



# Local Allocation LA2 Old Town Hemel Hempstead

## Master Plan



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# Foreword

Six 'Local Allocations' (Green Belt sites identified for housing development and other associated uses) were identified in the Council's strategic plan, called the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in September 2013. Further detail on these sites is provided in the Site Allocations document adopted in July 2017.

The landowners, in partnership with the Council, have prepared master plans for each Local Allocation. These master plans add further detail to the site requirements set out in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD); providing further information on the design and layout of the sites.

Consultation on the site was carried out as part of preparation of the Council's Core Strategy (adopted September 2013) and through other consultation events, including those associated with the Pre-Submission Site Allocations in 2014. These responses, where appropriate, have been used to help prepare the master plans. Details of the public consultation undertaken are set out in the Local Allocations Master Plan Consultation Report.

The master plan is intended to be read alongside the Site Allocations document.

The master plans have been updated to ensure they reflect the wording of the adopted Site Allocations document, where this has been amended through the public examination process.

The master plans seek to take forward and elaborate on the visions and principles in Policies LA1-LA6 in the Site Allocations DPD. They must be consistent with that approach and all modifications made to that document in progressing the DPD to adoption. The master plans and all indicative spatial layouts have also been prepared on the basis of technical work submitted at the time of the examination of the Site Allocations DPD.

For information, all capacities are conservative and have been prepared for housing supply and monitoring purposes. They similarly reflect technical work available at the time of the examination of the Site Allocations DPD. However, the Site Allocations DPD makes clear that the net capacity figures specified provide an estimate of expected dwelling capacity and should not be treated as maxima.

Where proposals differ from the master plans – whether dwelling numbers or aspects of the layout, design, height and content of development – as a result of further technical studies they will need to be tested through the planning application process, which in itself will develop a finer level of detail than can be provided in the master plans. All detailed schemes will be expected to demonstrate compliance with relevant policies and guidance.

If you have any further questions regarding any of the issues raised in this document please contact the Strategic Planning and Regeneration team on 01442 228660 or email [strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk).

# Executive Summary

Site LA2: Old Town is allocated for residential development within Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy. This document forms part of the suite of documents that make up the Local Planning Framework for the Borough. The LA2 site is owned by Dacorum Borough Council and has been allocated for around 80 new homes.

The LA2 site is located close to the historic heart of Hemel Hempstead, forming part of the gateway to the Old Town Conservation Area and adjacent to the existing neighbourhood of Highfield. The site has good access to the shops and services located within the historic high street and is also well positioned for access to the new Town Centre.

This master plan document sets development principles for the form and character of new development and looks at how new development will fit in with the existing surroundings.

The development principles set for the LA2 site in this master plan are as follows:

## Homes

- Around 80 new homes should be provided on site.
- Provide a mix of house types, with some flats and houses, including 40% affordable homes.

## Design

- Secure a high quality layout and design that respects the character of the Old Town Conservation Area and the setting of its listed buildings, retains views of St Mary's Church spire and takes account of the steeply sloping nature of the site.
- Limit housing to two storeys, except where two and a half storey housing would create interest and focal points in the street scene.
- Arrange new housing to achieve natural surveillance and provide active and attractive frontages to the main area of open space and Fletcher Way.
- The built form should act as a transition between the Old Town and New Town.
- Provide adequate provision for refuse bins and bicycles within residential properties.

## Streets and Spaces

- Ensure that streets and spaces are designed to add positively to the character of the existing area.
- Avoid over-domination of parked vehicles in the street scene.

## Access

- Take the primary road access (and the secondary access if provided) from Fletcher Way.
- Improve the east-west and north-south public footpaths.
- Ensure that pedestrian access to the existing residential areas is maintained and enhanced to encourage the use of existing transport facilities.

## Utilities and Infrastructure

- The site should link into existing utilities networks.
- Establish the capacity of the existing network and provide extra capacity where needed to serve the development.
- Co-ordinate the design of land drainage with the design for streets and open spaces.

## Landscape and Open Space

- Respect the landscape setting and character of the site.
- Provide around 1 hectare of open space, located mainly on the higher ground adjacent to The Bounce and Townsend.
- Retain the existing important trees at the top of the hill adjacent to The Bounce and Townsend and as many other trees as possible.

## Views and Surrounding Countryside

- Soften views of the development from across the valley and open countryside by the use of carefully designed planting.
- Views of the site from the surrounding areas and open countryside must be taken into consideration.

The LA2 site is shown in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document for development from 2021 onwards. It is envisaged that the site will come forward in one phase of development.

# 1 Purpose

This master plan has been prepared on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council by Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design to investigate the development options for the land at Cherry Bounce, also known as the Old Town site or Local Allocation 2 (LA2).

The Old Town site is one of a number of sites where the principle of housing development has been established in the Dacorum Core Strategy. This site has been identified as a site for around 80 new homes. The Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) added detail about the development of the site. The Site Allocations DPD has also removed the site from the Green Belt and set a new Green Belt boundary. The Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs form part of the suite of documents that make up the Local Plan for Dacorum.

The purpose of the master plan is to supplement the Site Allocations DPD by setting development principles and a framework through which high quality residential development can be delivered on the site. The master plan will be used to guide a future planning application on the site. It is also intended to demonstrate how the planning requirements set out in the Site Allocations DPD can be delivered.

The master plan has explored the technical feasibility of delivering housing development on the site in relation to a number of factors that can affect development. It has been prepared in consultation with, and contribution from, key stakeholders. These stakeholders include Hertfordshire County Council (as local Highway Authority), Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The master plan has also been used as a mechanism to engage with the existing local community. Discussion with local residents during the production of the master plan has helped to understand their aspirations and concerns for development on the site. Their input has helped to shape the contents of the master plan and the development principles within it.

The extent of the area covered by this master plan is shown on Figure 1. Dacorum Borough Council owns the whole site.

This master plan has been adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst planning applications on the site will be considered against Development Plan policies, this document provides further

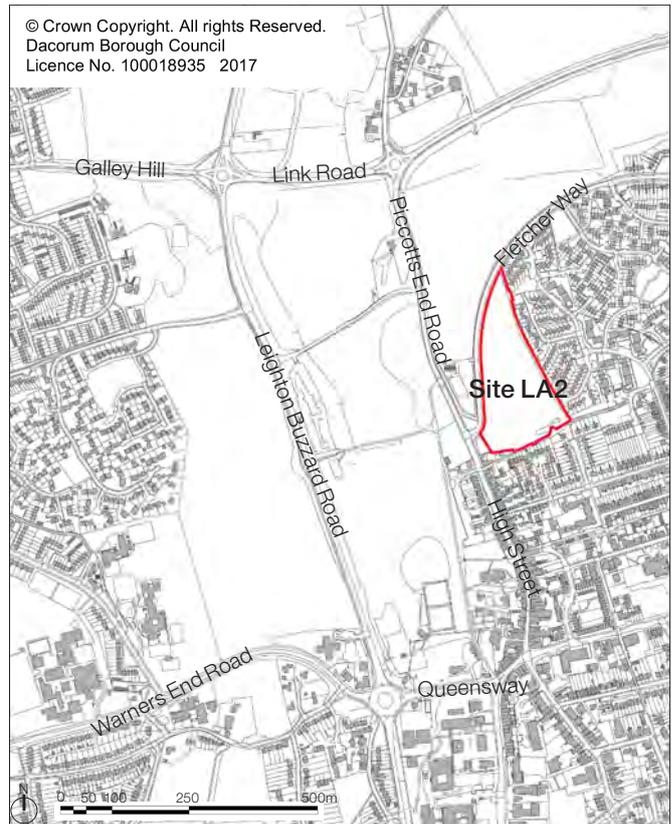


Figure 1: Site location plan

detail pursuant to those policies and has been the subject of public consultation. As such, it will carry weight as a material consideration, when planning applications are determined.

The document:

- Describes the site and surroundings.
- Identifies the technical work that has been undertaken in order to demonstrate technical feasibility.
- Provides and describes an Indicative Spatial Layout Plan, identifying principles that will be important in ensuring that the development proceeds in an acceptable manner, taking account of the constraints and opportunities of the site and results in a high quality addition to the town.

# 2 Context

## 2.1 Planning Policy and Process

The following section sets out the planning policy context within which the master plan proposals would be developed. This includes both existing national planning policy, saved policies from the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted 21st April 2004), the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPDs.

This document also reflects and takes forward a considerable period of site study and policy formulation related to the LA2 site, including engagement with the local community. These are summarised below.

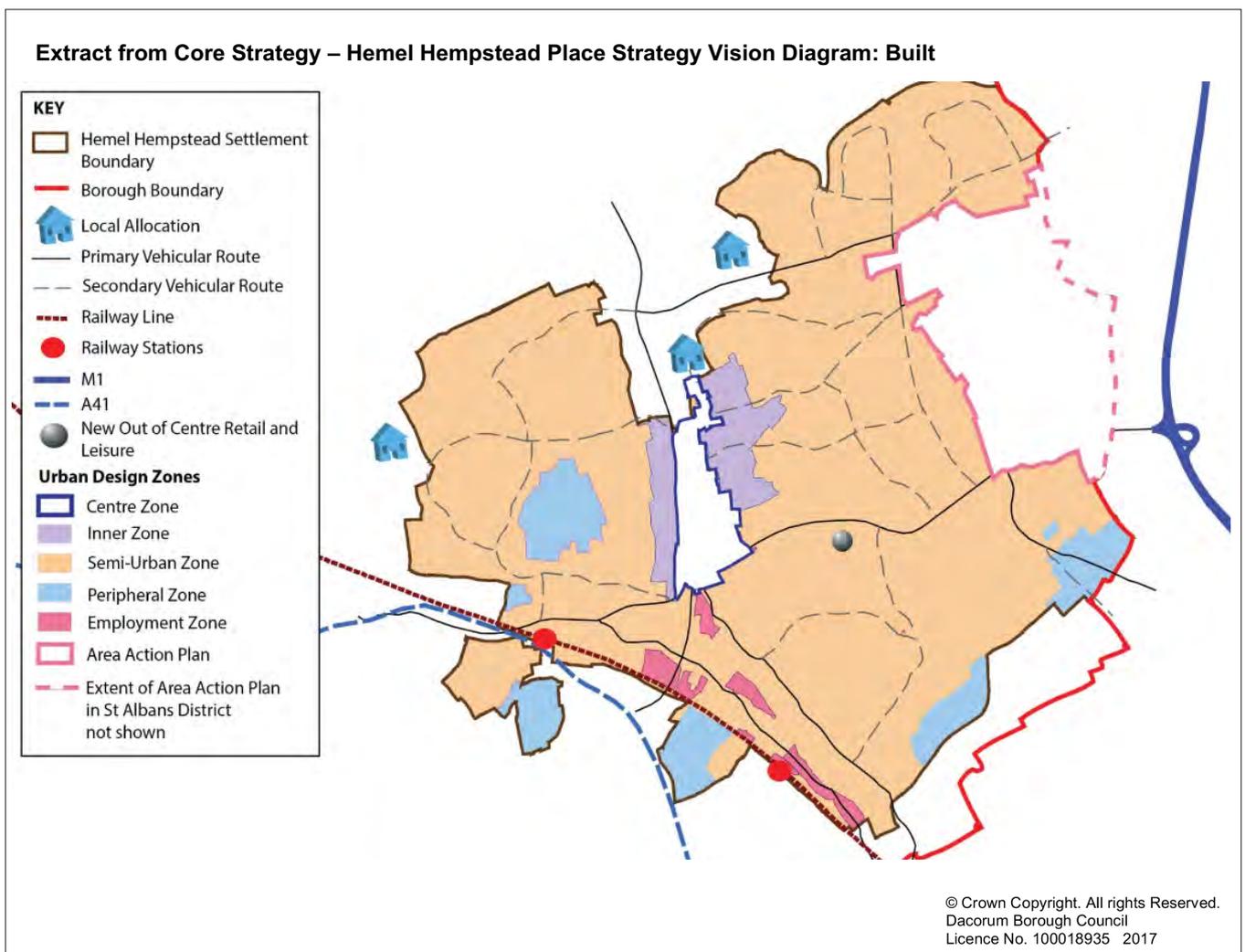


Figure 2: Extract from Core Strategy – Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy Vision Diagram: Built

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## NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) adopted in 2012 and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) represent the planning policy context at the national level. The Council's Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs were prepared in the context of the NPPF and are in general conformity with it.

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## Core Strategy

Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted on September 25th 2013 and contains the main strategic planning policies which will guide development in the Borough.

The Old Town site is designated as Local Allocation LA2 within the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy. The Hemel Hempstead Vision Diagram from the Core Strategy is reproduced in Figure 2. The Core Strategy states that Hemel Hempstead will accommodate up to 8,800 new homes up to 2031.

The principle of development in this location has thereby been accepted following examination by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The development is a key component in the overall delivery of housing to meet the needs of the Borough to 2031.

