



Homes  
England

# Former Blood Centre, Brentwood Planning Brief



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# 1 Introduction

The 1.5ha former Blood Centre site, on Crescent Drive in Brentwood, presents an attractive brownfield residential development opportunity in a sustainable location. A scheme of approximately 55 units is likely to be achievable delivering a market facing and policy compliant mix of apartments and housing units in an attractive setting. Brentwood Borough Council are supportive of the proposals which they anticipate coming forward in the short term.

This Planning Brief has been prepared by Wood Plc on behalf of Homes England and in consultation with Brentwood Borough Council. The Planning Brief seeks to support Homes England's marketing process and presents key information relating to the site obtained through an initial review of site potential and early discussions with the Local Planning Authority, Brentwood Borough Council. In so doing, the Brief goes some way to de-risk the site and will facilitate swift progression to a future planning application.

The Planning Brief:

- Describes the site and its context
- Identifies opportunities and constraints to future development
- Outlines key policy requirements
- Establishes key design principles and illustrates an appropriate indicative development layout
- Summarises initial environmental due diligence undertaken to date
- Provides advice on validation requirements and consultation with key stakeholders.



# 2 The Site and Context

## 2.1 Site Description

The site was formerly used as a blood donor, processing, research and distribution centre, with associated laboratories, cold stores and office facilities.

The site is located on Crescent Drive (CM15 8DP) in Brentwood, Essex, approximately 1km from Brentwood High Street's shops and services, 1.5km from Brentwood Station and 1.1km from Shenfield Station, providing services to Stratford and London Liverpool Street. Bus stops are located close to the site outside Brentwood Community Hospital which is located to the north-west of the site. Crescent Drive, with large detached dwellings beyond, is located to the north and east of the site. An established dense woodland area is located to the south.

The site is 1.5ha with approximately 1ha of land deemed to be developable with remaining areas including woodland within the Green Belt. Access is achieved off Crescent Drive with currently 3 access points provided.

The site houses the main blood centre building in the centre, with demountable stores and car parking to the east of the main structure, and workshops, garages and further stores to the south and south-west.

Two internal access roads leading to car parking and storage areas are present along the eastern and western boundaries of the site. The south-west and western sections of the site are heavily wooded with mature trees. Further areas of landscaping are present to the east of the site in the vicinity of the car park.

The site slopes north to south from Crescent Road to a stream located to the south of the southern boundary. There is a less pronounced fall from north-west to south-east. The main building is of split level construction maximising site topography with the main building being 2 storeys in height to the north (fronting Crescent Drive) increasing to 3 and 4-storeys as the site levels drop in the east.

The Community Hospital to the west of the site is a wood-clad building of 2- 3 storeys. Surrounding residential properties are generally large detached 2-storeys dwellings. There is a property close to the eastern boundary of the site.



Aerial of the Site



View of Blood Centre from Crescent Drive  
© Google



Example of large detached properties to the north and east of the site  
© Google



View of properties to the north from the upper floor of the Blood Centre



Sensitive eastern edge



Brentwood Community Hospital to the west  
© Google



Hardstanding area in the west of the site

## 2.2 Designations

### Green Belt

The western and south western portion of the site is within the Green Belt. The majority of this area is woodland but there are hardstanding areas of car parking within the Green Belt boundary.

### Flood Risk

The site is not in an area of Flood Risk as defined in Gov.uk Maps for Planning. Pockets of surface water flooding have been reported on site.

### Heritage

MAGIC mapping has not identified any heritage designations on or adjacent to the site. The site is not in a conservation area.

### Environmental

MAGIC mapping shows the woodland located to the south of the site is identified as a Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland in the National Forestry Inventory.

