Fair Mile Hospital
Cholsey, Oxfordshire
Development Brief

Prepared by
South Oxfordshire District Council
and Barton Willmore on behalf of Inventures
Introduction

Purpose and format of the brief

1.1 This brief has been prepared jointly by South Oxfordshire District Council and the Barton Willmore Planning Partnership on behalf of Inventures acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health. The brief has been prepared to give planning guidance to potential purchasers of Fair Mile Hospital following its closure and to provide some certainty to the local community.

1.2 The subsequent sections of the brief contain:

- A description of the site and its surroundings
- The planning policy context
- Acceptable future uses
- Design principles
- Landscape and biodiversity issues
- Transport and access
- Site conditions, services and infrastructure
- Glossary of terms
- List of contacts

Background

1.3 Fair Mile Hospital has operated as a mental hospital since the mid-nineteenth century and at its peak provided 1,010 beds. In mid 2002 the hospital catered for about 200 patients and was operated by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust under a lease. The hospital is expected to close at the end of March 2003. The existing healthcare services will be provided at alternative local facilities and at Prospect Park, Reading. Fair Mile Hospital will therefore be surplus to NHS requirements.

1.4 The property is owned by the Secretary of State for Health and forms part of the retained estate. Inventures, part of NHS Estates, has been instructed by the Secretary of State for Health to sell Fair Mile Hospital and is project managing its disposal. Inventures has appointed a team of specialist consultants and sub-consultants who have been responsible for obtaining baseline survey information.

1.5 In the preparation of this brief South Oxfordshire D. C. and Barton Willmore have undertaken consultations with Oxfordshire County Council, Cholsey Parish Council and other neighbouring town and parish councils, English Heritage, the Garden History Society and other organisations interested in the historic environment, the Environment Agency, Thames Water, English Nature and BBOWT. An exhibition on the draft Brief was held in Cholsey on 30 October and 2 November 2002 and comments on the proposals were invited. Where appropriate, comments received have been
incorporated into this Brief. A summary of all the comments received is available from the District Council.

Status of the brief

1.6 This Brief was adopted by the District Council as supplementary planning guidance in February 2003.

1.7 Whilst the brief has been prepared for guidance in preparing and considering planning applications and applications for listed building consent on the site, it does not form part of any application. The brief should also be read in conjunction with the planning policy guidance summarised in Section 3 of this brief.
Description of the site and its surroundings

2.1 Fair Mile Hospital is located to the east of Cholsey immediately south east of the A329 Reading Road about 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) south of Wallingford. Appendix 1 contains a location plan. The River Thames forms the south-eastern boundary of the site.

2.2 Appendix 2 contains a plan of the site. The main group of buildings is located in the north-western part of the site with some further buildings extending a short distance along the north-eastern and south-western site boundaries. There are playing fields immediately to the south east of the buildings. Beyond the playing fields is open land with the Cholsey Marsh Nature Reserve, which is managed by BBOWT, bordering the River Thames. The George Schuster building is separated from the main site complex by Papist Way.

2.3 The property comprises over 29,000m² (312,000ft²) of floorspace. The principal buildings are Grade II listed. The hospital was built as a lunatic asylum in Tudor-gothic style to designs by C H Howell (1868-70) with red brick enlivened by blue brick and stone dressings under pitched slate roofs. Howell extended the original building in 1878 and it was extended again by G T Hine in 1898. The list description is in Appendix 3 and it refers to the main hospital building, the free-standing chapel and the Lodge.

2.4 Inventures have commissioned the preparation of a Conservation Plan to inform the re-use of the site.

2.5 There are also a number of more modern buildings on the site, some of which are of no architectural value and detract from the appearance of the site.

2.6 The hospital is set in extensive grounds totalling 39 hectares (97 acres) of land and buildings. With the exception of most of the land bordering the River Thames, the site is included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as Grade II. The site Register entry is Appendix 4 and it states that the 26ha site comprises about 6ha of airing courts, gardens and pleasure grounds and about 20 hectares of kitchen gardens, orchards and paddocks.

2.6 The site is generally level with a bank on the south-east boundary marking a descent to the Thames floodplain. It is enclosed by mature trees and shrubbery on the north-western, north-eastern and south-western boundaries with views to the Chilterns south east across the River Thames. The site contains a large number of mature trees.
Planning policy context

National and regional planning guidance


Structure Plan policies

3.2 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan was adopted in August 1998. There are no site-specific policies in the Plan but relevant policies include G1, G2, G3, T1, T18, EN4, EN5, EN8, E4, H1, H4, R1 and R2.

3.3 The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 is also relevant.

Local Plan policies

3.4 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan was adopted in 1997. Of particular relevance are the policies in Section 2 - General Planning Policy context, Section 4 - The Historic Environment, Section 5 - The Countryside, Section 6 - Housing, Section 7 - Employment and Section 8 - Transport. Specific reference is made to Fair Mile Hospital in paragraph 6.14. This states:

"One large windfall site which is likely to come forward in the plan period is Fair Mile Hospital at Cholsey. The hospital, which includes a number of Grade II listed buildings, is likely to become vacant at the end of the 1990's. Proposals for the site should pay particular regard to the desirability of preserving the character of the listed buildings and their setting. Uses which best achieve this are likely to include a significant residential element, but other uses such as business use, hotel, leisure or institutional uses might also be appropriate. Some of the modern buildings should be demolished and their replacement with alternative buildings will be a matter for negotiation. However, the Council will be most unlikely to permit an increase in the amount of floorspace on the site. Any redevelopment in the front of the main building, or to the rear towards the river, will not generally be acceptable. The open nature of the land near the river and its nature conservation interests, must be protected in any proposals. In accordance with Policy G6 development on this site may be required to fund the cost of essential infrastructure and..."
services made necessary by the
development."

3.5 In June 2002 the South
Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
was placed on first deposit. The
Plan contains a number of
general and site-specific policies
relevant to this site. Sections 2
- 6 and Section 8 of the Plan all
contain policies which will be
relevant to any planning
application on this site. Policy
H2 makes provision for
residential development at Fair
Mile Hospital. The estimated
number of dwellings is 150, but
the Plan states in paragraph 5.9
that the number of dwellings is
for guidance and statistical
purposes only and does not
commit the Council to a
particular number of dwellings
on a particular site. The lower-
case text (paragraph 5.12)
states that, "proposals for the
site should pay particular regard
to the desirability of preserving
the character of the listed
buildings and their setting. A
number of uses and a mix of
uses would be suitable for the
site but the re-use for housing of
some of the buildings is likely to
be an appropriate use".

