



Warner Bros. Studios
Leavesden

Planning supporting statement
January 2010

Foreword			
Summary			
1 Background		5	
Introduction			
The planning application			
Adjacent site			
The applicant			
The Warner Bros. vision and development philosophy			
Project concept			
Master plan concept			
2 Site description		11	
Site location			
Site accessibility			
Site description			
Site designations			
Site planning history			
<i>Leavesden Aerodrome</i>			
<i>1993 Planning brief</i>			
<i>Rolls Royce redevelopment proposals</i>			
<i>Film studio use</i>			
<i>Millennium Group redevelopment proposals</i>			
<i>2001 MEPC proposals</i>			
<i>Footprint schedule</i>			
Key considerations			
3 The history of filming at Leavesden and the story so far		19	
The legacy of filming at Leavesden			
Existing activities on site			
Success despite constraints			
Key considerations			
4 The proposals		23	
Detailed description of development			
<i>Architectural proposals</i>			
<i>Landscape proposals</i>			
Key elements of the proposals			
<i>The selection of Leavesden Studios</i>			
<i>Requirement for physical connection between the refurbished studios and the new stages</i>			
<i>Design principles</i>			
Site operation – public zone			
Anticipated development traffic			
Access strategy			
Parking strategy			
Sustainable travel strategy			
Construction programme			
Consultation			
5 The economic benefits		33	
The contribution of the UK film industry to the national economy			
The current contribution of Leavesden Studios to the national and local economy			
<i>Single largest studio space in the UK</i>			
<i>Major inward investment</i>			
<i>A catalyst for innovation and technology led business growth</i>			
<i>Employment</i>			
The additional contribution the proposals bring to the local economy			
<i>Direct contribution</i>			
<i>Recruitment</i>			
<i>Training</i>			
<i>Additional spend in the local economy</i>			
Key considerations			

6	Relevant site planning policies	39
	Introduction	
	PPS4 Planning for sustainable economic growth (2009)	
	Leavesden Studios – A key employment site	
	East of England Plan and Regional Economic Strategy	
	Hertfordshire's draft economic strategy 2009 – 2021	
	Recognition of the role of the creative industries and clustering in national and regional economic strategies	
	Major Developed Site (MDS) within the green belt	
	Criteria of PPG2 Green Belt, Policy C4	
	Footprint schedule	
	Scheme compliance when considered with adjacent proposed housing land	
	Very special circumstances	
	Defined need for housing and requirement to make the best use of land	
	Key considerations	
7	Sustainability, transport and the environment	51
	Promoting sustainability and tackling climate change	
	Achieving quality design	
	Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, landscape and trees	
	Protecting cultural heritage	
	Improving ground conditions and avoiding pollution	
	Protecting the noise environment	
	Sustainable travel	
	Services and utilities provision	
	A strategy to minimise and manage waste	
	Lighting strategy	
	Signage strategy	
	Key considerations	
	Conclusion	59
	Accordance with planning policy considerations	

Appendix 1	Documents submitted in support of the full planning application	61
Appendix 2	Films produced in the UK by Warner Bros. since 1968	63
Appendix 3	Films and productions that have utilised Leavesden Studios	65
Appendix 4	Meeting policy objectives: Planning policy review	66

List of figures		
Figure 1.1	Indicative master plan	6
Figure 1.2	Location plan showing application boundary	8
Figure 1.3	Project components	9
Figure 2.1	Location of studios within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film and media cluster (Screen East)	11
Figure 2.2	Site designations and environmental constraints	12
Figure 2.3	Original Leavesden Aerodrome buildings	15
Figure 2.4	1993 Planning brief	15
Figure 2.5	1998 'concept plan' (Leavesden Developments)	16
Figure 2.6	2001 master plan (MEPC)	16
Figure 4.1	Illustrative plan showing project components	23
Figure 4.2	Landscape master plan	24
Figure 4.3	Proposed studio concept plan	26
Figure 4.4	Artistic impressions of proposal	27
Figure 4.5	Proposed site plan	28
Figure 4.6	Illustrative sketch of proposal	31
Figure 6.1	Landscape master plan	43
Figure 6.2	View towards the site from North West Avenue bridge (extract from landscape and visual assessment)	45
Figure 6.3	View towards the site from Aerodrome Way (extract from landscape and visual assessment)	48
Figure 7.3	Example directional signage	57

List of tables		
Table 1	Schedule of existing accommodation	13
Table 2	Footprint schedule as existing, excluding Studios	17
Table 3	Schedule of proposed accommodation	23
Table 4	Total major feature film studio space in the UK	33
Table 5	Value of Warner Bros. Productions at Leavesden Studios (Source: Screen East)	34
Table 6	Developable area schedule	46
Table 7	Footprint schedule incorporating Warner Bros. proposals and footprint assumed by MEPC housing site	46





Warner Bros. Entertainment is pleased to submit this planning application to Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council to retain and refurbish the existing film production facility at Leavesden Studios and provide two additional stages for the storage and public exhibition of film sets and artefacts.

Warner Bros. holds Leavesden Studios in the highest esteem as the home of our much-loved Harry Potter films, and this proposal is central to our long-term plans to invest in the local production community, to create new local and industry employment opportunities, and to support the future of the UK film industry.

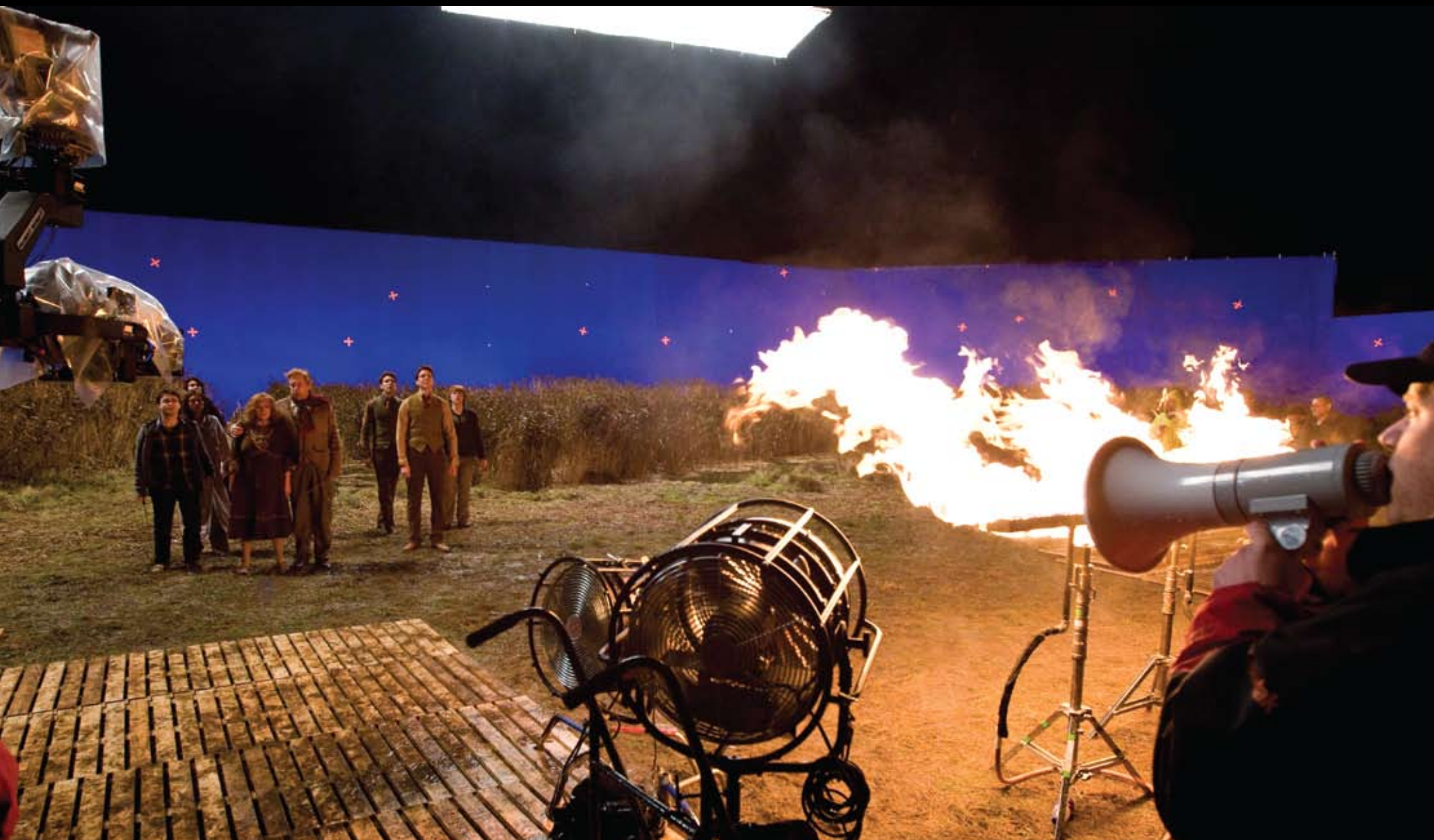
On behalf of Warner Bros. Entertainment, our film production teams and the leadership of our UK operation, we are excited to be responsible for this new venture, which demonstrates our firm commitment to the protection and promotion of the legacy of exceptional British filmmaking at Leavesden and across the UK.

Yours,

Barry Meyer, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Alan Horn, President and Chief Operating Officer



1. Warner Bros. has a long tradition in the UK film industry, stretching back to the 1920s, and is the only US major film production company ever to run its own studio in the UK – at Leavesden. Warner Bros.'s relationship with Leavesden began in 2000, and has grown significantly since then, with the facility now the home for the Harry Potter series of films.
2. The UK film industry makes a significant contribution to the economy as well as to our social and cultural life. Figures from the Film Council confirm that in 2006 the industry directly employed 33,500 people and supported a total of 95,000 jobs, taking into account the wider supply chain. In terms of GDP the industry contributed over £4.3 billion in 2006, and over £1.1 billion to the Exchequer.
3. In its own right, Leavesden Studios has a formidable track record, attracting an estimated total of £704 million in film production budgets between 2003 and 2008, and directly employing 1,500+ people during peak filming periods, of which the vast majority live locally. Indirectly, through spin off effects, its contribution to the economy, including the growth of the Hertfordshire film and media cluster, is even wider.
4. Warner Bros. move to Leavesden in 2000, has enabled the production and associated marketing and corporate activities to be consolidated in one location. This strategy has proved to be an outstanding success for the company, the local community and for the regional economy, and over the last decade has accounted for 25-50% of the nation's inward investment in film production.
5. The company, whose lease of the Studios expires at the end of 2010, has a vision to purchase the site to make Leavesden its permanent studio home in the UK. This will complement Warner Bros. main studio complex at Burbank, California. However, if this long-standing relationship is to continue to flourish, and in order for Warner Bros. to make this long-term multi-million pound investment in the site, the company requires planning certainty that secures the future of the site for filming activities. Continuing to operate on a temporary basis is not an appropriate solution. A permanent permission will also safeguard the long-term future of this strategic employment site, the associated local jobs and the wider economic, social and cultural contribution that the Studio makes.
6. The selection of Leavesden Studios as Warner Bros. UK flagship facility follows the consideration of a range of alternative scenarios. A number of essential criteria are satisfied by Leavesden, including:
 - a strategic location within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film cluster, that is within the critical catchment area for film technicians, crews and associated businesses. This is essential to ensuring sufficient qualified crews are immediately available and equally importantly that they do not need to be housed in hotels which would substantially increase production costs,
 - Leavesden Studios represents approximately 39% of the UK's dedicated studio space for major feature film production,
 - the ability to retain and enhance current staff and supply chain relationships with the safeguarding of existing jobs (Screen East estimates that 6,700 people are employed in film and associated sectors in Hertfordshire alone),
 - the provision of a single site with the scale, security and privacy required for outdoor and indoor filming,
 - a site that can be owned and operated by Warner Bros. without the need for a third party partner,
 - a site that will enable continued occupation of the site by Warner Bros.,
 - keeps the key Warner Bros. functions within a single site thereby encouraging further synergies and economies of scale,
 - optimises the substantial multi-million pound investment in existing stages, film sets, workshops, marketing and other support facilities made to date at Leavesden,
 - the ability to celebrate and build on Warner Bros. success at Leavesden Studios is critical to the Warner Bros. business development plan and the future prosperity of the Group, particularly in these challenging times.
7. At a time when investment in the UK's economy is critical, Warner Bros. submitted planning application will enable the continued production of high quality films at Leavesden, and facilitate a seamless transition when the production of the Harry Potter series of films ceases in 2010. To lose Warner Bros. from Leavesden would have a significant impact upon the UK film industry and the Hertfordshire economy in particular, and a unique opportunity to celebrate the outstanding legacy of both Warner Bros. in the UK and at Leavesden Studios would be lost. It would also equate to approximately one third of the major film production capacity of the UK having to find an alternative location, some of which would almost certainly be outside the UK.



Introduction

1.1 Warner Bros. has submitted a full planning application to Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council for the retention, refurbishment and extension of Leavesden Studios, Hertfordshire.

1.2 Following a series of temporary consents granted since 1994, the current application seeks consent for the permanent retention of the Studios and associated exterior filming and production areas (including the backlot) for film production and other associated activities. Consent is thus sought for the refurbishment of the existing studios, replacement and extended workshops, stages and offices. Two new stages are also proposed for the storage and public exhibition of film sets and artefacts, with new accesses from Aerodrome Way (previously known as Airfield Way) and revised internal layout and parking areas to consolidate and improve existing arrangements.

1.3 Warner Bros. has agreed to purchase the 66 hectare studio site from the current landowners MEPC, subject to planning consent. MEPC will retain the land to the east, which is proposed for housing in the Three Rivers District draft Core Strategy.

1.4 This supporting statement has been prepared to explain:

- the background to the current proposal,
- the detailed planning history of the site,
- the legacy of filming at Leavesden,
- the economic benefits of the application,
- relevant planning policy considerations.

If successful, the project will provide significant direct and indirect employment opportunities, strengthening the site's role as a strategic employment site and providing continuity to Warner Bros' investment in the UK film industry and more specifically in the Studios at Leavesden.

1.5 In accordance with appropriate planning requirements, the applicant has screened the proposals for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The screening assessment has been discussed informally with Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council and is submitted formally with this application. The screening request is based on initial environmental studies and suggests that EIA is not required for this application. Informal feedback from officers has supported the methodology and conclusions of the screening request.

