

WYCH ELM DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

DECEMBER 2022



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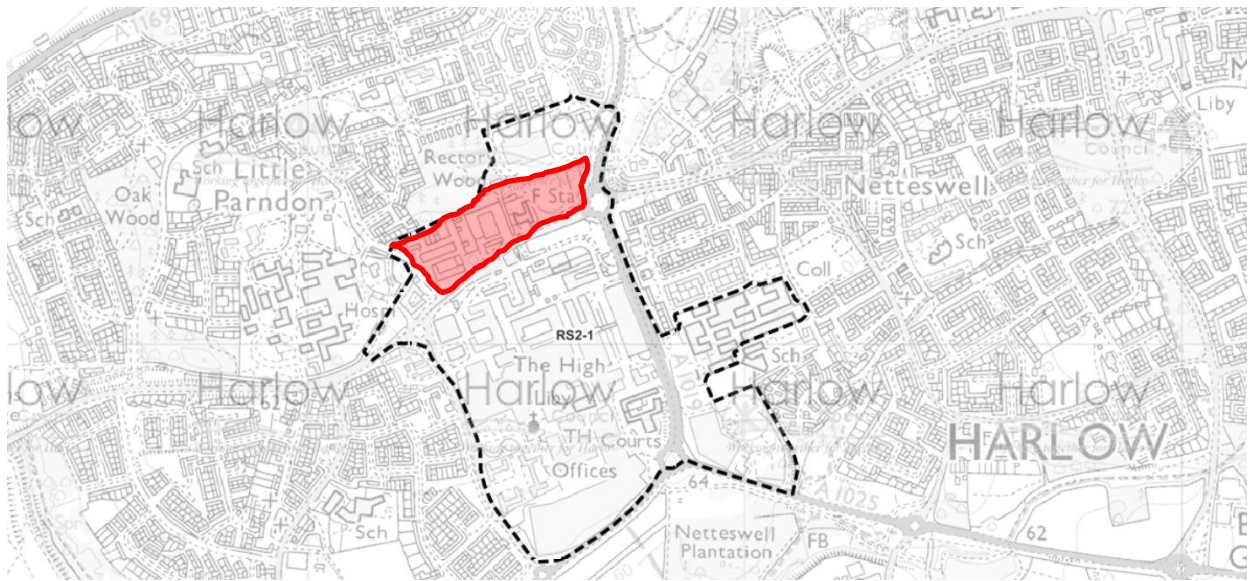
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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Development Brief has been prepared to guide the regeneration and redevelopment of the Wych Elm area. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for Wych Elm. The aim of the brief is to ensure that Wych Elm is brought forward in a comprehensive way through a set of design principles and standards.

2. Location

- 2.1. The Wych Elm area is located within the boundary of Harlow Town Centre as shown in the image below. This is designated as part of the town centre in the Harlow Local Development Plan (adopted December 2020) and accompanying Policies Map.



Map 1: Wych Elm Area highlighted red and Harlow Town Centre Boundary

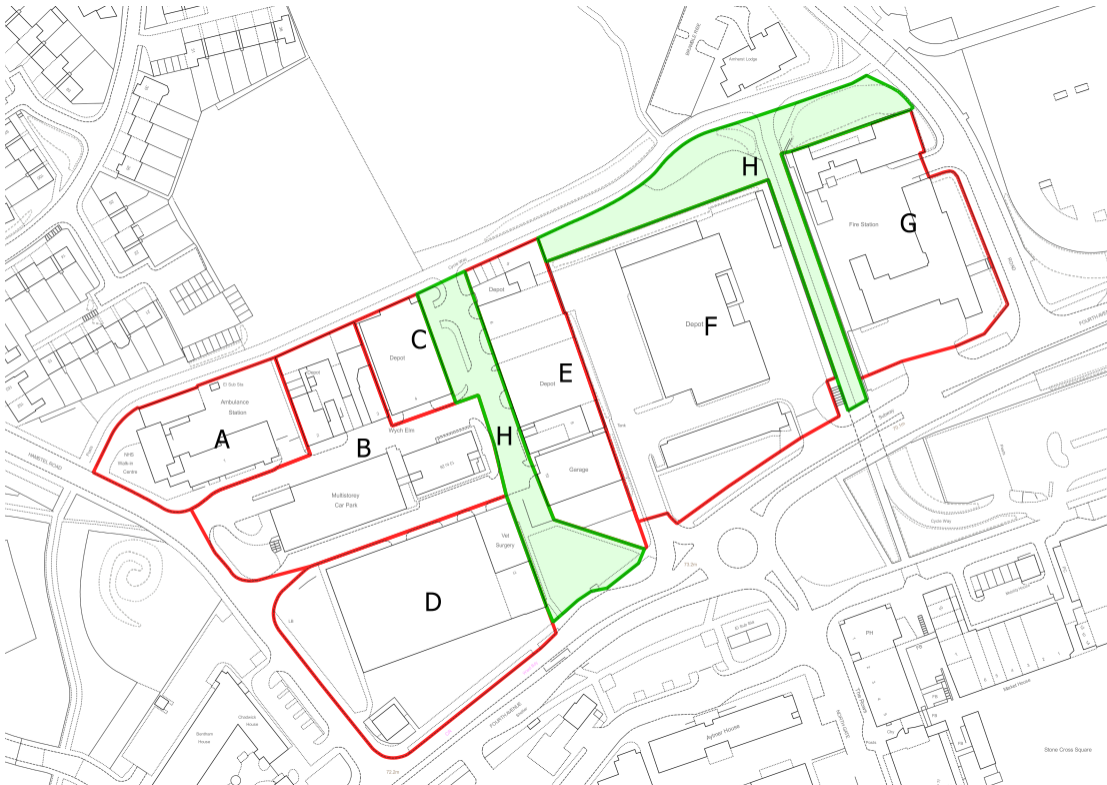
- 2.2. The site is situated at the northern most part of the town centre close to the existing Princess Alexandra Hospital site to the west, Sainsbury's to the north-east and Rectory Wood to the north. It is bounded by Fourth Avenue to the south which disconnects the site from the rest of the town centre but is accessible via a pedestrian/cycle underpass.
- 2.3. The site is approximately 1km away (as the crow flies) from Harlow Town Railway Station and 340m from the bus station located within the town centre to the south-east.

3. Existing uses

- 3.1. The Wych Elm area consists of several uses, both private and public. Map 2 sets out the Council's landownership, highlighted in red. The areas highlighted white are in separate landownerships.
- 3.2. For the purposes of this development brief, the Wych Elm area has been divided into separate distinct land parcels (A-H in Map 3). This does not mean that they must come forward independently from each other and a comprehensive approach to the delivery of the area will be sought. This is set out further in this brief. The land uses for each parcel are set out in table 1 (as of December 2022).



