

Civic Centre Opportunity Site



Development Brief /
Supplementary Planning Document

July 2012

PREFACE

The Civic Centre Opportunity Site lies at the heart of St Albans City Centre and provides an exciting opportunity to transform a currently unattractive and poorly functioning piece of townscape into a vibrant new quarter that adds value to the City Centre.

This brief has been drawn up to set out the aspirations, requirements and standards expected from the redevelopment of this site. These aspirations and requirements are summarised into the following vision:

To extend City Centre vibrancy into the site through the creation of a high quality distinctive redevelopment which is informed by its historic surroundings. The robust and sustainable mixed use development should transform the site and its surroundings and become a catalyst for the renaissance of St Albans.

The brief also seeks to attract interest, solutions and investment from prospective development partners for the potential redevelopment of the Civic Offices and Alban Arena under Council ownership. The objective is to combine with the redevelopment of the southern half of the site to make a comprehensive and integrated whole. However, the Council is open minded and flexible in its future accommodation and operating requirements to help facilitate development on this site in respect of its land holdings. It welcomes dialogue with potential developers to further explore possible options.

The Council's aim is for redevelopment of the whole site to optimise the potential of this important location with a range of complementary uses, which underpin the existing theatre offer, create new employment and enliven the proposed new public space. The objective is that an improved retail circuit is delivered to help reconnect this currently disjointed site better into the surrounding area.

The site also allows a contemporary sustainable residential development to be created in the accessible heart of the City. It will provide an exciting location to live with easy access to all the services and facilities of the City Centre. The aim is that proposals will be of the highest design quality responding to the Conservation Area and will create the listed buildings of tomorrow.

This brief is but the start of a multi year project to maximise the potential contribution from the site to the renaissance of St Albans City Centre.

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1. INTRODUCTION

St Albans City & District Council (the Council) has prepared this development brief Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to facilitate the delivery of an inspirational and high quality development in the civic heart of St Albans City Centre. The redevelopment and renewal of the Civic Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) is anticipated to bring forward a range of commercial and community mixed uses including residential, cultural, retail and leisure.

1.1 Purpose & Status of the Brief

The purposes of this brief are to:

- Set out the context for development;
- Provide an overarching vision and objectives for the site;
- Interpret 1994 District Local Plan Review (1994 Local Plan) policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to guide development of this site;
- Set out the planning principles and design parameters for future development;
- Attract developers to create innovative proposals that accord with the Council's objectives;
- Inform the public and other interested stakeholders;
- Inform adopted policy for assessing planning applications.

In order to optimise the site's potential, the Council is strongly advocating a comprehensive approach to masterplanning, urban design and phased delivery. It is acknowledged that the privately owned land on the southern section of the site may be redeveloped ahead of the Council owned land to the north. However, the Council firmly believes that a comprehensive development approach is needed which acknowledges this potential, but provides an overall contextual framework for CCOS. This way the detrimental effects of isolated piecemeal development can be avoided.



Figure 1: Aerial View of Site

1.2 Production of the Development Brief

The need for this development brief stretches back to 1994 when the southern half of the site was identified for potential redevelopment in the 1994 Local Plan. The content of the SPD provides site specific detail and guidance which builds on 1994 Local Plan Policy 116, subject specific 1994 Local Plan policies and the NPPF. This SPD does not set new planning policy.

In 2009 the Council produced the City Vision which identified the whole site for potential redevelopment as vital to meet wider City Centre objectives. The site was seen as a priority for early development and the vision included a high level conceptual masterplan for the area. This proposed a mixed use development that included: a hotel and supermarket; further retail and restaurant uses; and a cultural and community hub potentially comprising library, gallery space, cinema and museum to be accommodated on the site.

In 2010 the Council commissioned specialist property and design advice in regard to CCOS to inform this brief. The Knight Frank Consultancy team market tested the commercial viability of the key physical mixed use options for CCOS and examined potential viable delivery options. The full study, however, includes commercial information which relates to the Council and other parties whose interests would be negatively affected by full disclosure.

Both the City Vision and the Knight Frank advice contain proposals that do not necessarily constitute the Council's view. The City Vision and the Knight Frank study (partly redacted due to commercial information) are available on the District Vision webpage <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/district-vision/>

To inform the brief, the Council held discussions with individual landowners and other stakeholders prior to formal consultation. The draft brief was published on 1 November 2011 for a six week consultation period. The consultation responses received informed changes to the brief as did feedback from the Look! St Albans project organised by community groups and the Princes Foundation for Building Community.

The final brief was adopted by the Council on July 11 2012 as an SPD. This brief is now a material consideration on planning matters.

The brief was tested using a sustainability appraisal to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of the brief. All of the significant effects identified from implementing the brief were positives, with the exception of potentially increasing demand for water in this water scarce region. For more detail the Sustainability Appraisal Report is available at <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/district-vision/>.

2. CCOS CONTEXT

The CCOS lies at the heart of the historic City of St Albans, which is ideally located within the North London Arc sub region, for easy access to London and surrounding M25 towns.

CCOS is defined, for the purposes of this brief, as the land edged red in Figures 1 & 2 and extends to approximately 3 hectares (7.4 acres) in total. It is currently divided into two distinct areas by Civic Close:

- Civic Centre South Site (CCSS) with an area of 0.77 hectares (1.9 acres);
- Civic Centre North Site (CCNS) which comprises 2.23 hectares (5.5 acres) predominately owned by the Council.



Figure 2: Strategic Location

2.1 History

Despite being in the heart of the historic centre, the interior of the site was developed much later than the majority of St Albans City Centre, which largely originates from the medieval and Victorian periods. The site was characterised by villas with large gardens to the rear and was semi-rural in nature up to the 1930s, which made it a suitable location for the re-erection of the medieval Waterend Barn.

The site was developed in the early 1960s to a 1957 masterplan designed by renowned New Town architect Sir Frederick Gibberd, together with the then City Engineer, A.S.Moody and County Architects Department. The plan sought to create a Civic Centre municipal campus to include a public square, magistrates courts and city hall, together with shops, offices and public parking. This was completed in 1966, with the current Civic Offices added in 1988 on an existing car park.

2.2 Conservation & Archaeology

St Albans is synonymous with heritage buildings from the Roman period onwards and the site is located within the St Albans Conservation Area. There are a number of important historic buildings that need to be retained and their settings respected as part of any development. These buildings are:

- The Grange (Nationwide Building Society) – grade II* listed building fronting St Peter's Street;
- Waterend Barn – grade II listed former barn (now pub) that was move to the site in 1939;
- 19/21 Victoria Street – grade II listed terraced properties.

There are also a number of listed buildings surrounding the site that should inform any development. These are shown in figure 3 overleaf. For more information see Area 19 of the St Albans Conservation Area Character Statement available at <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/conservation/StAlbansConservationAreaCharacterStatement.aspx>

CCOS is in the 1994 Local Plan and is designated as area AS.R.25, an archaeological site where planning permissions may be subject to a recording condition (St Albans - including Saxon Kingsbury, Saxon and medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery) as defined in the 1994 Local Plan.

Whilst consideration of the archaeological background to CCSS has been undertaken in response to previous planning applications (see Appendix 2) only limited information is available on features of the remainder of the site. These are:

- Unconfirmed features of possible Roman date at the western end of Victoria Street;
- The Quaker Burial Ground which was used for some 200 years from 1676 for burials;
- The existing Lime Avenue in Bricket Road as evidenced by early plans of the area.



Figure 3: Listed and Locally Listed Buildings

2.3 Existing Buildings (as shown on Figure 4 overleaf)

Many of the buildings on site demonstrate limited architectural quality, are energy inefficient and detract from the City Centre setting. The Council's objective is the redevelopment of the following buildings:

- Bricket Road Car Park – is of little character;
- Hertfordshire House – former County Council offices that are now vacant and boarded up on the ground floor;
- Police Station – Hertfordshire Constabulary are relocating and the existing building detracts from the Victoria Street City Centre gateway location;
- The Principal Health Clinic (attached to Hertfordshire House) is an unsightly building which occupies a strategic position within the site. NHS Hertfordshire is considering the accommodation options for the clinic on behalf of Herts Community Health NHS Trust. The Council strongly encourages the redevelopment of this building with the use retained on the site or an adjacent location.