The planning application

1.6 Full planning permission is sought for:

'the continued use of land and buildings for film production and associated activities including retention and refurbishment of existing studios to accommodate stages, backlot, workshops, offices, production facilities, canteen / commissary and ancillary studio facilities and services, replacement and extended workshops, stage and offices. Two new stages (approx. 13,000 sqm floorspace) for the storage and public exhibition of film sets and artefacts (including approx. 380 sqm café and 330 sqm gift shop), new accesses from Aerodrome Way, revised internal road layout and parking, extended backlot, landscaping and associated works.'

1.7 More specifically, consent is sought for the following key elements:

- retention and refurbishment of the existing studios including:
 - i refurbished stages,
 - ii new and refurbished office accommodation,
 - iii workshops including carpenters, plasterers, lighting and prop storage,
 - iv production services including costume wardrobe, dressing rooms, art department, makeup, hairdressing, prop storage, visual effects, film editing, prosthetics and animatronics,
 - v commissary, catering and other informal meeting areas.

- retention and expansion of the 100-acre backlot and external filming and production areas to allow continued open-air shooting, set-building and associated activities,
- retention and refurbishment of the Flight Shed for stage and storage purposes
- replacement stage and associated demolition works,
- replacement workshop and associated demolition works,
- two new stages for the storage and public display of film sets and artefacts,
- reconfiguration of existing road layout and parking,
- closure of existing access on South Way,
- introduction of two new access roads from Aerodrome Way,
- landscape and earthworks associated with the development and the relocation and enhancement of earth bunds,
- other ancillary infrastructure and works as shown on the site layout plan, including drainage works, tree works, provision of street lighting, associated power supplies and associated signage.

1.8 In accordance with statutory requirements, the application contains sufficient information for the application to be validated and determined. Appendix 1 sets out the full list of documents submitted to support the application.

1.9 Figure 1.1 overleaf provides an indicative master plan for the site showing the location of different elements of the proposal and how the application relates to adjacent land.



Figure 1.1 Indicative master plan

Adjacent site

1.10 To the east of the application site, 13.3 hectares of land has been proposed as a 'preferred option' housing site in the Three Rivers Core Strategy, Further Preferred Options document (November 2009). The application which is the subject of this supporting statement, is made solely by Warner Bros. and is unrelated to this adjoining land other than having regard for its potential to deliver housing numbers for the district. The proposal has been designed to ensure that it does not compromise future development of the adjoining site. The detailed technical studies submitted with the application provide evidence to support this, demonstrating that the capacity of the road network, access to the future residential site and green belt objectives are not compromised by this application.

The applicant

1.11 Warner Bros. is a broad-based entertainment company and a global leader in the creation, production, distribution, licensing and marketing of all forms of entertainment and their related businesses. Above all, it is a content company. The company's overriding objective is to create quality content for a wide variety of audiences around the world.

1.12 Founded in 1918, Warner Bros. operates one of the world's leading film studios, and is a subsidiary of Time Warner, with its headquarters in Burbank, California.

The Warner Bros. vision and development philosophy

1.13 After over a decade of unprecedented successful filming at Leavesden, Warner Bros. is proposing to commit to the long-term future of the UK's film industry with the purchase, refurbishment and expansion of Leavesden Studios. The vision is to modernise the existing studios and associated facilities to maintain and enhance Leavesden's position at the forefront of the creation and production of UK-based films. Importantly, at a time of economic recession, this will safeguard existing jobs, foster economic growth, create new employment opportunities and support the future of the UK film industry, as

set out in detail within section 5. The Leavesden concept not only demonstrates the company's commitment to film production in the UK but also to the local community, with employment opportunities during the development and operation of the facility and during times of production. This will provide a boost to one of the UK's most valued and fastest growing industries at a critical time.

1.14 Additionally, the proposal includes opening a part of the Studios to enable the public to view the magnificent world-class film sets and other memorabilia from the Harry Potter films. Over its extensive history, Warner Bros. has demonstrated a deep commitment to the preservation of its company's legacy and to the history of the film industry as a whole. The company is committed to celebrating the artistic creativity and cinematic excellence in the country where the story and films were conceived and brought to life.

1.15 By owning and operating Leavesden as its own production facility in the UK, Warner Bros. will be better placed to implement its vision of creating quality content for global audiences while expanding its studio facilities business in international markets.

1.16 In addition, the public exhibition of Harry Potter sets, props and artefacts will help foster the film culture in the UK, particularly among the younger generations of filmgoers, as well as promoting the creative industries as an exciting career opportunity.

1.17 This project also aligns with Warner Bros.' history of engaging in responsible and active corporate citizenship. The company seeks to have a positive impact on the communities in which it does business. In Burbank, California, home to Warner Bros.' headquarters, the company has been a good community partner for over 86 years, supporting the city through economic development, philanthropic giving, employee volunteerism and civic leadership. In addition to directly offering its support to many local organisations, the company maintains programmes to encourage its employees to volunteer their talents and efforts in support of the community. Its London-based employees have also supported their local community through supporting fundraising, volunteering, and mentoring programmes for charitable causes in the areas where they are based.

Opposite: Aerial photograph



1.18 Much of the emphasis of Warner Bros.' corporate responsibility programme has been placed on environmental stewardship. Over the past 17 years, the company's initiatives have demonstrated that 'green' business practices can benefit both the environment and directly support business objectives of strategic growth, innovation and sustainability. Warner Bros. wholly supports initiatives that promote the use of environmentally friendly and energy efficient building materials, and has developed an innovative recycling programme to minimise waste from production set materials. It is recognised that such efforts increase efficiency, reduce costs and create a healthier environment for employees and the community as a whole. In line with the historic management of the site, Leavesden Studios will endeavour to improve upon its sustainability performance, looking for opportunities in all its businesses to decrease its environmental footprint.

1.19 Warner Bros. has a dedicated approach to sustainability and understands the benefits available through implementing best practice sustainable design and construction measures. It is recognised that the proposed development offers an excellent opportunity to improve on the current operation in terms of resource consumption. Warner Bros. is committed to delivering a development that has clear environmental credentials.

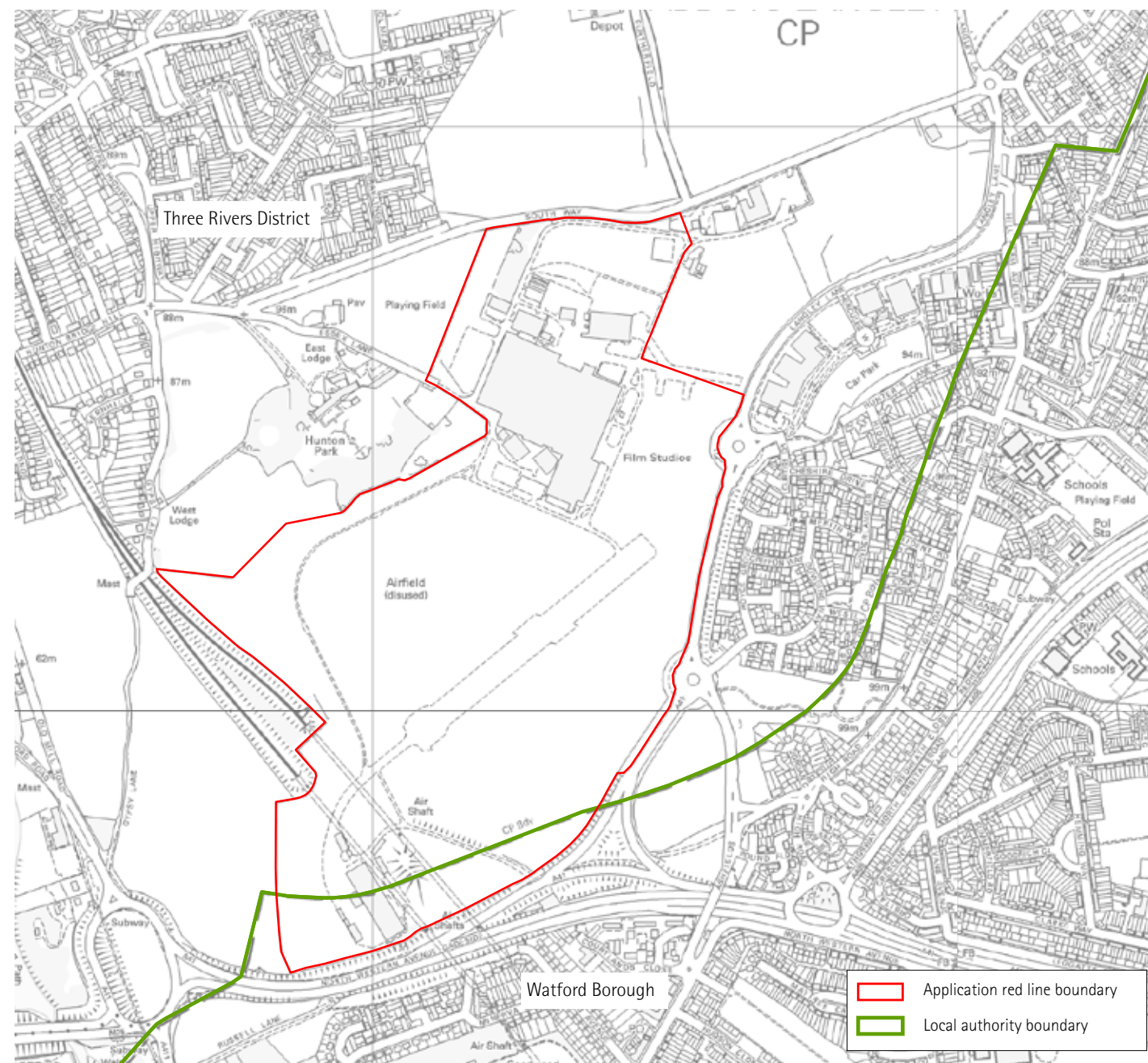


Figure 1.2 Location plan showing application boundary

Project concept

1.20 The project will build upon the special characteristics of its location within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film cluster, the unique setting of the large backlot and the very successful productions to date, together with all the necessary functional elements to meet the needs of film and television productions at the highest level. The aim is to safeguard and enhance the film making community at Leavesden that has built up a reputation for the very best quality of film production. The project will help maintain a commercially viable and self-sustaining UK film industry. The objective is for Leavesden to become Warner Bros. UK flagship facility, from which the UK film industry will continue to prosper. The existing complex will become the permanent home for Warner Bros. Productions in the UK, attracting the best filmmakers and the best of British craftsmanship and technology.

1.21 The two new stages are a major feature of the scheme and will provide a home for many of the wonderful sets and other artefacts used in the production of films on site. The displays will provide an insight into the people and skills involved in filmmaking and help to promote career opportunities to meet the needs of a dynamic and growing industry.

Master plan concept

1.22 The master plan concept will integrate three principal areas of activity which are considered essential to film making in the 21st century:

1) A core production zone, which includes the refurbished and modernised studios together with workshop and production support facilities. The existing studio buildings are in need of major investment to make them weatherproof and bring them up to modern standards. This is a unique opportunity to bring about such improvements. Most importantly, the refurbishment of the existing large-scale stages will continue to attract high profile large-scale film productions. In addition, provision can be made for other stages ranging in size from approximately 10,000 sq ft (930 sq m) to 40,800 sq ft (3,800 sq m).

2) A location zone. A key requirement of the project is to maintain the ability to continue to film exterior sequences on site. The availability of a 100 acre (40 hectare), flat and largely open backlot is a major attraction to both British and overseas producers, as it affords an expansive outdoor area for large set-building with a 180 degree clear horizon for shooting. Of paramount importance is the contiguous nature of the backlot to the Studios. This often avoids the need for 'off the lot' location shooting, saving the production considerable time, inconvenience, money and retaining a higher proportion of expenditure within the UK. There is also a considerable sustainability benefit in avoiding the need to travel.

3) A new public zone which will contain two new stages to accommodate many of the authentic sets and artefacts which have been produced on site and used in the Harry Potter series of films and other Warner Bros. productions. This is an essential element of Warner Bros.' requirements, given that it is one of a very small number of film companies that own and operate its own studios. The Harry Potter film franchise has been the most successful ever, and Warner Bros. is keen to find a home for the many film sets and artefacts produced over the course of the last 10 years of filming, and which are considered to be a showcase of excellence for the UK film industry. The co-location and integration of the public zone with the production and location zones is considered to be of critical importance to retaining the Harry Potter legacy, developing film culture, encouraging creative excellence and nurturing new talent.