Map 2: Harlow Council owned land at Wych Elm



Map 3: Development land parcels at Wych Elm

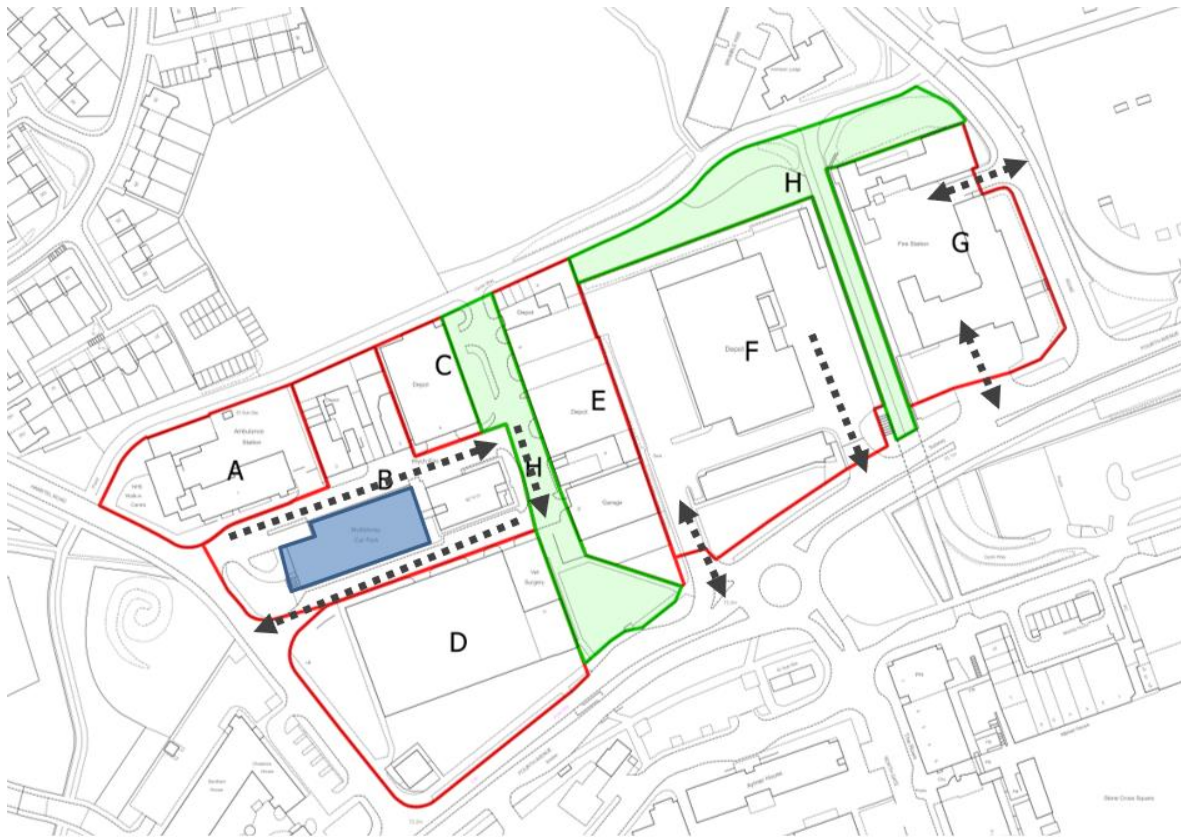
Table 1: Land parcels and their existing uses and landownership (where known)

Parcel	Parcel size (approx)	Existing Uses
A	0.23ha	Wych Elm Centre (NHS Walk-In Centre) and Ambulance Station
B	0.34ha	Mostly Council owned land/buildings including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council owned multi-storey car park (120 parking spaces over three levels). - Rainbow Services (charity group) - Wych Elm Depot (part of HTS) It also includes 13-26 Wych Elm which contains several business units, not owned by the Council
C	0.12ha	4 Wych Elm which is currently occupied by Ripped Gym.
D	0.32ha (buildings only)	Wych Elm House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The site will deliver 122 residential units and commercial ground floor units in a 2-11 storey block (Ref HW/FUL/19/00241). 11 Wych Elm - An adjoining veterinary centre
E	0.30ha	5-10 Wych Elm which includes several private businesses including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daniel Robinson & Sons Funeral Directors which utilise a large proportion of the parcel - Tyre Shop - Mr Unique - Smaller business units
F	0.80ha	Arriva Bus Depot and associated offices and parking
G	0.48ha	Fire Station and associated buildings and car parking
H	0.43ha (total)	Potential for green buffers/improved amenity areas in these locations

4. Existing vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access points

Vehicle Access Points

- 4.1. The Wych Elm site is accessed from three separate vehicle entrances (Map 4). Parcels A, B, C, D and E are accessed via a one-way internal loop which enters and exits at Hamstel Road. The multi-storey car park (highlighted blue on Map 4) within Parcel B mostly provides spaces for visitors using businesses at Wych Elm, the town centre and Princess Alexandra Hospital. It also provides several spaces for permit holders including permits for employees at Wych Elm.
- 4.2. Parcel F is currently accessed via a in/out slip road into the site from Fourth Avenue and an exit further east along Fourth Avenue. The fire engines for the Fire Station (Parcel G) use Fourth Avenue whereas staff/visitors use a secondary access point situated off Hodings Road to the east of the parcel.



Map 4: Existing vehicle access points at Wych Elm and Multi-Storey Car Park

Pedestrian/cycle routes

- 4.3. A cycle and pedestrian route (designated as part of National Cycle Route 1) runs in an east-west direction between the Wych Elm area and Rectory Wood to the north. Rectory Wood also has public access. Pedestrians and cyclists from this route are able to access the Wych Elm Area between Parcels C and E. An underpass between Parcels F and G enables cyclists and pedestrians to access the town centre under Fourth Avenue.



Access from foot/cycle path through to Wych Elm between Parcels C and E

5. Environmental Constraints

- 5.1. There are no environmental or historical designations within Wych Elm (e.g. SSSI, LWSs or Listed Buildings). There is a Scheduled Ancient Monument outside of the site to the west of Hamstel Road. There is also no flood risk in the Wych Elm area. However suitable sustainable urban drainage systems will need to be incorporated into any development proposal. Consideration will also need to be given about any visual or environmental impact upon Rectory Wood and the wider area.

6. Policy Context for Wych Elm

Town Centre Masterplan Framework Supplementary Planning Document

- 6.1. The Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP) was adopted in December 2020. Policy RS2 of the HLDP identifies the future retail floorspace for the district and states that a Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan (HTCAAP) will be prepared. This will look to deliver a significant proportion of the retail floorspace in the town centre through site redevelopment and regeneration opportunities. It would also identify environmental and public realm improvements, access, other supporting uses and infrastructure.
- 6.2. A Regulation 19 HTCAAP document was approved for consultation in 2020 and this is a material consideration in the determination of proposals for the town centre. However, as a result of a number of planning and non-planning related matters as set out in the Council's [HTCAAP Update Note \(August 2021\)](#), it was agreed to pause work on the HTCAAP.
- 6.3. In order to help guide applications coming forward in the town centre in absence of an AAP the Council has adopted a [Town Centre Masterplan Framework Supplementary Planning Document](#) (TCMF SPD). This document was published for consultation between December 2021 and February 2022 and adopted in March 2022. It includes masterplan drawings and frameworks for individual opportunity areas, guidance brought over from the Regulation 19 HTCAAP and more detailed public realm strategies. The Strategic Objectives for the TCMF SPD include:
- A strong retail and leisure offer
 - A unified town centre
 - A town centre which supports wider economic growth
 - A high quality public realm
 - An inclusive and accessible destination
 - A strong cultural offer
 - First class community facilities
 - A cohesive place
 - Retaining the ethos and respond positively to Sir Frederick Gibberd
 - Increase resilience to climate change
- 6.4. The Wych Elm brief aims to respond to these individual objectives.

- 6.5. The TCMF SPD also includes a strategy for tall buildings in the town centre setting out design criteria and what will be considered in relation to matters such as height, massing, scale and orientation.
- 6.6. The Wych Elm Opportunity Area has been identified in the TCMF SPD for residential development with community, civic and other uses supported at ground floor. The SPD states that proposals in this area should adopt a comprehensive approach and seek to facilitate the relocation of the existing ambulance station, bus depot and fire station to more suitable and viable locations. Subject to the relocation of existing uses, the SPD states that the area could be suitable for higher density residential development with the potential to accommodate taller development. The document suggests the following indicative capacity estimates for the Wych Elm area.

Residential GEA (sqm)	37,500	Estimated residential units	370
Flexible active GF (sqm)	3,000	Workspace (sqm)	7,700
Education (sqm)	0	Community (sqm)	2,000

Table 2: Indicative capacity estimates for Wych Elm – TCMF SPD

- 6.7. The indicative figures set out above give an indication of what could be provided based on the masterplan images provided in the TCMF SPD. They do not entirely replicate the floorspace of existing businesses at Wych Elm (table 1 of this brief) as they presume that some relocation will be required. It may be that additional floorspace will be needed, such as workspace units, to help accommodate existing businesses which are considered appropriate town centre uses. More information on which uses could be relocated or retained can be found in the individual Land Parcel strategies.
- 6.8. The indicative masterplan images for the Wych Elm area can be found in Appendix A of this brief. They show a mix of tall and very tall buildings with a mix of residential, workspace and flexible uses at ground floor and mostly residential and workspace above. The fire station has also been identified for possible community facilities.
- 6.9. A new strategic green space which will link Rectory Wood to the town centre is also illustrated on the framework plan for this area (see Appendix A). Development proposals should incorporate and safeguard this green space as part of their layout and design. This forms part of a wider 'Urban Forest' for the town centre as set out in the TCMF SPD and summarised on page 32 of this brief.
- 6.10. More specifically the SPD states that development proposals at Wych Elm must:
- A. Provide a high-quality public realm with active frontages which address Fourth Avenue;
 - B. Facilitate the transformation of Fourth Avenue into a boulevard character with a coordinated approach to planting and pedestrian crossings;

- C. Improve walking and cycling connections to surrounding neighbourhoods, Rectory Wood to the north and towards the town centre; and
- D. Respond and incorporate the strategic green space into their masterplan in terms of pedestrian and cycle connectivity, the creation of new landscaping and green spaces, and through the design of buildings and public realm.

