

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

Supplementary
Planning Guidance



12.3



Saxmundham
Area Specific Guidance

March 1995



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

On 1st April 2019, East Suffolk Council was created by parliamentary order, covering the former districts of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. The Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 (part 7) state that any plans, schemes, statements or strategies prepared by the predecessor council should be treated as if it had been prepared and, if so required, published by the successor council. Therefore this document applies to the part of the East Suffolk Council area formerly covered by the Suffolk Coastal District until such time that it is replaced.

Following the reforms to the Planning system through the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 all Supplementary Planning Guidance's can only be kept for a maximum of three years. It is the District Council's intention to review each Supplementary Planning Guidance in this time and reproduce these publications as Supplementary Planning Documents which will support the policies to be found in the Local Development Framework which is to replace the existing Suffolk Coastal Local Plan First Alteration, February 2001.

Some Supplementary Planning Guidance dates back to the early 1990's and may no longer be appropriate as the site or issue may have been resolved so these documents will be phased out of the production and will not support the Local Development Framework. Those to be kept will be reviewed and republished in accordance with new guidelines for public consultation. A list of those to be kept can be found in the Suffolk Coastal Local Development Scheme December 2004.

Please be aware when reading this guidance that some of the Government organisations referred to no longer exist or do so under a different name. For example MAFF (Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) is no longer in operation but all responsibilities and duties are now dealt with by DEFRA (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Another example may be the DETR (Department of Environment, Transport and Regions) whose responsibilities are now dealt with in part by the DCLG (Department of Communities & Local Government).

If you have any questions or concerns about the status of this Supplementary Planning Guidance please contact a member of the Local Plan team who will be able to assist you in the first instance.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we feel it inappropriate to reproduce each document with the up to date Government organisations name as they change.

PREFACE

The previous Suffolk Coastal Local Plan was adopted on 15th December 1994. This contained a number of policies and reasoned justification relating to the development or enhancement of the following specific areas within Saxmundham:

1. Land east of the River Fromus
2. Land west of the High Street
3. Land between the High Street and the River Fromus

Design Briefs for these three areas have been adopted by the District Council and are set out in this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

The current Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, incorporating the first alteration, was adopted in February 2001. Specific details in the current plan relating to Saxmundham can be found in Chapter 9 (paras 9.170 to 9.219).

This document was originally published as an earlier SPG (SPG 6) in November 1991, and was superseded by a later SPG (SPG 12.3) in March 1995. Subsequently, the 1995 document has recently been updated in respect of policies and the names of organisations and departments.

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DESIGN BRIEF ONE: LAND EAST OF THE RIVER FROMUS

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Policy AP148 formally allocates the land for residential development and states:

Saxmundham: Land east of the River Fromus

An area of 14.3 acres east of the River Fromus, as indicated on the Proposals Map, is allocated for residential development and public open space and shall be developed generally in accordance with a Design Brief adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. An area alongside the River Fromus shall be made available and laid out as public open space as part of the development.

- 1.2 The area proposed for development is in a number of ownerships -a number of small parcels alongside the River Fromus and two larger areas generally to the east of Love Lane.
- 1.3 It is extremely important that the right balance between housing and open space is achieved on this rather linear site. A layout making the most of the river frontage as open space -an area which is in the floodplain and would be costly to develop anyway -could provide an attractive environment to complement and enhance the character of the existing Conservation Area. The whole scheme must be properly related to the town centre, and take full cognizance of the characteristics of the area and its surroundings.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 1.4 Clearly, however, whatever scheme is adopted will be dependent on a satisfactory means of access and the owners of the land by which that access is achieved are in a relatively strong position with regard to other landowners who will be reliant on that access.
- 1.5 The District Council consider it extremely important, therefore, that this area is developed in accordance with the following Brief in order to secure an orderly and comprehensive development of the land, which not only is environmentally sensitive, but also, in a number of ownerships. Each parcel of land has its part to play in the scheme and because certain areas will only be used as open space, they are no less important to the overall package than areas for housing.
- 2 SPG No. 12.3- March 95

Design Principle 1

Access shall be achieved from Church Hill, in a position and to a standard to be agreed with the County Highway Authority. This access shall serve a maximum of 150 dwellings.