1.23 The principles of this arrangement are shown in figure 1.3

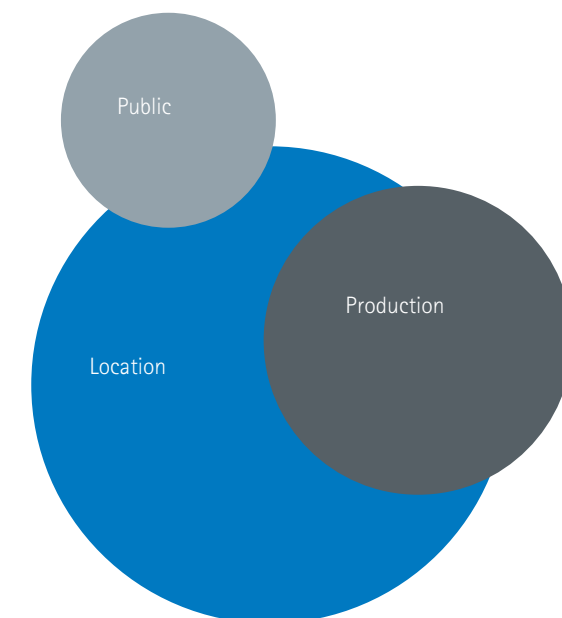


Figure 1.3 Project components



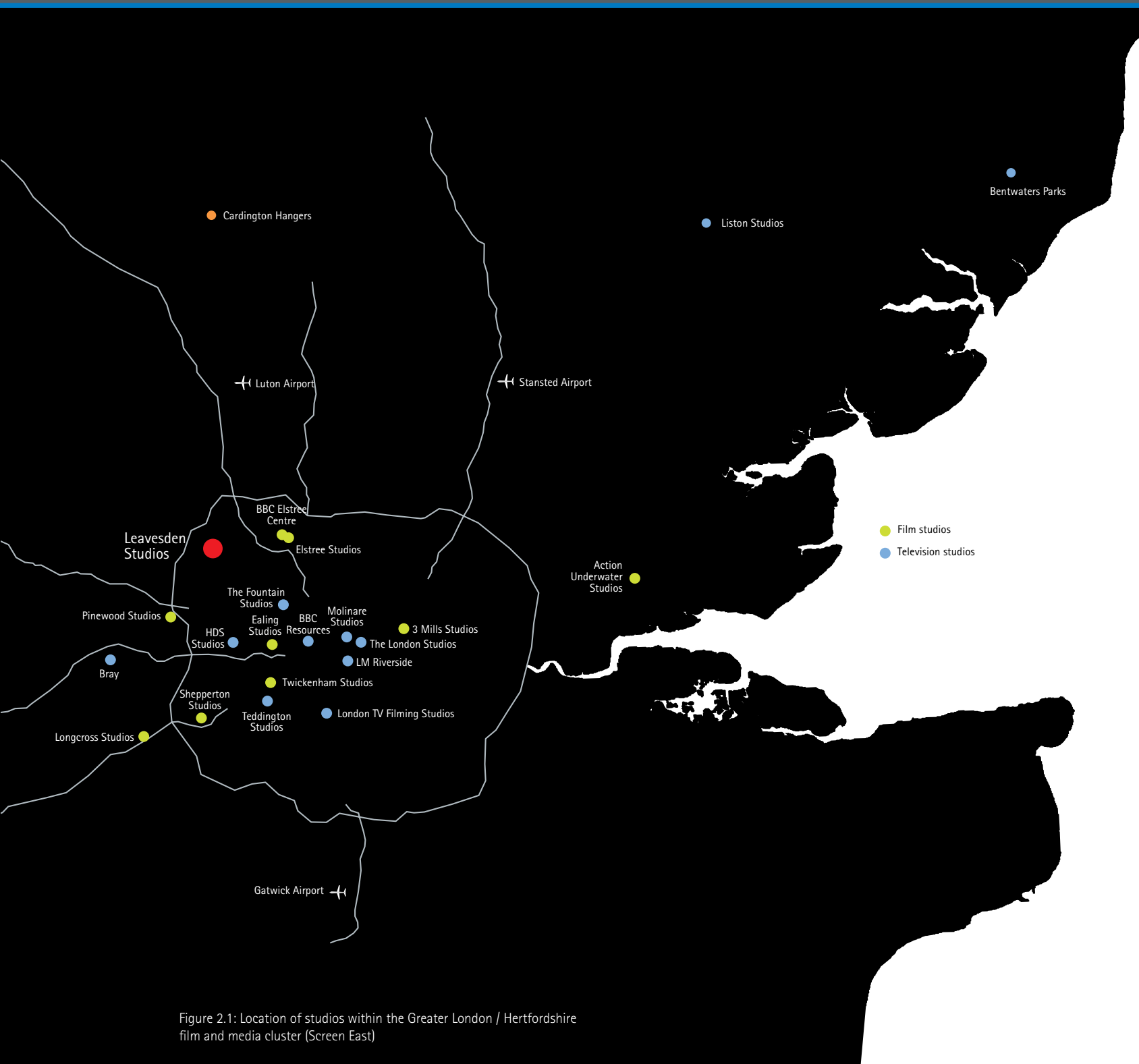


Figure 2.1: Location of studios within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film and media cluster (Screen East)

Site location

2.1 The 66 hectare brownfield site is located at the former Leavesden Aerodrome, immediately north of Watford, and approximately 30 kilometres from central London.

2.2 The majority of the site lies within Three Rivers District but a proportion – approximately 10% – encompassing part of the Flight Shed, falls within the Borough of Watford. The extent of the site is shown by the planning application boundary plan.

2.3 The site offers significant locational advantages for filming, with regard to the unique setting of the large 100-acre (40 ha) backlot, good site accessibility and high level of natural screening. The backlot in particular is a major attraction to British and overseas producers, as it affords an expansive on site outdoor area for large set-building, with a 180 degree clear horizon for shooting, all of which are key elements that make Leavesden an excellent filming location. These features are fundamental to the philosophy behind the project concept, and no other comparable sites exist within the filming catchment area, making it impossible to replicate without moving outside this key strategic zone or overseas.

2.4 Importantly, the site is located within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film and media cluster, which includes the Soho creative industries hubs and other major studios including Pinewood, Shepperton and Elstree, see figure 2.1. This is essential for the successful operation of the Studios, which requires the specific skilled workforce, additional services and facilities that are only available in sufficient levels within this media cluster zone.

2.5 The successful historic record of film production at Leavesden is of vital importance to Warner Bros. who seek to maintain and develop Leavesden's reputation and position within the film industry and enhance the development of associated industries in Hertfordshire.

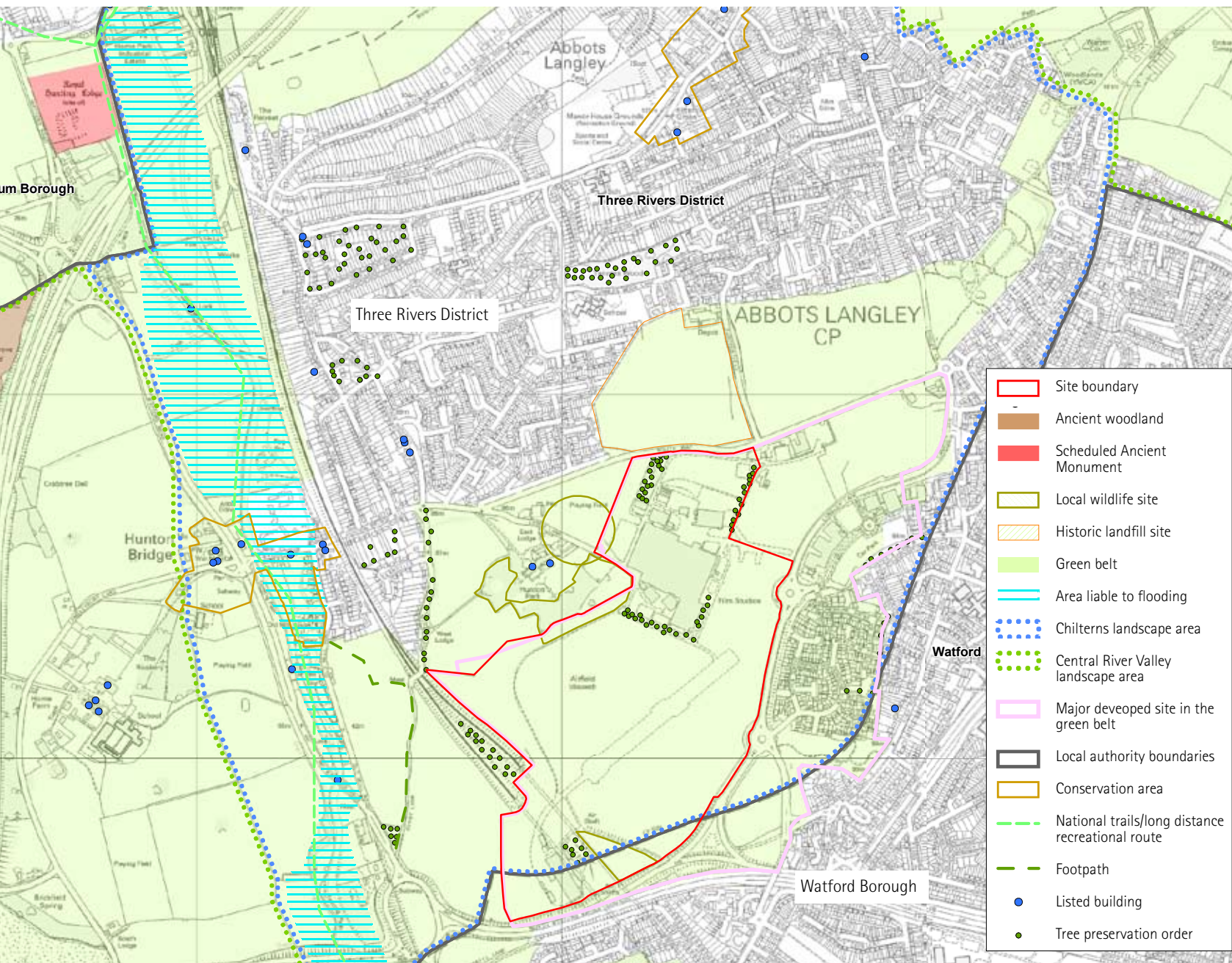


Figure 2.2: Site designations and environmental constraints

Site accessibility

2.6 Leavesden Studios benefits from good inter-urban rail services and the West Coast Main Line from London with services departing from Euston for Watford junction every 10 - 15 minutes with a journey duration of 20 minutes. Watford Junction station is within 4km of the site and Kings Langley station is located approximately 2.5km to the north.

2.7 Existing and frequent public bus services run past the site frontage along Aerodrome Way, providing direct access to and from Watford and neighbouring residential areas. Other services can be accessed by a short walk to South Way or Leavesden High Road and Ashfields, and these form part of the extensive Watford local bus network.

2.8 Arriva service 80 runs past the site, accessed from Leavesden Park, providing a direct bus service to Watford Junction running approximately every 40 minutes. This is primarily a shuttle service used by those working at Leavesden Park. However, it is currently underutilised and there is a real opportunity for direct services to Leavesden Studios to be improved through the implementation of the Warner Bros' proposed framework travel plan.

2.9 The site is well located in terms of road connections from London and the rest of the UK with excellent motorway connections to junctions 19 and 20 of the M25 and junctions 5 and 6 of the M1 motorway. The A41 provides access into London and Hemel Hempstead via the A425. The A405 provides access to St Albans.

2.10 At a more local level, Aerodrome Way, a single carriageway local distributor road that connects with the A41 to the south, originally constructed to relieve Leavesden High Road, bounds the site on its eastern frontage.

2.11 There is a single vehicular site access from South Way. Currently there is no operational access from Aerodrome Way along the eastern boundary of the site, although provision has been made for such access, with spurs already in place on the recently constructed roundabouts.

2.12 In terms of pedestrian infrastructure, all pedestrian routes to the site from the surrounding residential areas consist of lit pavements, with signal controlled crossing facilities at the Aerodrome Way junctions with Ashfields and Hill Farm Avenue. The development will ensure that pedestrian access into the site is provided.

Site description

- 2.13 The application site extends to 66 hectares of relatively flat previously developed land and currently comprises:
- the remaining part of the former Leavesden Aerodrome runway,
 - 100 acre backlot with 180 degrees of clear and uninterrupted horizon for open air filming on site, protected by existing bunds,
 - the Flight Shed, No.1 Factory and associated buildings in the north of the site now used as a film stage and associated production facilities by Warner Bros.,

Table 1 below provides a schedule of existing accommodation:

Stage	Area (sq ft)
Stage A	40,800
Stage B	30,900
Stage C	11,250
Stage D	11,808
Stage E	(currently used as workshops)
Stage F	15,300
Stage G	19,275
Stage H /I	74,656
Flight Shed Stage L	48,110
Total Stage Space	252,099

Table 1: Schedule of existing accommodation

2.14 Aerodrome Way and the residential outskirts of Watford bound the site to the south and east. To the north is the former county landfill site, De Vere-owned Hunton Park Hotel and conference centre, Abbots Langley playing fields, and beyond the residential areas of Abbots Langley and Hunton Bridge. The busy West Coast Main Line railway borders in part the site to the west, and continues through the site underground, adjacent to the Flight Shed, in the Watford Tunnel. Beyond and to the west of the site is the A41 and green belt land adjacent to Hunton Bridge.

2.15 Immediate and long-range views into and out of the site are highly restricted due to the topography and earth bunds to the south and natural vegetation screening to the north and west. For further details see the landscape and visual assessment undertaken by Terence O'Rourke Ltd and submitted in support of this application.

2.16 There are no existing public rights of way within the development site. Adjacent to the site (approximately 30m to the west of the site boundary) a public footpath runs south from Hunton Bridge, along Gypsy Lane to the Hunton Bridge Interchange.

Site designations

2.17 The current development plan for the site encompasses the saved policies of the Three Rivers Local Plan, adopted in 2002, and the saved policies of the Watford Borough Local Plan, adopted in December 2003. The East of England Plan, adopted in May 2008, provides strategic policies, whilst a small number of policies remain saved from the Hertfordshire Structure Plan (adopted April 1998). Both local authorities are at the preferred options stage in preparing their core strategies, which will in time replace the local plans as part of the local development frameworks.

2.18 The site is identified in the Three Rivers District and Watford Borough local plans as a major developed site (MDS) within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The principle of redevelopment has been established provided that due regard is given to the specific criteria relating to Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 2 Green Belt and the adopted 1993 Planning Brief for the site.

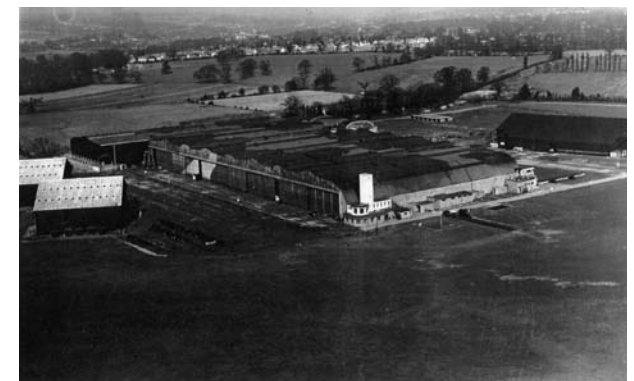
2.19 The former Leavesden Aerodrome site is also allocated as a key employment site in the Hertfordshire Structure Plan. This is in recognition of the historic quantum of development on site and its future potential to play a major long-term role in the Hertfordshire economy.

2.20 Within the application site Tree Preservation Order 305 protects trees around the existing studio buildings, TPO 310 and 107 protect trees in the vicinity of the Flight Shed in the south west corner of the site.

2.21 Figure 2.2 highlights the environmental features and policy designations within the site and surrounding area. These include three local wildlife sites located either wholly or partly within the site, the grade II* listed Hunton Park and grade II listed Dairy at Hunton Park adjacent to the site, and the Central River Valleys Landscape Area.

2.22 The landscape area recognises the course of the historic proto-Thames, and characteristic landscape features associated with the nearby River Gade and Grand Union Canal, which run in a north south direction, approximately 400m to the west of the site.

2.23 The landscape and visual assessment submitted in support of the application demonstrates that due to the site's history of intensive industrial use, the landscape character of the site is not of the same high value as the surrounding greenfield land. Further information is provided at paragraph 6.37-6.40 and within the landscape and visual assessment.