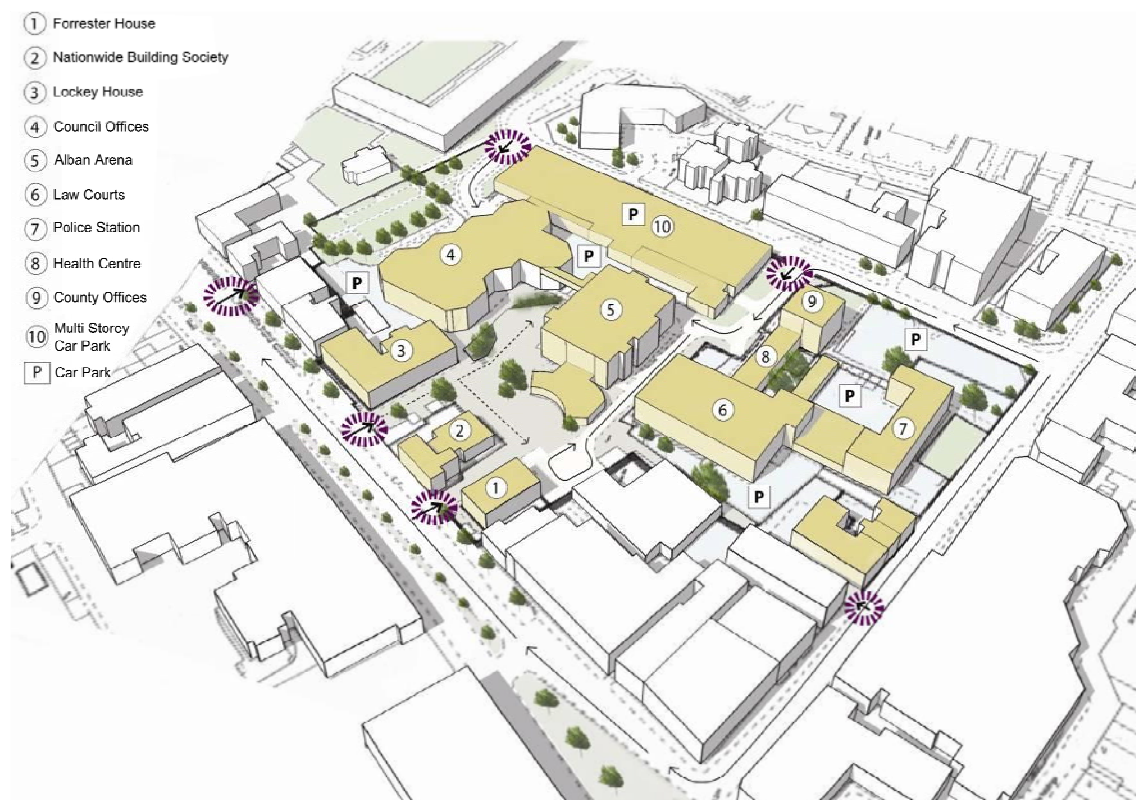


Figure 4: Axonometric of Existing Development

There are other buildings which detract from the site and restrict redevelopment options but are likely to be retained at this time. These are:

- Magistrates Court – located within the centre of the site but has recently had internal refurbishment and the courts are not looking to move;
- Lockey House – has been subject to recent refurbishment and is subject to long leases;
- Forrester House – under multiple occupation.

2.4 Alban Arena & the Civic Centre

The Alban Arena (figure 5 overleaf) occupies a significant central part of the overall site, is locally listed and subject to an operator's contract until 2016. Due to the building's limited size it cannot accommodate large theatrical productions and currently lacks adequate back stage and servicing facilities as a result of its original City Hall design. This results in touring vehicles being accommodated in Civic Close for the duration of performances. A new purpose built theatre is a Council aspiration but more viable alternatives could be extensions or refurbishment.

The Council is currently reviewing its long-term future accommodation and operating needs and is flexible as to how this is resolved. This could include either remaining as an anchor tenant in any redevelopment/refurbishment scheme or moving, entirely or partially, out of the Civic Offices. The Civic Offices are energy inefficient, do not fully meet the Council's requirements and will require significant expenditure on maintenance in the next five years. Further work to inform this decision is currently being undertaken.



Figure 5: Front Elevation of the Alban Arena

2.5 Public Realm & Green Space

The public realm surrounded by the current buildings is of poor quality and lacks defined enclosure, permeability and legibility throughout. Sight lines from the key gateway points along St Peter's Street are weak and provide limited visibility for uses that are located behind the retail frontage, such as the Alban Arena and the Civic Centre. This constrains footfall to specific trips and discourages recreational use of the public realm, which is further undermined by existing rights of way and vehicular usage. The intensive use of land adjoining The Grange for car parking, which is accessed entirely across the pedestrian area adjoining Cafe Nes, is particularly intrusive.



Figure 6: Municipal Gardens

The Municipal Gardens are an attractive and relaxing public space but are difficult to find and are under used. They are inward facing and currently lack attractive connections, natural surveillance or proper integration into the site.

The Quaker Burial Ground is located at the southern edge of the site. However, it does not integrate well with the rest of the public realm and its attractiveness is detracted by the presence of its surrounding context.



Figure 7: Quaker Burial Ground in front of the Police Station

2.6 Trees

All trees on the site are protected by conservation area status and some are the subject of specific Tree Preservation Orders (see Opportunities & Constraints diagram in section 4).

The area between the Alban Arena and St Peter's Street contains three mature Lime trees and three mature Sycamore trees on raised planters, all between 10 and 25m in height. The trees are in a reasonable condition and provide a skyline and landscape feature in scale with nearby buildings. A group of three close growing mature Yews stand in a raised planter near the Waterend Barn entrance. These planters create additional clutter in the public realm and reduce useable space. Under-mature trees fronting the Council Offices and Alban Arena consisting of one Japanese Maple, one Birch, two Sweet Gum and six Hornbeam also contribute to the landscape quality.



Figure 8: Trees in Front of the Alban Arena and Civic Offices

Recent tree survey work on CCSS by the Council has led to works to support the Copper Beech (T2), whilst the Sweet Gum (T5) is considered to require minor remedial surgery. The Planes (T3 & T4) require further investigation with regard to root protection areas which would involve air-spading to expose root spread.

2.7 Connectivity

The pedestrian routes through CCOS, although important thoroughfares and facilitate some activity, do not work satisfactorily at the moment. Civic Close (figure 9 below) provides a narrow and unattractive pathway between the southern side of the Alban Arena and the entrance to the Magistrates Courts. The alternative route between the Civic Centre and the northern side of the Alban Arena is equally uninviting and only brings pedestrians into conflict with the Alban Arena's rear servicing area and car park entrance. The existing pedestrian route alongside the Magistrate's Court through to Victoria Street is purely functional and uninspiring, offering little by way of passing interest, as is the route to the Municipal Gardens via the rear of Lockey House.



Figure 9: Civic Close fails to provide an attractive pedestrian route through the site



Figure 10: The route through to Victoria Street is uninspiring

2.8 Access & Parking

Being located in the City Centre, CCOS is highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. St Peter's Street is the main thoroughfare through the City Centre and is the primary bus stopping area. As a result St Peter's Street suffers from heavy traffic congestion. The site is a 10 to 15 minute walk from the City Station.

Car parking on CCOS comprises the following:

- 370 spaces in the Bricket Road multi-storey car park, (250 are currently for Council staff / members but are available in the evenings and weekends to the public);
- 49 privately-owned surface pay & display spaces with an additional 27 spaces solely for Police use on the corner of Victoria Street/Bricket Road;
- Dedicated parking provision, (including disabled) adjacent to the clinic.

2.9 Topography

The change in topography from the northern end to the south eastern corner is significant. It is problematic in terms of the existing layout of the public realm, especially between the Civic Offices and the Alban Arena, which has a number of different levels. This has the effect of reducing its extent and function as a useable active public space. A number of existing buildings on site have extensive basements, including the Civic Offices and Alban Arena.



Figure 11: The slope across the site needs to be addressed by new development

2.10 Site Ownership

Despite being a large site there are a small number of individual land owners as set out in Figure 12 below. CCNS is predominately in Council ownership, whereas CCSS is currently in the ownership of a private development company, Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust and Hertfordshire Constabulary.

