DACORUM

URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

TRING

Final Report
January 2006

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

urban practitioners UP

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Tring Urban Design Assessment final report is structured into nine sections.

'Tring - Today' describes the town's basic characteristics, including location, transport connections, population and social composition. The policy context summarises policy issues pertinent only to Tring that have not been covered in the borough-wide document. 'Tring - History' provides the historical context to the assessment.

STRATEGY PLAN and SETTLEMENT PRINCIPLES

The Strategy Plan and Settlement Principles lays out broad principles in both planimetric and text form which characterise the four Urban Design zones and sets out principles for circulation, views and legibility.

URBAN DESIGN ZONES

The Urban Design zones section defines the areas associated with each Urban Design zone and identifies the 'ideal norm' for each zone. The Tring Urban Design zones have been created on the basis of existing characteristics, reflecting the morphology, density and typologies of each area, *and* an understanding of how these areas should be viewed in light of any potential development or regeneration of the zone. The norm, shown as a cropped portion of the zone and as a section, demonstrate the ideals for that zone in terms of such Issues as building heights, setbacks, typology, morphology and densities.

URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

The Urban Design Assessment provides the baseline evidence and analysis which has shaped the strategy plan, settlement principles and urban design guidelines. The assessment follows the criteria described in the borough-wide report. Please note that the maps contained within this report are not to scale.

OPPORTUNITIES, SENSITIVITIES and CAPACITIES

The Key Opportunities, Sensitivities and Capacities section summarises the issues that emerged from the baseline evidence and analysis.

CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

The Consultation Workshop summary encapsulates the results of the Tring stakeholder workshop. Many of the stakeholder comments have been used as evidence in the urban design assessment.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES and CASE STUDIES

The Urban Design Guidelines have been created on the basis of each Urban Design zone. The guidelines have been developed following the Urban Design Assessment criteria described in the borough-wide report, although circulation, views and legibility have been addressed under the settlement-wide principles.

Case Studies

The case studies apply the various classifications of the guidelines to create a range of recommended possibilities for each Urban Design zone. Depending on the zone, case studies may suggest applying 'typical' conditions, 'enhanced density' conditions, or 'increased density' conditions relative to the surrounding character. The case study drawings which follow each zone's guidelines are illustrative only, particularly as it regards car parking or amenity space.

Both the guidelines and case studies dedicated to each zone are divided into two categories, **infill** and **block** sites. A block site is considered to be an site area greater than 0.35 hectares, with dimensions of no less than (approximately) 50 metres by 70 metres. Block sites, due to their size, have greater latitude to introduce new densities and characteristics into an urban design zone. Examples are shown at the far right.

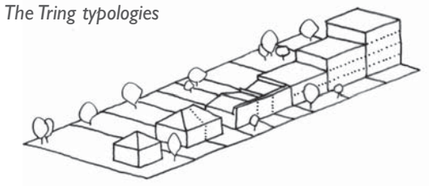
Decisions on when to apply 'enhanced' or 'increased' densities with regard to block sites would depend on the block's relative adjacency to other land uses. Blocks within approximately 400 metres of significant public transport connections, significant A1 and A3 land uses, and primary schools would be potential sites for increased densities, depending on significant view corridors or other considerations. For the purposes of the urban design guidelines, a circle with a radius of 300 metres (it is assumed that most paths to the given land use node/transport hub will not involve straight routes) has been drawn - centring on transport hubs, retail centres or schools - to determine this area of potentially increased densities. Family housing should be encouraged as part of any development seeking increased development within the radius of the school.

Alternately, increased densities should potentially be discouraged within approximately 100 metres of green belt land 'the Protected Density Zone'. The determination of minimum block size and the relationship to adjacent land uses has drawn advice from the *Urban Design Compendium*, produced by Llwelyn-Davies for English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation in 2000. Designated view corridors would also potentially serve to discourage taller building heights. The view corridors should be reviewed on a case-by-case matter. The guidelines rely on criteria comments and classifications. These classifications are set out below:

Building types

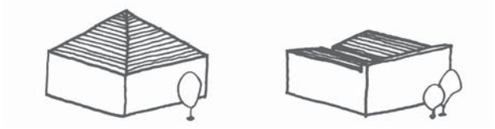
Building types considered for Tring include:
- Terraced housing
- Semi-detached housing
- Detached housing
- Two-storey block of flats
- Three-storey block of flats
- Four-storey block of flats

The Tring typologies



Architectural styles

Architectural styles within the Urban Design zones have been very broadly organised according to the type of roof pitch. The facade applied to terrace buildings generally denotes a more urban character.