Site planning history

Leavesden Aerodrome

2.24 The land on which the application site is located consists of part of the former Leavesden Aerodrome, originally known as "Mile Field" – part of Hunters Farm. The Ministry of Supply requisitioned Leavesden Aerodrome from Watford Corporation in 1940. (The Ministry of Supply was later abolished with responsibilities and assets devolved to the newly created Ministry of Defence (MoD)). The site was an important centre of Mosquito and Halifax aircraft production and pilot training during World War II with a runway of approximately 915m and two main factory complexes for aircraft manufacturing.

2.25 Following the war, the site became a focus for the manufacture and testing of civil and military aircraft engines by a number of companies including de Havilland, Hawker Siddeley, Bristol Siddeley and most recently Rolls-Royce.

2.26 In 1953 the MoD purchased the land from Watford Corporation, following which it was leased, then sold to Rolls-Royce. At its peak, in excess of 3,000 people were employed at the site, making and testing aircraft, aero-engines and components.

2.27 The airfield was a popular location for flying with some 60,000 aircraft movements at its peak in 1990. It remained open until March 1994, being used by a private flying club, the Leavesden Flight Centre.

1993 Planning Brief

2.28 The Rolls-Royce factory closed in 1993, at which time a Planning Brief was prepared for the site to guide future redevelopment proposals. The Planning Brief, which was prepared jointly by Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council, was approved by all three parties in September 1993. The document was subsequently reprinted in February 1994 and August 1996 when metric measurements were added.

2.29 The Planning Brief established a number of basic principles for the future redevelopment of the site, which related to a measurement of the developed areas in 1993. These were as follows:

- 'The total floor area of all the buildings to be erected on the site must not exceed the total floor area of buildings presently on the site which has been calculated to be 102,879 sqm (1,107,416 sq ft) (excluding garages, cycle sheds and runways)'. It was subsequently agreed in 1995, following the publication of revised PPG2 *Green Belts* that floor area should not be used as a control mechanism for future development,
- 'The **footprint** of the buildings to be erected on the site must not exceed the present total footprint of **90,523 sqm** (974,381 sqft) (excluding runways)',
- 'The **height** of the existing buildings should not be exceeded'. This was established as **18.28m**, as confirmed by the Three Rivers District Council reports of 22nd May 2002 and 16th July 2002 respectively,
- 'The totality of the ground level site area to be developed (which is to include all buildings, parking, hardstanding, storage, landscaping about buildings and site access roads) should not exceed the present developed site area'. The maximum **developed area** was later established to be **32.28 hectares** (excluding runways).

2.30 The Planning Brief also included reference to potential future uses of the site, including business, residential and leisure development and green belt enhancement.

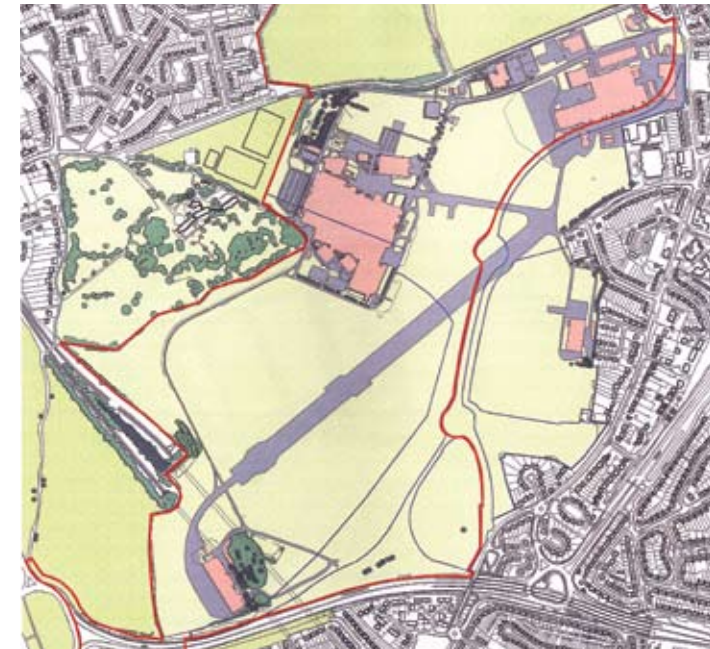


Figure 2.3 Original Leavesden Aerodrome buildings – shown in pink

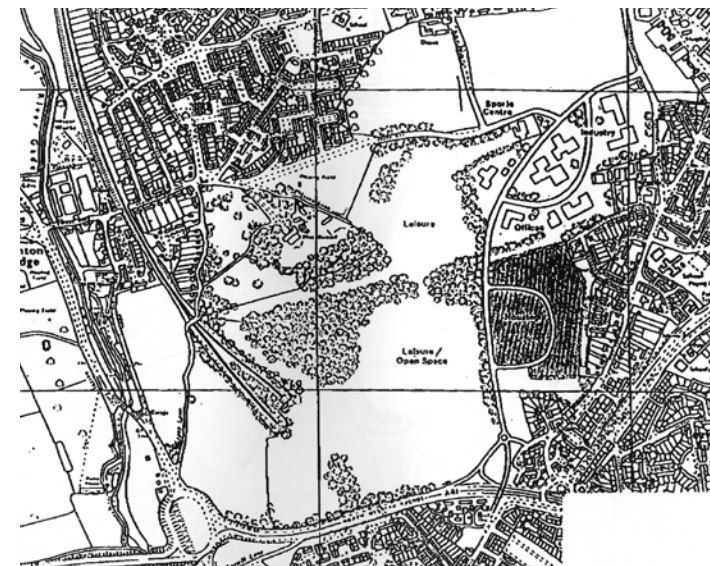


Figure 2.4 1993 Planning brief

Rolls-Royce's redevelopment proposals

2.31 During 1994 and 1995, Rolls-Royce submitted outline planning applications to Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council for four different schemes, as set out below:

- Rolls-Royce Scheme A (1994): Redevelopment of site including class B1 (business), residential and leisure development to a maximum total floorspace of 108,589 sqm, together with formation of new estate roads and access to the A41(T) (Three Rivers ref: 94/0448/8, Watford ref: 94/0240/9).
- Rolls-Royce Scheme B (1994): Redevelopment of site including class B1 (business), class B2 (general industrial), class B8 (storage and distribution), residential and leisure development to a maximum total floorspace of 130,663 sqm, together with formation of new estate roads and access to the A41(T) (Three Rivers ref: 94/0449/8, Watford ref: 94/0449/8).
- Rolls-Royce Scheme C (1995): Redevelopment of site including class B1 (business), residential and leisure development to a maximum total floorspace of 108,554 sqm, together with formation of new estate roads and access to A41(T) (Three Rivers ref: 95/0118/8, Watford ref: 95/0074/9).
- Rolls-Royce Scheme D (1995): Redevelopment of the site including class B1 (business), residential and leisure development to a maximum total floorspace of 108,544 sqm, together with formation of new estate roads and access to A41(T) (Three Rivers ref: 95/0119/8, Watford ref: 95/0075/9).

2.32 Schemes A, B and C were subsequently withdrawn. A resolution to grant consent for scheme D was reached by Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council in June 1995 subject to conditions and a section 106 Agreement. The section 106 Agreement was not signed, and therefore no planning permission was formally issued.

2.33 During this period Rolls-Royce leased the site to Millennium Group Ltd (Leavesden Developments) who subsequently purchased it in November 1995.

Film studio use

2.34 Filming at Leavesden dates back to 1994 when Eon Productions (the makers of the James Bond films) submitted a change of use application to film studio and ancillary activities. A temporary consent was granted and, since that time, the majority of the factory buildings on the site, the runway and adjoining open land have been used for film production purposes.

2.35 The temporary planning permissions have since been renewed on a regular basis in 1996, 2002, 2004 and 2006 by both Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council to allow the continued use of land and buildings as a film studios with ancillary activities. The latest consent (ref: 06/0529/FUL Three Rivers and 06/00425/FUL Watford) allows the use to continue until 31 December 2010.

Millennium Group redevelopment proposals

2.36 In April 1995 Millennium Group submitted an outline planning application to use the No 1 Factory building (the largest building on the site) as film and television studios and to redevelop the remainder of the site for a range of uses including a studio tour, family leisure centre, offices, housing, sports and playing fields and a new spine road (Three Rivers ref: 95/0221/8, Watford ref: 95/0130/9).

2.37 Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council subsequently granted outline planning permission for the Millennium Group proposals on 3 November 1995, subject to the provisions of a signed section 106 Agreement and 37 planning conditions.

2.38 The application was accompanied by an illustrative layout plan No.1, which was subsequently amended. The "concept plan" of February 1998 provides the best indication of the form and location of the development that was intended by Leavesden Developments, (a subsidiary company of Millennium Group) at that time.

2.39 The spine road was subject to reserved matters approval in November 1998 (Three Rivers ref: 98/0711) and completed and adopted as a public highway by Hertfordshire County Council in September 1999. The residential development permitted by this outline permission was also subject to detailed approval for the construction of 320 dwellings in September 1999 (Three Rivers ref: 99/01231/AOD).

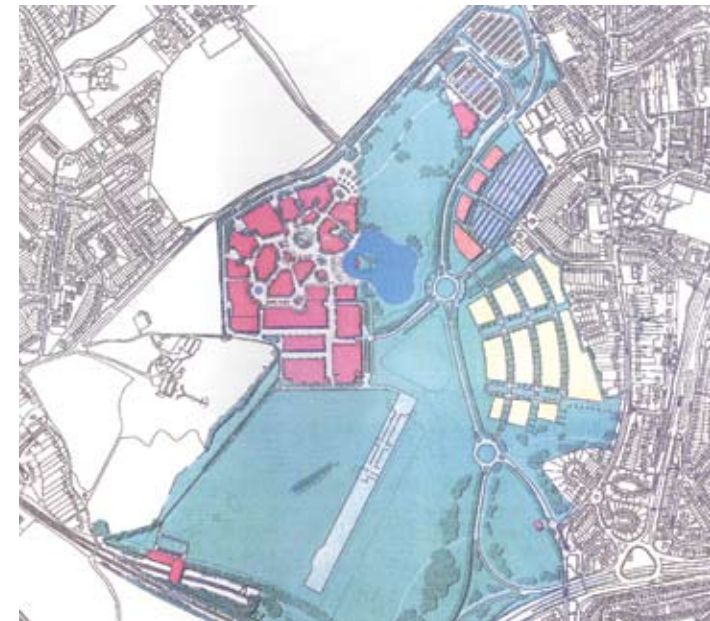


Figure 2.5: 1998 'concept plan' (Leavesden Developments)



Figure 2.6: 2001 master plan (MEPC)

2.40 In late September 1999, MEPC acquired a significant part of the former Leavesden Aerodrome site from Millennium Group Ltd, following which it submitted details of the office element of the outline planning application to Three Rivers District Council for reserved matters approval in February 2000. This consisted of four 4-storey buildings and was approved by the council in November 2000 subject to the terms of a new section 106 Agreement (Three Rivers ref: 00/00208/AOD and 00/00209/FUL). Three of the four office buildings have been built, whilst the fourth benefits from extant planning permission.

2.41 Although the spine road, residential and office developments have partially been developed, details were never submitted in relation to the film and television studio, studio tour and leisure centre elements of the Millennium Group outline consent.

2001 MEPC proposals

2.42 In December 2000 / January 2001, MEPC submitted two identical outline planning applications to Three Rivers District Council (00/01646/OUT and 01/00001/OUT) and Watford Borough Council (01/00003/OUT and 00/00795/OUT) for the development of a Technology Media and Telecommunications (TMT) Park at Leavesden Park.

2.43 The total area of the application site extended to 118 hectares, of which 18.6 hectares formed the developed area (with an anticipated maximum floorspace of 121,500 sqm), leaving 99.4 hectares undeveloped to be used as parkland, recreation and amenity space and nature reserves. The developed area proposals comprised:

- B1 development, comprising offices, research and development and light industry,
- a considerably reduced film studios and facilities with a studio tour, including sound stages, production facilities and administration buildings. (It should be noted that the resultant size of the studio facility would have been far too small for the production of a major motion picture.),

- amenity facilities to include a day nursery, health centre, shops, restaurants, gymnasium etc.,
- the undeveloped area comprised areas of public and private open space.

2.44 A resolution to grant outline planning permission for application 01/00001 (Three Rivers) and 01/00003/OUT (Watford) was reached in February and January 2003 respectively, subject to the completion of an extensive section 106 Agreement. Although drafted, the section 106 Agreement has never been formally completed and therefore, planning permission has never been issued by either council.

Footprint schedule

2.45 Table 2 below outlines the remaining developable footprint in relation to the 1993 Planning Brief control figures taking account of all implemented and extant development.

Reference	+/-	Footprint (sqm)	Footprint (sq ft)	Comment
A. 1993 Planning Brief footprint		90,523	974,381	
B. Residential development (1999)	minus	14,130	152,094	Built
C. Commercial development (2000)	minus	10,766	115,884	Consented and part implemented Note: Figures include 1,500 sqm unimplemented office 4 building, which has extant planning permission
D. Total green belt development to date (including unimplemented Office 4 building)		24,896	267,978	A plus B
Remaining developable footprint		65,627	706,403	A minus D

Table 2: Footprint schedule as existing, excluding Studios

Key considerations

2.46 The application site is designated as a strategic employment site and major developed site (MDS) in the green belt. Despite its location within the green belt the site has historically been used for intensive industrial use and as such the landscape character has been assessed as being of low value.

2.47 A review of the planning history indicates that the principle of the redevelopment of the site is acceptable, provided key PPG2 criteria are complied with. The 1993 Planning Brief also supports the redevelopment of the site.

2.48 Recent consented applications for large mixed-use schemes have only been implemented in part, largely due to their speculative nature, with much of the residual land remaining vacant. This proposal by Warner Bros. now provides the means by which a large part of this strategic employment site can be comprehensively safeguarded for the long-term future, whilst maintaining the character and openness of the green belt.

2.49 The Studios and associated land have been in continuous use for film production and associated activities for over a decade. The proposals will remove the uncertainty that currently exists over the future of the site and will provide a permanent long term solution with significant economic benefits.



The legacy of filming at Leavesden

3.1 Leavesden was first used for filming in 1994 by EON Productions, after the original change of use application was granted planning permission by Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council. At this time the 1 million sq ft floor area of the former Rolls-Royce factory was converted into temporary studios. The local authorities have since regularly renewed the temporary consents.