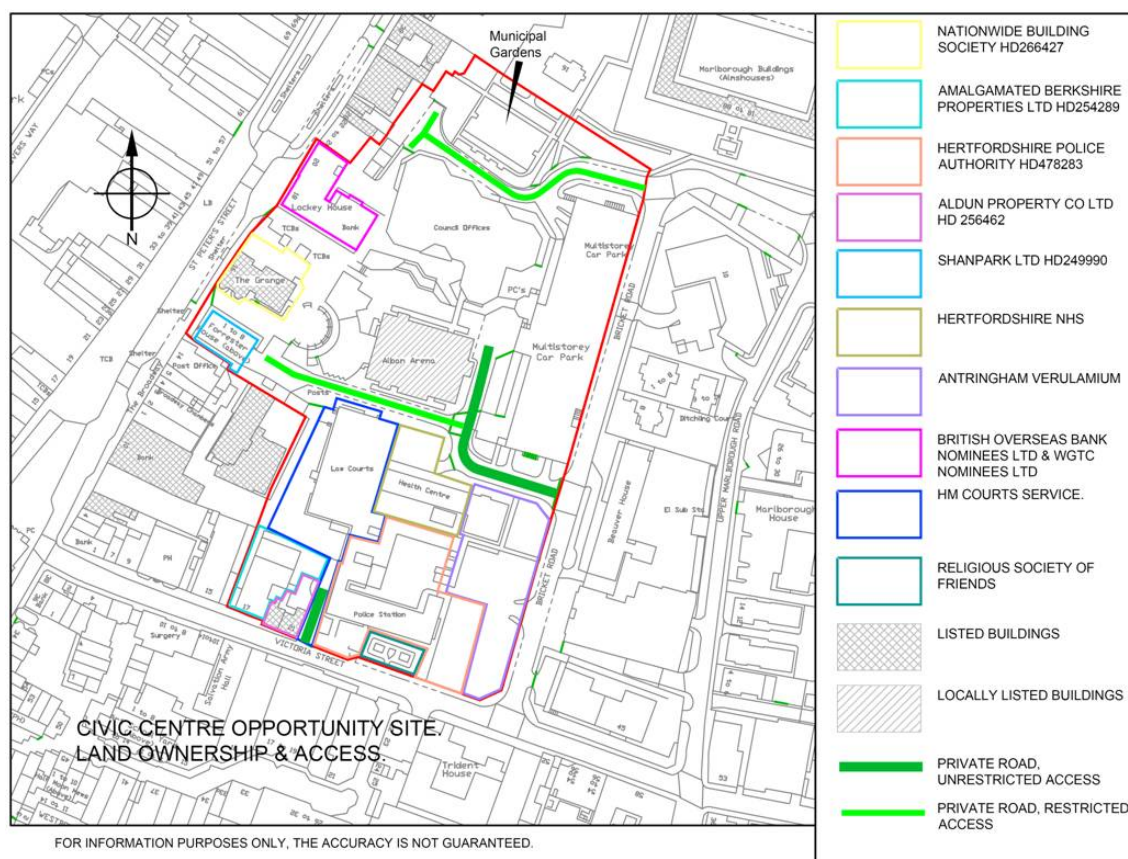


Figure 12: CCOS Land Ownership

There are a number of easements to be considered across the site. The rights of way include:

- Hertfordshire Police over the Hertfordshire House site to access their property from Bricket Road;
- Hertfordshire Police over part of the Magistrates Courts land to access their property from Victoria Street;
- Forrester House, Waterend Barn and properties fronting The Broadway (10-14) have an easement which gives access to their properties from Civic Close;
- Lockey House and properties fronting St Peter's Street (22 to 38) have an easement which gives access to their properties from Bricket Road.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the government's position on sustainable development in terms of planning. Whilst the majority of the NPPF contains detail relevant to the site and proposals, the Council's aim is that key sections of the document will have a strong influence on any proposals coming forward from developers, namely:

Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

The NPPF supports the principles of competitive and vibrant town centres that contain a mix of uses. Planning authorities should meet the identified need for town centre uses and identify relevant sites to meet that need.

Requiring Good Design

"The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment"

This is emphasised by the qualities and requirements set out in paragraph 58 that new developments must meet.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

The site is covered by the St Albans Conservation Area and is surrounded by numerous listed buildings within the historic City Centre. When assessing proposals the following should be taken account of:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

3.2 1994 Local Plan

The 1994 Local Plan remains the statutory development plan for the District. It includes a number of "Saved" policies relevant to this site. Those listed here are considered to be in accordance with relevant sections of the NPPF and therefore, will carry weight when assessing development proposals.

Policy 116 St Albans City Centre Policy Area 2 Central Shopping Core site specific proposal 2E sets out the policy context for CCSS. It is set out below:

If this site becomes available, the District Council and the County Council will prepare a planning brief for the redevelopment of the area. Proposals should enhance the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. A mix of uses will be favoured and particular consideration will be given to incorporating the following elements:

- i. shopping, including a possible department store;*
- ii. civic, leisure, cultural or entertainment uses;*
- iii. public car parking;*
- iv. and improved pedestrian route through the site from the Maltings to the Alban Arena.*

This SPD builds on the content of the above policy to provide guidance on how this site could be developed.



Figure 13: Hertfordshire House and the Police Station

Other key relevant policies areas covered:

- Affordable Housing;
- Buildings heights and rooflines;
- Development in conservation areas and historic buildings;
- Retail strategy;
- Service uses;
- General design;
- Landscaping and trees.

Details of these policies are set out in Appendix 1.

3.3 St Albans City & District Forthcoming Strategic Local Plan

The Council is currently preparing the Strategic Local Plan (formerly Core Strategy) and it is anticipated that it will be published during 2012/13. Whilst it is still not adopted, the pre-submission strategy will indicate the direction of travel for St Albans District for the next 15 years.

The strategy emphasises the need for the main urban settlements, principally St Albans, to accommodate the majority of housing growth in the District. New development will need to be developed at much higher densities than have been historically delivered. The CCOS site will be identified for mixed use development, including residential and, potentially, some food and non-food retail, based on the City Centre's need to maintain its competitive position in the regional hierarchy. The forthcoming Strategic Local Plan will fully support the approach to the development of the site set out in this SPD.

Policy areas relevant to any proposed development of this site in the Pre-submission Strategic Local Plan are set out below. The objective is that applications refer to the content of these policies if the Strategic Local Plan is published or adopted.

- Historic environment;
- Urban design;
- Town centres;
- Retail and cultural facilities;
- Sustainable construction and renewable energy;
- Affordable housing.

4. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

4.1 Vision

The following vision has been created for this site. It has been informed by 1994 Local Plan policies, City Vision work, the Council's aspirations for the site and the contextual analysis set out in the previous sections.

"To extend City Centre vibrancy into the site through the creation of a high quality distinctive redevelopment which is informed by its historic surroundings. The robust and sustainable mixed use development should transform the site and its surroundings and become a catalyst for the renaissance of St Albans."

4.2 Objectives

The Council has drawn the following objectives from planning policies, the vision and contextual analysis to guide new development:

- Create a vibrant mixed use quarter of the City that adds value to the existing City Centre offer;
- Protect and enhance historic buildings and spaces;
- Improve design quality, responding to St Albans' character and identity and establish a robust and attractive public realm;
- Improve access to and connectivity of the site with the surrounding townscape to encourage walking, cycling and public transport usage;
- Create a long lasting sustainable development;
- Sensitively integrate parking and servicing into the site;
- Integrate existing green spaces to optimise usage and supplement with appropriate new landscaping.

4.3 Opportunities & Constraints

From the context section above, the following development opportunities and constraints have been identified and are set out in the table and figure 14 below. The Council's aim is that opportunities are maximised to ensure the most appropriate development is achieved on site, whilst respecting and being aware of the site's constraints.

Opportunities	Development Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is flexible about future accommodation and operating requirements of the Civic Offices • Redevelop key City Centre site into a cultural and civic quarter with a supporting mix of uses • Introduce more appropriate uses on site that are active throughout the day and evening • Sustainable city centre living • Improve streetscape, particularly on Victoria Street and Bricket Road • Enhancement of the setting of listed buildings • Creation of a vibrant public space • Encourage the greater use of Municipal Gardens • Improve site permeability, legibility and connection to surrounding streets • Improve access through the site • Introduce energy efficient buildings and lower carbon emissions • Reduction of the traffic impact on St Peter's Street • Address bus movements and stops in the vicinity of the site • Redevelop and rationalise on-site parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain future of the Civic Centre offices • Respecting the setting of listed buildings and open spaces • Valued trees to be retained • Site topography • Conservation Area status covers site • Retention of the Magistrates Court, Lockey House and Forrester House • Retention of health centre use within locale • Economic viability of replacing/ refurbishing the Alban Arena • Site likely to be developed in 2 phases • Multiple site ownerships with a variety of easements. • Front and back conflicts • Archaeology



Figure 14: Opportunities & Constraints Diagram

The location of the indicative public space shown in figure 14 will be dependant on the approach taken to the redevelopment/refurbishment of this part of CCNS. A crucial objective is for new public space to be well overlooked (see section 6.4).

