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# Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground Development Brief

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April 2024



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# 1.0 Introduction

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## Background

As the majority landowner of Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground, Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) has been exploring development opportunities for the area and the potential benefits of these. With the current uses on Elm Grove and the Recreation Ground; the nature of the area; and the location of Elm Grove near the centre of Walton, the Council considers it appropriate to prepare a Development Brief setting out the details important to consider when designing a redevelopment scheme.

This Development Brief provides information on Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground, identifying constraints and opportunities associated with redevelopment as well as EBC's objectives and expectations for any future development scheme.

The Development Brief was updated following consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders for example, occupiers / users Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground. The consultation was conducted from 5 December 2023 to 29 January 2024. The consultation meant that resident and stakeholder feedback informed this Development Brief.

The Development Brief was adopted by the Council in April 2024. It will be used as a material planning consideration in the determination of any planning applications for the site. For the avoidance of doubt, the Development Brief does not have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and does not introduce new planning policy.

The area covered by this Development Brief is shown in Figure 1 overleaf. It should be noted that the allotments are not included in the area of this Development Brief.

## Purpose and status of the Development Brief

This Development Brief sets out the guidance and design principles for the redevelopment of Elm Grove and the enhancement of the Elmgrove Recreation Ground in Walton on Thames. It should be read in conjunction with the planning policy documents, including the Elmbridge Core Strategy 2011 and the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan 2015 or, any subsequent new Local Plan, and other adopted SPD.

The Development Brief seeks to provide a framework to guide the future development of the site. It does not attempt to define a redevelopment 'scheme'. The Development Brief is not a planning application, and it does not provide detailed design guidance: it is not intended as a design brief.

The purpose of this Development Brief is to provide the parameters in terms of land uses, access arrangements and open space to inform scheme proposals to be brought forward at a later date through a planning application.

## Structure of this Development Brief

The Development Brief is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides background context to the site.
- Section 3 summarises the key constraints and opportunities of the site.
- Section 4 outlines the Council's key objectives for the future of the site.
- Section 5 outlines the design principles. This has been informed by the site analysis and sets out the parameters for future development of the site
- Section 6 outlines the planning documents likely to be needed in support of any future planning application.



