

DOWNTON ROAD, SALISBURY



Development Brief

January 2005



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We try to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate at the time of going to press. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Salisbury District Council and Westbury Homes does not guarantee it, and does not accept liability for any error or omission.

This information can be made available in other formats, upon request. It can also be downloaded from www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning/downton-road



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Development Brief (hereafter referred to as the Brief) has been prepared jointly by officers of Salisbury District Council and representatives of the proposed developers of the site, Westbury Homes. Copies of the Brief are available to purchase from the Forward Planning Team at Salisbury District Council, 61 Wyndham Road, Salisbury SP1 3AH. Alternatively, the Brief can be inspected using the Council's website at www.salisbury.gov.uk
- 1.2 The Brief was adopted by the District Council on the 15th December 2004, and forms Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Adopted Local Plan and will be a material consideration the council will take into account when determining a planning application for the development of the site. The Brief comprises a written statement together with illustrative material including a masterplan. However, because the Brief is supplementary, this guidance does not have the same status as the Adopted Local Plan and it should not be read in isolation, but cross referenced to the relevant planning policies.
- 1.3 The masterplan (see Figure 12 on page 24) forms part of the Brief and indicates the general principles that should be applied to any detailed planning application. The text of the Brief indicates areas where specific options exist and also sets out principles that are more firmly established. The Brief describes the contextual analysis and objectives upon which the masterplan is based and together they provide a benchmark to assess future applications for planning permission.

Purpose of the Brief

1.4 The purpose of the Brief is:

- to describe the extent of the site and its context within Salisbury;
- to identify the planning policies and constraints which affect the site;
- to outline the types of development that would, in principle, be acceptable to the Local Planning Authority and highlight opportunities for the enhancement of the surrounding environment;
- to ensure new development is of the highest quality, sympathetic to its surroundings and designed in a manner that preserves and enhances the special character of the area;
- to inform both the community and prospective developers of the standard of development that will be expected together with any necessary improvements that may be required off site, including contributions by means of legal agreements;
- to establish a benchmark for quality and offer guidance as to how this may be achieved;
- to ensure that any new development proposals are well integrated into the established surrounding settlement patterns and facilitate easy movement to local employment and amenities such as shops, schools and public transport routes;
- to ensure that any new development is based on the principle of sustainability.

2.0 Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 This Brief relates to land allocated for development in the Adopted Local Plan (policy H2F) and should be cross-referenced to the other relevant policies in that plan. The relevant policies are summarised opposite. The Downton Road, Salisbury site was allocated to assist in meeting the housing (including affordable housing) needs of the district up to 2011. Development will commence in phase 1 of the plan (before 2006) and be completed in phase 2 (beyond 2006). The site is expected to provide approximately 120 houses for residential development along with community facilities in the form of a shop and a surgery (where these are established as necessary), affordable housing, education provision and a contribution towards highway improvements including a bus lane.

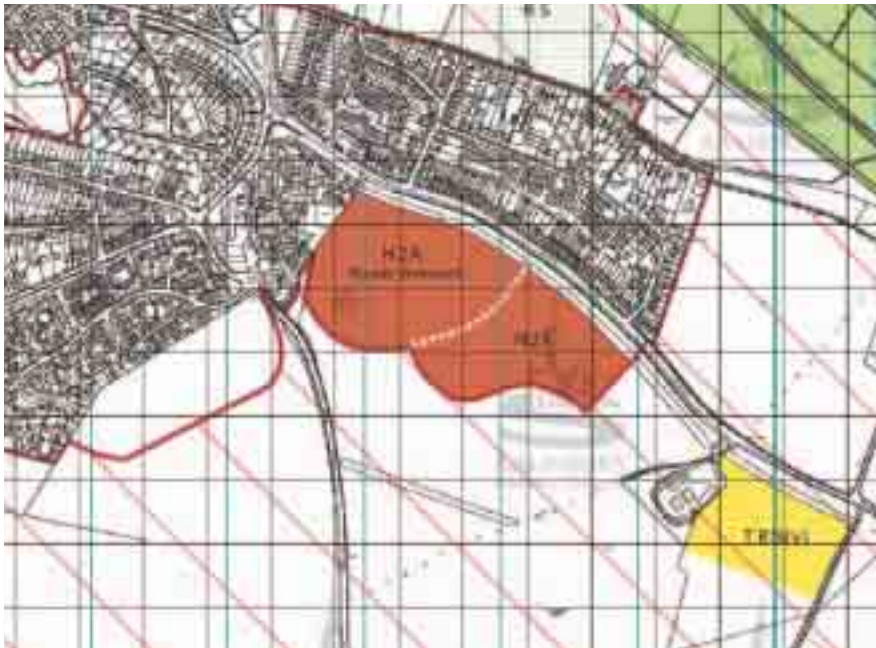


Figure 1: Local Plan Proposals Map

General Policies

- G1 Sustainable Development
- G2 General Criteria for Development
- G8 Groundwater Protection
- G9 Planning Obligations

