

Executive Summary Development Brief

1. This document is a non technical executive summary of the Hungerford Station Regeneration Development Brief this has been prepared by the Town Council. A full version of the development brief is available at the Town Council Office or the web site www.hungerford.uk.net,
 2. The development brief has been prepared to provide a clear concept of the potential for improvements to Hungerford Railway Station area, which is the subject of a number of competing pressures for development. The brief document is a starting point as it expresses the views of Hungerford Town Council. The brief has been subject to formal consultation with local people and those property interests affected by the brief.
 3. It is hoped that West Berkshire Council, who as planning authority for the area, can seek to implement the recommendations and will adopt the brief. If it is not adopted it will still form part of the evidence for plan making for the station. The more support from the community in the ideas and concepts for the Station the more the brief will be material to any planning applications and planning proposals for the site and its setting.
- 1.3 The vision for Hungerford Station is to:
- regenerate the Station area to create an attractive gateway to the town and AONB;
 - act as a catalyst for the redevelopment of sites surrounding the station and;
 - create a high quality transport interchange for Hungerford and its associated villages in West Berkshire and Wiltshire
4. The brief advocates the regeneration of the station area as shown on Figure I. This has three main elements which are detailed below and consist of:
 - A: An improved transport interchange;
 - B: Raising the design quality of redevelopments surrounding the station forecourt area, notably Oakes, St John Ambulance & West Rowlands, with the Oakes & St John Ambulance sites as possible residential sites if the employment safeguard policy can be overcome;
 - C: Improve access to the area with an improvement to the junction at Park Street and Station Road.
 5. **A: An improved transport interchange** – with the following improvements:
 - proper circulation and turning space for cars and buses
 - a dedicated taxi rank for two vehicles
 - Kiss and Ride (set down)

- bus/ coach waiting facility (ideally 2 spaces)
 - co-ordinated street furniture
 - Improved signage and lighting
 - Signage with 'Welcome to Hungerford: Heart of North Wessex Downs'
 - street tree planting of very high quality (no shrubs – litter problems),
 - cycle parking – covered and secure
 - Improved waiting shelters on the platforms
 - A station building would also be highly desirable
6. The proposed interchange improvements would reduce the long stay parking by about 15 spaces. This was supported by a majority of those who responded to the brief. An alternative option increases parking and has a full sized bus turning area.
7. Other alternatives have been considered and some of these are fairly radical. This included consideration of closure of the rail level crossing due to safety concerns.
8. **B: Raising the design quality of redevelopments surrounding the station forecourt area. This includes:**

a) Design Principles

There is an opportunity to raise the design quality and create new character that reflects scale/ proportion and grain of Hungerford but has contemporary language. The site needs a bold simplicity. The station interchange plans encapsulate this, bold as it, ignores ownership, but simple in that it is ordered and effective with a suggested simple unifying palette of materials.

b) Scale

The general scale of development within Hungerford is two storey, with some limited examples of three storey where roof space is utilised. However, where there are level differences taller structures can exploit the change in levels. It is recommended that for most of the site only **two storey development is appropriate**, generally with pitched roofs.

c) Grain

Hungerford is a 'fine grained' town. This means that buildings should have numerous openings at the ground floor level to animate the street and avoid dead frontages. 'Fine grain' generally means narrow bays of vertical emphasis with frequent windows and doors.

d) Townscape

Every opportunity should be taken to improve the townscape experience. This about using enclosure and visual devices to create comfortable space. At present the site has no enclosure and little in the way of quality to anchor the site. The Railway Tavern is the only feature of the site that makes a positive contribution. The opportunity to create a new visual stop and local landmark should be exploited at the western end of the Rowland's site.

e) Building Materials

Palette of materials - The Town Council could select suitable materials, which could be chosen by for suitability both in terms of fit with Hungerford and for its sustainability performance. Recommend the use of soft orange /red facing brick for elevations and slate for roof as main materials and add a limited additional range of accent materials.

Paving- Like facing materials, choice of paving and consistency of application is important. Tarmac can act as a unifying surface if broken up with high quality materials such as conservation kerbs, granite setts and smaller concrete paving units. A simple grey colour palette that does not compete with the buildings is often the best option.

Street Furniture – A good suite of street furniture designed to go together is often the simplest way to act as a unifying feature in an area. As the site is outside the conservation area the use of 'heritage' style furniture is not necessarily appropriate. A simple and bold solution would be to use more contemporary finishes simple dark grey or brushed stainless steel with timber seats.

Lighting –Participants noted that lighting in the station area is very poor quality. It is also very visually intrusive which is inappropriate to the AONB. Lighting should be chosen to complement the street furniture and should not have any light spill. Feature LED lighting could be incorporated into the station interchange area.

Planting – Some participants recommended seasonal display planting. This is high maintenance and costly. It would be better to invest in a few very good quality trees. The theme of simple and bold should apply to planting as much as to other design choices for the site.