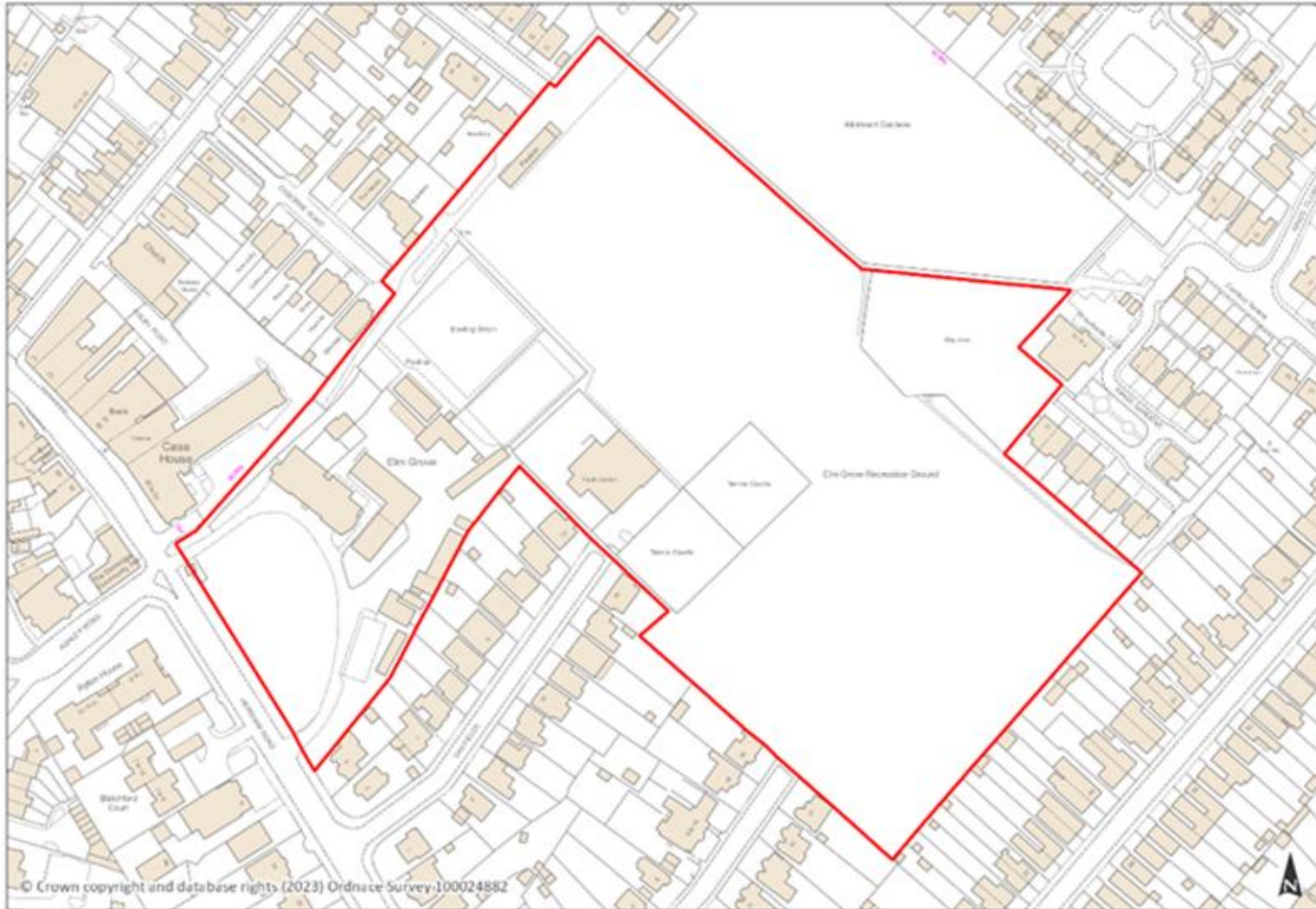


Figure 1: Site area (identified in red) covered by this Development Brief

## 2.0 Site description and context

### Site location

Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground are in Walton on Thames, in the north of the borough. The site is immediately to the south of the town centre located at the intersection of the High Street, Hersham Road and Ashley Road (see Figure 1).

To the northeast of the site is the offices of PA housing and the cinema, and beyond this commercial and retail uses in the town centre. The site is predominately bordered by residential properties including those in Oakfield and The Chestnuts to the south / southeast and on the other side of Hersham Road (A244). To the east / northwest are properties along Kings Road, Kings Close and Kings Gardens.

Elm Grove Allotments are located to the north with residential properties beyond in Esher Avenue and Nelson Close. Running along the western boundary are properties extending off Wincher Road including Osborne Road and Highfield Road.

### Site description

The site extends to approximately 5.6 hectares (ha), split between two areas, Elm Grove 1.11 ha and Elmgrove Recreation Ground 4.49 ha.

Several buildings occupy Elm Grove (see Figure 2). These are set back from the road in scattered formation set behind an area of open

space which forms a rough semicircle fronting Hersham Road. The area of open space is enclosed by an in-and-out vehicular access/egress that pedestrians also use. The front boundary is created by a low-level hedge interspersed by some significant trees.