3.6 Policy RUR6 relates to Fair Mile
Hospital and is as follows:

Policy RUR6

Proposals for the re-use of Fair
Mile Hospital, Cholsey will be
permitted provided that they:

i) provide a comprehensive
scheme for the re-use of
the buildings worthy of
retention and for the future
management of the site;

ii) secure a mix of uses for the
buildings worthy of
retention consistent with the
need to preserve the listed
buildings and the historic
park and garden;

iii) provide for the demolition of
buildings unsuitable for re-
use;

iv) retain as open land the
undeveloped parts of the
site which are of historic
interest and all the
undeveloped land between
the buildings and the River
Thames and protect, in
particular, the biodiversity
interest of the land adjacent
to the River Thames;

v) provide a management plan
for the future maintenance
of the listed buildings and
the grounds;

vi) provide a comprehensive
landscaping scheme which
includes provision for the
protection and
enhancement of the historic
park and garden and for the
maintenance of important
trees and other landscape
features, as well as new
planting in certain areas;

vii) protect the biodiversity
interest of the site;

viii) provide for a package of
sustainable transport
measures;

ix) comply with the policies for
encouraging sustainable
and high-quality
development in Section 4 of
the plan; and
x) in the case of proposals for housing, provide for 40% of the residential floorspace to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9; for a range of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7; and for recreation, education, library and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D10.

3.7 The lower-case text to Policy RUR6 is in Appendix 5. Barton Willmore Planning on behalf on Inventures acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health have lodged objections to aspects of this policy and to some of the general policies in the Plan. The objections will be considered by the Council as part of the Local Plan review process. It is hoped to publish the second deposit draft plan in September 2003.

Other guidance

Conservation Plan

4.1 Before any proposals are drawn up for the site a Conservation Plan should be prepared to guide this process. A Conservation Plan is a document which identifies the significance of a site and sets out policies for the retention of that significance in any future use, repair, alteration, development or management. Conservation Plans should seek to understand the site and its historical development using relevant documentary evidence and the evidence from the buildings themselves. It should assess the value of the site both generally and in detail, should identify the factors which affect the significance of the site such as physical condition, and finally, it should develop conservation policies to ensure that the essential character of the site is retained in any future use. The Plan should cover both the buildings and the park and garden and should include a full inventory of buildings and their features. Further guidance on Conservation Plans is given in English Heritage’s Conservation Plans in Action, 1999 and in the consultation draft Conservation Management Plans for Restoring Historic Parks and Gardens, 2002.

Possible uses

4.5 In considering future uses of the buildings the main objectives are:

- To secure a use which ensures the long-term future and management of this historic asset i.e those important buildings to be retained and their setting;
- To provide for a sustainable mixed-use development;
- To provide for the practical conversion and/or refurbishment of those buildings of special interest;
- To secure the removal of the buildings which detract from the character and appearance of the site;

Comprehensive approach

4.2 With the exception of the George Schuster building which lies to the south of Papist Way proposals for the site should provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the buildings and explain how provision is to be made for the future management of the site.

4.3 Planning applications and applications for listed building consent should be submitted at the same time.

4.4 It is important that any re-use scheme looks in detail at the suitability of individual buildings for re-use. Particularly careful consideration needs to be given to buildings such as the Chapel, the Theatre and the former farm.
To secure the long-term maintenance and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the open areas of the site.

4.6 The re-use of the buildings should ensure a mix of uses that address all relevant aspects of sustainable development including the need to travel and water and energy conservation measures. Subject to the findings of the Conservation Plan and the suitability of the particular building for conversion the possible uses are set out below:

i) Housing

In any proposal for housing, the Council will seek a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7 of the deposit draft Local Plan. The lower-case text of the policy states that a mix of about 12% 1 bedroomed dwellings, 47% 2 bedroomed dwellings, 23% 3 bedroomed dwellings and 18% 4 bedroomed dwellings will be sought. In applying this policy the Council will, however, take into account the findings of the Conservation Plan and the suitability of the building for conversion into dwellings of particular sizes.

The Council will also seek the provision of 40% of the residential floorspace for affordable housing as defined in Policy H9 of the deposit draft Local Plan. The Council will wish to ensure that the affordable housing is mixed in with the market housing. The affordable housing should meet identified needs and should be available to local people in perpetuity. The type of property and tenure will be a matter for negotiation with the Council and the eventual developer. In negotiations the Council will act in accordance with the advice in Circular 6/98 and take into account the particular circumstances of these buildings.

Some live-work units may be acceptable.

ii) Employment

The buildings are likely to be most suitable for B1 uses. However depending on the building and its location other uses would be considered.

iii) Institutional uses

The site is currently in a C2 residential institution use, which includes residential accommodation and care to people in need of care, hospitals and nursing homes and use as a residential school, college or training centre, and a continuation of such uses in all or part of the buildings would be appropriate subject to the details of any proposal. D1 non-residential institutional uses may also be appropriate, for example a day nursery.
iv) Hotel/leisure uses

Hotel and leisure uses may also be appropriate depending on the details of any proposal.
Design principles

Design Statement

5.1 All proposals should take into account the advice in Section 4 of the deposit draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide which has been approved as supplementary planning guidance. All applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the re-use of these buildings should be accompanied by a design statement including a statement setting out how the proposals conserve and enhance the historic assets of the site in accordance with paragraph 4.5 and Policy CON3 in the deposit draft Local Plan. The District Council has produced a leaflet on the content of design statements.

Existing buildings

5.2 The quality of the buildings on the site varies considerably. The Conservation Plan should indicate which buildings are integral to the special interest of the site and should be retained. Other buildings are of no merit and positively detract from the site. As part of any scheme, the Council would expect the demolition of these buildings. With the exception of the George Schuster Building and the associated boiler house, the latter include all the single-storey, post war, utilitarian buildings. The Council will expect the developer of the site to discuss with it and English Heritage proposals for demolition prior to the submission of applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

Replacement floorspace

5.3 Any proposals for replacement floorspace should meet the criteria in English Heritage’s policy statement Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets. A copy of the policy which forms part of that document is in Appendix 6.

5.4 In the event that any replacement floorspace can be justified it would need to be sympathetic in scale to the listed buildings and respect the historic park and garden. The District Council would be most unlikely to permit any increase in floorspace on the site. New development on the open land between the existing buildings and the River Thames, or which would be detrimental to the historic park and garden will not be permitted. Any replacement floorspace should respect the quality and nature of the site and preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the character of the site. Issues of the grouping of any new buildings, their size and form, orientation and siting, details and materials will need to be carefully addressed in the design statement.
Car parking

5.5 Proposals for the re-use of the buildings are likely to require significant amounts of car and cycle parking. The precise amount will depend on the nature of the uses and will be a matter for determination at the planning application stage. It will not be appropriate to have parking in locations which would detract from the setting of the listed buildings or from significant and sensitive areas of the historic landscape and it is likely that most of the parking will need to be located away from the main buildings. Underground parking will be considered if the developer considers it viable, subject to its impact on the listed buildings and historic park and garden and its impact on groundwater flows (see para 8.9).

