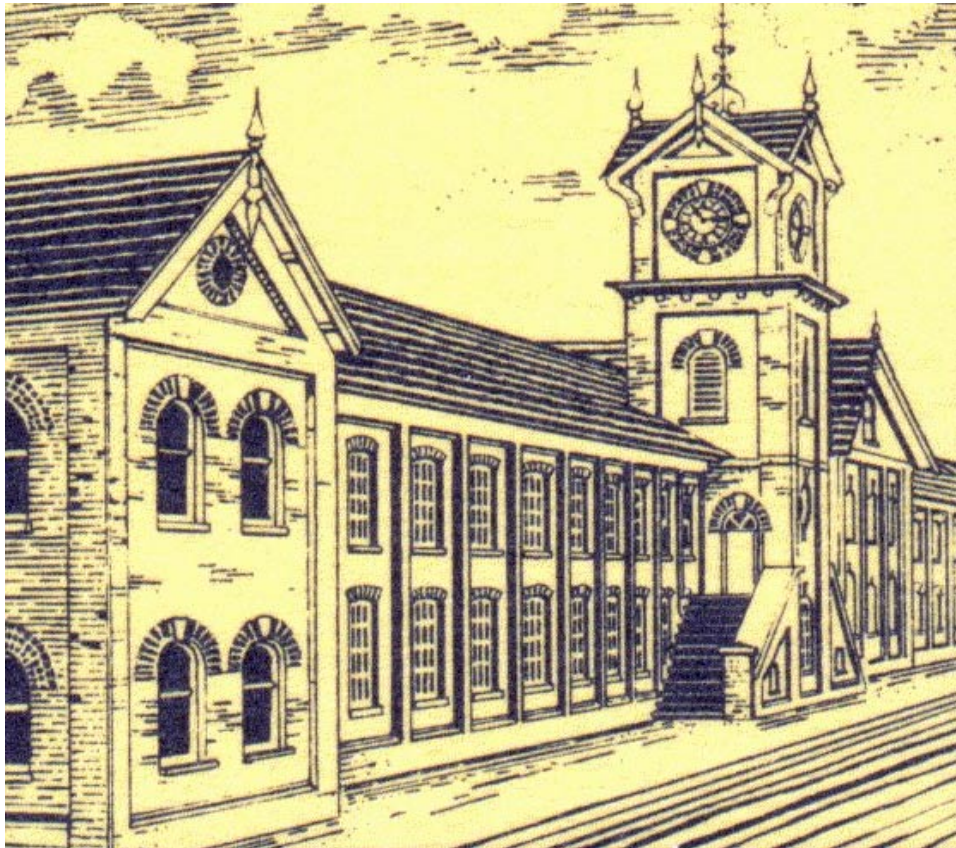


Planning Brief

**Buckland Mill
Crabble Hill
Dover**



July 2003

Prepared jointly by Dover District Council and SEEDA

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1.0 Introduction

The Site

- 1.1 Buckland Mill is located approximately 1 mile northwest of Dover town centre on the A256 Crabble Hill. The site is identified on the location plan attached at Appendix 1. A more detailed site plan is attached at Appendix 2.

The Purpose of the Brief

- 1.2 The purpose of the brief is to provide a planning framework to guide and encourage the regeneration of the site and to secure social and environmental benefits for the locality.
- 1.3 The overall objective for the site is to seek the comprehensive and sustainable regeneration of this previously developed site. This will be achieved by
1. Ensuring the site makes a positive contribution to the regeneration of the locality, without harming the vitality of the Dover Town centre.
 2. Uses that are appropriate to the local area and special character of the retained buildings
 3. Development that is of appropriate scale and high quality design that positively contributes to the local townscape and enhances the setting of the listed building and all other buildings which are retained.
 4. Development that is sustainable achieved through layout, retention of historic structures and energy efficiency construction
 5. Securing environmental enhancement through high quality design and landscaping treatment.
 6. Ensuring acceptable access, traffic demand and traffic generation
 7. Retaining as many of the existing buildings as possible, which are of architectural importance, and reflect the former use of the site as a paper mill.
- 1.4 With reference to relevant planning policies and requirements, the brief provides guidance on the form of development and types of uses likely to be considered acceptable.

