



Southend on Sea Borough Council January 2004



Redevelopment of Heath House & Carby House
Victoria Avenue

Project Management Brief VIC/PM/01

Appendix 1

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF -

Victoria Avenue Office Area

Phase 1 - comprising land occupied by Carby House, 73 Victoria Avenue and Heath House, 61-71 Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea

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Location Plan



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8 Jan 2004

Scale 1:1250

Victoria Avenue Office Area

Phase 1 - comprising land occupied by Carby House, 73 Victoria Avenue and Heath House, 61-71 Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea

The aim of this Planning Brief is to outline the development potential and planning objectives for the northern section of a larger redevelopment site known as the Victoria Avenue Office Area. This area is Southend's principal commercial district located within the Central Business District and forms the gateway to the Town Centre.

The whole Victoria Avenue Office Area is identified as providing a significant opportunity for regeneration as a high quality office quarter with an emphasis on technology orientated businesses along with a complementary mix of uses to create a vibrant working environment including an element of residential use. Studies have led to the conclusion that a suitable mix on the whole site would be in the range of 60% employment floorspace, 20% complementary commercial uses including hotel, cafe/bars and some element of small retail units, and 20% residential.

To deliver this mixed scheme and provide an initial catalyst it is considered that the northern section of the site, which is adjacent to existing residential premises, would be most suited to provide the required residential element. This would allow for a consolidation and differentiation of the commercial uses in the southern area where integration with the town centre and civic quarter is more appropriate.

The site to which this Brief refers is phase 1. It is in a key location - acting as the 'front door' to the wider redevelopment of the Victoria Avenue Area. This phase of development will therefore set the benchmark for the high quality and design standards expected for the remaining phases. As such it will be expected to integrate fully with a wider scheme and demonstrate a clear contribution to the creation of a distinctive place and promotes ease of access to and through the development.

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The Planning Policy context for this brief is provided by the adopted Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan. This was adopted in 1994 and contains policies and proposals which set out the main considerations on which planning applications for development will be decided and appropriate development opportunities promoted. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan was adopted in April 2001, and provides a relatively up to date strategic planning context.

In addition to this adopted planning policy framework for the town, Government Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) has included Southend, along with the rest of South Essex, within the Thames Gateway national regeneration priority as Thames Gateway South Essex. The Government's vision for the Thames Gateway is to create a strong and diverse sub-region with a comprehensive transport system, a skilled workforce and a quality environment for new businesses and homes. Thames Gateway was also included in the ODPM July Statement on Sustainable Communities as a growth area.

Policies to deliver the Government's agenda for TGSE will incorporate the requirement to achieve a jobs led regeneration within Southend. It is acknowledged that economic regeneration will depend not only on quality environments and a supply of suitable premises, but also a well skilled labour force and the social infrastructure to support a healthy, educated society. This includes recruitment and retention of key frontline workers. The Government has also recognised this as a national priority within its Key Worker Housing Programme. This need for key worker accommodation is in addition to the broader policy approach to meeting affordable housing needs in the town.

Policies to deliver the aims of TGSE will also incorporate the wider national agenda of Sustainable Development and Urban Renaissance, including action that secures significant improvement to the vitality and environment of urban areas so that they are more attractive places in which to live, work, shop and spend time.

The regeneration of the Thames Gateway is a national priority for the Government and as a result both Planning Policy Guidance for the South East and the Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan contain policies which reinforce this priority.

Southend on Sea Borough Council is committed to providing economic regeneration and sustainable development, and to embracing within its revised planning framework for the town the principles of Urban Renaissance.