Traffic circulation and street furniture

5.6 Care should be taken to ensure that access to buildings around the site does not have a detrimental effect on the historic landscape. Signage, lighting and other street furniture should also be carefully designed and sited to avoid adverse impact on the historic site.
Landscape and biodiversity issues

Landscape character

6.1 The landscape characteristics of the area surrounding the site include low-lying agricultural land characterised by large open fields with the land rising to the North Wessex Downs in the south and west and to the Chiltern Hills beyond the Thames floodplain in the east. The wider landscape character area is defined in South Oxfordshire District Council’s Landscape Assessment and includes the foothills of the Chiltern Hills and the edge of the North Wessex Downs. The key characteristics of the area are smoothly rounded hills and downland flanks, intimate dry valleys which dissect the chalk downs, typically with mixed woodland clothing the valley sides, and a dominance of arable cultivation but with a comparatively strong landscape structure of hedges trees and woods, providing visual enclosure and diversity.

6.2 In terms of landscape designations, the George Schuster building to the south of Papist Way lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The remainder of the hospital is within an Area of Great Landscape defined in the adopted Local Plan. This local designation is, however not carried through into the draft deposit Local Plan. The landscape impact of proposals will be assessed in accordance with Policy C1 in the draft deposit plan using the Landscape Assessment which the Council intends to adopt as supplementary planning guidance as a basis for this.

Site characteristics

6.3 The site is characterised by a gently sloping landform which rises from the River Thames and Cholsey Marsh to a more elevated plateau area where the main group of hospital buildings are sited. As stated in Section 2 the site is included within the Register of Parks and Gardens and a detailed description of the important landscape features of the site is in the Registry entry in Appendix 4.

6.4 The site contains mature trees both within the site and along its boundaries. These comprise individual mature trees and tree belts, trimmed vegetation and shrub vegetation. The individual trees and tree belts provide a mature landscape setting to the site and the trimmed hedgerows provide containment to the sports field. Substantial areas of trees and shrubs are found along the site’s south-western boundary, adjacent to Papist Way, and along the north-western boundary adjacent to the A329 Reading Road. A tree survey has been undertaken by Colin Bashford Associates on behalf of Inventures.

6.5 A visual survey was undertaken by Barton Willmore Environmental on behalf of Inventures from the area...
surrounding Fair Mile Hospital to determine the approximate extent of the area from which the site and the buildings on it are visible. This showed that the site and the buildings are only visible from a limited number of viewpoints, and that, with the exception of views across the Thames Valley, the hospital is not a prominent feature in the local landscape in longer distance views, due to the screening provided by the tree belts on the site and by vegetation and topographic variation within the surrounding landscape.

**Comprehensive landscaping scheme**

6.6 A comprehensive landscaping scheme should be submitted with any planning application. This should include a survey of the existing landscape features and should state how the existing features of value should be maintained and where appropriate enhanced. This work should draw on the Conservation Plan. Emphasis needs to be given to measures which would maintain and enhance the historic park and garden and protect mature trees.

6.7 The scheme should also address where new planting should take place. New planting is likely to be required to strengthen some of the existing boundaries and in areas of car parking. In the event that any new development is permitted there would be a requirement for landscaping around new buildings to assist in their assimilation into the site. The scheme needs to ensure that the land between the existing buildings and the River Thames is kept open. A strategy for the long-term conservation and management of the landscape character and biodiversity interest of the site, including a master plan, should be submitted with any planning application for the re-use of the site.

**Biodiversity**

6.8 A 'Phase 1 Plus' Ecology Survey has been carried out by Bioscan on behalf of Inventures. This report concludes that the hospital grounds are dominated by non-native species, and the fields to the south east of the hospital comprise improved grassland bordered by trimmed, species-poor hedgerows of minimal ecological value. No badger setts were found on the site and the only evidence of badger activity was a latrine in coarse grassland in the south-eastern corner of the site, adjacent to the BBOWT reserve. It appears likely that there is a badger sett outside the site, probably to the north, and that badgers from this sett make occasional use of the site for foraging and passage. A bat survey has not been undertaken but the report noted the likely presence of bat roosts in the hospital buildings and in the mature/semi mature trees on the site. Detailed surveys of both bats and badgers will be required prior to the submission of a planning application for the
re-use of the buildings. The County ecologist has also stated that it would be desirable for any prospective developer to undertake an overall ecological appraisal of the whole area to ensure the integration and management of biodiversity features with any proposed development.

6.9 The Cholsey Marsh Nature Reserve is located at the south-eastern end of the site, bordering the River Thames. The reserve contains a valuable stretch of riverside habitat; Desmoulins’ whorl snail also occurs there. This is a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The reserve is also valuable for birds. BBOWT has managed this area under lease from the NHS since 1986. BBOWT would wish to be offered the freehold of the site with a contribution towards identified capital works. Prospective developers will therefore be encouraged to discuss the future of this site with BBOWT with a view to securing the long-term management of this valuable site.
Transport and access

Existing arrangements

7.1 The site currently has three vehicular access points, two along the Reading Road frontage and one from Papist Way. All are located within the local 30 mph speed limit zone. The two Reading Road accesses are simple priority junctions, one located centrally to the site frontage, the other at the northern extremity. Visibility onto the main road from both accesses is restricted by the presence of listed boundary walls and mature vegetation. Traffic speed observations indicate that there is poor compliance with the 30 mph speed limit at these locations. The Papist Way access is also a simple priority junction, again with restricted visibility, located approximately 100 metres south east of the crossroads junction with Reading Road. There is substandard visibility at the crossroads and this has been identified by the Highway Authority as an accident problem location.

7.2 The local mainline railway station in Cholsey is situated off Papist Way a little under 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) from the centre of the hospital site. There is also a local bus service, route 135, with stops located on Reading Road to the south of the hospital, and on Papist Way to the west.

Transport requirements

7.3 A transport assessment should be included with any planning application. A travel plan should be included with the assessment in relation to the employment or institutional uses on the site. A package of sustainable transport measures is likely to be sought in relation to any development proposals and the precise nature of these will depend on the type and mix of development. It will be necessary to reach agreement with the County Council and seek confirmation of the measures outlined below at the planning application stage. The latter have already been discussed with the County Council as Highway Authority.