Building heights

Building types considered for Tring includes:
- One-storey
- Two-storey
- Three-storey
- Four-storey

Density

The classification for densities is based on Government guidance, reflecting advice in PPG3:
- Very low < 30 dph
- Low 30 - 40 dph
- Medium 40 - 50 dph
- High 50 - 60 dph
- Very high > 60 dph

The diagrams and drawings at the end of this section illustrate the generic typologies, plot sizes and setbacks that have been considered.

Building lines

Building lines will be considered for each Urban Design zone in terms of:
- Large setback (6 - 9 metres, depending on the building height)
- Medium setback (3 -6 metres)
- Minimal setback (0 - 3 metres)

Building orientation

Building orientation impacts urban design in terms of:
- Building orientation toward street front
- No particular building orientation

Pattern of open spaces

Topography impacts on urban design in terms of:
- Divided front gardens
- Shared front gardens
- Divided rear gardens (back-to-back with rear gardens)

The type of garden reflects on such concerns as the appearance of the streetscape, the privacy of the dwellings, quality of the wildlife habitat, the type of development, and the size of the development site.

Parking

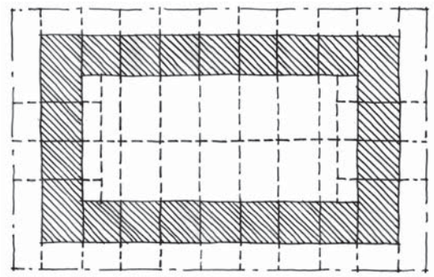
Parking options can be classified as:
- On-street parking
- On-site communal parking
- On-site individual parking

Decisions on the parking type relates to type of streets within the Urban Design zone (primary or secondary through streets, cul-de-sacs, or dead-end streets)

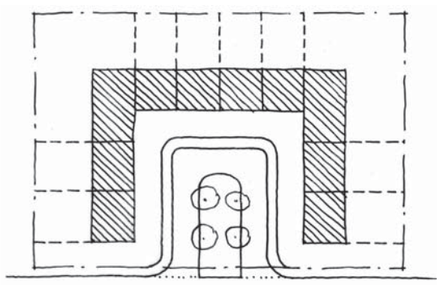
Block samples

The block samples were designed on the basis of the minimum block size of 50x70 metres (0.35 ha). The approximate density per hectare has been calculated by multiplying the number of units in each respective layout by three (or 1.05 has) Because of the constraints of this block, the close block development is much less dense than the perimeter block layout. Given larger blocks, the density of the perimeter block would likely be less. In addition, the size of the setbacks in larger blocks would have a greater impact on the density.

Minimum perimeter block and close development

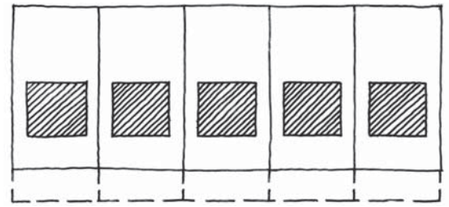


Two-storey terrace blocks (50 x 70m) = 66 dph
3/4-storey terrace blocks (50 x 70m) = 132 dph

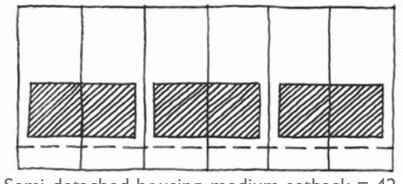


Two-storey terrace close 50 x 70 m = 30 dph
3/4 -storey close, 50 x 70 m = 60 dph