- 1.6 The development of this area for residential purposes provides an ideal opportunity to link to the shopping area fronting the High Street, and one or two property owners with land running from the High Street down to the Fromus have indicated a willingness to achieve such provision.

Design Principle 2

One or more pedestrian links between the residential development between Church Hill, Street Farm and the High Street, shall be provided by agreement with the landowners.

NB: (the agreement of Anglian Water Services for suitable river crossings will also be required, but as they are currently landowners of part of the area proposed for development, this should not prove too difficult.)

- 1.7 In responding to the Draft Plan consultation exercise, a number of people suggested a riverside footpath between Church Hill and Street Farm Road. The scheme proposed provides an ideal opportunity to achieve this aim.

Design Principle 3

A riverside footpath shall be provided alongside the eastern edge of the river Fromus, linking Street Farm Road and Church Hill, and also linking in with any footpaths created under Design Principle 2 above.

- 1.8 As mentioned earlier in this section, an area adjacent to the River Fromus is ideally situated to provide a substantial part of the open space for this development.

Design Principle 4

An open space area of at least 2.5 acres shall be provided alongside the River Fromus. this open space shall extend southwards to Church Hill in order to give an open aspect to St John the Baptist Church and Church House. The landscaping of this area shall take into account the need for access to the river bank for the purpose of maintenance and repair.

Design Principle 5

Additional areas of open space, which shall include provision for children's play spaces, shall be provided to separate the various elements of the development in order to give them their own sense of

identity and to minimise the linear characteristics of this site.

- 1.9 The landscape treatment of a sensitive site such as this is of vital importance, both in the retention of as many as possible of the visually important existing features, and in any new planting as part of the development.

Design principle 6

Particular care should be taken to protect as many as possible of the existing visually important landscape features, especially the following:

- (a) *the eastern boundary formed by a hedge and hedgerow trees, which should be retained and strengthened to create a strong visual edge to the development;*

NB 1: Many of the trees are Elms and will almost certainly succumb to Dutch Elm disease.

NB 2: A strong visual edge to the town is an important characteristic of Saxmundham. Both North and South Entrances exhibit a sudden transition from open countryside to urban area, delineated by a strong hedgerow or tree belt.

- (b) *the hedge running east/west across the centre of the site east of Orchard Villa should, as far as possible, be retained and enhanced in a landscaping scheme to form an integral part of the overall design.*

- (c) *trees adjacent to the River Fromus, which help to give it a rural character should, where possible, be retained.*

- 1.10 The existing landscape framework, changes in ground level, and the natural character of the site, should be exploited to the full. Existing hedgerows and boundaries could, where appropriate, form the basis for footpath links and help to give each housing area its own identity.

Design Principle 7

Additional planting should be an integral part of the scheme and make a positive contribution to it. Planting should not be a means of filling vacant spaces or as an applied cosmetic treatment.

Design Principle 8

Where possible, indigenous species of trees should be used, particularly in visually important areas. Identical species should also be grouped together, and overall, planting should take place at an early stage of the development.

Design Principle 9

Groups of small trees and shrubs should be used to give each cluster of housing or footway its own identity.

- 1.11 Because of its proximity to the central core of Saxmundham, this area cannot be treated in isolation. Consequently, what happens in the centre may well affect this site. The District Plan makes proposals for the town centre, including the means by which some of the area between the High Street and the Fromus could be redeveloped utilising an access from Church Street.

Design Principle 10

Where necessary, limited vehicular access from the Church Hill/Street Farm Road development may be provided across the River Fromus, where it is the only means of enabling the proper redevelopment/enhancement of properties between the river and the High Street shopping frontage.