Design Policies

- D1 Extensive Development Proposals
- D7 Site Analysis Requirement

Housing Policies

- H2(F) Allocation of Land at Downton Road
- H25 Affordable Housing

Conservation Policies

- CN20 Protection of Archaeology
- CN21 Protection of Archaeology
- CN22 Protection of Archaeology
- CN23 Protection of Archaeology

Transportation Policies

- TR1 Sustainable Transportation
- TR11 Parking Standards
- TR12 Sustainable Links in Development
- TR13 Footpath Improvement
- TR14 Cycle Parking

Recreation Policies

- R2 Open Space Requirements
- R4 Indoor Community and Leisure Provision
- R17 Public Rights of Way
- R18 Expansion of Public Rights of Way

3.0 The Site and its Wider Context

- 3.1 This section of the Brief looks at the site in more detail and examines how it relates to its surroundings. It has been prepared following site appraisal work which examined and recorded the existing landscape character of the site and the countryside beyond, the characteristics of surrounding neighbourhoods, and the visual characteristics, particularly in relation to the wider setting of Salisbury. The key characteristics that will influence the way in which the site is developed are listed at the end of this section and are then used to inform the design principles set out in section 4.

The site and its context

- 3.2 The general site location is shown in Figure 2. It is about four hectares (ten acres) in extent and located approximately 1.5 km from Salisbury city centre, to the south east of the city to the west of Downton Road. Odstock Road lies further to the west. As shown in Figure 3, the site itself forms part of a larger agricultural field on the north facing slope of the Avon Valley. The remainder of the field, outside the site boundary, is open countryside. The field slopes from the south west corner at its highest point at approximately 90m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to 55m AOD at its lowest point in the north east corner. The slope across the site ranges from approximately 1:9 to 1:17. The layout of the development will accordingly need to be sympathetic to the slope and contours of the land.
- 3.3 Figure 1 shows the relationship of the site to the Rowbarrow site already developed, and, in yellow, the proposed park-and-ride development to the south-east. As part of that earlier development, Odstock Road and Downton Road were connected by the Rowbarrow link road. Part of Rowbarrow now forms the northern edge of this site. The construction of this link road has resulted in a localised steep embankment between the road and the site. The embankment is at its highest at the junction of the link road and Downton Road.



Figure 2: Location Plan

3.4 The site boundary illustrated in Figure 3 is roughly defined by Rowbarrow to the north and Downton Road to the east. The southern and western boundaries are more arbitrary and flexible. The south east boundary is roughly defined by the extent of the built edge of Salisbury on the opposite side of Downton Road. To the south and west of the site, the larger field extends out to the field boundaries and existing hedgerows and treebelts.



Figure 3: Site boundary

3.5 All vegetation and landscape features of significance to the site are on its boundaries and can therefore be largely retained. Vegetation / features of importance are:

- a mature beech shelter-belt along the north east boundary;
- new structure planting along the north west boundary;
- open grassland to the south.



top left and top right: open grassland
bottom left and bottom right: mature tree belts

- 3.6 The mature tree-belt appears to be in good condition and forms an important landscape feature within the surrounding town/landscape. There is new structure planting along the north west boundary of the site. The development will provide an opportunity to enhance this planting.

Landscape character

- 3.7 One of the defining characteristics of Salisbury as a city is its landscape setting. Despite the prominence of the Avon Valley, the city is largely contained by landforms on all sides, by Salisbury Plain and the West Wiltshire Downs to the north, and by the South Wessex Downs to the south. The Downton Road site itself is located on rising ground to the south of the city and the more elevated areas to the south of the site form part of the landscape backdrop.



View across the city from Old Sarum illustrating the landscape setting

The Downton Road site contributes to the landscape setting and new development on the site must include a well defined landscape structure that seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- A form of development that allows open space and new landscape structure to connect with the surrounding countryside;
 - A new pattern of planting and open space that fits in with the patchwork of open land and woodland blocks that characterise the setting of city to the south.
- 3.8 The landscape and open space structure should include open grassland, clumps of trees and tree belts connecting the new development with the open countryside to the south. There is a clear opportunity to reinforce the existing landscape character and influence the setting and the character of new development.

