

Planning Brief

Former Wexham Nursery and adjacent land

Slough Regeneration Partnership Site

Purpose of brief

The purpose of the brief is to provide guidance to the architect of the proposed Slough Regeneration Partnership (SRP) residential development of the site. It includes background planning policy information to indicate how the site has come forward for development. The brief should be read in conjunction with any SRP client requests regarding design and development.

Location of Site

- Wexham Road, Slough
- Post Code : SL2 4HG (Nursery Cottages)
- Grid Ref :SU/41 9866 8199 (Site entrance)

The site is on the north edge of the town next to Wexham Road. It is 3 km north of the centre and 0.5 km from Wexham Park Hospital to the north. Wexham Road has a regular bus service to the town centre. There is a Post Office and small shop nearby to the north and a pub nearby in Stoke Green. Primary and Secondary Schools are within 1.2 km of the site walking distance. A new play area is located off Norway Drive on the Wexham Parish Council land.

Description of site

The site comprises a former Council nursery on Wexham Road, two cottages associated with the nursery plus two parcels of open land off and separated by Forest Close. The total site area is 3.423 ha as outlined red on the Site Plan (Wexham Nursery and adjacent land).. See the attached drawings for further details and immediate context of the site. The aerial photo covers the former nursery part of the site only. The sites are higher than Wexham Road and the smaller Forest Close site slopes to the west.

Hospital car parking overflows onto adjacent roads including Wexham Road and Forest Close

Key context information for the former nursery part of site:

- Green Belt to east and west.
- Green Belt overlaps western boundary of site including the 2 cottages.
- Wexham Lodge (residential) is adjacent to the west and is a Locally Listed Building (LLB)
- Medium density 2 and 3 storey housing has been built to the north within the last 10 years (Benjamin Lane and Huxley Close).

- Wexham Secondary School grounds are adjacent to the east
- A Nursing Home (Oak House) lies to the south.
- An Extra Care residential home and day care centre (The Pines) lie to the south/south west.

Key context information for Forest Close part of the site :

- Green Belt overlaps the northern edge of the site (north of Forest Close)
- Green Belt to north (Wexham Lodge site, LLB, looks over the site)
- Public Open Space (with play area) to south (Wexham Parish Council.)
- Car park of The Pines Extra Care home to east.
- Big hedge and wide verge to west with open Green Belt land beyond Wexham Road (South Bucks District Council area)
- This part of the site slopes to the west

Planning Policy Background

Most of the site was released from the Green Belt by way of the Local Plan 2004. That Plan allocated housing sites to the north and south of the Nursery site. Most of the open area off Forest Close was allocated for residential development in the 2004 Local Plan as part of a larger parcel of land. Most of that parcel has been developed in the last 6 years for an extra care home and a nursing home. The remaining area, which forms part of the brief site, was not developed and proposals at that time to formally create public open space did not come to fruition.

The Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2026 was adopted in 2008. It has recently been consolidated to take account of the National Planning Policy Framework and the saved policies of the Local Plan 2004. The Core Strategy, at para. 7.50, specifically says some undesignated greenfield sites could come forward for housing. The Strategy does not allocate sites for development. A separate Site Allocations Development Plan was adopted 2010 and allocated strategic sites for development.

The Wexham Nursery site was considered as part of the site allocation process but not selected at that time (2009) as other sites that met the Core Strategy criteria for development were available to meet the housing target applicable at that time. The omission of a site from the Site Allocations Plan does not prevent it from coming forward via a planning application in the normal way. Any proposal will need to be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Whilst the Core Strategy has strategic objectives that include focusing development in the most accessible locations (town centre/within the town) and protection of open spaces they also include objectives to make the best use of previously developed land and to provide housing for the needs of the whole community in terms of dwelling mix and affordable housing. A key element of the Strategy is provision of family housing to balance the substantial number of flats permitted in the town before 2008.

Development of the site provides an opportunity to provide suburban family housing and affordable family housing that is more difficult to achieve on more central sites. Many more central sites are smaller or have high existing use values which make it more difficult to negotiate a large amount of family housing and affordable housing. Part of the site falls into the category of previously developed land by way of the former nursery buildings.

Development of the site will help counter balance high density schemes planned or recently developed in central parts of the town to provide a mix of dwelling types in the Borough.

The Council has included the site within its housing trajectory - the assessment of sites that the Council expect to come forward for residential development in the future to meet the Core Strategy housing target.

Links to the policy documents are in Appendix 2.

Planning Policy (Design)

Key planning policy documents are listed in Appendix 2. However the guidelines below hopefully cover the key matters relevant to design of the proposed development. Some parts of the Developer's Guide are referred to below.