Any such access will need to be very carefully integrated into the development, and so designed and located as to minimise its impact, particularly on the riverside open space area and its footpath links. Any properties served by such an access may also count against the maximum number of units which can be served from the Church Hill access.

IMPLEMENTATION

Density

- 1.12 The land allocated for housing between Church Hill and Street Farm will provide a substantial proportion of the housing needs of Saxmundham. To ensure that development takes place in an orderly fashion, and to make the most of this site, housing density will need to be varied in order to give a sense of identity to each part of the development and to safeguard important features of the site, which contribute so much to the character of the area. Particular care will need to be taken to respect the outlook towards the church and Church House.

Layout

- 1.13 The shape of the site, the position of the access, and the need to safeguard a substantial area of open space alongside the River Fromus, largely dictates the form which the development will take.

Design Principle 11

The road layout should, wherever practicable, follow contours and avoid steep gradients.

- 1.14 With the linear nature of the site virtually dictating that a spine road will run for much of its length, particular care will need to be taken in designing this road to minimise its impact.

Design Principle 12

Dwellings will not normally have access directly on to the spine road.

- 1.15 Houses grouped around small culs-de-sac or mews courts can provide a much more satisfactory layout, with the potential for interesting spaces being created between groups, accommodating footpath links to the main open areas and the town centre. Such a layout gives a much greater opportunity for each part of the development to have its own particular recognisable identity.

Design Principle 13

Where practicable, houses should be grouped around mews courts or culs-de-sac and each part of the development should have its own recognisable identity.

Design Principle 14

Houses should, where possible, be orientated to take maximum advantage of views of the church or the town across the river and its associated open space.

Design Principle 15

The layout should take account of the need to avoid overlooking. The bulk of the private open space associated with dwellings should be usable by the residents and at the rear of the houses, screened by the buildings themselves or garages and screen walls. The length of screenwalling should, however, be kept to a minimum.

INDIVIDUAL DESIGN

- 1.16 While it is important that each part of the development be given its own character, the various housing types should maintain a sense of visual unity and should observe traditional housing styles in the vicinity.

Design Principle 16

Houses, garages, porches and outbuildings should be of traditional style, with pitched roofs at an angle of at least 35°. Areas of solid wall, rather than areas of window, should be visually dominant. Window sizes should be based on an identifiable module related to door widths and the number of window types should be kept to a minimum.

- 1.17 Poorly-balanced or ill-proportioned window types with small opening lights, thick glazing bars of the neo-Georgian type, or horizontally orientated styles, will not be appropriate.
- 1.18 Careful attention to details around openings, on porches and at the eaves and verges to roofs can make a considerable contribution to the appearance of buildings.

MATERIALS

- 1.19 Because of the sensitive nature of this site, materials should be 'quiet' and not stand out in the landscape.

Design Principle 17

Facing bricks should be of good quality in red, brown or grey to complement local materials. A few buildings could be colour-washed. Alien materials, such as stone-cladding or the use of tile-hanging, are not acceptable. Roofs generally should be of a darker appearance than the walls, and the use of through-coloured concrete tiles (not granular faced) or blue-black asbestos slates is acceptable.

- 1.20 The use of black or dark stains on external joinery, such as fascias, bargeboards and window frames can also be particularly effective.

PEDESTRIAN/VEHICULAR SEGREGATION

- 1.21 Where possible, vehicles should be segregated from pedestrians, and except in mews courts, footpaths separate from the roads should be provided.

Design Principle 18

Where possible, a footpath system separate from the road network shall be provided to link the individual groups of housing and also connect to those required between Church Hill, Street Farm, High Street and the riverside. It should also have regard to the requirements of Design Principle 7.

PARKING STANDARDS

1.22 In addition to the standards quoted below, for each five dwellings proposed, one unassigned space shall be provided for visitor and service parking. These spaces, if located and constructed in accordance with Highway Authority guidance, are likely to be adopted by the Highway Authority.