In the mean-time it is driving forward this national and sub-regional agenda locally. This has involved reassessing the potential of the Victoria Avenue Office Area and reinforcing the Urban Renaissance principles through a commitment to development which:

- achieves design excellence;
- assists in creating economic strength;
- takes environmental responsibility
- prioritises social well-being

REGENERATION CONTEXT

Within the planning context, the Council has recognised that the Victoria Avenue Office Area, outlined on the location plan, offers a window of opportunity in this key location and prime employment area. This will build on a number of major investment schemes being progressed by the Council which seek to create a distinctive and attractive town centre environment, raise the image and perception of the Borough and improve accessibility. These include Sshape, the new Pier Entrance, Pier Hill Improvements, the Cliff Gardens and major investment in the transport system including the Local Transport Plan Major Scheme. Of major importance to

the town and its entrepreneurs is the multi million pound new University campus being developed minutes away from this office area within the heart of the town centre. Knowledge creation, technology transfer and business development is key to the regeneration programme focussed in the centre of town.

A series of detailed studies and consultations have been undertaken exploring the future potential of the Victoria Avenue Office Area and its role in the wider town centre renaissance context. These include:

- Chesterton PLC - "Victoria Avenue Office - Area Future Potential Study" (Final Report May 2001)
- Town Centre Scrutiny Report - "Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012" (2001)
- Buro Happold/DTZ Pineda - Consultation Framework Document "Town Centre Study and Master Plan Framework" (2003)

Based on the information from these studies and the views of the local community the Council has resolved that the Victoria Avenue Office Area should positively contribute to the vision of the Town Centre which is to become –

"THE foremost town centre of South Essex, Thames Gateway and beyond, offering an increasingly vibrant mix of shopping, cultural and leisure activities, supported by thriving commercial, education and technology sectors".

Therefore the vision for The Victoria Avenue Office Area is –

"TO provide an attractive and vibrant gateway to the town centre, being complementary to the overall vision to ensure that Southend Town Centre is the foremost town centre of South Essex, Thames Gateway and beyond"

The Council has further agreed that it should actively encourage redevelopment of the Victoria Avenue Office Area to provide a contemporary urban environment centred on commercial activity but encompassing a mixture of uses that would breathe life and vitality into this important centrally located area. The Planning Objectives are contained within its adopted "Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2001-2012". This strategy is the result of extensive public consultation and examination of issues by the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site subject to this brief is shown on the location Plan as Phase 1 and is situated at the northern end of the Victoria Avenue Office Area. It is a 0.9 hectare site comprising land occupied by Carby House, 73 Victoria Avenue and Heath House, 61-71 Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea. It is bounded to the east by Victoria Avenue, to the west by Baxter Avenue and to the north by Harcourt Avenue. The remaining Victoria Avenue Office area is located to the south. The site is 'T' shape with frontages onto Victoria Avenue. Carby House is an 8 story building with a total of 3,739 m² of floorspace. Heath House is a 9/10 storey building of 14,457 m² floorspace. The land fronting Baxter Avenue is predominantly laid out to parking. The remaining office area also comprises 60's and 70's office blocks. A slip road (Victoria Avenue service road) runs parallel to Victoria Avenue along the length of the commercial area and currently provides access for servicing and parking to Heath House. There is also access from Baxter Avenue. The access to Carby House is via Harcourt Road.

This is a prime location fronting onto Victoria Avenue, the main approach road to the town centre, and is close to the mainline Great Eastern Railway Station with direct access to London Liverpool Street. The Town Centre is minutes away to the south with a further main line railway station serving several centres within the town and London Fenchurch Street. The central Bus station is also located within the town centre. All of these key transport hubs are scheduled for improvements that will provide a more integrated, modern and efficient public transport system.

The town's civic area is immediately opposite to the east and comprises the Council's Civic Centre, Police Station, Law Courts and Central Library. There are also proposals to develop residential accommodation on the existing College site immediately opposite the site. There are, in addition, two areas of significant open space close by, Churchill Gardens and the award winning Priory Park, as well as the historic Prittlewell Area with its shops, pubs and restaurants.

The Council sees this site as the front door to what will be an outstanding commercial district and gateway to the town centre. The whole area will resonate with workers, visitors and residents enjoying well located, connected and appropriate leisure facilities and shops. This Phase 1 redevelopment scheme should strongly demonstrate its contribution to this.