7.4 The existing Reading Road accesses are considered unsuitable to accommodate increases in exit movements from the site in their current form. It is therefore envisaged that the main vehicular entrance/exit will be from Papist Way. In conjunction with the main traffic movements being via Papist Way it will be necessary to upgrade the existing Reading Road / Papist Way crossroads to traffic signals control. Such an improvement will bring substantial local benefits by improving the poor safety record of this location. Signalisation of the junction would also bring the opportunity to provide safe facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the Reading Road. In designing
improvements to the junction, regard will need to be had to the existing trees within the site at this location and to the historic nature of the landscape. It is anticipated that the two existing accesses onto Reading Road would remain in operation without the need for improvement, but on an entry-only basis, thereby avoiding the need to remove established vegetation and walls along the site frontage.

7.5 To address the issue of vehicles speeding along the Reading Road site frontage, where there is expected to be an increase in pedestrian and cyclist activity, it is likely that some form of traffic calming will be needed to reinforce the 30 mph speed limit. This might take the form of combinations of the following: gateway entry treatments, rumble strips, carriageway markings (such as speed limit repeaters), or speed cameras.

7.6 The impact of additional traffic on Cholsey village and the need for any mitigation measures will need to be considered when the precise nature of the re-use is known.

7.7 In addition to the above it is likely that measures will be sought by the highway authority to improve the level of accessibility to public transport services. In that respect, there is the potential to provide a pedestrian crossing facility on Station Road, to the immediate north of its junction with Papist Way, which would provide a safe crossing point for travellers en route to the railway station as well as for children walking to the primary school.

7.8 With regard to rail services, Cholsey railway station does not currently provide a modern secure store for cycle parking. There is the potential to provide a covered cycle parking facility, which would encourage increased use of the station.
Infrastructure provision

8.1 A Section 106 Agreement is likely to be required in respect of a number of matters such as transportation measures, affordable housing, education etc. The measures that will be needed to mitigate the impact of the development cannot be identified until the precise nature of the development is known. Guidance on the range of likely measures is given in the booklet, *Infrastructure and Service Needs for New Development* produced by Oxfordshire County Council and the District Councils in Oxfordshire.

Education and libraries

8.2 Oxfordshire County Council has given some initial advice on education and library provision. This is that proposals for residential development would have an impact on schools in the area. Contributions would be sought towards secondary education provision at Wallingford School and to further permanent accommodation at Cholsey Primary School.

8.3 Wallingford Library is the nearest static facility to Fair Mile Hospital and it is currently operating at maximum capacity. Contributions towards existing library provision would therefore be sought. Should any sheltered housing be accommodated on the site, an additional mobile library stop would need to be accommodated.

Community and recreational facilities

8.4 A residential use will give rise to a need for recreation and community facilities. The nature of any provision or contribution will need to be negotiated with interested parties at the planning application stage.

8.5 Consideration also needs to be given to the future of the existing playing fields on the site and the Fair Mile Staff Social Club. Further discussions on these will need to take place with the developer and the District and Parish Councils.

Archaeology

8.6 An archaeological desk-top assessment of the site has been prepared by CgMs on behalf of Inventures. The report concludes that the overall archaeological potential of the site is low. The gravel deposits of the River Thames are generally regarded as being of high archaeological potential, however, it would appear that the main focus of archaeological activity was on the eastern bank of the river, not within the site. It is conceivable that there are, as yet unrecorded, remains within the study site. The main potential impact on any surviving archaeological remains will be in
the area of any proposed development outside of the existing building footprint. The County Archaeologist has commented that archaeological finds have been recorded from the general area in the vicinity of Fair Mile Hospital and therefore some level of archaeological mitigation may be recommended at a later stage when any planning applications are made.

Ground and groundwater contamination

8.7 A Phase 1 desk top geo-environmental assessment has been undertaken by WSP Environmental on behalf of Inventures which highlights environmental considerations, predominantly with respect to ground and groundwater conditions, on and around the site. The report identifies that the site is located in an area of medium/high environmental sensitivity due to its proximity to the River Thames and the major aquifer underlying the site and adjacent land. Within the scope of this assessment WSP Environmental are of the opinion that the site is likely to represent a high risk with respect to environmental considerations in developed areas of the site and a low risk in undeveloped areas. It recommended that an intrusive investigation be carried out to assess the presence of landfill gas, soil and groundwater contamination at the site.

8.8 The Environment Agency advises that should any potentially polluting operations have occurred, a detailed site investigation should be carried out to assess the degree and nature of the contamination present, and to determine its potential for the pollution of the water environment. The method and extent of this site investigation should be agreed with the planning authority before development commences. Details of the appropriate measures to prevent pollution of groundwater and surface water including provisions for monitoring, should be submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority before development commences. The development should then proceed in strict accordance with measures approved.

Groundwater

8.9 The proximity of the River Thames and unconfined nature of the underlying aquifer results in a shallow groundwater table at this site. Large underground structures such as foundations or an underground car park constructed below the water table may act as an obstruction to groundwater flows and a building-up of groundwater levels may occur. Any drainage systems proposed for such structures should be capable of allowing groundwater flows to bypass the structure satisfactorily and should not adversely affect the licensed groundwater abstraction.
Geotechnical report

8.10 WSP Environmental were also commissioned by Inventures to carry out a Phase 2 geotechnical investigation of the site, in order to confirm the ground conditions in certain areas. The intrusive site investigation confirmed the ground conditions to consist of clayey sand or sandy clay over sand of the Valley Gravel. The geo-technical Interpretative Report concludes that strip foundations taken into or onto the Valley Gravel would be suitable for two or three storey structures.

Flood risk

8.11 The Environment Agency states that the 1947 floodplain map shows that only a small area adjacent to the River Thames lies within the floodplain. The existing buildings all lie outside the floodplain.

Surface water run-off

8.12 Thames Water requires the separation of foul and surface water sewerage on new developments. Inventures advise that an examination of Thames Water Utilities Ltd records indicate that there are no adopted surface water sewers within the vicinity of the site. It is therefore likely that the private surface water drains discharge directly into the River Thames. It is also conceivable that all or some of the surface water run-off discharges to soakaways or infiltration ditches.

8.13 The Environment Agency is seeking to encourage the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems on the site, which can improve water quality and enhance the environment whilst catering for flood peak attenuation. Discussions with the Environment Agency should therefore take place to establish the applicability of these systems in the re-use of the site. Further information can be obtained from the Environment Agency publication, Sustainable Urban Drainage: An Introduction.