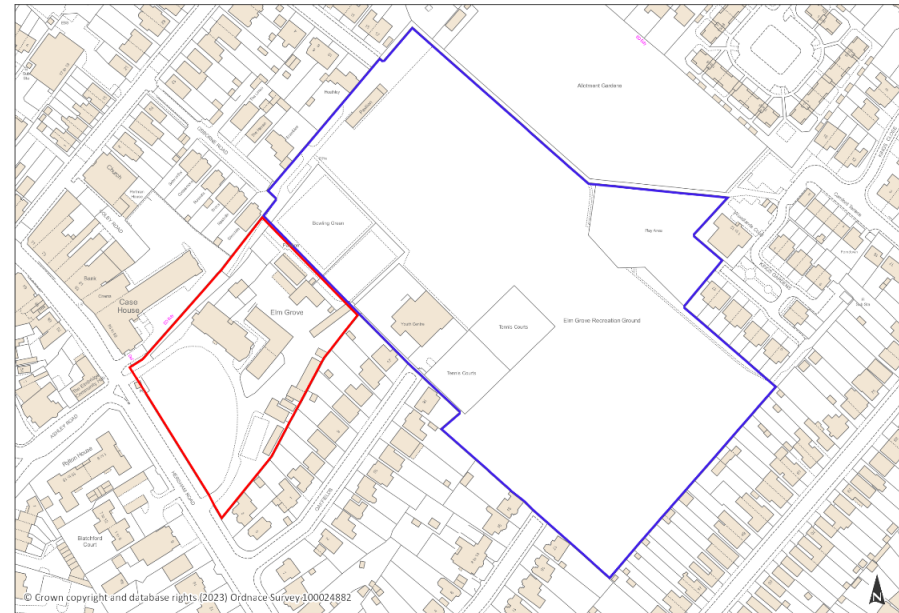


Figure 2: Site location. Elm Grove is outlined in red and Elmgrove Recreation Ground in blue

The main building on Elm Grove is located towards the northwest boundary, a Grade II Listed Building occupied by the Walton Montessori Nursery providing preschool education. Elm Grove also hosts the Walton Bowling Club, Elmbridge Community Eco Hub, storage for the Council's Museum and landscaping furniture, Surrey County Council's Youth Club, and areas let for car parking. In addition, Elm Grove consists of several other currently vacant buildings of varying sizes.

To the rear of these buildings is the open public green space, Elmgrove Recreation Ground, consisting of the bowling green, football pitch, tennis courts and a play area (see Figure 4).

### Site ownership and obligations

EBC own the majority of the buildings on Elm Grove, excluding the Youth Club and four other buildings along the eastern boundary, that are owned by Surrey County Council (SCC). EBC also owns the Elmgrove Recreation Ground. With the exclusion of the Youth Club, SCC has agreed to sell its remaining assets to EBC to simplify any future development. Site ownership is shown in Figure 5.

The potential development site (see Figure 3) includes the Walton on Thames Bowling Club and the Elmbridge Community Eco-Hub. EBC is working closely with Walton-on-Thames Bowling Club to redeliver existing provision within Walton on Thames. EBC has a legal obligation to re-provide the Bowling Club. In addition, EBC is working closely with Elmbridge Community Eco-Hub to explore options for relocating within the vicinity of Elm Grove.