The key principles that have been identified for the LA2 development are:

- Two storey housing including around 40% affordable homes.
- A contribution must be made towards educational and community facilities.
- The layout, design, density and landscaping must be in keeping with the Old Town Conservation Area.
- Impact on the local road network mitigated through promotion of sustainable travel options, including pedestrian links onto Fletcher Way.

The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.

In addition the following policies from the Core Strategy are the most relevant for development on the LA2 site:

- Policy CS1: Distribution of Development
- Policy CS3: Managing selected development sites
- Policy CS8: Sustainable Transport
- Policy CS10: Quality of Settlement Design
- Policy CS11: Quality of Neighbourhood Design
- Policy CS12: Quality of site design

- Policy CS13: Quality of the Public Realm
- Policy CS18: Mix of Housing
- Policy CS19: Affordable Housing
- Policy CS23: Social Infrastructure
- Policy CS26: Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS27: Quality of the Historic Environment
- Policy CS28: Carbon emission reductions
- Policy CS29: Sustainable design and construction
- Policy CS31: Water Management
- Policy CS32: Air, Soil and Water Quality
- Policy CS35: Infrastructure and developer contributions

Policy CS5: Green Belt will apply until the site is formally removed from the Green Belt (i.e. until the Site Allocations DPD is formally adopted).

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## Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Dacorum Borough Council's Site Allocations DPD was adopted in July 2017 and contains the more detailed policies and site specific proposals which are necessary to deliver the strategic policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

The Site Allocations DPD contains a policy for the Old Town site (Policy LA2), together with a vision, an indicative layout and a series of development principles. These are reflected and elaborated on by this master plan. Policy LA2 is shown below (Figures 3-5) and Figure 7 following it depicts the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy vision in the Site Allocations DPD.

The Site Allocations document also defined a new Green Belt boundary. The new boundary has taken the whole site out of the Green Belt.

Apart from Policy LA2, the following policies from the Site Allocations DPD are the most relevant for the development at the Old Town site:

- Policy SA1: Identified Proposals and Sites
- Policy SA3: Improving Transport Infrastructure
- Policy SA8: Local Allocations

Where there is any conflict between the requirements of this master plan and the Site Allocations DPD, the latter document will take precedence.

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## **Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted 21st April 2014)**

Although the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs have been adopted, some of the Local Plan policies are still 'saved' (i.e. they remain operational). These saved policies will be superseded when the Council produces the single Local Plan.

The following saved Local Plan policies are particularly relevant to the development of the Old Town site:

- Policy 12: Infrastructure provision and phasing (to be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Policy CS35)
- Policy 13: Planning conditions and planning obligations
- Policy 18: The size of new dwellings
- Policy 21: Density of residential development
- Policy 51: Development and transport impacts
- Policy 54: Highway design
- Policy 57: Provision and management of parking
- Policy 58: Private parking provision
- Policy 76: Leisure space in new residential development
- Policy 99: Preservation of trees, hedgerows and woodlands
- Policy 111: Height of buildings
- Policy 113: Exterior lighting
- Policy 119: Development affecting listed buildings
- Policy 120: (Development in Conservation Areas): this policy is relevant because it applies not just within conservation areas, but also to "development proposals outside a conservation area which affect its character and setting"
- Policy 129: Storage and recycling of waste on development sites.

The following Local Plan appendices are particularly relevant to the development of the Old Town Site:

- Appendix 3: Layout and design of residential areas
- Appendix 5: Parking provision
- Appendix 6: Open space and play provision
- Appendix 8: Exterior lighting

The Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs will take precedence where there is any conflict in content.

## **Policy LA2: Old Town, Hemel Hempstead**

Local Allocation 2 at Old Town, Hemel Hempstead as identified on the Policies Map has been released from the Green Belt and will deliver 80 homes.

The key development principles for the site are set out below. Further detail is contained in a site master plan.

### **Old Town Vision**

The LA2 site will form a new, attractive part of the Old Town area of Hemel Hempstead. Development will be integrated with the existing residential areas to the east and south through maintaining and improving existing pedestrian links to the site and incorporating routes through the new development. New open spaces will be incorporated on site for use by existing and new residents.

Design of new buildings will positively contribute towards the character of the Old Town Conservation Area. There will be a mixture of family and smaller homes. The new area will be designed to be safe and secure and an inclusive community.

### **Key Development Principles**

The following principles have been used to guide the site master plan and will be used to assess the subsequent planning application:

- Provide a mix of house types, including some flats and houses, including 40% affordable homes.
- Take the primary road access (and the secondary access if provided) from Fletcher Way.
- Secure a high quality layout and design that respects the character of the Old Town Conservation Area and the setting of its listed buildings, and takes account of the steeply sloping nature of the site.
- Built form should act as a transition between the Old town and New Town.
- Limit housing to two storeys, except where two and a half storey housing would create interest and focal points in the street scene, and would not be harmful to the historic character. Provide around 1 hectare of open space, located mainly on the higher ground adjacent to The Bounce and Townsend.
- Arrange new housing to provide active and attractive frontages to the main area of open space and Fletcher Way.
- Avoid over-domination of parked vehicles in the street scene.
- Provide adequate provision for refuse bins and bicycles within residential properties.
- Respect the landscape setting and character of the site.
- Retain the existing important trees at the top of the hill adjacent to The Bounce and Townsend and as many other trees as possible.
- Soften views of the development from across the valley and open countryside by the use of carefully designed planting.
- Improve the east-west and north-south public footpaths.

Figure 3: Extract from Site Allocations DPD: Policy LA2

## Indicative Spatial Layout



Figure 4: Extract from Site Allocations DPD: Policy LA2 - Indicative Spatial Layout

## Delivery and Phasing

- LA2 is scheduled to come forward from 2021, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS3: Managing Selected Development Sites, SA1: Identified Proposals and Sites, SA8: Local Allocations and the Schedule of Housing Proposals and Sites.
- The site will be developed as a single phase in accordance with the master plan.
- No abnormal costs have been identified that would undermine the ability of this site to provide appropriate contributions towards infrastructure either through CIL and Section 106, as appropriate, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS35: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions.
- Key planning obligations are set out in the site master plan and include 40% affordable housing and contributions towards local social and transport infrastructure.
- Key off-site transport works are set out in the Schedule of Transport Proposals and Sites (proposal T/11).
- Early liaison required with Thames Water to develop a drainage strategy to identify any infrastructure upgrades that are required as a result of the development in order to ensure that sufficient sewerage and sewage treatment capacity is available to support the timely delivery of this site.
- Early liaison required with the local planning authority to ensure appropriate sustainable drainage is designed into the development scheme at the early design stage.

Figure 5: Extract from Site Allocations DPD: Policy LA2

## Core Strategy Extract for LA2

<b>Location reference</b>	LA2
<b>Site location</b>	Old Town
<b>Proposals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 80 new homes</li> </ul>
<b>Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two storey housing including around 40% affordable homes.</li> <li>• A contribution must be made towards educational and community facilities.</li> <li>• The layout, design, density and landscaping must be in keeping with the Old Town.</li> <li>• Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including pedestrian links onto Fletcher Way.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.</li> </ul>

Figure 6: Extract from Core Strategy DPD: LA2

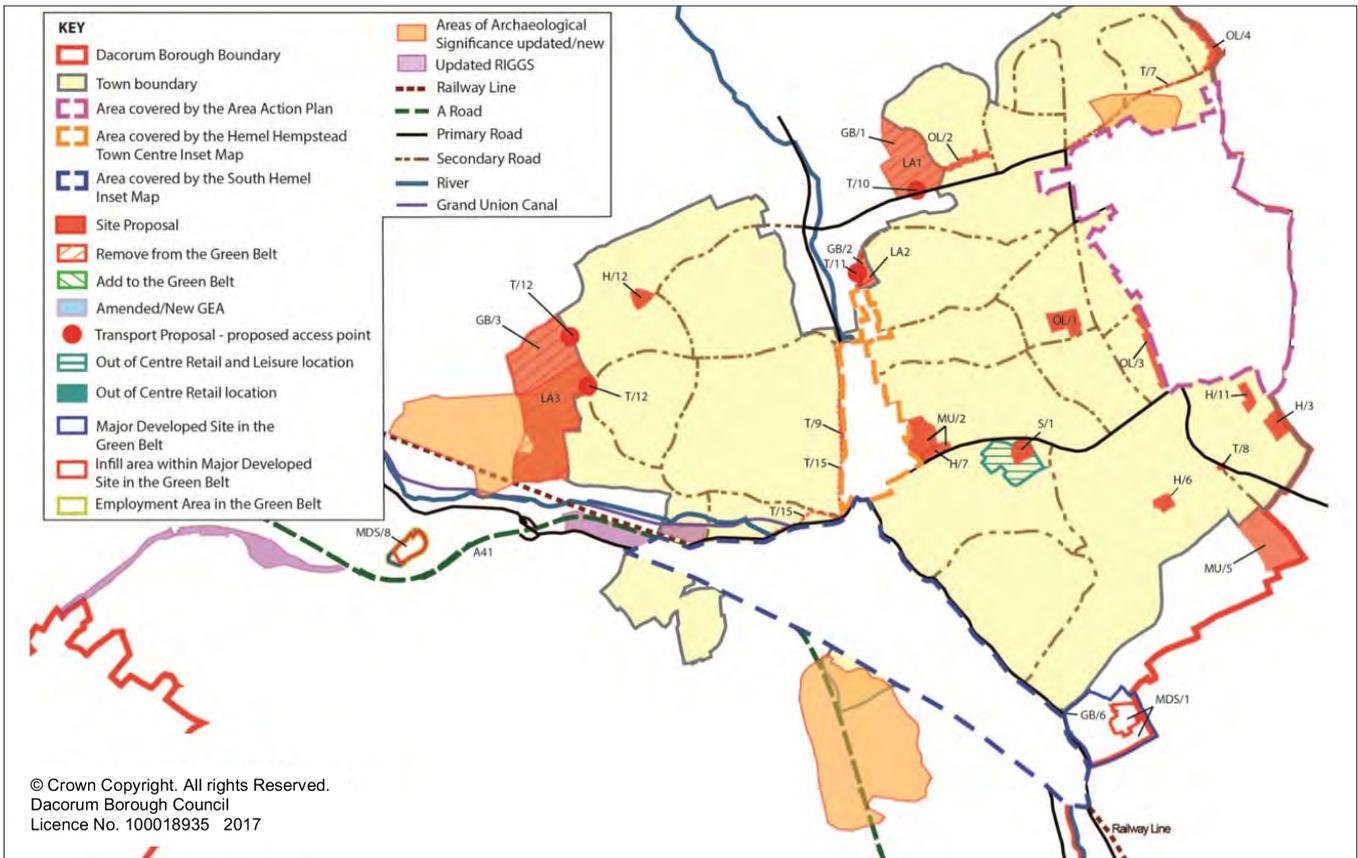


Figure 7: Extract from Site Allocations DPD – Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy Vision Diagram: Built

## Supplementary Guidance

The Council has adopted a number of documents to supplement the Local Plan and Core Strategy policies. These documents are used as material planning considerations in deciding planning applications. Where there is a conflict between their content and that of a Local Plan, the Local Plan will take precedence. The main documents relevant to the development of the Old Town site are as follows:

### Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- Accessibility zones for the application of car parking standards (now incorporated into the Area Based Policies SPG (2004))

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and other advice

- Affordable Housing (2013)
- Sustainable Development Advice Note (December 2013) and associated sustainable development checklist

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/site-allocations/localallocations>

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/site-allocations/localallocations/la5-west-tring>

## Community Engagement

Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs, the Council has engaged with the local community to obtain their views on, and aspirations for, this site. This engagement has helped develop and refine the development principles highlighted in this master plan. For further information please see the relevant reports of representation and consultation on the Council's website <sup>2</sup>.

### Community Infrastructure Levy

Dacorum Borough Council adopted its charging schedule and supporting documents and policies<sup>3</sup> on 25 February 2015, and thereafter implemented the charge on 1 July 2015. The Charging Schedule requires new residential and large retail developments to contribute to infrastructure via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It is expected that some of the infrastructure required to support the development of the Old Town site will be secured through CIL, with a limited number of contributions secured through the current S106 mechanism (see section 7 for further information).

<sup>3</sup>The supporting policies are the Regulation 123 List, Exceptional Circumstances Relief, Discretionary Charity Relief, and Instalments and Payment in Kind policies.