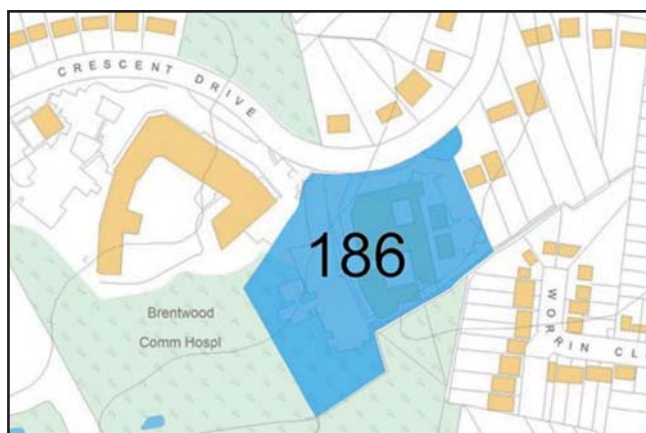
### Analysis of existing site



Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS EUL 100019606

# 3 Planning Position

The site is a brownfield site, largely outwith the Green Belt, in a relatively sustainable location and within the settlement boundary of Brentwood. In addition Brentwood Borough Council have positively encouraged the redevelopment of the site and are seeking to allocate the site for housing through the emerging Local Plan process. The principle of redevelopment to the proposed use is therefore relatively secure. This section reviews planning history on the site, reviews the emerging allocation and summarises adopted policy requirements



Draft Site Allocations Document (page 65)

## 3.1 Planning History

A review of historic maps shows the Blood Centre building was originally constructed in the 1960s. By the late 1980s the stores were constructed to the north-east, east and south of the main building along with the western access road and car parking area

With the exception of 2 minor more recent applications, relating to a new entrance and a covered walkway, there are no applications of note relating to the site. There are no extant permissions surrounding the site which would impact on the development proposed.

## 3.2 Site Allocation

Brentwood Borough Council have included the site as a draft allocation in the emerging Regulation 18 Preferred Site Allocations document. The site is identified as (ref 186) having potential for 55 residential units with a delivery forecast of 1-5years.

## 3.3 Planning Policy

The Development Plan consists of the saved policies (2008) of the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan (Adopted) 2005.

Brentwood Borough Council are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. Both the emerging Local Plan document and the Site Allocations document are however at an early stage, and, at the time of writing, hold limited weight in the determination of planning applications. The Local Plan is scheduled for adoption in Q2 2019. Applicants should review the latest planning policy and consider its weight when an application is being prepared.

For the purposes of this Brief, key current adopted policies of relevance to the site are set out below:

	Key Local Plan Policies	SPGs/SPDs
General Development Criteria	CP1, CP2, CP4	Urban Place Supplement SPD (2007)
Green Belt	GB1, GB2	
Residential Development	H9, H14, H16	Urban Place Supplement SPD (2007)
Transport	T2	
Parking Standards	---	Parking Standards SPD (2011)
Open Space	LT4	
Landscaping	C5	
Flooding	---	Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide (2015)

Policy	Summary	Assessment												
Policy GB1: New Development in the Green Belt	<p>Development in the Green Belt is restricted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated or the proposal falls into the categories of appropriate development in the Green Belt.</p> <p>NB: Para 89 of NPPF (written after the Local Plan and therefore takes precedence) states that previously developed land in the Green Belt is suitable for redevelopment unless proposals impact on the openness of the Green Belt in that location.</p>	<p>The south-west and western portion of the site is in the Green Belt. The majority of this area is within the wooded area on site. Areas of hardstanding do exist however. Given these areas can be deemed 'previously developed' an argument could possibly be made for development in this location – ideally, if required, re-use for car parking is suggested as per the former use. Any additional development may increase planning risk.</p> <p>As the site is contained by woodland in this location there is no argument to say the openness of the Green Belt would be impacted.</p> <p>The emerging allocation for the site may lead to a redrawing of Green Belt boundaries in this location.</p>												
H9: Affordable Housing on Larger Sites	Requires 35% affordable housing for sites of 0.66Ha or larger in the Brentwood Urban Area.	<p>Taking the allocation assumption as a guide, a scheme of 55 units would be required to deliver 19 affordable units.</p> <p>Affordable housing is also currently set at 35% in in emerging Local Plan policy.</p>												
H14 Housing & Density	Requires minimum densities of not less than 30 dwellings per hectare net “unless the special character of the surrounding area determines that such densities would be inappropriate”. “Densities greater than 65 dwellings per hectare net will be expected in town and district centres or other locations with good public transport accessibility”.	Whilst the site is 1.5ha, approximately 1ha is deemed to be developable as some of the land is woodland and in the Green Belt. A scheme of 55 units on a 1ha site would deliver a density of 55dph. The Council are supportive of such a density on a brownfield site in a relatively sustainable location												
H16 Lifetime Homes	Requires the design and layout of all new residential development schemes to achieve “Lifetime Homes” standards in all properties where appropriate	Lifetime Homes Standards to be met when considering the design of properties at detailed design stage.												
T2 New Development and Highway Considerations	Requires that development does not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the transport system.	A Transport Assessment will be required and will assess the impacts of the development on the existing highways network. Sustainable transport initiatives and maximising pedestrian and cycle links will also need to be considered												
Parking Standards SPD (2011)	<p>Parking requirements as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Use</th> <th>Vehicle</th> <th>Cycle</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Minimum</th> <th>Minimum</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 bedroom</td> <td>1 space per dwelling</td> <td>1 secure covered space per dwelling. None if garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2+ bedrooms</td> <td>2 spaces per dwelling</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Use	Vehicle	Cycle		Minimum	Minimum	1 bedroom	1 space per dwelling	1 secure covered space per dwelling. None if garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling.	2+ bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling		Brentwood Borough Council have advised that, based on recent consents elsewhere in the Borough, 1 space per unit for apartment units is likely to be appropriate subject to further discussion.
Use	Vehicle	Cycle												
	Minimum	Minimum												
1 bedroom	1 space per dwelling	1 secure covered space per dwelling. None if garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling.												
2+ bedrooms	2 spaces per dwelling													



