

WEYMOUTH AVENUE AREA

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF



FEBRUARY 2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Historical and archaeological site constraints

- An archaeological field evaluation (to include trial trenches) must be carried to ensure that any planned development of the Weymouth Avenue Area will not damage or destroy any important archaeological artefacts or remains.
- Any redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area should:
 - not physically damage or adversely affect the setting of the scheduled ancient monument of Maumbury Rings;
 - retain and reuse the historically important buildings on the site and in particular the listed Brewery Buildings (including the chimney). Any scheme of conversion should respect the historic plan form of the buildings and retain significant fixtures and fittings both externally and internally.
- The design, scale and layout of any new development on the site should preserve or enhance the setting of the Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area and ideally will:
 - improve the setting of the Brew House and re-establish the importance of the southwest facing elevation – potentially through the provision of a formal open space in the form of a “public square” along the southern aspect of the main brewery building;
 - preserve and reinforce the industrial character and visual importance of the listed buildings;
 - use materials and detailing appropriate to the existing historic/architectural important buildings on the site and in the wider conservation area;
 - include the improvement of the Weymouth Avenue frontage, including repairs to the boundary wall and gate pillars and the reinstatement of the original fenestration where inappropriate alterations have been carried out.

Land Contamination and Potential Sources of Pollution

- Any redevelopment of the site should:
 - include details of remedial measures to address any localised soil contamination. These should be submitted prior to the consideration of any planning application relating to contaminated areas;
 - where possible utilize sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) in the design of the drainage systems to limit the rate of run-off wherever possible, and site contamination will need to be assessed to ensure this does not lead to pollution of ground water. New surface water sewers incorporating balancing facilities will need to be considered.

Land Uses

- The mix of land uses should reflect the part of the area within which the development proposals fall. Within the western side, the mix of uses should be predominantly employment-based (in its broadest definition), although residential uses and other uses can be accommodated within this area to enhance its variety and vitality. In the eastern part of the site the mix of uses should be predominantly residential, although appropriate non-residential uses should be accommodated within this area to increase its variety and vitality, located in key positions (such as corner buildings and the focal point of vistas) to enhance the legibility of the area.
- **Housing –**
 - The site’s location in relation to the town centre and accessibility to public transport services make it suitable for residential development at the upper end of the Government’s recommended density range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare. Development at a net density in the region of 50 dwellings per hectare or above will therefore be encouraged.
 - The Council will negotiate for a proportion of the overall housing provision within the site to be ‘Affordable’ housing for local needs, incorporating a mix of accommodation types and tenures in line with the 2002 Housing Need Survey. Consideration will be given to the provision of supported/special need accommodation in lieu of ‘general need’ housing.
- Affordable housing should be fully integrated within any redevelopment proposals and should, as far as possible, be dispersed throughout the site and indistinguishable in design and quality from open market housing.
- **Employment –**
 - The Council will seek to ensure that any redevelopment will not result in a significant reduction in employment workspace provision within the Weymouth Avenue Area (based on the wider definitions included in the deposit Local Plan). The existing level will be taken as a baseline of 200 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) workplaces.
 - A range of employment types will be sought. Where a proposed land use would attract large numbers of people, the sequential approach adopted in Government Guidance PPG6 will be followed.
 - The site offers the opportunity to deliver hotel and conference facilities to meet wider business needs in the area and such provision will be encouraged.
 - The provision of employment workspace should be in conjunction with the phased release of land for housing.
- **Retail –**
 - The provision of retail premises (A1, A2 and A3 use classes) within the Weymouth Avenue Area should be limited to small shops, offices, cafes and restaurants, or as ancillary to other employment uses.

- **Community Facilities –**

- The amount of outdoor playing space required will depend upon the extent and type of new residential development and an up-to-date assessment of open space and recreation facilities in the local area. As a guide a minimum of 0.12ha of children’s play space should be provided per 100 dwellings within the site in proximity to and overlooked by residential properties. The remaining provision may be provided through developer contributions towards the improvement of existing facilities (both open space and wider sporting facilities), or towards new provision nearby. Commuted maintenance sums will also be sought in all cases.
- Support for improving leisure and cultural facilities available to the community within the town will be encouraged.
- A pro-rata contribution (likely to be in the region of £3,217 per dwelling) towards the provision of education provision will be sought depending upon the number and type of dwellings proposed. An additional financial contribution towards the provision of youth facilities may also be sought.
- A need has been identified for a community building that could be used for childcare of all types, which could be accommodated on site. The workspaces generated by this use will be considered as part of the overall contribution to employment workspace.
- A need has been identified for a medical centre to cater for the expanding population of Dorchester and its wider rural catchment, which

could be accommodated on site, in consultation with the South West Dorset Primary Care Trust. The workspaces generated by this use will be considered as part of the overall contribution to employment workspace.

- Premises suitable for use as a “One Stop Community Centre” that can be utilised by voluntary sector services could be provided within the site and help meet the mixed-use objective. This use will be considered as part of the overall contribution to employment workspace.

Local Distinctiveness

- The redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area should help reinforce the local distinctiveness of Dorchester through:
 - retaining and strengthening of the green corridors into the centre (tree-lined avenues and the green corridor alongside the railway);
 - improving the visual and physical links from the town centre to the market, railway stations and car parks;
 - respecting historic landholdings in plot patterns / design where this would provide interest and add to the local distinctiveness of the area, and existing (sometimes hidden) heritage;
 - improving the image of the station gateways / arrival points to Dorchester and the physical / visual links from the centre to the suburbs;
 - improving links with key areas of open space adjoining the core (Maumbury Rings, Fairfield and the Borough Gardens);

- retaining and reflecting the importance of the Brewery site in terms of its commercial standing, and in particular reinforcing the importance of Brewery buildings and market;
- ensuring a variety of experiences, in terms of land use and detailed design of buildings, reflecting a variety of periods and local sourcing / traditions.

Scale, Massing and Height of Buildings

- The block pattern, plots and positioning, scale and massing, and design and materials used in development need to respect the Listed Buildings, Conservation Area and their settings and the network and hierarchy of roads and spaces. The intensity of development within the Weymouth Avenue Area will be highest at the centre of the site, focused on the Brewery buildings and the station approach. The intensity should then gradually reduce to the east and the south respectively.

Layout and Street Pattern

- The network of streets and pedestrian routes should achieve a legible design which takes its cues from:
 - the established pattern of development;
 - the location of existing landmarks; and
 - the potential to achieve direct and convenient routes linking to the town centre, railway stations, residential areas of Fordington, Manor Park, and the existing public open spaces at off Weymouth Avenue and Borough Gardens.

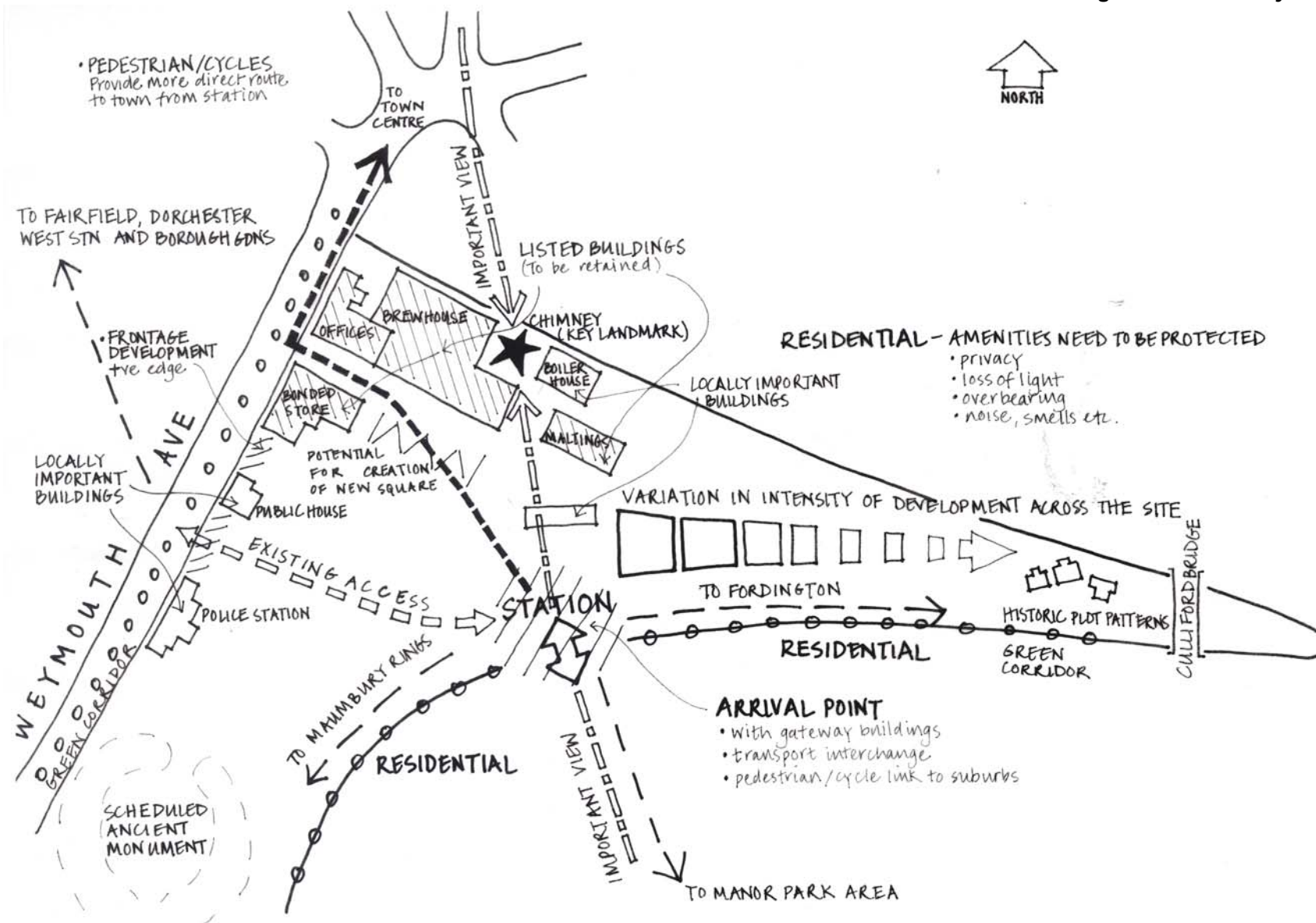
- The resulting configuration should not to be overly complex in plan, and the design, in terms of the extent and status of public realm, should reflect the importance of the types of uses that will be served by it. Open spaces should be provided within this overall network, their location and purpose based on the likely land uses within that area, as well as the network of routes and connectivity to key uses outside the site. The size and design of these spaces will depend upon their purpose and relationship to surrounding development.
- The road and footpath layout should conform to urban design and highway safety requirements as set out in the Government guidance Places Streets and Movement, and the County Council's Estate Road guidance.
- A transport assessment will need to be submitted as part of the comprehensive planning application for the site.
- Where a transport assessment identifies a need, contributions will be sought towards the costs of improvement of the local highway network.
- Safe pedestrian and cycle route/s will be sought within the Weymouth Avenue Area, linking to the station and areas beyond the boundaries of the site including the town centre, Fordington, Manor Park, Maumbury Rings, and Fairfield (and on to Dorchester West station and Borough Gardens).
- The internal layout of the site will need to ensure that the layout is designed to allow for the movement of HGVs, and access to the public transport network.