- (i) Dwellings of two or fewer bedrooms with private grouped unassigned parking courts:
 - three spaces per two dwellings
- (ii) Dwellings of three or more bedrooms with private grouped unassigned parking courts:
 - two spaces per dwelling
- (iii) Dwellings of three or fewer bedrooms, parking within the curtilage of the dwelling:
 - two spaces per dwelling, which may include garage provision
- (iv) Dwellings of four or more bedrooms; parking within the curtilage of the dwelling:
 - three spaces per dwelling, which may include garage provision.

ADOPTION

1.23 All open spaces, landscape areas and footpaths required for adoption shall be readily accessible and be of a size and shape which will permit easy and economic maintenance. All spaces not required for roads, footpaths or landscaping should be incorporated within private gardens, preferably at the rear (see Design Principle 15).

NB: Highways and Access

Detailed information on road junction design can be found in the Design Notes produced by Suffolk County Council Highways Department.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Design Principle 19

The developer shall be responsible for any off-site improvement works to the foul drainage system necessary to serve this development.

NB: (It may be possible to reach agreement with Anglian Water Services and other developers, if their developments drain into the same system and would also necessitate improvements.)

- 1.24 Anglian Water Services, subsequent to their Local Plan consultation response, has indicated that developments in Saxmundham will increase the rate of surface water run-off, which may require improvements to the River Fromus downstream as far as Snape Sluice. The cost of such improvements will need to be borne largely by the developers and apportioned between each development site. A binding agreement will need to be reached with Anglian Water Services to establish the financial contribution that the development of this site will attract.

Design Principle 20

The developer shall reach agreement with Anglian Water Services on any financial contribution towards survey work and improvements to the River Fromus downstream of any surface water outfall which may be required as a result of increased run-off from the development.

NB: Any development of any scale in Saxmundham is likely to increase run-off into the River Fromus. Improvement costs should, therefore, be apportioned fairly between all developments and not just the first to commence.

- 1.25 East Anglian Water Company made this comment in respect of water supply:

The proposed development within this Design Brief area will require additional trunk mains to ensure a satisfactory supply to this area. The length of mains will be relatively short and should prove to be acceptable within the development of that area.