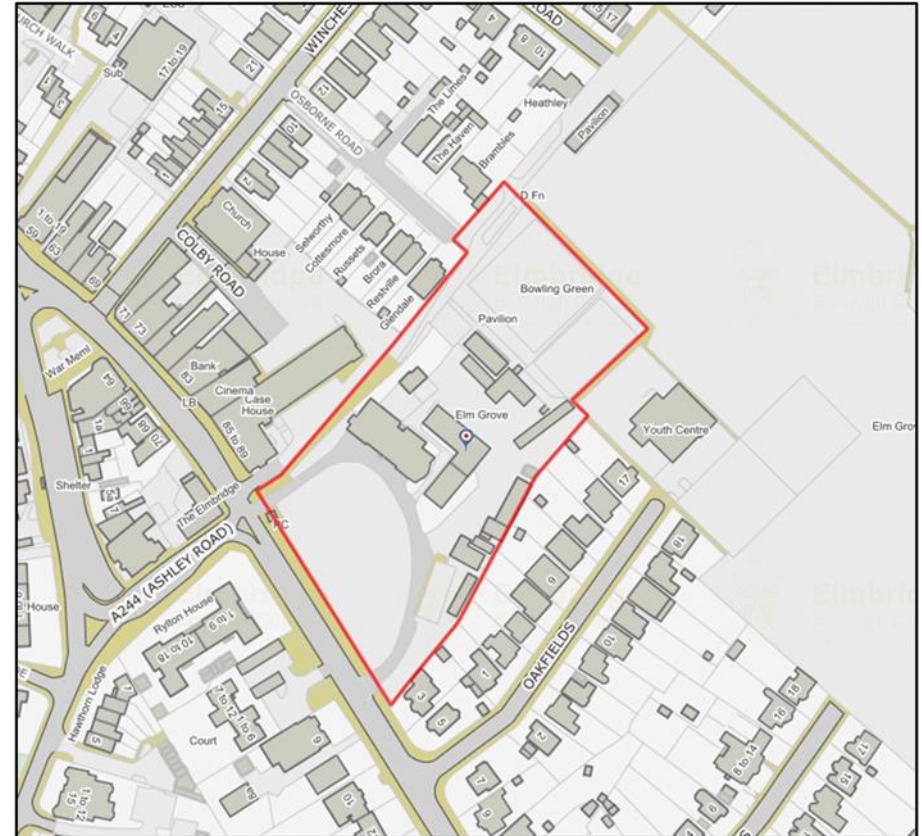


Figure 3: Potential development site outlined in red. Consists of Elm Grove, the BOWLS Club and Elmbridge Community Eco-Hub





Figure 4: Aerial view of the existing buildings on Elm Grove (outlined in red) and facilities at Elmgrove Recreation Ground (outlined in blue)



## Planning policy context

It is important to understand the existing policy position as this will help inform the redevelopment opportunities for the site as well as help shape the planning and design principles.

The current development plan for the Borough consists of the Core Strategy 2011 and the Development Management Plan 2015, as well as several SPDs, including the Elmbridge Design Code (2024). The Surrey Waste Local Plan sets requirements for waste at demolition, construction, and post construction stages. At a national level, policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy for Waste.

The emerging Local Plan, which is currently at examination, identifies the Elm Grove part of the site for residential and mixed development with an allocation of circa 70 units. It also proposes the designation of Elmgrove Recreation Ground as Local Green Space.

Where appropriate, these policies have influenced the content of the Development Brief. In other cases, they will need to be followed when planning application(s) are submitted to the Council and all planning applications will be assessed against these policies.

The planning history for the site shows several historic applications that are all associated with the current and previous buildings and uses of the site.

The site or part of the site is covered by the following designations (see also Figure 6):

- Grade II Listed Building (Elm Grove)

- Area of High Archaeological Potential
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding (low to high) - predominantly in the southwest part of the Site
- Air Quality Management Area (abuts the northwest corner of the Site).
- Adjacent to The Elmbridge Community Hub (formerly Walton Library) 72 High Street - a locally listed building
- Part of the site within the town centre boundary