Foul water discharge

8.14 Inventures advise that foul water is currently drained via an adopted gravity sewer which discharges to a Thames Water pumping station on the site. Effluent is then pumped for treatment at Cholsey Sewage Treatment Works, which it is understood, has sufficient capacity to accommodate the re-use of Fair Mile. However there may be a requirement to refurbish the on-site pumping station to meet current industry standards.

8.15 If there are any operational
sewers crossing the site, a diversion may be required. In addition an impact study of the sewerage system will be required to determine the amount of spare capacity in the system. The developer will be required to fund this and any necessary upgrading.

**Water supply**

8.16 There are no mains directly adjacent to the site frontage on Papist Way or Reading Road. Water supply is currently taken from on-site bore-holes for which there is an abstraction licence. Should the developer wish to continue using the bore-hole as a source of supply, the licence will need to be formally varied to reflect the new purpose. If the site requires a greater quantity of water from the bore-hole, a pumping test will be necessary to ascertain whether or not any increase in volumes can be sustainably abstracted. Should this be successful, a formal variation to the licence will be necessary. Should the bore-holes prove to be insufficient, the requirements for connection to and potential reinforcement of nearby Thames Water mains will need to be determined. Developers will be required to fund any necessary studies and upgrading of the network.

**Electricity supply**

8.18 The site is currently served by a single sub-station situated behind the boiler house. This is fed from an 11KV overhead supply which enters the site from Reading Road. Scottish and Southern Energy plc have indicated that to supply the redevelopment would require the replacement of the existing sub-station with one or two new sub-stations, supplied from the underground mains in Papist Way.

**Gas supply**

8.19 Inventures advise that the site is currently fed by medium pressure mains, entering from Papist Way, which have adequate capacity to serve the proposed re-use.
Affordable Housing
Low-cost market and subsidised housing (irrespective of tenure, ownership - whether exclusive or shared - or financial arrangements) that will be available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market (paragraph 4, Circular 6/98: Planning and Affordable Housing, April 1998). A more detailed definition of what is considered to be affordable housing in South Oxfordshire is given in para. 5.36 of the deposit draft Local plan.

Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)
An area designated by the District Council as being of local landscape importance.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
An area designated by the Countryside Agency, and confirmed by the Secretary of State, where the primary objective is to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape.

BBOWT
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

Conservation Plan
A Plan that reviews and assesses the significance of a site in architectural and historic terms and how that significance will be retained in any future use.

Geo-Environmental Assessment
An assessment of environmental considerations associated with a site’s redevelopment, predominantly with respect to ground and groundwater conditions on and around the site.

Listed Building
A building of special architectural or historic interest included in a list drawn up by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as Grade I, II* or II depending upon the building’s degree of interest (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Register of Parks and Gardens
A national register of historic parks and gardens compiled by English Heritage. Sites included on the Register are divided into three grade bands - Grades I, II* and II - to give added guidance on their significance. The Register imposes no additional statutory controls but is a material consideration in planning terms.
Useful contacts

Local Planning Authority
South Oxfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Benson Lane
Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford, OX10 8NY

Contacts:
Gill Oliver   Tel: 01491 823724
Martin Brookes   Tel: 01491 823751

Landowner (current):
Secretary of State for Health
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8 Baird House,
The Pensett Estate
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West Midlands  DY6 7YA

Contact:
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Inventures’ Planning Advisors:
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Oxfordshire County Council
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Contacts:
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Environment Agency
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Tel: 01491 832801
Fax: 01491 834703
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English Heritage
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The Garden History Society
Chief Conservation officer
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Fax: 020 7490 2974
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Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
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Tel: 01865 775476
Fax: 01865 711301
Contact: Iain Corbyn
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 54

3rd List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

As at 13 January 1986.

DISTRICT OF SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE (OXFORDSHIRE)

(That part comprising the Parishes of Aston Tirrold, Aston Upthorpe, Cholsey, Moulsford, and South Stoke.)

WHEREAS

1. by section 54(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 the Secretary of State for the Environment (hereinafter called "the Secretary of State"), with a view to the guidance of local planning authorities in the performance of their functions under the Act in relation to buildings of special architectural or historic interest, is required to compile lists of such buildings;

2. it appears to the Secretary of State that the buildings described in the schedule hereto are buildings of special architectural or historic interest;

3. the Secretary of State has consulted those persons who appear to him appropriate as having special knowledge of, and interest in, such buildings;

NOW THEREFORE the Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 54(1) of the Act, hereby compiles the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest described in the schedule hereto. This list is cumulative and records all buildings included in previous lists compiled by the Secretary of State or his predecessors under the Town and Country Planning Acts 1944 to 1971 for the stated part of the aforementioned District Council area in addition to buildings now listed for the first time. Buildings previously listed (under the aforementioned Act or earlier legislation) are to be treated as listed from the date appearing against the entry. Where no date appears against the entry the building in question is to be treated as listed from the date appearing above.
House. Mid C18 with C19 additions and alterations. Grey brick with red brick dressings; old plain-tile hipped roof; various brick stacks. 2 storeys and attic. 3-window range. Sash door to centre with Gothic panelling to base. C19 square brick battlemented porch with 4-centred stone arch with trefoil carving to spandrels and hood mould with carved end stops. 2-storey angled bays to left and right with stone mullion and transom windows with hood moulds and carved end-stops. Flat brick band between ground and first floor. Stone cross-window to first floor centre. Hood-mould. Stone mullion and transom windows to bays to left and right with hood moulds. Flat brick band below battlemented parapet to eaves. 3 gabled dormers to roof. Interior not inspected. C19 extensions to left and right; red brick with grey brick headers in Flemish bond; plain-tile roof. 2-storey single window ranges with mullion and transom windows. C19 single storey and attic cross-gabled extensions to left and right ends.

Lunatic Asylum, now hospital. Dated 1870 to carved panel above main door, by C.H. Howell, additions by G.T. Hind 1898, some C20 alterations and additions. Red brick with some stone dressings and grey brick courses and diapering. Complex Welsh slate roof with lead ridges; various red brick stacks. Complex symmetrical plan. 5-storey, 18-window range with towers. Panelled door to centre with stone Tudor archway with carved trefoils to spandrels. 5-storey tower to left with hipped roof. Stone mullion, and mullion and transom windows to centre block. 4-pane sashes to wings. Interior not inspected.

Lodge. c.1870. By C.H. Howell. Red brick with grey brick relieving arches to
doors and windows; old plain-tile complex roof; brick ridge stack to centre.
Single storey and attic. 4-window range. Plank doors to left and right. Three
8-pane sashes with common segmental brick head to left and right of centre.
Round flat-roofed turret to left corner. Cross-gable to left of centre with
paired 4-pane sash. Eaves dormer to right of centre with crow-stepped gable and
paired 4-pane sash. Crow-stepped gable to left return. Interior not inspected.
Included for group value.

