

*Working towards...*

*The Spelthorne Local Development Framework*

# Initial Draft Bridge Street Car Park, Staines Planning Brief



Supplementary Planning Document

May 2006

**Planning Brief**  
**for**  
**BRIDGE STREET CAR PARK**  
**BRIDGE STREET, STAINES**

**Initial Draft**

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Planning Brief is to set out the Council's requirements as Local Planning Authority for the proposed redevelopment of the Bridge Street Car Park site.
- 1.2 The brief proposes that the primary use of the site should be residential with an element of public and private car parking at ground and any basement level. Any scheme must include provision for the Sea Cadets unless an alternative appropriate and acceptable site can be found for them. The resulting development must be of exceptional quality given the site's prominent location with the Staines Conservation Area, adjoining the River Thames and at an important 'gateway' into Staines town centre.
- 1.3 It is the Council's intention in due course to formally adopt this document as a Supplementary Planning Document as part of its new Local Development Framework. Currently this draft brief has no statutory status and has been prepared to facilitate early consideration of the site's future. It nevertheless is a statement of the Council's intention for the site and will be a material consideration in its determination of any planning application which might come forward prior to the brief's formal adoption.

## 2. Description of the Site

- 2.1 The exact location of the site is shown on plan 1. It is some 0.714 hectares (1.71 acres) in extent. It is broadly rectangular in shape and is accessed from Bridge Street via a shared entrance with Ashby House and Hanover House. It is in Staines town centre and, being adjacent to Staines Bridge, is prominent and at an important gateway into the town. The site also has an important frontage to the River Thames.
- 2.2 The Planning Brief site currently has two levels of public car parking with the first floor level on a deck which is broadly level with the height of Clarence Street and the approach to Staines Bridge which are both elevated above the original prevailing ground levels.
- 2.3 The car park was constructed in the late 1980s as part of a comprehensive development scheme involving the redevelopment of a brewery site immediately to the north owned by Courage and the car park site owned by the Borough Council. Courage built new headquarter offices to the north of the car park and converted the historic brewery tower fronting Church Street to residential use. The single decked car park has 280 spaces and was also constructed to provide both public parking spaces, some of which are used by the offices on weekdays under a license agreement (100 spaces). A new headquarters for Staines and Egham Sea Cadets was also provided as part of the development in the south west corner of the site. A dedicated riverside walk was also created linking existing sections of towpath either side of the site.
- 2.4 The site is located in the Staines Conservation Area and also adjacent to Staines Bridge, a Grade II Listed Building and close to other listed building and historic structures. This part of the Conservation Area is characterised by development built up to the back of the pavement. The site has a river frontage of some 70 metres. The site is in a prominent position with longer distance views of the site from the tow paths on both north and south banks of the river. The Thames at this point has a slight curve with the Planning Brief site on the outside of this curve. Long views of the site are therefore possible for up to half a mile or more from the Thames both from the south and the west. The development will be clearly visible along side/behind the historic Staines Bridge. The site is also prominent when viewed from within the Conservation Area particularly along Clarence Street but also from Bridge Street.
- 2.5 The site is within the defined 1:100 year flood risk area. The Conservation Area boundary, nearby listed buildings and flood area are shown on Plan 2. Plan 3 shows the important viewpoints.
- 2.6 The Borough Council owns the freehold of the site. All relevant ownerships in the vicinity of the site are shown on Plan 4.

