

# Picts Lane and the Station Area

**Princes Risborough**  
A Non-Statutory Brief for Redevelopment

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## Introduction



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The site occupies a 5.7 hectare site located to the South of Princes Risborough Town Centre. The site is partly in use and accommodates a number of businesses.

The vision in both 'The Risboroughs: 2035' (David Lock Associates, August 2006) and in the 'Preferred Options Site Allocations Development Plan Document' is for a mixed use development for the site. The mix will include business, residential and improvements to the station area in terms of both setting and access.

This document provides non-statutory development guidance for the site that will be used to evaluate planning applications for redevelopment as and when they are submitted with the aim of coordinating development to achieve wider objectives.

## The Brief's Purpose and Structure



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This brief is intended to offer guidance for the future redevelopment of the site to assist landowners and developers to formulate proposals that achieve wider objectives and to reassure local people and businesses about what is intended and what the benefits and impacts will be.

It has been subject to wide involvement of key stakeholders and the wider community and has been prepared alongside work for the Wycombe Development Framework. This adopted brief is a material consideration for the purposes of Development Control.

The brief for redevelopment sets out:

1. **Analysis** of the site and its context, and the redevelopment **issues** and how they can be resolved
2. Redevelopment **objectives** that guide the concept
3. The **brief** for redevelopment and its key components
4. **Phasing**

This brief follows a public workshop hosted by David Lock Associates on 17 October 2006 at the Royal British Legion, in Princes Risborough. At this workshop some of the following key issues were identified:

- Need for better access, drop off facilities and parking at the Station
- Need for affordable housing and a mix of flats and houses
- Retention of local employment and encouraging opportunities for new employment
- Preference for a mix of uses on the site
- Provision for green space, restoration of the stream and new pedestrian routes
- Provision for community uses

It also responds to the recommendations made in Section 9 of The Risboroughs 2035 vision document, regarding making the station the focus of a wider mixed use area.

## **Analysis of the Site and its Context**

### **THE SITE**

#### **Main Issues**

- This is a site on the edge of town.
- There is poor road access from the town.
- The site isolates the station from the rest of the town.
- It is unclear where Princes Risborough ends and Saunderton begins and in particular the residential properties in Picts Lane are cut off from the rest of the town by the existing industrial area.
- The railway is a real barrier between the town and the Princes Industrial Estate and nearby sports facilities.
- The site may be contaminated due to previous industrial uses

#### **Key Responses**

- Provide physical links aligned along direct movement routes between station and town.
- Integrate Picts Lane with the rest of the town.
- Create a pedestrian and/or cycle bridge over the railway linking Picts Lane, the Station and Princes Estate.
- Reinforce character of Picts Lane as going out into the countryside
- Undertake contamination survey

