

Case Study 5: Town Centre Mixed Use

Context Appraisal

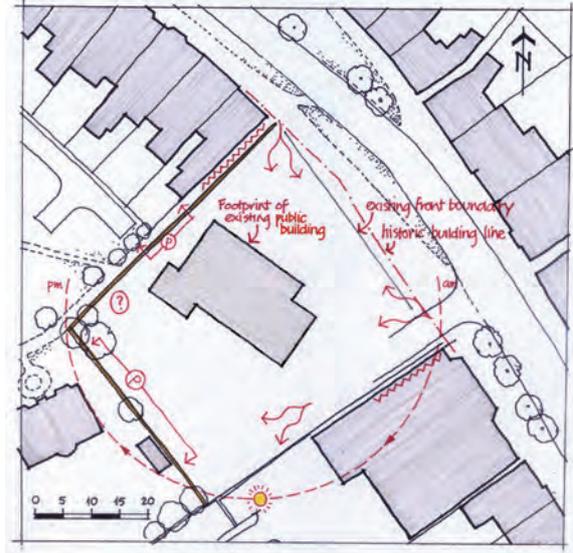


7.50 The site is located on the west side of a high street in an historic town. It is at the northern end of the shopping area with larger 3 storey shops fronting on to the south of the site and smaller scale (2 storey) shops to the north. The slightly winding High Street widens to the north and is more enclosed to the south.

7.51 The building line of the High Street is a key component of its character. Its subtle curvature remains largely intact. The existing public building on the site has broken the building line, by straightening and recessing the front boundary. It is substantially set back, underlining the break in the continuity of the street frontage. To the back (or west) of the site stands a house in its walled garden, and immediately to the north of this is the medieval church, which is a local landmark, glimpsed from many points in the High Street.

7.52 A network of alleys and footpaths are aligned at right angles to the High Street, enhancing the connectivity of the area.

Site Appraisal

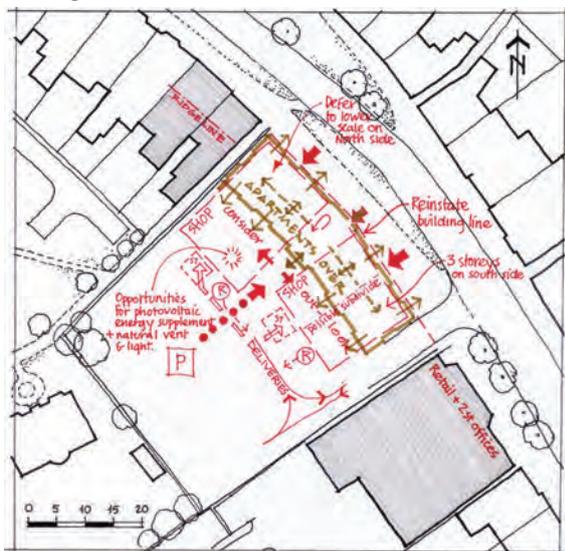


7.53 The existing site utilisation is poor and somewhat wasteful, with the public building set at angles to all of the site boundaries, creating poorly defined spaces around much of the building.

7.54 An historic brick wall delineates the northern boundary of the site. This feature comprises the main historic asset of the site, and its general maintenance is considered essential. Mature trees on the north western corner are also an asset, especially as it forms the interface with the church yard at this point. These considerations, plus the need to respect the privacy of the 18th century house on the western boundary, reinforce the need to locate the bulk of the development towards the high street.

7.55 The existing access driveway is well located, and due to the curvature of the high street is probably in the best position regarding sight lines. The site slopes gradually from west to east. The orientation of the site is quite favourable for passive solar energy generation.

Design Concept



7.56 The primary objective is to follow the building line as closely as possible to reinstate the street frontage. This suggests two shops either side of an entrance door and hallway access for the apartments above taking up the pivotal wedge shape between.

7.57 Due to the lower building heights and glimpses of the church tower on the north side of the site, the development should be two storey on this side and three storey on the southern wing. It is important that the outlook from the west facing apartments avoids the view of what could be an unattractive flat roof. The development should be as carbon neutral as possible by incorporating natural daylight, natural ventilation, and renewable energy regeneration.

7.58 Main pedestrian access to both shops and apartments should be via the street frontage. As some parking can be accommodated on site, it is recognised that pedestrian access will also be via the rear of the development. This should be as attractive and secure as possible.