## 4. Development Requirements

- 4.1 The Council's requirement is for a residential development which subject to the findings of a current car parking study of the town centre may require an element of public car parking to be retained and either provides for the retention or rebuilding of the existing Sea Cadet accommodation, or enables their relocation to an appropriate alternative site. It will require 50% of the dwellings to be affordable of which no more than one third are to be for shared ownership with the remainder for rent. 80% or more of the dwellings are to be one and two bedroom units.
- 4.2 The development must be comprehensive and of an exceptionally high quality to reflect the site's prominent location at a 'gateway' into the town centre, adjacent to the River Thames and listed buildings and within a conservation area. Any planning application must be accompanied by a detailed design statement including a Flood Risk Assessment and any scheme will be required to demonstrate how it will enhance this part of the Staines Conservation Area. The Council's guidance on preparing such statements is set out at Appendix 2.
- 4.3 The specific requirements of any development on this site are as follows:
- a) Design
    - i. Massing - the mass of the building will need to be such that it fits in with the pattern and scale of buildings in the locality and, in particular, care must be taken not to harm the setting of the nearby listed buildings including the 2/3 storey late Georgian/early Victorian properties on the north side of Clarence Street and of Staines Bridge.
    - ii. Location of buildings - This should reflect the surrounding development patterns which reinforces the existing street pattern and alignment and position of Staines Bridge. The frontage of any new building to the River Thames should be set back sufficiently to allow long distance views along the towpath through the pedestrian tunnel through which the towpath passes under Staines Bridge. This is likely to require development behind a line defined by the north side of the pedestrian tunnel and the front elevation of Hanover House. The new building will need to achieve an appropriate separation from Staines Bridge and its approach to enable access to the arches under the Bridge including one which has pedestrian access through it. The position of the building will need to meet the Environment Agency's normal requirement for a minimum eight metres wide strip area for access to and maintenance of the River Thames of eight metres wide.
    - iii. Height - this should not exceed the height of adjoining buildings and not result in the properties on the north side of Clarence Street being over dominated. Clarence Street provides a particularly important vista within the Staines Conservation Area. The street rises from Market Square to its junction with Bridge Street as do the floor levels of the buildings. To preserve the visual integrity and prominence of this important group of buildings the height of the new development should not appear to be greater than the top of the parapet of no 41 Clarence Street when viewed along the street from outside the Blue Anchor Hotel at Market Square. This does not mean the building height should not exceed the actual

height of no 41 but that along this line of view it does not give the appearance of being greater. The building(s) will also need to achieve a satisfactory transition to the scale of Hanover House to the west and relate appropriately to the existing Sea Cadet building if it is retained. The development should not obscure the important view from Staines Bridge of the historic St Mary's Church in Church Street to the north west of the site.

- iv. External Appearance and Materials - This will need to be of a high standard of design and use of materials reflecting and complementing the character of the nearby listed buildings and the character of this part of the Staines Conservation Area. The elevations and roofline will need to be appropriately articulated and materials chosen to break up the scale of the building and reflect the character of this part of the Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings. Care will be required in designing a structure which will be elevated above the prevailing ground level to ensure that the overall design of this element is attractive and the parking area does not detract. Any lift shafts or plant areas required for the development should not be readily seen from outside the site.
- v. Secured by Design - The development will be expected to be designed to minimise the opportunities for crime and will be expected to meet Surrey Police 'Secured by Design' standards (Contact Vic Smith, Crime Reduction Officer - 01784 444269).
- vi. People with Disabilities - in accordance with Policy H7 of the local Plan 20% of the dwellings provided on site should be suitable for people with disabilities.
- vii. Public Art - an artistic element should be included as an integral part of the overall design of the building in accordance with Policy BE3 of the Local Plan and the Council's 'Public Art Policy for Spelthorne' March 2005.

b) Access and Parking

The site access onto Bridge Street is at an already congested part of the highway network. The Council recognise, however, that where the opportunities for housing are optimised on sites within or close to town centres and there is proximity to both a range of facilities and good public transport there is more scope to limit the travel needs of these residents by private cars. Housing on such sites can be particularly attractive to these people who do not wish to have a car or make only limited use of one. Any development proposal must be accompanied by a detail transport assessment which must be prepared in consultation with Surrey County Council's Transportation Development Control Section. The Council has the following access and parking requirements:

- i. Vehicular Access - the new development should not significantly add to the existing traffic problems in the vicinity experienced at peak times. The extent of any impact will be dependent on a number of factors including the number and size of the new dwellings, the parking provision provided for them, encouragement given to residents to walk or use alternative transport to the private car, the amount of public car parking retained and its pattern of use and the differences in movement patterns of those occupying the residential properties and those of a public car park.