- Secondary schools
- Doctors surgeries
- Nearest primary schools to the site



Figure 8: The site in relation to the wider context of Hemel Hempstead

## 2.2 The Site and its Surroundings

### Location / Historic Development

There is evidence of settlement at Hemel Hempstead from Roman times in the form of early Roman villas and burial grounds. The next significant phase of development for the town occurred during the 17th and 18th centuries when due to its location on the shortest route between London and the industrial Midlands the settlement grew into a small market town. The town benefited from roads and canals connecting it to the wider area during this phase of industrialisation. The town remained as a small agricultural market town throughout the 19th century, however in the last decades of the century houses and villas to cater for London commuters and workers in the paper industry were starting to be built. The town's largest period of growth was post World War II when it was developed as a New Town. The New Town development began in the 1950s and continued apace until

the early 1980s. The new town development enveloped the historic core of the original town.

The LA2 site is located close to the historic town centre of Hemel Hempstead, which is now known as the Old Town and is a designated conservation area. The Old Town is close to the new town centre and existing residential areas.

### Location of Existing and Proposed Services

The Old Town site is well located for access to local shops and services. The Old Town High Street contains a number of smaller shops and services including banks, restaurants and cafes. The new town centre is easily accessible from the site and contains a number of larger convenience shops and supermarkets.

Cavendish School in Warners End Road is the nearest secondary school to the site. There are a number of primary schools nearby with the closest being George Street Primary School located within the Old Town.

## Heritage / Conservation

The site is adjacent to and acts as a gateway to the Old Town Conservation Area. The conservation area is noted for the coherence of the High Street, in particular the dominance of historic listed buildings and intactness of the historic scale and grain. A key aspect to the character of the conservation area is its relationship with the valley setting which is accentuated by a sectional change across at the northern end of the High Street where the eastern side of the High Street is at a higher level than the western side. Views to the spire of St Mary's Church are also a key feature of the area.

The 'Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals' document was approved by the Council's Cabinet in January 2014. It is noted within the appraisal, that the spatial qualities of the conservation area are experienced principally from the approach from Gadebridge Park. On this approach the transition between the semi-enclosed nature of the churchyard at St Mary's Close moving through to the enclosed nature of the High Street is an important characteristic. There is a rich diversity of materials contained within the conservation area including red, purple and brown bricks, timber, render and stucco, flint and terracotta.

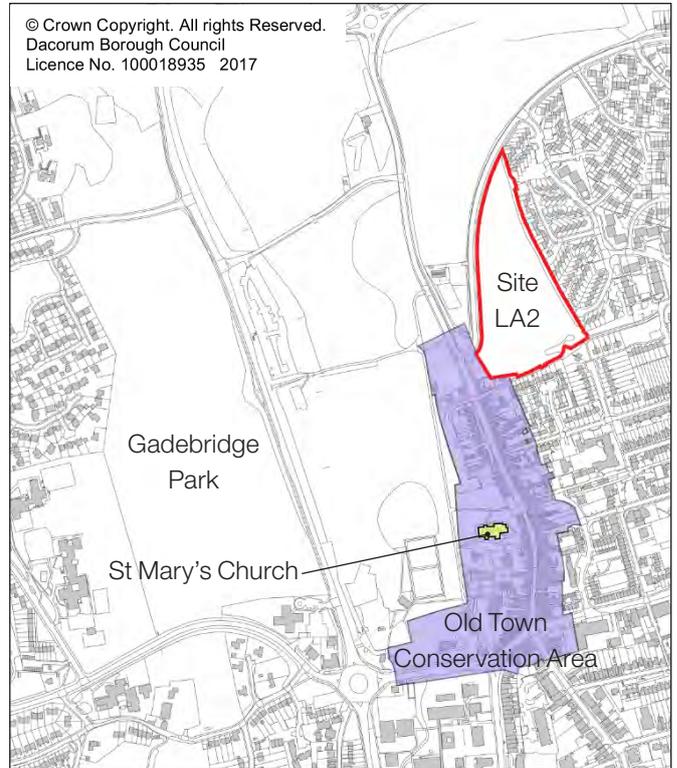


Figure 10: Old Town Conservation Area plan

## Regeneration of the Old Town

A regeneration scheme to enhance the positive, attractive features of the Old Town has recently been completed. Interventions undertaken include:

- Creating a new one-way system for the High Street.
- Creating more on street parking.
- Improving the public realm to be more in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area.
- A night time taxi rank installed to support the night time economy of the area.



Figure 11: The Old Town High Street



Figure 9: Views to the spire of St Mary's Church are a key feature of the Old Town Conservation Area



Figure 12: At the northern end of the High Street the western side of the street is at a lower level reflecting the High Street's location within the Gade Valley

## 3 Analysis of the Site

This section of the master plan sets out a site analysis of the Old Town site. It covers the following topics and has been used to inform a consolidated constraints plan which is shown in the next section of this report:

- Archaeology
- Ecology and trees
- Landscape and topography
- Views and visual impact
- Flood risk and drainage
- Highways and access
- Infrastructure (including school capacity and utilities)

### 3.1 Archaeology

A desk based archaeological assessment was undertaken over Spring / Summer 2013 by Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. The findings of this report indicate that there are no known heritage assets on the site. Aerial photography has revealed the presence of a small field system which possibly belongs to the prehistoric period.

The site had been used solely for agricultural purposes since mediaeval times, until it became a public open space when the new town neighbourhood of Highfield was built. Thus the likelihood of heritage assets being found on site from the prehistoric to Roman times is assessed as being moderate. The likelihood of finding heritage assets later than the Roman period is deemed to be unlikely.

Due to the potential presence of a field system it was decided to undertake a geophysical survey of the area. A number of magnetic anomalies were uncovered during the geophysical survey. In order to ensure that any potential archaeological remains do not present a constraint to future development some trial trench survey work was undertaken over the summer of 2013. The results of the trial trenching found no significant archaeological features or artefacts that could relate to a possible small scale field system or the magnetic anomalies that were present. The natural soil sequence across the site was recorded and undisturbed natural stratum was defined in each trench.

Following the various stages of the archaeological assessment, Hertfordshire County Council's Historic

Environment Advisor has advised the Council as follows with regard to LA2:

*This site was the subject of an archaeological desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and limited field evaluation to test the results of the geophysics. No heritage assets of sufficient quality or extent to represent a constraint on the allocation of the site for housing were identified. However, the percentage of trial trenching was very low, specifically designed to reveal the presence of any archaeological constraints that might affect the allocation of the site for housing. It is possible that discrete archaeological features or small sites may exist in areas not examined during the evaluation which may represent either a constraint on the construction of individual properties/aspects of the development, or require mitigation through the planning process. I, therefore, recommend that further limited archaeological field evaluation is undertaken to inform the determination of an outline application for housing, and what, if any, mitigation is required.*

The 2013 archaeological assessment documents are available on the Council's website.

### 3.2 Ecology and Trees

#### Ecology

Hertfordshire Ecology indicated that it has no ecological information on the site to suggest that there are any constraints. The site should be subject to a Phase 1 Habitat Survey to reach a firm conclusion on ecological issues. However, Hertfordshire Ecology considers that if the site was of some intrinsic importance they would probably be aware of it by now.

Hertfordshire Ecology considers that the most historic belts of trees are locally valuable within the site, and provide a visual and ecological resource. With regard to the trees, Hertfordshire Ecology advises that:

*"The B and C rated trees would not present any ecological constraints, although if removed they should be checked by the arboricultural contractor in respect of bat potential, and a consultant appointed if there is good likelihood or evidence of their presence. This is only likely if they are old trees with rot holes, cracks etc. which I would think is very unlikely given their relative age, but it ought to be considered for obvious*

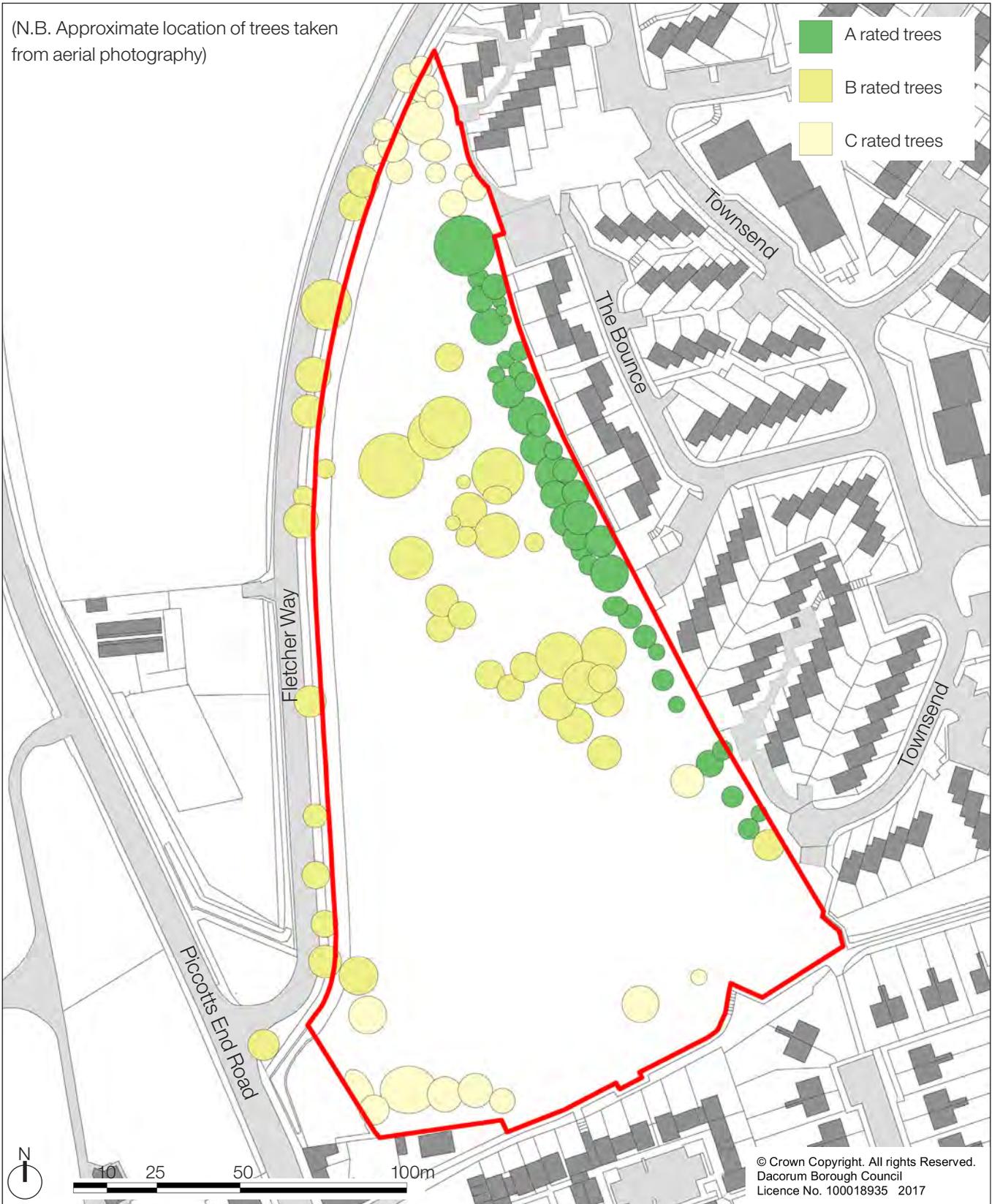


Figure 13: Plan showing the different categories of trees within the Old Town site

reasons. Obviously if they could be retained they would already contribute to the ecological resource, although possibly less so if they were all, say, sycamore or exotic species.”

In terms of habitat connectivity and networks, the Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), in partnership with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Hertfordshire County Council and the Herts Environmental Record Centre, has produced a report on Hertfordshire’s Ecological Networks which will need to be considered in preparing proposals for the site. This will help ensure that the development seeks to protect and enhance the integrity of wider ecological networks and achieve biodiversity gains where possible, in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.

On the issue of how ecology might be handled in a future housing development on the site, Hertfordshire Ecology advises that:

*“Once any open areas have been identified for retention, their ecological potential is really reflected partly in what may already be there - for the trees and scrub that would be known, but not for the grassland - and then in what may be created. Then it is all dictated by management. It also depends upon what use the open spaces are expected to provide - general amenity of something more interesting. The topography may limit casual football etc. so areas of longer grass - with paths through - may be more appropriate. These could be sown with a suitable wildflower mix and hopefully be maintained by mowing a few times, lifting the cut with the longest grass. This should contribute and enhance the existing ecology (if not already of some interest) as well as the development as a whole. There is relatively little space to do anything more physical, such as a Community orchard or similar..”*

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## Trees and Vegetation

The trees on site have been assessed by the Council’s tree officer for their contribution to the area in terms of visual, historic and conservation interest.

The trees on site fall into two distinct categories;

- Those that were planted since the new town was developed.
- Those that were present before the new town’s development.

The older more historic trees sit along the eastern boundary on an historic boundary bank. These trees have been rated as A trees, as they would not be replaceable if they were to be lost.

The majority of the other trees on the site are valuable in that they are pleasant features in a green setting but could be replaced in the short to medium term. These trees have been rated as B trees for this exercise.