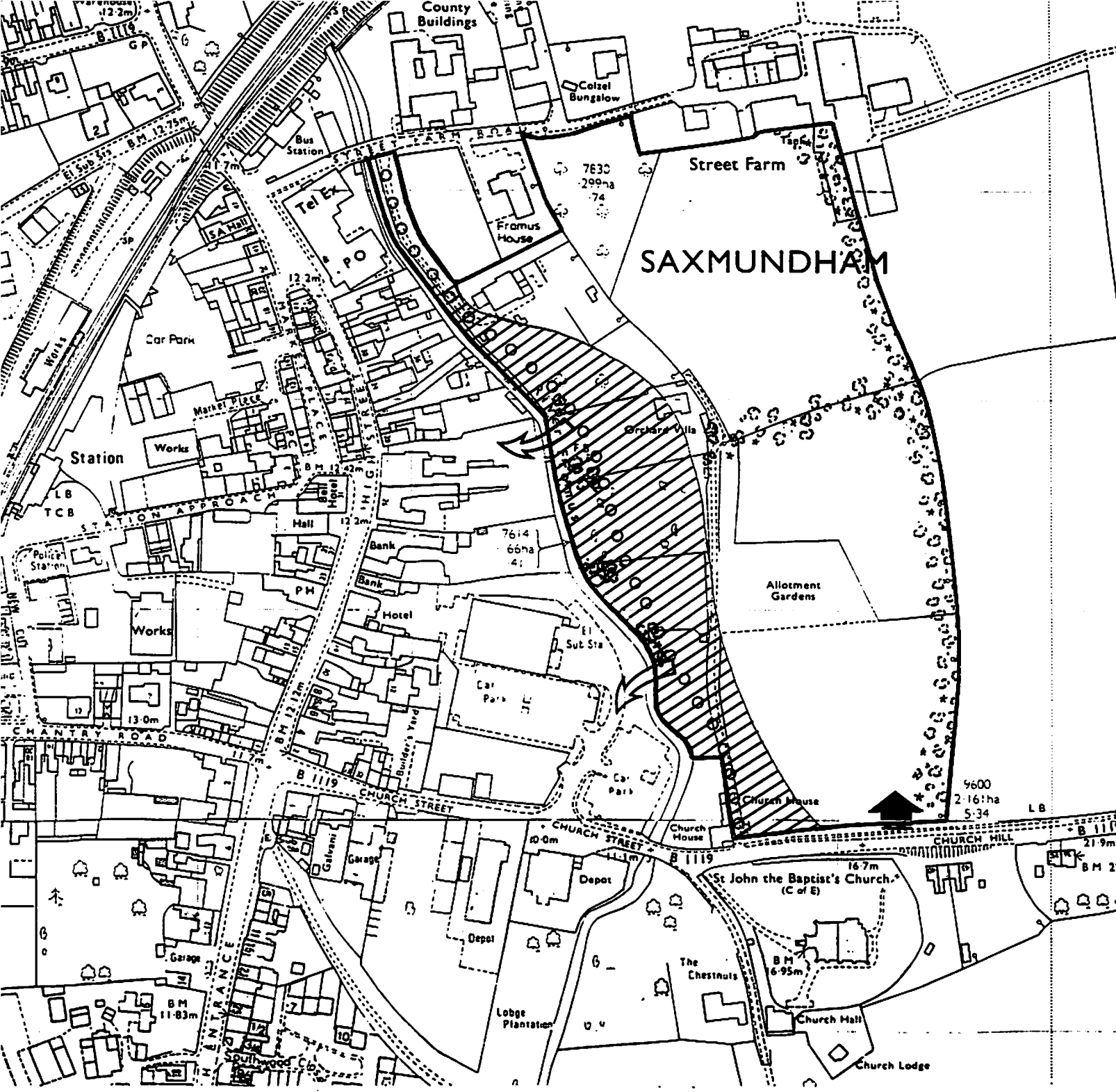
- 1.26 Eastern Gas commented in respect of this site:

Local Supplies in Church Hill are not adequate to supply the proposed 150 dwellings mentioned in the Church Hill/Street Farm Design Brief and a feeder main from the High Street would be required.







- 1.27 Eastern Electricity made this comment in respect of all large developments:

It is essential that developers give Eastern Electricity adequate notice to prepare schemes of reinforcement, should this be necessary. Where

overhead lines are involved, delays of approximately nine months can occur in order to obtain Wayleave, Planning and Statutory consents. It is emphasised that until Eastern Electricity is provided with details of size, type and layout of development and also the load required, that firm proposals regarding work necessary to provide supply cannot be made, but it is anticipated there will be no technical problems in meeting any such demands.



SAXMUNDHAM
DESIGN BRIEF ONE
Land east of the
River Fromus

-  Area covered by Design Brief
-  Point of vehicular access:
Design Principle 1
-  Pedestrian link to High Street:
Design Principle 2
-  Proposed riverside footpath:
Design Principle 3
-  Proposed riverside open space:
Design Principle 4
-  Protection of existing landscape features:
Design Principle 7

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DESIGN BRIEF TWO LAND WEST OF THE HIGH STREET

- 2.1 This Design Brief is for guidance only, and indicates the criteria which would need to be met in any redevelopment of this area. It should be read in conjunction with Policies AP152 and AP153 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

Policy AP152 states:

Saxmundham: Market Place

As financial resources permit, the District Council will consider a scheme for the partial or total pedestrianisation of Market Place as a means of improving the environment of the area.

Policy AP153 states:

Saxmundham: Enhancement Schemes east and west of the High Street

As resources permit and opportunities arise, the District Council will promote and encourage enhancement schemes for the areas east and west of the High Street, Saxmundham, as shown on the Proposals Map.