- Any redevelopment should make provision for the upgrading of the South Station as a transport interchange. Where appropriate, a contribution will be sought towards the upgrading of the existing interchange to cater for all levels of users of the various transport modes (bus, train, taxi, cycle and pedestrian).
- The level of parking to be provided will be guided by the maximum requirement as set out in Appendix 1 of the deposit Local Plan. It is considered that only the operational and servicing requirements (those trips which have to involve a drive to the development) and adequate provision of parking to meet residential needs should be accommodated on site.

Landscape and Nature Conservation

- A landscaping scheme should be submitted as part of any planning application.
- The development should:
 - make provision for the retention and protection of any protected species;
 - include new planting and landscaping, as an integral part of any proposal, that will complement the existing natural environment of the area and enhance the environment within the development itself;
 - make provision for the retention and protection of important trees (as identified in a tree survey) within and close to the site;
 - exploit opportunities to enhance the conservation value of the site by providing new habitat/nesting areas.

Figure A: Summary Diagram



1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The need for a development brief

1.1.1. Central government guidance advises Local Planning Authorities to help guide development by the preparation of development briefs for sites of significant development potential. Development briefs are seen as a useful tool for improving: the quality and consistency of advice provided to developers; the efficiency of the planning process; and the quality of the built environment. A site-specific brief forms a stepping-stone between the provisions of the development plan and the requirements of a planning application. The process of preparing and implementing a planning brief provides a framework for collecting information about a site, and investigating and evaluating different interests in it.¹

1.1.2. In early 2001 the District Council was made aware that the Brewery site in Weymouth Avenue was to be sold and the development potential of the site was being actively investigated. The Brewery site, together with adjacent land represents a total of 8.9ha (21.9 acres) of land close to Dorchester town centre and is therefore a significant redevelopment opportunity within the town. In recognition of the importance of the site, the District Council prepared an interim policy statement in March 2001. This interim policy statement was incorporated into Policy EA15 – Weymouth Avenue Action Area of the First Deposit Plan of the Local Plan Review, published in January 2003, and carried forward with minor amendments into the Second Deposit Plan. The supporting text to this policy refers to the preparation of a development brief. The Area extends

beyond the boundaries of the Brewery site on the basis that any proposed redevelopment of the Brewery site should be viewed as the major element in the comprehensive and cohesive redevelopment of a wider area, and the boundary has been used for the purposes of preparing this development brief. It is vital that in the event that only part of the Weymouth Avenue Area (ie: the Brewery site) comes forward for redevelopment that it does not compromise the proper redevelopment potential of the remainder.

1.1.3. The development brief has been prepared to provide guidance, and therefore some certainty, with regard to the future development of the Brewery site and the surrounding area. It is primarily aimed at the landowners, those professionals involved in promoting or controlling development (planners, architects), key decision makers (such as elected Councillors), and wider service providers (such as public transport providers and utilities companies). However, it is also to inform the wider community - local residents, businesses and visitors - as the future of this key site within the County town is of interest to everyone who lives, works or visits Dorchester.

1.1.4. This development brief has been subject to public consultation prior to its formal adoption by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted West Dorset District Local Plan.

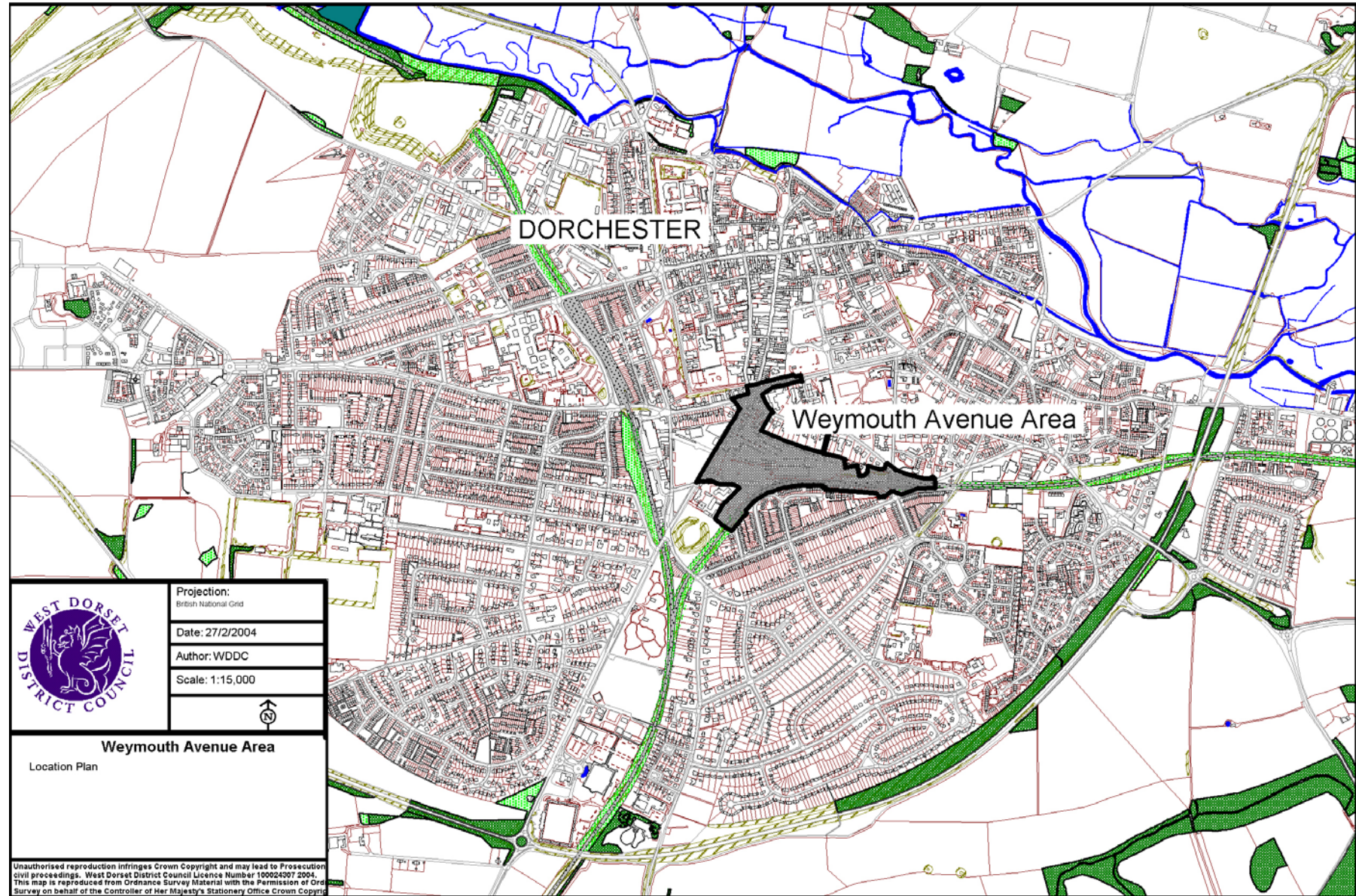
¹ ODPM Planning & Development Briefs: a guide to better practice.