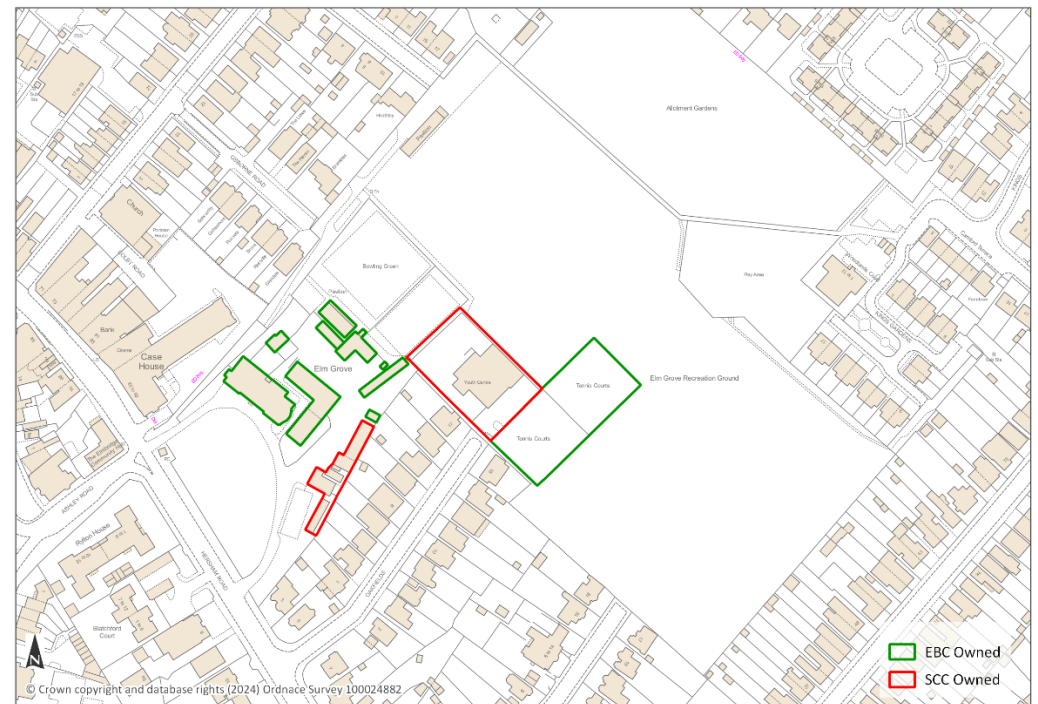


Figure 5: Ownership

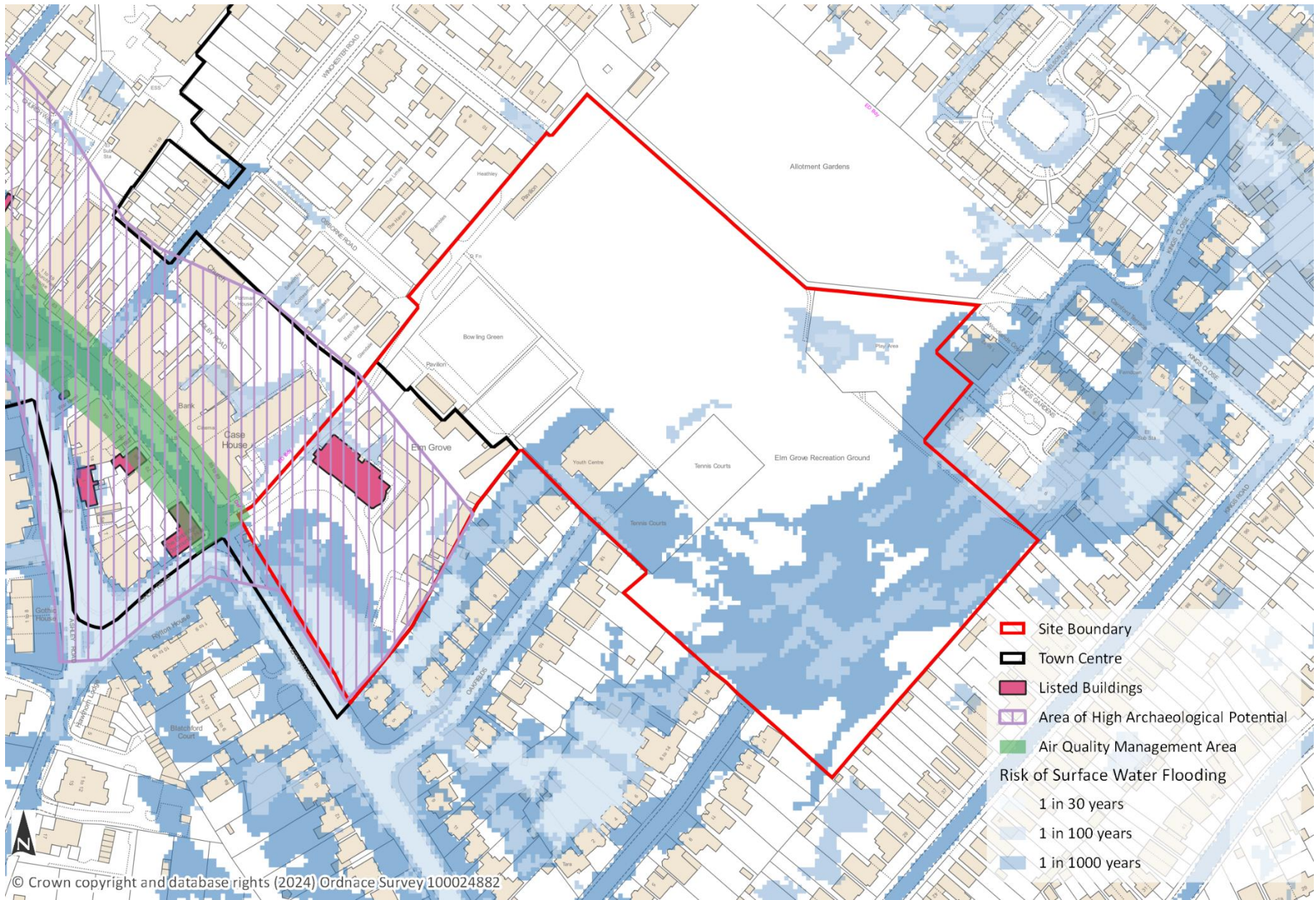


Figure 6: Elbridge development plan designations



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## 3.0 Site appraisal

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Development proposals for the site must take into consideration the surrounding context and the key constraints and opportunities, which must consider the planning constraints/designations on the site highlighted in this section, as well as planning policy and guidance.