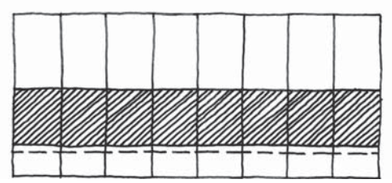
Infill samples



Detached housing, medium setback = 31 dph
(Assumes 5m setback, 11.5m rear garden, 13m x 25m plot)
Detached housing, large setback = 26 dph
(Assumes 10m setback, 11.5m rear garden, 13m x 30m plot)



Semi-detached housing, medium setback = 42 dph
(Assumes 3.5m setback, 11.5m rear garden, 9.5m x 25m plot)
Semi-detached housing, no setback = 49 dph
(Assumes no setback, 11.5m rear garden, 9.5m x 21.5m plot)



Two-storey terrace housing, medium setback = 57 dph
(Assumes 4m setback, 11.5m rear garden, 7m x 25m plot)
Two-storey terrace housing, no setback = 68 dph
(Assumes no setback, 11.5m rear garden, 7m x 25m plot)
3/4-storey terraces with flats, medium setback = 104 dph
(Assumes 4m setback, 11.5m rear garden, 7m x 25m plot)

TRING - TODAY

Physical Location

Tring is a small market town situated in the western-most corner of Hertfordshire, approximately halfway between Hemel Hempstead and Aylesbury. It is positioned at a low point in the Chilterns Hills range, only 30 miles (50km) northwest of London. The Grand Union Canal runs near the northern edge of the town and the 300 acre Tring Park lies to the south. Tring possesses a reasonable level of good quality open space and access to the open countryside.

Transport Connections

Tring town centre is located just to the north of the A41. Tring railway station is located two miles outside of the town with direct links to London Euston Station. Silverlink operates all trains that stop at Tring station with services that run between London and Milton Keynes. Connecting trains from Milton Keynes are required for destinations further north to places such as Northampton, Rugby, and Birmingham. Tring has a considerable commuting population.

Population

The three wards which comprise Tring (East, West and Central) have a combined area of 3,565 hectares and population of approximately 13,319. The settlement of Tring has a population of 11, 635.

Social composition

The mean age of the entire population of Tring is 38.41 and the number of residents aged 16-74 is 9,437. There are a total of 200 unemployed people and the number of retired persons is 1,124. The ethnic composition of the village is largely White British.

Planning Policy Context

Tring is designated as a market or other town within the draft Regional Spatial Strategy and the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 designates Tring as a town (policy 2). The retail designation is a town centre. Tring falls within accessibility zones 3&4 which means that parking provision as part of new residential development is unrestricted.

The historic core of Tring is a designated Conservation Area and contains both ancient monuments and Areas of Archeological Significance which are detailed below:

Ancient Monuments:

- Grim's Ditch (or Gryms Dyke), Section extending 1 mile 740 yds east from Longcroft, Tring
- Deserted Vale of Tiscott, Tring
- Settlement of St. Mary's Church Puttenham, Tring
- Ardwick deserted medieval Village, Tring

TRING - TODAY

Areas of Archeological Significance

- Marshcroft Lane Tring Cropmark
- Tring
- Tring Station
- Miswell Farm Tring
- West Leith Tring

Tring Town Centre Strategy (set out in the Local Plan 1991-2011)

Tring town centre has suffered adversely from a new food store located on London Road. The town centre now requires a new role which builds upon strong independent retailing but also offers a shift to business activities and residential occupation, encouraging linked trips to the town centre for shopping and associated business, leisure and cultural activities. The strategy will be used to influence transport strategy as well as incremental land use and aims to sustain and enhance the quality of retailing but also to increase the vitality and viability of the town centre by diversifying into the use mix. The changes proposed are to be accommodated within the existing built form.

The key components of the strategy are:-

- To increase small scale specialised retailing not currently offered in the town centre
- Retain and enhance the existing market facilities
- Increase the evening economy uses and diversify the town centre role
- Encourage small scale business activity
- Maintain and enhance the attractive town centre environment
- Improve the environment at Dolphin Square
- Promote transport links between Tesco and the town centre to maximize the potential for linked shopping trips.