Further supporting documentation

- 6.11. The Garden Town partners¹ have developed a series of supporting documents which are material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This includes a [vision document, design guide and sustainability checklist](#).
- 6.12. The Garden Town have also produced a [Transport Strategy](#) which sets out how planned growth in the Garden Town can be achieved through modal shift towards sustainable and active travel. It details a number of measures to achieve this modal shift and the ambitious targets proposed for sustainable travel. The document is to be used by developers and their agents, design teams, consultants and contractors in shaping development proposals and transport measures based on the transport hierarchy. This strategy will guide the design of proposals and ensure coordinated and integrated consideration of active and sustainable transport principles and mode shift targets at an early stage.
- 6.13. The mode shift target is 50% of all trips starting and/ or ending in the existing settlement area of Harlow Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes. This rises to 60% for the new Garden Communities. Although the Council will consider increasing this further due to the Wych Elm's sustainable location.
- 6.14. Other documentation that will be relevant to the delivery and development of Wych Elm are set out below. This is not exhaustive and applications should review the Council's [Validation Checklists](#) before submitting an application.
 - [Design Guide and Design Guide Addendum](#)
 - [Affordable and Specialist Housing Supplementary Planning Document](#)
 - [Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space Supplementary Planning Document](#)
 - [Harlow Town Plan](#)
 - [Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#)
 - [Harlow and Gilston Garden Town How To Guide for Planning Obligations & Viability](#)

¹ Harlow, East Herts and Epping Forest District Councils and Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils

7. Issues and Opportunities at Wych Elm

- 7.1. The Wych Elm area is considered to have a poor environmental quality with very little green space, trees or landscaping however this is not surprising given the types of uses that are currently situated there. The legibility and layout make it difficult to move around safely particularly if you are a pedestrian or cyclist. Connections from Rectory Wood and residential areas to the north to the town centre are very poor with only one suitable access point at the underpass. Traffic along Fourth Avenue makes crossing the road difficult and unsafe at street level even if this is considered a more direct route from Wych Elm to the town centre.
- 7.2. The positioning of most of the buildings at the northern parts of Wych Elm mean that the footpath and cycle way to the north is lined with unsightly blank frontages. Neither the wooded area nor these blank frontages provide any overlooking or natural surveillance of the pathway making it both unattractive and potentially unsafe. This may prevent people from using it. The frontages of buildings and spaces along Fourth Avenue are also poor with very few features, multifunctional green spaces, active uses or pleasant buildings. Again, this is not surprising given the nature of the uses at Wych Elm which in most cases are workspaces and customer/worker parking.



Blank Frontages along the cycle/footpath



Lack of legibility and green space at Wych Elm

- 7.3. The Wych Elm Area forms part of the town centre yet it currently has little to no relationship to the town centre because of issues such as a lack of legibility, the 'separation of the site' by Fourth Avenue and the uses within the area which are not typical of a town centre location. Yet it has so many opportunities to come forward comprehensively for a mix of uses that will make Wych Elm more active and connected to the town centre. By making better use of layout and space and relocating existing uses where possible the Wych Elm area can be developed into a 'mixed use hub' and a destination in its own right in this northern part of the town centre.
- 7.4. The following vision and objectives have been identified for the Wych Elm area considering the issues identified above, the opportunities presented at the site and the guidance set out for this area in the TCMF SPD. Applicants should take these objectives into account and the specific strategies for the individual land parcels as set out in Chapter 8.

Vision for the Wych Elm Area

Wych Elm will be a place where residents and visitors will want to shop, relax, eat, socialise, play and make use of community services as well as live and work. Wych Elm is to be redeveloped for a mix of uses, including new homes and active day-time services including community and civic facilities.

High quality taller residential blocks which provide active ground floor frontages are supported. Non-residential uses will serve mostly day-time needs such as cafes, healthcare services, workspaces and small shops. This will support needs of the local and wider community. The town centre south of Fourth Avenue will continue to act as the main shopping and leisure destination.

The Wych Elm area will be an attractive and pleasant space for all members of the community, accessible and safe for pedestrians and cyclists and well-connected to the rest of the town centre.

Objectives for the Wych Elm Area

1. Deliver the Wych Elm Area in a comprehensive way for a mix of new homes including affordable, workspaces and/or commercial units, community and civic facilities and if necessary, healthcare services.
2. Seek opportunities to relocate existing uses where these are not suitable for the Wych Elm area or where there are more appropriate alternative sites to enable a comprehensive approach to come forward.
3. Improve the legibility and layout of the Wych Elm area to make it safer and attractive particularly for cyclists and pedestrians within the site and improve connections to the town centre, Town Park, education and early years and childcare settings, the Princess Alexandra Hospital site, Sainsbury's superstore and other services and facilities.
4. Significantly 'green' the Wych Elm area through a series of enhancements and improvements including multi-functional green spaces and amenity areas connecting to Rectory Wood taking into consideration the public realm strategy in the TCMF SPD.
5. Improve the layout and orientation of buildings to provide active and attractive frontages particularly along Fourth Avenue, the cycle/footpath to the north and at Hamstel Road.

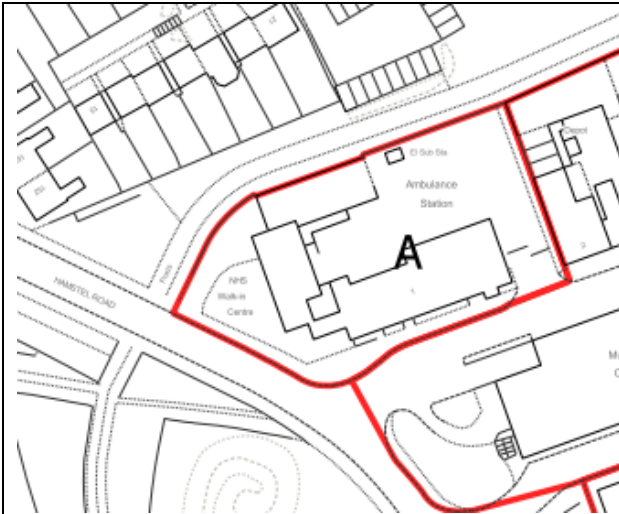
8. Development Strategy

- 8.1. The development strategy for the Wych Elm area has been led primarily by the Opportunity Area guidance contained within the TCMF SPD. However, there may be differences between the Framework and this development brief as circumstances have changed within the land parcels. Furthermore, this brief provides more detailed information on what the Council would expect to be provided on site. Both documents should be read together when considering proposals for the Wych Elm area.
- 8.2. The Council will be proactive in bringing forward development opportunities at Wych Elm particularly on Council owned land and will look at joint ventures to support delivery.

Land Parcel Strategy

- 8.3. The tables on the following pages set out the development strategy for each individual land parcel (asset out Map 3 and Table 1). The development strategy for each land parcel includes information in respect of:
- Land uses the Council considers appropriate and the potential quantum of each land use e.g., number of homes or sqm of workspace. The appropriate uses detailed in the tables do not prevent other uses coming forward that comply with the HLDP or NPPF including comparison and convenience retail uses. A percentage of new homes should be affordable in accordance with HLDP Policy H8.
 - The possible relocation of existing uses where this is considered appropriate. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for uses to stay and be incorporated within a scheme.
 - The potential for other uses to be relocated to Wych Elm including specific community and civic facilities.
 - What will be considered appropriate in respect of building heights for each of the land parcels considering the potential land uses the site may contain, the surrounding uses and existing planning consents. It has also considered the height recommendations set out in the TCMF SPD.
 - Specific layout and design parameters for each of the land parcels which applicants must consider. These parameters give a general outline of what must be incorporated or considered as part of any scheme. For example, this could include improving cycle and pedestrian connections, providing specific green spaces or enhancing frontages
 - An approximate timescale for delivery (although this is subject to change and should act as a guide only).
 - In some circumstances the TCMF SPD indicative drawings shows a preferred comprehensive scheme which involves the redevelopment of two parcels together. A land parcel strategy will set out where this would be supported.
- 8.4. The tables have been developed having considered the TCMF SPD guidance including representations received during the consultation process, pre-application discussions on some of the land parcels and the appropriate uses for the town centre as set out in the Harlow Local Development Plan.

