

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

HILLCREST SCHOOL, ST JOHNS ROAD, EXMOUTH **Interim Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Emerging** **East Devon Local Plan**



STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

The Hillcrest School Development Brief was adopted as interim supplementary planning guidance to the emerging Local Plan by East Devon District Council, following public consultation, on 2 August 2005. As such it supports the policies of the Revised Deposit Version of the East Devon Local Plan 2003 and Adopted Devon Structure Plan 2004, setting out more detailed guidance on the way in which the policies in the plan will be applied.

The Draft Development Brief was the subject of a 6-week consultation exercise between 22 April 2004 and 3 June 2005. Letters were sent to all relevant statutory parties, including Exmouth Town Council, Exmouth District Councillors, Devon County Council, the Environment Agency and English Heritage. Two site notices were posted in prominent locations to the north and south of the site, a press release was issued and letters were sent to 28 adjoining landowners/residents and relevant representatives from the Local Plan database. The Draft Brief was made available on the Council website and public copies were supplied to the town library and town hall.

From the consultation exercise the Council received 24 responses (which are summarised below), 12 of which were from local residents. The majority of statutory body responses to the Brief were positive, particularly in relation to the retention and redevelopment of the Listed Building, the provision of cycleways/footpaths to extend the Valley Parks network and the provision of the southern section of the site as open space. The majority of residents were in objection to the residential development of the site and the continued over-development of Exmouth.

Main Amendments made to the Brief:

The following issues were raised and it was felt that amendments to the Brief were necessary and appropriate:

1. Nature Conservation - English Nature and the Environment Agency identified that the Brief did not cover nature conservation and protected species and this was addressed through reference in the Brief to the relevant Local Plan Policies and a requirement to undertake an ecological survey.
2. Environmental Matters - The Environment Agency referred to flooding, foul water, pollution and sustainable construction and the Brief was expanded to incorporate these recommendations. A number of residents also raised concerns over potential flooding and the Brief now recommends that a Flood Risk Assessment be undertaken which should address these concerns.
3. Listed Building Issues - The concerns of English Heritage regarding the unauthorised UVPC windows in Hillcrest School were addressed through a stronger rewording of this part of the Brief.
4. Footpath Link to Duke of Cornwall Close - This has had to be reassessed as the strip of land over which the proposed footpath would have crossed is in private ownership and the Brief was amended to show an alternative footpath connection to Dinan Way over land in District Council ownership. A footpath link to Duke of Cornwall Close is still preferred and the map shows a potential footpath link in this location but this will be dependent on negotiations with the landowners.

5. Humphries Park Estate - Several residents of this estate commented that although the development would have the greatest impact on Humphries Park, it had not been mentioned in the Brief. The revised Brief now refers to all residential development around the site and emphasises the need to consider the impact of any new development on these existing residential properties. This will also address concerns that the proposed 2 and 3 storey elements will result in a loss of privacy.

Other Issues Raised

The following issues were also raised but it was felt that these did not require amendments to the Brief:

1. St John's Road - A number of resident's objections concerned the impact of the development on St John's Road in terms of traffic and parking for the school. County highways were consulted prior to the production of the draft Brief and their requirements were incorporated into the original draft version. Highways did not object to the proposals contained in the Brief and it is not considered appropriate for the District Council to specify any further measures or alter the proposal on highway grounds.
2. Bassetts Farm Primary School - Representations were made raising concerns over the land to be retained for use by the school and its future capacity. These comments were copied to Devon County Council who confirmed that the area of land identified for use by the school was suitable and that the school did not require further capacity. As these are matters for the County Council, which can reserve whatever land at the Hillcrest School site they feel is required for the future use of Bassetts Farm School, it is not considered appropriate for the District Council to offer an alternative scheme. A possible land swap was also suggested involving part of the EDDC owned playing fields at St Johns Road but due to the size of the respective sites a land swap would reduce the options for future sports provision and was not considered to be appropriate.
3. Density and Affordable Housing - A number of residents and the Town Council raised concerns/objections to the provision of high-density affordable housing on the site. It is considered that this approach complies with National Policy and represents the most suitable and realistic use for this site and it is not considered appropriate to alter the guidance. In relation to the impact of this type of development on the Listed Building, the Brief is clear in what needs to be considered and allows Development Control officers sufficient scope to resist future proposals which would harm the setting and character of the Listed Building.