Phase 1 - comprising land occupied by
Carby House, 73 Victoria Avenue and Heath House, 61-71 Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea



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OVERVIEW OF PLANNING OBJECTIVES

To achieve the Vision for the Town Centre as a whole and the Victoria Avenue Office area specifically the Council has resolved that the entire area should be developed as a quality office quarter with an emphasis on technology orientated businesses with complementary uses such as A3 (food & drink), C1 (hotel), D2 (leisure) and a smaller element of live work and residential units.

Studies have led to the conclusion that a suitable mix on the whole site would be in the range of 60% employment floorspace, 20% complementary commercial uses including hotel, cafe/bars and some element of small retail units, and 20% residential.

To deliver this mixed scheme it is considered that the site at the northern section of the area which is adjacent to existing residential premises would be most suited to provide the required residential element. This constitutes Phase 1 of the larger proposals and is the subject of this Brief. Further phases will consolidate and strengthen the employment / commercial uses in the southern area where integration with the town centre and civic quarter is more appropriate.

All phases should, however, be well connected with each other and with adjoining areas to create a new permeable and integrated area within which there is a clear sense of place.

PLANNING POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Land Use

Policy H2 – Future Housing Provision and Government’s Key Worker Programme;

Borough Local Plan Policy H2 and current policy development based on the findings of the Housing Needs Study are likely to increase the Affordable Housing element required on qualifying sites from 20% to 40% in the new planning framework for the town. This planning objective seeks to provide more traditional affordable housing that meets a wider range of needs. In addition, the use of housing initiatives to support recruitment and retention in key frontline public services is a Government Priority (see **Key Worker Housing Programme**). This new programme focuses on those workers delivering such services, including health workers and teachers, social workers and Local Authority planners and engineers. This is also seen as a priority within Thames Gateway South Essex in order to deliver sustainable economic regeneration

The Council has resolved that due to the strategic importance and location of this site in meeting the wider economic regeneration needs of the town and the Thames Gateway it would be more suited to providing homes for key frontline workers in the public services. Notwithstanding the normal affordable housing requirement in the Borough Local Plan, the Council would actively encourage a residential development providing for 240 affordable key worker residential units, along with a small amount of commercial uses at ground floor level to complement and serve the needs of the local residents.

The support of Government funding of £6 million has been secured to assist in achieving the keyworker accommodation.

Interim Development Control Policy - Employment Land supersedes Borough Local Plan Policy E4 – Industry and Warehousing and is in accordance with Policies CS1, BE2, BIW1, BIW2 and BIW4 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan. This policy seeks to prevent the loss of all existing employment land to other uses except in exceptional circumstances, such as where there is evidence of long term vacancy. The Chesterton’s 2001 Study highlighted the problems of letting the outmoded 60s and 70s office accommodation in Victoria Avenue and recommended a phased redevelopment scheme

incorporating a mix of development as set out above. In the light of these considerations, this site forms part of a wider approach to the regeneration of the whole area.

In such circumstances the Council considers the loss of employment uses on this site and its redevelopment for residential uses is the best way of consolidating and strengthening the additional employment potential in the remainder of the area, including the provision of supporting key worker housing resources. Moreover, it is expected that this first phase of redevelopment will act as a catalyst for further phases and allow for these to be brought forward more effectively.

Building Design

Policy H5 – Residential Design and Layout Considerations and Appendix 4 – Design and Layout Guidelines for Housing: residential development is to be appropriate in its setting by respecting neighbouring development, existing residential amenities and the overall character of the locality, whilst achieving a high standard of layout and design. It also requires that an area representing 10% of the net site area be set aside for amenity open space.

Policy C11 – New Buildings, extensions and alterations requires proposals for all new buildings, extensions or alterations to respect the amenity of existing residential property, safeguard the character of Conservation Areas and important public vistas and, where appropriate, contribute to and enhance public open spaces.