Landscape Characteristics of Area Surrounding Tring (taken from Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum May 2004)

Surrounded by just one landscape area: Tring Gap Foothills

Land cover and land use: Arable farmland occupies most of the area to the north and east of Tring. There are a mix of recreational uses, including playing fields and sports clubs, and grazing located to the south.

Transport patterns: Numerous arterial routes including the West Coast main line, and the A41, the Grand Union Canal is located to the east of Tring.
Key characteristics: Views to the Chilterns escarpment, mixed open farmland and urban fringe influences,

TRING - HISTORY

Tring lies just to the east of the crossing point of two ancient routes, Icknield Way and Akeman Street.

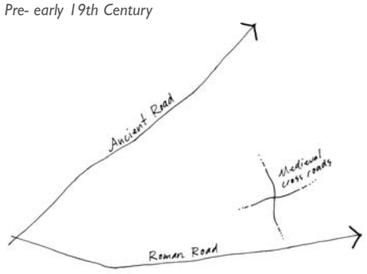
Icknield Way was the great prehistoric trackway that crossed southern England from the Cotswolds to Norwich and was later used by the Romans. Akeman Street, Roman in origin, ran east-west, just to the south of the town. Akeman Street later gave its name to one of the main streets in the town centre, running mainly north-south and connecting the market place to the Roman road.

Tring was well established by the time of the Domesday Book (1086) and had a population of around two hundred. The medieval settlement probably grew from a cluster of cottages around the churchyard area, with narrow smallholder plots laid out at right-angles to the streets. A market was formally granted in the 14th century and probably began to the south of the churchyard (where a market house stood until 1900) with stalls spread along the High Street. Trade in cattle and straw plait were the main activities, as well as general trading. Gradually, permanent structures replaced the stalls.

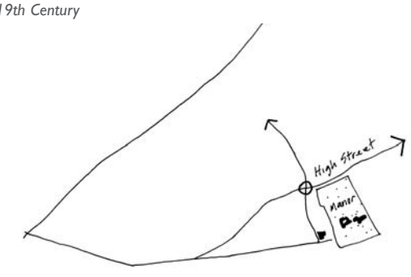
With the exception of the 13th century parish church, the oldest buildings in Tring date from the 16th century and are to be found in Akeman Street and the High Street. Examples include 12-13 Akeman Street which, like others of the same period, conceal a timber frame behind a later brick front.