- 2.2 It is important at the outset to stress that whilst this area clearly has potential for redevelopment, it is unlikely that the whole of the site, which is indicated in the Brief as being suitable primarily for retail use, would be required within the Plan period even if large-scale housing and employment growth does take place.
- 2.3 This Brief merely indicates ways in which any retail growth in this area would need to relate to through-pedestrian routes, possibly in the form of a Mall linking High Street and Market Place, if it is to stand any chance of success. The possibility of pedestrianising the Market Place and the eastern end of Station Approach would help to facilitate such a link. It could also provide the opportunity of removing the current pedestrian/vehicular conflict at the entrance to the Market Place car park, provided a new vehicular access to the car park can be achieved from Station Approach.
- 2.4 The High Street frontage is the prime shopping frontage and is likely to increase in importance now that the bypass is completed. It is likely that as retailers seek to take advantage of this more important role, they will look to the potential which exists to the rear of the High Street.
- 2.5 The Conservation Area was designated in April, 1991. This part of it offers considerable potential for redevelopment which could enhance the townscape of Saxmundham. Whilst development should have the prime objective of improving retail provision in the town and the means by which it can be serviced, it should also contain other elements such as residential use, which helps to keep the town alive.

The primarily residential character of Chantry Road should be maintained. Planning consent exists for some elements of this redevelopment.

- 2.6 What is important is that no single part, such as a residential scheme, is developed in isolation in such a way as to prejudice the overall objectives of this Brief. Any scheme which precluded the creation of a through-pedestrian link, for example, or prevented adequate servicing or car parking being provided, would make any retail development in depth unlikely to succeed.
- 2.7 It is recognised that some constraint to the redevelopment of this area will be imposed by the limitations of the roads from which access must be achieved. The difficulties experienced on the roads crossing the railway and leading to the town centre from the Rendham Road cannot be reduced and the situation may even have been exacerbated by improved access from the bypass.
- 2.8 However, whilst accepting the limitations of Station Approach it is felt, nevertheless, that it could provide improved access to this part of the town, the public car park off Market Place, and to possible additional parking and servicing provision in association with any redevelopment of the area to the south of the road.
- 2.9 The future of this neighbourhood will depend largely on market forces and the intentions of the individual owners in the area. This Brief, it is hoped, will give a clearer indication of how the potential, which clearly exists, might be realised.

SAXMUNDHAM

DESIGN BRIEF TWO Land west of High Street

-  Area covered by Design Brief
-  Possible pedestrian routes
-  Possible area with priority given to pedestrians
-  New vehicular access to Market Place car park



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SCALE
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DESIGN BRIEF THREE: LAND BETWEEN THE HIGH STREET AND RIVER FROMUS

- 3.1 This Brief is for guidance only, indicating the criteria which would need to be met in any development or redevelopment in this area, and should be read in conjunction with Policy AP153 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. Policy AP153 is set out in Design Brief Two.
- 3.2 The part of Saxmundham between the High Street frontage and the River Fromus forms a vital element of the town's Conservation Area, designated in April, 1991.
- 3.3 It displays a mixture of well-maintained private gardens and business premises which, mainly because of access constraints, no longer serve a useful purpose and have, in some cases, suffered from many years of neglect.
- 3.4 The way in which these buildings are grouped and their relationship to both the High Street and the River Fromus, means that they should, where possible, be retained and improved if an important aspect of Saxmundham's character is not to be lost.
- 3.5 It is recognised that this area can only play a limited part in improving retail or residential provision in the town centre, but the redevelopment of the Saleyard area, and the proposals to create an area of open space east of the Fromus, with pedestrian links across the river, may present an opportunity by providing the means of access, to find a useful role for some of these neglected buildings. Indeed, the only prospect of saving some of them will be by their having a useful purpose. Others, regrettably, have already deteriorated to such an extent that there is little prospect of saving them. Discussions have already taken place with the owners of some properties in an attempt to find ways of revitalising the area.
- 3.6 The overall objective should be to retain and, in some instances, recreate the intimate quality formed by buildings around long courtyards running down to the river .
- 3.7 This character, which has been largely hidden except for occasional glimpses from the High Street, will become more apparent from the east, both from the proposed open space and the area suggested for housing beyond. The creation of pedestrian links across the Fromus and through to the High Street will also encourage people to pass through the area, enabling it to play a much more important role in the townscape.