### Constraints

There are several constraints that have been identified that will need to be considered in any redevelopment of the Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground site.

### Heritage

The main Elm Grove building is a Grade II Listed Building (Statutory Listed on 16 November 1984) for its special architectural and historic interest. Due to the presence of the Listed Building, the following are considered constraints that will need to be considered as part of any future development proposal. These are visualised in an analysis diagram in Figure 7.

- The setting of the Listed Building is of most significant at the front and therefore development should be limited beyond the Listed Building's front building line.
- The Listed Building is three storeys in height with a shallow pitched roof. Any development will need to respect this scale and not affect views of the Listed Building from the front by appearing behind.
- New development will need to consider the character of the Listed Building, especially in views from the front. Therefore, traditional designs are likely to be more importance to the side. However, there is greater scope for modern development to the rear.
- New development shall protect and enhance the key view of the principal elevation (see Figure 7) and notably vegetation with the potential to improve views of the heritage asset from the street. Development near to sensitive boundaries shall accord with EBC's standard separation distance guidelines.





Figure 7: Analysis diagram

## **Archaeology**

The front part of the site is located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential, as indicated in Figure 6. Redevelopment of the site will need to consider the potential for any heritage assets with archaeological significance being present on the site, in line with policies CS17 Local Character, Density and Design and DM12 Heritage.

## **Established residential areas**

The site is adjacent to established residential streets comprising two-storey Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached and terraced housing to the north and east, as well as larger detached housing to the southern boundary. These boundaries with residential properties present a particularly sensitive edge, where building height, overlooking and privacy, noise and disturbance and distance between buildings are all factors that require sensitive consideration.

## **Flood risk**

A risk of surface water flooding has been identified in the southwest part of the site. Any development will need to consider this risk and how and what impact there could be from any redevelopment of the site, considering Policy CS26 Flooding and the Flood Risk SPD. Opportunities to reduce local flood risk and increase surface water drainage should be fully investigated as part of any redevelopment of the site.

## **Sensitive boundaries**

The site has sensitive vegetation to the southwest and northwest boundaries, as well as views to the open space from the northeast boundary. These site boundaries will need to be sensitively considered in any redevelopment of the site. In addition, any changes or demolition of the existing buildings that form the southeast boundary of the site should take place after careful consideration and consultation with residents on Oakfield, for whom these buildings currently form the boundaries of their gardens.

## **Access**

The site has an in out access to the west of the site, this should remain as existing in any development due to the impact on the setting of the listed building. Any alterations to the access arrangements will require very careful consideration in terms of highways impact, heritage impact and impact on neighbouring residential properties.

## Opportunities

The Elm Grove and Elmgrove Recreation Ground site provides an opportunity through redevelopment to bring a large part of the site that is currently vacant back into use. Alongside the more efficient use of the site. This section of the brief details the opportunities to enhance the listed building and improve the facilities and offer at the recreation ground.

### Reuse of a vacant site

The Elm Grove site is located within the boundary of Walton on Thames Town Centre, however much of the site is unused and buildings are vacant. The optimisation of this site through a comprehensive and considerate redevelopment would enable the most efficient use of land in a sustainable area.

Being a in town centre location the site benefits from being located close to the existing bus network, active travel routes and a variety of other services and facilities in Walton Town Centre.

The development area of the site includes the existing bowls club facilities. These facilities must be re-provided elsewhere on the recreation part of the site.

### Heritage

The main building on Elm Grove is Grade II Listed, however the redevelopment of the site provides the opportunity to conserve and enhance the setting of the Grade II Listed building whilst allowing existing users (the nursery) to continue to provide an essential service to the community.