Background to the Preparation of the Brief

- 1.5 The whole of the Buckland Mill site is within the ownership of the South-East England Development Agency (SEEDA), who recently acquired the site because of its potential importance for regeneration.
- 1.6 SEEDA have been working closely with the Council to improve and bring forward the potential of the site and have undertaken surveys, demolition work and site clearance in preparation for a disposal. As a means of guiding potential purchasers, it was agreed that SEEDA and the Council should prepare a planning brief jointly.

Status of the Brief

- 1.7 This brief was adopted by Dover District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 23rd July 2003 following a period of consultation held between the 2nd June and 30th June 2003. In accordance with the advice given in PPG12 – Development Plans, the brief has been prepared within the context of the adopted local plan. It provides supplementary planning guidance and will be regarded as a material consideration in the assessment of any planning application.

2.0 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The Mill site occupies an important and prominent location within a predominantly residential area. It extends to approximately 3.83 hectares and is bounded to the north-east by Crabble Hill, to which it has frontage of approximately 370 metres.
- 2.2 The southern/south-western boundary is formed by Crabble Meadows, a narrow lane that can be accessed from Crabble Hill at the southeastern end of the site. Crabble Meadows provides an access to the site and forms part of a public footpath link to River, west of the railway line. It also provides an access to St Andrew's Church and the adjoining graveyard. The Church is Listed and makes a significant contribution to the character of the area.
- 2.3 To the west of the church and forming the north-western boundary of the site is a steep railway embankment, which provides an attractive backdrop.
- 2.4 The Buckland Mill site can be divided into two distinct areas. The northern part of the site contains a large single storey warehouse building surrounded by a generous area of hardstanding and car parking. Adjoining the warehouse to the rear, is a two storey brick office building and a two storey Georgian building which was the former Mill House and

was last used for office purposes. This building is Grade 2 listed. At the north western end of the site is a Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHP) building which has been decommissioned.

- 2.5 The southern part of the site was developed to a much greater density. The retained buildings are of late 19th century and early 20th century origin and generally comprise a mixture of traditional materials with brick elevations, cast iron windows and slate roofs, although some are clad in modern sheet material. The buildings fronting London Road make a significant contribution to the townscape of the area and the clock tower is a particularly important landmark building.
- 2.6 The site straddles the River Dour, which runs through both parts of the site in an open channel until it reaches the most southerly building of the site where it is culverted.
- 2.7 More specifically, the site is made up of the following retained buildings and features that are identified on the site plan attached at Appendix 2:
 - 1) Existing main access to the site from Crabble Hill
 - 2) Former access to site from Crabble Hill (now blocked up)
 - 3) Existing rear access to site from Crabble Meadows
 - 4) River Dour
 - 5) Mill Pond
 - 6) Modern warehouse building
 - 7) Office building
 - 8) Mill House (Listed)
 - 9) Decommissioned CHP Plant building
 - 10) Mill buildings
 - 11) Sub station

3.0 Planning Policy Context and Preferred Uses

- 3.1 The Kent Structure Plan (1996), the Dover District Local Plan (2002) and national policy guidance provide the context for planning policies applicable to the brief area.
- 3.2 There are no site-specific policies in the Local Plan but there are a number of policies that are relevant. Attached at Appendix 4, is a schedule that sets out these policies in full, together with an extract of the site from the Local Plan Proposals Map.
- 3.3 Crabble Meadows is shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map as a 'Footpath and Cycle Route'. St. Andrews church and cemetery are

identified within an 'Area of Open Space' and the railway line is shown as forming part of a 'Green Corridor'.

3.4 The principal policy relating to the site is policy LE1 that seeks to protect and retain existing employment sites. The policy, however, allows for circumstances in which a change to alternative appropriate uses (such as residential) may be considered acceptable. Non-employment uses may be considered acceptable providing there is no shortage of employment land either locally or in the district and it can be demonstrated that:

- i) alternative uses would bring significant social or environmental benefits, or
- ii) the land or premises has been appropriately marketed without success.