There are also some areas of scrub which generally have been rated as C trees as they are of lower quality and less importance. It is worth noting that although they are of a lower quality they do provide some screening to the site in long distance views and from the nearby conservation area, but this effect could be replicated with new planting.



Figure 14: The approach to the site from the roundabout at the junction of Fletcher Way, Piccotts End Road and the High Street. The sloping bank to Fletcher Way can be clearly seen

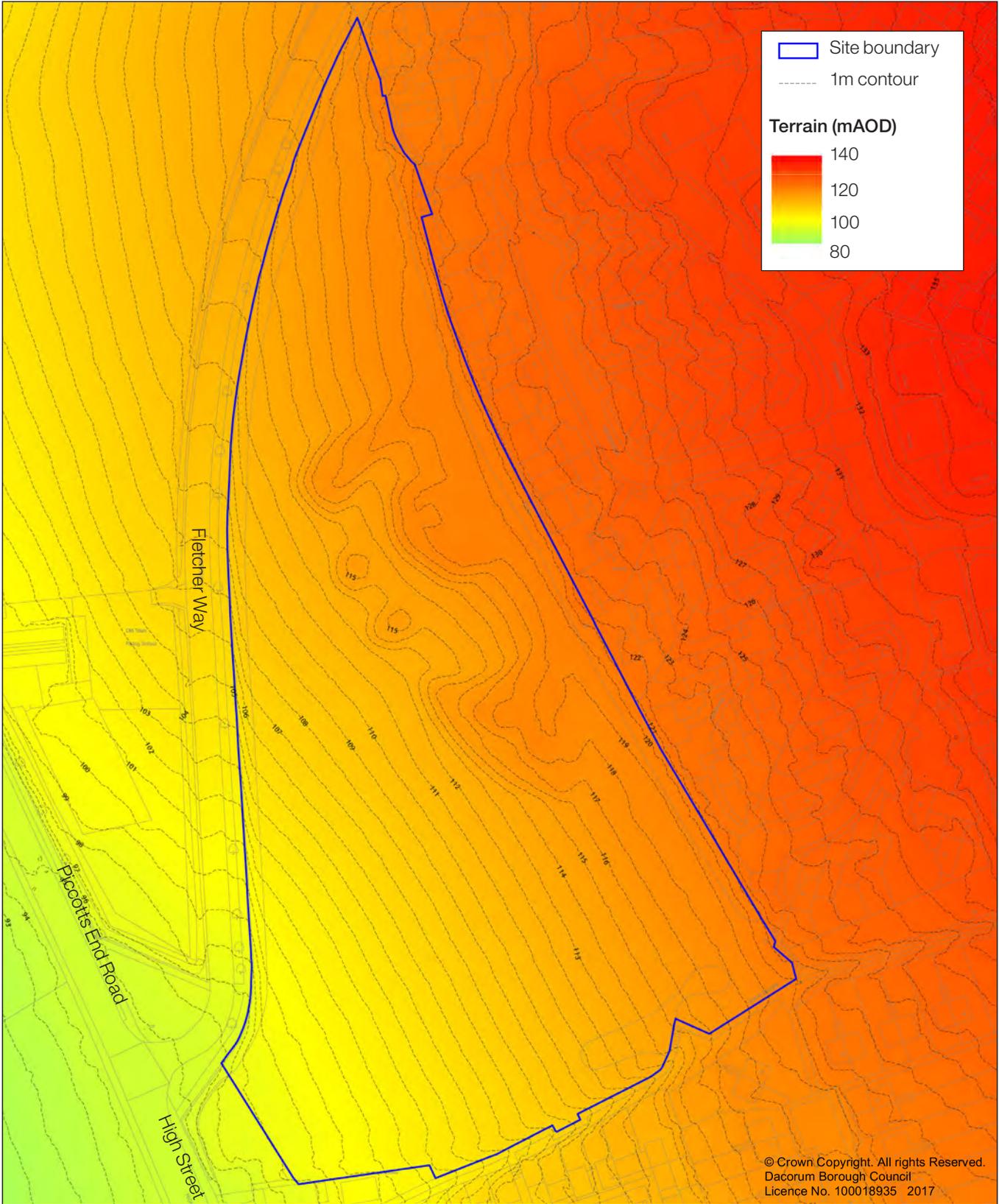


Figure 15: Plan indicating the topography of the site as extracted from LIDAR data



Figure 16: The Old Town site as seen from the other side of the Gade Valley

### 3.3 Landscape and Views

The site is steeply sloping in some areas, there is a steep bank which runs along the majority of Fletcher Way, apart from this the land is fairly evenly sloped across the whole site with a more level area at the top adjacent to the existing development at The Bounce. The majority of the site has a gradient of 1:10 or greater as shown on the adjacent diagram.

In order to assess the ability to develop the site LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data has been obtained and used to extract the one metre contours shown on the adjacent topography drawing. LiDAR is an optical remote sensing technology that can measure distance through laser technology. LiDAR survey data provides a comprehensive, thorough and economic solution to determining site levels and gradients. The data is ideal for making engineering assessments of earthworks, retaining walls, slope stability and other engineering issues.

The steeply sloping nature of the site presents a challenge to development however an acceptable form of development can be achieved on the site through careful design. There are good precedents of where this has been achieved both within Hemel Hempstead and other locations, for example the existing residential area on the land to the south of the site.

#### Views

The Old Town site is located within the Gade Valley, due to the sloping nature of the site it benefits from views across the valley and out to the wider countryside.

#### Visual Impact

New housing would not impact in views from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is some way away. Housing development on site LA2 would have a limited impact upon views into the site from open countryside to the north. Housing development on the site would be seen within the backdrop of the existing built area and road infrastructure.

The main views of the site would be from the western slopes of the Gade Valley within the existing confines of the town. New housing on the site would not cause great harm to these views as it would be seen in context with the existing development to the east and south of the site. The more mature, high quality trees would be kept as part of a new development with elements of new landscape added to help screen development in long distance views.

Views into the Old Town, Gadebridge Park and across the river valley are a feature of the site and bring the countryside into the surrounding residential areas. The layout, height and design of new development should retain views at key

points, including within the open space and at access points into the site. It will be particularly important to retain views of St Mary's Church spire from the open space at the top of the LA2 site, as far as possible.

### Surrounding Residential Character

The area surrounding the site apart from the historic area around the Old Town predominantly consists of 1960s development that was built as part of the new town expansion. Homes are predominantly two stories and arranged within culs de sac.

## 3.4 Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is not within any flood zone and due to the sloping nature of the site is unlikely to suffer from any flooding from nearby water sources. The closest area to the site which suffers fluvial flooding is the Gade Valley which the River Gade runs through. However, Fletcher Way immediately to the west of the site is at medium to high risk of surface water flooding. Therefore, the LA2 development should be designed to minimise any flood risks to existing and new residents, and to highways. Any planning application should be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment which will re-assess flood risk from all sources and identify appropriate mitigation/design requirements.

The Environment Agency has advised that the site also lies within a Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3). Any development proposals will need to ensure that further groundwater contamination does not occur as a result of this development. Any infiltration drainage techniques will need to be carefully considered in this context.

Early liaison is required with Thames Water to develop a drainage strategy to identify any infrastructure upgrades required in order to ensure that sufficient sewerage and sewage treatment capacity is available to support the timely delivery of the site.

Some off-site reinforcement of the foul water sewerage network may be required, but this should not present an overriding constraint to development. Thames Water is presently working on an impact study looking at the capacity of Maple Lodge Treatment Works. Investment in this plant is expected to come forward in due course and developer funded studies will be undertaken to fully determine infrastructure upgrade requirements.

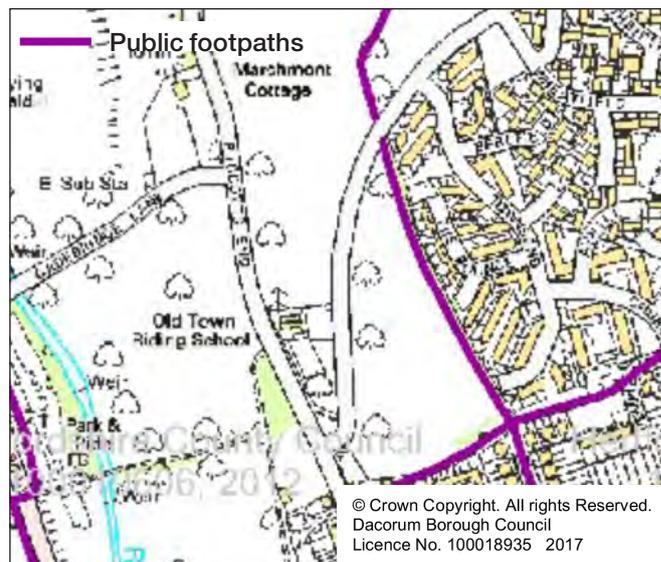


Figure 17: Extract from Hertfordshire County Council Definitive Footpaths map

With regard to foul water drainage, Thames Water has indicated that new or upgraded drainage infrastructure is likely to be required as a result of the development to ensure there is sufficient capacity within the waste water network ahead of the development (see section 7 regarding delivery). Further studies will be necessary to identify capacity constraints within these existing networks and it is expected that a Drainage Strategy should be prepared by the developer to determine the exact impact and significance of infrastructure required to support the development.

Appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be implemented within any new development where technically feasible. This will ensure that the drainage concept and design is considered at an early stage, allowing space to manage surface water, improve water quality and provide amenity space and enhance biodiversity value. Pre-application discussion on the drainage strategy and SuDS design is recommended with the local planning authority, as well as Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, to establish an appropriate surface water drainage strategy and SuDS design for the site.

At this site, consideration should be given to the following aspects in relation to surface water management:

- The topography of the site.
- Enabling water to infiltrate across the site.
- Ensuring that no additional runoff from the site impacts on the adjacent highway.

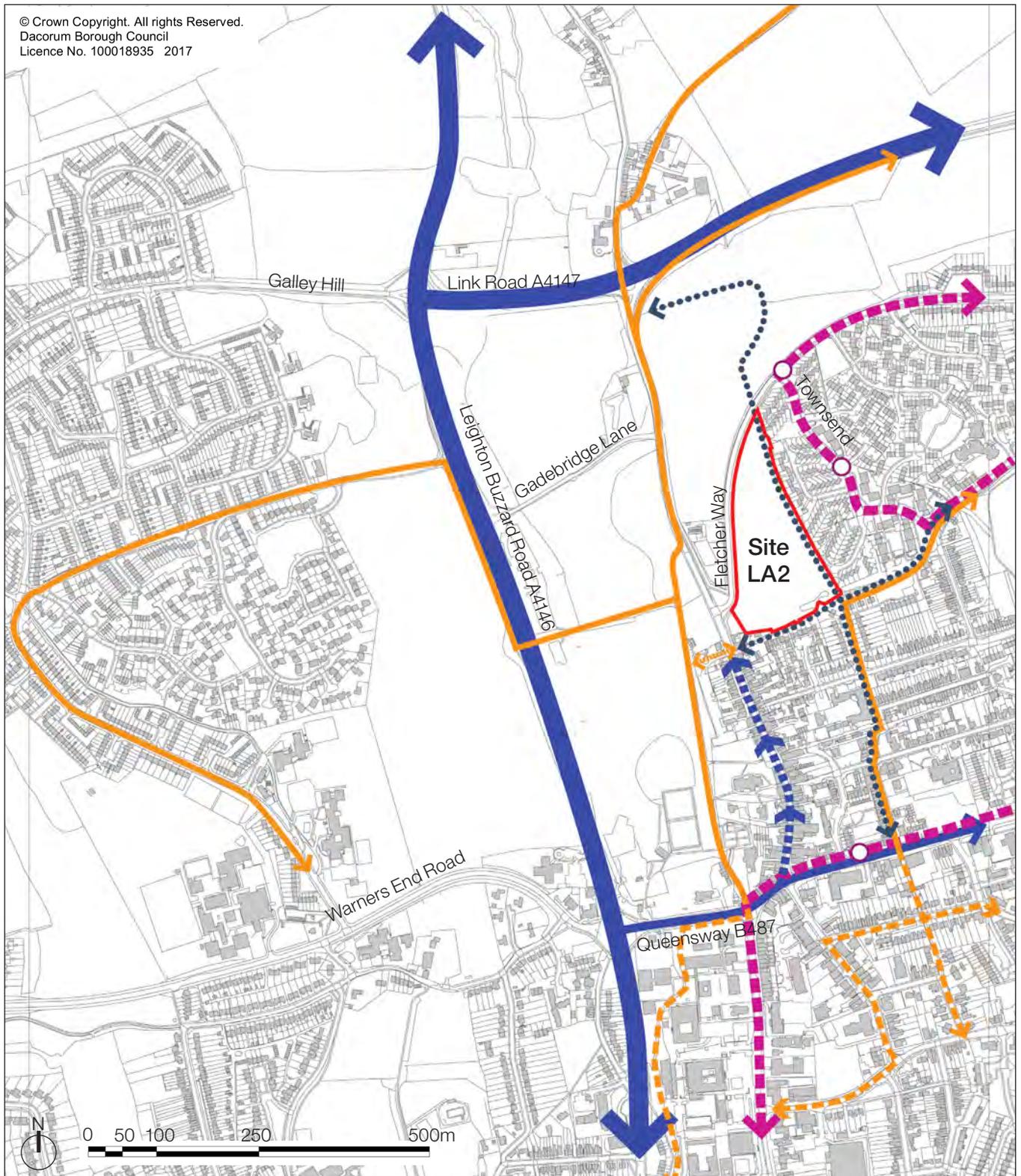


Figure 18: Movement network around the site and wider area



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## 3.5 Highways and Access

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### Access

The site can be accessed off one main access from Fletcher Way, which is designated by the Highway Authority (Hertfordshire County Council) as a local access road in the hierarchy. The new access road will need to be designed to accommodate two-way traffic and will be in the region of 5.5 metres wide. The road will need radii suitable for access by service vehicles and pedestrian footways should be provided on each side of the road to connect with the existing footway on Fletcher Way. To ensure there is acceptable access to all of the site a narrower secondary access point would also be appropriate for the northern part of the site. The accesses may or may not be linked. For a site of this size an emergency access point would be desirable although not essential, there is potential for an emergency access point from Townsend. When a decision is taken on whether to include an emergency access, the fact that this would result in the loss of well-used on-street parking spaces in Townsend should be taken into account. At the planning application stage arrangements for refuse collection and servicing would need to be carefully considered when designing the access arrangements.