5. CCOS APPROPRIATE USES

The brief does not seek to set out a proposed breakdown of floorspace as it should remain flexible to market changes and the emerging thinking on the future of the Civic Centre. However, as guided by 1994 Local Plan policy 116 2E, the objective is for the provision of a combination of the following elements to maximise the potential of this central site.

5.1 Residential

Residential demand in St Albans remains strongly fuelled by the short rail journey times to Central London and the distinctive and attractive living environment. The Council's forthcoming Strategic Local Plan will emphasise the significant role of urban sites in meeting the District's housing needs and will encourage higher densities in more urbanised and accessible locations such as CCOS.

Both the 1994 Local Plan and the forthcoming Strategic Local Plan support residential development within St Albans City Centre. This city living experience could be accommodated on upper floors as part of a sustainable mixed use development, with higher density development helping to meet housing need as well as providing vibrancy and surveillance. It is a highly sustainable residential location with immediate access to services and facilities and St Albans City and St Albans Abbey train stations are a short walk away. A mixture of unit sizes would help to create a more sustainable development.



Figure 15: Mixed use development with residential on upper floors

The forthcoming Strategic Local Plan will require 40% of dwellings on all developments to be affordable. The 1994 Local Plan policy requires 35% on a threshold of 15 units. Both policies have a tenure split of 60% social/affordable rented and 40% intermediate housing (also see section 8.4). The Council's view is that residential designs should be tenure blind and affordable units should be pepper potted throughout the development.

5.2 Retail, Leisure and Services

St Albans City Centre is generally regarded as having an attractive and distinctive retail offer. It has purpose-built shopping precincts located to the west (Christopher Place), to the east (The Maltings) and to the south (Heritage Close) of the primary shopping area of St Peter's Street. St Peter's Street also has a vibrant twice weekly market and the City Centre retailing environment is robust and resilient as it has been identified as having one of the lowest retail vacancy rates in the UK. The combination of national multiples, a vibrant market, historic setting and variety of independent shops make St Albans an attractive and desirable retailing location.

St Albans must maintain market share and its place in the retail hierarchy. It also has to prevent sales leakage to nearby competitor centres. Although CCOS is off the main shopping street it can play a role in meeting identified retail need. Whilst larger footplate stores may be more suitable for the redevelopment of Drovers Way, CCOS would meet the identified need for a basket foodstore (up to 1,000sqm of convenience floorspace) and smaller specialist retailers. The objective is for retail uses on this site to provide a key linkage in the retail circuit between St Peter's Street and the Maltings.

As well as retail, main ground floor uses on the site can provide a range of leisure and service uses, cafés and restaurants. These will support sustainable living and shopping and the cultural uses in the vicinity. They will also help create vibrancy and can spill out on to new public spaces around the Alban Arena supporting the creation of a cultural quarter.



Figure 16: St Albans Market



Figure 17: Quality mixed use development spilling out on public space

5.3 Cultural

The Council is keen to consolidate and expand the cultural provision in the City Centre. The Council's Cultural Strategy includes the development of a City Centre Cultural Hub, emphasising and expanding the current offer available in the City through both a clustering of facilities and co-promotion.

The Alban Arena is locally listed and forms a key part of the site. The Council has aspirations to provide a fit-for-purpose 1,200 seater auditorium with a 200 seat studio theatre together with related flexible space. It is open to approaches regarding the future of the building beyond its existing contract termination date. The Council seeks innovative proposals as to what the eventual solution could be and welcomes discussions with developers to progress thinking. This will be considered in terms of redevelopment or refurbishment to create a cultural hub. This will see the Alban Arena or replacement linking with a potentially redeveloped Maltings Theatre and the St Albans Museum relocating to the nearby Old Town Hall.



Figure 18: A new purpose built theatre would be desirable



Figure 19: Alternatively the Alban Arena could be refurbished

A new public space in the site will be essential for outdoor performance events such as the annual summer Arts & Culture festival. The space could also be used for further public events and as a space in the City Centre for relaxing and enjoyment.

5.4 Civic

The Council is currently reviewing its own service needs and property requirements, in order to maximise site potential, facilitate partnership working and respond flexibly to market opportunity. This includes consideration of the future size and extent of the Council's front-line services to be provided on this site and the related issue of the future of the Civic Offices building.

Further work to inform this decision is to be undertaken. The Council currently has an open view as to the optimal amount and form of office space it needs to retain on site. This depends on the nature and extent of its interface with the public, together with the optimum number of staff and associated car parking to support them.

In Autumn 2011, the Council, with partners, implemented a joint Local Services Hub (LSH) which has combined front-line provision in a jointly run facility. It is located on the ground floor of the existing Civic Offices. This hub might later include services currently provided at the Principle Health Clinic, together with a Police enquiry office. It is intended that a LSH remain on site, locate in a new or refurbished office building or become established nearby in the City Centre.

Whether in the existing building or a redevelopment, it is anticipated that the Clinic will remain in this centrally accessible location.



Figure 20: St Albans Annual Festival



Figure 21: The Clinic detracts from the site and the preferred solution would be redevelopment

5.5 Hotel

CCOS in the heart of the City Centre is a sustainable location for a hotel to enhance St Albans as a tourist destination. Hotel stock in the City is at present limited and there is identified demand for budget, 3 star and boutique hotels which would benefit from City Centre parking facilities. Any proposals for hotels would, however, be required to be of the highest of design standards, reflect the character of the site and not be an identikit design used elsewhere.

5.6 Offices

St Albans has a lack of modern purpose built offices with 21st Century infrastructure. Around 8% of St Albans' estimated office stock of 2.4 million square feet is considered to be modern. The prime rents for Grade A space currently being marketed in St Albans compare favourably with adjoining competing centres, such as Watford, and have the added attraction of a quality surrounding environment.

The site is adjacent to the City Centre office core and contains the Civic Offices and Magistrates Court. The forthcoming Strategic Local Plan and NPPF recognises offices as a main town centre use. The site's public transport links make it an accessible site for B1 office use and modern premises near both the Magistrates and Crown courts would be desirable by the legal profession. New floorspace would contribute to the forthcoming Strategic Local Plan aim of making the City and wider District more economically sustainable by reducing out-commuting. Office floorspace could form part of the upper floors of any development or as a replacement of the Civic Offices. Conference facilities are also in demand in the District and could be a component of a development mix.

6. DEVELOPMENT FORM & DESIGN

This is a key site at the heart of an historic, much-visited and well-regarded City. As a result a number of key urban design principles are encouraged from development proposals. These principles are drawn from 1994 Local Plan policies and the NPPF.

Further thinking and design analysis has been generated through the Look! St Albans project, which is a partnership with, amongst others, the Council and the St Albans Civic Society, to prepare design guidance for the City Centre. This initiative has generated huge community interest and support, with the outputs to set out the local community's aspirations for new development in the City Centre, particularly for integrating contemporary development within St Albans unique historic context. It is anticipated that this information will provide developers with examples of built form, detailing and materials which exemplify St Albans character.

6.1 Quality & Conservation

The delivery of a comprehensive scheme designed to the highest of design quality is of the utmost importance on this high profile site. In accordance with the 1994 Local Plan and the emerging Strategic Local Plan, high quality design will be sought from developments to address local context/character, public realm, accessibility, development longevity, safety and designing out crime. Design guidance in "Manual for Streets" and CABI publications such as "By Design" is considered valuable in the preparation of high quality proposals. If published, proposals will be expected to comply with the requirements of the forthcoming Strategic Local Plan on Building for Life; Hertfordshire Building Futures; Code for Sustainable Homes; Lifetime Homes and Secure by Design standards.

The site is located at the heart of the St Albans Conservation Area, within an area of high quality townscape. Therefore the aim is for development proposals to demonstrate an exceedingly high quality urban design and architectural solution.