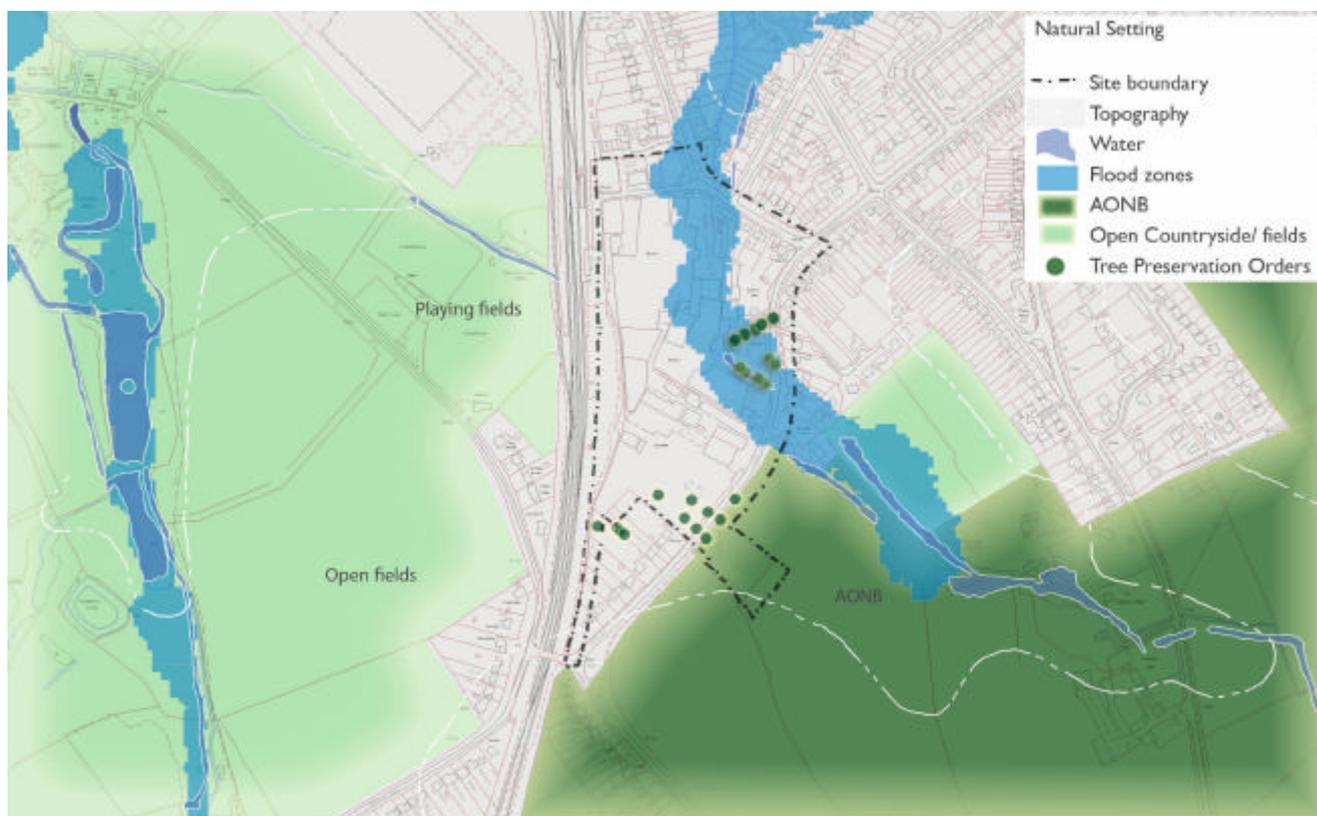
## THE NATURAL SETTING

### Main Issues

- Relationship with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Preservation of protected trees on-site.
- Responding to the streams and their flood plains.
- Ensuring the development contains greenspace and planting to link the country side on either side of the site

### Key Responses

- Celebrate natural site features.
- Create vistas to surrounding countryside.
- Open up river/pond to create a focal point for functional public space.
- Integrate existing trees as focal features within the layout.
- Include opens space and tree planting on the site



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## BUILT SETTING

### Main Issues

- Relationships to surrounding properties.
- Distinctive tree-lined streets e.g. Manor Park Avenue.
- Existing coarse grain of the built form causes internalised environment and cuts direct routes.

### Key Responses

- Development form should respect the character and scale of adjacent historic buildings (in terms of the edge treatments along this part of the site).
- Design cues taken from distinctive “boulevard” style streets.
- Create finer grained development.
- Reference should be made to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide as a source of information on local materials and design.
- The provision of open space on the site to address the existing deficiency



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## CONNECTIONS

### Main Issues

- Where is the natural access point for the site?
- What types of vehicles need to access the site?
- Strategic access to the site.
- How can the site relate to Phoenix Trail and footpath between Picts Lane properties and railway station?
- The site does not provide direct link to station, and there is no access to Princes Estate.

### Key Responses

- Create strong relationship and connections between site, station and town via public realm treatments and creation of public space.
- Integrate and enhance existing footpath connections.
- Create key gateway space as main access point to site.
- Create access to Princes Estate through provision of a footbridge



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## **LAND USE SETTING**

### **Main Issues**

- What is an appropriate mix of uses (including neighbourliness and consideration of such issues as noise levels etc)?
- Where is the best location for new homes?
- Can small-scale employment uses be incorporated?
- Can we/should we seek to overcome the "Lack of evidence of demand" vicious circle that stops new things happening?