LT4 Provision of Open Space in New Development	Seeks to deliver opens space that is “made necessary by and is fair and reasonably related to the proposed development” on site unless a sum is paid to provide provision elsewhere. Appendix 5 of the local plan sets out the thresholds for opens space provision	The guidance implies that schemes over 50 units or sites larger than 1ha should set aside 400 sqm for a LEAP and an element of open space. Some of the open space could be provided within the woodland area on site if suitable.
Policy C5 Retention and Provision of Landscaping and Natural Features in Development	Requires that existing trees, hedges, woods, ponds, watercourses and other natural features should be retained, with new landscape works required to enhance and new development	The majority of the wooded area on site falls within the Green Belt. There is therefore limited development potential. Design proposals should seek to retain and enhance existing natural features where possible. An aboriginal survey will be required

### 3.4 Other Policy Considerations

#### Housing Mix

Whilst not currently set out in adopted policy, the Council have advised that housing mix should be in line with the latest information in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The emerging Regulation 18 Local Plan refers to the 2013 SHMA which suggests a split for market homes of

- 65%: 1& 2 bed
- 35%: 3& 4 bed

Latest emerging SHMA evidence provided by the Council indicates that these figures remain relevant, however there is a higher demand for 2,3, and 4 bedroom properties compared to 1 bed.

The mix of market housing, and mix and tenure split of affordable housing should be discussed with Brentwood Borough Council as proposals come forward.



# 4 Design Approach

## A development concept and indicative layout plan has been devised to respond positively to the site's opportunities, constraints and planning potential.

A range of development options have been considered to determine an ideal layout arrangement and appropriate capacity for the site. Options have considered a housing-unit only scheme reflecting the surrounding low density housing; an apartment-only scheme built to the same scale and footprint of the Blood Centre building; and a mix of both apartments and houses. Whilst any of these options may be suitable to progress by a future applicant; in consultation with Brentwood Borough Council planning and design officers, a mixed-unit option has been deemed to be the most preferable for the following reasons.

A mixed apartment and housing scheme enables:

- An appropriate and sensitive response to the site's context within a 'transition zone' between the dominant mass of the Community Hospital to the west and the low density, large detached properties to the east;
- A policy-compliant mix for the site in line with emerging housing market needs, and parking requirements;
- A confirmed preferred market-facing scheme with a mix of unit types meeting market demands. It was considered that a sole apartment scheme is more appropriate for a town centre location; and
- Best use of a brownfield site in line with density requirements for a site in this location. It was considered a low density sole housing unit scheme would not reflect the site's true development potential and would not maximise brownfield land.

In line with the emerging housing allocation for the site, Brentwood Borough Council is supportive of a scheme of approximately 55 units. The indicative layout shown on page 11 illustrates one way in which the scheme could be designed.