1994 Local Plan policies and the NPPF require that submitted proposals will demonstrate that not only has the setting of the listed buildings been considered and respected, but that enhancements to their settings have been achieved. On CCOS the Council seeks the enhancement of the settings of the Grade II listed Waterend Barn and 19/21 Victoria Street, together with the Grade II* listed The Grange. The relationship between the height of buildings on the north-east corner of the site and the setting of the Grade II* listed Marlborough Almshouses in Hatfield Road, in particular requires careful consideration. Further conservation analysis of the site is contained in the draft St Albans Conservation Area Character Statement - sub-area 19 Office Core.



Figure 22: Proposals should respond to the historic setting but not be pastiche

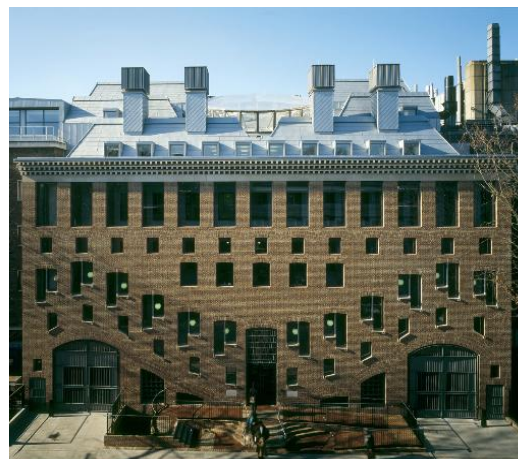


Figure 23: Proposals should try to create future listed buildings

This brief does not advocate a particular architectural style and it is strongly encouraged that proposals respond to and are informed by the St Albans context. However, a pastiche solution would not be acceptable and applicants are encouraged to create buildings designed for the 21st century, which have the potential to be the listed buildings of tomorrow. In respect of building form, design guidance indicates an acceptable development will be delivered through addressing scale, height and massing and building appearance, articulated through details such as fenestration, openings, rhythm, rooflines and the use of quality materials.

6.2 Blocks & Massing

Currently the site contains a range of large block developments that do not integrate well or reflect the historic fine grain of the City Centre. The objective is that an important element of any redevelopment proposals is the creation of clear building layouts and a block form that reflects human scale and integrates better with adjacent historic development. This will help to create a new urban grain that will provide the seamless transition from this into the surrounding, finer grain, more legible townscape.

6.3 Building Heights

The site is within the Council's Building Height Control Area which is set out in saved 1994 Local Plan Policy 114. This seeks to protect the City skyline and views of important City Centre features as seen from specified Zones of Visibility. These features include:

- St Albans Cathedral 147.8m;
- Clock Tower 130.7m;
- Upper Dagnall St. Baptist Church 130.0m;
- The Old Town Hall 130.1m;
- Christ Church Tower 121.0m;
- St Peter's Church Tower 147.7m.



Figure 24: St Albans Skyline

Development is required to be compatible with the local roofscape and not to break the skyline or mask the skyline features of the nearby St Peter's Church Tower and the Old Town Hall in particular. As set out in 1994 Local Plan policy 114 the Council expects building heights to be carefully considered. A design objective is that heights should respect and respond to existing heights in the City Centre (mostly three/four storeys) and the site topography. However, the Council seeks to maintain the City Centre tradition of a varied and undulating skyline.

The existing buildings in the vicinity of Victoria Street are four/five storeys in height, including the Police Station and Hertfordshire House (129m), which is the tallest building on the site at five commercial storeys plus plant room. At Bricket Road the heights tend to be three/four commercial storeys and at the northern end of Bricket Road, the Council's objective is that building heights will take into consideration the nearby listed Marlborough Almshouses (2 storey with a pitched roof).

It may be feasible to go higher, to five/six storeys, on parts of the site which are lower than the rest of the site due to topography and slope, especially where there is a significant change in levels between the existing car park and the Civic Offices on Bricket Road. On the corner of Victoria Street and Bricket Road it may be possible to create a landmark building as a key gateway feature, although building height is not the only technique to create a landmark building. However, the aim is that through skyline impact modelling the detrimental impacts on the skyline of proposals are avoided and long range views of the City's landmark buildings remain protected.

Comprehensive redevelopment of CCOS should allow a number of design techniques to be employed that will help reduce the effects of building heights. By this means development can seek to maximise the site's potential, provide variety and visual interest and accord with existing planning policies. Techniques may include:

- stepping back from street boundaries to reduce impact;
- adopting roof shoulders and terracing;
- balconies;
- the appropriate use of scale within detailing, including quality fenestration and door treatments;
- roof gardens and green roofs.

6.4 Public Realm & Open Space

Green spaces within the site, namely, the former Quaker Burial Ground and the Municipal Gardens, require greater permeability and connection to the wider area. Redevelopment of CCOS would benefit from a layout that creates greater visibility of the under utilised Municipal Gardens and provide a more direct pedestrian route from both St Peter's Street and Victoria Street.



Figure 25: Municipal Gardens with a view of St Peter's Church



Figure 26: Vintry Gardens

Redevelopment of the CCSS offers an opportunity to integrate the burial ground into a significant new piece of public realm that enhances its townscape value and function as an open space with footpaths and seating areas. These can provide opportunities for reflection and contemplation. An objective is to maintain the burial ground as a discrete, quiet, green open area, but one which is integrated into the wider setting to benefit the public without it developing into a thoroughfare. Improvements to these sites will establish them as part of a number of interconnected City Centre green spaces which include the Vintry Gardens at the Abbey and St Peter's Churchyard.

In addition to these existing green spaces, it is envisaged that a new public space would be provided through the redevelopment of this site around the Alban Arena. It is anticipated that the space would be surrounded by active frontage and benefit from appropriate connectivity and aspect. Located just off St Peter's Street the Council's aim is for a multi functional civic and destination space, to host performances and become a focus for cultural activities and outdoor events. The space would be attractive when both filled or empty of people and at all times of the day and evening. The space would combine high quality paved areas, seating and water features creating an inspiring and unique space for a wide range of users. Quality public art incorporated into proposals will enhance the civic and cultural nature of the site.



Figure 27: Attractive and multi purpose public open space



Figure 28: Water features can enliven public spaces

As part of the fine grain development of CCSS there are opportunities to create attractive secondary public spaces that could accommodate spill out space for mixed uses as part of the development. Proposals could also examine the opportunities that public spaces present to display information and artefacts from St Albans long history. There is an opportunity to properly display the Roman mosaic in the Alban Arena. It was moved from Verulamium Park and is currently not publicly visible.

6.5 Connectivity

A long-held local objective is to improve the connectivity between this site and the surrounding City Centre to reinforce existing retail circuits and underpin the vitality and viability of the northern end of the retail centre. 1994 Local Plan policy 116 set out the requirement for an enhanced pedestrian link to the Maltings. This would improve pedestrian movement and increase footfall through the site to connect Victoria Street to St Peter's Street and Municipal Gardens. Indicative pedestrian movements are set out in Figure 29.



Figure 29: Indicative Pedestrian Links



Figure 30: Public art adds visual interest to pedestrian routes

To help deliver this important new link, the public realm needs to be enhanced significantly throughout the scheme, especially in the area around the rear of the Alban Arena and Civic Close, together with the area between St Peter's Street, the Civic Centre and the Alban Arena. The existing route between Victoria Street and Hatfield Road is unclear. These improved pedestrian routes through the site should be visible, secure and accessible to all.

On St Peter's Street, Forrester House, Lockey House, and the Grange are situated at important pedestrian access points and currently frame views into the site. New development could therefore address this existing development in an integrated way and seek to draw people through and into the site, by careful use of sightlines, landmarks and gateways. Visual improvements to Lockey House and Forrester House would be supported by the Council.



Figure 31: Lockey and Forrester Houses detract from gateways into the site

7. SITE SPECIFIC FACTORS

7.1 Trees

The site enjoys the benefit of a number of substantial trees, which bring a mature green presence to the area and provide natural shade. The Council's Tree Strategy Review 2010 makes reference to the retention and protection of trees within any development. Policy 26 of the Review states that the Council will:

- i. Seek to protect trees of amenity and environmental value ;*
- ii. Promote good standards of tree care and woodland management ;*
- iii. Promote good practice for the protection of trees on development sites.*



Figure 32: Trees adjacent to the Police Station

There is no reason at the present time to consider that the protected trees on site, by virtue of their age and condition, cannot continue to enhance the local environment. However, should their long-term retention not be considered to optimise the site's redevelopment within the above policy, then their removal will be considered subject to replacement planting. Replacement of semi-mature specimens, as part of a comprehensive public realm proposal together with an accompanying maintenance plan, would always be sought in any situation where existing trees are proposed to be removed. The planning history of CCSS, attached as Appendix 2, demonstrates that the Council is not prepared to countenance the removal of trees on CCSS where there are insufficient mitigating reasons.