Land within the Green Belt

Two parts of the site on the western edge are within designated Green Belt land. These two parcels abut Wexham Road. One of the parcels contains 2 cottages (Nursery Cottages). See green shaded area on plan attached.

National and local policy allows development in the green belt in exceptional circumstances only. There are no exceptional circumstances for the undeveloped portion of the green belt land within the site.

However if the existing Nursery cottages are demolished there is scope to replace the building footprint within the combined curtilage of the two cottages inclusive of associated new gardens, parking etc. The rest of the green belt area within the site should remain open and have no new buildings. However the open areas can be used for play space and associated works.

Accommodation and dwelling mix

Ideally only family homes should be provided to comply with the Core Strategy. A family home is defined as 76 sq metres gross internal area. A few two bedroom homes a bit below this figure will be accepted. In addition to any affordable housing flats that might be requested a few private flats can be incorporated in the form of coach houses above garage blocks or corner units if this helps with achieving a good design.

To comply with planning policy the development needs to include 30 % social rent housing and 10% other affordable housing acceptable to the Housing Section. Percentage to be applied to total number of units in development.

The affordable housing mix should be as in the table below (percentages are to be applied to the total number of affordable housing units in the development).

Unit type	size	Other Affordable Housing	Social Rent (Target Rents)
2 bedroom house	3 or 4 person	20%	0
2 bedroom house	4 person	0	48%
3 bedroom house	5 or 6 person	5 %	0
3 bedroom house	6 person	0	27%

Affordable Housing should be designed to comply with HCA DQS Space standards. The gross internal floorspace for each dwelling must fall within the range in the HCA table below :

The definitions of bed space and internal floor area are taken from the HQI and are set out in Annex 1.	Recommended range for GIA for HQI (m ²)
3 bed space (2 bed house)	61 to 67 sq m
4 bed space (2 bed house)	71 to 75 sq m
6 bed space - 2 storey (3 bed house)	95 to 105 sq m

Source: Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form Version 4 updated April 2008 - Section 5, Indicator 5.1, p.27

Design of Social Housing

The Council, as potential future owner of the social housing, have some specific client requirements relevant to this stage of the design :

- No integral garages
- No bedrooms on same floor as living room or kitchen.
- No access paths to rear gardens (other than side gates for end terrace or semi detached)
- Social rented housing should be grouped together or in 2 clusters.
- No alleyways or footpath links to be located next to social rent units.

- A large percentage of the 3 bed family housing should allow for a separate kitchen, dining and lounge and preferably easy adaptation of the space to allow alternative arrangements.

Form and appearance of development

The Council is seeking a development that will be perceived by its future residents as well designed and distinctive and which respects the landscape character of the area. Whilst innovative design is encouraged and contemporary architecture supported the Council is not specifically seeking a character of development that will stand out. Whilst the surrounding areas have no clear cohesive style or character the new development must pick up on some features found in the immediate area to provide a link with its surroundings. The key consideration is making the scheme distinctive utilising creative architectural, urban and landscape design.

The design must also be appealing to potential purchasers and once agreed with SRP to purchase the affordable units to also satisfy the Council in terms of its interest as owner of some properties. You should include commentary on your design proposals and how your proposals meet the brief.

Materials should focus on those that offer high quality and low maintenance. Traditional tried and tested materials will be favored over untested products. Materials need to be attractive to purchasers and offer longevity rather than those that offer an initial statement but may cause maintenance or aesthetic issues in several years' time (for example staining, mould growth etc).

In terms of street scene the Council does not support rear parking courts so special attention to reduce the dominance of cars in the street scene is needed.

Good urban design principles should be applied. Circulation space, highway design and creation of a structured landscape need to be considered alongside built form. Key relationships are to the open space, retained trees, adjacent Wexham Lodge, homes to the north, green belt boundaries, link to/frontage to Forest Close. Homes should, in general, face the street. There should be some variety in types of street. Buildings on corners or at street ends to be designed to reflect their position.

In terms of circulation key access routes are referred to below. A loop road round the development is preferred to minimise the need for cul de sacs and simplify refuse collection and help with emergency access.

The key roads should be designed to be adopted by the Council as Highway Authority. The principles of Manual for Streets are supported but Highway Authority maintenance considerations may limit application in some circumstances.

For the recent housing developments to the north (Benjamin Lane and Huxley Close) and to the south (Forest Close) of the site the Council accepted

medium density development despite the edge of town location next to the Green Belt. However the frontages to the key roads Wexham Road and Church Street have not been developed intensively such that there is space for trees to remain or grow and there are gaps between buildings.