The buildings that surround the Listed Building are not considered to be of any heritage interest. The 'L' shaped building to the southeast of the Listed Building is a harmful addition that impinges on the setting of the Listed Building. A full assessment will be required but it is likely that these buildings can be demolished.

There is greater scope for development at the rear of the site, although separation distances from the Listed Building will need careful consideration.

### Improving public recreational use of the site

The green space to the west of the site which forms a semi-circle to the front of the Listed Building must be retained to preserve the setting of the Listed Building. However, the redevelopment of the site offers an opportunity for the enhancement of the use of this space for the public, for example, as an informal amenity and seating area. The redevelopment should explore options for encouraging and enhancing public use of this space whilst remaining sensitive to the setting of the listed building.

The redevelopment of Elm Grove will include investment in Elm Gove Recreation Ground that are to be delivered by EBC. The Council will carry out a further public consultation to ensure that in the future, any plans for improving the recreation offer and useability of this space meet the needs of the community and its different groups of users, whilst seeking to maintaining the openness of the setting without breaking up the space.



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## 4.0 Objectives of any future development scheme

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The Council's vision for the site is for a genuinely high-quality scheme which is clearly of the 21st century, complementing the area's rich heritage, strong in urban and landscape character, and promoting sustainable travel.

Any future redevelopment scheme of Elm Grove and the enhancement of Elmgrove Recreation Ground will need to achieve the following objectives for the site:

### **Objectives of any future development scheme**

- Protect the special significance of the Elm Grove Grade II Listed building and its setting.
- Allow the nursery to remain in the Grade II Listed building, securing the long-term future use of the building.
- Improve the recreation offer and usability of the recreation ground and facilities.
- Boost access to the quality green spaces and attract more users, providing benefit to more Elmbridge residents.
- Provide an appropriate level of car and cycle parking considering the intended uses of the buildings and sustainable location.
- Improve drainage across the site by implementing a multifunctional sustainable drainage system scheme.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity on the site including the retention of mature trees where possible.
- Work closely with Walton-on-Thames Bowling Club to redeliver existing provision within Walton on Thames.
- Work with Elmbridge Community Eco-Hub to explore options for relocating within the vicinity of Elm Grove.

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## 5.0 Development principles

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The development principles are based on the currently adopted national and local policy framework for EBC. As referenced in Section 2 of this Development Brief, EBC are currently reviewing the local plan and therefore the following development principles would need to be reviewed as the EBC Local Plan progresses towards adoption. The redevelopment of the site should realise the Council's objectives for the site set as out in Section 4.

The following development principles should be reflected in proposals for the redevelopment of the site. Where development proposals deviate from these principles these would need to be robustly justified. The development principles have been derived through assessment of the site opportunities and constraints.

### **Mix of uses**

The location and context of the site offers the opportunity for the site to be redevelopment for residential or community use or a combination of these uses.

### **Built form**

The existing buildings identified to be demolished should be replaced with high quality, sustainably designed buildings that enhance the setting of the Listed Building. The development proposals must, in terms of their scale, height, mass, siting and design, be sensitive to and complement heritage assets both designated and non-designated. Building forms must also positively contribute to the historic setting, including the roofscape and skyline. Heights of buildings must respect the character of the area and the height of neighbouring buildings and, respond sensitively to the Listed Building and adjacent green space. The site can provide a high-quality development, that embraces vernacular architectural styles to reinforce the sense of place and enhance character.

Developers should consider the opportunities for enhancing the environmental sustainability of their schemes at the outset, so that environmental considerations can help inform and shape the design process.

### **Access and movement**

Providing sustainable access to and from the site and minimising impact on the wider area is crucial to future development proposals. Vehicles should access the site from the existing accesses on Hersham Road. Any development, as minimum, will need to demonstrate compliance with access requirements for servicing (refuse vehicles) and emergency access. Any variation from the existing vehicular access would require careful consideration to ensure harm is not caused to the setting of the listed building and the amenity of neighbouring residents.

A car-free development is encouraged given the town centre location of the site. If car parking is included, it must be in accordance with the parking standards. Any car parking should be carefully integrated to ensure the front of the site and the buildings are not dominated by large areas of surface car parking. Any car parking areas shall be broken up with landscaping and tree planting.