Design Principles for the Key Sites

9. **Oakes Bros** – Residential or a mix of residential and employment (if employment protection policy is overcome) would be appropriate for the site. The residential is likely to flats and could be suitable for retirement or assisted living. Residential is seen as appropriate as:

- It is probably the only viable land use as suggested by no development having taken place for over 5 years;

- Residential will provide an important surveillance role and make the place feel safer;
 - It links up the St John site which would otherwise be stranded as an island of residential in an employment area
10. Frontage should face the station forecourt, it should not exceed the building line of the previous building on the site. Some of the forecourt area should be utilised for the station interchange, or if this is not possible have strong hardscape and planting that would contribute to the interchange space using same materials and street trees and street furniture. This should be achieved even with a temporary use as these have the habit of permanence. Three-storey possible. Ground floor parking possible but with active street level frontage. Should have fine grain- narrow bays and frequent openings. Could have contemporary roof form –but consider impact on heritage asset adjacent-Railway tavern. If of more significant scale –leave gap to boundary with pub, or scale down on pub boundary. Rationalise with single access point – share with access to sub station. Need to respect properties on Park Street with regard to views and amenity.
11. **St John Ambulance-** If possible revisit approved scheme and work with Oakes Bros to create something comprehensive. Building could cross boundary ownership. Look for more complementary design that says more about Hungerford. No cedar/ timber cladding -avoid projecting fins and alien roof form. Replace render with facing brick. Avoid flat roof. Have more animated ground floor. Glazing units should be better quality and more traditionally spaced or more dramatic use of glazing. Frontage to face station as approved. Forecourt planting and space to contribute to transport interchange as for Oakes Bros site.
12. **West Rowlands Site** –Consent was granted for a three-storey office block. This consent is about to expire and the owners are considering their position. The building needs to be turned by 90 degrees to face strongly into the transport interchange. It needs a stronger more Hungerford design to act as a visual stop. This would give it a stronger visual presence for a potential occupier and potentially attract better yield. The design of the building should complement the Oakes Bros and St John site if possible and use the same materials. The roof should be slate or slate equivalent rather than profile sheeting- this would give it more appeal as an office rather than an industrial building. There is an opportunity to create a more contemporary solution, which would appeal better to the target market of high-tech businesses.
13. **Land adjacent to northern platform-** Potential to lay out with landscaping, some additional long stay car parking and a possible small station building to replace the existing building on the site. Alternatively the existing building could be converted. Any building to comply with the palette and scale of building materials identified above.
14. **C: Highway access improvements.** Highway access to the site is constrained. All options identify an improvement to the Station Road / Park Street junction where visibility is sub standard. This could be resolved by either:

- a pavement build-out at the junction;
- convert one metre from the front garden of house on the junction to a footway.

Other options should also be welcomed such as alternative accesses to the Park Street, but these would involve significant land take.

15. The brief also considers longer term, more radical and innovative solutions beyond the immediate Station interchange site. Throughout this brief this is referred to as the setting to the Station site.
16. The brief examines the planning policy for the site in detail. The engagement by the Town Council and the community in the next stage of planning policy process at West Berkshire for the town is critical to successful delivery of the potential objectives for the site.
17. The following actions are proposed for the Town Council:
 1. Produce final report following consultation, adopt as a document and submit to WBC.
 2. Campaign for an improved interchange layout. To include better waiting shelters on the platforms and the interchange layout as identified in the preferred option. This might be possible through route enhancement management as part of the new franchise by the Rail Operator, at the very least make all parties aware of the aspiration in the town.
 3. Campaign for a new rail station building as part of above.
 4. Campaign for improvements to the junction of Station Road and Park Street.
 5. Campaign for identifying more long stay car parking within easy walking distance. Nearby opportunities include the site to the north and old railway sidings to the east which Network Rail & the operator agreed to investigate.
 6. Clutter audit – review what is necessary in terms of signs, and street furniture. Can signs be combined? Are items redundant/ beyond repair? Look to brand as Hungerford: Heart of North Wessex Downs on Station Signs.
 7. Draw up more detailed layouts, plans and elevations of the interchange and adjacent sites in accordance with the development brief once adopted. This is likely to be achieved by the developers in the area or by way of an architectural design competition (use RIBA format). Ensure expenses of entrants are met to secure quality submissions. This will also require the landowner's consent.
 8. Car Parking Temporary Use – Oakes Bros site. An opportunity to gain some physical improvements at the Station interchange through the grant of planning consent may be possible, consider it as phase one of the interchange plan.
 9. The Brief to input and contribute to the Town Housing Growth Review.
 10. Engage with WBC Sites Development Plan Document – Accept that the Oakes site will be residential or a mixed development and consider the implications for alternative employment sites.

11. Land Assembly- HTC to continue to act as facilitators over the complex landownership and access arrangements on the station forecourt also obtain information on services/ underground and above ground to assist developers to identify constraints.
12. Lobby for funds.

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Figure 1
Hungerford Station Development Brief

Key

- Interchange Area
- Set-down Area
- New Building Frontage
- Station Building Opportunity
- Car Parking
- Tree Planting
- De-clutter Opportunity
- Vehicular Access Retained

info@jacksplanning.com
www.jacksplanning.com
01264 730286
0755 400 6494

Scale 1:500 @A3