THE FORMER SALEYARD AREA

- 3.8 A Design Brief for the former Saleyard area was adopted as part of the Saxmundham-cum-Kelsale Plan in October 1987. This included guidelines for the redevelopment of this area to provide a supermarket and associated car parking, which has now been constructed. Those parts of the Design Brief relating to this development have, therefore, been superseded. A number of the remaining Design Brief objectives are

still considered to be valid and are retained, as set out below.

Vehicular Access

- 3.9 The opportunity to provide a vehicular access to the area between High Street and the River Fromus to the north of the White Hart Hotel was retained in the layout of the supermarket development. This enables access to be provided via Church Street to the rear of the properties fronting High Street, particularly the banks and offices. The opportunity to extend vehicular access in a manner which does not conflict with the objectives of the Brief for that area should be protected.

Design Principle 1

Provision should be made to safeguard vehicular access to land immediately to the north of the supermarket.

Pedestrian Access

- 3.10 Following the supermarket development, the opportunity should be taken of providing a pedestrian access across the River Fromus to the area allocated for residential development (see Design Brief One). This, together with the new link to the High Street, could provide an ideal pedestrian route between the proposed new development, including the riverside open space and the main shopping area of the High Street. The link would also improve the riverside area to complement the open space proposed on the east side of the river. Improvement of the riverside area by appropriate additional planting and other landscaping measures, could result in substantial benefits to this part of the town. It could also have the advantage of making the Church somewhat more accessible to pedestrians from much of the town centre. Any work done along the river would need to be carried out in conjunction with Anglian Water Services, who are known to have a long-term objective of improving the watercourse on parts of the Fromus.

Design Principle 2

Provision shall be made for a pedestrian link from the supermarket area across the River Fromus.

Car Parking

- 3.11 Two areas of car parking have been provided to serve both the new supermarket and to meet the more general parking needs of Saxmundham. The remaining area of land fronting Church Street is currently used as a saleyard, having been concentrated on to the site to facilitate the supermarket development. The smaller, eastern car park was provided as a temporary measure until 1994, pending the relocation of the saleyard.
- 3.12 Consent also exists on this site for a new saleroom and associated parking which, when implemented, will enable release of the area to the west of the access for public car parking.

- 3.13 The parking needs of Saxmundham town centre will continue to increase and in the event of the new saleroom not being developed, the site should be retained for public parking. In the event of the saleyard use declining or ceasing, the areas on both sides of the supermarket access should be made available for car parking, and would be essential were any extension of the supermarket envisaged.