"Wallingford 1, Reading 14".

Wallingford 2, Reading 13". "Jackson Reading" to base. Reputed to be rare type
of milestone.
(K. Lawrence, Milestones of Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Museums Information Sheet
7, undated).
OXFORDSHIRE

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE
CHOLSEY
SU5985

FAIRMILE HOSPITAL

GD3314
II

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST

A late C19 asylum with grounds designed by Robert Marnock.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Lunatic Asylum for the County of Berkshire and the Boroughs of Reading and Newbury, later known as Moulsford Hospital and today (2000) known as Fairmile Hospital, was founded on a previously undeveloped site near Moulsford Station, Cholsey following the first meeting of the Committee of Visitors in March, 1867 (Visitors’ Minutes: Berkshire Record Office D/XQ1). The Committee appointed as architect C.H. Howell, who had previously designed the asylum at Woking, Berkshire (The Builder, 1868). Howell was commissioned to design an asylum to accommodate 285 patients, with a chapel, medical superintendent’s house, gas works and farm (BRO: D/XQ1; The Builder, 1868). Construction commenced in March 1868 with the appointment of Mansfield, Price and Co. of London as contractors. In September 1868 the Visitors remitted the laying out of the grounds to a sub-committee ‘to order and superintend the Formation of such Plantations as may be necessary for the protection of the Grounds of the Asylum’, while in January 1869 Joseph Harding, a nurseryman of Winterbrook, Wallingford, was appointed to plant hedges and trees on the newly-fenced asylum boundaries (BRO: D/XQ1). The asylum buildings including the chapel and farm were completed in 1870, and were described in The Builder (2 April, 1870). Accounts for July 1871 record a payment of £30.0.0 to Robert Marnock (1800-89) for laying out the asylum grounds (BRO: D/XQ 1/3), while the Annual Report for 1872 notes ‘the planting of the trees and shrubs on the grounds in front of the Asylum, in continuation of Mr. Marnock’s plan’ (BRO: Q/AL 12/1). Gardening and work on the asylum farm, orchard and vegetable garden formed an important part of the patients’ regime, with over 50 patients being thus employed in 1871 (Annual Report, 1871 – BRO: Q/AL 12/1). The farm included over 3 acres irrigated by sewage.

The original buildings were extended to the design of C.H. Howell in 1878 to provide accommodation for a further 500 patients. Further extensions were made by the Nottingham architect G.T. Hine in 1894 (detached infectious diseases hospital) and 1898 (ward wings), while in 1929-30 a new house for the medical superintendent was built to designs by Willcocks and Greenway of Reading. New accommodation for 100 female patients and an attached staff house were built to designs by C.B. Willcocks of Reading in 1934, while in the mid and late C20 further buildings have been constructed. Today (2000) the site remains in institutional use.
SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING
Fairmile Hospital is situated 2.5km south of Wallingford and 1km east of the village of Cholsey, to the south-east of the A329 Reading Road and to the north-west of the River Thames. The 26ha site comprises 6ha of airing courts, gardens and pleasure grounds and 20ha of kitchen gardens, orchards and paddocks. To the north-west the site is bounded by the A329 road, while to the south-west it adjoins a metalled track, Papist Way which leads from Cholsey to the River Thames. The site adjoins agricultural land to the north-east, with the boundary being marked by C20 fences. To the south-east it adjoins the flood-plain of the River Thames; a gravelled walk extends across the flood-plain to the river-bank. The north-west, south-west and north-east boundaries are screened by dense plantations of mixed ornamental trees and shrubs which include a high proportion of evergreens. The boundary hedges were formed by Joseph Harding of Wallingford from 1868 (BRO: D/XQ 1/4), while in 1874 the Visitors reported the planting of a belt of shrubbery and trees on the north-west and south-west boundaries (BRO: Q/AL 12/1).

The site is generally level with a bank on the south-east boundary marking a descent to the level of the Thames flood-plain. Enclosed by mature trees and shrubbery to the north-west, north-east and south-west, there are views south-east across the River Thames to high ground including Goring Heath, Checkendon and Nuffield Hill.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES
Fairmile Hospital is approached from the A329 Reading Road to the north-west. The entrance is marked by late C19 low brick quadrant walls with cruciform pierced decoration, which support mid C20 wrought-iron lamps. To the south of the entrance and immediately within the site stands a lodge (listed grade II) which was constructed in 1868-70 to designs by C.H. Howell. The gothic-style red and blue brick structure comprises two storeys under gabled tiled roofs with a flat-roofed round turret to the north. From the entrance the tarmac drive extends c50m south-east to reach a turning circle below the north-west or entrance façade of the Hospital. The turning circle, which is marked by an outer planting of mature maidenhair trees, encloses an oval-shaped lawn with a central circular bed for seasonal planting. To the north-east of the turning circle a drive extends c100m to reach the farm and service buildings north-east of the hospital. An entrance c190m north-east of the principal entrance leads directly to the farm and service buildings.

A further drive leads south-west from the turning circle through an avenue of mid C20 specimen conifers, and is aligned on the late C19 chapel (listed grade II). The chapel was designed in gothic style by Howell in 1868. Below its apsidal north-east end the drive divides, passing to the north-west and south-east of the building to reach a late C20 car park to the south-west of the building. The drive to the south-east of the chapel continues parallel to the south-east boundary of the car park through an informal avenue of C19 specimen trees to emerge on Papist Way c100m south-west of the hospital. A mid C20 single-storey staff club stands to the east of this drive.

A further entrance c300m south-south-east of the hospital leads into the site from Papist Way. A simple field gate gives access to a track which leads c200m north-east between paddock enclosures, to join a further track which leads south-east from the
hospital to the River Thames. There is further access to the site from the riverside footpath.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING
Fairmile Hospital (listed grade II) is constructed in Tudor-gothic style to designs by C.H. Howell (1868-70) with red brick enlivened by blue brick and stone dressings under pitched slate roofs (The Builder, 1868). Howell extended the original building in 1878; it was extended again by G.T. Hine in 1898 (The Builder, 1878; 1898). The hospital comprises a central range running from north-west to south-east built around two courtyards. Symmetrical wings extend north-east and south-west providing separate accommodation for male (north-east) and female (south-west) patients. Hine's late C19 additions to these wings preserve a symmetrical ground-plan. The north-east and south-west wings partly enclose late C19 airing courts for male and female patients. The entrance or north-west façade comprises three storeys with the principal entrance placed centrally in a projecting two-storey porch. The north-east range was designed to accommodate administrative offices and accommodation for 'working patients'. The entrance is flanked to the north-east by a four-storey hipped-roofed water tower which surmounts an arch leading to a service court, while to the south-west a wing designed as accommodation for the medical superintendent breaks forward and is enlivened with a pyramid-roofed turret.

