

# CR3 FORUM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## 'SITE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### 1. Site Details

- a. What is the site's name/reference?

CR3NPCV3007 The Soper Hall

- b. Where is the site located?

Harestone Valley Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 6HY

Grid ref: TQ 34090 55309

- c. What is the site description?

Irregularly-shaped, site falling in level from west to east by approximately 3 metres. Single large building roughly central to site. Low boundary wall to road frontage (west). One large copper beech feature tree. Two other non-descript trees and a small amount of shrub planting on road frontage. Pedestrian and vehicular access from north & south sides of site. No access directly off road.

- d. What are the adjoining uses to the site?

Car parking to shopping centre (A1) to south and east. Residential (C3) beyond car park to south. Church and community facility (D1/D2) on opposite side of road to south. Road frontage to west with residential properties (C3) on opposite side of road. Shared access drive to north with residential (C3) on opposite side of drive.

- e. What is the site area (hectares)?

0.1531 ha (1,531 sqm – 0.378 acres)

- f. What is the existing land use?

Mixed use – Community halls (D2), offices (B1(a)) and storage (B8?).

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g. Who is/are the owner(s) of the site?

The Soper Hall Community Centre Limited

Soper Hall, Harestone Valley Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 6HY

h. What is the site's planning history?

Originally built 1912 as Council offices with a memorial hall shared between Council use and community use. It ceased to be Council offices in 1988. Community use of the two halls remained and office use was retained on the remaining area of ground floor and all of first floor. Basement/lower ground floor used for storage and ancillary services. No planning applications since 1949. Two unsuccessful attempts to list the building through English Heritage since 1988.

i. Desk top research & planning policy considerations:

1. Any relevant planning policies
2. Is the site allocated for particular use in the Local Plan?
3. Do any Local Plan designations apply to the site? For example:  
Greenbelt / Public Open Space / Strategic open space / Village confines / extent of settlement  
Conservation Area / Protected wildlife or habitat / Landscape character area
4. Do any other designations apply? e.g. National Park/AONB/Village Green / Local Green Space
5. Are there any emerging local planning documents with relevant policies or designations?

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1. National Planning Policy Framework; Tandridge District Council Core Strategy (CSP1 Location of Development, CSP12 Managing Travel Demand, CSP13 Community Sport & Recreation Facilities & Services, CSP14 Sustainable Construction, CSP15 Environmental Quality, CSP18 Character & Design, CSP22 The Economy, CSP23 Town & Other Centres); Tandridge Parking Standards SPD; Tandridge Local Plan Detailed Policies (DP2 Town Centre Development, DP4 Alternative Use of Commercial & Industrial Sites, DP5 Highway Safety & Design, DP7 General Policy for new development, DP9 Gates, fences, walls & other means of enclosure, DP18 Community Sports & Recreational Facilities, DP20 Heritage Assets, DP21 Sustainable Water Management, DP22 Minimising Contamination, Hazards & Pollution).
2. No designated use allocation
3. Designated within Caterham Valley Town Centre
4. No other designations
5. CR3 Forum Neighbourhood Plan & new Core Strategy are emerging plans

- j. Are there national policy considerations that are relevant to the site? Are there policies, or is there evidence related to the regional strategy that is relevant to the site?

NPPF sustainable development clauses 7 -14, core planning principles clause 17, strong competitive economy clauses 18-22, ensuring the vitality of town centres clause 23, promoting sustainable transport clauses 30, 32, 34, 35 &39, requiring good design clauses 56-58, 60-61, 63-66, promoting healthy communities clauses 69-71, meeting the challenge of climate change clauses 95, 97 & 98, conserving & protecting historic environment clauses 126, 128 & 131.

No relevant regional strategy applicable to site.

- k. Does the site feature in or are there relevant policies in other local planning documents e.g. supplementary planning document, Village Design Statement, Conservation Area Appraisal?

No.

- l. Does the site feature in assessments undertaken to support the Local Plan e.g. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Sustainability Appraisal?

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No.

### 2. Desktop evidence review

- a. Is the site in flood plain / known to be affected by flooding?

No.