### **Key Responses**

- Flexible and adaptable buildings incorporating fine grain development (or larger development with vertical divisions) including potential provision for leisure or small scale hospitality uses.

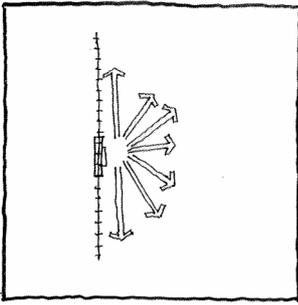
## **SUMMARY**

Although the site itself is industrial in character, its position is environmentally sensitive sitting between two major areas of open countryside of national significance. The railway is a strong barrier to the west and the surrounding industrial area and indirect road access isolates the station from the rest of the town. A new built form should integrate the site and the station into the surrounding area.

The site is well suited to a wide range of future uses that would benefit from the setting and connections, and there could be a substantial shift to create a new residential community with supporting facilities.

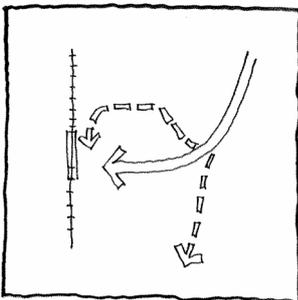
Access will remain a difficult issue but the redistribution of activities may alleviate the worst of the access problems. The opportunity to connect through the station from the west side of the railway line to the east is very important.

## Redevelopment Objectives

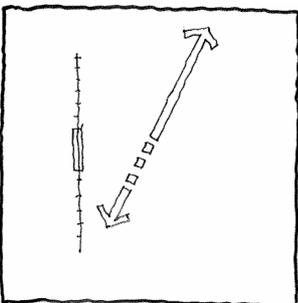


**To connect properly the station with the rest of the town.**

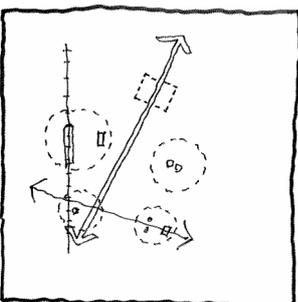
There are a number of routes that approach the station area but the station remains hidden. Rather it needs to become the hub of these routes as the most important single destination in the area.



**To make Station Road more significant.** This will remain the most important approach to and from the station for most users, providing an all-traffic route. At present it has no direct approach to the station. This can be improved as part of the redevelopment of the sites.

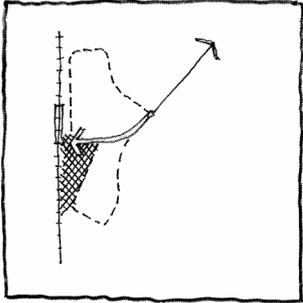


**To extend Manor Park Avenue towards the station and open countryside as the main pedestrian and cycle approach.** This can be achieved perceptually in the structure of the site and its internal green space, and physically through the creation of new pedestrian routes into the site and to and from the station.

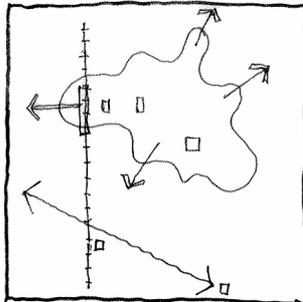


**To create a series of special places.** In addition to the station, there are a number of points in and around the site that have the potential to become special places, enhanced by landscape and the form, design and use of buildings. These include: the junction of Picts Lane and Station Road; the point at which the "extended" Manor Park Avenue meets the railway and the footpath; the single house on the southeast side of Picts Lane.

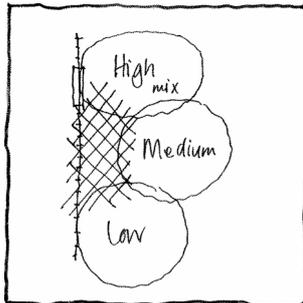
**To create improved access to and through the site.** The extension of Station Road should become the main route into the site, to the station and to the station car park, which should allow scope for enlargement, perhaps by decking. All internal routes will connect to this new street including the provision of improved pedestrian access to the station from the south.