3.2 In 1995 the site was purchased by Millennium Group, at which time the Studios were expanded to accommodate the facilities required for the bigger, more complex and more visually exciting productions demanded by the public.

3.3 Following the purchase of the site by MEPC, Warner Bros. signed a lease with the company in 2000. The current lease expires in December of this year.

3.4 Warner Bros. is the only US film company currently operating a studio in the UK. It has a long tradition in the UK film industry dating back to the 1920s when the Studio first set up a UK operation to produce films that would draw on the UK's literary and artistic heritage and talent pool. For more than eight decades, Warner Bros., based first from Soho, and subsequently Teddington Studios, Pinewood, and finally Leavesden, has produced a steady stream of thrillers, romantic and crime dramas, musicals and comedies. Appendix 2 provides a list of all Warner Bros films produced in the UK since 1968.

3.5 Warner Bros' relationship with Leavesden, which began in 2000, has grown significantly with the Studios now the permanent home for the Harry Potter series of films, and as such, also home to many thousands of Potter-related costumes, props and a host of intricately designed and produced sets.

3.6 Leavesden is also the UK studio home of Warner Bros. Productions, which is responsible for all Warner Bros. films based in the UK, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. In the last five years alone, Warner Bros. has made, on average, four films a year in the UK, with recent UK-produced films including (in addition to the Harry Potter series), Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Batman Begins, Sweeney Todd (co-produced with Paramount), The Dark Knight and Sherlock Holmes.

3.7 A large number of films have been produced at Leavesden since its first use as a studio. Appendix 3 provides a list of films and other productions that have used the Leavesden facilities.

Existing activities on site

3.8 The following activities and uses associated with film and television production currently take place on the site:

- office accommodation for productions,
- workshops including carpenters, plasterers, lighting and set / prop design and storage,
- production services including costume wardrobe, dressing rooms, art department, makeup, hairdressing, prop storage, visual effects, film editing, prosthetics and animatronics,
- animal and bird enclosure,
- commissary, catering and other informal meeting areas,

- stages for filming both within Factory No.1 and the Flight Shed,
- exterior filming and productions areas (including backlot), utilised for outdoor filming and external sets,
- on a full filming day, up to a 1500+ people may be working on the site.

3.9 It is important to note that whilst the Studios are leased to Warner Bros. they are available to hire by third party production companies who also utilise this national film asset. This will continue to be the case subsequent to this application.

3.10 Given the intense public interest in the Harry Potter series of films and their stars, the entire studio complex is a "Closed Set" and is not open to the public. The only people who can access the studio are cast and crew involved in the film and invited guests.



Success despite constraints

3.11 Leavesden Studios currently operate from the majority of the former factory buildings, including the Flight Shed, which is located in the south eastern corner of the site.

3.12 The physical condition of the existing buildings, which are over 60 years old, is poor and they are in urgent need of modernisation. For example, there is a lack of adequate soundproofing, and significant flaws in the current layout and access and egress locations result in an inefficient use of space and inappropriate adjacencies. For example, vehicle movements and noisy workshops are located adjacent to non-soundproofed stages. In addition, multiple stage use is not possible due to noise transference.

3.13 Services provision in the form of utilities is also outdated and in need of improvement and modernisation. There is, therefore, an opportunity through this application to make a real improvement to the sustainability of the site, both in terms of energy savings and environmental improvements. The utilities statement and sustainability statement submitted in support of this application provide full details, whilst a brief summary is included in Chapter 7.

3.14 The lack of a permanent planning consent is also a severe operational constraint for the Studios. Despite the use being established since 1994, the lack of a permanent consent prevents the Studios from developing long-term aspirations at Leavesden. The lack of such certainty of use clearly impacts upon the Studios' operational efficiency and adversely affects the opportunity for long term business planning, investment and commercial decision-making. The current temporary consents expire at the end of 2010.

3.15 Despite these existing constraints, Leavesden Studios has enjoyed over a decade of unprecedented success. The Harry Potter films franchise have surpassed all expectations, breaking box office records, with all six of the released Harry Potter films being among the 20 top-grossing box office hits of all time and the franchise becoming the worldwide, top-grossing film picture franchise in history.

Key considerations

3.16 Over the past 16 years Leavesden Studios has established itself as an internationally renowned studio, with an enviable reputation at the forefront of the creation and production of UK-based films. The Studios have cultivated UK filmmaking talent; employing skilled craftsmen, actors, film crew and technicians from conception, through filming and post production to produce the very successful productions to date.

3.17 Its main attractions include its accessibility (especially from London and abroad), space, security and flexible accommodation together with its close proximity to the highly skilled filmmaking labour force. The 40-hectare backlot, which provides an unprecedented 180 degrees of uninterrupted horizon for filming is also a significant attraction to directors, whilst the remaining area of runway and areas of hardstanding give a level and stable base for prop construction.

3.18 The Studios in their current configuration are ideal for one single major motion picture. However, the renovation of the facility will ensure that the Studios are capable of attracting multiple occupiers within flexible stage space thus increasing a diversity of use in the types of productions that can be accommodated.

3.19 The proposal will enable the Studios to overcome its existing constraints, delivering urgent refurbishment and extension works to increase flexibility and modernise the facility in line with current film production standards. The grant of a permanent consent for the use of land for filming and related uses, will remove the current uncertainty that exists, and enable Warner Bros. to commit its long-term future to the site. This will ensure the continuation of Leavesden Studios as a strategically important employment site, safeguarding the many existing jobs that it creates and as importantly, the significant indirect employment UK-wide, associated with the films produced at the Studios.





Detailed description of development

Architectural proposals

4.1 The proposals to refurbish, replace and extend the existing studios at Leavesden, seek to significantly improve the layout of the Studios to make more efficient use of space, consolidating similar user groups in appropriate locations and rationalising access, parking and internal circulation to provide a more logical, flexible and user friendly layout. The upgrading of the existing building fabric will provide a secure and weatherproof high quality facility, ensuring the Studios can attract the best of the international film making community and allowing it to continue to compete on a global level.

4.2 The proposal will also incorporate two new stages initially to store and exhibit a range of some of the most famous sets and artefacts associated with films made at Leavesden, but also designed to be capable of use for filming in the future. While this element of the proposal aims to highlight and support the traditional craftsmanship used on site in the Harry Potter series of films, from conception, through filming and post-production, it is essential that these new stages be strongly integrated with the existing studio complex. A building footprint of 64,932 sqm is proposed and a total floor area of 71,027 sqm (GIA), including 56,169 sqm (GIA) of existing replacement and refurbished building and 14,858 sqm (GIA) of new build.

	Floorspace (GIA) (sqm)
Existing floorspace	55,019
Floorspace to be lost	6,136
Floorspace to be retained and refurbished	48,883
Proposed replacement stage and workshop	7,286
Proposed new floorspace	14,858
Total proposed floorspace	71,027
Net additional floorspace	16,008

Table 3: Schedule of proposed accommodation

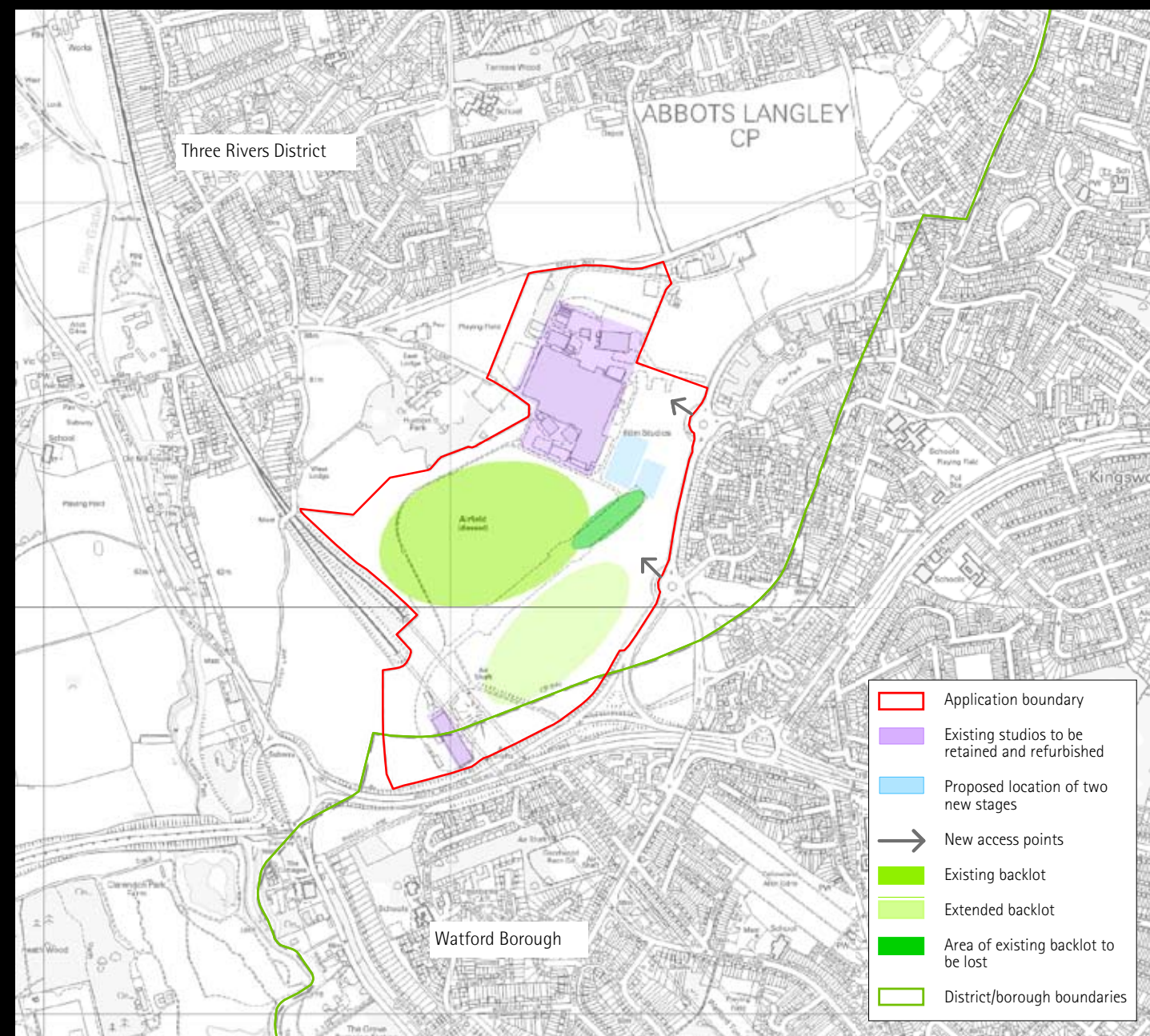


Figure 4.1: Illustrative plan showing project components



Landscape proposals

4.3 The landscape scheme will involve earth modelling, limited tree removal, hard surfacing and new planting of the car parks and pedestrian areas. The earth mound that currently runs alongside the existing runway forms a clear horizon to the external film backlot and is an important feature required for filming. This bund will be relocated adjacent to the security fence alongside Aerodrome Way. Earth mounds will be constructed further north continuing the alignment along Aerodrome Way and maximising the screening of the proposed car parks and new stages. These particular earth mounds are not required to afford a clear horizon for filming and will therefore be planted with a native species to create a mixed woodland, encouraging biodiversity.

4.4 A number of trees will be removed throughout the site where they have been identified in the arboricultural condition survey as dead or dying and urgently requiring attention. A limited number of trees will be removed where they are close to the existing buildings in areas where extensions are proposed. New tree planting will be incorporated into the scheme to replace lost trees and enhance the existing landscape. The important line of lime trees that forms a strong feature within the site will be retained and enhanced through new planting of lime trees on the opposite side of the road, thereby creating an avenue and ensuring the long term survival of this feature. Additional tree planting, hornbeam hedges and ornamental planting will be incorporated into the parking areas, breaking up the views from within the car park and ensuring a high quality external environment.

Key elements of the proposals

The selection of Leavesden Studios

4.5 The selection of Leavesden Studios as Warner Bros' UK flagship facility follows the consideration of a range of alternative scenarios. It is essential from Warner Bros' perspective that the proposals take place at Leavesden. In its view no other UK location satisfies the necessary criteria. Should planning permission fail, consideration would have to be given, for a variety of reasons, to moving a significant amount of film production outside the UK. This would clearly not be Warner Bros' preferred choice, as it wishes to keep film production at Leavesden, benefit from its strategic cluster location and avoid the loss of those jobs presently associated with the films created at the Studios.

4.6 Leavesden satisfies the following essential criteria:

- it occupies a strategic location within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film cluster,
- it represents the largest dedicated studio space for major feature film production in the UK, (comprising approximately 39% of the UK's total major film production space),
- it offers the ability to protect and safeguard a large percentage of the UK media production workforce and supply chain relationships. (Screen East estimates that 6,700 people are employed in film and associated sectors in Hertfordshire alone),
- it offers a single site with the scale, security and privacy required for outdoor and indoor filming,
- it can be owned and operated by Warner Bros. without the need for a third party partner,
- it is immediately available for occupation and development,
- it keeps the key Warner Bros. functions within a single site thereby encouraging further synergies and economies of scale,
- it optimises the substantial multi-million pound investment in existing stages, film sets, workshops, marketing and other support facilities made to date at Leavesden,
- it offers the unique ability to celebrate and build upon Warner Bros. success at Leavesden which is critical to Warner Bros. business development plan and the future prosperity of the Group.

Requirement for physical connection between the refurbished Studios and the new stages

4.7 Both in terms of the efficient operation and effective management of the site, there are significant benefits in having all Studio facilities centrally located, making resource and service distribution more cost effective. The replacement and new stages will benefit from direct access to a newly centralised and rationalised service core.

Design principles

4.8 Through the design process, a number of overriding principles have been focussed upon;

- Making the most of the existing buildings by utilising and adapting as necessary the existing buildings and site infrastructure to create an integrated and cohesive Studio facility, achieving inbuilt flexibility for varied operation and technological change in the film industry.
- To regenerate a site characterised by historic industrial infrastructure and maximising the re-use of buildings and materials in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.
- To preserve the architectural merit of the 1930's Art Deco and 1950's industrial buildings and add or alter with sensitivity and without detriment to the overall character of the site thus acknowledging and reflecting the continuance of purpose and form of the Studio.