In order for new access arrangements to meet Fletcher Way at a suitable gradient the banking that runs along the edge of Fletcher Way will need to be cut. The design of all new access roads should follow guidance contained in the County Council's 'Roads in Hertfordshire' document (<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/devmanagment/roadsinherts/>). This document interprets Manual for Streets for Hertfordshire and also includes advice on retaining structures which may be required here due to the level differences and gradients on the site. The gradients on the access roads are likely to be at the steeper end of what is acceptable. Further into the site roads should aim to follow the contours of the site where possible. The potential emergency access point from the site onto Townsend will also be over a considerable change in level and as such some earthworks will be likely. The access point will need careful siting and design in order to minimise the impact on the bank feature.

The visual impact of the access roads and associated earthworks will be minimal, landscaping associated with the junctions will help to minimise impact in long distance views. Each side of the site access junctions will contain soft landscaping with gentle slopes to open up the entry into the site and provide appropriate levels of visibility in both directions along Fletcher Way for traffic exiting the site.

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## Wider Transport Network

The site is well connected in many respects, there are a number of footpaths and cycleways which are of good quality and provide quick, sustainable access to the town centre, adjacent neighbourhoods and open spaces. There are also a number of pedestrian and cycle routes which provide good access to the local countryside for the population.

Many of the existing pedestrian connections from Townsend, The Bounce and Cherry Bounce are currently in a poor condition and not suitable for all users. Development on this site would provide an opportunity to improve these connections and link into the wider footpath and cycle network being proposed as part of the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre master plan. Signage and waymaking would be improved as part of any new proposal.

These improved pedestrian connections will facilitate access to the bus stops in Townsend. The need to improve pedestrian routes to the bus stops in Fletcher Way should also be looked at (there is no footway leading to the northbound bus stop).

There are two public rights of way that run along the site boundaries. There is a footpath that runs along the southern boundary of the site, this is outside the current site boundary and would not be affected by development on the site. There is also a footpath that runs through the site on the eastern edge. This footpath is within the site boundary and whilst the exact alignment may change a pedestrian route would be maintained through this part of the site in any development proposals.

The site is also served well by public transport. Bus route 4 runs close to the site and connects the site into Hemel Hempstead Town Centre and the railway station. The bus service is frequent with approximately 3 services per hour during weekday and Saturday peak times, with services being less frequent in the early morning and late evening and on Sundays.

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## 3.6 School Capacity

The nearest primary school to the site is George Street Primary School within the Old Town which is situated approximately 300m to the south east of the LA2 site. This school is on a constrained site in the Old Town with little space for expansion and is currently at capacity. It is therefore likely that the child yield from the Old Town site would be satisfied by new school sites within the Town Centre.

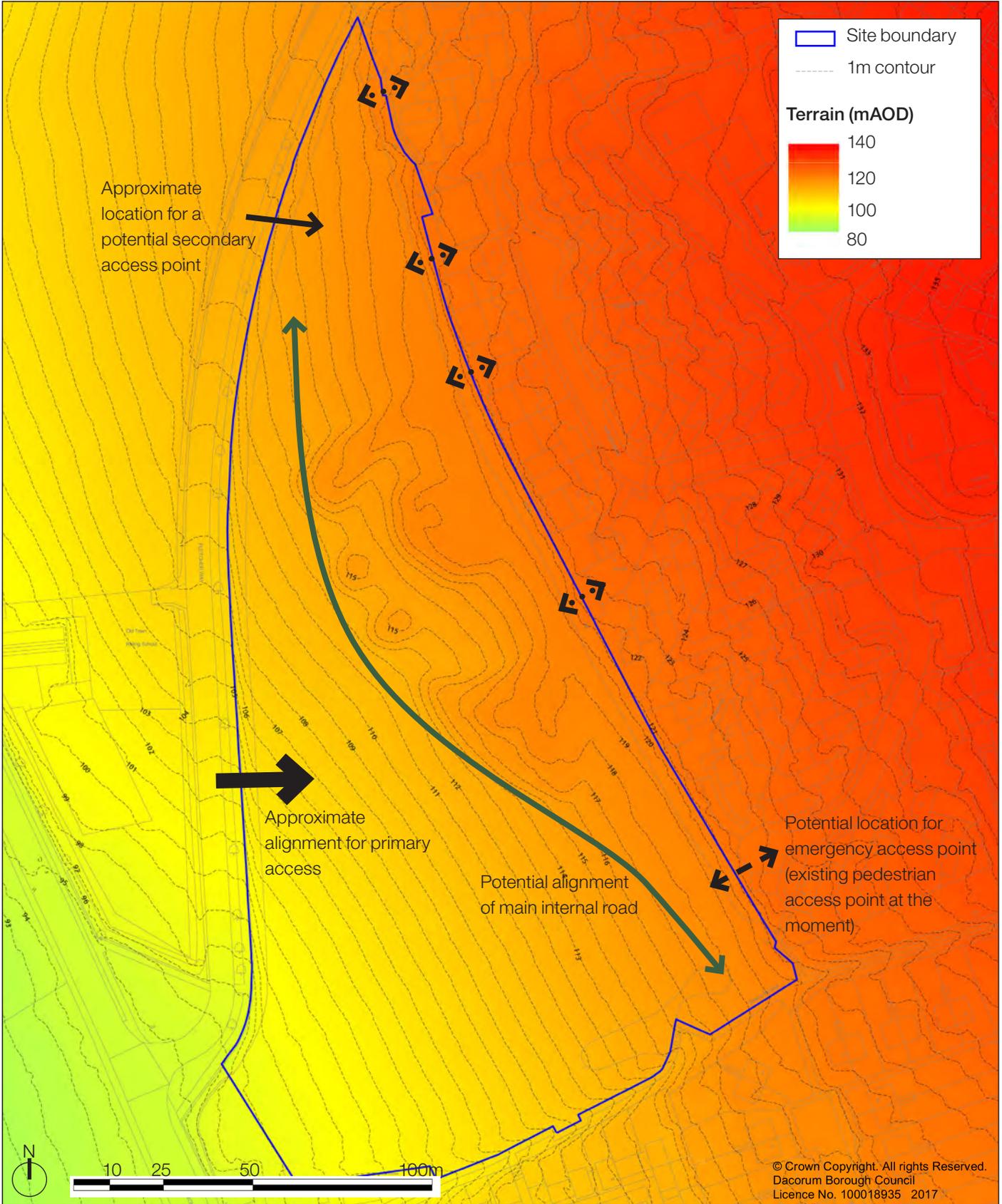


Figure 19: Topography and proposed site access

Existing pedestrian access points

### 3.7 Affordable Housing

40% of the total homes will be affordable. This should comprise 75% rented and 25% shared ownership or other forms of intermediate housing (excluding shared equity housing) <sup>4</sup>. All affordable homes will be provided as a mix of sizes and types (flats and dwellings) to reflect local needs. At present there is an equal need for 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms homes within Dacorum.

Accommodation to provide supported housing and independent living (e.g. for the elderly and people with learning, physical and mental disabilities) may contribute towards the affordable housing element of the proposal either for social/affordable rent or shared ownership.

The Council expects affordable housing to be indistinguishable from market housing in terms of design and to be dispersed across the site. The affordable homes should be designed to the Homes and Communities Agency's design and sustainability standards (<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/design-and-sustainability-standards>) or their equivalent. The Council will work with Registered Providers to ensure, where feasible, a proportion of homes are delivered to meet lifetime homes standards.

The detailed mix of tenure and type of housing will be informed by the latest advice and technical work set out in the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ([www.dacorum.gov.uk/ahspd](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/ahspd)), and the most up-to-date local housing needs information. Early liaison with a Registered Provider and the Council's Strategic Housing team is essential. Judgements about the level, mix and tenure of affordable homes will also have regard to points (a) – (d) in Core Strategy Policy CS19.

<sup>4</sup> Subject to the latest Government guidance on the definition of Affordable Housing.

### 3.8 Planning Application Requirements

In addition to plans and drawings the following supporting studies may be required as part of an outline planning application for the LA2 Old Town site (depending on the validation requirements at the time of submission):

- Neighbourhood Notification Sheet
- Planning Statement
- Built Heritage Assessment
- Sustainable Development Checklist
- Site Waste Management Plan
- Tree Survey/Arboricultural Report
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Residential Travel Plan
- Archaeological Assessment
- Protected Species Survey and Assessment
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey
- Land Contamination Assessment Phase 1 Report
- Lighting Assessment
- Open Space Assessment
- Crime Prevention Measures (to be included within the Design and Access Statement)
- Safer Places Statement
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Planning Obligations – Draft Heads of Terms
- Drainage Strategy
- Flood Risk Assessment

Further advice relating to validation requirements, together with any specific requirements for this site, is available from the Council's Development Management team.

## 4 Development Constraints and Opportunities

The Old Town site presents an opportunity to deliver around 80 homes. However, as stated in the Site Allocations DPD:

*“The net capacity figures specified provide an estimate of expected capacity and should not be treated as maxima. Final dwelling capacities will be tested through the planning application process, where detailed schemes will be expected to demonstrate compliance with specified planning requirements and other relevant policies and guidance.”*

Given the technical studies, it is clear that there are a number of issues that present either constraints or opportunities, or both. There is considerable potential for the site to provide a high quality development that responds to the surrounding context and predominant features of the site to create a strong sense of place.

There are a number of constraints on site which present a varying challenge to development. The existing A rated trees and footpath along the eastern boundary will need to be retained. This can be turned into a more positive feature within a new housing layout with overlooking and easing of some of the more overgrown, lower quality areas of scrub. The large groups of trees within the site could potentially restrict the amount of development possible on the site, however some groups could be retained to form part of the open space.

The site is sloping and as such careful consideration to both the vehicular access and the internal road layout needs to be taken into account. The majority of the site has a slope of 1:10 or greater, this flattens out towards the eastern boundary where the footpath is located.

The site has been checked for utilities easements, there are no high, intermediate or medium pressure gas pipes that run through or close to the site. There are a number of low pressure gas pipes that serve the surrounding area but none that run across the site and as such are unlikely to present a constraint. Likewise there are wastewater sewers that run adjacent to the site but not through it. No overhead cables run over the site. A title plan has been obtained for the site which does not specify any easements for access to water or drainage infrastructure.

The site boundary abuts the Old Town Conservation Area boundary at a small section of the lower south western edge. It is therefore important that new development is of a high quality that complements and enhances the positive characteristics of the Conservation Area.

The site is also adjacent to the area identified as the ‘High Gade Valley’ landscape character area in the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment notes the important characteristic steep slopes to the valley with long views along the valley.

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### Relationship with Existing Area

The master plan needs to achieve integration with the built up area by, for example, pedestrian and cycle links, views across the site and beyond to the countryside, and by the shared use of existing facilities.

At the same time, the residential amenity of existing residents must be mitigated by good separation between existing and proposed dwellings, by landscaped margins to the new development.