Housing-only layout



Apartment-only layout



Mixed apartment and housing layout

## Indicative Layout: Key Design Parameters

### Mass and Siting

- **Proposals should respect and reflect the form and height of the Community Hospital to the west.** The illustrative layout shows a 3 - 4 storey apartment block located in the western half of the site. The number of storeys will be determined by the design response put forward at application stage and also decisions on the extent of site profiling. Based on the illustrative layout, 24 (3storey) – 32 (4storey) apartments may be feasible on the footprint shown dependent on site levels.
- **Proposals should respect and reflect the established lower density detached dwellings to the east of the site.** The illustrative layout shows housing units rather than apartments on the eastern portion of the site. Dependent on the final mix, approximately 20 housing units could be achievable. The illustrative layout shows houses set back to follow the line of the existing Blood Centre building for units fronting onto Crescent Drive. Houses are also deliberately set back from the eastern boundary to preserve the privacy of the existing neighbouring dwelling. Housing units could either be mews properties or detached/ semi-detached/ terraced properties.
- The Council requires a full site survey, levels and sectional information to be explored further in respect of the massing of the apartment block and impact upon the local distinctiveness.

### Access

- **Proposals should consider rationalising vehicular access arrangements.**  
The illustrative layout retains the central vehicular access which becomes a single point of access for traffic (reduced from 3), this then feeds smaller areas of shared surface to each portion of the site. The main access road creates a new street scene with new visual link between Crescent Drive and the woodland to the South. The other former site entrances become pedestrian/ cycles access only to enhance permeability. The Council have confirmed that 1 main point of vehicular access would be preferred avoiding multiple access points onto the public highway.

### Response to the Green Belt

- **Proposals should seek to avoid significant built form in the Green Belt.**  
The indicative layout keeps built form outside the Green Belt. LEAP and open space areas are located within the Green Belt which provides a transition zone between the existing dense woodland and the new development.
- A very small number of parking spaces are located in the Green Belt in the layout shown, which reflects adopted parking standards. These may not be required should parking requirements be negotiated down. Parking areas could however be deemed to be acceptable in the Green Belt on the basis that the hardstanding areas constitute previously developed land.



### Parking Provision

- **Proposals should seek to meet adopted Parking Standards where possible.**  
The layout shown reflects required parking provision. Conversations with Brentwood Borough Council have indicated that, should parking provision become problematic, provision of 1 space per apartment unit may be acceptable given the close location of bus stops and the site's relatively sustainable location.

### Landscape Response

- **Proposals should seek to retain and enhance trees and hedgerows.**  
The indicative layout retains the existing trees and hedgerow along the front of the site to help maintain the current street scene along Crescent Drive, and existing trees within the site are retained as far as possible
- The green space and suggested LEAP is positioned in the designated green belt adjacent to woodland areas in the south and west of the site.
- The Woodland to the rear is believed to be in Council ownership. The Council have raised the possibility of opening up access to the woodland possibly via this site. A footbridge would be required over the brook to the south of the site to enable access to existing paths through the woodland. Whilst this is a detailed matter for discussion in due course, the design layout as shown could connect into the woodland at a number of points.

# 5 Other Considerations

## 5.1 Environmental Considerations

Technical environmental assessments have not been undertaken at this stage. An initial due diligence review of the site, undertaken by Homes England, has flagged a number of matters which are likely to require further investigation in due course.

Topic Area	Assessment	Further Work
<b>Ecology</b>	The buildings within the site are considered to be of moderate potential to support roosting bats and the surrounding mature trees may support foraging bats. The woodland habitat is considered suitable for supporting badgers and potentially dormice. The site may also support great crested newts.	An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment should be undertaken to fully review ecological potential with subsequent surveys undertaken in the appropriate season where required.
<b>Ground Conditions</b>	<p>A number of former site operations may give rise to contamination constraints including former fuel storage and refuelling areas, garages / workshops, refrigerants, former transformer and potential for former waste disposal.</p> <p>The site is underlain by variable geology (made ground comprising ash fill is evident to the south east of the site) which may give rise to the potential for differential settlement and the requirement for ground improvement / unconventional foundations.</p> <p>In addition, the topography of the site slopes from north west to south east, giving rise to the current split level building construction and retaining features. Earthworks will likely be required to achieve a suitable residential development platform.</p> <p>The site is shown to be located within an area at risk from groundwater flooding which will require consideration during future development proposals.</p>	<p>A Phase 1 Geo-environmental Assessment should be undertaken to fully consider the extent of contamination on site alongside any geo-technical/ land stability issues.</p> <p>Intrusive ground investigations are likely to be required as further follow-on work.</p>
<b>Services and Utilities</b>	<p>A number of services including electricity, sewerage and water are present along the northern site boundary which service the site and adjacent Brentwood Community Hospital. The exact locations and depth of the utilities are currently unknown.</p> <p>The capacity of the existing services in the vicinity of the site is unknown, but it is not considered that the proposed development will increase demand from the site's previous use. Confirmation from the statutory undertakers is advised</p> <p>A sub-station / transformer is located in the north east of the site which may require an easement or relocation as part of the proposed development.</p> <p>A surface water drain is understood to cross the site and discharge into the stream to the south of the southern site boundary.</p>	<p>A utilities assessment should be undertaken to determine the exact location and depth of any services and utilities on, or in the vicinity of the site, including points of connection. The assessment should also ascertain likely demand from the scheme and capacity of existing services.</p> <p>A Sustainable Drainage System will be required to be established as part of the overall design layout for the site to enable effective drainage of surface water</p>
<b>Buildings</b>	Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) are present within on-site buildings and will require controlled removal, with associated air quality monitoring and monitoring in a residential area.	A demolition management plan will be required to reduce risk to contractors and on/ off site receptors during demolition.