4.9 In order to reflect the very strong architecture of the existing buildings, and maintain the striking characteristics that visually define the site, new buildings have followed similar design features in both form and function. The two new stages have longitudinal footprints running parallel to the main stages (original hangars) with a roof profile modelling that echoes the original and highly characteristic 'monitor' roof. Visual massing is relieved through the sensitive location and stepped alignment of the new buildings, with the overriding design intent being to create a natural visual extension of the existing Studios.

Figure 4.2: Landscape master plan

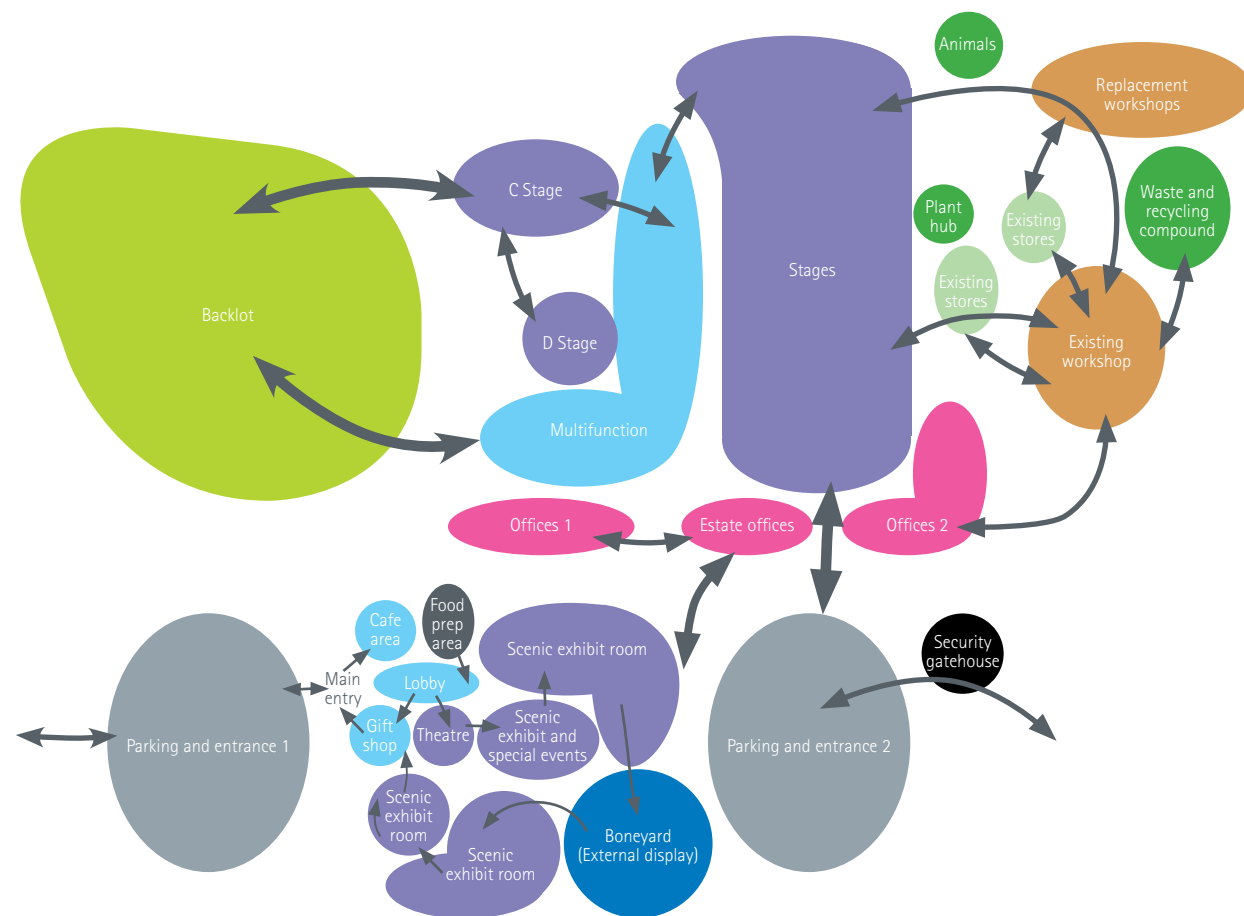


Figure 4.3: Proposed studio concept plan

Site operation – public zone

4.10 Public access to the site will be strictly managed and initially, and also during times of high demand, will be by prior appointment only. All marketing information and the booking and ticketing process will clearly state that there will be no access to the Studios unless a valid ticket is held, and that entry will only be allowed a maximum of 30 minutes prior to the ticket holder's allocated tour start time.

4.11 Although access to the site will be clearly identified as being by prior appointment only it is accepted that there will be occasions when members of the public will enter the site without a valid ticket. The car park has been designed to accommodate such occurrences, ensuring that there will be no possibility of vehicles blocking the immediate highway. Such visitors will be advised of the prior booking procedures and will either be asked to vacate the site and make a prior booking on-line or given the opportunity to book a later date while at the site, depending on current capacity. Such occurrences are likely to be few and far between, and limited to the initial opening period during holidays and weekends.

4.12 The number of people entering and leaving the site will be strictly controlled through this process, ensuring that the intensity of use of the site is managed and minimised. Visitor numbers will clearly be subject to annual, seasonal, weekly and even daily fluctuations with higher visitor numbers likely to coincide with weekends and school holidays, and fewer guests expected on weekdays during the winter months. The projected attendance numbers average out at substantially less than the maximum theoretical capacity (an approximate daily average of just 2,500 visitors which equates to only 50% of maximum capacity), however, the assessment work has assumed 100% attendance on a worst case basis and Warner Bros. will devise operational procedures capable of accommodating maximum numbers.

4.13 The maximum visitor scenario is based upon the following assumptions and controls:

- visitor opening hours 10.00 – 22.00,
- a tour will last 2 hours 10 minutes,
- the last tour starts at 18.40,
- all guests arrive a maximum of 30 minutes before their tour commences,
- all guests stay on site for a maximum of 1 hour once the tour finishes,
- the site receives the maximum permitted guests each day.

4.14 The outcome of this scenario is that the maximum number of guests on site at any one time will be 1,980 and this is expected between the hours of 13.00 and 18.40 inclusive (representative of less than 50% of the entire operational day), and an average of 1,478 visitors on site at any one time. It should be noted however, that the actual figures are much reduced during the first and last two hours of the operational day.

4.15 An alternative scenario has also been calculated, with guests staying for 30 minutes after the tour ends (a total of 3 hours 10 minutes on site). This result is a maximum of 1,710 guests on site between 12.40 and 18.40, and an average across the day of 1,278 people.

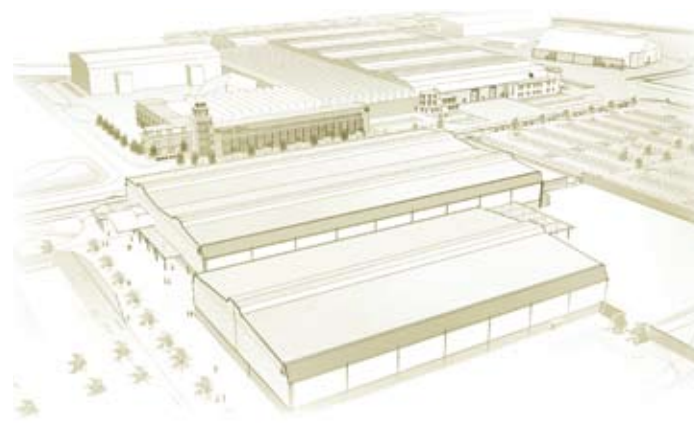


Figure 4.4: Artistic impressions of the proposal

4.16 Both these scenarios assume the exhibition is operating at maximum guest capacity, however, the maximum visitor scenario is considered to represent the worst case situation and has been used for traffic monitoring work, associated with the transport assessment (TA) and the development of the framework travel plan. In reality, it is likely that the majority of guests will not spend the full time on site (as allowed for in the modelling), with many arriving later and/or leaving earlier, and will of course, be subject to the fluctuations referred to above. Consideration must also be given to the fact that projected attendance numbers indicate an approximate daily average of just 50% of the maximum visitor scenario.



L Stage
(Flight Shed)

Backlot

C Stage

D Stage

Multi function

Stages

Replacement
workshop

Waste
recycling

Oil, gas and
hazardous material
compound

J Stage

K Stage

Gate 1

Gate 2

Anticipated development traffic

4.17 Warner Bros. has estimated that the new studio space will require a total of 118 FTE additional staff across various shift patterns. This will equate to a maximum of 78 staff on site at any one time. Based on this data and existing journey to work modal split information taken from the 2001 census, during the traditional peak periods of 08.00-09.00 and 17.00-18.00 the site will generate a total of 35 two way staff vehicular movements during each peak.

4.18 Anticipated visitor trip generation has been estimated using the maximum visitor capacity of the site and appropriate modal splits and car occupancy data based on a number of UK visitor attractions. At periods of peak demand hourly visitor trips will be 270 two-way car movements, 12 two-way bus/coach movements and 18 two-way taxi movements. This will not occur during the weekday morning peak hour, as the site will not be open to visitors until after the peak period. As the site is open to visitors during the weekday evening peak, there is the potential for this number of visitor trips to have an impact at this time, but this would only be if the site were operating at full capacity, something more likely to occur at weekends and during school holiday periods, which will run contrary to the general flow of traffic.

4.19 Employee trip distribution has been estimated based on existing journey to work patterns for the area. Visitor trips are anticipated to be from a much larger catchment than for staff and the majority of visitors will arrive via the strategic road network. Appropriate signage and visitor information on tickets and promotional material will encourage this.

Access strategy

4.20 The development proposals promote two vehicular access points, via additional arms onto the existing Aerodrome Way roundabout junctions. Amendments to the existing roundabout geometry are compliant with normal design standards and both junctions have sufficient capacity to accommodate development traffic. Stage 1 safety audits of these junctions confirm that these proposals are acceptable in safety terms.

4.21 The northern access point will provide access into Leavesden Studios for existing staff and will also be used by staff working in the new stages. The access strategy will include a separate exit only arm onto the roundabout from the staff car park.

4.22 The southern access will provide access for public visitors to the site, and will be of a standard capable of accommodating private vehicle and coach trips.

4.23 Vehicle swept path analysis has been completed for both the new arms of the roundabout and the internal road layout and demonstrates that the largest vehicles expected to visit the site can use the proposed junctions and internal roads safely.

4.24 As part of the access strategy it is proposed to close the existing site access on South Way. This will reduce traffic on South Way and on Aerodrome Way north of the new site access points.

Parking strategy

4.25 Given the changing numbers of cast and crew required on different filming days, from a minimum of 200 to a maximum of 1500+, the Studios have fluctuating parking requirements. They currently operate a system of overspill parking to enable the significant variation in parking requirements to be accommodated. Therefore, rather than attempting to identify the parking capacity on the site, the transport assessment identifies the level of parking usage.

4.26 As part of the proposed development, it is intended to formalise some of the rather ad hoc parking arrangements that currently exist on the site. Given the very diverse nature of activities that take place within the Studios, and its sui-generis use, to which no parking standards are attached, parking provision has been based on current levels of parking on the site, additional staff parking generated by the new studio space and anticipated visitor parking demand.

4.27 The proposed parking provision for the site is 860 staff spaces and 590 visitor spaces. These will include a total of 44 spaces specifically for people with disabilities. A total of 14 coach parking spaces will be provided, along with 3 coach / bus drop off spaces.

4.28 The studios currently provide 30 internal cycle spaces. Cycle parking will be provided for both staff and visitors in accordance with Policy T10 of the Three Rivers Adopted Local Plan and will comply with the parking standards detailed in the Cycling Strategy Supplementary Planning Guidance document. A total of 59 visitor spaces and 30 staff spaces are proposed.

4.29 Full detail of the proposed parking provision is available in the transport assessment.

Figure 4.5: Proposed site plan

Sustainable travel strategy

4.30 The development proposal will support sustainable travel choices to and from the site, further details of which are available within the framework travel plan submitted as part of the planning application.

4.31 It is anticipated that following any successful application, a Travel Plan Co-ordinator will be appointed, who will prepare a more detailed travel plan for the site and be responsible for its implementation once the development is operational.

4.32 The framework travel plan promotes a range of measures to support sustainable travel aimed at both staff and visitors, including cycle parking and changing facilities for staff and ticketing strategies for visitors, but is focused on the use of a shuttle bus to transport visitors from Watford Junction Station to the site and back again, thereby reducing the need to travel by private car.

Construction programme

4.33 The programme for the timing of construction works has been devised to cause minimum disturbance to both local residents and current filming commitments at the Studio. Throughout the works, Warner Bros. will continue to maintain a presence on the site with both pre and post production work continuing for the duration, and stages being used as and when possible.

4.34 The construction of the two new stages will not impact upon current operations and is proposed to commence in August 2010 with completion and a soft opening scheduled for December 2011. Current filming commitments require initial works to the existing Studio to be delayed slightly with full completion of these works scheduled for January 2012.

4.35 All necessary improvements and construction work will be completed to allow the resumption of full filming capabilities and the first public visitors to be welcomed to the Studios in the first quarter of 2012, prior to the start of the London Olympics.

Consultation

4.36 Pre-application consultation has been undertaken to gain stakeholder views and inform the design process. Since the architect's appointment regular weekly meetings have been held between the consultant team and a range of individuals from Warner Bros. and the Studios to review, test and refine the brief and the design as it develops.

4.37 Best practice advice and guidance has informed the design development based on Warner Bros.' experience at its exemplar studio headquarters at Burbank, California and the team's knowledge of other similar studios worldwide. More generic industry advice on securing good design and accessibility has also been taken into account.

4.38 Due to the highly confidential nature of the proposals it has not been possible to undertake the level of public consultation that the applicant would normally have wished, prior to the submission of the application. However the applicant will make all endeavours to engage with the local community to explain and explore the proposals with them upon submission of the application, in line with Warner Bros.' normal public communication procedures.

4.39 The proposals have been discussed with the officers of Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council during the course of the design process. Officer pre-application advice has been taken on board and used to inform design development. Discussions have also taken place with Hertfordshire County Council highways officers with regards to traffic and Screen East with regard to the Hertfordshire creative industries initiatives.