Summary of Representations in Respect of Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Summary of Statutory Bodies/Parish Council/Ward Members Responses

Body	Comments
South West Water	No objections or constraints Site will not drain into St Johns Road sewerage system - drain to a 225mm sewer which has sufficient capacity
Sport England	Pitch on site not playing pitch as defined S11817 – Sport England not statutory consultee EDDC may like review brief ref. playing pitch strategy and seek financial contribution to improve pitches
English	No mention made of nature conservation issues

Nature	<p>Large old building set in wooded surrounds with areas of grassland and scrub High potential to support range wildlife including protected species (bats, badgers, reptiles, birds) Brief should be subject to a ecological investigation – without this it is impossible to consider planning matters</p>
Exmouth Town Council	<p>Welcomes need to conserve Listed Building The residential development of the area ,while consistent with affordable housing policy, continues the development of Exmouth without the provision of supporting facilities (facilities for young people, lack of land for economic development) Some of the land marked for development should be left open – allows for growth of Bassetts Farm School and for open space All other aspects welcome</p>
English Heritage	<p>Brief protects historic building most adequately Reservation over requirement to replace illicitly introduced UPVC windows – unless point is emphasised it may not be adequately addressed by prospective purchasers More appropriate if County Council carried out work themselves prior to sale – should rectify damage they have done to the building</p>
GOSW	No comments
East Devon Primary Care Trust	<p>Insufficient information provided to evaluate some of the statements – size of site being proposed for development and play areas for existing residents Plan appears 1.5 hectares = 50 – 70 dwellings = 150 new residents Most concerned over comment that there is no need to retain or replace current playing pitch – in residential area it is essential for sufficient open space to enable ball/team games Older children require space for activity as well as younger children Essential to promote physical activity and reduce obesity – both top local and national level priorities</p>
Ward Member (Withycombe Raleigh)	<p>House of great historical value to town – welcome proposal to conserve listed building Removal and redevelopment of later extension must respect and enhance appearance of listed building Main concern – land to north of main building outlined as Potential Development Area – should be set aside to allow for potential growth at Bassetts Farm School and as open space Need to consider long term – provision of community infrastructure – ref. to Local Plan page 200 para. 13.27</p>
Bassetts Farm Primary School	<p>Welcome extension of Valley Parks footpath and cycleways network Agree with reconstruction of boundary wall and provision of footpath Value securing legal agreement for contribution towards primary education but school already over capacity – need new build to extend school space not small amount of money Concern with area of DCC retained land – need considerable work to make this a usable sports area - not adjacent to school land so supervision of children an issue-land to north of site of greater benefit – If land to north retained for amenity use and laid out as football pitches it would have potential for joint community facility Possible land swap negotiated – ref. St Johns Playing Field site Concern that if insufficient Equipped Area of Play provided children will attempt to access play facilities in the school causing inappropriate use and vandalism</p>
Environment Agency	<p>Two watercourses within site – associated flood risks Flood Risk Assessment recommended to cover: areas that are considered to be a functional flood plain on the site, any areas at risk of flooding, and an adequate means of surface water disposal in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage from a Conservation perspective brief addresses most of our concerns No reference to protected species – bats likely to be using roof of Hillcrest School and trees – full bat survey should be undertaken before any work commences Landscaping – recommended encouragement given to ensuring parkland history of site is mimicked Foul drainage – important kept separate from clean surface and roof connected to public sewerage system – need to consult Water Company at early stage –</p>