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### Sustainability

The development must be brought forward based on a full recognition of the varying facets of sustainable development and minimising carbon emissions. As set out in the NPPF and in the Core Strategy, there are numerous components to sustainable development. In relation to master planning, particular attention should be paid to:

- Minimising the need to travel.
- Minimising pollution in all forms, including emissions and ground and surface water pollution and providing natural solutions to achieve this.
- Minimising energy use through design including considering the orientation of properties at a detailed stage in order to maximise passive solar gain.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in layout and design.
- Using land use planning and design to improve health and well-being, for example, encouraging exercise by easy access to open space, to encourage healthy eating, and ensuring well designed neighbourhoods that reduce crime and the fear of crime.
- Integration of new communities with existing ones, maximising connectivity to shops and Hemel Hempstead Railway Station.



Figure 20: Constraints and opportunities

# 5 Master Plan Requirements

## 5.1 Vision and Development Principles

This master plan document aims to set out a framework in which new high quality development can be achieved that meets the aspirations of the Council and also ensures that the opinions and concerns of existing local residents have been addressed. The main mechanism for achieving this within this document is to set out a vision describing what new development might be like. The vision statement is then further expanded upon through a set of development principles. The development principles are designed to fix certain key things but to retain enough flexibility for things to change in the future.

The following vision statement aims to set the tone for what new development could potentially be like on site.

### Vision Statement

The LA2 site will form a new, attractive part of the Old Town area of Hemel Hempstead. Development will be integrated with the existing residential areas to the east and south through maintaining and improving existing pedestrian links to the site and incorporating routes through the new development. New open spaces will be incorporated on site for use by existing and new residents.

Design of new buildings will positively contribute towards the character of the Old Town conservation area. There will be a mixture of family and smaller homes. The new area will be designed to be safe and secure and an inclusive community.

### Proposal

The development is expected to involve the construction of around 80 homes. However, as stated in the Site Allocations DPD:

*“The net capacity figures specified provide an estimate of expected capacity and should not be treated as maxima. Final dwelling capacities will be tested through the planning application process, where detailed schemes will be expected to demonstrate compliance with specified planning requirements and other relevant policies and guidance.”*

The development will also secure 40% of the units as affordable housing (through a Section 106 agreement) and make other contributions towards on and off-site infrastructure as required.

## Development Principles

The following development principles have been established for this site, which reflect and add to those set out in Policy LA2 of the Site Allocations DPD. These must be followed when drawing up the detailed planning application for this site. They will also be used by the Council as a basis upon which to assess this application.

### Homes

- Around 80 new homes should be provided on site.
- Provide a mix of house types, with some flats and houses, including 40% affordable homes.

### Design (design principles for the site are further expanded in the following section)

- Secure a high quality layout and design that respects the character of the Old Town Conservation Area and the setting of its listed buildings, retains views of St Mary's Church spire and takes account of the steeply sloping nature of the site.
- Limit housing to two storeys, except where two and a half storey housing would create interest and focal points in the street scene.
- Arrange new housing to achieve natural surveillance and provide active and attractive frontages to the main area of open space and Fletcher Way.
- The built form should act as a transition between the Old Town and New Town.
- Provide adequate provision for refuse bins and bicycles within residential properties.

### Streets and Spaces

- Ensure that streets and spaces are designed to add positively to the character of the existing area.

- Avoid over-dominance of parked vehicles in the street scene.

### Access

- Take the primary road access (and the secondary access if provided) from Fletcher Way.
- Improve the east-west and north-south public footpaths.
- Ensure that pedestrian access to the existing residential areas is maintained and enhanced to encourage the use of existing transport facilities.

### Utilities and Infrastructure

- The site should link into existing utilities networks.
- Establish the capacity of the existing network and provide extra capacity where needed to serve the development.
- Co-ordinate the design of land drainage with the design for streets and open spaces.

### Landscape and Open Space

- Respect the landscape setting and character of the site.
- Provide around 1 hectare of open space, located mainly on the higher ground adjacent to The Bounce and Townsend.
- Retain the existing important trees at the top of the hill adjacent to The Bounce and Townsend and as many other trees as possible.

### Views and Surrounding Countryside

- Soften views of the development from across the valley and open countryside by the use of carefully designed planting.
- Views of the site from the surrounding areas and open countryside must be taken into consideration.



Figure 21: Indicative Spatial Layout Plan showing one way in which the master plan could be delivered



Figure 22: 3D view of key space



Figure 23: The Prince's Natural House at the BRE campus is a good example of the massing and proportions that would be appropriate for the Old Town site

## 5.2 Design Principles and Guidance

The site presents an opportunity to enhance the gateway to the Old Town and the historic High Street. Development on the site should reflect key elements of the Old Town's character without unnecessary pastiche.

Key characteristics of the Old Town Conservation Area are (adapted from the Old Town Character Appraisal and Management Proposals (January 2014):

- The compact nature and fine grain of the High Street;
- Regular, long and narrow plots;
- The openness of the Gadebridge Park setting to the west;
- The majority of buildings being consistently of two and half to three storeys; buildings tend to be of a grander scale moving towards St Mary's Church and fall away towards the north;
- A variation in the facades of buildings due to remodelling and rebuilding over time. The layering of these changes provides some of the most interesting and diverse architectural features seen in the Conservation Area; and
- A change in the nature of the townscape moving north along the High Street where the carriageway widens and development to the west side of the street drops below street level.

The following design principles should form the starting point in developing a detailed proposal for the site that creates

an appropriate transition into and from the Old Town. In addition to these principles the design and layout of the new development would be expected to meet latest best practice guidance.

Development will be encouraged to comply with the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. For guidance on principles of sustainability refer to Policies CS28, CS29, CS30 and CS31, and Table 10 of the Core Strategy and the Sustainable Development Advice Note 2016 requirements<sup>5</sup>, relating to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, energy and water efficiency. Other factors of environmental sustainability should comply with Building Regulations. Developers will be expected to complete a Sustainable Development Checklist. Further advice is available in Hertfordshire's Building Futures Design Guide<sup>6</sup>.

The development will follow best practice in urban design and the principles set out in Building for Life 12<sup>7</sup>. The principles should be demonstrated as part of any planning application submission.

The development should take account of 'Building Futures' (<http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures/>). Building Futures is a Hertfordshire based guide, which focuses on making development in Hertfordshire more sustainable and of a higher quality in design terms. It is an evolving web-based guide designed to provide practical, user-friendly and up-to-date guidance.

### Residential Character Across the Site

The Old Town site acts as a gateway to the Old Town Conservation Area and High Street but also provides an opportunity to address the existing New Town residential areas. As such there is potential for the site to deliver a variety of residential characters to reflect the site's transitional nature. These should be carefully considered and the design of all buildings should also complement each other and work together across the site.

The approach to the Old Town is a key location where the massing and proportionality of the buildings will be important. In this location new buildings must complement the form, massing and proportionality of the traditional buildings of the Old Town. The precedent of the Prince's Natural House which is showcased at the Building Research Establishment's campus in Watford is felt to demonstrate well the type of qualities the Council would expect of new homes in this location.

As you move through the site towards the existing New Town the character of the new homes can change to reflect

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/sustainable-development>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures>.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/knowledge-resources/guide/building-life-12>.

the more modern style of the houses in the existing area. These homes should also be designed to be of a high quality design and materiality. The transition between the different character areas within the site should be considered carefully and all of the architectural styles on the site should complement one another.

There are some parts of the site where it is felt that taller built elements of up to two and a half storeys would be appropriate and add positively to the street scene and character of the site. Generally these locations are at key junctions within the site and at gateway spaces such as the main access point. Taller buildings would need to demonstrate that no harm would be caused to the setting of designated heritage assets in the Old Town. As a guide, it is expected that eaves heights of the new housing will be about 5 metres above ground level, whilst ridge heights will be around 8 metres for two storey and 9 metres for two and a half storey homes.



Figure 24: Approach to character and taller built elements

- Traditional character
- Transitional area between traditional and modern character
- Modern character
- Suitable location for a taller built element

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## Key Spaces in the Master Plan

Within the master plan there are a number of spaces that have an important role in creating a positive townscape and character. Principally these are:

- The treatment to Fletcher Way - principal frontage;
- The streets within the site:
  - Secondary frontage streets
  - Mews streets
- The new open spaces that will be created as part of the development.

In addition there are a number of elements to the housing layout that will be common to all parts of the site and their sensitive and good quality design will be key to making the Old Town site a successful place. These are:

- Sensitively incorporating parking;
- Working with the topography of the site;
- Designing flattened development; and
- Servicing and refuse.

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## Treatment of Fletcher Way - Principal Frontage

The approach to development adjacent to Fletcher Way is a key element of the design of the site. It also plays a key role in the approach into Hemel Hempstead and the Old Town that gives the potential to provide a gateway space into the existing built up area. Development in this location should be tight to the boundary with Fletcher Way.

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## Streets

Within the site there is the opportunity to create character through different treatments of streets and open spaces. Other than the principal frontage onto Fletcher Way there are two potential types of street:

**Secondary Frontages:** These are areas where development overlooks incidental open spaces, they play an important role in the character of these spaces. These streets could have a reasonably formal appearance with defined pavements and carefully planned or grouped buildings e.g. villas, semi-detached dwellings or short terraces. Dwellings should have green front garden spaces to allow for areas of planting and to 'green' the streets. Where the road is adjacent to an open space some on street parking would be appropriate where it is designed in and with sufficient landscaping to mitigate its impact.

**Mews Streets:** To reflect the compact and fine grain nature of the conservation area a mews street typology is appropriate for this location. Mews streets have a more



Figure 25: Positioning new homes so that they overlook open spaces and key pedestrian routes helps to make them feel more safe and secure



Figure 26: Incorporating existing planting and mature trees into new spaces helps them to feel more established



Figure 27: Carefully position routes through open spaces so that they follow logical desire lines and are overlooked by development

informal feel often with a different road treatment such as block paving. Dwellings on these streets should be in short terraces that are of a consistent width and height and tight in nature to give the street a compact definition. Mews streets can be narrower than the main street and front boundary treatments should be shorter (less than 1m) or to the back of footway and paved or with planters.

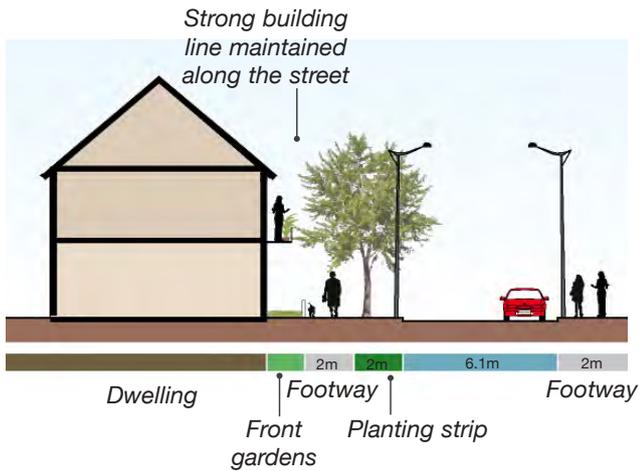


Figure 28: Indicative section of a principal frontage

Key features of Principal Streets:

- Buildings have a more formal appearance;
- Boundary treatments to houses are more formal in nature;
- Some on-street parking provided; and
- Existing trees and any new tree planting reduce impact of parking.

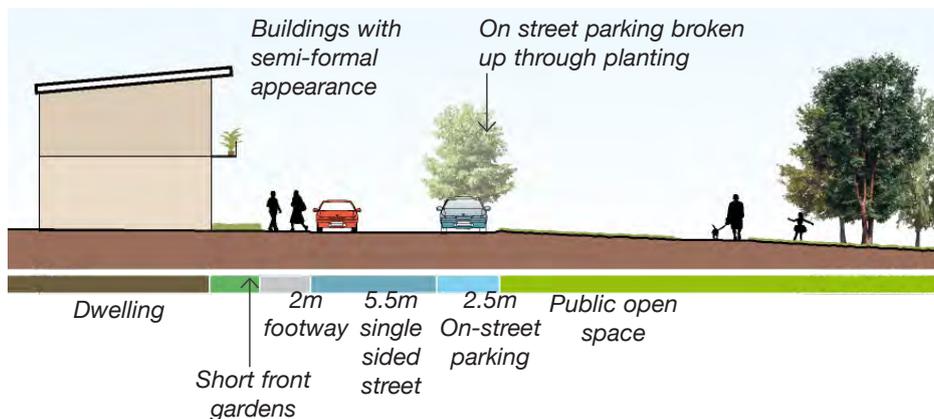


Figure 29: Indicative section of a street next to open space

Key features of Secondary Streets overlooking open spaces:

- Target maximum speed 10mph;
- Buildings with semi-formal appearance overlooking adjacent open space;
- Some on-street parking provided;
- Street trees and planting reduce impact of parking and bring housing together with well framed views; and
- Street provides direct vehicular and pedestrian frontage to properties.