The Council wishes to see development of the site built up around a series of buildings encompassing a layered approach to break down the overall mass and create semi-private space. Privacy and safety should be enhanced through use of concierge systems throughout.

The requirement for a minimum of 240 affordable key workers dwellings indicates that a density of approximately 270 dph would need to be achieved. Government policy seeks to promote housing development at densities not less than 30 dph. The urban nature of Southend has enabled the Council to encourage much higher densities and protect green space from development pressures. Subject to the rigorous design and other requirements for this site, it may be possible to achieve higher densities.

The prominent location of this site means that any development will have considerable public and visual impact not only on the actual locality and environment, but also on the perception of the area for potential investors and residents, workers and visitors. This opportunity presents a unique architectural challenge to further the Town's emerging reputation for high quality architecture and urban design, and to set the benchmark of quality for the rest of the redevelopment of the Area.

The site is in a key location - acting as the 'front door' to the wider redevelopment of the Victoria Avenue Area and gateway to the Town Centre. This phase of development will therefore set the benchmark for the high quality and design standards expected for the remaining phases. As such it will also be expected to integrate fully with any wider scheme and the surrounding area providing good linkages, connections and a wider sense of place. Particular attention should be paid to its relationship with the existing residential area to the north. Careful consideration should be given to the integration of a creative lighting solution highlighting key building elements and spaces in and around the built form.

The requirements for any development in this area, therefore, will need to demonstrate the following:

- The highest quality of design and materials,
- Its response to the urban context and high density occupation
- Sustainability and reduction in energy consumption.
- Potential of diversity at street level with commercial mixed use integration

- A visual and physical connection to the wider area including integration with the future development of the remaining Victoria Office Area, car parking areas, the surrounding residential streets and the Civic Zone opposite.

This approach is endorsed in **PPG1 General Policy and Principles** which regards design as a material consideration in the appraisal of development proposals.

Traffic and Parking

Policy T11 – Parking Standards and Interim Vehicle Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Guidance) set out the Council's vehicle parking requirements for the provision of off street parking and the current adopted standards.

The approach to off street parking provision on this site will be flexible and take into account its central location and its closeness to major public transport interchanges and routes. Parking levels are maxima in accordance with adopted policy (Planning matter not Highways). In addition, safe, secure cycle parking/ storage will be required for each element of the development in accordance with the Council's adopted criteria

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 – Transport (March 1994), the Council will also expect any development proposals to take account of the need to provide attractive facilities which would encourage residents to use alternative modes of transport to the private car

Travel Assessment

The availability of on-site parking must be considered to meet all parking needs of the development. The travel assessment (TA) must demonstrate that this is realistic for the needs of the development and how the need for non-car transport will be met.

It might reasonably be expected that travel assessment would demonstrate that the car parking provision and public transport are adequate to serve the development. However to encourage use of non-car modes (making them more attractive) and preclude off-site parking the requirements for Travel Plan and Transport Contributions should be noted.

Travel Plan

The TA must be supported by a Travel Plan (TP) that:

- Commits to membership of travel wise/ business travel wise.
- Provides the mechanism(s) to support, financially or by direct provision the non-car transport modes on which the TA will depend for planning consent.
- Provides the mechanism to support/ operate, long term (at least 10 years after occupation) a car club
- provides for monitoring travel and modal split and shift over time and the variation of support or provision for non-car modes for a period of at least 10 years after occupation.

T8 – Traffic and Highway safety

There is no specific highway injury accident record, which the development proposals should address. The existing access arrangements on Harcourt Avenue and Baxter Avenue are considered to be suitable for the level of vehicular use.

If changes are sought or required, as a result of the requirement to close vehicular access prohibit motor vehicle use from the Victoria Avenue Service Road, they should be safety audited.

The Borough is making increasing use of CCTV for Community Safety in public places. It would be beneficial to the management of risk for general public safety and traffic and highway safety; for the provision of CCTV, to a plan to be agreed, with the capacity to monitor the public space around the development site and the traffic patterns and congestion on Victoria Avenue and its junctions.