## 5.2 Validation Requirements

Planning applications will be required to be in line with national 1App requirements.

Brentwood Borough Council have a local list of validation requirements, which can be found via the following weblink:

<http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/16022017144348u.pdf>

Whilst the exact requirements will depend on the detail of the application being submitted, it is envisaged the following information will be required to be submitted as a minimum:

- Planning Drawings (NB: site levels and sectional drawings are required on sites which involved a change in ground levels)
- Planning Statement
- Design & Access Statement
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Biodiversity Survey and Protected Species Report
- Contaminated Land Investigation
- Draft Planning Obligation/Section 106 Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Lighting Assessment
- SuDS Report
- Transport Statement (TS) for 25 to 50 units and a Transport Assessment (TA) for 50+ units.
- Arboricultural Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment if trees are affected.

The final list of application requirements should be agreed with the Council in pre-application discussions.

## 5.3 Developer Contributions

On-site S106 / developer contributions are anticipated to be:

- 35% affordable housing subject to viability; and
- Provision of LEAP (local play area) and open space. It is understood the Council will consider off-site contributions if on-site provision is problematic.

Given there is an existing building on-site which is vacant (rather than abandoned), there may be an opportunity to capture Vacant Building Credit (VBC) which could enable a reduction in affordable housing requirements. Further investigation would be required and should be discussed with the Council at pre-application stage.

The Essex Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2016) has been adopted by Brentwood Borough Council as an SPD and is available on the Council's website: <http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/20072016162336u.pdf>

Major developments will be required to make County level contributions towards the delivery and maintenance of large scale infrastructure such as roads, libraries, healthcare and schools.

Negotiations relating to on-site and off-site contributions should be undertaken with Brentwood Borough Council.

The Council are in the early stages of progressing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The draft charging schedule is currently set at £200 psm for residential development. CIL is expected to come into force in line with emerging Local Plan adoption in Q2 2019. Applicants should review the latest developer contributions policy at the time proposals come forward.

## 5.4 Consultation

Pre-application discussions with Brentwood Borough Council are advised. The Council offers a variety of pre application advice services, which can be tailored depending on the application type and development programme. Specialist advice, where required e.g. Arboricultural and/or Design Advice can be brought into the pre-application service by the appointed case officer upon request. Details on this service and the associated costs are available at <https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/index.php?cid=2167> or via contacting the Planning Administration Team via [planning@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:planning@brentwood.gov.uk)

Discussions with Essex County Council are also encouraged, particularly on Highways matters. Essex County Council offer a separate charged pre-application service. Further information can be found on the following webpage: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Development-in-Essex/Pages/Developer-information.aspx>

It is also advised that discussions are held with neighbouring Brentwood Community Hospital and also with local residents. A stakeholder engagement programme should be discussed with Brentwood Borough Council at pre-application stage.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This Planning Brief has established that the former Blood Centre site in Brentwood is an excellent development opportunity with strong planning certainty for a scheme of approximately 55 units. The adopted and emerging policies support redevelopment of brownfield sites in sustainable locations subject to appropriate design details. Brentwood Borough Council are supportive of the redevelopment opportunity. Whilst there are a number of environmental matters which need to be considered further, it is considered that there are currently no significant reasons to prevent a successful application coming forward for redevelopment for residential use coming forward in the short term.