2. SITE INFORMATION

2.1. Location

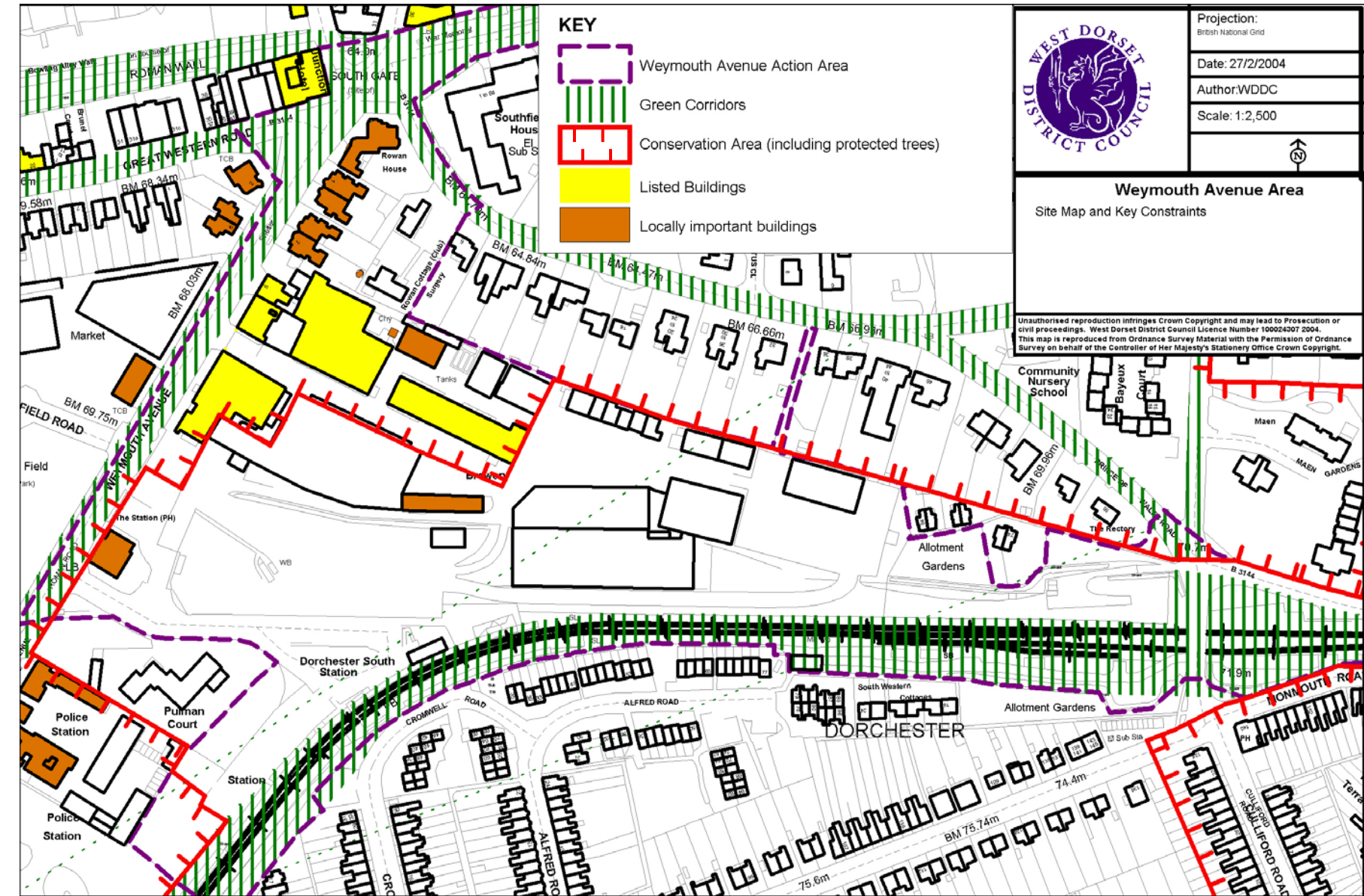
- 2.1.1. The Site Location Plan (Figure 1) shows the area covered by the development brief and its relationship to the wider town of Dorchester. The town is the main service centre in the District, with a population of 15,800. It is an important transport centre, located on the convergence of the A35 trunk road, A352, A354 and A37; served by the Waterloo – Weymouth and Weymouth – Bristol railway lines; and is the centre of a wide rural bus network. The town is recognised as potentially one of the most sustainable locations to meet future housing and wider socio-economic needs within the district due to the existing concentration of services and accessibility.
- 2.1.2. Recent public consultation has shown that local residents perceive Dorchester as a small, compact town with views out to the countryside and green links penetrating right to the town centre. It is seen as a county town with both administrative and shopping roles, but lacking in terms of a strong image. However, it was recognised that Dorchester has an interesting and diverse historic environment which is considered to be central to its identity. The distinction between the former Roman town of Dorchester, the manorial holding of Fordington to the east and suburban neighbourhoods beyond the railway, are key to the character of Dorchester. The Brewery site and immediate surrounds falls between the suburbs and the town centre, reflecting a mix of historic influences and in particular its importance in commercial expansion of the town in the late 19th century.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Weymouth Avenue Area: Development Brief

Figure 2: Site Plan



2.2. Site Characteristics

2.2.1. The Weymouth Avenue Area is located to the south of what was the Roman town of Dorchester, just outside the Roman Walls. The site is a key arrival point to the town by road and rail, being on the main Dorchester – Weymouth road and including Dorchester South station, and is within easy walking distance of the town centre and the Dorchester West railway station. The area covered by the brief is previously developed land containing a mix of primarily commercial and community uses.

2.2.2. The site plan (Figure 2) shows that the Weymouth Avenue Area is roughly triangular in shape with the existing listed Victorian brewery buildings occupying a point close to Dorchester town centre. The three sides of the triangle are bounded by Weymouth Avenue to the west, by the backs of substantial Victorian residential properties in Prince of Wales Road along the northern side, and the Weymouth/Waterloo railway line forming the boundary to the south. The Weymouth Avenue Area includes the Five Ways Junction to the north and the Culliford Road Bridge over the railway to the east. Beyond the railway to the south, there is an area of suburban residential development, which is known locally as Manor Park.

Access

2.2.3. The main public vehicular and pedestrian access route into the site is from Weymouth Avenue via the approach road to Dorchester South Station. A private walkway from the northern part of the Area provides pedestrian access on to Prince of Wales Road. There is also a private vehicular access from the very far eastern end of

the Brewery Site onto the Culliford Road junction.

2.2.4. The historical evolution of the site and the later residential development around it has resulted in the area forming a “wedge” between the residential area in Manor Park and the town centre. As such direct access from Manor Park and the station to the town is obstructed. The main pedestrian and vehicle routes skirt around the Weymouth Avenue Area, with the only pedestrian route through it being via the station footbridge and the station approach road. The station approach actually directs pedestrians away from the town centre.

Existing Uses

2.2.5. The Weymouth Avenue Area is currently occupied by a mixture of commercial and industrial activities that include brewing, offices, warehousing, vehicle repairs, retail (in the form of a wine shop), open storage and food and drink premises (public house). These businesses occupy a number of buildings that vary considerably in age, scale and design. There is also a significant amount of open storage, parking and circulation space between the buildings. Planning permission has been granted recently for the erection of houses on land to the rear of the Police Station.

2.2.6. Also included within the Weymouth Avenue Area is Dorchester Station South, which forms an important interchange on the rail line between London (Waterloo) and Weymouth, which also connects with the route 31 bus service (Weymouth – Dorchester – Bridport – Axminster). There is currently an hourly train service together with a limited extra number of services at core

times, and South West Trains are investigating the potential to increase the service to two trains an hour connecting to Bournemouth and Weymouth. The station forecourt area includes a taxi rank, setting down points and a lay-over area for buses and coaches. To the west of the Weymouth Avenue Area land is set aside for the regular Wednesday market on Fairfield with the space used for long-stay parking (approximately 630 spaces) on the remaining days.

Utilities

- 2.2.7. Foul water sewers are in place along Weymouth Avenue and Prince of Wales Road, and there is an existing pumping station adjacent to the railway station. When redeveloped, the site should be connected to the public foul sewerage system. The precise point of connection and any necessary works will need to be agreed with Wessex Water. Public surface water sewers exist in Weymouth Avenue. Surface water run-off should be controlled close to the source, and sustainable drainage systems should be utilised in the design of the drainage systems to limit the rate of run-off wherever possible (site contamination will need to be assessed to ensure this does not lead to pollution of ground water). New surface water sewers incorporating balancing facilities should be considered. Arrangements for highway drainage and house roof drainage will need to be agreed with Wessex Water, and arrangements made for their future maintenance. The Weymouth Avenue Area is crossed by major electricity transmission circuits, which form part of a wider extra-high voltage system. A Transco gas main runs along Weymouth Avenue with a spur into the Brewery site leading into the former Bonded Warehouse (now an off-licence). There may however be gas pipes owned by other gas providers or in private ownership

present in the area. Points of connection to external supplies (water, gas and electricity) and any offsite reinforcement works can be determined when the development options are being finalised.

- 2.2.8. Contact details of the utility providers can be obtained from the council offices.

2.3. Site Constraints

- 2.3.1. In considering any proposed redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area, an assessment needs to be made of what the site has to offer in terms of historical and archaeological assets that should be recorded or preserved.

Historical & Archaeological Constraints

- 2.3.2. Figure 2 shows the historically important buildings on the site, together with those unlisted buildings that have local interest and also the extent of the Dorchester Conservation Area. The scheduled ancient monument of Maumbury Rings lies just outside the Weymouth Avenue Area to the south.

Archaeology

- 2.3.3. The Weymouth Avenue Area is situated to the southwest of what was once the South Gate to the Roman Town of Durnovaria, and close to the pre-historic Maumbury Rings. It is therefore likely that it is of significant archaeological interest within the area. Maumbury Rings originated as a Neolithic henge monument, and as a scheduled monument is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. There is some evidence that the area between Maumbury Rings

and the town centre may have been the focal point for the early military activity that followed the removal of the native power base at Maiden Castle. Very little is known about this early period in the Roman occupation of the area, but there is the likelihood that a Roman cemetery exists along Weymouth Avenue, following the discovery of Roman burials on the northern side of the road within the Market site. Archaeological investigation is needed to establish if important remains are on the site.

Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest

2.3.4. The Victorian Buildings on the Brewery Site are Grade II listed as being of historic or architectural interest². Designed by G. R. Crickmay (the writer Thomas Hardy's employer), the buildings were occupied in 1881 but were substantially rebuilt after a fire in the 1920s. The group comprises the following:

- The Office/administration building;
- The Brew House (and tapering chimney 125 ft or 38 metres in height);
- The Maltings; and
- The Bonded Warehouse.