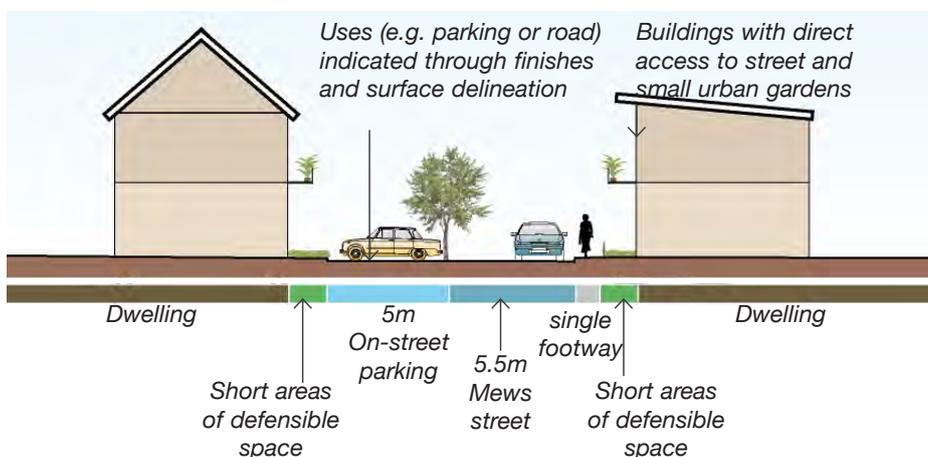


Figure 30: Indicative section of mews street

Key features of Mews streets:

- Target maximum speed 10mph;
- Pedestrian priority;
- Single continuous surface, with delineations for footway and parking indicated through finishes;
- Parking provided within the street, and broken up through the use of street planting; and
- Street provides direct vehicular and pedestrian frontage to properties.

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## Open Spaces

Where there are smaller, incidental open spaces within the site these should be overlooked by development on at least one side. Where appropriate pedestrian routes should be incorporated into the landscape scheme and follow logical desire lines. Where possible existing high quality landscape features, such as the more mature trees on site should be retained as part of any landscape scheme. Trees can be used to create distinctiveness within an area and where possible, appropriate additional planting should be incorporated in a planned way that supports the design intent of the proposal.

If planting is proposed to break up parking areas in areas to be offered for adoption by the highway authority, it should follow the guidance given in 'Roads in Hertfordshire' (see section 3.5 above) and the County Council's 'Highway Tree Strategy and Guidance Document' (<http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/t/treestrat>).

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## Working with the Topography

The Old Town site sits across a consistently sloping site and is clearly visible from existing neighbourhoods across the Gade Valley. To address this, detailed designs will:

- Relate scale and massing of built form to the contours, surrounding developments and open spaces (e.g. through consistent stepping within grouped elevations) to achieve an attractive roofscape;
- Consider the possibility of some split-level housing;
- Provide roads in accordance with Hertfordshire County Highways guidance;
- Provide pedestrian and cycle routes to meet the gradient requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) wherever possible;

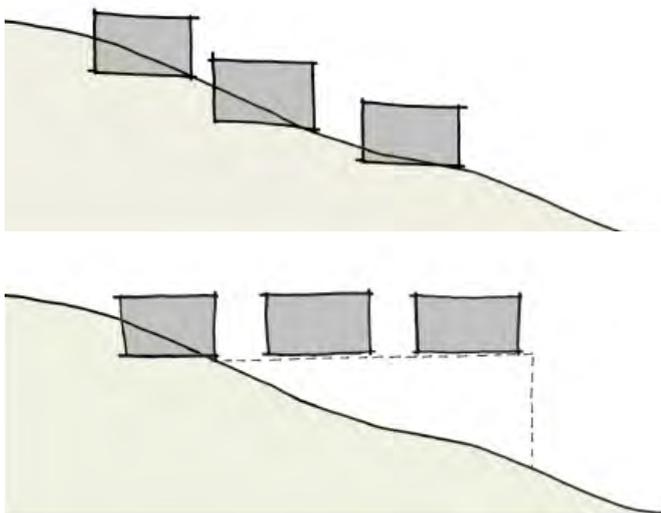


Figure 31: Buildings should step down with the topography to avoid unnecessary retaining wall and awkward access arrangements

- Relate internal floor levels of homes to the external ground level; and
- Deal carefully with changes in level in the public realm, including the banking at the edges of the site and the space in between.



Figure 32: The buildings in this example step down with the topography of the site and the open space has been designed to incorporate existing levels and features



Figure 33: The existing homes on the nearby Chapel Street step down the steep hill and provide level access for each dwelling. Front gardens are terraced with the levels of the road



Figure 34: The buildings at Greenhithe step down a steep slope creating an interesting pattern of roofs, whilst also allowing level access to new homes

## Level Changes in the Public Realm

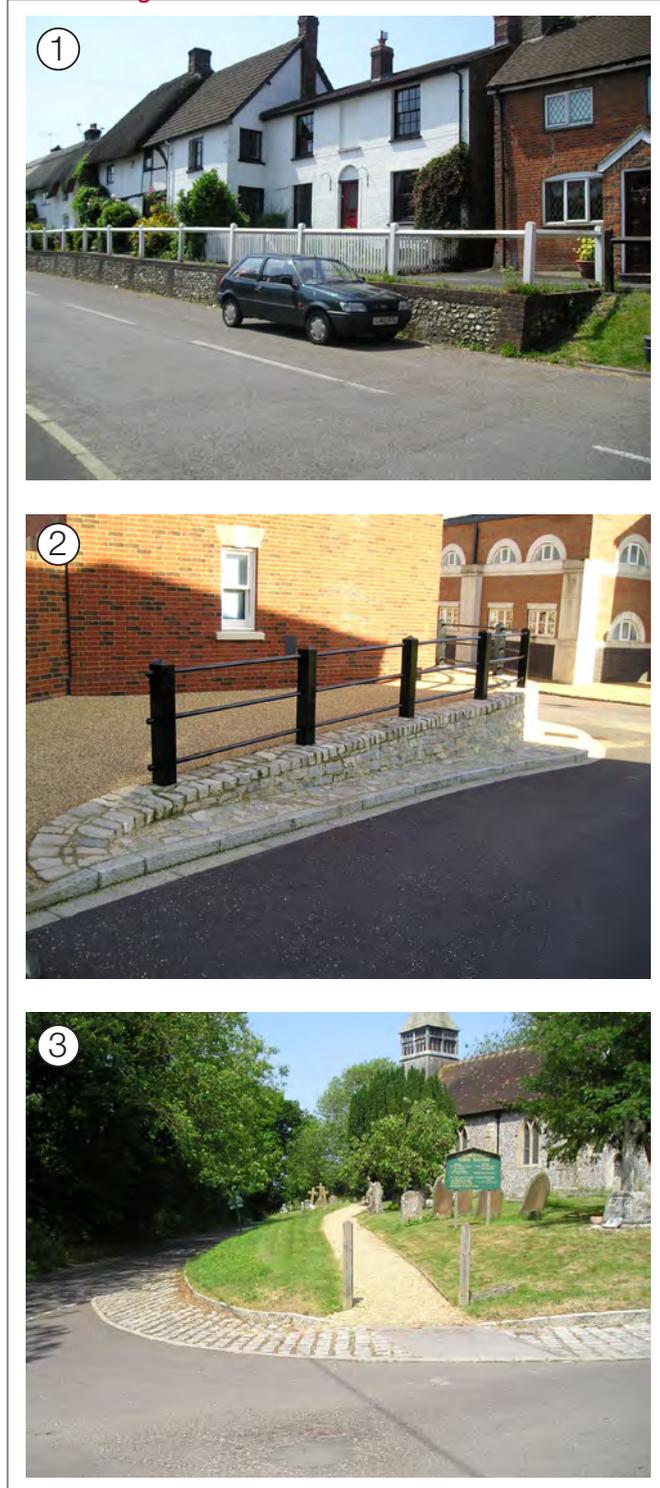


Figure 35: In the public realm changes in level can be dealt with sensitively in a number of ways. In example 1 the change in level presents an opportunity to provide a pedestrian route that is separated from vehicular routes. Example 2 shows one way in which the public realm can help to turn a corner and provide interest in the street scene. In example 3 a change in materials can help to delineate the public realm and green verges soften the steepness of the site

## Designing Flatted Development

Some flatted development is appropriate for the Old Town site however it needs to be designed sensitively and to ensure that it is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and in particular the Old Town Conservation Area.

The mass and form of the building should be carefully considered to reduce the bulk and impact of the building. Considered articulation of the facade can help to break down the bulk of the building. Blocks of flats should be designed so as to be in keeping with the houses that surround them.

The space around flats should be carefully considered and some external space for residents should be provided.



Figure 36: The articulation of the elevation of these flats help to break down its overall massing and is also in keeping with the surrounding housing development



Figure 37: Although more modern in style than other examples the articulation of this facade provides opportunities for balconies with privacy from overlooking

## Designing in Bins and Servicing at an Early Stage

Thinking carefully about the design of refuse storage and areas for metering equipment and other 'forgotten' elements such as satellite dishes from the early stages of the detailed design process can make a large impact on the final look and feel of a place.

Bin stores and recycling facilities should be designed to screen bins from public view, whilst being easily accessible for residents. The materials used for walls and fences should relate to the materials used for the remainder of the building. Boundaries to public areas, such as streets, should be robust, for instance brick walls or railings, or other appropriate boundary treatments, while avoiding the use of less robust solutions such as close boarded timber.

Carefully position flues and ventilation ducts, ensuring they are as unobtrusive as possible. Use good quality grilles that fit in with the approach to materials for the building as a whole.

Ensure that gutters and pipes fit into the overall design approach to the building and aim to minimise their visual impact.

## Incorporating Space for Bicycle Storage

In order to encourage more residents to cycle as an alternative and more sustainable form of transport, it is important that adequate cycle storage is provided.

Cycle storage should be provided in a location that allows easy and direct access to a public highway. Cycle parking can either be provided within a dwelling or in a communal area for flatted buildings.

It is generally considered that in order to be able to access bicycles independently the following minimum space is required:

- 1 cycle: 2 m long × 0.75 m wide
- 2 cycles: 2 m long × 1.5 m wide
- 4 cycles: 2 m long × 2.5 m wide

If cycle parking is provided within a dwelling (for example in a hallway) that space must be wide enough to accommodate both the cycle parking and still function as the space is intended. If cycle parking is provided within a domestic garage adequate space must be provided to park a car and also store bicycles.

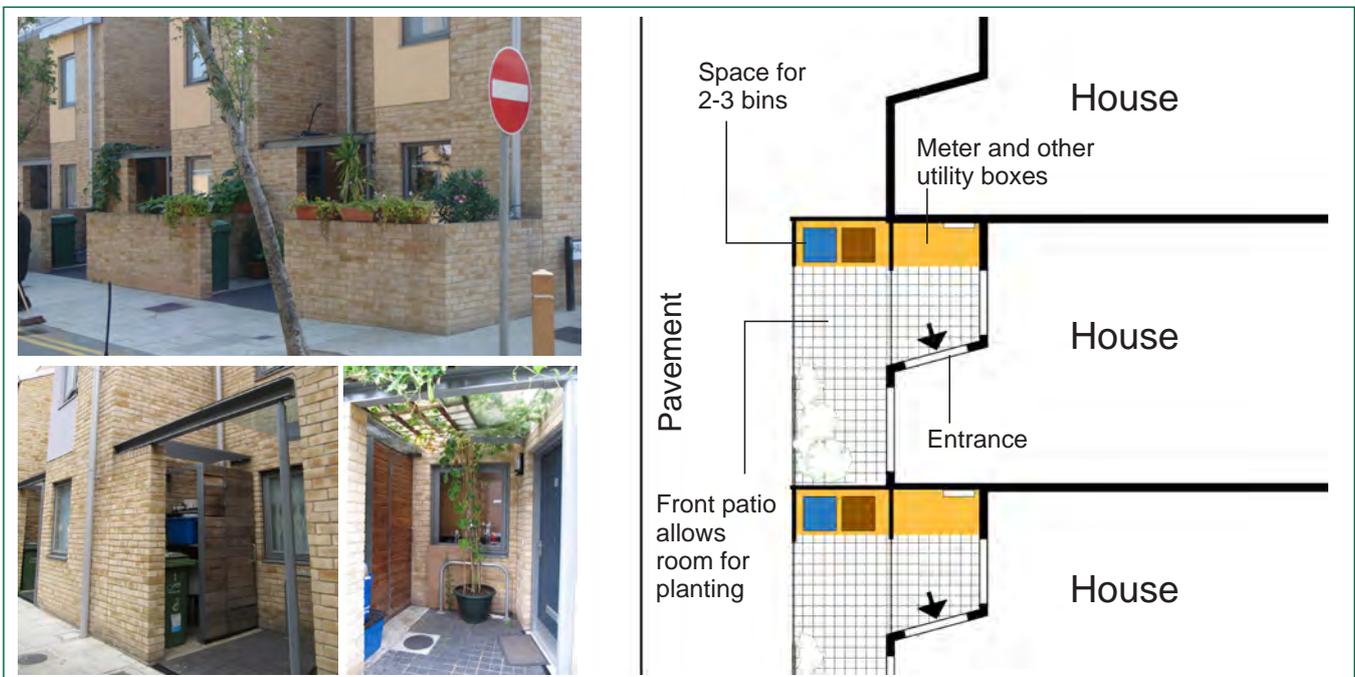


Figure 38: Early consideration of detailed elements such as bin stores and meter boxes influences the quality of the development. Example of well integrated bin store and storage space in an urban development where it relates well to the character of the local area

## Sensitively Incorporating Parking

The design approach for car parking should be to avoid a single parking solution and to vary the ways that parking is provided and related to dwellings. Acceptable forms of car parking include:

- On street parallel parking adjacent to the carriageway, particularly for visitors. Ideally this should be created by a simple widening of the road rather than as formal marked bays.
- Garage parking, ideally with an additional space in front, between dwellings. Garage parking should be designed to ensure that it does not obstruct the footway;
- In-curtilage parking accessed from the front of the property. This form of parking should be behind the building line in most instances to minimise the visual impact of parking in the street scene. Tandem parking is preferred to side by side as it minimises the visual impact on the street;
- Covered spaces beneath a flat over a garage with its own ground level front door ideally located within public courtyards and quieter streets.