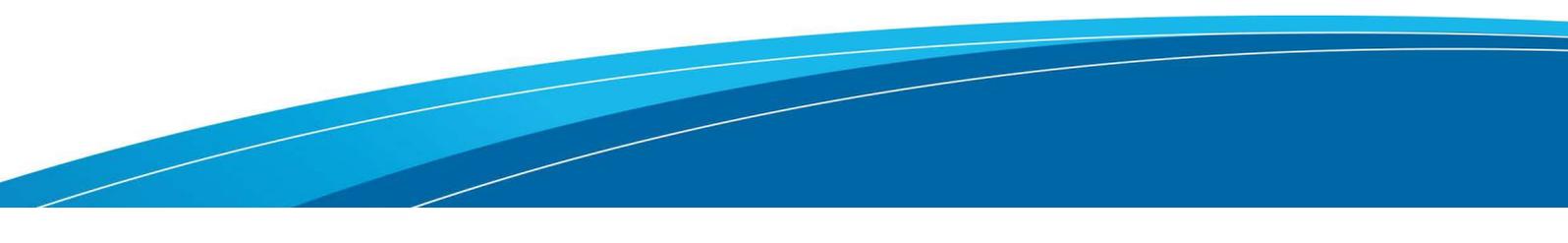
- b. Could the land be contaminated by a former use or activity?  
Would development require the remediation of contaminated land?

Unlikely.

- c. Are there any nearby sources of noise or air pollution which could affect the site?

No.

- d. Does the site contain a valuable mineral resource?



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No.

- e. Is the land of agricultural value / official designation of agricultural land?

No.

- f. Are there any 'Listed' buildings on or close to the site?

No.

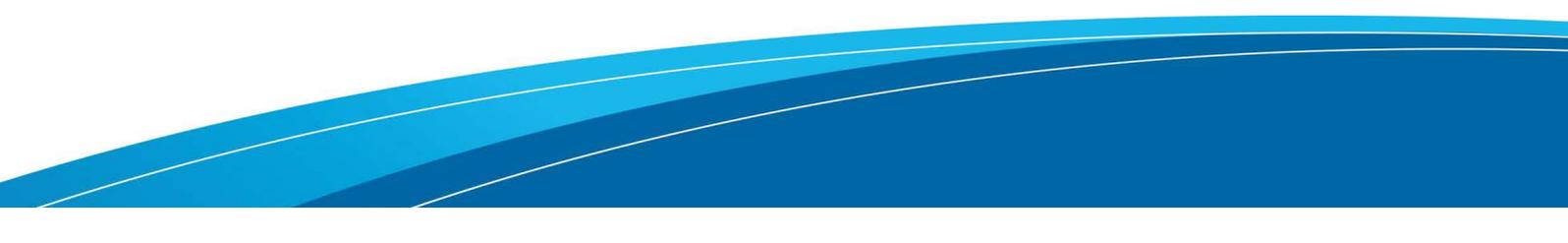
- g. Could the site contain any archaeological remains?

No.

- h. Are there any issues of capacity on the local road network (congestion and/or parking)?

No.

- i. Are there any known legal considerations relevant to the site e.g. covenant?



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No. It is understood that in the event of redevelopment for non-community uses, the previous owner Tandridge District Council has an overage entitlement.

### 3. Onsite considerations

- a. Access / How is the site accessed / Is it easily accessible from the highway?

There is easy access to the site.

Primary vehicular and pedestrian access from the shared access road to the north to both the front and rear of the existing building with secondary pedestrian and vehicular access along the south boundary from the car park adjoining the site to the front of the present building only.

- b. Is the site accessible by public transport, cycling and walking?

Yes.

Railway station, bus services and taxi facilities available within close proximity (less than 5 minute walk). Accessible on both foot and by bicycle.

### 4. Existing features

- a. Are there any physical constraints affecting the site e.g. access, slope, pylons?  
Will the topography of the site constrain development e.g. steep slopes?  
Are there any power lines, pipelines or other infrastructure crossing or affecting the site?

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There are no physical constraints on development.

The sloping site is a factor in preparing design but can be exploited for the benefit of any development.