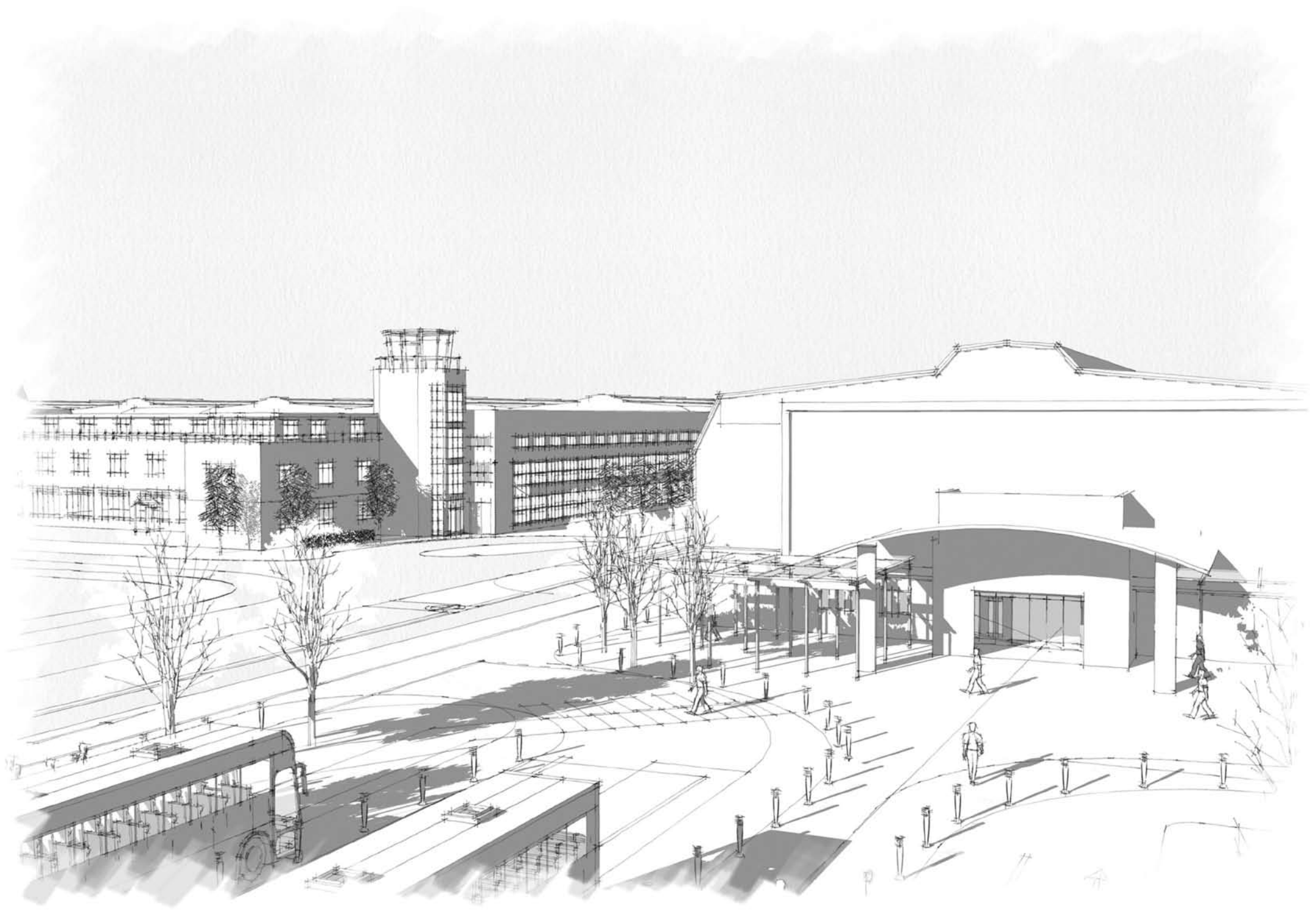


Figure 4.6: Illustrative sketch of proposal



The contribution of the UK film industry to the national economy

5.1 The UK film industry makes a significant contribution to the national economy as highlighted by the key facts below which are extracted from the Oxford Economics report, *The economic impact of the film industry* (July 2007) which was supported by the UK Film Council and Pinewood Shepperton plc.

- The core UK film industry is a substantial industry, directly employing 33,500 people in 2006 and supporting a total of 95,000 jobs, taking into account those working in its supply chain and its contribution to UK tourism, trade and merchandise sales.
- For every job supported in the core UK film industry a further job is supported through indirect and induced multiplier impacts.
- The film industry provides jobs for some of the UK's most highly qualified workers. Fifty nine percent of the production workforce is university educated, while 23% of the production workforce has a graduate level qualification specifically relevant to the film industry.
- Overall, the core UK film industry contributed over £4.3 billion to UK GDP in 2006, taking into account its multiplier impacts, and over £1.1 billion to the Exchequer (gross of tax relief and other fiscal support).
- The film industry is one of the UK's most carbon-friendly sectors. The report notes that initial estimates suggest that its emissions per £1,000 of GDP contribution are only half those of the economy as a whole.

5.2 Screen East and the UK Film Council confirmed that US inward investment in film production in 2009 totalled £730 million, across 17 features (Source: The Office of the British Film Commissioner, January 2010). This is the highest ever figure and reflects the contribution, performance and high esteem in which British filmmaking and UK locations are held.

5.3 In addition to the economic impact, the UK film industry also makes a wider contribution to promoting British cultural life, attracting tourists to the UK, supporting UK exporters, and generating sales of DVDs, CDs and other merchandise, as the Oxford Economics report demonstrates.

- UK films contribute substantially to the cultural life of the country. They are a key means of expression of UK identity and address issues of diversity that are critical to meeting the challenges of the 21st century.
- Films depicting the UK are responsible for attracting about 1 in 10 overseas tourists, spending around £1.8 billion a year.
- Exporters also benefit from the part UK films play in establishing and reinforcing the country's image and 'brand'. This is helped by nine of the top 25 worldwide films since 2001 being premiered or co-premiered in the UK, which has generated substantial media exposure for the country.

5.4 The report highlights that the skills of those working in the core UK film industry are highly valued around the world. It also notes that these individuals would be likely to choose to work abroad, given the international nature of the film industry and its labour force, if there was a significant change or downsize in the UK film industry.

5.5 Further detail on the role of the UK film industry, the contribution of the creative sector and national and regional support for the industry is provided at Chapter 6. It is also anticipated that the UK Film Council will release statistics for 2009 shortly.

The current contribution of Leavesden Studios to the national and local economy

5.6 The contribution of Leavesden Studios to the national, regional and local economy is significant and is emphasised by the following key facts from Screen East, the regional screen agency for the East of England:

The single largest studio space

- Leavesden Studios represents approximately 39% of the UK's dedicated studio space for major feature film production (see table 4 below). It is the single largest studio space in the UK.

Total major feature film studio space (approx.)		
	Sq ft	%
Leavesden	252,099	39
Pinewood	230,859	35
Shepperton	166,868	26
Total	649,826	100

Source: http://www.pinewoodgroup.com/gen/Stage_Size_Comparison_Chart.aspx

Table 4: Total major feature film studio space in the UK

Year of Production	Film Title	Estimated Warner Bros. Production Budget (adjusted for xe rate)	Total Inward Investment Value (UK)	Total number of films major	No of Warner Bros. films in the year	% in the year	Value of Gross Box Office \$ world-wide
2000 (Oct)	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	63m	156m				974,733,550
2001 (Nov)	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	50m	102m				878,643,482
2003 (Feb)	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	72m	729.5m	30	1/30	10%	795,634,069
2004 (Jan)	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	82.5m	549m	20	3/20	45%	895,921,036
2004 June-Dec	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Pinewood)	82.5m					474,968,763
2004 (April)	Batman Begins (Cardington)	82.5m					372,710,015
2005 (March)	V For Vendetta	27m	308m	25	1/25	8.7%	132,511,035
2006 (April)	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	82.5m	580.5m	27	2/27	14.2%	938,212,738
2006	Fred Claus (Cardington)	N/A					97,838,349
2007 (February)	Sweeney Todd The Demon Barber of Fleet Street	25m	531.6m	28	3/28	51.7%	152,523,164
2007 (April)	The Dark Knight	125m					1,001,921,825
2007 (Sept)	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	125m					929,359,401
Totals	Number of films 10	704m	2,698.6m	130	7.7%	26%	6,754,977,427
2009 (Feb)	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I	150m	N/A	N/A	N/A		
2010	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		

Table 5: Value of Warner Bros. Productions at Leavesden Studios (Source: Screen East)

Major inward investment

- Leavesden Studios has become a vital part of 'UK Film Plc' accounting for on average 25% of UK inward investment production rising to 50% in exceptional years in which three films have been produced. Table 5 highlights the inward investment value of films produced at Leavesden together with production budgets and gross revenues.

- Between 2003/08 the Studios produced 26% of the UK major inward investment features and inward investment co-productions by value (£704m) from 7.7% of the total number of eligible films.
- Leavesden Studios attracted estimated total film production budgets of £704m between 2003 and 2008.
- Films made at Leavesden Studios have yielded \$6.75 billion in gross revenues world-wide.

A catalyst for innovation and technology led business growth

- For the last 10 years Warner Bros. has created at Leavesden the longest running and most profitable film franchise ever from the seven novels by JK Rowling, in addition to the use of the studios for other productions. The Harry Potter film franchise grossed US\$4.47 billion by 2007 and became the highest grossing film franchise of all time with two films to go. The franchise was the subject of a recent case study within the publication Creative Industries, Technology Strategy 2009 – 2012 by the Technology Strategy Board, the government-backed agency charged with driving and catalysing innovation. It noted that the Harry Potter franchise is a global story of cross-media success across film, video games, publishing and merchandising.

Employment

5.7 Warner Bros. has invested many millions of pounds and employed many thousands of people on its film productions, bringing significant benefits both locally and across the UK film industry. The base crew when all filming units are operating and with construction departments working at 100% is approximately 800 to 1,000 personnel. Additionally during large crowd and cast days this can increase to 1,500+ and reduce down to 200 – 400 during very early pre-production and late post-production. Wages are significantly wide ranging from basic manual labour to dedicated craftsmen to highly paid film directors, producers and actors. Approximately 60-80% of the people working at Leavesden are British and from within an approximate 30-mile radius. The majority of the remainder of the workforce is from elsewhere in the UK, with the balance from overseas.

5.8 The company has also invested significantly in training, with between 20 and 30 plus trainees/work-experience individuals and apprentices given placements in each film.

5.9 Over the last 10 years those people working on the production of the Harry Potter films have collaborated with over 3,500 companies. A large number of them come from within a 30-mile radius and the Studios has increasingly forged links with local businesses. Many specialist businesses have migrated closer to Leavesden to better serve the Studios' needs.

5.10 Through its productions Warner Bros. is a significant supporter of the UK visual effects industry, providing these houses with work on creatures, environments and effects that they would otherwise have had no chance to develop expertise in, and thus attracting inward investment and the opportunity to expand their businesses. In addition, the increased volume of work provided in this way for the UK lighting, costume, camera equipment companies as well as, writers, producers, directors, film crews and post-production offices, in turn ensures that these services are available to smaller, independent film companies, without which they may have been unable to sustain their businesses.

5.11 A significant side effect of the Harry Potter franchise has been the growth of the Soho visual effects and post-production houses such as Double Negative and Framestore. Skillset, The Sector Skills Council for Creative Media confirmed that 6,700 people are employed in the sub-sectors of post-production, studio and equipment hire, special effects and outside broadcast in the East of England. The Skillset report acknowledged the formidable track record of the TV and film studios at Leavesden.

5.12 Warner Bros. Productions also works closely with the key divisions of Warner Bros. Entertainment UK, the company's largest operation outside of the US, and the focal point for much of Warner Bros' European activity. With a total of 495 UK-based employees, of which 186 are entirely UK-focused, the company is made up of divisions responsible for the creation, distribution, licensing and marketing of feature films, TV shows, DVDs, video games and consumer products. Warner Bros. Entertainment UK saw significant success in 2009 with TV series' Gossip Girl and The Mentalist; with video game LEGO Rock Band; and 22 feature films including, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, The Hangover, Gran Torino and Sherlock Holmes – which collectively, grossed £101,386,157 at the UK box office.

5.13 Leavesden Studios is committed to being a 'good neighbour' within the local community and this is reinforced by Warner Bros. senior management both in the UK and US. Whilst the Studios has to retain a high level of privacy and security around all productions, public notices advertise filming activity, particularly periods of night filming or use of visual effects. The Studios deal with any and all requests for information both directly and individually and the Studios and local authorities can only recall a handful of concerns raised since the site was first used for filming in 1994. This clearly demonstrates the Studio's commitment to being a "good neighbour".

The additional contribution the proposals bring to the local economy

Direct contribution

5.14 The Warner Bros. project will result in a total (pre-opening) site investment of £110 million and has a construction budget of £50 million. It is anticipated to create up to 300 jobs, including builders and specialist contractors, with up to 50% of the workforce sourced locally.

5.15 The refurbished Studio facility centres on protecting existing jobs (see figures above). However with an improved and more flexible layout, services and facilities the Studios will be able to facilitate at least 2-3 major (blockbuster) films per year or larger numbers of smaller productions, providing a more diverse and consistent labour requirement.

5.16 The visitor element will employ 27 full time salaried staff with an annual wage bill of £1,052,000. These positions will cover the full range of management and administrative business functions.



5.17 A further 91 FTE (full time equivalent) hourly paid positions will be required to service the visitor element with an annual wage bill of £1,435,000. These positions will range across the full service spectrum providing opportunities for skilled, semi skilled and unskilled workers. The average annual salary for the full time salaried staff will be £38,900. The average annual pay for 'hourly paid' staff will be £15,750 (based upon a 40-hour week.)

5.18 The vast majority of the workforce will be locally based within easy access of the site, due to the nature of the seasonality and the hours of business, with only few senior positions potentially relocating into the area. The development will therefore result in a significant additional wage payment into the local community. The nature of the visitor element will also offer employment to the full spectrum of the community with opportunities for older employees on flexible hours and younger employees to meet peak seasonal demands. The flexibility of the hourly requirements and the peak nature of visitor tour attendance may also provide opportunities for employees with restricted hours of availability due to family or other commitments.

5.19 It is anticipated that contracted services including landscape, facility and technical maintenance and other support services will generate up to a further £1,855,000 annual spend into the local economy. The need for regular and timely maintenance of all facilities will favour local contractors who can respond rapidly and provide a consistent service and out of hours cover. Those contracts won by national or larger suppliers will still require local manpower to deliver the services, even when remote expertise or management is deemed to be preferable.