The same principle applies to the nursery/Forest Close site such that medium density development is acceptable set back from the road but Wexham Road frontage and the east boundary need space for trees and vegetation. The development need not be hidden from view but planting to soften the appearance when viewed from adjacent existing roads is important.

Where development is close to or abuts the existing open spaces, design should seek to protect the qualities and amenities of the open spaces, create active frontages (avoiding wherever possible development which 'turns its back' on spaces), and which enhances rather than detracts from landscape quality provided by those spaces.

Road frontage – conservation of the landscape character of the existing road corridor.

Particular attention is to be given to the creation of a creative and positive interface between the new development and the Norway Drive (Wexham Court Parish Council) open space which achieves a permeable and visually appealing relationship between the new development and open space.

A mixture of two storey and three storey homes is wanted.

If any flats are subsequently agreed for the site there is scope for these to be on the parcel of land south of Forest Close.

Constraints

- No additional development on Green Belt land (see above)
- 10% (approx) of site to be open space (see below for details) provided as large and functional spaces. (Aggregation of small amenity plots will not count towards open space provision)
- 2 existing homes on site.
- Group of trees/shrubs to east of The Lodge to be partly retained.
- Setting of Wexham Lodge, a Locally Listed Building, should not be adversely affected (the land to south of it should not be developed, trees to the east retained and new buildings nearby to be 2 storey and set off the boundary by a substantial margin).
- Trees and shrubs on south side of existing main site entrance to be retained (subject to minor modification re access highway works).

- Trees in corner of sites on west boundary and north boundary to be retained.
- Allow space on south boundary near to Oak House for new tree and hedge planting.
- Adjacent Green Belt and open land – respect setting and views (east boundary to have realistic space for new tree planting to soften and help screen edge of built development when viewed from Church Lane to east. (The existing conifers can be removed)
- Hedge alongside Wexham Road to be retained. A gap can be created for pedestrian access.

Access

- The existing nursery access is to be modified to form the main access to the site. A right turn lane will need to be formed in Wexham Road.
- For the Forest Close site access should be by a spur off that road.
- Some homes on the nursery site can be accessed off the adopted portion of Forest Close if this is practical.
- Pedestrian and cycle access should be provided from Forest Close onto the nursery site.
- Provide pedestrian access across south boundary to Parish Council open space.
- Pedestrian access should be provided from the north west corner of the nursery site to Wexham Road. There is an existing path link to the north of the site at this point however connecting to this, whilst desirable, involves a third party land.

Car Parking

- Normal standards are set out in Developers Guide part 3. In brief this means 2 parking spaces per house plus an extra one for any four or more bedroom houses. Garages count as a parking space. Parking can be on plot or frontage courtyard or kerb side. If all parking spaces are assigned or on plot the development will need to have some extra visitor spaces.
- Because of the Hospital parking overflow problem most of the site roads will need to be adopted to allow for parking restrictions to be introduced that prevent all day parking by non residents etc.
- The parking ratio for affordable housing is to be to the same as private housing although assignment or otherwise of parking may differ.

- No rear parking courts behind houses should be provided.
- Garages should be 3 m by 6 m in size.
- Long drop crossings over footways are not acceptable. The Highway Authority's standard policy is below for 90 degree parking accessed over footways. It effectively requires single or pair of spaces with associated crossovers separated by a minimum of one parking space length gap along the kerb. This policy does not apply for shared surfaces.
 - The maximum crossing size width will be 4 metres. (i.e will serve a pair of parking bays)
 - Hard standing areas behind the footway must be 4.8 metres deep by 2.4 metres wide.
 - No more than two crossings in a row will be provided before one parking space for an on street parking space is provided.
 - The crossover will not interfere with the use of a junction nor will it be detrimental to the safety of highway users.

Gardens/Private Amenity Space

- Minimum 9 m length for rear gardens for houses.
- Most gardens should be longer than 9 metres.
- Gardens with existing or proposed boundary trees should have 9 metre length clear of the crown spread of the tree when mature.
- Longer or wide gardens needed for 4 bedroom homes.
- Flats to have balconies/ground floor patio wherever practical.
- Flats need some green space next to or immediately in view of the flats
- Ensure other occupiers parking spaces are not immediately next to habitable room windows.
- Small incidental landscape amenity spaces should where ever possible form part of the curtilage. Avoid spaces that require public sector maintenance. Such spaces to be clearly associated with dwellings.

Separation distances (between habitable room windows).