There is services infrastructure serving the site but there does not appear to be any shared primary services infrastructure running across the site.

There is a large (3.5 storey) blank brick wall forming the east boundary of the site to the adjoining multi-storey car park.

- b. What natural features are there e.g. any trees, hedgerows, watercourse?  
Are there features of particular biodiversity value?  
Could the site be home to protected species such as bats, badgers, great crested newts etc.?

The main natural feature is a large copper beech tree which actually sits on the adjoining land off the site. There are two non-descript trees along the road frontage.

There is no particular biodiversity value and there are no bats or other creatures with a habitat on the site.

- c. Are there any health and safety constraints e.g. nearby major hazard site?

No.

- d. Are there existing buildings that could be retained or converted?

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Yes.

e. Are there important views into or out of the site?

The view from/along the Harestone Valley Road is significant as the present building is one of few old buildings in the area. While not of architectural value, it does form part of a significant street scene together with the church to the south-west and the road network at this point. Any new development should seek to form a composition with the church.

f. How might development at the site affect the skyline?

No significant impact and the building height could be increased by possibly one floor.

g. Are there any public rights of way affecting the site?

No, although the public have got into the habit of using the forecourt of the building as a pedestrian route.

There is the shared driveway to the north alongside the site and the vehicular access into the multi-storey car park to the south.

The parking spaces on south boundary belong to shopping centre but are accessed across forecourt to Soper Hall. Possible right of access.

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- h. Information to record about neighbouring sites and the surrounding area.

What are the neighbouring uses? (What are the existing uses and are there any development proposals?). Are any of the adjacent uses, 'bad neighbours' giving rise to noise or fumes that could impact the development?

Could the original site be expanded into neighbouring sites?

Car parking to shopping centre (A1) to south and east. Residential (C3) beyond car park to south. Church and community facility (D1/D2) on opposite side of road to south. Road frontage to west with residential properties (C3) on opposite side of road. Shared access drive to north with residential (C3) on opposite side of drive.

There are no known development proposals.

The adjoining uses are not bad neighbours.

The present site could be expanded to include the open ground level section of the public car park to the south.

- i. What is the local style of buildings – materials, scale, density?

Local materials are predominantly red brickwork or white render with clay tiled roofs. Stone trimmings are present on the feature buildings.

The scale of the buildings on the opposite side of the road to the west is two-storey residential with pitched roofs. The buildings on the east side of Harestone Valley Road and Harestone Hill are 3.5 storey high.

Density on the east side of Harestone Valley Road is higher than on the west side.

- j. Could development at the site cause any issues of overlooking or loss of privacy for neighbouring uses?

No.

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k. Physical infrastructure and local services considerations

Is the site connected to local utilities (such as water, energy supply and sewerage disposal)?

The site is provided with all necessary utilities including high speed broadband.

l. Does the site have high speed broadband connection?

Yes.

### 5. Local facilities and services

a. How close are the following local services and facilities? Where is the nearest:

School (primary & secondary) / GP practice / Pharmacy / Local shops / Post Office / Library / Play space / Sports centre and/or pitches.

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A GP Practice, several pharmacies, shops and supermarkets, post office, banks, offices, library and open space are in the immediate vicinity and no more than 5-10 minutes walk.

The local state secondary school and the nearest sports centre is within one mile of the property. A private well-respected boarding school is located roughly one mile further along Harestone Valley Road.

There are five state primary schools within one mile of the site. There is a private primary school about one and a half mile distant.

b. What is the capacity of local schools?

c. Are local services accessible by public transport, cycling and walking?

Almost all local services can be accessed by cycling or on foot. There are bus services to the state primary schools. There is no public transport to the state secondary school or to two of the state primary schools. The private secondary school operates a shuttle mini-bus system and is within walking/cycling distance.

## 6. Community Infrastructure Levy

a. What are the priorities for local infrastructure improvements linked to the development of this

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site?

The Soper Hall as a potential central community hub was specifically mentioned in the 2012 Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.