Opportunities for the enhancement of local bus shelters adjacent to the site should also be considered.

### **Routes and permeability**

There is an opportunity to create a new publicly accessible pedestrian/ cycle route through the site linking the town centre and residential areas to the south to the improved facilities at the recreation ground. The site is located on the route of the Hersham Road Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Cycling Corridor linking Hersham and Walton-on-Thames. Significant development of the site would be expected to contribute to the delivery of this initiative. This may comprise a financial contribution or part provision of improvements secured through a S106 agreement.

There is also opportunity to consider improved pedestrian and cycle access and links to the site both at the gyratory and via the provision of signalised pedestrian crossing facilities on Hersham Road. Development should where possible include a continuous footway across the vehicular access point on Hersham Road, in accordance with Surrey County Council's Healthy Streets for Surrey Design Code.

### **Boundary Treatments**

The boundary to the Green Space to the front and rear of the site will need to remain open and permeable. Careful consideration will be required to the boundary with neighbouring residential properties especially those which are currently formed by buildings on the site (marked as acceptable for demolition). Boundaries with neighbouring residential properties will need to maintain privacy and security to those properties. Opportunities for greening of boundaries will be encouraged especially with the use of native hedgerows which increase biodiversity on the site.

### **Open space and public realm**

The site provides an opportunity to enhance the recreation ground and to create new multi-functional open spaces and green infrastructure in the local area that will provide safe and functional informal recreation opportunities for existing and local residents and support local aspirations. Open spaces must be of a high-quality design and be robust and adaptable so that they can be managed and maintained for continual use. In addition to public areas of open space, new street and parkland trees should be planted to articulate space, frame views, soften built form and provide air quality mitigation.

### **Ecology and biodiversity**

There is good existing green infrastructure in the north of the site, and it will be important to enhance the potential of the site to support wildlife. Where possible the redevelopment should improve connections to green corridors and maximise opportunities to protect and



maximise net biodiversity gains across the site. Trees on the site should be surveyed and all mature trees retained where possible. If trees are lost as part of the development, it will be expected that they are replaced with sufficient high-quality trees.

### **Flooding and Drainage**

Multifunctional sustainable drainage must be included as part of the redevelopment of the site. The redevelopment offers opportunity to utilise a range of sustainable surface water management techniques which not only contribute to a reduction on discharge rates from the site, but provide amenity, biodiversity and water quality improvements and contribute to mitigating climate change by considering both drought and flood conditions. All hard surfacing on the site must be permeable or allow for sufficient drainage within the curtilage of the site.

### **Demolition and Construction**

The development must be in accordance with Policy 4 of the Surrey Waste Local Plan and provide sustainable construction and waste management. The use of sustainable materials and construction methods is encouraged. The demolition and construction phase also offers opportunities for further investigation of archaeology on the site.

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## 6.0 Delivery and monitoring

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The Council encourages early engagement by submission of pre-application and Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to discuss the detailed proposals, the scope of the application as well as contributions towards social and physical infrastructure. Pre-application advice will confirm the documents required for any application submission, but these are likely to include:

- Air Quality Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Archaeological Surveys
- Biodiversity Impact Assessment
- Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plan
- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric calculations
- Boundary Treatment Plan
- Community Involvement Statement
- Contamination Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Ecological surveys including a Habitat Suitability Index survey for great crested newts
- Energy Strategy/ Sustainability Principles
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Assessment (foul and surface water drainage) including Water Infrastructure Capacity
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Housing Mix and Affordable Housing Provision
- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Management and Maintenance Strategy for all Public Open Space S106 Heads of Terms
- Management Plan for the appropriate re-use and improvement of soils
- Masterplan and Parameter Plans
- Materials Schedule
- Noise and Vibration Assessment
- Parking Plan
- Services and Utilities Plan
- Parking Principles (where not covered in the Brief)
- Planning Statement

- Public right of way statement
- Soft and Hard Landscape Plan
- Topographical Surveys
- Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan
- Waste and Recycling Plan including bin storage and bin collection points

Please refer to the local validation requirements: [elbridge.gov.uk/planning/requirements](http://elbridge.gov.uk/planning/requirements)