Land Parcel A Strategy



Acceptable land uses on Parcel A:

- Residential uses
- Possible provision of a local healthcare hub
- Possibly provision of workspace if brought forward comprehensively with Land Parcel B

Relocation of uses and healthcare hub:

The appropriate uses for Land Parcel A are predicated on the relocation of the on-site ambulance station and existing healthcare facilities. However, representations from the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System (H&WE ICS) have suggested that following the potential relocation of the Princess Alexandra Hospital

(PAH) a suitable health care presence is likely to be retained within central Harlow, possibly in the form of a local hub within the town centre. Wych Elm may be considered a suitable central location for such a facility with good access to the bus station and Sustainable Transport Corridor along Fourth Avenue. If Wych Elm was agreed as a suitable location with the H&WE ICS then Parcel A is considered to be appropriate.

Comprehensive Scheme

If relocation of the existing uses is required and facilitated, Land Parcels A and B should consider coming forward through one comprehensive scheme as per the TCMF SPD.

This includes possible workspace units (which could include existing workspace uses in Parcel B e.g. Rainbow Services) at ground floor.

Indicative capacity estimates:

Residential units: 75-130*
Potential Workspace: 800sqm**
Possible healthcare hub size: TBC

Delivery timescale:

Subject to relocation of existing uses this parcel is considered to be a medium – long term site (10-15 years)

Building Heights:

Parcel A is suitable for buildings of approximately four storeys in height as per the indicative drawings in the TCMF SPD although a taller building fronting Hamstel Road may be considered appropriate.

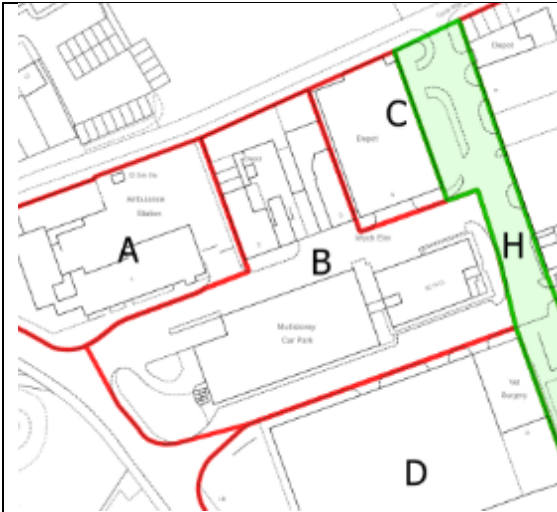
Specific layout and design principles for Land Parcel A:

- The layout and orientation of buildings at Land Parcel A must ensure that the frontages along the cycle/footpath to the north are attractive and provide some form of natural surveillance
- The Land Parcel should improve cycle and pedestrian connections to the west across to the Princess Alexandra Hospital site particularly if it is redeveloped for housing as per it's HLDP allocation
- Opportunities, where appropriate, to enhance and preserve the setting of the Scheduled Ancient monument to the west of the site should be sought

* The number of units is dependent on the possible requirement of a healthcare hub and the final building heights across the site

** Ground floor workspace could be provided if Land Parcels A & B come forward comprehensively

Land Parcel B Strategy



Acceptable land uses on Parcel B:

- Residential uses along the cycle/footpath with the potential for a comprehensive development with Land Parcel A
- Workspaces and flexible active uses at ground floor
- If required, a reconfigured multi-storey car park (at lower levels) with workspaces/residential above

Existing businesses and Multi-Storey Car Park:

There are a number of small business units within Land Parcel B that could relocate or form part of a mix of uses within the Parcel. Representations from the H&WE ICS suggest that some form of healthcare hub and associated parking is required in a town centre location. Furthermore, the car park is well used by visitors and users of businesses at Wych Elm and for the town centre. Therefore, it may be appropriate to maintain some form of car parking at Wych Elm. There are several options for parking in this Parcel:

- Demolish the multi-storey car park and rebuild it in the same location. There is an opportunity to then provide other uses above including residential and workspace/commercial units
- A complete relocation of the multi-storey car park

outside of Wych Elm. The site could then be developed in accordance with the TCMF SPD i.e.

Indicative capacity

estimates:

Residential units: 50-120 homes*
 Workspace: 800 sqm
 Flexible ground floor uses: 700 sqm
 Public car parking: No. of spaces
 TBC

Delivery timescale:

Subject to retention or relocation of existing businesses this parcel is considered to be a medium – long term site (10-15 years)



the car park building would be replaced with a predominantly residential block with some active ground floor uses.

- Relocate the multi-storey car park within Wych Elm, possibly on Council owned land in Land Parcel B (in-between Parcels A and C). This could be on a temporary basis to enable redevelopment of the existing car park area but could later be converted to residential use. As above, the existing site would then be developed in accordance with the TMF SPD.

Businesses could also be retained at 13-26 Wych Elm within a reconfigured and redeveloped commercial block with residential above. Residential at first floor and above in this location will need to be mindful of the impact on the amenity of occupiers at Wych Elm House.

If the exiting multi-storey car park is relocated entirely then, as per the TCMF SPD, only one access point may be required from Hamstel Road at the south which would enable more public realm space where the existing access from Hamstel Road currently is. However, if the ambulance station is retained it is considered that a one-way system may be better for ambulances and other vehicles to move around Wych Elm.

Comprehensive Scheme

If relocation of the existing uses are facilitated, Land Parcels A and B should consider coming forward through one comprehensive scheme as per the TCMF SPD.

Building Heights:

Parcel B is suitable for apartments above active ground floor uses and parking. The existing multi-storey car park is three storeys, and it is recommended that approximately four storeys in height are appropriate in this location. A taller building may be appropriate north of Land Parcel B along the footpath subject to the impact upon the amenity of occupiers at Land Parcel C to the east.

Specific layout and design principles for Land Parcel B:

- The layout and orientation of buildings at Land Parcel B must ensure that the frontages along the cycle/footpath to the north are attractive and provide some form of natural surveillance

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provision of sufficient car parking for businesses/possible healthcare facilities in Wych Elm will need to be considered• The creation of green spaces in and around development to improve the public realm• The land parcel should look to maintain a vehicle access from Hamstel Road. Depending on the requirement for the multi-storey car park and options for the ambulance station this could be one access route or retention of the existing one-way loop• Consideration of the Wych Elm House development and Land Parcel C in respect of impact on amenity e.g. window to window distances, aspects and light.• Opportunities, where appropriate, to enhance and preserve the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument to the west of the site should be sought	
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* The number of homes is dependent on whether the Multi-Storey Car Park is still required on the site and the final building heights across the land parcel

Land Parcel C Strategy



Acceptable land uses on Parcel C:

- Residential from first floor and above
- Flexible active uses (e.g. Use Class E) at ground floor

Building Heights:

A staggered point block and shoulder block design of between 6-15 storeys with the taller blocks located along the eastern and northern edge will be supported.