7.2 Site Access

Vehicular access considerations are the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council. Current policy guidance is set out in the County Council's "Roads in Hertfordshire – a Design Guide" and Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2031.

The NPPF states that developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Travel Plan and Transport Assessment. A sustainable approach would be to examine the shared use of parking provision and the site's City Centre location in any proposals approach to on-site car parking provision and encouraging public transport use.

Proposals are being investigated to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the City Centre. This could involve reducing the large volume of buses on St Peter's Street and requiring new bus routes around and through the City Centre, which may have an impact on the site, in terms of pedestrian flow and activity points. Developers should contact the Council and Hertfordshire Highways to identify the latest position on which to progress any proposals.

The site is highly accessible by walking, cycling, car and public transport. New development would be enhanced by the incorporation of cycle facilities, dedicated disabled parking provision, quality parking and public transport facilities. The objective is that such facilities are incorporated into the design of the public realm in the area. Developer contributions may be required towards sustainable transport solutions, especially where potential parking demand may exceed on-site provision.

7.3 Parking & Servicing

The Council is currently reviewing the location and capacity of City Centre public parking and will be developing a Car Parking Strategy for the central area. This has a mid-term timeline and the Council has yet to determine the future level of public parking spaces on this site. However, it is unlikely that the Council would seek an overall reduction in public parking spaces as part of any development.

The Council's current policy on private car parking provision is set out in its Revised Parking Policies and Standards document January 2002. Given the site's centrally accessible location and range of possible uses the Council will consider car parking provision flexibly, factoring in anticipated demand as well as specific standards. Many new parking facilities in the UK include "plugged in places" charging points for electric cars. On this site there is potential for them within internal parking structures or associated with on street parking on Bricket Road.

The current parking solutions on site are not efficient and rationalisation would be welcomed as part of any proposals. The natural slope of the site, falling some 2 metres from the north and west to the south-eastern corner, provides an opportunity to have screened basement and undercroft parking, together with other secondary uses, relatively inexpensively. This would maximise the efficient and economic use of City Centre land in proposals whilst improving the visual quality of the built environment by removing intrusive surface parking. Undercroft parking will not impact on the height of buildings in this sensitive location.



Figure 33: Current Alban Arena servicing is intrusive and insufficient

The preferred access point for all development on CCOS is from the existing service roads, Charter Close to the north and Civic Close to the south, which currently have access restrictions, or directly from Bricket Road. The current access to CCSS from Victoria Street has limitations and the Council's objective is that access will not be extended or its use intensified as the Council intends to reduce traffic movements here.

Servicing facilities at the rear of the Alban Arena are currently inadequate. An improvement would be new service provision via a below ground service area or some form of extension. The aim is that servicing is designed to be inconspicuous within the streetscape, but remain adequate to meet the needs of on site uses.

7.4 Streetscape

Development of this site presents an opportunity to improve the streetscape of Bricket Road and the important gateway of Victoria Street. The majority of existing lime trees on Bricket Road have become over-mature and straddle the carriageway. The footway could be redesigned to provide protection to the trees which may need to be replaced in the long term.



Figure 34: Streetscape improvements are required in this gateway location

Victoria Street is the key artery which links City Station to the City Centre and will form many peoples' first experience of the City. Victoria Street will be the subject of public realm and way-finding improvement proposals, following on from the City Vision work. The aim is for any development proposals to support this work through creating a development that provides variety and visual interest, whilst exerting a non-aggressive approach to the street-scene. There is also an opportunity to create a landmark building at the corner of Bricket Road with Victoria Street, as the gradient of the road slopes downwards from west to east. However, landmark does not necessarily mean tall and the objective is that the overall building height avoids dominating the Quaker Burial Ground and the adjoining small-scale, two-storey listed 19-21 Victoria Street.

7.5 Sustainable Design & Energy Solutions

Development on the site provides an opportunity to deliver sustainable design and innovative renewable energy solutions. The Council considers it an important objective that the development proposals for this site provide a tailored solution that respects the historic location, prove to be adaptable over time and can demonstrate longevity. The majority of the current buildings on site have failed to do this.

Forthcoming Strategic Local Plan policy will set a requirement for development to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes or BREEAM accreditation to the level required by building regulation energy requirements. Developments should be informed by and address elements of sustainable design including energy efficiency, built form, water usage, waste, materials and renewable energy. Good practice is for a sustainable design and construction statement to accompany proposals. The forthcoming Strategic Local Plan will set out a energy hierarchy seeking to maximise the efficiency of the buildings prior to the use of renewable and low carbon technology.

The Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technical Study has a number of recommendations with regard to the potential for district heating and identifies Central St Albans as a particular opportunity. Given the comprehensive redevelopment opportunity the site presents, consideration will need to be given to district heating or combined heat and power/trigeneration plants. Whilst the site may not be considered suitable for biomass or wind turbine solutions, solar and photovoltaics could prove appropriate if located sensitively in the historic roofscape.

Other sustainable measures that should be examined include sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and green roofs/rooftop gardens. Best practice is that SUDS should be implemented in all new development to minimise run-off rates during heavy rainfall. This could include porous surfaces and planting. The roofs of residential development could be used for green roofs and rooftop gardens. Benefits of these include:

- Evaporative cooling, improving the microclimate of surrounding areas;
- Shade for buildings, preventing solar gain and helping with passive cooling in summer and reducing demand for air conditioning;
- Insulation to buildings, preventing heat loss in winter;
- Alternative habitats for some species;
- Reducing the rate and volume of surface water run-off;
- Providing public or private amenity space;
- Extending the lifespan of the roof membrane;
- Reducing noise levels.



Figure 35: Rooftop gardens provide amenity areas in higher density developments as well as sustainability benefits

8. DELIVERY

8.1 Early Delivery of CCSS

On CCSS a number of buildings are empty or consideration has been given to the relocation of their uses whereas important decisions have yet to be made about the buildings on CCNS. Therefore it is highly likely that development on CCOS will come forward in two phases, with CCSS being developed first. The Council will support this early delivery as long as proposals meet the aspirations and requirements of this brief.

In order to realise the aspirations of this development brief a partnership approach between the Council, developers, landowners and the community will be required. Piecemeal development of CCSS will not facilitate the major improvements that the brief envisages this site could deliver to significantly improve its contribution to the City Centre townscape or to ensure enhanced pedestrian connectivity. Aspects of servicing, for example, that make use of existing ownership and rights of access, are only likely to provide a “second best” solution. In this respect the Council has an important role to play in terms of facilitation and the encouragement of a comprehensive approach.

In particular, the relocation of the Clinic is considered highly desirable, allowing an extended built form on CCSS to optimise the access and servicing route provided by Civic Close. The Council will continue to bring landowners together and work in partnership to bring about the phased, integrated development of the site and welcomes pre application discussions.

8.2 The Council as a Landowner

The Council also has an important role as a major landowner of the CCNS and therefore the Council is open to discussions and proposals from developers and landowners for the future redevelopment of its land. This will inform the decisions the Council will take concerning its future accommodation needs as discussed in section 5.4.



Figure 36: The Council owns the Alban Arena and the Civic Offices

This development brief is in itself an important component in market testing the appropriateness of proposals for the site as a whole, or, possibly, with other sites the Council owns and the potential delivery solutions available. The Council seeks innovative proposals as to what the eventual solution could be and welcomes discussions with developers to progress thinking and understanding on the preparation of site proposals.

The Council will ensure that the decisions it reaches as a major landowner remain consistent with its aims as the local planning authority, but the Council is flexible and open to discussion on its landholdings and would welcome partnership working with potential developers. If it will facilitate development the Council will consider selling part or all of its landholding to a private developer to secure the form and quality of development it is pursuing. Decisions will also be informed through the consideration of its landholdings within its overall asset management strategy.

For the CCOS there are a number of potential development and design options which are identified in the Knight Frank report. These vary from a “de minimis” development of CCSS by individual developers in isolation to a comprehensive scheme in partnership. A key factor in encouraging the optimum form of development is the need to provide a degree of certainty between developers of the CCSS and the Council and any of its prospective partners on CCNS. Assurances will be needed that any integrating north-south route will actually be completed on the Council land extending into CCNS.

