

HOLMHURST ST. MARY

page 243 The Holmhurst St. Mary Area

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- 11.93 The Holmhurst St. Mary area is bounded by The Ridge, Harrow Lane, the Conquest Hospital and residential development to the south. It comprises the buildings and grounds of the former Holmhurst St. Mary School, together with the Harrow Lane Caravan Park, the Harrow Lane Recreation Ground, and an area of open ground south-east of the junction of Harrow Lane and The Ridge. All of the area lay outside the defined built-up area in the existing Borough Plan, but is now shown within the built-up area on the Proposals Map. It is proposed to prepare a planning and development brief for the whole of the area.
- 11.94 The area contains several existing land uses. The Harrow Lane Caravan park is allocated for housing development (see Policy H1). The Harrow Lane Recreation Ground contains sports pitches which it may be desirable to remove or to relocate within the site or elsewhere. This will be the subject of more detailed investigation including their use and the general requirement for the facilities both locally and in the wider area. Part of the existing Holmhurst St. Mary building complex is listed Grade II but the remainder, whilst pleasant, could be retained, redeveloped or converted, dependent on the outcome of the planning and development brief. The grounds of Holmhurst St. Mary are extensive, with large areas enclosed by woodland, providing both opportunities to strengthen and manage the woodland cover and potentially attractive areas for housing and employment development. A substantial part of the grounds is an SNCI in recognition of the wildlife value of the semi-natural woodlands and meadows (see Policy NC5 in the Nature Conservation chapter). However, Policy NC6 recognises that development may be required on part of the site. The grounds also contain some features from its use as a school and a large statue of Queen Mary, which is Listed Grade II. There are many fine views from the area and parts of the area can be seen in long distance views from other parts of the town.
- 11.95 The area is the only significant greenfield site adjoining the built-up area and within the Borough boundary, but not within the AONB. Therefore its use should be considered very carefully and any proposed development should only take place when it is absolutely clear that no alternative “brownfield” site is available and that the development is required to serve an important function for the town.
- 11.96 Employment use is proposed for part of the area (see Policy E2 (d) in the Employment Land chapter) to provide for the expansion of existing businesses in the town and the attraction of new businesses to the area. Possible development could be offices and/or light industry in a high quality setting. Part of the remainder of the area may also be required as part of the sites for new housing to be provided in the town in the period up to 2006 (see paragraph 7.23 of the Housing chapter). This will depend on the progress on other housing sites.

- 11.97 Both of these uses will be investigated in a planning and development brief which will be carried out in two stages. The first stage will establish the key landscape, topographical, wildlife and other attributes of the area, together with potential points of access. This will enable the possible development area to be defined. The second stage would examine development and access requirements in more detail, together with proposals for the retention and improvement of woodland and wildlife areas, and access to and within the area. Public consultation will be part of the preparation and consideration of the planning and development brief.

Holmhurst St. Mary

POLICY HSMI

A Planning and Development brief will be prepared for land at Holmhurst St. Mary to include employment and housing uses. The brief will also include consideration of:-

- (a) landscape and topographical features;**
- (b) pedestrian and vehicular access to the area;**
- (c) playing field requirements;**
- (d) retention and conservation of woodland;**
- (e) wildlife interests;**
- (f) retention and conservation of the listed building and structure;**
- (g) requirements for on-site and off-site infrastructure and services.**