Indicative capacity

estimates:

Residential units: 82 homes
Flexible ground floor uses: 400sqm

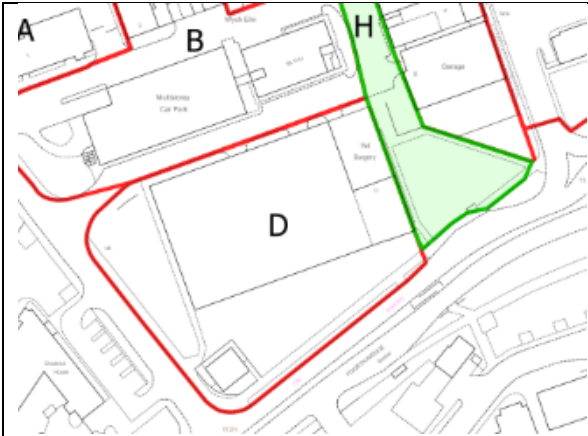
Delivery timescale:

This parcel is considered to be a short-term site

Specific layout and design principles for Land Parcel C:

- Frontages along the cycle/footpath to the north which are attractive and provide some form of natural surveillance
- Active ground floor frontages and private amenity space for occupiers as well as improvements to the public realm
- Development must not impact upon the delivery of a better cycle/footpath connection and green link between Rectory Wood and Fourth Avenue to the south (Land Parcel H)
- Consideration of any amenity impact on neighbouring properties

Land Parcel D Strategy



The majority of Land Parcel D is being built out in accordance with the planning consent for this site (Ref HW/FUL/19/00241).

Veterinary Centre

The Veterinary Centre could be retained in its current use and location. However, this will not improve the frontage onto Fourth Avenue. Therefore, the preference is to relocate the unit and the area used for green space and public realm improvements to support the green finger (Land Parcel H). It could also be used for a small residential scheme or some form of commercial/business use. This could include the possible relocation of Rainbow Services, currently situated within Parcel B. Alternatively, there may be opportunity for a small mixed-use scheme incorporating the Veterinary Centre and some residential units above. This would improve the site and frontage.

The indicative capacity estimates are as the planning consent for Wych Elm House (see Table 1)

Options for the Veterinary Centre will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Land Parcel E Strategy



Acceptable land uses on Parcel E:

- Residential uses from first floor up
- Flexible active uses (e.g. Use Class E) at ground floor
- Workspaces at ground floor where appropriate or necessary

Existing businesses:

There are several existing businesses on the site where relocation would be required. This would enable the site to come forward for the uses above and comprehensively. Some of the uses are not entirely appropriate for a town centre location and may be better suited within an industrial/employment area premise such as The Pinnacles or Templefields. However, some of the uses, such as the Funeral Directors, may be appropriate within workspace units on ground level within the land parcel.

This is subject to parking and access provision that may be required for customers and how the workspace improves the overall appearance and environment of Wych Elm.

Comprehensive Scheme:

Subject to the relocation of existing uses and timescales of delivery for both sites, Land Parcels E and F could come forward comprehensively as one scheme as per the TCMF SPD. This may alter the types of uses appropriate for Land Parcel E

Building Heights:

Indicative capacity

estimates:

Residential units: 110 - 130 homes*

Flexible ground floor uses: 700 sqm

Workspace uses: 2,800 sqm

Delivery timescale:

This parcel is considered to be a medium-term site (10 years) if delivered independently from Land Parcel F and subject to appropriate access.

Parcel E is suitable for a mix of uses including blocks of up to six storeys in height as per the indicative drawings in the TCMF SPD although taller buildings fronting Fourth Avenue or the footpath to the north may be considered appropriate.

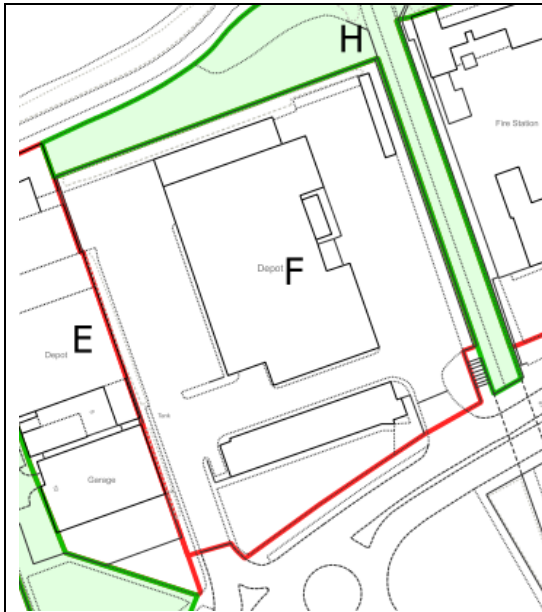
Given the central location of the parcel within Wych Elm, consideration needs to be given of the potential impact on amenity of other buildings particularly 4 Wych Elm and Wych Elm House where development is either already being built out or is likely to be built out before this site is developed.

Specific layout and design principles for Land Parcel E:

- The layout and orientation of buildings at Land Parcel E must ensure that the frontages along the cycle/footpath to the north and along Fourth Avenue are attractive and provide some form of natural surveillance
- The layout must also enable and help create green spaces that together will contribute towards the green finger running through Wych Elm from Rectory Wood towards Fourth Avenue
- Consideration of the Wych Elm House development and 4 Wych Elm and any impact on the amenity of these sites e.g. window to window distances, aspects and light.
- A footpath/cyclepath connection through the Land Parcel is required to access Land Parcel F
- The preferred vehicle access should either be directly from Fourth Avenue or using the same access into Land Parcel F. The existing access from Hamstel Road should be retained only for Land Parcels A-D. This would then enable the green link from Rectory Wood (Land Parcel H) to be delivered.

* The number of homes is dependent on the final building heights

Land Parcel F Strategy



Acceptable land uses on Parcel F:

- Residential uses
- Flexible active uses (e.g. Use Class E) at ground floor
- Workspaces at ground floor and first floor where appropriate or necessary
- Potential for civic and community facilities
- Potential for local healthcare hub (as an alternative site to Land Parcel A)

Existing Arriva Depot:

Parcel F is currently occupied by Arriva and consists of a depot, offices and staff car parking. Relocation of Arriva would enable the site to be better utilised for a mix of supporting town centre, civic and residential uses and improve the environment and appearance along Fourth Avenue. A more suitable location could be found in an

employment area or somewhere close to the town centre with suitable access for staff and for buses to enter and exit the site. There may be opportunities for the Parcel to retain office space through workspace provision on the ground floor.

Civic and Community Facilities:

There is potential for Land Parcel F to function as a civic/community hub through the provision of healthcare facilities including the potential healthcare hub detailed in Land Parcel A, childcare provision and other services. This could be supported by some residential development.

Comprehensive Scheme:

Indicative capacity

estimates:

Residential units: 80 homes*
Flexible ground floor uses: 850 sqm
Workspace uses: 3,400 sqm

Other facilities if required:

Civic facilities: TBC sqm
Healthcare hub: TBC sqm

Delivery timescale:

This parcel is considered to be a medium to long term site (10 years +) if delivered independently from Land Parcel E. This is also subject to the relocation of Arriva and the potential for the site to deliver other community uses

Subject to the relocation of existing uses and timescales for delivery for both sites, Land Parcels E and F could come forward comprehensively as one scheme as per the TCMF SPD. This may alter the types of uses appropriate for Land Parcel F

Building Heights:

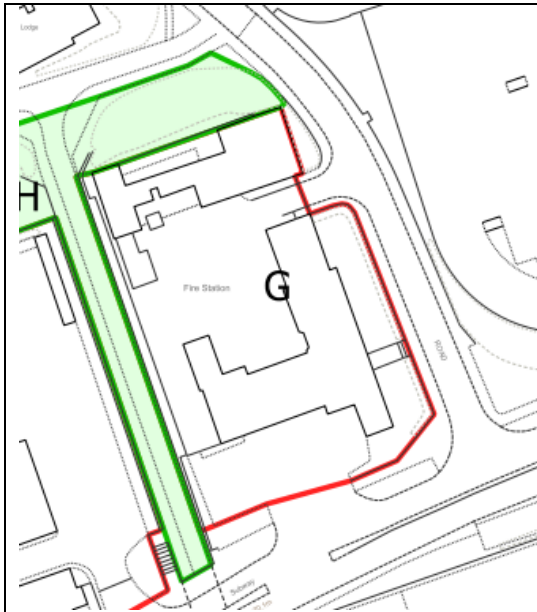
As per the indicative drawings in the TCMF SPD, Parcel F is suitable for a mix of uses including apartment blocks of up to six storeys in height although this is subject to what mix of uses are to be provided on the site. Civic and community uses, for example childcare facilities, will be supported above a single storey but this must be considered appropriate for the users and partner authorities. Furthermore, buildings must not impact upon the amenity of adjoining uses and occupants in respect of light and privacy. If this parcel were agreed as a solely residential led site, then taller buildings may be considered acceptable.