Visual characteristics

- 3.9 The setting of Salisbury is an important influencing factor on any development on the edge of the city. In considering the setting of the city, development needs to take account of views out from the city towards surrounding countryside as well as views into and across the city from the site and from key approaches. The site is located on rising ground and the highest ground to the south forms the skyline when viewed from a number of places within the city. Development in this area will be designed to avoid any significant impacts on the setting of Salisbury thus maintaining the landscape backdrop to the city and preserving the skyline. The lower slopes to the north and east are relatively well contained.



Views of the Cathedral from the site

- 3.10 Like many elevated areas on the edge of Salisbury one of the most significant characteristics of the site is the view towards the Cathedral, focusing on the spire. This is particularly important on elevated ground in the southern half of the site. The views out from the site not only take in the Cathedral but also include Old Sarum and the rest of the city. These views are important factors that will influence the form of development.
- 3.11 The site, located on sloping ground, varies in its visibility and sense of enclosure. Lower slopes to the north and east of the site are relatively well contained visually by the mature beech tree belt along Downton Road which screens and filters views into and out of the site. Over time the new tree belt along the southern side of the link road will also help screen and filter views of the site as it becomes established. Higher slopes in the south of the site are more open and visible from parts of Salisbury, Old Sarum and other distant ridgelines. In these views the site is seen in the context of existing housing development.
- 3.12 The site is screened from views from the open countryside to the south by the Harnham Hill Ridge. Principle views to the site are from the footpath along the southern boundary, from Odstock Road, from the link road and adjacent properties and from distant viewpoints to the northwest, north and east.

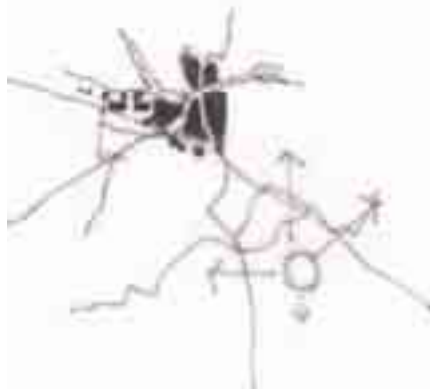
Urban character and context

3.13 The site is located on the edge of Salisbury and the overriding built context is clearly suburban to the north and east. The neighbourhood areas immediately adjacent to the site comprise housing estates built over the last few decades whose character and layout provide few positive references to the way in which this site should be developed.

3.14 Although the historic part of Harnham has an attractive and distinctive character, its urban form and building types are largely influenced by ancient routeways and the proximity to the river and the river crossing. Although it has all the good characteristics of an historic settlement with tight urban form, connected streets and continuous building frontages its qualities and its character largely derive from its importance as a bridging point and as the natural meeting point for a number of key routes into the city.

3.15 The stronger influence on Downton Road is its landscape setting and its wider role in relation to the setting of the city. The open

Historic Harnham located on valley floor/valley sides - tight urban form linked to convergence of routes and bridging point



Downton Road located on more elevated ground more open in character

landscape and woodland blocks beyond the site indicate a development form that is more in tune with its landscape context rather than its urban context. In the distant past wealthy landowners wishing to locate themselves beyond the city boundary would build their villas and country estates in open countryside to make the most of the landscape setting and to impose their own designed landscapes on the countryside. These estates are now part and parcel of our built heritage and they provide an alternative model for placing contemporary built development on the edge of the city. In particular they are reminders that the creation of a strong landscape structure can provide a very effective setting for new buildings. Salisbury has a number of historic parklands and country houses dotted around its periphery and this in itself is a distinctive and characteristic part of the setting of the city. These historic estates are illustrated in Figure 4.