The private right of way easements for vehicles referred to in section 2.10 together with other relevant covenants on various parts of the land, require confirmation. The Council’s Estates team will work with prospective developers to ensure that all relevant ownership information for CCNS is identified and user constraints are reviewed. Potential re-alignment and re-negotiation should be considered where incompatible with emerging proposals.

8.3 EU Procurement

Procurement options for CCNS and any other Council owned land, may require the Council to select a development partner(s), a process together with the structuring and programming of delivery processes, which could fall within the requirements of EU and UK legislation. In pursuing this approach the Council may enter into a Development Agreement or Joint Venture which will place obligations on the partner (s) to deliver a specific form of development within a specified timetable.

In progressing the development and delivery of its land, the Council will need to be guided by EU regulations. This may include following an EU compliant Competitive Dialogue procurement process.

This requires the Council to:

- Place an advertisement for the opportunity in the Official Journal of the European Union;
- Seek expressions of interest through a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ);
- Select a shortlist of developers to negotiate;
- Work up schemes and contractual arrangements whilst in competition;
- Broadly finalise documentation prior to selecting a preferred developer.

8.4 Planning Obligations and Infrastructure

Development contributions may be required to mitigate the impacts of the development and make it sustainable in the long term. Depending on the timing of proposals these contributions will either be required through a planning obligations agreement with the Council or combination of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments and planning obligations. The Council intend to have a CIL Charging Schedule in place by early 2014, but this is dependant on the adoption of the Strategic Local Plan.

Planning Obligations will be sought both by the Council and Hertfordshire County Council as the upper tier authority. Details of Hertfordshire's County Council's requirements are set out in their Planning Obligations Toolkit which is available at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/hcc/resandperf/hertsprop/planningobs/>

What contributions are sought will be dependant on the type and quantum of development that is proposed as well as development viability. What is clear is that residential development will require a greater level of contributions due to the higher number of services and infrastructure that are required to support it. Contributions that are likely to be sought are for the following service/infrastructure areas:

Hertfordshire County Council

- Highways & Passenger Transport;
- Education (nursery, primary and secondary);
- Fire and Rescue;
- Libraries & Youth Facilities;
- Child and Adult care including Special Needs;
- Waste and Utilities;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Health Facilities.

St Albans City & District Council

- Affordable Housing;
- Play Areas & Open Space Improvements;
- Sports, Leisure and Recreation Facilities;
- Community Safety;
- Site Specifics including some Utilities;
- Public Realm and Tree Planting.

APPENDIX 1 RELEVANT SAVED 1994 LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

The 1994 Local Plan includes the following saved policies which are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and relevant to any proposals for this site.

Policy 69 General Design & Layout

This policy sets out the general design principles that all development must comply with.

Policy 74 Landscaping and Tree Preservation

The policy makes a presumption in favour of retaining existing landscape features unless it is incompatible with the design or economic use of the site. In terms of new developments, the policy states that buildings should not be sited where they are likely to justify future tree felling or surgery for reasons of safety, excessive shading, nuisance or structural damage. The Council will attach appropriate landscape and tree protection conditions to planning permissions to safeguard existing trees and ensure that new planting is established and protected.

Policy 85 Development in Conservation Areas

The policy states that the Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when exercising any of its planning functions. The policy also sets out that planning applications and applications for Conservation Area consent will therefore be considered in the light of:

(i) Design of Development – High standard of design that is sympathetic: a) The existing building line be respected and development not detract from the setting of nearby buildings b) Form and density – to relate to existing buildings and landscape c) Materials – good quality, normally traditional and natural; d) Window to wall ratios – appropriate to the existing street scene; e) Extensions – existing building to remain predominant with original roof extended f) Height, roofspace and skyline – appropriate to the existing street scene; g) Features and relief – building facades to complement and enhance street frontage; h) Car parking and servicing – to not detract i) Healthy Trees – Not to be felled, topped or lopped, have their root systems seriously affected or be endangered by construction work or underground services;

(ii) Demolition – to consider effects on surrounding buildings and the Conservation Area: a) Proposals to demolish listed buildings – assessed against Policy 86 of the Local Plan; b) Proposals to demolish locally listed buildings – assessed against Policy 87 of the Local Plan; c) Unlisted Buildings of little/no contribution – acceptable with detailed plans for redevelopment required prior to gaining Conservation Area Consent;

(iii) Surfacing Materials and Street Furniture – to be considered as part of any planning application with new materials compatible with existing.

‘Saved’ Local Plan Policies 86 and 87 set out the criteria for determining the impact of development on listed and locally listed buildings.

Policy 86: Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

States that listed buildings should be preserved unless exceptional circumstances exist. Consideration of planning applications that affect a listed building or its setting will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Policy 87: Locally Listed Buildings

This sets out the criteria for gaining Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of Locally Listed Buildings. The Criteria requires either (i) and (iii) or (ii) and (iii) to be met:

- (i) The Council is satisfied that the applicants have demonstrated that the viability of alternative uses for the building has been fully explored (including the possibility of sale to an alternative user) and that the buildings cannot at reasonable expense be retained;
- (ii) Substantial planning benefits to the community will decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition;
- (iii) There are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment which show what is to be substituted and how it will fit into the area.

Policy 114: St Albans City Centre, Building Height, Roofscape and Skyline

Sets out the building height control area in the City Centre where development must be compatible with the local roofscape. It also requires that water tanks, plant rooms, ventilation equipment etc. shall be within the building envelope and will not be acceptable if they impair the roofscape or exceed the height limitations.

Policy 116: St Albans City Centre Policy Area 2 Central Shopping Core

This policy identifies area 2E (Civic Centre South) for redevelopment if it becomes available. It states:

Proposals should enhance the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. A mix of uses will be favoured and particular consideration will be given to incorporating the following elements:

- i. shopping, including a possible department store;
- ii. civic, leisure, cultural or entertainment uses;
- iii. public car parking;
- iv. and improved pedestrian route through the site from the Maltings to the Alban Arena.

APPENDIX 2 ARCHAEOLOGY

This section is extracted from the Planning Referrals Committee Report 02.02.2011 on the Antringham Verulamium Ltd proposals ref 5/10/1602

CCOS is in AS.R.25, an archaeological site where planning permissions may be subject to a recording condition (St Albans - including Saxon Kingsbury, Saxon and medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery) as defined in the 1994 Local Plan. The south-eastern part of CCOS is 75 metres from the medieval town boundary to the east (Urban Archaeological Database (HHER) Monument 637; Part of the Tonman Ditch). Victoria Street, previously known as Shropshire Lane, led beyond the town (broken into by the insurgents during the Peasant's Revolt in 1381) to the Abbot's warren on Shropshire Lane. The alternative name, Butts Lane came about because the lane also led to the archery butts situated in Tonman Ditch. Victoria Street was so-called because in 1877 a Charter granted by Queen Victoria designated the Abbey Parish Church as a Cathedral, and conferred on the town the status of city. In response, the new city renamed Shropshire Lane as Victoria Street reciprocally in her honour. Recent service renewal along Victoria Street, at its western end, uncovered several features of possible Roman date (C. Saunders pers. comm.), although these are not confirmed.

There is also the site of the Quakers burial ground. In the early 1670s as persecutions decreased the local Quakers felt confident enough to erect a Meeting House now accessed from Spencer Street. Four years later, in 1676, a larger plot was purchased, and although there are no records of a second Meeting House having been built, the plot was used for some two hundred years as a burial ground. This plot now provides a pleasant public garden to the front of the Police Station in Victoria Street.

A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) previously undertaken privately by CgMs (Reference CgMs 2008 revised June 2010, CP/HH/9184) which, from a map regression exercise, suggests that the south-eastern part of the site has remained unused since at least the late eighteenth century. Earlier maps were consulted, but are of such a large scale that individual sites are hard to define or characterise given the low intensity of cartographic accuracy.