**To provide a “green and blue” setting for development within the site.** There are two culverted streams running through the site which should be reopened. These are related to a number of important and protected mature trees. Together the streams and the trees should be celebrated as a new green space connected visually and by paths to surrounding green spaces and adding significant value to surrounding development. This may also help address flood risk issues. The green frontage to Picts Lane should be extended and enhanced to provide a link to, and ensure no adverse impact upon, the rural setting and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

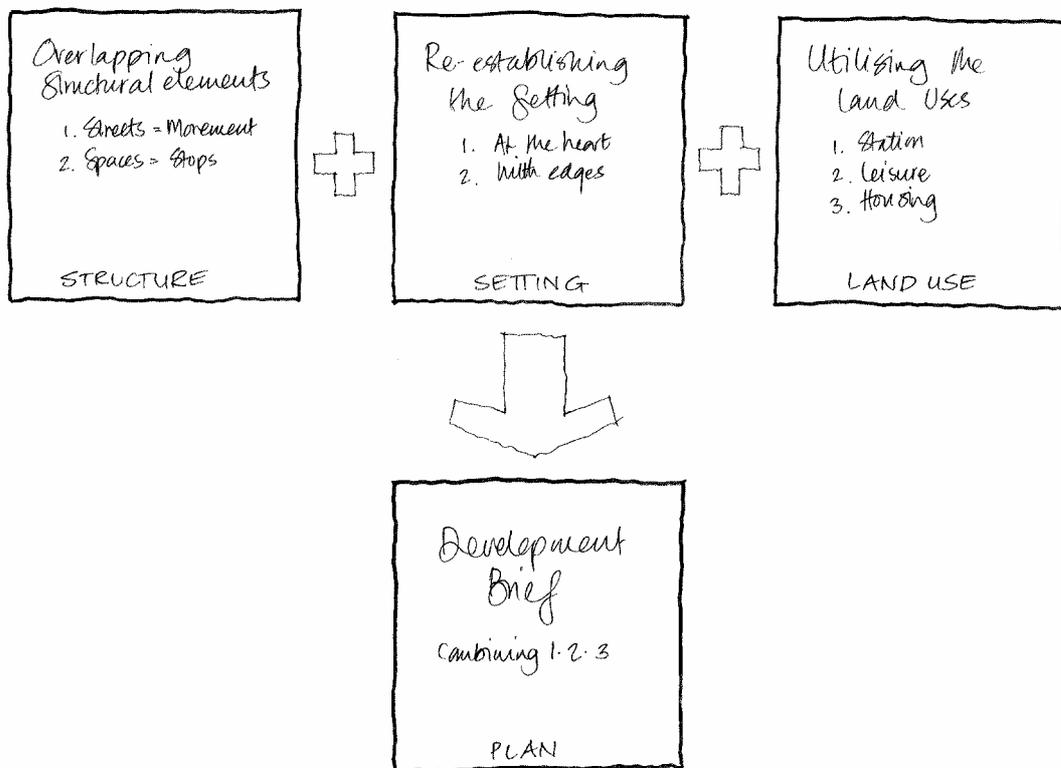


**To create a rich and diverse new development.** The mix of activities, building forms and styles and densities of development will vary across the site from relatively low density, housing development in the south to mixed-use, higher density development in the north.



# The Brief for Redevelopment

The Brief has three main elements that come together to structure the site. The brief defines the first two – Structure and Setting – in some detail as key requirements of the redevelopment of the site. The third, the mix of uses, retains a degree of flexibility because of the need to balance the appropriate mix of uses on the site, market demand and the economics of relocation of operational activities to enable the retention of jobs locally. However, the indicative layout would suggest a split of 50% housing and 50% employment.