### **Deliverability**

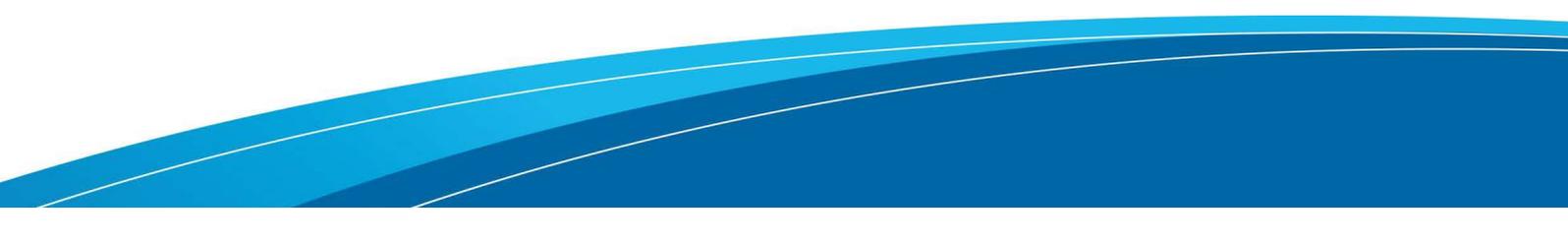
Starting to think about whether development of the site is deliverable and viable...

### **7. Suitability - potential constraints on development** Is there a record of local opinion towards development of the site?

The site was the subject of a community asset transfer from local authority ownership to the present community group as the result of rumours that the council wanted to sell the site for commercial or residential development.

The community seems roughly equally divided between those who wish to see the existing building retained and those who want to see the site redeveloped for up to date community facilities.

### **8. Availability**



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- a. Is the land owner willing for their site to come forward for development?

It is believed that if funding was available, the present community group would consider improvement of the site. Whether they would consider comprehensive redevelopment is unclear.

- b. Are there any factors which might prevent or delay development e.g. tenancies, leases?

1. The attitude of the present management group;
2. Any deemed overage settlement with the local council;
3. Leases with tenants and hirers.

### 9. Summary

Desktop research findings

Planning policy considerations

Onsite considerations

Infrastructure & local services

Deliverability

Over what timeframe might the site become available for development - in years, 1-5 | 6-10 | 10+?

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This is a site that by virtue of its location is a prime redevelopment site.

The site is capable of comprehensive redevelopment involving demolition and reconstruction. It is also capable of extension and adaptation of the existing building, including the potential for a full or part additional floor. There are no problems with servicing any development.

The site could be extended to include the open car park to the south, which might have the beneficial effect of hiding the multi-storey car park and providing more facilities within the development.

There are no restrictive planning policies and the present site is not listed or within a conservation area. Height and car parking are the two key planning issues in physical terms. Use of the site would be the other issue.

The impact on street scene is a consideration but this should not restrict development as it should be possible to design a suitable replacement building.

Any development should be required to respect the copper beech tree.

There are daylight issues to the rear of the site created by the height and enclosing shape of the present multi-storey car park, allied to the lower ground level.

There is potential to dig out more of the site to enlarge the lower ground floor if the cost could be justified.

It would be possible to locate the frontage of the building slightly nearer the road so as to align with the present building line along this part of Harestone Valley Road.

The present building has a distinctive external appearance. The building fabric externally and internally needs a complete overhaul. Internally, the building appears 'tired' and 'old-fashioned'. In commercial terms, as it stands, its attraction will be on the basis of cost and location rather than quality of the environment.

The site is suitable for the following uses:

1. Community assembly D1 (halls, meeting rooms, day centre, religious use, art gallery, library, museum, exhibition halls, theatre, cinema, training/conference);
2. Residential C3;
3. Commercial B1(a);
4. Storage B8 (yellow box style of personal or office archive storage);
5. Public house, bar or wine bar A4.

**Summary Continued**

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For a community use or public house, etc use to be successful on this site, a distinctive destination landmark design is required. This is because the building has historically been underused as a community facility because it is not noticeable or well-known. It lacks the visual amenity to make it the first choice destination for users such as wedding receptions, etc.

If residential or commercial development is to be provided, then this should adopt an appearance that fits more quietly into the street scene, taking its lead from Victoria House and the flats to the north.