Specific layout and design principles for Land Parcel F:

- The layout and orientation of buildings at Land Parcel F must ensure that their frontages along the cycle/footpath to the north and along Fourth Avenue in are attractive and provide some form of natural surveillance.
- It is important that this site is well connected for pedestrians and cyclists both from the south, north and west particularly if it is to provide community/civic uses.
- The land parcel will still be accessed from the existing entrance point along Fourth Avenue although the layout of this access point may require improvement and will be subject to discussions with the local highway authority.
- The area of amenity green space to the north of the parcel is to be retained and improved/enhanced and opened up for the enjoyment of the community and occupiers of Land Parcel F.
- The site should provide pedestrian access directly into the underpass (Parcel H)
- The scale of development for Land Parcel F may require upgrades to the wastewater network and further discussions will be required with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to agree a housing and infrastructure phasing plan.

* The number of homes is subject to the potential requirement for other civic/community facilities and the final height of buildings across the site

Land Parcel G Strategy



Acceptable land uses on Parcel G:

- Retention of fire station if suitable location is not found
- Flexible active ground floor uses
- Residential above ground floor
- Potential for community facilities

Fire Station Relocation:

Any major redevelopment of this site is predicated on the relocation of the fire station to an appropriate location. This would need to have easy and safe access onto the road network and may be required in a central location within Harlow. It may be agreed that the existing site remains the most appropriate location and therefore will be retained. There may be opportunity however to explore whether a reconfiguration or re-use of space on this land parcel could enable some other uses to come forward.

Community Facilities:

There is potential for Land Parcel G to incorporate community facilities including civic services as an alternative site to Parcel F. The indicative capacity estimates reflect the fact that Parcel G could be used for either these facilities or workspace with limited residential development.

Building Heights:

The TCMF SPD suggests that the buildings would be retained as they are and converted into other uses. For example, the fire station building could be retained, improved and converted into other community facilities. The building to the north could also be retained at the existing height of two storeys and converted into active ground floor units and residential above. If the fire station is

Indicative capacity estimates:

The indicative estimates below are based on the TCMF SPD masterplan and are subject to the potential relocation of the fire station and further testing as to the suitable uses.

Residential units: 6-10 homes
Flexible ground floor uses: 750 sqm
Workspace/Community uses: 2,000 sqm or

Delivery timescale:

This parcel is considered to be a medium to long-term scheme subject to the suitable relocation of the fire station

relocated, it could be more intensely developed but it is considered that the building heights should not be above four storeys.

Specific design and layout principles for Land Parcel G

- The layout and orientation of buildings, or in this case the façade of existing buildings if retained, must ensure that frontages along the cycle/footpath to the north, along Fourth Avenue and Hodings Road are attractive and provide some form of natural surveillance
- It is important that the site is well connected for pedestrians and cyclists both from the north, south and east particularly if it is to provide community facilities
- Ensure that safe pedestrian connection across Hodings Road to Sainsbury’s is provided
- The area of amenity green space to the north of the parcel is to be retained and improved/enhanced and opened up for the enjoyment of the community and occupiers of Parcel G
- The land parcel will have a safe vehicular access point which may be better suited along Hodings Road only. This is subject to further discussion with the local highway authority
- The site should provide pedestrian access directly into the underpass (Parcel H)

Land Parcel H Strategy



Parcel H East:

There is opportunity through redevelopment to significantly 'green' the western part of Wych Elm which would help create a green finger from Rectory Wood to Fourth Avenue. This would provide a much more pleasant connection for cyclists and pedestrians and environment for workers, residents and new communities at Wych Elm. These spaces should be multi-functional where possible providing opportunities for meeting, seating, playing and movement and should improve existing amenity space along Fourth Avenue.





Parcel H West:

This green space is primarily the underpass which currently enables pedestrians and cyclists to access the town centre under Fourth Avenue. It also incorporates amenity space to the north of Parcels F and G. There is opportunity to utilise the space in the underpass to provide multi-functional green and amenity space through for example planters, seating areas, natural play equipment, public art and sculpture and green walls. The underpass and green space to the north could contribute towards amenity provision for new residents at Wych

Elm and those who use the foot/cycle path to the north. The underpass would still need to maintain a suitable footpath and cyclepath connection. The Council may undertake a Design Competition for the design and delivery of this scheme.

Planning contributions may be sought from development sites to support the public realm and landscaping improvements in Land Parcels H. This may also include payments towards the long-term maintenance of the areas or to support some form of longer-term stewardship approach.



9. Delivery Strategy

- 9.1. The strategies for each land parcel set out above show that there are clear linkages between the effective delivery of individual parcels. The design, scale and orientation of buildings as well as agreed land uses and access/connectivity points of one parcel will impact on the delivery of a successful scheme of an adjoining land parcel. For example, the redevelopment of Land Parcel F should encompass a vehicular access point to deliver an effective layout for Land Parcel E. This will also help to deliver the green finger (Parcel H west). Another example is that the design and layout of Land Parcel E should enable a pedestrian/cycle access through the scheme to support movement and permeability to Land Parcel F. Furthermore, it is important that together the parcels support the implementation of public realm, green infrastructure, landscaping and movement principles for the Wych Elm area as a whole. Therefore, the phasing of land parcels, the successful relocation of uses, whether within or outside of the area, stewardship arrangements and opportunities for equalisation across the sites is important. Some important principles for delivery are set out in this section.
- 9.2. The strategies above identify delivery timescales for each of the land parcels. These timescales are indicative only and the Council will support the early delivery of the land parcels in order to regenerate the Wych Elm area sooner. This may require a degree of flexibility in the requirements set out in the brief and compromises where delivery may be affected or delayed. This may include the need for some sites to come forward independently rather than comprehensively. The Council will work proactively with the development industry to bring sites forward earlier than the indicative timescales set out above. This includes identifying, where possible, suitable alternative sites for existing uses and working with those uses in their relocation. The Council will also work with infrastructure providers and statutory providers to overcome any hurdles and look at opportunities to deliver joint ventures with developers or purchase land that will help deliver new homes. Early dialogue with the Council is greatly encouraged in order to begin this process as early as possible.

Relocation or retention of existing uses

- 9.3. There are a number of existing uses in the area that may require relocation. However, there may also be opportunity for some of the existing businesses to be incorporated into a development scheme. The land parcel strategies recommend the relocation of the Arriva Bus Depot, the fire station, options for the multi-storey car park relocation, the ambulance station and the existing businesses in Land Parcels B and E. Many of these uses would be suitable in Harlow's employment areas, including the Arriva Bus Depot and uses which are usually located in industrial locations such as MOT testing stations.
- 9.4. There are uses that would benefit both the viability of the business and the community if they were to remain in the Wych Elm area. This is because of the area's strategic location close to public transport, the town centre and local residents. This includes Rainbow Services, the Veterinary Centre, the Funeral Directors and some other local businesses particularly in Land

Parcel B where most businesses are still considered to be appropriate town centre uses. A healthcare presence, as suggested in the individual land parcel strategies may also be appropriate and incorporated into a wider scheme.

- 9.5. One of the largest and longest serving businesses in Wych Elm is the Daniel Robinson & Sons Funeral Directors located in Land Parcel E. This has been located at Wych Elm since 1966 and is an important community facility. It's position close to Princess Alexandra Hospital means that it acts as additional overflow mortuary facilities. Relocating the Funeral Directors would enable a comprehensive scheme to come forward in Land Parcel E. However, it is noted that a Funeral Directors should be located centrally within the town, such as in a town centre location, to enable visitors and employees to access the site by public transport and on foot. If relocated, it must also have space for work vehicles and, in the case for Daniel Robinson & Sons, include an on-site, extensive mortuary facilities. The relocation of the Princess Alexandra Hospital may in due course open up opportunities for a more appropriate site to be identified that may benefit the Funeral Directors.
- 9.6. A new site for the Arriva Bus Depot should have appropriate access to the road network and include enough space for a turning area for the buses, storage and office buildings. It must also have sufficient car parking for employees who are likely to work unsociable hours. The relocation of the ambulance station may be appropriate alongside the relocation of the hospital to the east of Harlow, subject to sufficient land being available.
- 9.7. An alternative site for the fire station would require access to all major roadways and be accessible for local crews by footpaths and cycleways and by road and public transport for all other crews. There would need to be enough land for the existing buildings including a potential command tower, and taller buildings such as the drill towers. It must also be on a site that has little to no environmental constraints including no risk of flooding and must consider the potential impact upon neighbouring residential areas.
- 9.8. If suitable alternative sites are not identified for these uses and they are not available at the time an application is submitted for the land parcels, then they will remain on their existing sites or incorporated within a development scheme.