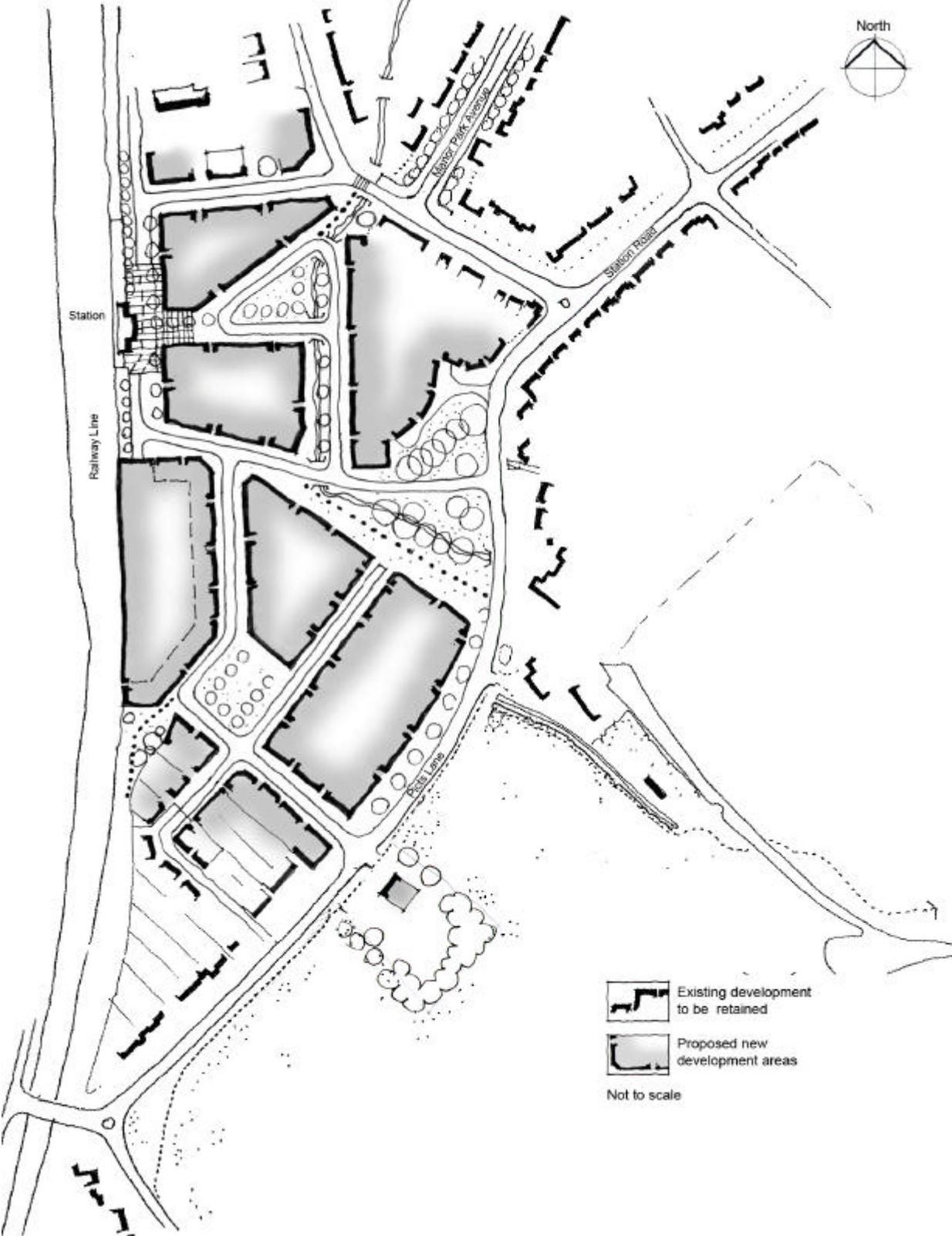
## A DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

This illustration is a development framework for the whole site which describes this structure of streets and spaces and how it could respond to its setting. It incorporates a new street and footpath network associated with green space and a new station forecourt that define sites for redevelopment while retaining the most important parts of what already exists.

The whole would create a much improved approach to the town from the station, and would create new homes and businesses in a highly sustainable location.

This structure has been conceived with a mind to land ownership and phased delivery, but it is not wholly capable of reflecting complex ownership boundaries if a coherent development form is to be created.

The components of the framework are described in detail below.



An overall development framework

## PHASING



Indicative phasing based on land ownership.