3.5 The planning policy position in relation to alternative uses can be summarised as follows: -

- **Employment use:** the preferred use for the site is for employment purposes (light industrial, offices and research (B1), general industrial (B2) storage and distribution (B8)) [policy LE1], and other sui generis uses of an appropriate employment nature.
- **Residential use:** the next favoured option is a mixed-use scheme incorporating employment and residential [Policy HS2]. If housing is proposed, then the following will also be required:-
 - Affordable housing [Policy HS9]
 - A mix of unit sizes to include 1-2 bed dwellings [Policy HS11]
 - An area for children's outdoor play space [Policy OS2]

In addition to the above, there may also be a need to provide the following:

- A financial contribution towards the provision of community facilities [Policy CF3]
- A financial contribution towards education facilities [Kent Structure Plan Policy S9]
- **Commercial leisure uses, community and tourist facilities:** uses of an appropriate scale are supported in principle [Policies CF1, LE23, LE29 and OS6].

- **Retail:** major retail uses are not favoured due to the out of town centre location of the site, but local shops may be acceptable [policies SP3 and SP4].
- 3.6 In accordance with the provisions of Policy LE1, the site has been marketed for employment purposes without success. It has been demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that residential conversion of existing buildings and new residential development is an appropriate alternative use for the southern part of the site and the land to the west of the River Dour.
- 3.7 The Planning Policy position in relation to other matters can be summarised as follows:
- **Listed building:** employment uses should be proposed in a way that would not adversely affect the character and the setting of the listed building. [Policy HE4]
 - **Buildings of Townscape quality:** the buildings fronting London Road and Buckland Bridge should be retained. They have townscape quality and positively contribute to the character of the area. New development should enhance the environment whenever possible. [Policy DD1]
 - **Green Corridors:** vegetation should be enhanced wherever possible and especially along the site's northern boundary, which forms part of the 'Green Corridor' allocation [Policy C010] and also along the River Dour.
 - **Environment:** contaminated land, noise and light pollution issues need to be addressed in accordance with planning policies to ensure an acceptable level of amenity for those living and working both on and off the site [Policies ER4, ER5 and ER6].

4.0 Urban Design and Environmental Issues

- 4.1 Developers will need to take into account the principles set out in Kent Design as well as the advice given in the DETR document, By Design – Urban Design in the planning system: towards better practice; places, streets and management – a companion guide to design; Bulletin 32 – Residential roads and footpaths and By Design – Better places to live. Planning applications must be accompanied by a Design Statement and the Council's guidance notes on this are given in Appendix 4.

Retention and Demolition of Buildings

- 4.2 The Mill House is a Listed Building that needs to be retained and its setting needs to be enhanced. The range of buildings fronting Crabble Hill are of townscape value and should also be retained.
- 4.3 The site plan attached at Appendix 2 identifies existing buildings and key features.

Design Criteria

- 4.4 In order to protect the retained buildings to enhance the townscape value of the area and to create an attractive scheme, the Council will expect proposals to take account of the following:
- The pattern and role of space between buildings.
 - The siting, massing and scale of new buildings in relation to the retained buildings.
 - Architectural styles should respect the surroundings.
 - The safeguarding of the setting of St Andrew's church and churchyard to the west of the site, and enhancement of the setting of Mill House.
 - The functional needs of new developments such as accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities, car and cycle parking and playspace should be an integral part of the design.
 - Hard and soft landscaping should be an integral part of the design. Boundary treatment, both existing and proposed will be particularly important.
 - The landscape character of the area, particularly in relation to the River Dour, should be respected.
 - External materials should be appropriate to their surroundings.
 - The layout of buildings, gardens, open spaces, footpath cycleways, parking and roads should be both functionally well designed so as to help reduce the fear and risk of crime.
 - Environmental inputs such as air, water, and noise pollution should be anticipated and overcome.

- Energy efficiency measures should be considered in the design and layout of development.

Ecological Considerations

- 4.5 The site does not contain, join or include any statutorily designated sites of ecological interest and is not known to contain or support any statutorily protected species of Fauna or Flora.