2.3.5. The south facing elevation of the Brew House is particularly significant in terms of its proportions and detailing. Of particular visual importance in the wider area is the chimney, which is not only significant as part of the brewery complex but forms a local landmark and is

visible from a number of vantage points within the town, the suburbs and the countryside beyond.

2.3.6. Other buildings of local historical and architectural interest (though not listed in their own right) are the 1930s boiler house adjacent to the chimney, and an interwar building that is situated along the line of a former siding. Whilst it is desirable for these buildings to be retained, it is not at the request of the planning authority.

Conservation Area

2.3.7. The group of listed buildings, together with the south western section of the development Brief Area also form part of the Dorchester Conservation Area (as shown in Figure 2). As will be considered in more detail later, any redevelopment within or immediately adjacent to a designated Conservation Area, is required to preserve or enhance the character of the area. A Conservation Area appraisal has been recently carried out by the District Council in order to assess the character of the conservation area and the buildings and structures within it that contribute to that character.

2.3.8. The appraisal recognises the Brewery Site as being particularly noteworthy due to the contribution made by the Victorian industrial group of late c19th brewery buildings. The "County Constabulary" building (dating from 1860) is also considered to be important in terms of its contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Other significant buildings highlighted include the former butter market; the remnants of the Dorchester South stationmaster's house (now a public house); and four large Arts and Crafts Houses on Weymouth Avenue. The document also draws attention to the six large detached and semi-detached houses at the northern end of Weymouth Avenue, which form an interesting group.

² The legislation relating to the Listing covers not only the named buildings but fixtures and equipment, either internal or attached to the building that contribute to the historical or architectural importance of the buildings. Listed Building legislation also covers free-standing buildings within the curtilage of a Listed Building that pre-date 1948.

2.3.9. The avenues of mature trees that line the roads in this locality are intrinsic to the character of the Conservation Area and to that of Dorchester as a whole. In addition, there are significant open areas in the locality: the Fairfield (laid out in 1877) and the triangular area to the south; and Maumbury Rings, with its grassed banks and trees.

2.3.10. The type of building materials used within an area also contributes to its overall character and appearance. In the case of the Weymouth Avenue Area, there is a wide mix of building materials and architectural detailing evident in the locality. The Brewery buildings are particularly notable due to the polychromatic³ combinations of brick banding and panels, combined with stone and encaustic⁴ tiles. Roofing materials are of slate or plain tile, and the Market's single storey sheds (linneys) have pantiles. There are spear-topped iron railings around the main market site and simpler "park" railings around the southern car park.

Landform – topography and underlying geology

2.3.11. The site is situated in a gently sloping depression within the dip slope of an escarpment, the scarp slope of which runs roughly north west to south east with the River Frome flowing at its foot. From the Brewery site, the ground rises to the south, west and north with High West Street running along the northern ridge and Monmouth Road following the ridge line to the south. The topography within the Weymouth Avenue Area has previously been altered to accommodate the railway sidings, and as such the land has a number of changes in

level. Land instability is not considered to be a particular issue.

2.3.12. The geological map for Dorchester shows the Brewery Site located on Chalk and underlain by a major aquifer. Water has been drawn from this underground source for use in the brewing process throughout its history. To the south of the site there is a groundwater protection zone.

Land contamination and potential sources of pollution

2.3.13. Within the Weymouth Avenue Area, the Brewery site has been in industrial use since the late 19th century with significant areas of former rail sidings which not only served the brewery but also the market and the station in addition. Previous and existing industrial uses within the Area have involved chemical and fuel storage within the site and may have been subject to some level of contamination due to spillage etc.

2.3.14. A Contamination Assessment Report for the Brewery Site was prepared by Buro Happold in December 2001. There is a necessity to progress to a Phase 3 investigation, the details of which should be forwarded to the Agency before implementation in order to determine a suitable approach. The Environment Agency recommend that further investigations are made to try and establish the current state of the underground storage tanks in order to eliminate the possibility of any further leakage from the tanks, and that the presence / absence of unlicensed abstractions within the immediate vicinity be investigated. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council) shall be carried out until the developer

3 Polychromatic: combinations of different colours

4 Encaustic: with colours burnt in during manufacture

has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Council for, an addendum to the Method Statement. This addendum to the Method Statement must detail how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.

Access Limitations

- 2.3.15. As described above, there is currently only one main point of vehicular access into the Weymouth Avenue Area and any redevelopment has the potential to generate a significant increase in traffic movements both for servicing and residents/workers etc. Inevitably this traffic will have an impact upon the existing junction of the Station Approach and others within the wider town. In particular the Maumbury Rings junction, the Five Ways junction, Culliford Road junction and Great Western Cross are likely to be affected and have already been identified within the adopted Local Plan as needing improvement. In addition, potential vehicular and pedestrian / cycle conflict exists and may be exacerbated by development in the access area to Dorchester South Station. A

pedestrian crossing currently exists along Weymouth Road, but its adequacy will need to be considered depending upon the layout and land uses that may be contained within the Weymouth Avenue Area. Adequate provision will also be required for emergency vehicles throughout the site.

Sensitive Uses

- 2.3.16. There are residential properties in Prince of Wales Road along the northern side of the Weymouth Avenue Area, cottages immediately north of the former allotments, and planning permission granted for residential development to the south (to the rear of the police station). Consideration must be made to the impact of any proposed redevelopment upon these properties, with the aim being to ensure that no significant harm is caused to the amenities of the occupiers.

3. PLANNING POLICY

3.1. The hierarchy of policy statements

- 3.1.1. In formulating planning policy or considering applications for development, the local planning authority must have regard to the relevant Government policy documents. Central Government policy informs the relevant Regional Planning Guidance (RPG), which in turn is disseminated into the relevant Structure and Local Plans. The Structure and Local Plans constitute the statutory development plan and the plan-led system (Section 54A, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended) requires that in making a determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan. The determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.2. With regard to the Weymouth Avenue Area, it is the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan together with the adopted West Dorset District Local Plan that constitutes the development plan for development control purposes. However, the Adopted West Dorset District Local Plan is currently under review, and the council approved the First Deposit Plan on 7th November 2002 for the purpose of placing on deposit, for objections and representations. The 8 weeks deposit period extended from Friday 17th January to Thursday 13th March 2003 and representations made during that time are currently being considered. Approval of the Second Deposit Plan is being considered alongside the proposals to adopt this brief as SPG.
- 3.1.3. With regard to the status of the emerging policies of the local plan review, it should be noted that, prior to the

adoption of the emerging local plan, applications for planning permission will be determined in accordance with the existing development plan (ie: the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan [adopted 2000], the Dorset Minerals and Waste Local Plan [adopted 1999] and the West Dorset District Local Plan [adopted 1998]). Account will be taken of the emerging policies in the deposit plan, the weight attached to them depending upon the stage of plan preparation and whether objections have been made to any relevant policies, and whether the adopted policies are still relevant and up-to-date.

3.2. Government Policy Documents

PPG 1 General Policy and Principles (1997)

- 3.2.2. Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 describes urban regeneration and re-use of previously developed land as important objectives in achieving sustainable development. The Government is committed to: concentrating development in places well served by public transport; and ensuring that development within urban areas creates or maintains a good living environment.
- 3.2.3. It is stated that development plans should identify individual sites that are suited to mixed-use development and that planning and development briefs should be used. It goes on to say that the planning system can deliver high-quality, mixed-use developments such as “urban villages”. Built on large sites within urban areas,

they are characterised by:

- Compactness;
- A mixture of uses and dwelling types, including affordable housing;
- A range of employment, leisure and community facilities;
- Appropriate infrastructure and services;
- High standards of urban design; and
- Ready access to public transport.

3.2.4. With regard to design, the guidance explains that the appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are material considerations in determining planning applications. Local planning authorities should seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies and supplementary planning guidance. Particular weight should be given to the impact of development upon existing buildings and on the character of areas recognised for their landscape or townscape value, yet not stifle innovation and originality.

PPG 3 – Housing (2000)

3.2.5. The main aims of this guidance are to promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land. The guidance states that local planning authorities should avoid developments that make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net), encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net); and seek greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility such as town, district and

local centres or around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors.. Local planning authorities are required to promote mixed-use developments, which combine a mix of land uses, including housing within a site. Mixed-use developments should be facilitated by:

- encouraging more housing, including affordable housing, in town centres, by, for example, converting space above shops and vacant commercial buildings;
- identifying appropriate sites in development plans;
- preparing development briefs for sites likely to become available for development;
- assembling sites for redevelopment; and
- adopting flexible planning standards for car parking and densities.

3.2.6. At the time of writing PPG3 is under review and a consultation paper was published in July 2003. Of particular relevance is the proposed introduction of additional wording that actively supports the use of employment sites and or allocations that have not been taken up, for the provision of affordable housing.

3.3. The Adopted Development Plan

Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (2001)

3.3.2. In line with Government advice, the main guiding principle of Structure Plan policy is sustainable development. The Structure Plan strategy focuses on work, housing, community life, safety and health, in relation to land use. The location of the Weymouth Avenue Area, within an existing built-up area, adjacent to the Poole/Weymouth railway corridor and with the potential for a mixed use

development on the site, provides an economic regeneration opportunity in the Weymouth / Portland / Dorchester area

Adopted West Dorset District Local Plan (1998)

3.3.3. **Policy SP1 (Development within Defined Development Boundaries)** The whole of the Weymouth Avenue Area including the former Eldridge Pope Brewery is located within the Development Boundary of Dorchester. This policy requires that within the Defined Development Boundary (DDB), development will only be permitted if the scale and nature of the development is in character with the settlement and its surroundings (and attention is drawn to Local Plan Policy CD1); the amenities of the surrounding areas are safeguarded; the development does not involve the loss of an important area of open space or feature which is an essential part of the character of the settlement; and adequate highway access, parking and utility services are or will be provided.