Indicative Design



7.59 The building footprint closely follows the design concept for the street frontage. The entrance lobby for the apartments is accessed from the front, with cycle storage and recycling storage easily accessed from the rear.

7.60 The apartments are arranged as three per floor per wing, totalling 9 units. Each end apartment has dual outlook. All have shallow balconies. The flat roof to the rear of the shops is a living/green roof, with combined northlights & PV panels.

7.61 The access road serves a delivery bay and car park sited as far away from windows as possible. Rear pedestrian access to the shops and to the apartment lobby would be securely designed for when the shops are closed. The building has a pitched roof on the frontage to relate sympathetically to its neighbours. The development should provide opportunities for balanced elevation design, reducing undue emphasis on horizontal lines in this context.

Case Study 6: Edge of Town Centre Mixed Use Site

Context Appraisal



7.62 The site lies directly behind the range of shops facing the high street to the south. On the east and north side of the site a busy road leads out of town. An attractive small green lined with houses is situated on the opposite side of this road. On the west side of the site, a minor street is mainly fronted by Victorian terrace houses and a public building. Further to the west, the spire of the fine neo-gothic church is a local landmark.

7.63 The site is situated at the interface between the shopping area to the south, some commercial premises just behind these, and areas of town centre housing. Due to its 'transitional' location between a number of land uses a mixed scheme would be appropriate. A mixed use scheme adjacent to the town centre would also promote diversity and vitality in a sustainable location.

7.64 Having a relatively central situation, the site is conveniently located for local services, facilities and bus stops, with the railway station a little further on.

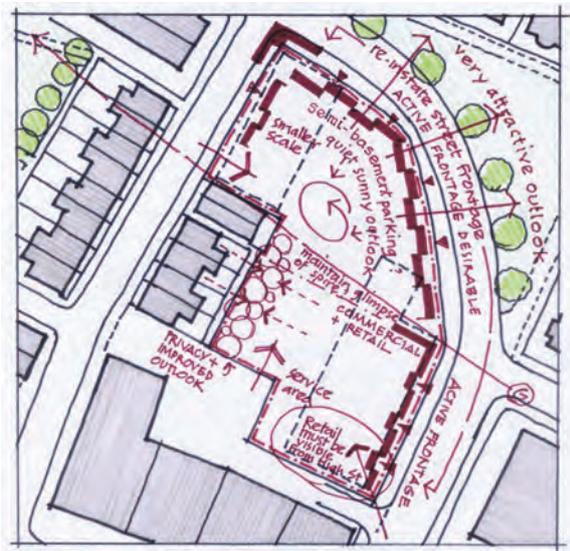
Site Appraisal



7.65 The site is occupied by a continuation of the Victorian terrace houses on its south western side. It will be important for the development to respect the private side of these houses. Most of the eastern and central part of the site is an unsightly collection of single storey warehouses and an associated lorry park.

7.66 The site slopes down gently to the north. Boundaries are mainly chain link fences and hoardings, presenting an unattractive frontage to the green and the entrance to the town. The southern boundary is shared with the service areas to the rear of the 3 storey shops and offices facing the High Street.

Design Concept



7.67 The primary aim should be to reinstate the frontage of the main road to create an edge to the green and an improved entry to the centre. The development proposals should 'step down' the sloping site somewhat, to create skyline interest. A 'natural' break in the proposed land uses suggests itself at the turn of the corner. The potential view of the church spire could be realised at this point.

7.68 The corner at the northern point of the site should be 'celebrated', as this is seen on approaching the town centre. The frontages to the side street should diminish in scale. The area behind the frontages in the core of the site will be sunny and relatively quiet, as it is located in the 'sound shadow' of the proposed building. The area should have a definite sense of place, and substantial boundary planting will be necessary at the rear of the terrace housing and public hall.

Indicative Scheme



7.69 Apartments on the northern side of the site would have good outlook on both sides of the building, ensuring natural ventilation and daylight, and access to the sunny quiet court and views of the green.

7.70 Entrances on the street frontage, but the staircases would also be accessible from the basement garage area. The basement garage, is situated 1 metre below average pavement level. The roof is pitched to allow for the installation of photovoltaic panels, and to allow for efficient rainwater collection.

7.71 A mixed use building, either offices or residential units could be accommodated within the storeys above. The block has a maximum depth of 13 – 14 metres, which allows for good natural lighting and ventilation. It is also a reasonable depth for future conversion to a commercial use such as a hotel, or corridor access flats. The incorporation of balconies and terraces would provide valuable amenity space for the apartments to the north.