- Where adjacent to existing homes (at rear) 21 m minimum.
- Within new development minimum of 18 m spacing at rear.
- Separation of homes across the street should, in general, reflect typical distances found in medium density suburban streets. The separation distances found in the development to the north are quite short in many instances. For the nursery site the distances should never be below 12 metres and most should be more than 14 metres.
- The above distances are minimums; greater separation is preferred because of the suburban nature of the development.

Highway Design

The principal key roads should be designed to be adopted by the Council as Highway Authority. The principles of Manual for Streets should be followed but Highway Authority maintenance and safety considerations may limit application in some circumstances.

Key dimensions for the principal roads are:

- Road width 5.5 m wide.
- Forward visibility 20mph 22m / 30mph 40m metres
- Junction visibility 20mph 2.4 x 22m / 30mph 2.4 x 40m

Designing Out Crime

- The Council is keen to ensure designing out crime is considered at an early stage. The design should take account of Secured by Design guidelines.

Public Amenity Space

About 10 % of the site area should be open space. Within the open space there should be a dedicated place for young children's play. If less than 10% is proposed a financial contribution is required for off site recreation.

The Green Belt land i.e the open area in the north west corner and open area north of Forest Close can comprise the core of the 10 % open space. Retained trees east of the Lodge can also be part of the 10% but only if incorporated in areas that are functional spaces designed for public recreational/amenity use.

The children's play space needs to have good natural surveillance, ideally including from dwellings and be serviced by ancillary infrastructure (paths, seating/bins etc). They should be overlooked by homes and be near key pedestrian routes but also set back from nearby houses to avoid nuisance.

In terms of form of play space no formal play equipment is required but the landscaping of the space should create places that are safe and appealing places where children can play.

Open spaces must be well related to the development and designed to limit opportunities for anti social behaviour.

Only space that is large enough to function as recreational open space/play space and designed to standards that give the space specific and diverse functionality will be considered suitable as open space. Other spaces provided to achieve appropriate landscape structure/quality, to retain key landscape features (trees etc) or to provide appropriate public realm will not be considered part of the 10%

open space requirement unless they form part of sufficiently large and well designed open spaces.

Trees

The willows on south boundary near Oak House can be removed (this supersedes the request for retention on the plan). These should be replaced by new trees.

The west boundary conifers can be removed but a lime on/near boundary should be retained. The conifers should be replaced by new trees and hedge.

Trees on the west boundary should be retained unless in poor health.

Trees/dense shrubs north of Nursery Cottages gardens should be retained.

Trees and shrubs on the south side of nursery entrance should be retained.

Group of trees next to east boundary of Wexham Lodge – retain trees/shrubs near the boundary including yew. Consider retention of other trees in this group especially yew, one mature pine and two red chestnuts. If retained these trees should be part of an amenity area. This note supersedes that on the plan.

Ensure root protection areas of retained trees are not severed by new construction.

Refuse

- Ensure sufficient space is provided in accordance with the tables in the guide Refuse and Recycling Storage for New Dwellings – web link in Appendix 2 under Developers Guide. A Quick Reference table is at Appendix 1. (Note : the table in Developers Guide Part 4 has been superseded).
- Because of local problems re bins on street and obstructing pedestrians the Council is keen to make sure bin store areas are provided (in rear gardens where garden access paths provided or in enclosures on frontage) and access is practical for users and collection.
- For the Council housing the Council (Housing Management) do not want any rear garden access paths. Consequently for terraced homes space needs to be provided on the frontage for screened bin stores and covered lockable, cycle stores.

Cycle Stores

Ensure secure and covered cycle stores are allowed for in sensible places. See Developers Guide Part 3 Developers Guide under The Planning Process > Local Planning Policy on Council web site www.slough.gov.uk. Link : [Developer's guide - Slough Borough Council](#)

As noted above covered, lockable cycle stores are needed on the frontage of any terraced Council housing.

Sustainable Development

Homes should be built to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 3.

The Council's published policy requires energy to be generated from low or zero carbon (LZC) sources equivalent to 10% of the developments estimate carbon emissions. (based upon a building regulations compliant scheme but assuming no LZC energy generation installed). However there is scope for flexibility on the amount of LZC technology incorporated provided that it can be shown that the development is 10% better, in terms of carbon emissions, than Building Regulations Part L. This should be calculated by use of the Target Emission Rate for dwellings as a baseline to which the 10% reduction is applied. Consequently the carbon reduction can be achieved by a mixture of on site energy generation and improved building fabric.