A single storey isolation hospital for infectious diseases (today, 2000, a secure unit), stands c190m north-east of the main hospital; this was built in 1894 to the design of G.T. Hine (The Builder, 1898).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS
The informal pleasure grounds lie to the north-west of the hospital, while further walled gardens and airing courts are situated immediately to the north-east, south-east and south-west of the building.

The pleasure grounds to the north-west of the hospital are divided into two approximately equal areas by the principal drive. The northern area comprises lawns screened from Reading Road to the north-west by late C19 mixed boundary planting; further mixed shrubberies screen the late C19 farm buildings to the north and late C20 single-storey annexes and, beyond the service drive, the service quarters to the south-east. The southern area is also laid out with lawns bounded to the north-west by a late C19 mixed boundary plantation; this returns along the south-west boundary of the site. The lawn is planted with late C19 specimen trees, while c100m west of the hospital and immediately south of the lodge, a small flower garden is enclosed by tall privet hedges. Today (2000) used as a therapeutic garden, the garden incorporates a mid C20 glasshouse which is constructed on the site of a late C19 or early C20 glasshouse or conservatory which is shown on the OS edition of 1912. The pleasure grounds to the north-west of the hospital were laid out in the early 1870s to a design by Robert Marnock, the patients being involved in the construction and horticultural work as part of their treatment (Annual Report 1872 - BRO: Q/AL 12/1).

A late C19 gravel walk running parallel to the north-west boundary of the southern lawn passes to the north-west of the chapel where it divides, one branch leading south and south-east to the chapel; the other continues south-west through the edge of the boundary plantation to reach an area of grass planted with standard apple trees. A
small circular concrete pool survives c100m south-west of the chapel, while a late 
C20 communications mast stands within a fenced enclosure at the south-west corner 
of the site. Some 30m south-west of the chapel a two-storey brick house stands in 
gardens enclosed from the pleasure grounds. To the north-east a gravelled turning 
circle is enclosed by privet hedges, while to the south-west gardens comprising lawns 
are enclosed by late C20 board fences. This house was built in 1929-30 to the design 
of Willcocks and Greenway of Reading as accommodation for the medical 
superintendent. To the south-east of the former medical superintendent’s house and to 
the south of the chapel a rectangular area of mid or late C20 car park replaces further 
lawns.

To the east of the drive leading south-west from the turning circle to the chapel, a belt 
of evergreen shrubbery screens C20 tennis courts which occupy part of the site of the 
late C19 medical superintendent’s garden. A tarmac path to the north-west of the 
tennis courts and shrubbery to the south-west survive from the garden layout shown in 
1912 (OS). This garden is separated from a garden south-west of the female patients’ 
day room by a brick wall c3m high. The day room garden is laid out with lawns and a 
single row of lime trees parallel to a gravel walk which runs below the north-west 
boundary wall. The garden is separated from a service yard to the south-east by C20 
railings, a privet hedge and late C19 brick walls.

Airing courts for male and female patients are situated to the north-east, south-east 
and south-west of the hospital. The courts allocated to each sex are of similar plan. 
The south-west or female airing court is enclosed to the south-west and south-east by 
brick walls c2m high, and to the north-east by the hospital buildings. The court is 
divided into two unequal areas by a bank c15m south-east of the building; a mature 
horse chestnut is planted on this gentle south-east-facing slope. The smaller, upper 
area is laid out with a lawn enclosed by tarmac paths to the south-west and south-east. 
The larger, lower area is similarly laid out with a rectangular lawn surrounded by 
tarmac paths. To the north-east of this lower area, two small recesses between wings 
of the hospital are separated from the airing court by spiked metal railings and gates 
manufactured by Hayward and Son of Wolverhampton. These inner courts are paved. 
The south-west airing court and the identical north-east (male) airing court were laid 
out between 1878 and 1898 when new wings were added to the hospital by C.H. 
Howell and G.T. Hine (The Builder, 1878; 1898); their present arrangement reflects 
that shown on the early C20 OS (1912).

A narrow terrace returns along the south-east façade of the female wing and is 
separated from a further airing court to the east-south-east of the building by further 
spiked metal railings. The east-south-east court is laid out with a rectangular lawn 
enclosed by tarmac paths which are in turn flanked by narrow sloping panels of lawn 
below the hospital buildings. It is enclosed to the south-east by a brick wall c2m high, 
and on other sides by hospital buildings. A late C20 two-storey wing to the north-east 
separates the lawn from a further area which is today (2000) used as a car park. This 
area is bounded to the north-east by a recreation room built as an extension to the 
main building by Hine in 1898. The corresponding area of the east-north-east court 
retains a brick quadrant wall which linked the south-east boundary wall to a recreation 
room added to the buildings by H.C. Howell in 1878; that in the east-south-east court 
does not survive. The east-south-east and east-north-east courts partly occupy the site 
of the airing courts constructed by Howell in 1868-70; these were altered as the result
of additions to the hospital in 1878 and 1898. Their present arrangement reflects that shown on the early C20 OS (1912).

THE PARK
Sports fields and paddocks occupy level ground to the south-east of the hospital buildings, from which they are separated by a tarmac drive which encloses the buildings to the south-west, south-east and north-east; this drive was constructed in 1875 (Annual Report 1875 – BRO: Q/AL 12/1). The grounds to the south-east of the hospital are divided into two unequal enclosures by a gravelled walk which leads c 500m south-east from the hospital to the River Thames. The larger, southern enclosure is laid out as a sports pitch and is bounded to the south-west by a two-storey ward block which was constructed in 1934, and to the south-east by a hawthorn hedge which separates it from a paddock. A single storey mid C20 timber pavilion with a veranda enclosed between a pair of gabled wings stands at the northern corner of the pitch. The sports pitch was developed in the early C20 on the site of a late C19 kitchen garden and orchard which was laid out in the early 1870s (OS 1888, 1912). The paddock to the south-east of the sports pitch also formed part of the kitchen garden associated with the hospital in 1888 (OS). This meadow enclosure is separated from a further paddock to the south-east by a track which leads across the site from Papist Way. The south-east paddock remains pasture with groups of mature ornamental trees and specimen trees planted adjacent to the south-west boundary. To the south-east the paddock adjoins the River Thames flood-plain.