Servicing and Access

T12 – Servicing Facilities and Appendix 4– Design and layout Guidelines for Housing requires non-residential development to provide adequate off-street servicing facilities in the interest of highway safety and the amenities of adjoining residential areas. The site has access to the slip road running parallel to Victoria Avenue, Baxter Avenue and Harcourt Avenue

Vehicular Access should all be off Harcourt Avenue or Baxter Avenue. The Victoria Avenue Service Road (referred to also as the slip road) should be linked to Victoria Avenue to the south-east of the development site and the Victoria Avenue bus lay-by. Motor vehicles should be prohibited on the length of the service road fronting the development site (between the proposed link to Victoria Avenue and Harcourt Avenue) and the area re-landscaped without differential levels as public space for pedestrians and cyclists in support of the Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012 (Page 28 Victoria Avenue - Environment 1.). The cost of these works should be attributable to the development.

Transport Contributions will be required to provide for:

1. A local residents' parking scheme. (S106 to exclude residents from on-street residents' parking schemes and from town centre residents season tickets - under PPG13 the development will be providing for all the development residents parking needs)
2. Car Club support and/or operation
3. Real Time Bus Information and New high quality passenger shelters at local stops
4. Creating a cycle route from the Town Centre Route to Harcourt Avenue
5. CCTV (Community Safety and traffic congestion management)
6. Improvement to and maintenance of the Victoria Avenue pedestrian Subway.
7. Victoria Avenue Service Road

- Linking the Service Road to Victoria Avenue to the south-east of the development site and the Victoria Avenue bus lay-by.
- Prohibiting Motor vehicles on the length of the service road fronting the development site (between the proposed link to Victoria Avenue and Harcourt Avenue)
- re-landscape the area, without differential levels, as public space for pedestrians and cyclists in support of the Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012 (Page 28 Victoria Avenue - Environment 1).
- Improvements to street lighting.

Access and Safety

Policy U5 - Access and Safety in the Built Environment and Appendix 7 - Guidelines for Access and Safety in the Built Environment requires the design and layout of the built environment to provide for safe and easy access for all members of the community.

It is important to have regard to the particular needs of people with disabilities and ensure that the needs of mothers, babies and families are catered for when considering access to and use of public places.

In accordance with Policy U5 and the guidelines in Appendix 7 any development should provide facilities for disabled persons and comply with the relevant building regulations.

In drawing up detailed proposals the Council considers that the advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer for the area should be sought on aspects of safety and security.

Environmental Considerations

Policy E5 - Non residential uses located close to housing requires that the character and amenities of residential streets be safeguarded from overlooking, noise, smell, parking traffic and other activities. Particular regard will need to be given to the impact of noise generating activities on residential premises proposed as part of the scheme and on existing housing on Baxter Avenue and Harcourt Avenue.

In accordance with Policy E5 and Environmental Health Legislation the Council require that:

- the site layout should minimise any adverse impact on the surrounding residential areas; and
- provision is made for environmental and pollution control equipment, including ventilation and extraction equipment and methods of noise attenuation, where appropriate.

SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL POINTS OF CONTACT

Economic Development	Mr Mark Murphy	01702 215429
Housing	Liz Best	01702 215
Highways	James Westgate	01702 215659
Planning Policy	Ms V Burdon (Principle Planner Strategic Planning)	01702 215708
Design and Regeneration	Mr S Kearney	01702 215402
Property	Mr Antony Daniels	01702 215852
Development Control	Ms Jo Oxford	01702 215326
Building Control	Barrie Grimwade Special Projects Officer	01702 215340
Environmental Health	Mr David Krieger (Food, Safety & Licensing)	01702 215808
	Mr Simon Griffiths (Environmental Protection)	01702 215864
In addition:		
Essex Police	Crime Prevention Officer and Architectural Liaison Officer	01702 423140