3.3.4. **Policy CD1 (Design Standards)** New buildings and alterations or extensions to existing buildings will be required to meet the following criteria:-

- i) The position of the building on the site will be determined by its relationship with adjoining buildings;
- ii) The relationship between new buildings should be such that the layout respects the historic street pattern predominating in the locality;
- iii) Materials to be used should be appropriate to the area and sympathetic to the adjoining buildings;

- iv) The general design and mass of the building will respect the scale and be in harmony with the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole; and
- v) The design of any alterations to or extensions of buildings will be such that the proportions and details respect the character of, and area well related to, the building.

3.3.5. **Policy CD3 (Landscape Schemes)** Landscape schemes will be required as an integral part of development where the lack of such landscaping would result in the proposed development being detrimental to the character of the site or surrounding area.

3.3.6. **Policy CD5 (Protection of Character of Conservation Areas)** The Dorchester Conservation Area was enlarged in November 1999 to include the Listed brewery buildings (see Figure 2). In line with PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment, Policy CD5 requires that within designated Conservation Areas, proposals for development must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the areas. This will be achieved by ensuring that any proposals are appropriate to the site and its surroundings in terms of mass, proportions, detailed design and materials.

3.3.7. **Policy CD8 (Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings)** As outlined previously, the Brewery Buildings are listed as being of Historical and Architectural interest (Grade II). Again in line with PPG15 Policy CD8 has been worded to ensure that any alteration, addition to, or change of use of a Listed Building, or redevelopment in the vicinity of such a building, will not be permitted if it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the historic or architectural special features or character of the building or upon its setting.

- 3.3.8. **Policy CD17 (Areas of Archaeological Sensitivity)** PPG 16 - Archaeology explains that the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications. This is the case whether or not that monument is scheduled. Developers and local authorities are required to take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development control process. In this respect Policy CD17 states that where archaeological information suggests that an area is of archaeological sensitivity, an assessment and/or a field evaluation will be requested prior to the determination of a planning application for development.
- 3.3.9. **Policy H3 (Residential Development within Defined Development Boundaries)** This policy states that within the DDB, the development or redevelopment for residential purposes of sites not identified for other uses will be permitted subject to meeting the criteria of Local Plan Policy SP1 (see above).
- 3.3.10. **Policy H7 (Local Needs Housing within Defined Development Boundaries)** Local Plan Policy H7 states that the council will negotiate with developers to secure a proportion of affordable housing to meet identified local needs on appropriately sized sites which come forward for development with the DDB. The level of provision will take into account the identified local need in the area and market and site conditions. Affordable housing is housing that is available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market, and provision can encompass both low-cost market and subsidised housing (irrespective of tenure, ownership, or financial arrangements) that will be available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market. Policy H7 only applies to sites of an appropriate size, based upon the thresholds as set out in Circular 6/98. This states that the Policy should only be applied to housing developments of 25 or more dwellings or residential sites of 0.5 of a hectare or more, located in settlements with a population of 3000 or more. It is anticipated that the provision of housing on the site would be in excess of the threshold as set out in Circular 6/98.
- 3.3.11. **Policy E4 (Retention of Employment Sites)** There is a substantial element of employment-generating uses within the Weymouth Avenue Area and within West Dorset the loss of land currently in employment use is of concern due to the difficulties of providing new sites for such uses. As such, current Policy E4 of the Adopted Local Plan places particular emphasis on the retention of existing employment land and buildings in B1 (light industrial / office), B2 (general industrial) or B8 (storage) use, and prevents the development of existing or allocated employment sites for other uses. Proposals that would lead to the loss of existing employment sites will only be permitted where it involves the amelioration of significant highway or environmental problems associated with a small existing employment site in what is a predominantly residential area.
- 3.3.12. **Policy R1 (Public Open Space in New Housing Developments)** This policy requires that Public Open Space to the District Council's standard of 0.5 hectare (1.25 acres) per 100 dwellings should be provided on site pro rata, by the developers in new housing developments. Where the provision of useable open space on site on site is not practical, or for security reasons is inappropriate, the district council will seek a commuted payment towards open space provision, or a recreational facility, which is related to the needs of the development

and is reasonably accessible from it. In this respect the council will seek to enter into a legal agreement with the developer.

3.3.13. **Local Plan Policy L9 (Green Corridors)** This policy requires the protection for the green corridors as shown on the proposals map, three of which run immediately adjacent or close to the Weymouth Avenue Area (see Figure 2). These corridors are seen as providing visual continuity, reinforcing local identity, providing opportunities for nature conservation and increasing opportunities for access.

3.3.14. **Local Plan Policy L12 (Nature Conservation) and Local Plan Policy L14 (Protected Species)** Due regard must be had to the needs of nature conservation in the consideration of development proposals. Local Plan policy also requires that where protected species are present on a site, development will not be permitted unless provision is made for the retention of the species in their existing habitat or (in exceptional circumstances) their safe removal to new locations.

3.3.15. **Policy CU2 (Ground Water Source Protection)** Development will not be permitted which would result in increased risk of pollution to water sources within the plan area. The responsibility for providing information on whether a site is contaminated rests primarily with the developer. The local planning authority will need to consider whether any proposal for redevelopment of a site that might be contaminated take proper account of contamination. It may be appropriate for specific remedial measures to be made a condition of planning permission. Appropriate remedial measures should:

- ensure that the occupiers of the development and neighbouring land users are not exposed to unacceptable risk from the contamination;
- prevent the contamination of any watercourse, body of water or groundwater;
- prevent the contamination of adjoining land;
- prevent the release of contamination to air; and
- avoid the structural integrity of any building on or adjoining the site being threatened.

3.3.16. **Policy TR13 (Contributions to Costs of Providing or Improving Highway Facilities)** Development or redevelopment proposals which have a significant adverse impact on existing traffic flows or an adverse effect on safety will only be permitted provided acceptable remedial measures form part of the proposal. Alternatively, appropriate financial contributions would be sought towards the cost of these measures.

3.3.17. **Policy TR15 (Cyclists and Pedestrians)** All new development will be expected to take account of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists

3.3.18. **Policy TR19 (Parking Provision)** This policy states that all new development (including change of use and extensions) will be required to provide parking space within or adjacent to the site in accordance with the adopted guidelines. The policy goes on to state that in relation to major development proposals, contributions may be sought towards the provision of improved public transport, cycling or pedestrian facilities.

3.4. The Local Plan Review (2003/4)

3.4.1. The Local Plan is currently under review. The First Deposit Plan was published and placed on deposit in January 2003, and second deposit draft agreed in early 2004. Of particular relevance to any possible redevelopment is Policy EA15, which relates to the Weymouth Avenue Area. The second deposit version is set out below:

POLICY EA15 - WEYMOUTH AVENUE AREA

Land at Weymouth Avenue, including the brewery site, as indicated on the Proposals map, is a key gateway site to the town, by road and rail, where a comprehensive mixed use scheme is appropriate, to include the following:

- a) residential (a range of sizes, types and tenures, including affordable housing);
- b) a substantial element of employment workspace;
- c) retail (this will be a minor and ancillary use);
- d) an element of public car parking;
- e) a transport interchange facility.

The development of the site will be in accordance with a development brief, to include the following:

- i) a highway link through the site from Prince of Wales Road to Weymouth Avenue, to assist local access;
- ii) effective pedestrian/cycleway links through the site with adjoining areas, including from Dorchester South Station to South Street;
- iii) appropriate junction improvements to facilitate the links referred to in ii) above;
- iv) contributions to traffic management in adjoining areas;
- v) appropriate design criteria;
- vi) the retention of Listed buildings;

vii) density will reflect high accessibility of the site, and the concept and need to maximise the use of previously developed land;

viii) contributions towards improvement to public transport.

3.5. Community Planning

3.5.1. A recent community planning exercise framed a vision statement for the future of Dorchester, that it should be a thriving County town which has a vibrant town centre with a strong sense of identity; has a diverse and strong economy providing jobs for local people; is proud of and makes the most of its unique heritage & environment; promotes environmental sustainability in all its activities; is caring, inclusive and a safe place to live; and acts as a strong focus for the area, providing services for the town and rural communities.

3.5.2. Community consultation events carried out as part of the Community Planning process, have in general supported the provision of affordable housing within Dorchester as being a key priority. Other issues raised included the need for public car parking and coach parking, improvements to junctions to reduce, traffic and pedestrian concerns, the provision of cycle links into town and between the stations. Improvements to Maumbury Rings, in particular relating to visitor use, were also highlighted in community consultation together with better tourist information signs. Other potential “wants” for the town included an Arts Venue, a large multi-use community building, and a hotel or possible conference facility.

4. APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSES

4.1. What is Sought

- 4.1.1. A number of physical and policy constraints have been identified in the previous section. These in turn lead to the identification of what are the basic requirements that any potential redevelopment within the Weymouth Avenue Area must address, and what additional aspects are being sought. In the following section, advice is provided as to the mix of uses considered appropriate to the Weymouth Avenue Area, related community infrastructure and criteria for the design and layout.