	<p>availability, location, adequacy of existing public sewerage and sewerage treatment facilities</p> <p>Expand brief to include need for development of site carried out such way that pollution is avoided – specific measures: construction vehicles not cross watercourses, pumps sited well away from watercourses and surrounded absorbent material, discharge silty/dicoloured water be irrigated over grassland/passed via settlement lagoon, fuel storage away from watercourses, off site waste disposal carried out accordance relevant legislation, agency notified of incidents likely cause pollution</p> <p>Recommend brief incorporate need for sustainable development – achieved by requiring particular measures – water consumption, energy and lighting systems, waste recycling – include need for any developer to sign up to principles of Sustainable Construction Charter</p>
Exmouth Society	<p>Could part of (ground floor) of Listed Building have a community function?</p> <p>Maximum lengths of relocated boundary wall should be rebuilt to maximise its integrity</p> <p>Only one access onto St Johns Road</p> <p>Use of planting to soften wall</p>
Ward Member (Brixington)	<p>Site Analysis – note trees on front of the site; mature trees are an important amenity</p> <p>Transport Links – railway is more than 1.5 km away</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance – would request that we urgently keep developer to provision of affordable housing</p> <p>Unauthorised works – are we taking action</p> <p>Listed Building – agreed principle residential conversion but query if developer would want to comply with conditions</p> <p>Setting – building must stand alone in its own grounds</p> <p>Watercourse – concerned with boggy/flooded areas</p> <p>Development – concerned not allow over-development if site – should be exception to heavy build policy</p> <p>Permitted Development – important to remove pd rights</p> <p>Trees – require sensitive treatment – full survey should report back to members before any developer</p> <p>Wooded area to South – welcome retention – not be used as access road</p> <p>Height – important as no other buildings locally over 2 stories high – 3 stories properties are not acceptable</p> <p>Materials – query over what is locally distinctive</p> <p>Housing size and form – welcome mix of units – more sustainable</p> <p>Lighting – essential as there is a need to preserve darkness and avoid light pollution</p> <p>Access, Road and Car Parking – footway is essential and needs County Council review of St John’s Road see if section can withstand expected increase in traffic – parking should be sensitive</p> <p>Education – secondary provision as well as primary</p> <p>Open Space – encourage play or kick about area somewhere on the development</p> <p>Landscaping – important as area will be overlooked by many nearby residents</p>

2. Summary of Residents Responses

Objections	No.
Residential development of no benefit to community	1
St Johns Road sewerage mains pipe cannot cope with extra housing	5
Large volume of traffic on St Johns Road from school run and parking – not cope with more – development add to congestion	7
Traffic calming scheme needed	1
New access road in dangerous place	2
High density development out of character with existing residential areas	1
No privacy for surrounding homes/gardens from 2-3 storey dwellings	1
Impact on house and woodland/mature landscaping if site developed as residential area	1

Potential impact on trees – TPO not protect trees	3
Recognise need for low cost homes but should encourage people back into vacant properties in town centre	1
Community use would address problems of jobs and vandalism	1
Humphries Park estate adjacent to site – most affected but not mentioned in brief	4
High density affordable housing not suitable in grounds of listed building	4
More over development of Exmouth and area which saturated by high density housing	2
Flooding of Withycombe and adjacent areas – Basset's Garden	5
Increased noise and light pollution	2
Quality of open space will be downgraded	2
Widening road by demolishing the boundary wall not preserve historical heritage	1
Obstruction of views from St Johns Road	1
Contrast of expensive luxury flats surrounding by low cost affordable housing	2
Potential increased crime and vandalism levels due to pedestrian links from housing estates to woodland	3
Impact on adjacent elderly residents – crime and traffic	1
Pressure on Bassetts Farm School – will require extra class rooms and more play area	1
Potential vandalism to public artwork	1
Lead to back door development of St Johns playing field	1
Not happy with blocks of flats in an area like this and would prefer 2 storey houses	1
Removal of the hedge will devalue properties	1
Prefer to see no building work within 5 metres of any tree	1
Proposed and potential pedestrian link – falling within rear garden of 14 Dukes Crescent so access not acceptable – issues over vandalism and safety	1
Impact on wildlife from development	1

Support	No
House needs to be tidied up and a suitable use found	2
Pleased to see all trees would be protected and LB get great deal of attention	1
Welcome focus on Valley Parks and opportunity to extend cycleways and footpaths	2
Support landscape enhancement of land to south of main building	2
Support tree preservation order and need for tree survey	3
Support footpath and cyclepath – should be as many accesses as possible to Valley Park from surrounding streets	1
Agrees that developer needs to make open space safe for public use and contributes to future maintenance	1
Pleased old wall on front boundary will be retained	1

3. Alternative Proposals/Changes to Proposal

	Proposal	No.
1	Whole site developed as sports/leisure centre for community – sports rooms, games rooms, educational rooms, youth club, social club, conference rooms, restaurant, swimming pool	3
2	Site used for several different visitor attractions	1
3	Listed Building could be made into a hotel – ref. landscaped grounds and link to Withycombe Valley Park	1
4	Restore house as dwelling/convert to quality flats and build fewer more expensive houses in grounds	1
5	Create Heritage Site for benefit local area	1
6	Piece of land adjacent to the school to the North of the house would be better as playing field/sports area for school	1
7	Entrance/exit to development in position of existing entrance	2
8	Provision of a lay-by for school parking where wall set back	1
9	Exclude woodland area from development by reducing number of buildings	1