Phasing of land parcels

- 9.9. The brief does not set out a specific phasing plan for the Wych Elm area. This will be determined by the level of interest in bringing the sites forward and whether or not proposals deliver the successful regeneration of the Wych Elm area and the objectives and vision set out in this brief.
- 9.10. Land Parcel G, which houses the fire station, can come forward independently of the other sites given its separation by the underpass and the availability of separate vehicular access points. This is considered to be a long-term site however to enable the relocation of the fire station.

- 9.11. Land Parcel C could come forward independently and therefore sooner than other land parcels. The layout and design of any scheme must however enable the delivery of Land Parcel H green finger and ensure that vehicular access for other parcels is still viable.
- 9.12. The Council will support the comprehensive delivery of Land Parcels E and F with their existing uses relocated and a shared access route from the roundabout to the south. Having a shared vehicular access will enable the green finger link at Land Parcel H (west) to be delivered solely for pedestrians and cyclists. A pedestrian/cycle access would connect the west of Wych Elm through Land Parcel E to Land Parcel F. If Land Parcel E became available for development sooner, than this could come forward as independent blocks but still with a preferred shared access point at Land Parcel F and the inclusion of a pedestrian/cyclist connection route through. The delivery of these land parcels is dependent on relocating the Arriva Bus Depot and uses in Land Parcel E. Alternative sites must not only be suitable but also available. Schemes should also consider whether they can accommodate some of the existing businesses at Land Parcel B which are suitable town centre uses.
- 9.13. There are opportunities for Land Parcels A and B to also come forward comprehensively, as per the TCMF SPD. The northern part of Land Parcel B along with Land Parcel A could deliver a healthcare hub, community services and a car parking area as well as residential above ground floor. The strategy for Land Parcel B suggests several options for the redevelopment or relocation of the multi-storey car park. The redevelopment of the existing car park and 13-26 Wych Elm for a mix of uses could also come forward independently.
- 9.14. Land Parcels A and B are not considered to be short term sites given relocation requirements and redevelopment options for the multi-storey car park. If required sooner, then Land Parcel A could deliver some form of healthcare hub but this may require relocation of the ambulance station in order to bring forward a large enough hub.
- 9.15. The delivery and phasing of the land parcels must ensure that the green finger links and pedestrian and cycle connections are protected. Public realm improvements should come forward as development is being built out across the Wych Elm area so that an element of public open space is available for the enjoyment of new residents and visitors.
- 9.16. It will be advantageous for developers of land parcels to work together to ensure the costs and benefits of developing the land parcels are shared with measures put in place to equalise and apportion costs. This includes any improvements to the road network to enable shared access arrangements, the delivery of public realm and green finger improvements across the area and the potential re-homing of existing uses or relocation of other necessary uses e.g., the healthcare hub. Developers should also consider what stewardship arrangements will be required for the maintenance of shared spaces, including public realm improvements, in Wych Elm where they benefit the development.

10. Planning, Design and Infrastructure considerations for Wych Elm

10.1. The guidance below provides further general planning and design principles for Wych Elm which should be considered across the entire area.

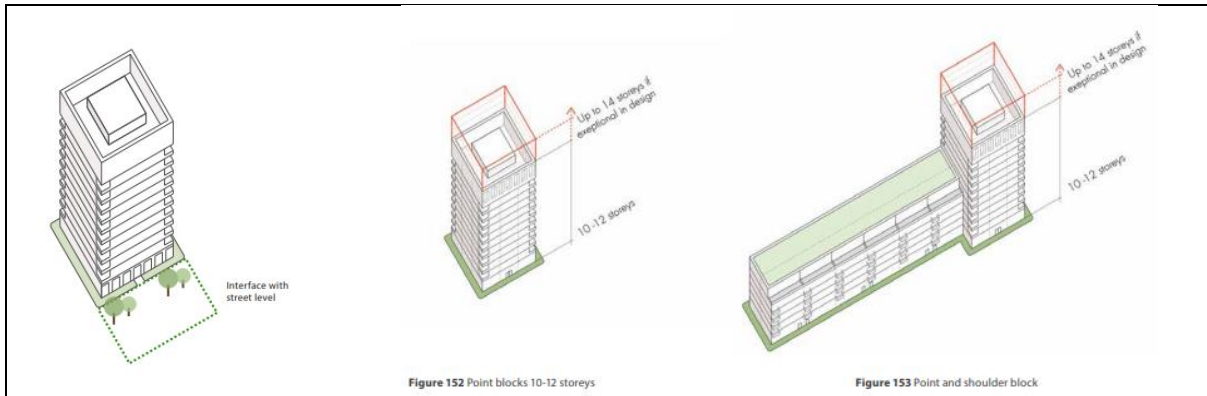
Tall Buildings

Applicants should consider the tall building guidance contained within the Design Guide Addendum (2021) and TCMF SPD (2022). In summary:

- Tall buildings should consider the relationship with the existing context, including prevailing building heights. As part of this, proposals should demonstrate that the location is appropriate in relation to an evaluation and assessment of suitability and sensitivity.
- Proposals must consider the sensitivity of the site in relation to any potential impact on designated and undesignated heritage assets, views, ecological assets, public spaces and green spaces.
- Proposals should consider key views through to Rectory Wood to support way finding for pedestrians and cyclists
- The individual land parcel strategies set out the number of stories considered acceptable on each parcel although taller exceptional buildings will be considered. However, in general, proposals should consider 1) the positioning of multiple tall buildings in close proximity on a single site or adjacent sites; 2) the cumulative impacts where multiple tall buildings clash in the foreground or background of defined views; and 3) the positioning of buildings so as to avoid barriers between Fourth Avenue and the town centre.

The TCMF SPD sets out further detail in respect of design considerations (palettes, materials lighting) and geometries for tall buildings (mostly point block or point block with shoulder block formations) and how applicants should consider aspects such as light, aspect, wind and overshadowing. It is also important that applicants consult with the Civil Aviation Authority in respect of Stansted Airport and safeguarding heights when planning tall buildings.

It will be very important in Wych Elm that each of the land parcels complement the other in respect of tall buildings and applicants may be expected to provide massing studies and detailed CGIs and drawings as part of their application. It will also be important for tall buildings to have considered the interface of the ground floor with the street. Applicants must provide high quality public realm and human scale, active frontages, user friendly and legible entrances and approaches, sunshine zones, appropriately sized open space, legible links with transport and pedestrian routes, and appropriate landscaping and amenity space.



Landscaping, Public Realm and Open Space

There are multiple opportunities through the redevelopment of Wych Elm to provide additional amenity space and landscaping as part of private amenity space and general open space for the wider community.

The two green spaces identified through Land Parcels H will be secured and provided as part of a comprehensive approach to Wych Elm. It is important that this landscaping connects with Rectory Wood which is an important green asset in this area. It is also important that these green links connect with and improve existing green spaces at Wych Elm along the south of Parcel E and north of Parcels F and G.

The provision of amenity space for the wider public should be consistent with the Council’s Green Infrastructure and Public Open Spaces SPD. This sets out a series of principles for Green Infrastructure in Harlow as well as guidance on trees and hedgerows, biodiversity net gain and play space. The amenity spaces for Wych Elm should follow the GI principles in particular, be multi-functional, including recreation use, natural play and Sustainable Drainage Systems and where possible provide ecological and biodiversity enhancements.