Surface Water Drainage

- Sustainable drainage will need to be incorporated. Space will be needed for infiltration or attenuation within the development that is clear of existing or proposed trees. The new SUDS approval process may start during 2014.
- The site is not in an area liable to flood. However the geology is such that soakage cannot be relied upon alone to drain surface water in extreme weather events. The geology is complex and must be considered over a wider area than the site itself for infiltration purposes. Attenuation on site and measures to control surface exceedance flows will be needed.
- Wexham Road is an important emergency route to the hospital but it is also at risk of surface water flooding. Consequently it is important that development of the site does not increase this risk and flows off the site are taken into account when designing drainage.

Other matters

- There are no known soil contamination issues that would affect the design of the layout. However former uses on or adjacent to the site

may have resulted in some contamination. A study will be needed before work commences on site and some remediation work may be necessary.

- An ecology study will be needed at the planning application stage; Lovell Homes have already carried one out together with a topographical/tree survey. The development should incorporate wildlife habitat through appropriate planting and nest boxes etc.
- An archaeology study may be needed. Further information to follow.

Section 106 planning obligation matters

As this brief is for design of the scheme Section 106 matters are not detailed in full separate discussion with the developer having already taken place. The key planning obligation matters will be affordable housing, financial contribution to off site transport and highway works etc.; signing of Sec. 278 agreement re off site access works (right turn lane Wexham Road), travel plan and associated monitoring fee, financial contribution for education and if appropriate, and subject to further discussion, off site provision in lieu of on site recreation space.

Regarding long term management of public open space it can be in private ownership but it is envisaged that the Council will retain the open spaces and manage them when complete. However management by the Council will be subject to funding being provided through the development.

Contact

If you have any planning or highway queries please contact Howard Albertini (Special Projects Planner) 01753 875855 Howard.Albertini@Slough.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Refuse Quick Reference Table Re Refuse (revised 2013)

	Houses **	Flats ****	Bin size	Bin size	Bin size
			12+ flats	6-12 flats ***	1-5 flats
Residual Waste	180 litre bin or 240 litre (6 or more person household) *	97 litre/flat	1100 litre Euro bins.	Communal bins 1100 or 360 litre. Or individual bins	Individual wheeled bins 1x 140 litre
Recycling	240 litre bin Optional 360 litre bin (6 or more person household) *	53 litre/flat	1100 litre Euro bins	Communal bins 1100 or 360 litre. Or individual bins	Individual wheeled bins 1x 140 litre
Dwelling to Store Max. distance	Bin on curtilage	30 m			
Drag Distance Max. (Refuse collector)	15 m preferred 25 m certain circumstances only	10 m			
Dwelling to Bin Collection Point (maximum drag distance for resident)	30 m Certain circumstances only	Not Applicable			
Max. reversing distance	12 m	12 m			

* - 4 or more bedrooms or large 3 bedroom house.

** - Each house has a minimum of 2 bins (residual and recycling); residents can ask for a third bin, for garden waste only.

*** - for blocks of 6 to 12 flats individual wheeled bins should be considered before communal bins.

**** - Round up capacity figure to bin size to be used

Appendix 2

Planning Policy documents

The Council's adopted Core Strategy (page 17) has strategic objectives and a spatial strategy (page 21) which will guide development proposals on the Slough Regeneration Partnership sites.

Key policy documents that can be referred to are below with web page links. The Developers Guide is the only key document relevant to this stage of design of the development.

Documents can be found on the Council's web site www.slough.gov.uk under : Planning & Building Control > The Planning Process > Local Planning Policy

Slough Local Development Framework (Development Plan Documents)

- **Core Strategy 2006-2026 (Adopted December 2008).**
Link:
http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Adopted_Core_Strategy_16-12-08.pdf
- **Site Allocations (Adopted November 2010)**
Link:
[http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/LDF_63_Site_Allocations_DPD_November_2010\(1\).pdf](http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/LDF_63_Site_Allocations_DPD_November_2010(1).pdf)
- **New Local Development Framework Proposals Map**
Link:
[Local Plan Proposals Map - Slough Borough Council](#)

The Local Plan for Slough (adopted 2004)

- **Local Plan**
Link :
[http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Local_Plan_\(2004\).pdf](http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Local_Plan_(2004).pdf)
- **List of saved Local Plan policies :**
Link
[http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Local_Plan_\(2004\).pdf](http://static.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Local_Plan_(2004).pdf)

Developers Guide

- Part 2 Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing (Section 106)
(Note Part 2 revisions in a separate document)
- Part 3 Transport and Highways Guidance
- Part 4 General Development Guidance (ignore Section 8)
- Refuse and Recycling Storage for New Dwellings Dec 2013

Link: [Developer's guide - Slough Borough Council](#)
<http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/planning-and-building-control/developers-guide.aspx>