Figure 40: An example of well designed parking court



Figure 41: Well-designed on street parking can make a positive contribution to the street scene

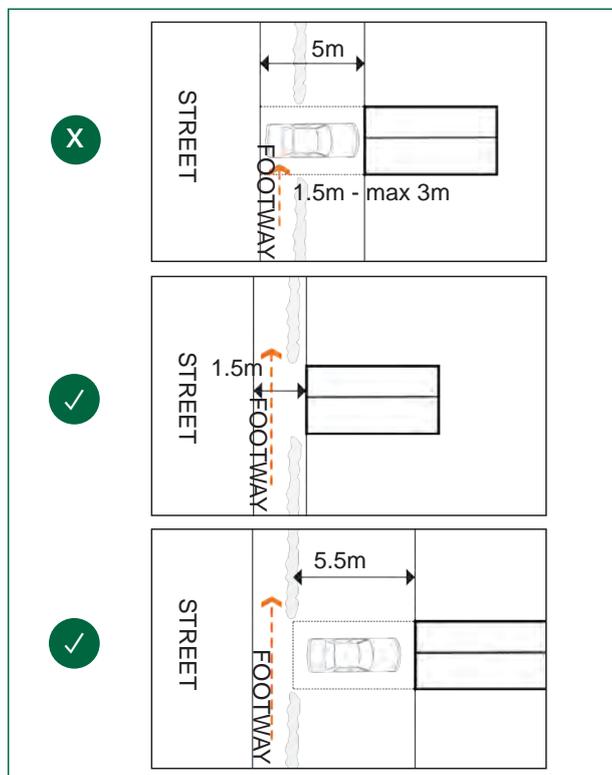


Figure 39: It is important to position garages so that cars do not park across the footway

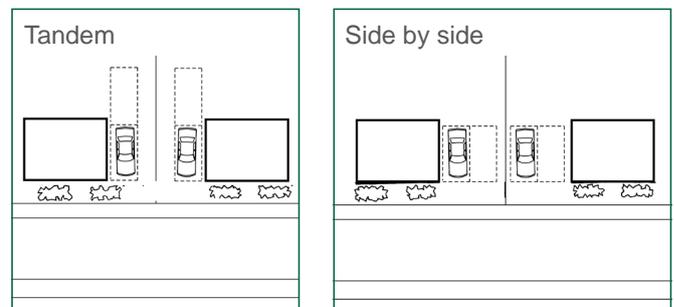


Figure 42: Parking should be set behind the building line where possible so that it doesn't dominate the street scene

# 6 Master Plan

## 6.1 Preferred Approach

The approach to development in this master plan document focuses around maintaining the large groups of existing trees and incorporating them into an open space. This would help to provide a buffer between the new development and existing built up area and also enables a large area of open space to be retained to compensate for new development.

In this approach the primary frontages are turned to face onto the open space with the primary road also running alongside.

This framework plan delivers the following approximate areas:

Site area (red line)	2.8ha
Open space	1.1ha
Developed area (houses, gardens, roads and parking)	1.7ha

The layout is capable of achieving around 80 units depending on the mix of flats to houses. A notional mix for capacity purposes is outlined in the table below:

	Smaller units (1 / 2 beds)	Larger units (3 / 4 beds)	Total
Flats	50	/	50
Houses	13	17	30
<b>Total</b>	63	17	<b>80</b>

If a higher proportion of larger units is required this would reduce the capacity of the site. The capacity could be maintained if housing were to be built on some of the proposed open space area.

Parking needs to be sensitively incorporated into the layout for the site and must be provided to meet the current parking standards. The parking standards for different size dwellings are as follows:

Dwelling size	Car parking standard
1 bedroom dwelling	1.25 spaces
2 bedroom dwelling	1.5 spaces
3 bedroom dwelling	2.25 spaces
4 bedroom dwelling	3 spaces

# Framework Diagram

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Figure 43: Master Plan framework

# 7 Delivery

This master plan will be used as a framework to help guide future development on the site. It elaborates on the requirements set out in the Site Allocations DPD.

The site has been subject to an initial viability assessment which indicates that the proposals are deliverable and viable for the quantum of development the site will be allocated for, including the necessary affordable housing provision and likely section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

The whole site is owned by Dacorum Borough Council.

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## Phasing

In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS3: Managing Selected Development Sites and Site Allocations Policy LA2: Old Town, the site is scheduled to come forward for development in the second half of the Core Strategy period i.e. after 2021. The site is relatively small in comparison to other local allocations and as such will most likely be developed in one phase.

The Council will require that when a planning application is brought forward for the allocation it demonstrates broad compliance with this master plan and a comprehensive approach to the development of the allocation, including the nature, timing and delivery of the scheme and associated works and contributions.

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## Planning Obligations

There are no known or identified abnormal development costs which will undermine the ability of this site to pay appropriate contributions towards infrastructure either through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 or a combination of both, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS35: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions. The cost of providing a new road junction on Fletcher Way has been included in the viability assessment of the site carried out to inform the development of CIL.

The Council has identified the following infrastructure requirements which may need to be secured via a Section 106 agreement or provided from the receipt of a CIL payment:

- Affordable housing - provision will be in accordance with section 3.7 above and the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. The individual composition of the tenure will be determined at the time of the application.

- Junction arrangements from the site onto Fletcher Way – this is expected to be in the form of a priority junction. Precise configuration to be determined following advice from the Highway Authority at the planning application stage.
- Other local junction improvements – as advised by the Highway Authority.
- Contributions towards sustainable transport – as advised by the Passenger Transport Unit at the County Council.
- Education contributions - for local primary school provision and other educational needs.
- Healthcare contributions – for local services as advised by Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Social and Community Facilities – for facilities where a need is identified through the Council's infrastructure evidence base.

The need to provide the infrastructure requirements listed above will be tested against Regulations 122 and 123 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) throughout the application process and having regard to the viability of delivering the site.

The County Council's requirements (access, education and social and community facilities) will be based on the cost of providing infrastructure in accordance with the formula set out within their document 'Planning Obligations Guidance - Toolkit for Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire County Council's requirements)' unless site specific costs are provided<sup>5</sup>.

It should also be noted that early liaison is required with:

- Thames Water, to develop a Drainage Strategy to identify any infrastructure upgrades required in order to ensure sufficient sewerage and sewage treatment capacity is available to support the timely delivery of the site.
- the local planning authority to ensure appropriate sustainable drainage is designed into the scheme at an early stage (see section 3.4).

The detailed scope and level of requirements will be determined at the planning application stage and in accordance with policies in operation at that time.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hertsdirect.org/yourcouncil/hcc/resandperf/hertsprop/planningobs/> or any replacement document.

## 8 Supporting Documents

The following background documents have helped with the preparation of the master plan:

- Dacorum Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy: Viability Study, DBC (July 2013)
- Dacorum Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy: Strategic Sites Testing, BNP Paribas (October 2013)
- Dacorum Borough Council Site Allocations DPD: Update to Development Viability Testing for Local Allocations (July 2016)
- Dacorum Borough Council Affordable Housing SPD (September 2013)
- Desk Based Archaeological Assessment for LA2, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) (July 2013)
- Trial Trench Report for LA2 (ASC) (December 2013)
- Geophysical Survey Report for Dacorum Area, Stratascan (June 2013)
- Hemel Hempstead Old Town Conservation Appraisal & Management Proposals, DBC (January 2014)
- Hertfordshire's Ecological Networks: A report on the current situation and priorities for restoration, Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (2013)
- Hemel Hempstead Transport Model Update (July 2015)

The archaeological reports can be viewed on the LA2 section of the Council's website:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/site-allocations/localallocations/la2-old-town-hemel-hempstead>

The links to some of the other documents are given below:

[http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/community-infrastructure-levy-\(cil\)/setting-the-cil-charge](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/community-infrastructure-levy-(cil)/setting-the-cil-charge)

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/hemel-hempstead-conservation-area-report.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

<http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/Mapping%20project%20report%20-%20Final.pdf>



# Appendix 1: Glossary

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
	Affordable Housing	<p>Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.</p> <p>Affordable housing does not include low cost market housing.</p>
	Affordable rented housing	Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
<b>AONB</b>	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a precious landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them, created by the legislation of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. The Chilterns AONB is one of 38 AONBs in England and Wales.
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy	A new charge which local authorities in England and Wales will be empowered, but not required, to charge on most types of new development in their area. CIL charges will be based on simple formulae which relate the size of the charge to the size and character of the development paying it.
<b>CSH</b>	Code for Sustainable Homes	The Code for Sustainable Homes is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. It is an environmental assessment method for rating and certifying the performance of new homes, and it is possible to secure a CSH rating of between zero and six, with six being the most sustainable.
	Conservation Area	An area designated by the Borough Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the felling of trees.
<b>CS</b>	Core Strategy	<p>A Development Plan Document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives, and containing both strategic policies and generic policies which will apply to all development proposals in the local authority area as a whole.</p> <p>The Core Strategy for Dacorum was formally adopted by the Council in September 2013.</p>
	Curtilage	The area of land, usually enclosed, immediately surrounding a home.
<b>DAS</b>	Design and Access Statement	<p>A report accompanying and supporting a planning application. Required for many types of planning application – both full and outline – but there are some exemptions. They are not required for householder applications.</p> <p>Design and access statements are documents that explain the design thinking behind a planning application.</p>
<b>DBC</b>	Dacorum Borough Council	The Local Authority for the Old Town site.

<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document	A type of Local Development Document, which carries significant weight in the development control process. Development Plan Documents are spatial planning documents which are subject to independent examination.
	Development Plan	A plan comprising the Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Development Framework. This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
	Dwelling mix	The mix of different types of homes provided on a site. May typically include a range of types from, say, 2 bedroom houses up to larger 4 and 5 bedroom houses.
	Examination	An review of planning policy documents carried out in public by an Independent Examiner.
	Flood plain / Flood risk zone	Areas identified by the Environment Agency, marking areas as high (zone 3), low to medium (zone 2), or little or no risk (zone 1).
	Green Infrastructure	The network of accessible, multi-functional green and open spaces.
	Gross density	The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area includes the entire site area.
<b>HCC</b>	Hertfordshire County Council	
	Infrastructure	All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals and so on.
	Listed buildings	Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance are the subject of special legislation. Listed building consent is required before any works are carried out on a listed building.
<b>LDD</b>	Local Development Document	An individual component or document of the Local Development Framework.
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework	The portfolio of Local Development Documents
	Market housing	Housing for sale or for rent where prices are set in the open market.
	Mixed-use	Developments where more than one use is constructed. Uses may be mixed within the same building (e.g. offices above shops) or may be mixed across the site (e.g. houses next to shops and community facilities)
	Master Plan	The master plan document sets more detailed principals for the character and layout of the Old Town site. It is intended to shape and guide future planning applications on the site.
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework	The National Planning Policy Framework was published by the government in March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
	Net density	The number of dwellings per hectare when the calculation of the site area excludes features such as open spaces for the benefit of the wider community, significant landscape buffers and major access roads.
	Public Open Space	Open space that is open to the public and is normally owned and managed by a public organisation.

<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord	Independent housing organisations registered with the Tenant Services Authority under the Housing Act 1996.
	Saved policy	Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy has replaced many of the policies in the previous Local Plan. However, some of the more detailed policies in the old Local Plan are not incorporated within the Core Strategy. In common with other local planning authorities DBC has 'saved' these policies so that they continue to apply until they are replaced by newer, more up to date policies.
	Social Rented Housing	Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.
	Use Classes	The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. For example, A1 is shops and B2 is general industrial.