River Dour

- 4.6 The most ecologically valuable existing part of the site is the River Dour. It is a chalk stream with high water quality, supporting a range of delicate pollution sensitive organisms. It runs through the site providing a wider lagoon with fish pass and millpond at the most southerly end of the site. The river would, however, benefit from a further programme of restoration and sympathetic conservation management, to recreate a strong river corridor of increased ecological and aesthetic value. A conservation management strategy should be prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency.

Amenity and Landscape

- 4.7 Apart from small areas of vegetation along the river corridor, the only other vegetation on site is restricted to localised areas of amenity planting within the built environment. Wherever possible, these should be retained and the majority of the semi-mature and mature trees incorporated into a more cohesive scheme of landscaping to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the site, and also to raise its potential ecological interest. The scheme should incorporate native plant species.
- 4.8 A landscape strategy will need to be prepared to include details of materials and servicing that enhances the proposed urban form and which is based around existing features, principally the course of the River Dour and existing amenity areas.
- 4.9 A landscape belt running across the site may be required in order to separate the north west part of the site from the south east, should residential be proposed for the latter. Any such landscape feature should provide a visual and ecological link to the churchyard to the west of the site.

Built Environment

- 4.10 A preliminary ecological field survey undertaken in March 2002 found evidence of roosting birds but no other indication of wildlife. Although it did not find any evidence of bats, there is a possibility of undetected bat

roosts within the crevices and cracks of brick walls and some of the roofs. Further investigations will be required.

Contaminated Land

- 4.11 Before determining any planning application on land which is or can reasonably be expected to be contaminated the Council will require the applicant to carry out a detailed site survey and analysis which identifies any contaminants. The investigation must identify and assess the nature, extent, location and risk posed by the contaminants on site in relation to the proposed end use. Appropriate mitigation/ remedial measures necessary to adequately control and significant risks will then need to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 4.12 The control of noise in new development is a material planning consideration under PPG24. Proposals for both noise creating development (i.e. commercial / industrial activities) and noise sensitive development (i.e. residential) on the site may need to be subject to an acoustic assessment. The applicant may be required to demonstrate that, following site surveys and analysis, suitable mitigating measures can be carried out to ameliorate problems associated with noise. Noise mitigation measures may, for example, include siting, layout and landscaping requirements, the use of acoustic barriers and the installation of sound reduction and installation features.

Archaeological and Historical Considerations

- 4.13 The decision as to which buildings to retain was made following a detailed site survey having regard to both their historic importance and townscape value. Owing to structural and practical considerations for conversion it was not possible to retain all of the buildings. Proposals will be expected to reflect the historical development of the Mill in respect of the scale, form, materials and positioning of new buildings. This is illustrated in the design principles contained in Section 6 and Appendix 6 to this Brief, and the design criteria in Section 4.4 above.
- 4.14 An archaeological appraisal will be required prior to development commencing.

5.0 Highways

Vehicular Access

- 5.1 The use of the existing access at the northwestern end of the site for employment purposes is considered acceptable. If other uses are proposed for this part of the site, then it will be necessary to demonstrate

that this existing access is also suitable for the proposed new use. Internal arrangements should be constructed to the standards set out in Kent Design to facilitate adoption.

- 5.2 If residential development is proposed then a new access to serve this area will be required along Crabble Hill.
- 5.3 Attached at Appendix 5 is a plan that shows how the site can be accessed from London Road. It shows a standard crossroad junction in the location of the existing blocked up access.
- 5.4 Access to serve a limited number of dwellings may also be acceptable from Crabble Meadows, providing there is no adverse effect on the route or amenity value of the existing public footpath and the cycle link and that adequate provision can be made to facilitate cycle and pedestrian access as part of the longer distance through route. This could be achieved by the provision of a slow speed environment that provides a distinct area for cyclists and pedestrians.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

- 5.5 Clearly defined pedestrian/cycle access should be provided through the site to link with the public footpath and cycle route along Crabble Meadows.

Car Parking

- 5.6 The County Council's vehicle parking standards will be used as a basis for assessing maximum provision. Parking at less than the County Council standard requirements will be considered acceptable if it can be provided without causing harm to road safety, traffic management or amenity.