4.2. Land Uses

Policy Context

- 4.2.2. The primary existing land use within the Weymouth Avenue Area is employment. This includes a range of employment types – offices, industry, storage, and ancillary retail (such as the brewery wine shop). Community facilities such as the public house and the voluntary sector offices with drop-in and training facilities are also accommodated. Local Plan Policy E4 states that proposals that would lead to the loss of existing employment sites will only be permitted where it involves the amelioration of significant highway or environmental problems associated with a small existing employment site in what is a predominantly residential area. It is not considered that these circumstances apply to the Weymouth Avenue Area. However, Government guidance (PPG4) and the consultation paper on the revision of PPG3, takes a more flexible approach to the

retention of employment uses. The guidance recognises that many urban areas contain large amounts of land, once used for industrial purposes but now under-used or vacant, and that such sites have scope for mixed use development of an appropriate scale that would not adversely affect residential amenity. Emphasis is placed on getting such land back into beneficial use to secure the regeneration of towns and cities.

- 4.2.3. In the light of the above advice the District Council has accepted that the development of the Weymouth Avenue Area could be intensified to include a wider range of uses, given the scope for mixed use development (both within buildings and across the site) and locational benefits (being in close proximity to public transport provision and the town centre). However, the Weymouth Avenue Area is expected to retain a substantial element of employment workspace alongside residential dwellings (including a range of tenures and affordable housing); some retail (of a minor and ancillary use); public car parking and a bus interchange facility. In addition, alternative uses, including community facilities and leisure uses may be acceptable. In determining the appropriate balance of uses, account should be taken of the wider needs of Dorchester (given that the site is one of a limited number of opportunities to meet Dorchester's needs over the coming decade, alongside Poundbury, Charles Street, and other windfall sites that may come forward), and also the need to ensure that the mix is viable, otherwise it is unlikely to be developed.

Employment

4.2.4. To achieve a high-density mixed use of the Weymouth Avenue Area, it is considered appropriate to take a flexible approach to the retention of employment uses within the site. The council acknowledges the importance of employment generated by alternative uses outside the B1, B2 and B8 use classes and this is consistent with the emerging policy in the Deposit Plan (see table 4.1 below). On this basis, the local authority will support a more intensive use of the area with the aim to retain the existing level of employment opportunities on the site.

Table 1: Definition of Employment

The definition of employment uses as set out in the second deposit plan includes uses falling within Use Classes B1 (light industrial / office), B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage) as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, and some Sui Generis⁵ uses. Uses that have provided significant levels of employment (at least equivalent of 6 full-time employees) falling within C1 (hotels etc...), C2 (residential care / nursing homes, hospitals etc...), and D1 (clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, museums, libraries, schools, colleges etc...) are also considered under this definition.

4.2.5. It is estimated that within the Weymouth Avenue Area the Brewery Site alone has accommodated between 200-300 jobs in the past 10 years. It would therefore be appropriate that any redevelopment should provide employment workspace for a minimum of 200 workplaces. Different employment types and land-uses

create varying numbers of jobs and OffPAT⁶ have produced advice notes on employment densities⁷ which specifies the average amount of floorspace (gross internal area) per full time equivalent job. These employment densities will be used to assess any redevelopment proposal for the Weymouth Avenue Area and determine whether the sufficient employment space is provided on site. The densities are summarised in the table at Appendix A.

4.2.6. The Weymouth Avenue Area is situated adjacent to the Town Centre. Employment provision should be primarily located within the western side of the site, as it is more accessible to the railway stations, has potential for good connections to the town centre and the industrial character of the Listed brewery buildings lends such building to accommodate employment re-use. In the eastern part of the site, which has closer connections to the surrounding residential areas and is further removed from the range of town centre and other key land uses, it is appropriate that the mix of uses is predominantly residential.

4.2.7. The site offers the opportunity to deliver hotel and conference facilities to meet wider business needs in the area and such provision will be encouraged.

⁵ Uses that do not fall within any use classes as defined in the Use Classes Order 1987 – “without class”

⁶ Office of Project Appraisal Training - set up by the Regional Development Agencies, the London Development Agency and English Partnerships to support their joint effort on developing and disseminating best practice in project appraisal, delivery and evaluation in the context of the DTI's Single Programme Appraisal Guidance.

⁷ Employment Densities: Appraisal Advice Note No 1, based on research undertaken by Ove Arup and Partners International Ltd in July 2001

Retailing

- 4.2.8. The extent of retail premises (including class A1, A2 (financial and professional services) and A3 (food and drink), whilst contributing to the vitality of the area, should be limited, provided as small units or ancillary to other employment uses, in order to safeguard the vitality and viability of the town centre. If significant provision is proposed this will need to be assessed in accordance with the sequential approach outlined in PPG6 and would require a retail impact assessment.

Housing

- 4.2.9. Local Plan Policy H3, together with PPG1 and 3, provides support for housing to be included as part of a mixed use development within the Weymouth Avenue Area. In the Local Plan Review, the Weymouth Avenue Area has been included as one of the range of housing allocations. This site's proximity to the town centre and public transport services means that it is an appropriate location for residential development at the upper end of this range, in the region of 50 dwellings per hectare or above (measured as net density). The expected capacity is in the region of 500 units, although the actual provision will depend upon the type and mix of dwellings and employment provided.

Local Need Housing

- 4.2.10. The potential level of housing provision within the Weymouth Avenue Area is likely to be above the threshold as set out in Circular 6/98 – Affordable Housing. Therefore, under the provisions of Local Plan Policy H7, the council will seek to negotiate an element of affordable housing for local needs as part of any redevelopment.

- 4.2.11. In negotiating an element of affordable housing, the Council will be mindful of the findings of the recently published Housing Need Survey (HNS) for West Dorset.⁸ The HNS identified Dorchester as having the District's greatest need for affordable housing. A projected estimate of 721 concealed and newly forming households will need accommodation in the County Town between 2002 & 2007. In accordance with the survey findings and to increase the supply of affordable housing across West Dorset, the District Council will need to negotiate for 35% of new homes across the District (from the total of all suitable sites) to be 'Affordable'. Although a figure of 35% is given for the District as a whole, there are areas such as larger settlements, where the need is greater and therefore a higher percentage may be sought.

- 4.2.12. The need in Dorchester has been broken down into a need for rented accommodation (61%) and home ownership (39%). Housing costs for both tenures must be affordable to those with lower incomes (84% of concealed households in West Dorset earn less than £15,000 per annum). To achieve a balanced and more sustainable community, the affordable housing provision should be mixed in tenure and a design approach will be sought that integrates affordable housing with open market housing, with the affordable housing provided throughout the site, ideally clustered in small groups (eg: short terraces or blocks of flats) where ongoing management will be required.

- 4.2.13. To address the identified need, housing development within the area should ideally provide a mix of accommodation types to include housing for singles, couples and small families. In addition, given its

⁸ West Dorset Housing Need Survey – 2002 (David Coultie Associates)

proximity to the town centre, local services and ease of access, the Weymouth Avenue Area would be ideally suited to the provision of special need accommodation for older people or those with limited mobility. Some 20% of households in the District contain someone with a disability, and 69% of all disabled household members were over sixty years of age. With an ageing population and emphasis on 'stay at home' services, the need for frail elderly accommodation is predicted to increase. Further research is currently being carried out to ensure that appropriate affordable housing is provided to meet the needs of Dorchester and West Dorset residents with specific physical and mobility disabilities. Where such a priority is demonstrated for provision within the affordable sector, consideration will be given to the provision of supported/special need accommodation in lieu of 'general need' housing. An effective way of achieving control over all forms of affordable housing will be to involve a registered social landlord.

Recreation and Open Space

- 4.2.14. In applying the standard as set out in Local Plan Policy R1 to the area, it is clear that the aspiration to achieve a high-density mixed-use development would be compromised by the need to provide a large amount of formal open space within the site. Given the central location of the Weymouth Avenue Area and desirability to make the most efficient use of land, the amount of open space provided on site will be guided by an assessment of existing facilities in the locality, and the likely participation rates of the site's residents. There are a number of open spaces within easy walking distance of the Weymouth Avenue Area including Maumbury Rings and the Borough Gardens. In addition Salisbury Fields and the playing fields to the south off Weymouth Avenue

are also reasonably close. It is likely that contributions will be sought towards improved open space and sporting facilities and / or pedestrian links from the site to them, in lieu of full provision on site. However, sufficient children's play space should be provided on site, suitably overlooked by housing. As a guide a minimum of 0.12ha of children's play space should be provided per 100 dwellings within the site, although this figure will depend upon the anticipated age range of the new residents.

- 4.2.15. In assessing existing provision in the locality, regard should be given to the revised PPG17 published in July 2002 which expands the definition of open space. The definition has been widened to include urban parks and formal gardens; natural and semi-natural green spaces (including wasteland and derelict open land); green corridors; outdoor and indoor sports facilities; informal amenity green space; play areas and skateboard parks; allotments; cemeteries and church yards; and accessible countryside in urban fringe areas. Also of relevance when considering on-site provision is the inclusion of and civic spaces such as civic and market squares or other hard surfaces designed for pedestrians.

4.3. Community Infrastructure

- 4.3.1. The redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area, particularly new residential elements, has the potential to increase the demand for community infrastructure and exacerbate existing problems with under provision. The redevelopment of the site should therefore contribute by means of a planning obligation towards (or provide on site) such services as education, health facilities and social services where it is established a need will be generated.

Education & pre-school day-care / nursery provision

4.3.2. A development of the size anticipated within the Weymouth Avenue Area could have a considerable effect on educational provision in the Dorchester area. It would therefore be reasonable for a pro-rata contribution towards education provision to be made for each relevant dwelling (ie those capable of family occupation and not specifically intended for retirement homes etc). The education authority (Dorset County Council) has indicated that any contribution will be based on the DFES cost multiplier for the calculation of schools costs attributable to developments as at December 2002, which currently stands at £3,217 per dwelling, to cover all age ranges.