The re-routing of the old Roman Road

Pre- early 19th Century



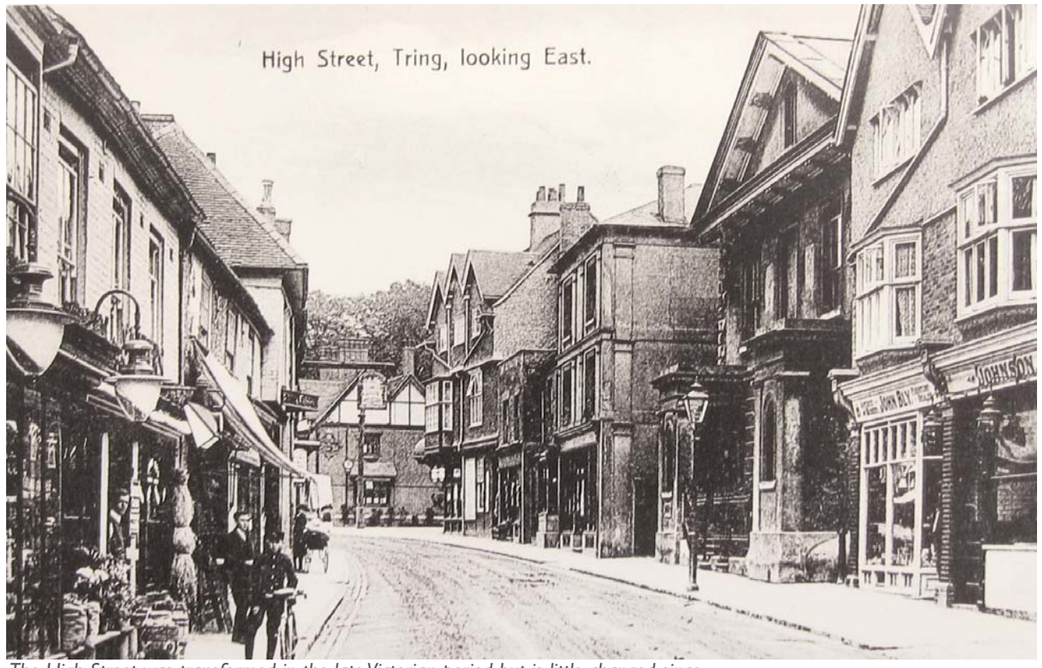
Post - mid 19th Century



In the post-medieval period (1650-1900) Tring accommodated a wide range of industries including milling, brewing and boot making, as well as the continuing trade in straw plait that lasted through the Victorian period. Most significant, however, was the silk mill to the east of the town (off Brook Street) which at its peak employed up to 600 people. It closed at the end of the 19th century. The hilly nature of the area prevented the Grand Junction Canal (1805) from coming into the town and runs to the north of the town. Tring Summit became the highest navigable waterway in England, with 57 locks over 2 ¼ miles.

From the early 18th century to the early 20th century the lord of the manor and resident of Tring Park had a strong influence on the development of the town. At the beginning of the 18th century William Gore extended the park, closing off the old Roman Road to divert the highway through the High Street. Large scale changes came in 1872, when Lord Rothschild acquired the estate and began an extensive programme of rebuilding. Rothschild's architect, William Huckvale, favoured a 'Tudor revival' style that employed a palette of brick, tile, timber and plaster to picturesque effect. This style has given Tring its prevailing late Victorian architectural character which, superimposed on its medieval street plan, gives the town centre much of its appeal today.

Tring is still a small town, but its spread has doubled in the past fifty years. In addition to residential growth, there are also Tring's main schools and a small light industrial area. It is worth noting, however, that this expansion has almost entirely taken place within the limits of the old Roman Road and the Icknield Way that were in use two thousand years ago.



The High Street was transformed in the late Victorian period but is little changed since.
Photo courtesy of the Hertfordshire County Records Office (HCRO)

This map shows Tring's development from medieval times to the beginning of the 20th century.

STRATEGY PLAN and SETTLEMENT PRINCIPLES

Urban Design zones

A The town centre zone (1) should protect its historic character, maintain a land use mix that encourages activity accessible by pedestrians and vehicles, and provide opportunity for high density residential units (above shops on the High Street.)

B The Inner zone (2) should provide quality medium to high density housing (with potential for three-storey very high density units in new 'block' sites) with strong links to the town centre and the train station.

C The Closed Route zone (3) should provide quality medium to high density housing which attempts to introduce through routes.

D The Peripheral zone (4) should provide quality low-rise, low to medium density housing that acts as a transition between the countryside and the town.

Circulation

E The primary distributors should facilitate through traffic, ensuring that two-way traffic is prioritised over on-street parking, with efforts to be made to include cycling routes.

F The district distributor roads should facilitate through traffic, ensuring that two-way traffic is prioritised over on-street parking, with street design to ensure calmed traffic.

G The High Street (local distributor) should be considered as an activity zone which prioritises High Street uses, such as pedestrian crossings, over through traffic. Through traffic should be discouraged and calmed.

H Access roads (residential streets) should encourage on-street parking, with the exception of the Tring Triangle and the Peripheral zone.

I Footpaths should be considered as significant pedestrian routes which receive design attention.

Views

J Tring's key views include into the town centre from the east, from Miswell Lane into the Green Belt, from the adjacent recreation ground into the town centre, and along the Streamside Walk. The impact of the massing, building height and architectural quality of any new development within the view corridor should be considered as part of the development's application.

Legibility

K The strong town boundaries formed by the historic roads allow good views into the countryside and create a clear divide between the town and countryside. The clear boundaries should be maintained.

L The gateways into the town centre - from the north along Frogmore Street, and from both ends of the High Street- are not strongly marked by gateways. Buildings, signage, or streetscaping could signify gateways.