Cycle Parking

- 5.7 The standards set out in Appendix 1 to the Dover District Local Plan will be used as a basis for assessing cycle parking provision.

Transport Assessment

- 5.8 Depending on the proposed use, a transport assessment may need to be submitted as part of any future planning application. In order to determine the extent of any Traffic Assessment required, it will be necessary for a scoping study to be agreed with the highway authority.

6.0 Illustrative Design Principles and Potential Use

Illustrative Design Principles

- 6.1 Attached at Appendix 6 are plans that set out indicative design principles for the site including an illustrative master plan. The plans show one possible concept of what could be achieved and identifies principals to guide the way in which the development of the site could take place.
- 6.2 Whilst the masterplan may change to respond to particular development and land use requirements, there are key principles which the development at Buckland Mill should include. The original, retained, buildings set the scene for a balanced design by creating an address and a standard for new development to integrate with. The site will provide employment and mixed residential use and has the potential to be a significant regenerator for this part of the town. If this is to happen it is clearly important that a high quality “sense of place” is created by making best use of the site’s potential and opportunities: existing buildings with architectural features and of townscape importance, different levels of enclosure created by both buildings and walls at the site along with the surrounding landscape and the newly revealed river corridor can all be used to create this ambience. The south facing views of the Church and beyond to Dover Castle should also be exploited by the layout.
- 6.3 Appendix 6 includes plans identifying existing site characteristics and features; an illustrative proposed layout; vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and circulation within the site and indicative design principles for developing the site.
- 6.4 **The employment area:** The employment area is shown on the illustrative Masterplan in Appendix 6. This comprises the more modern warehouse and office buildings which have good provision of hard standing for circulation, turning and parking and an excellent means of access to Crabble Hill at the most northerly end of the site. This may involve the re-use or conversion of existing buildings or the redevelopment of part or of the whole of this area for employment purposes. Given the location of the site and its accessibility, commercial leisure uses of an appropriate scale to the location may also be considered appropriate.
- 6.5 **The residential area:** the southern area of the site and land to the west of the River Dour is of a different character and includes a number of retained older buildings that have local townscape value. The illustrative plan shows how these buildings, which are principally sited along the Crabble Hill frontage, could be converted to residential use. It also illustrates the opportunities that exist for a high quality new build residential scheme at a high density, designed to provide a mix of

dwellings appropriate to the general character of the site and making best use of the river corridor.

- 6.6 **Access:** The re-opening of the former access along London Road is proposed to provide a direct means of access to the residential area. This could also provide an improved access to Buckland House and an opportunity to improve its setting.
- 6.7 Access along Crabble Meadows to serve a limited number of dwellings at the southern end of the site may also be considered acceptable [see Paragraph 5.4].
- 6.8 **Landscaping:** The illustrative plan shows a landscaping belt separating the employment and residential areas. It also shows how areas within the site could be landscaped and how the course of the River Dour could be improved to provide an important landscape feature running through the site.

7.0 Implementation

- 7.1 The Council would prefer to see a planning application for the whole site that ensures development is undertaken on a comprehensive basis.
- 7.2 It is recognised, however, that the site divides into two areas and that the main warehouse building and its curtilage could continue in employment, possibly without the need for planning permission to be obtained or may be developed independently and/or in advance of the south and western parts of the site.
- 7.3 Where permission is required in relation to the employment part of the site, the provisions of this brief will be applied, particularly in respect of improvements to the River Dour, and the enhancement of amenities and landscaping.
- 7.4 If residential use is proposed, then landscaping boundary treatment will be required to separate the employment and residential areas. This would need to form part of an application relating to the whole of the south and western parts of the site.
- 7.5 Proposals for the conversion and change of use of existing buildings will require full applications to be made.
- 7.6 Proposals for new development (which do not affect the setting of the listed building) may be made in outline form, but should include details of access and siting.

- 7.7 Proposals that affect the setting of the listed building will need to be fully detailed so their impact can be fully assessed. Any alterations to the listed building will require listed building consent.

8.0 Contacts

- 8.1 Further planning advice and clarification of issues relating to the brief can be obtained by writing to the planning department at the following address:

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