4.3.3. With regard to pre-school day-care / nursery provision, the level of additional provision will similarly depend upon the amount of new family homes within any possible redevelopment. However, as a guide it is considered that the anticipated level of housing provision that could be provided with the Weymouth Avenue Area could almost certainly benefit from a community building which could be used for childcare of all types. This could be accommodated within the site.

Healthcare

4.3.4. Interest has also been expressed for new purpose build surgery premises (Use Class D1) in the Dorchester Area to improve existing provision and cater for the expanding population of Dorchester and its wider rural catchment. Two existing premises (in Cornwall Road and Prince of Wales Road) are housed within converted premise and it is not feasible to adapt / enlarge these facilities. For this reason the healthcare authorities are seeking to locate new premises in the region of 1,500 m², with potential to

expand and also link with other health related practices. The Weymouth Avenue Area would serve as an easily accessible location for these facilities.

Social Services

4.3.5. Dorset County Council Social Services have indicated that an office base for social care staff, with provision for day care services / drop in sessions, would also be of use in this central location in addition to the already identified demand for a community centre at Poundbury.

Youth Facilities

4.3.6. With the projected increase in population resulting from additional housing provision within the Weymouth Avenue Area, there will also be pressure on youth facilities within the town. In this respect there is a potential demand identified by Dorset Youth Association for the development of an additional Youth Café and the Weymouth Avenue Area would provide an ideal location.

Voluntary Sector

4.3.7. A number of voluntary sector services are located within or close to the Weymouth Avenue Area, benefiting from close proximity to the town centre and the public transport network that this location provides. This clustering of services has led to an exploration of potential benefits of establishing a shared community building for the use of voluntary organisations and advice centres, in the guise of a "One Stop Community Centre". Such a facility would allow for cost efficiencies in service provision and facilitate closer partnership working and a greater customer focus.

Leisure and Cultural Facilities

- 4.3.8. The brewery site has the potential to accommodate a range of leisure and cultural facilities, suitable for all ages, as part of its mix of uses. There is evidence of strong public support for improved provision in terms of a community arts centre, however unless a building and revenue funding is forthcoming that would support an arts centre the Dorchester Art Forum's preference would be for a contribution to be made towards better arts provision within the town.

4.4. Design Criteria

- 4.4.1. The existing character of the Weymouth Avenue Area is relatively unique, and its 'island' qualities are such that there is no predominant development pattern in the locality that lends itself to replication within the site. There are sizeable open spaces within the Weymouth Avenue Area, currently mainly hard-surfaced and used for outside storage or vehicle parking, and it is not considered that they make a positive contribution to the character of Dorchester. There is therefore an opportunity for any redevelopment proposals to intensify development on the site, to be innovative in design and to establish a distinct and individual character for the site, while still respecting existing developments within and adjacent to the Weymouth Avenue Area and producing a high quality of urban design.

Local Distinctiveness

- 4.4.2. PPG1 emphasises the need to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, and in defining those key characteristics that contribute towards the local distinctiveness of

Dorchester, reference has been made to its gradual development and those aspects of its history that have shaped the current form of the town, and people's perceptions of the town. In relation to the Weymouth Avenue Area, some of the key characteristics have been identified as follows:

- Dorchester is a small / compact town with views out to the countryside and green links penetrating right to the town centre;
- Dorchester is perceived as a county town with both administrative and shopping roles, but this image is not strong. The core shopping area (South Street) appears run down and has poor links to stations / south which detract from this image;
- Dorchester has an interesting and diverse historic environment - considered to be central to its identity. The distinction between the former Roman town of Dorchester, manorial holding of Fordington and suburban neighbourhoods beyond the railway are key to the character of Dorchester. The Brewery site and immediate surrounds falls between the suburbs and the town centre, reflecting a mix of historic influences and in particular its importance in commercial expansion of the town in the late 19th century;

Buildings and features to be retained

- 4.4.3. The Listed Buildings within the Weymouth Avenue Area, together with some locally important buildings elsewhere, have been identified as contributing to the character and appearance of the Dorchester Conservation Area and should be retained as part of the redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area. It is important that the reuse of

the Listed Buildings is secured as an early phase of development to ensure that they do not fall into disrepair and that their long-term protection is achieved. In this respect, PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment advises that “...economic prosperity can secure the continued vitality of conservation areas, and the continued use and maintenance of historic buildings, provided that there is a sufficiently realistic and imaginative approach to their alteration and change of use, to reflect the needs of a rapidly changing world”. An appropriate re-use of the buildings is therefore supported, however any alterations, extensions or changes of use that affect the special character of listed buildings must be considered carefully. It is important that the any re-use of a Listed Building respects the plan form as far as possible and exploits the existing internal arrangements and spaces that are intrinsic to the buildings character. Careful consideration will need to be given as to which of the internal fixtures and fittings are significant and should be retained within the building and incorporated into any proposed scheme. Where it is considered appropriate to remove or relocate historically important fittings, their original position should be carefully recorded.

- 4.4.4. Externally, the Brewery buildings are particularly distinctive in terms of their design, materials and detailing. For example, they have distinctive metal windows combined with the ornate brick detailing. Another example is the curved corrugated roof that links the Office Block to the Brew House. These and other such features should be retained where possible. Any proposed alterations to existing door and window openings will need to be considered carefully in terms of the impact that any such changes will have upon the elevational character and rhythm of the building. Of particular visual importance in the wider area is the chimney, which is not

only significant as part of the brewery complex but forms a local landmark and is visible from a number of vantage points within the town, the suburbs and the countryside beyond. It is therefore essential that the chimney should be retained as part of any development proposals and the views of it protected. Other buildings of historical and architectural interest (but not listed in their own right) within the curtilage of the Brewery buildings are the 1930s boiler house adjacent to the chimney, which has Art Deco detailing in the brickwork and an interwar building that is situated along the line of a former siding

Scale, Massing and Height of Buildings

- 4.4.5. In terms of the scale of development proposed, this will be largely dictated by the height and proportions of the Listed Brewery buildings and the need to maintain or enhance the significant views from within and from outside the Weymouth Avenue Area. This is particularly important in terms of the proximity of any new development to the Conservation Area, and the relationship of new buildings to existing development.
- 4.4.6. With regard to the setting of the listed buildings on the site, any new buildings should be designed and laid out to respect the scale, height, massing and alignment of the Brewery buildings, with the use of appropriate materials. In particular, any new development within the site should not undermine the dominance of the Victorian group of buildings, and where possible should reinforce its industrial character. In this respect, new buildings should be in harmony with, or complementary to, the existing listed structures. The south facing elevation of the Brew House is particularly significant in terms of its proportions and detailing, but more recent additions and modern buildings have obscured the visual importance of this

frontage. Therefore, redevelopment proposals of this section of the Weymouth Avenue Area provide an opportunity to re-establish public views of the building, and there is potential for the provision of formal open space in the form of a “public square” along its southern aspect that would provide this setting and contribute towards the open space provision on site.

4.4.7. The area to the south of the Brewery buildings is predominantly commercial in character and includes the entrance to Dorchester South Station. In this locality, development will need to respect the scale of the existing buildings but it is considered that the public space in front of the station has the potential to be defined by significant new buildings. The station is one of the main arrival points in the town and would benefit from development that can create a positive sense of arrival. In addition there is an opportunity for development to infill the existing gaps along the Weymouth Avenue frontage to form a positive public front to the Weymouth Avenue Area along this edge.

4.4.8. To the east of the Brewery buildings, towards the Culliford Road end, the site is more open and becomes progressively “greener” and more residential in character. Within this area, particular consideration will need to be given to the relationship between new built development within the Weymouth Avenue Area and the residential properties in the Prince of Wales Road, the rear gardens of which abut the site along the northern boundary. New development should not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the occupiers of these residential properties through loss of privacy; loss of daylight or excessive overshadowing; and should not generate a level of activity or noise which detracts significantly from the character and amenity of the area or the quiet

enjoyment of residential properties.

4.4.9. It is therefore envisaged that the intensity of development within the Weymouth Avenue Area will be highest at the centre of the site, focused on the Brewery buildings and the station approach. The intensity will then gradually reduce to the east and the south respectively.

Designing out Crime

4.4.10. The need to reduce potential opportunities for crime is an important factor in the design of new development, and can be achieved through a wide range of measures. It is important that the layout and design allows for adequate public surveillance of spaces. This includes provision for appropriate street lighting, seating areas etc, which if designed correctly should reduce the need for other preventative measures such as CCTV.

Sustainable Construction

4.4.11. The Council is keen to encourage the adoption of sustainable construction techniques in the design of new developments. This can be achieved through a range of measures, including the use of energy / water saving devices and ecologically sound materials. Designs should allow for flexibility to accommodate different future uses, and also take into consideration the servicing and maintenance aspects of the site, including such matters as waste collection, street cleaning etc. Developers are encouraged to refer to the South West Sustainable Construction Charter⁹ for further advice.

⁹ prepared by Future Foundations in 2002

4.5. **Layout and Street Pattern**

4.5.1. The District Council recognises the importance of achieving permeability and legibility within settlements through the development process. In addition, it is important that any redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area should not have an adverse impact upon the safety of highway users.

Table 2: Definition of Permeability and Legibility

***Permeability** relates to the extent to which an environment allows people a choice of routes through it and a permeable road structure provides a number of alternative routes between any two points. **Legibility** is the degree to which an urban area is readily navigated, influenced primarily by landmark buildings and other features, road layout, and the positioning of buildings in relation to the street, which help a person identify where they are and how to reach their destination.*

4.5.2. Grid street layouts allow greater freedom of movement and more direct access to all parts of a settlement for all modes of transport, including pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, provided that the size of the block is not excessive and that freedom of movement is not curtailed by the higher incidence of potential road conflicts. Variations within the grid structure along the more minor routes (creating a 'deformed grid') that take into account local topography and natural features avoid creating monotonous, straight vistas, and generally decrease the number of potential road conflicts and improve ease of movement.