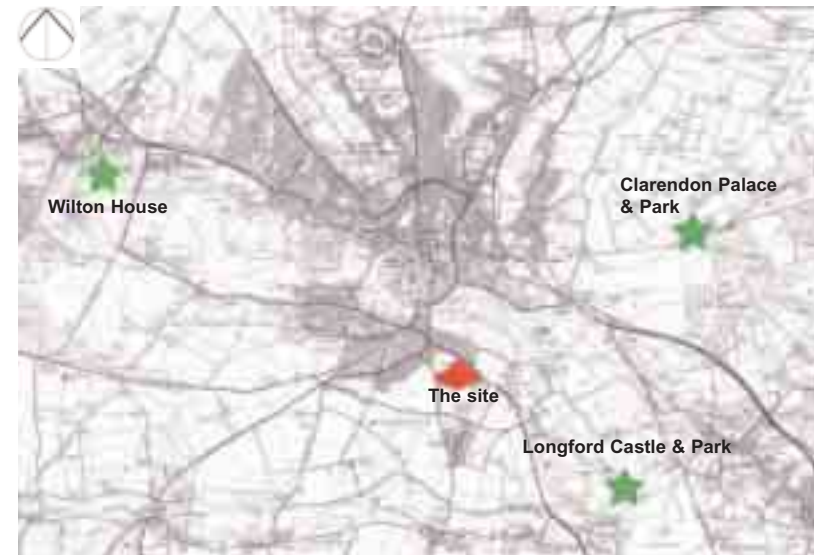


Figure 4: Historic parklands/gardens form part of the setting of Salisbury

- 3.16 To the south of the site is a field, and beyond into the open countryside. Development on this site must provide a buffer between the existing hard urban edge and the countryside beyond. Therefore, the natural focus for the Downton Road site is quite different from the existing development in Harnham and the new development requires a form of design that is more suited to its natural setting.

Ecology

- 3.17 The site is characterised by a neutral grassland ground cover which supports a range of species characteristic of calcareous (chalk) grassland, which has been subject to low intensity grazing for some time. Calcareous grassland is a UK biodiversity action plan habitat which is well represented in Wiltshire. There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites immediately adjacent to the site. Existing hedgerows and shelterbelts are largely unaffected by development. The proposed landscape structure should provide open spaces and a green corridor in which new habitats can be managed to enhance their ecological value.

Little Woodbury Ancient Monument

- 3.18 The landscape setting of the Little Woodbury Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is an important consideration. The SAM is located on the ridgeline south of the site, although it is physically and visually separated from the site by landform and the existing hedgerow and tree belt that forms part of the southern boundary. Development in this area will be designed to avoid any significant impacts on the setting of the Little Woodbury SAM.

On-Site Archaeology

- 3.19 Further archaeological investigations will be undertaken prior to construction to ensure the recording and/or protection of any finds as appropriate. These investigations will involve trial trenching, and the project design for this has been agreed with Wiltshire County Council's archaeologist.

Access and connectivity

- 3.20 Access from the development would be required for vehicles to the local highway network and for pedestrian and cycles travelling to more local key destinations and facilities. Such locations include:

- employment;
- local schools;
- local shops, leisure centre and other community facilities within the city centre;
- the proposed community hall;
- bus stops and other public transport facilities;
- network of footpaths/cyclepaths.

Vehicular access

- 3.21 Vehicle access to the development would be from Rowbarrow. Two points of access are required by the County Highways Authority to serve this development.



Existing footway on Downton Road

Pedestrian access

- 3.22 Pedestrian footways are already provided on the north side of Rowbarrow and on the south side in the vicinity of the community land, on Odstock Road and Downton Road. Pedestrian routes are provided into the city centre.
- 3.23 Pedestrian links should be provided from the development to the surrounding footway network principally at the main vehicular accesses. In this way, access would be achieved to the surrounding footway network, the city centre, local schools, and bus stops.

Cyclists

- 3.24 Intermittent on-street and off-street cycle paths are provided in the vicinity of the site including on Odstock Road and Downton Road. Salisbury District Council have proposals to add additional routes, including the extension of the Odstock Road route past Rowbarrow to tie in to the route to the city centre and the provision of a route on Rowbarrow. Financial contributions to these cycle facilities will be made.



Existing junction of Downton Road and Rowbarrow

- 3.25 As a part of the development, cycle lanes will be provided on Rowbarrow. The details of the scheme will be agreed with Wiltshire County Council.
- 3.26 Access for cyclists will be provided on the carriageway at the main vehicular junctions providing links to the existing and proposed cycle routes of the wider area and the local facilities.

Buses

- 3.27 Buses currently run along Downton Road, Odstock Road and Rowbarrow into the city centre. Bus stops are provided on Downton Road adjacent to the north-east boundary of the site, on Odstock Road to the south of the junction with Rowbarrow, and on Rowbarrow adjacent to the site. The Downton Road park and ride is planned to be open by Summer 2005 and is 200 metres from the southern boundary of the site. In conjunction with the provision of the park and ride, Salisbury District Council is proposing a southbound bus lane on Downton Road. Contributions to the bus lane that are reasonably related to the development will be provided.