To the north of the walk leading to the river a further approximately square enclosure accommodates sports pitches. In the late C19 and early C20 (OS: 1888, 1912) this area formed part of the farmland associated with the asylum. The walk leading to the river is defined to the south-west by hedges which enclose the sports pitch and paddocks, and to the north-east by C20 wire fences and irregularly-spaced mature specimen limes. This walk provided access both to the asylum farm land and to the riverside walk which was used as a place of exercise for some patients (Annual Report, 1872 - BRO: Q/AL 12/1).

KITCHEN GARDEN
The approximately square sports pitch to the south-east of the hospital occupies the site of the late C19 kitchen garden. Enclosed by hawthorn hedges (Annual Report, 1872 – BRO: Q/AL 12/1) the garden was divided by paths into quarters and planted with fruit trees (BRO: Q/AL 12/1; OS, 1888). Further areas of productive garden were situated immediately to the south-east in an area which is today (2000) paddock (OS, 1888). By 1912 (OS) the orchard to the south-east of the hospital had been removed and a new area c40m north-east of the male patients’ wing was planted as an orchard. Today (2000) this area is partly covered by a late C20 laundry building, while c60m north-east of the hospital a single mature walnut survives in an area of mown grass.

Tanks c270m east of the hospital survive from the late C19 and early C20 sewage irrigation system. Three meadow enclosures c300m east of the hospital were irrigated with sewage for vegetable production (Annual Report, 1871: BRO: Q/AL 12/1). By 1873, 264 sacks of potatoes were being produced in addition to unspecified vegetables (Annual Report, 1873 – BRO: Q/AL 12/1).
The buildings of the asylum farm survive c70m north of the hospital. Designed by C.H. Howell in 1868-70 and constructed in red brick, the farm comprises a pair of gothic-style cottages fronting Reading Road, behind which lies an approximately ‘U’ shaped farm yard enclosed to the north-west, north-east and south-west by one and two-storey ranges of buildings. Further one and two storey buildings including a cart hovel, pig-styes, workshops and poultry house are situated parallel to the north-east boundary of the site. The early C20 pig-styes (altered mid C20) replace a late C19 gas works and gasometer (OS, 1888, 1912). In 1873 the asylum farm produced 3,628 gallons of milk, 792lb of butter and 35 dozen eggs in addition to pork, beef, veal and poultry (Annual Report 1873 – BRO: Q/AL 12/1). The farm also provided therapeutic employment for the asylum patients.

REFERENCES
The Builder, 4 April 1868, p 256
The Builder, 2 April 1870, p 264
The Builder, 27 April 1878, p 443
The Builder, 2 July 1898, p 19
The Victoria History of the County of Berkshire, iii (1923), p 297
Inspector’s Report: Fairmile Hospital (RCHME 1992)

Maps
OS 6" to 1 mile: first edition, published 1888
second edition, published 1914

OS 25” to 1 mile: second edition, published 1912

Illustrations
Engraving, Berkshire, Reading, and Newbury Lunatic Asylum [from the north-west], in The Builder, 2 April 1870

Archival items
Hospital records, 1867-late C20 (private collection)
Quarter session records including minute books of Visitors’ Committee 1867-70,
accounts and cash books (1867-1911), and Annual Reports 1871-75 (Berkshire
Record Office: Q/XQ and Q/AL 12)

Description written: August 2000; revised September 2000
Register Inspector: JML
9.20 Fair Mile Hospital, as shown on the Proposals Map and Map 7, was built as an asylum and opened in 1870. The principal hospital buildings are listed Grade II and the Chapel and Lodge are listed separately at Grade II. The hospital is also included on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens as a Grade II site. The site also includes a number of more modern buildings. The hospital is due to close in March 2003.

9.21 Proposals for the re-use of the site should relate to the whole site. Only proposals for the re-use of the George Schuster building could be considered separately. As a first stage, the Council will require the submission of a Conservation Plan setting out the significance of the site and explaining how that significance will be retained in any future use. The Council will also adopt a planning brief for the site as supplementary planning guidance.

9.22 As far as future uses are concerned, the main objective is to secure the long-term future of the historic asset. This includes both the buildings worthy of retention and their setting. It is likely that any re-use will include a significant element of residential development, but other uses such as business, hotel, leisure or institutional uses may also be appropriate. There are a number of buildings on the site which are unsuitable for residential conversion and any scheme should provide for appropriate uses for these buildings which include the former farm, the Chapel and the theatre. A mixed-use scheme which reflects the diversity of the buildings on the site and reduces the need to travel will therefore be sought.

9.23 The site also contains a number of modern, post-war, utilitarian buildings which detract from the site and which should be demolished. Any replacement floorspace will only be permitted if it is required to secure the long-term future of the listed building and meets the criteria set out in the English Heritage Policy Statement Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets. The Council will be most unlikely to permit any increase in floorspace on the site.

9.24 Given the status of the site as a historic park and garden any scheme should include provision for maintaining and enhancing the grounds of the former hospital. Any new development on the open land between the existing buildings and the River Thames, or which would be detrimental to the historic park and garden, will not be permitted. A comprehensive landscaping scheme should be prepared. Particular care will be needed with regard to the provision of car parking to ensure that this does not have an adverse effect on the setting of the listed buildings and the historic park and garden. The land bordering the River Thames is a BOWWT reserve and any scheme should make provision for the continuing future management of this area.

9.25 The site is not considered to be in a sustainable location for development in terms of reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of walking, cycling and public transport. A package of sustainable transport measures will therefore be sought. In accordance with Policy D8, the development should demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy and water.

9.26 A number of other policies in this plan are likely to be of relevance depending on the nature of the proposals, particularly those in Sections 3 and 4 of the plan. In the case of proposals for housing, the Council will seek the provision of 40% of the residential floorspace as affordable housing. The Council will also seek a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7. The provision of or contributions towards the provision of necessary infrastructure, services and facilities will be required in accordance with Policy D10.
The Policy

English Heritage believes that there should be a general presumption against enabling development which does not meet all of the following criteria:

1. The enabling development will not materially detract from the archaeological, architectural, historic or landscape interest of the asset, or materially harm its setting.

2. The proposal avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the heritage asset.

3. The enabling development will secure the long term future of the heritage asset, and where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose.

4. The problem arises from the inherent needs of the heritage asset, rather than the circumstances of the present owner or the purchase price paid.

5. Financial assistance is not available from any other source.

6. It is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the heritage asset, and that its form minimises disbenefits.

7. The value or benefit of the survival or enhancement of the heritage asset outweighs the long-term cost to the community (i.e. the disbenefits) of providing the enabling development.

These criteria may also be helpful in framing exception policies in local plans in relation to enabling development.
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