4.5.3. The alignment of blocks and streets should focus the pedestrian's attention upon key landmark features, such as tall spires and public buildings, which provide locally

identifiable features. There should be relatively few changes in direction along the main streets and distributor roads leading into the settlement and between key public areas. The use of a hierarchical structure of road widths (including the footways and verges, ie: all of the public realm), can improve legibility where it indicates the importance of the street, in terms of the motorised and pedestrian traffic that it carries and the route it takes between key community buildings or areas.

Access, Transport and Circulation

4.5.4. In considering the layout of new development on the Weymouth Avenue Area, it is important that the street pattern is not too complex and the layout of streets should facilitate a clear and direct route for pedestrians and cyclists to access the town centre through the site. Within the Weymouth Avenue Area the road and footpath layout will need detailed consideration dependent upon the proposed mix and configuration of land uses. It should conform to urban design and highway safety requirements as set out in the Government guidance Places Streets and Movement, and the County Council's Estate Road guidance, and be designed to enable access by disabled persons. The layout will need to be designed to allow for the movement of and access to the public transport network, as well as HGVs servicing any proposed commercial uses. A highway link should be provided through the site from Culliford Road bridge off Prince of Wales Road to Weymouth Avenue, to assist local access and improve permeability. The detailed design of this link will be guided by the transport assessment. The need for a safe route/s to the station for both cyclists and pedestrians has been highlighted through the community consultation on Dorchester's future. Strong cycle and pedestrian linkage is considered

fundamental to the proposals, particularly linkage via a more suitable footbridge to the Manor Park neighbourhood on the south side to the rail line. Suitable provision should also be made to ensure adequate access for emergency vehicles.

4.5.5. Proposals for buildings which may be used as a dwelling, place of work, or visited by the general public will be expected to incorporate appropriate access facilities for people with disabilities.

4.5.6. A number of bus and coach operators have indicated their interest in increasing the potential for the Station Area to develop as a more integrated public transport interchange. At present some services do not enter into the station due to the time it takes to enter/ exit the site, adding to the delays caused by peak-hour congestion along Weymouth Avenue itself. There is potential to upgrade the existing interchange to provide a much more integrated facility. The layout of the interchange should be welcoming, cater for all levels of users of the various transport modes (bus, train, taxi, cycle and pedestrian) and make provision for their needs (such as unrestricted cycle lockers, improved ticketing facilities), and adequate space for the dropping off and alighting of passengers. The remodelling of the pedestrian ramps to the station on the southern and northern sides of the railway line would be of particular benefit in improving accessibility. It is anticipated that this will require space to be provided for 2 bus / coaches and 6 taxis; public car parking for the station (to retain or exceed existing provision), to include arrangements for disabled parking; and secure cycle parking. The station needs to be secure by design and would also benefit from the provision of CCTV. Where appropriate, a contribution towards the improvement of the interchange will be sought from development within

the Weymouth Avenue Area.

4.5.7. Any proposals likely to generate traffic levels above the capacity of the local highway network will need to be carefully considered. A transport assessment will need to be submitted as part of the comprehensive planning application for the site. This should not only be concerned with the internal arrangements, but should also take into account the existing pressures on the highway network in the vicinity of the site and the likelihood that any redevelopment would exacerbate this situation. Areas of particular consideration will be the need to enhance the cycle / pedestrian links and the bus/rail interchange, and the potential for additional traffic movements at the following junctions:

- Culliford Bridge junction;
- Maumbury Cross junction;
- Great Western junction; and
- Fiveways Junction, South Gate

4.5.8. There are potential difficulties in egressing from the Weymouth Avenue Area at the station approach / Weymouth Avenue junction. Therefore, any redevelopment proposals that would result in a significant increase in traffic movements at this junction will be required to contribute to improvements or include them as an integral part of any detailed proposal.

Parking

4.5.9. It should be noted that the guidelines referred to in the adopted local plan policy TR19 have been superseded by PPG13 Transport (published in 2001), which advises that

parking guidelines should represent the *maximum* on-site provision. In response the revised parking guidelines in Appendix 1 of the Second Deposit Plan of the Local Plan Review set out a maximum car parking requirement. It is also recognized that in certain situations, such as development close to town centres, it may be appropriate to reduce the level of parking, given the potential for increased accessibility to other modes of transport, population densities and the ability to walk to local facilities. In these circumstances it is suggested that the developer should undertake a Parking Provision Assessment to establish the appropriate car parking requirement. This assessment should take into account the rural nature of the district, in which car ownership levels are comparatively high and public transport comparatively poor, and the fact that this will have an impact across all tenure types.

- 4.5.10. The Weymouth Avenue Area is in a sustainable location given the proximity to public transport alternatives and the town centre. Directly across Weymouth Avenue, the market site currently provides 630 long-stay public parking spaces. However, it should be noted that this public car park is currently at capacity in the peak summer months, and throughout the year on market days when the number of available spaces is reduced. Also, current parking projections for the Market Site, which do not take into account the potential increased demand from redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area, anticipate that the car park will reach capacity year-round within 10 years.

4.6. **Landscape and Nature Conservation**

- 4.6.1. Landscape features, and the 'greening' of the urban environment, contribute to the visual enjoyment and

distinctiveness of the local townscape, help to maintain the variety and diversity of plant and wildlife, and can provide visual clues in people's perceptions of their surroundings. In the case of Dorchester the distinctive avenues of trees are integral to the character of the town and highlight important thoroughfares. Landscaping can also provide other benefits (such as screening out noise and unsightly development, providing shelter, recreation and filtering pollution). In this respect, Government guidance acknowledges that landscape design is an integral part of urban design and is "often of comparable importance to the design of the buildings themselves"¹⁰. Landscaping proposals should therefore form an integral part of any proposed redevelopment, with hard and soft landscape treatment considered as part of the layout design from a very early stage.

Protection of trees

- 4.6.2. It is considered that there are a number of significant trees within or close to the site that could be affected by the redevelopment of the Weymouth Avenue Area and should be retained and protected where possible. A number of these trees are located outside the boundary of the Area but, due to their proximity, could be affected by work within the site. Such trees include a row of pollarded lime trees along the Weymouth Avenue frontage of the Brewery buildings; and mature trees within the rear gardens of properties in Prince of Wales Road
- 4.6.3. Guidance on tree protection is set out in British Standard BS 5837: 1991 – Trees in relation to Construction. A tree survey is essential in identifying those trees that should

¹⁰ Para 14, PPG1 (Revised): General Policy and Principles, 1997, DoE. Further guidance is also provided on Pages 76 – 77, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR

be retained as a priority, ie their retention is most desirable, those trees whose retention is desirable, those which should be retained but are not of great importance and those that should be removed. The assessment should be based upon the health and condition of each tree and its life expectancy; the suitability of the tree(s) within the context of the site development; and its value in either screening the site or the contribution it makes to the appearance of the area. Consideration must also be given to trees on adjacent properties.

- 4.6.4. Where trees have been identified as worthy of retention, it is essential that they are protected during development so as to avoid damage being caused by construction works. Detailed guidance on the type and position of physical protection measures is contained in BS 5837.

Biodiversity

- 4.6.5. Although there are no statutory designated nature conservation sites within the Weymouth Avenue Area, Maumbury Rings are designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) by the Dorset Wildlife Trust. In addition, the green corridors alongside roads and railways in the area provide or have the potential to provide enhanced wildlife value to the area, particularly where the maintenance of these focuses on the habitat of locally native species.

- 4.6.6. The lines of trees along Weymouth Avenue and Prince of Wales Road, comprising mature Lime, Plane, Maple and other tree species, contribute to the character of the area and help maintain and improve biodiversity. It is therefore important that any development within the Weymouth Avenue Area should not compromise this important 'green' feature. The same applies to the green link provided by the railway line running to the south of the site and the opportunity this gives for wildlife to migrate along this corridor, between other green spaces in the town. Again any development on the brewery site should not detract from the value of this area and if possible enhance it. The replacement planting of more suitable trees will be encouraged where this would significantly improve the nature conservation and amenity interest of the green corridors

- 4.6.7. With regard to the potential for protected species of animals or plants being present on the site, the buildings may provide bat roosting areas. In addition, any naturally colonised or undeveloped areas may contain rare plants or provide habitat for a variety of invertebrates, birds, reptiles and mammals. The local planning authority will request that appropriate surveys are carried out prior to the development of the site to determine whether or not protected species are present. Any new development has the potential to provide new or replacement habitats for wildlife, for example incorporating nesting boxes for swifts.

APPENDIX A: EMPLOYMENT DENSITIES

Employment Density (gross internal floorspace per employee) (where figures are not shown a more detailed assessment will be required).

USE TYPE	Sq. m.	Major factors creating variations
INDUSTRY (B1)		
Small Business	32	
High tech / R&D	29-32	Lower density within Science Park
OFFICE (A3/B1)		
General	19	Densities vary according to location. Changing working practices are affecting densities.
Headquarters	22	
Serviced Business Centre	20	Densities within units may be high but common areas reduce the overall density
Call Centre	12.8	
LEISURE / COMMUNITY FACILITIES (C1, D1)		
Hotels (employees per 15 bedrooms)	5-12	Densities towards lower end of range within more budget market hotels
Restaurants	13	Densities may be lower in fast-food restaurants and higher in high standard restaurants
Cultural Attractions	36	
Cinemas (including multiplex)	90	
Sports centres	90	
Private sports clubs	55	