The site is envisaged to be developed over a number of years. The existing businesses (Howle Carbide and Blanchfords Builders Yard), would not be required to relocate unless and until it was advantageous to them to do so. (Refer to diagram left showing indicative phases based on land ownership)

Most of the contributions that would be expected to wider public infrastructure can be made on a phased basis, each site picking up its own proportion of the costs. However, that is not the case with the need for a bridge to provide pedestrian access from the Picts Lane site to the Princes Industrial Estate. This is essential infrastructure to ensure the new housing development in particular can gain easy pedestrian access to employment opportunities and thus reduce the need for local car journeys.

Given the likely phasing of the development, however, if each phase contributed an equal measure, the bridge may not be provided for perhaps 20 years. This would clearly put an unnecessary strain on the existing infrastructure and be an unacceptable time frame for the issue to be resolved.

It will therefore be expected that the bridge will be provided in full by the first phase of development.

## ACTIVITIES AND LAND USES

### The Range of Uses

Apart from the new street structure and open spaces, when phases of redevelopment come forward, the primary land uses to be considered for this site are housing and employment, presumed to be B1 in character, probably office based to ensure compatibility within a residential community. Alongside these primary uses there may be a range of secondary uses. These should include:

- **Car parking** associated with the station
- **Community Uses**
- **Pub** and/or **restaurant**

and in addition could include:

- **Hotel** accommodation
- **Small shops** serving the local population and station users and providing local services
- **Community facilities** of the range outlined in the WDF Core Strategy policy C17

Until the time of redevelopment, the existing uses remain on the site. The timetable for future redevelopment will be determined by the land-owners interests in redevelopment.

The **housing** will include 40% affordable units and be a diverse range from apartments, town houses and live work units nearest to the station and the north of the site to single family houses to the south of the site. This represents a range of densities of development:

- 50-60 dwellings per hectare in the vicinity of the station where the development will have a more urban form and consist of a mix of apartments and town houses in connected buildings, generally 3 storeys but up to 4 storeys high in key landmark locations
- 40-45 dwellings per hectare to the north of the site in houses and apartments with continuous frontages and a general height of 2 to 3 storeys
- 35 dwellings per hectare in the southern part of the site where single family houses with gardens predominate.

**Employment** would be a mix of small and especially medium office buildings and studios, and employment uses in the lower floors of residential buildings, and larger purpose built offices on a client not speculative basis, subject to local needs at the time of development. The aim is that employment should provide up to 40% of the built floorspace.

### **The Policy Context**

In the current Local Plan for the area, all the land that may become available for redevelopment is allocated for employment use. The emerging policy in the Wycombe Development Framework (WDF) envisages that these areas should be redeveloped with a mix of 60% housing and 40% employment uses. This is in response to the changing policy approach to releasing land that is in 'employment' uses for mixed use including housing as advocated in the Economy and Employment Land Review, a background study that forms part of the evidence base for the WDF.

However, there is a strong desire to safeguard against the loss of major employers. If redevelopment of any part of the site facilitates the relocation of the existing business on the site within the town, consideration would be given to altering the proportion of residential to employment in each phase, depending on the extent to which there are overriding benefits to the town that would otherwise not be realised.

This Brief for the Picts Lane site was prepared alongside the emerging Wycombe Development Framework. The Brief reflects the 'Preferred Option' for the future redevelopment of this site which was included in the Site Allocations document.

### **The Development Capacity of the Site**

The site identified in the emerging planning policy extends to some 5.7ha. However, there is potential for additional areas that could be developed which extend the overall area to approximately 7ha. Taking into account the need for open space and the provision of employment land uses, it is envisaged that the whole site could yield in the order of 100 dwellings and 2-2.5ha of employment land. It is anticipated that good design could yield more development, or a different balance of development.

## **SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES**

It is expected the following standards will be met as a minimum:

- A 3\* rating level for homes (Code for Sustainable Homes)
- BREEAM rating of very good (for non-residential development);
- At least 15% on-site renewable energy generation
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and grey water recycling
- Use of materials rated 1 or 2 in the BREEAM construction guide
- Provision of a combined heat and power facility
- the recycling of redundant materials arising from demolition and construction

**The first draft of this brief, for public consultation in November 2006, was prepared by David Lock Associates.**

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