The overall greening of the Wych Elm area should also be consistent with the TCMF SPD’s public realm strategy and in particular it’s ‘urban forest’ which sets out a comprehensive green network across the town centre. The TCMF SPD identifies Parcels H as key green corridors within the town centre and identifies Fourth Avenue for enhancement as a boulevard street. The TCMF SPD also recognises the improvement of underpasses to the town centre through better lighting, public art, and playable elements and has also identified the potential opportunity for pocket parks and play space to be provided at Wych Elm. The overall public realm should be made attractive through street trees (tree pits), flower beds and planters and dual-purpose street furniture (benches and planters together). The Council will work with developers to bring together stewardship arrangements as part of the design and masterplanning for Green Infrastructure.

Applicants will also be expected to provide private amenity space in accordance with the Design Guide Addendum (2021) through the provision of balcony space, informal and formal communal areas (and also public amenity areas if considered appropriate), roof-top gardens, amenity areas above ground floor and children’s play spaces.



Figure 117 Alexandra Road Park. Multi-use green spine with dense planting, play areas and lawns. © J & L Gibbons

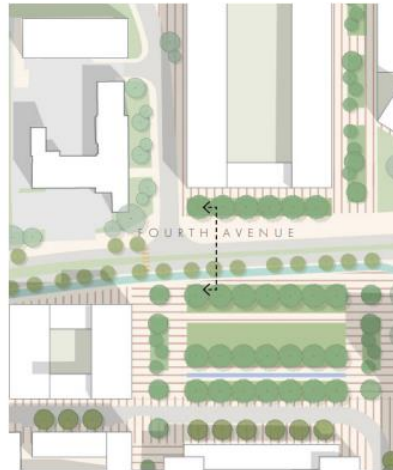


Figure 73 Rotated plan extract of Fourth Avenue Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2021). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627



Figure 116 Reeves Park, London with equipped play provision. ©Townshend Landscape Architects

Climate Mitigation and Sustainability

Applicants will be expected to comply with the current Building Regulations standards and Policy PL3 of the Harlow Local Development Plan and the Climate Change Section of the Design Guide Addendum (2021). The addendum provides useful guidance in respect of how developments can be energy efficient and how applicants can implement renewable energy and consider net-zero carbon through the building work itself and the construction materials. It also provides useful information on passive solar gain and passive cooling and overheating. This is particularly important for the orientation, layout and design of taller buildings. Clusters of tall buildings will also need to carefully consider the urban heat island effect and consider the use of landscaping, water features and areas of shading to help mitigate this.

Applicants will be expected to have completed the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainability Checklist prior to the submission of a planning application. It has been designed to be used by developers, design teams, consultants and contractors in shaping development proposals, ensuring co-ordinated and integrated consideration of sustainability principles and targets at an early stage. At the planning application stage, a Sustainability Strategy incorporating the Checklist, with relevant evidence / certification, must be submitted.

Cycle and Pedestrian Movement

The redevelopment of Wych Elm, whether comprehensively or for individual land parcels, must improve the pedestrian and cycle connections from the wider Harlow area north of Wych Elm to the town centre. The connections between and into individual land parcels is also important. This must also consider how wheelchair users and those who have restricted mobility can move around the area and this should be considered through the design of pathways, landscaping and crossing points as well as restricting cars parking on pavements.

As set out in the individual land parcel strategies, pedestrian and cycle connections must be improved from the existing cycle/footpath to the north into Wych Elm and out into Fourth Avenue. Movement within Land Parcels A to E in particular must be improved and be safe, legible, direct and pleasant to move around in.

Cycle parking should be more convenient than car parking and new developments should offer appropriate and secure locations to park bikes including spaces outside the development site where appropriate. Development proposals should also provide supplementary changing and charging facilities.

Vehicle Access Points, Parking and Servicing

Vehicle access points

- The main access (potentially retained as an internal loop) from Hamstel Road will be retained and will serve Land Parcels A-D
- The access points for Land Parcel E should be from Fourth Avenue or via Land Parcel F to enable the green link to be delivered
- The access point for Land Parcel F will be retained but may be reconfigured
- The access points for Land Parcel G will be retained if the Fire Station is to be retained where it is. If it is relocated, it may be appropriate to have one access point from Hodings Road

Vehicle parking

As per the TCMF SPD, the minimum standards set out for Essex and Harlow as per Policy IN3 of the Local Plan, are not applicable to the town centre. A low level of parking provision or car free development will be encouraged in new residential developments with appropriate justification (as set out in the TCMF SPD).

Through proactive use of Travel Planning and an integrated approach to the enhancement of public transport, the Council will seek to encourage a low level of dedicated parking for new commercial workspace as well, potentially car-free.

The Council will consider flexibility in the sustainable mode share target for retained or re-provided healthcare facilities although these services should aim to meet the target set out in the HGGT Transport Strategy.

Servicing

Servicing for retail areas should be via the rear of the units wherever possible and must not have a detrimental impact on pedestrianised areas. Proposals should demonstrate an integrated approach to the deliveries and collection points (including domestic residential deliveries) and it is important that proposals provide a clear summary of how existing and future servicing arrangements for development sites and neighbouring areas will be managed.

Sewerage Capacity

The impacts on sewerage capacity will be dependent on the final scale of development, timing of delivery and point of connection to the existing networks. The cumulative impacts of development both within the Development Brief area and outside need to be considered and as such early engagement with Thames Water to discuss wastewater infrastructure requirements that may be needed to support development should be made. Where there are concerns, it may be necessary for phasing conditions to be used to ensure the relevant phase of development is not occupied until any necessary wastewater infrastructure upgrades are in place.

Planning Contributions

Development proposals will have an impact on infrastructure provision and therefore mitigation measures will be required in the form of planning contributions. This is in accordance with HLDP Policy IN6 and is subject to viability. The infrastructure items that will likely require planning contributions are listed below but these may change depending on the individual circumstances of each planning application:

- Primary School Education
- Early Years and Childcare
- Local walking and cycling projects
- Sustainable Transport Corridor
- Healthcare provision
- Libraries contribution
- Public art either within the development or an off-site contribution
- Town Park and other open spaces in accordance with the Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space SPD
- Affordable housing or contributions towards off-site affordable housing
- Public realm projects

CONTACTS

To discuss the contents of the brief:

Forward Planning Team:

01279 446878

Myharlow@harlow.gov.uk

To make a pre-application enquiry:

Development Management Team

01279 446578

Planning.services@harlow.gov.uk

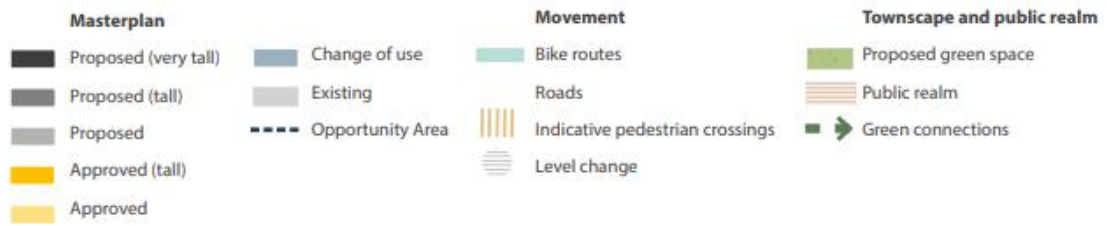
To discuss a land ownership/regeneration enquiry:

Regeneration Team

01279 446862

regen.enquiries@harlow.gov.uk

Appendix A – Town Centre Masterplan SPD Framework Wych Elm Images



GROUND FLOOR LAND USES



UPPER FLOOR LAND USES

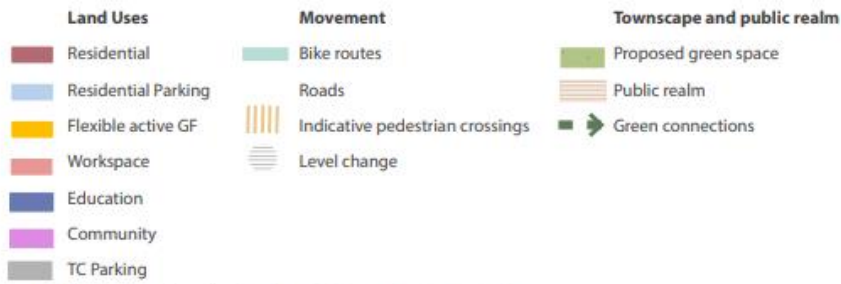


Figure 165 Indicative Town Centre land use plans for Opportunity Area 2 Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2021). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627