Design Principle 3

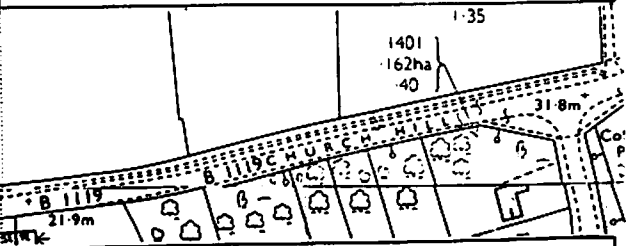
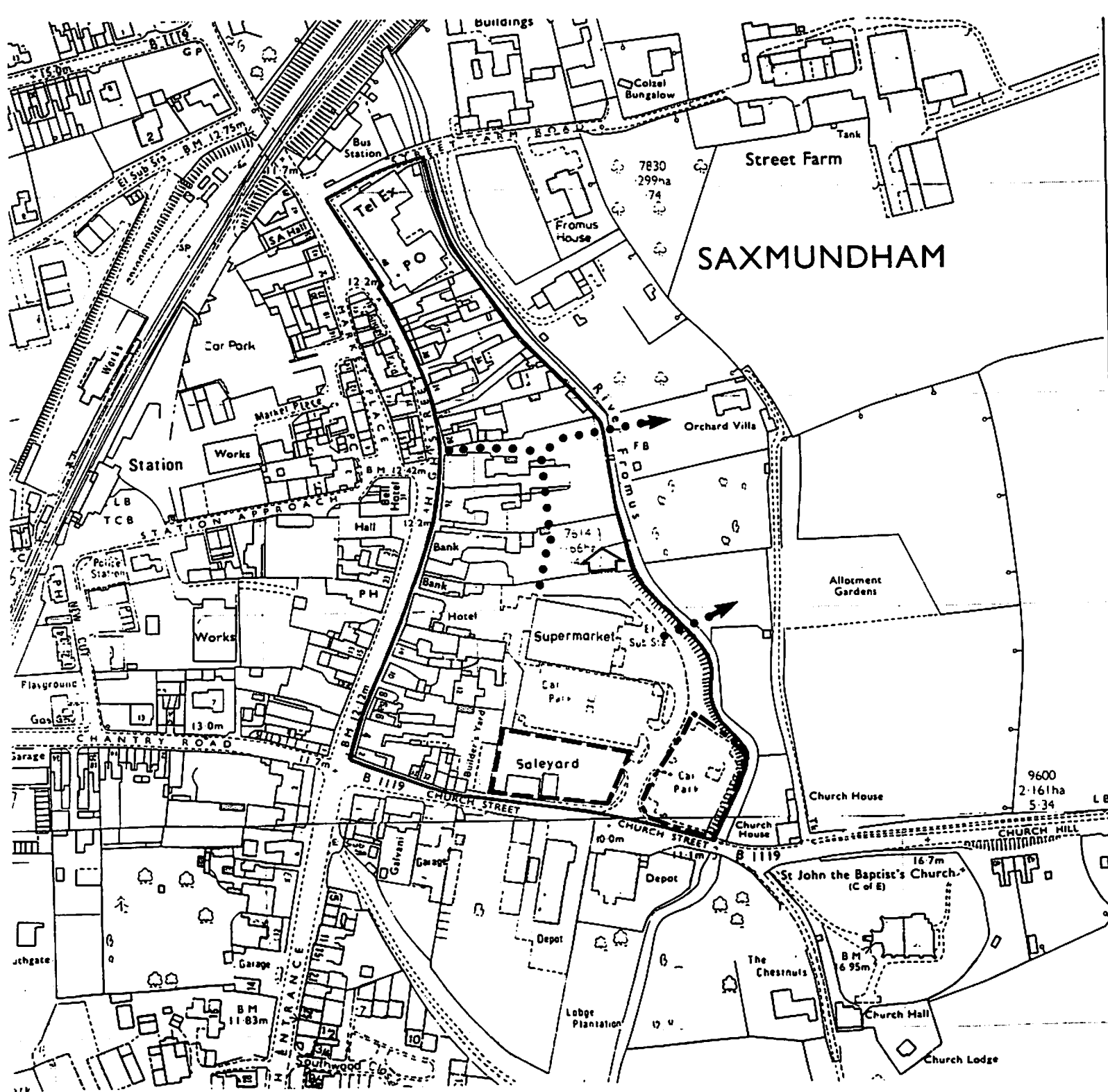
Permanent car parking provision shall be established on the existing saleyard site.

JR/BMM
25 May 1995
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SAXMUNDHAM

DESIGN BRIEF THREE Land between the High Street and River Fromus


-  Area covered by Design Brief
-  Possible pedestrian routes - with links to adjoining areas
-  Limited vehicular access
-  Area for approved saleroom or long-term car parking
-  Area for future car park
-  Riverside area to be enhanced



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