A consistent approach has been to ask for pre-determination works in the form of an evaluation but nothing has taken place on this site so that any potential archaeological constraints are ill-defined; therefore it is impossible to fully define the archaeological potential of this site. The DBA did however recommend the need for further work (CgMs, p. 19, 5.12 and p. 21, 6.4), but it did not fully define any potential constraints that may be encountered because of the lack of pre-determination works. The DBA did suggest a minimum loss of 0.5m where build had not taken place and probable total loss where it had (DBA, 5.3 and 5.4, pp18, respectively). For example, some of the archaeological deposits in the application area may have been totally removed by the previous build but in other areas, for example the car parking or grassed areas on the eastern side of the site, the deposits may be of high-quality. In summary, the 'Executive Summary' states that: Given the moderate potential for Medieval archaeological assets, a requirement for a programme of archaeological investigation is anticipated as a condition of planning consent. (DBA Executive Summary, 3)

Previous sites of a similar potential nature in the town have included work undertaken by St Albans Museums Service in 1998 at the Saracens Head Yard, or earlier at Chequer Street, Gentles Yard, Romeland and Belmont Hill. These prove that rear yard activity has taken place since the early medieval period (c. 1150). At Saracens Head Yard activity continued until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, when much of the rear yard was buried by a deposit of soil. As the current site is not on the main street frontage it is different, but it does front on to a medieval road leading to the main thoroughfare through the town.

Perhaps a better analogy would be work undertaken between 1988 and 1989 in Winchester at the Brooks excavation when a major medieval house belonging to John de Tytyng (c. 1299) was uncovered. This was sited along a relatively minor road leading to one parallel with the main high street and included a major medieval structure. Apart from this focal house, there were also ancillary buildings and features on the site, including wells and a probable dovecote. Adjacent properties to the de Tytyng house were owned by Juliana de la Floude and Stephen de Mont Acuto, and included a medieval cellar composed of worked stone.

APPENDIX 3 RELEVANT SITE PLANNING HISTORY

5/2010/1602 and **5/2010/1793** (Conservation Consent) Hertfordshire House, St Albans - Demolition of existing and erection of comprehensive mixed use development comprising Class B1 and Class A3 uses, forty seven residential units, hotel and associated car parking – Refused February 2011

5/2009/1192 and **5/2009/1029** (Conservation Area Consent) Hertfordshire House, St Albans - Demolition of existing in conjunction with and erection of comprehensive mixed use development comprising B1 and A3 uses, police station, 46 residential units, hotel and associated car parking (re-submission following withdrawals of 5/08/2605 and 5/08/2619) – Refused October 2009

5/2008/2605 and **5/2008/2619** (Conservation Area Consent) Hertfordshire House, St Albans - Demolition of existing and erection of site for comprehensive mixed development comprising B1/A3 uses, primary care trust, inclusion of 46 residential units, hotel and associated parking – Withdrawn March 2009

5/2001/1428 Police Station, Victoria Street, St. Albans, AL1 3JL Single storey extension to form new holding area and construction of a CS gas decontamination cage – Approved October 2001

5/1987/0397 17 Victoria Street, St Albans - Three storey office block – Approved January 1988

5/1986/0934 17 Victoria Street, St Albans - Demolition of existing buildings – Approved September 1986

5/1986/0933 17 Victoria Street, St Albans - Erection of 3 storey office block – Approved September 1986

5/1978/1198 Health Centre, Bricket Road, St Albans – Extension – Approved October 1978

APPENDIX 4 GLOSSARY

This Glossary is intended as a guide to the planning terminology used in this document and should not be relied upon as a definitive source of statutory definitions or to inform decision making.

Active Frontage: Making frontages 'active' adds interest, life and vitality to the public realm. Active frontages should consist of the following:

- Frequent doors and windows, with few blank walls;
- Articulated facades with bays and porches;
- Lively internal uses visible from the outside or spilling onto the street.

Affordable Housing: 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.

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).

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM): BREEAM is the world's most widely used environmental assessment method for measuring sustainable building design, construction and operation. BREEAM assesses non-residential buildings against a set criteria and provides an overall score which will fall within a band providing either a; PASS, GOOD, VERY GOOD, EXCELLENT or OUTSTANDING rating. See <http://www.breeam.org/>

Civic Centre North Site (CCNS): Northern part of CCOS comprising 2.23 hectares of land which is predominantly owned by St Albans City & District Council.

Civic Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS): Approximately 3 hectares of land in St Albans City Centre, which is the subject of this Development Brief.

Civic Centre South Site (CCSS): Approximately 0.77 hectares of land forming the southern part of CCOS.

Code for Sustainable Homes: The Code measures the sustainability of a new home against nine categories of sustainable design, providing a single 1 to 6 star rating for the 'whole home'. The Code sets minimum standards for energy efficiency and water use at each level.

Combined Heat & Power: Combined heat and power (CHP) integrates the production of usable heat and power (electricity), in one single, highly efficient process. CHP generates electricity whilst also capturing usable heat that is produced in this process. This contrasts with conventional ways of generating electricity where vast amounts of heat is simply wasted.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): CIL will be a new charge on most types of new development. CIL charges will be based on simple formulae which relate the size of the charge to the size and character of the development. The proceeds of the levy will be spent on local and strategic infrastructure to support the development of the area.

Conservation Areas: Areas of special architectural or historical interest. Within these areas development is more tightly restricted than elsewhere in order to preserve and enhance their special character and qualities. This listing is protected within law under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Density: A measure of the intensity of development of a plot of land.

District Heating: A district heating scheme comprises a network of insulated pipes used to deliver heat, in the form of hot water or steam, from the point of generation to an end user.

District Local Plan Review 1994 (1994 Local Plan): Is the current development plan for the Council. It contains policies saved under the 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act that are used to guide and assess development proposals. This will be partially replaced by the forthcoming Strategic Local Plan.

Form: The layout, density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

Floorplate: The surface area of a building.

Gateway: A structure, building or group of buildings that defines and entrance/exit to an area.

Grain: The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement. Also the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

Green Corridors: Linear routes that can encourage sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling and provide important links for nature helping to increase biodiversity.

Green Infrastructure: A network of greenspaces that supports local plants and animals and is important to people's health and quality of life.

Housing Association: A not-for-profit organisation offering independent homes owned by registered social landlords for rental.

Infrastructure: A collective term which relates to all forms of essential services like electricity, water and road / rail provision. It includes social, physical and green infrastructure.

Intermediate Housing: Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Lifetime Homes: Homes which are built to a set of national standards that make housing more functional for everyone including families, disabled people and older people. They also include features that enable cheaper, simpler adaptations to be made in the future.

Listed Building: A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. wells within its boundary). Designated by English Heritage.

Locally Listed Building: A Locally Listed Building is a building, structure or feature which, whilst not listed by the Secretary of State, the Council feels to be an important part of the City & District's heritage due to its architectural, historic or archaeological significance.

Massing: The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

Planning Obligation: A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Registered Social Landlord (RSL): Not-for-profit bodies that provide low-cost housing for people in housing need.

Renewable Energy: Renewable energy is energy generated from natural sources such as solar and wind. These energy sources are naturally replenished.

Social Rented Housing: Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which 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.

Strategic Local Plan (forthcoming): Formerly referred to as the Core Strategy, this will set out the spatial vision for St Albans City & District up to 2028. It will contain a set of strategic policies that are required to deliver the vision, including the broad approach to development. It is anticipated that it will be published for pre-submission comments in 2012/13.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): Assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of policies and proposals.

Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS): An alternative approach to the traditional ways of managing rain drainage from buildings and hardstandings. They can reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through stormwater systems.

Transport Assessment: A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport. It also should set out what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

Travel Plan: A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

APPENDIX 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following documents and information sources are referred to in the Development Brief and are available via the hyperlinks.

BREEAM: <http://www.breeam.org/>

CABE By Design: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/by-design>

CCOS Knight Frank Viability Report and Sustainability Appraisal: <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/district-vision/>

Hertfordshire Building Futures: <http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures/>

Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 3: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/transplan/ltp/>

Hertfordshire Planning Obligations Toolkit: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/hcc/resandperf/hertsprop/planningobs/>

Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technical Study: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/envplan/plan/renewablelowcarbonstudy/>

Lifetime Homes: <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

Look! St Albans Worksop Working Paper (not yet available)

Manual for Streets: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/manual-for-streets>

National Planning Policy Framework: <http://communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>

Roads in Hertfordshire - A Design Guide: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/transplan/infdev/roadsinherts/>

Secure By Design: <http://www.securedbydesign.com/>

St Albans City & District 1994 Local Plan: <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/policy/currentadoptedlocalplan.aspx>

St Albans Parking Policies and Standards: http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/parking_tcm15-2109.pdf