Recruitment

5.20 A continuous programme of recruitment will run throughout the operating years as the nature of the industry and its seasonality leads towards a higher rate of turnover of employees at the very start and very end of their careers. Recruitment will be carried out as locally as is sufficient to fill the roles available. Both the costs of continuous employment advertising and the need to be able to cover last minute illness and absence favour locally based recruitment.

5.21 Senior managerial recruitment will commence no later than 6 months prior to the scheduled opening of the new stages with all salaried positions being filled two months prior to opening. Hourly staff will start to be recruited three months prior to opening with supervisory roles being filled first.

Training

5.22 The potential for training partnerships with local partners can be realised in areas such as catering. However, the majority of staff will be trained in house in the specific nature and content of their roles.

5.23 Induction training at the outset will introduce all new employees to the concept of the visitor element, the culture and the operational issues of a customer facing business. This will be led by existing expertise from within Warner Bros. and external consultants where relevant. Comprehensive health and safety training and employee relations training will cover all statutory aspects starting at the induction phase and graduating with intensity specific to the function and role of the individual. The in house induction and role specific training programme will be developed alongside a "buddy system" for all new employees.

Additional spend in the local economy

5.24 In addition to the direct investment in facilities and employment it is budgeted that the proposals will result in the following additional annual spends within the local economy:

- £3 million on retail stocks,
- £950,000 on food and beverage stocks,
- £1.755 million on marketing and advertising,
- A further £1.5 million miscellaneous spend on services including insurance, legal, utilities, financial and educational services.

5.25 Visitors to the site will also require local services including local transport in the form of buses, trains and taxis and road side services, injecting further investment into the local community.

Key considerations

5.26 The UK film industry is an important employer and contributor to the economic wealth of the UK. As highlighted above in addition to the direct economic contribution, there is the hidden value from associated spin off industries and social and cultural benefits. The economic contribution of Warner Bros. in attracting inward investment and making films at Leavesden Studios is clearly of national significance to the UK film industry.

5.27 The application will not only safeguard existing jobs but also create new opportunities for employment and economic activity and build on the unprecedented global success of the Harry Potter films. The multi-million pound investment by Warner Bros. will also enable the continued use of the Studio asset by other production companies for filming and ancillary associated uses. The refurbished and expanded Studios will increasingly attract new business, placing Leavesden Studios more favourably in the market as a world-class film location, and simultaneously generating further economic activity and expansion of the Hertfordshire film and media cluster.



Introduction

6.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, together require that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the development plan comprises the regional spatial strategy and local development documents. The regional spatial strategy for the East of England, the East of England Plan, was adopted in May 2008 and provides strategic policies for the region. The saved policies of the Three Rivers Local Plan adopted in 2002, and those of the Watford Borough Local Plan adopted in December 2003 are in the process of being replaced by local development documents. Both councils are currently at the preferred options stage in the preparation of their core strategies. Until these are adopted a small number of policies remain saved from the Hertfordshire Structure Plan (adopted April 1998).

6.3 Central government planning policy guidance notes (PPGs) and Statements (PPSs) are also relevant, particularly in relation to areas where policies have not been saved and where government policy provides the latest and most up to date position. PPS4 Planning for Prosperous Economies (December 2009) represents the most up to date government policy guidance.

6.4 Appendix 5 provides a detailed policy analysis identifying policies contained within the above documents that are relevant to the consideration of this planning application and which are referred to within this supporting statement.

PPS4 Planning for sustainable economic growth (2009)

6.5 It has been demonstrated that the UK film industry and the contribution that Leavesden Studios makes therein, is of national importance, both as a result of direct and indirect contributions. This proposal will ensure the continuation of Leavesden Studios as an employment site, safeguarding the many existing jobs created at Leavesden and more importantly, the significant indirect employment generated UK-wide, associated with the films produced at the site.

6.6 Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for sustainable economic growth (December 2009), which supersedes the now cancelled PPG4 and PPS6 is intended to ensure that the planning system responds efficiently and effectively to the economic challenges of a global and competitive market both in the current recessionary climate, and as market conditions improve in the future. One of the overarching messages of the document is for a flexible and responsive planning system to support the economic aspirations of our communities.

6.7 PPS4 highlights the following relevant policy aims for achieving sustainable economic growth:

- Using evidence to plan positively and proactively for economic development to understand and recognise the needs of business – accurate evidence should be available taking account of the current economic climate, as well as the likely future direction, (Policy EC1.1).
- Delivering a supply of land for economic development – local authorities should ensure a good supply of land which provides for the differing needs of business, whilst being flexible and reflecting local circumstances (Policy EC2.1).

- Support for existing business sectors – taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting, and the different location requirements of businesses, such as the size of the site required, site quality, access and proximity to markets, as well as the locally available workforce. Councils are required to positively plan for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven or high technology industries, (Policy EC2.1).

6.8 Guidance for assessing planning applications for economic development is provided in PPS4 which states that local authorities should, when considering proposals:

- “Adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development. Planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably” (Policy EC10.1).
- Assess planning applications for economic development against a number of criteria which include: the impact on local employment, the impact on the economic and physical regeneration in the area, achieving quality and inclusive design, the accessibility of the proposal by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, the effect on local transport and local congestion, the need to minimise vulnerability and resilience to climate change and carbon dioxide emissions (Policy EC10.2).
- Ensure they take full account of the longer-term benefits, as well as the costs of development, such as job creation or improved productivity, including wider benefits to national, regional or local economies (Policy EC11.1).

6.9 Local authorities are also encouraged to adopt a flexible approach to development proposals that may come forward which were not anticipated when the development plan was drawn up.

6.10 By aiming to safeguard and enhance employment opportunities at Leavesden Studios the proposals are directly in line with, and supportive of, PPS4. Evidence is provided throughout the submission on the contribution of the UK film industry as a whole and Leavesden Studios individually, and on each of the criteria noted in paragraph 6.7 and 6.8 above, to demonstrate compliance. These proposals have emerged in a time of changing and unforeseen economic challenges. Their ability to create employment more widely should be positively planned for and considered favourably unless there is a good reason to believe the social, economic or environmental costs are likely to outweigh the benefits, as advocated within PPS4.

Leavesden Studios – A key employment site

6.11 The site is identified within the adopted Three Rivers Local Plan as one of the most important sites for employment and mixed development in the county. Paragraph 7.19 of the Three Rivers local plan states, "It is considered to be a very important site in the economy for this part of Hertfordshire."

6.12 Residential and office development has already taken place along the eastern edge of the site. A Planning Brief was approved in 1993, and in 1995 outline planning permission was given for the site's comprehensive redevelopment with film studios, housing (including social housing) and substantial leisure facilities. Elements of this application were subsequently implemented, including the highway improvements and residential and office development. Policy GB2 (Three Rivers), which is discussed in detail below, sets out the framework within which any further development should take place on the site.

6.13 The Hertfordshire Structure Plan (saved Policy 15) also recognises the economic value of the former Leavesden Aerodrome, allocating it as a key employment site. The policy recognises individual sites that have been identified to play a major role in the Hertfordshire economy, where employment generating activities will be encouraged and where co-ordinated activity and investment programmes are required to realise each site's full potential. This is in recognition of the historic quantum of development on site – when the Rolls-Royce factory was at its peak, in excess of 3,000 people were employed at the site – and its future potential to play a major long-term role in the Hertfordshire economy. In a climate where 9,700 jobs have been lost within Hertfordshire over the last 7 years, the value of such sites cannot be underestimated. (Source: East of England Regional Assembly.)

6.14 This proposal will ensure the continuation of Leavesden Studios as an employment site, safeguarding the many existing jobs created locally. Importantly, it will also ensure that the significant amount of indirect employment created UK-wide and associated with the films produced at Leavesden, will continue to flourish and grow. It will also create a number of additional jobs associated with the development of the new stages at the Studios.

East of England Plan and Regional Economic Strategy

6.15 Regional planning policy, including the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008), and the East of England Economic Strategy (Autumn 2008) highlights the need to support and nurture the sustainable and dynamic growth of the film and media sector and multimedia clusters in the Hertfordshire area. The proposals seek to retain and enhance the Studios with a long-term commitment and multi-million pound inward investment from Warner Bros.. This is consistent with the Regional Economic Strategy's identification of Leavesden Studios as a regional, as well as a national and international asset (page 100 of the Regional Economic Strategy) and a key economic driver located within the London Arc sub-region.

6.16 The East of England Development Agency's strategy for the London Arc seeks specifically to;

- support measures to raise employment rates and the profile of higher value employment across the Arc,
- ensure a supply and mix of employment land and premises in sustainable locations that meet the needs of businesses, support the requirements of key sectors and growing businesses,
- enable and facilitate cluster expansion, business innovation and radical performance enhancements around the Arc's leading companies and research institutes, supporting and enabling supply chains and business networks.

Again the proposals are consistent with these policy objectives.

6.17 A review of the East of England Plan was commenced in the summer of 2008 to roll it forward to 2031. Initial consultation was undertaken in November 2009 with the focus on further public consultation being undertaken on the draft East of England Plan > 2031 during March 2010.

Hertfordshire's draft economic strategy 2009 – 2021

6.18 Hertfordshire's new economic partnership, Hertfordshire Works, has produced a new draft economic strategy. The strategy is currently undergoing consultation until the end of February with a view to formal adoption by the Hertfordshire Works board in March 2010.

6.19 The strategy's vision is that by 2021, Hertfordshire will have a resilient and low carbon economy characterised by quality jobs, innovative and dynamic businesses, supported by a well skilled workforce and an entrepreneurial culture, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper and fulfil their ambitions.

6.20 The key economic objectives of the strategy are to create a vibrant, low carbon economy, stimulate enterprise, innovation and inward investment, develop a well skilled workforce for the future, provide quality locations and infrastructure and create vibrant towns and vibrant communities. This is consistent with the proposals put forward by this application, the multi-million pound investment commitment from Warner Bros. and the objective to safeguard jobs and enhance the skills base associated with the Studios and its supply chain.

6.21 The strategy recognises the advantages of a cluster approach to economic growth, and the high value and innovative nature of the existing digital creativity and media sector in the county. The Studios at Leavesden are recognised as an important component of the creative industry cluster and a county asset. The draft strategy sets a number of priorities for the county. Priority 2C specifically prioritises the growth of the digital creativity and media cluster through a strategy that seeks to investigate and address barriers to its further development in the south of the county, endeavours to improve and enhance the supply chains for this sector and assists in maximising the spin-off benefits in terms of tourism and 'brand image'. The application proposals will help to encourage further growth in these key sectors by providing a long-term future for Leavesden Studios and the associated attraction of film productions to the county.



Recognition of the role of the creative industries and clustering in national and regional economic strategies

6.22 The importance of the creative industries to the national economy and the Hertfordshire creative cluster, is acknowledged in a multitude of national and regional government strategies, a number of which are outlined below. The Leavesden Studios proposals have the potential not only to foster the growth of the Hertfordshire cluster, but also to contribute to the wider regional and national economy, assisting in achieving national economic, social and cultural aspirations and strategic objectives for fostering creative industries and clusters in Britain.

6.23 The growth of creative industries is seen as critical to assisting Britain to emerge from the global economic downturn. The June 2009 *Digital Britain Final Report*, published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, is one of the central policy commitments in the government's Building Britain's Future plan and draft legislative programme. The report outlines the government's approach to tackling Britain's recovery from the global economic downturn through enhancing Britain's strengths in the crucial digital sector and harnessing new technologies. Within this strategy, the creative industries are clearly positioned as central to achieving the aims and objectives for a Digital Britain:

The creative industries are a significant source of employment and national wealth creation, as well as almost uniquely delivering cultural and social benefits. They contribute 6.4% of GVA and have grown by an average of 4% over the past decade compared to 3% for the economy as a whole. (Chapter 4, p.86.)

6.24 The contribution of the creative industries was the subject of a House of Lords debate moved by Lord Bragg on 4 June 2009. Lord Watson of Invergowrie, former Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport in the Scottish Parliament, highlighted the economic, social and cultural contribution of the industry and the importance of clustering during his participation in the debate:

"Taken as a whole, the creative industries make a huge contribution to our economy as well as to our social and cultural life. They employ around 2 million people. They produce a higher proportion of GDP in the UK than they do in any other country, and they contribute

considerably more to our balance of trade than does construction, insurance or pensions, and twice the amount of the pharmaceutical sector. Our creative industries are therefore not some lightweight or marginal sector contributing on the periphery of our economy. They are serious business.

...Perhaps the most important measure is that of supporting creative clusters, because the spin-off effects of such developments can be of real benefit to more than the creative industries themselves. These companies can prove to be the drivers of wider growth, sometimes leading the regeneration of cities experiencing post-industrial economic slump."

6.25 In February 2008 the government launched a development strategy for the creative industries, *Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy*, in recognition of the economic, social and cultural contribution creative industries bring to the UK. The strategy sought to enhance the potential for economic growth within the sector, introducing 26 government commitments to support the industry.

6.26 In support of the strategy Gordon Brown said:

"In the coming years, the creative industries will be important not only for our national prosperity but for Britain's ability to put culture and creativity at the centre of our national life. ... It is also intended to make it easier for creative people to build on their success. In the global marketplace, our capacity to break new ground will be crucial to our future prosperity, and we need to act now to make Britain's creative industries accessible to an even wider pool of talent and to support our creative economy to enable it to grow."

6.27 The support for creative clusters due to their role in delivering the growth of the creative industries and assisting in the wider regeneration of the regions was an important objective of this strategy.

6.28 *Staying Ahead: the economic performance of the UK's creative industries*, 2007 acknowledged that the UK has the largest creative sector in the EU, and stated that:

"The creative industries can be conceived as a pioneer sector of the economy, trailblazing approaches, and fostering an attitude towards creativity and innovation from which the rest of the economy and society can benefit."(Paragraph 1.6)

Major Developed Site (MDS) within the green belt

6.29 PPG2: Green Belts (1995) enables local plans to identify existing Major Developed Sites (MDS) within the green belt. Three Rivers (saved) Local Plan Policy GB1 confirms that where an MDS has been identified, infilling or redevelopment may be acceptable.

6.30 The Leavesden Studios site is identified in the Three Rivers District and Watford Borough Local Plans as an MDS within the Metropolitan Green Belt (Policy GB 2 Leavesden Studio site). The policy sets out a presumption in favour of redevelopment at Leavesden Studios provided the proposals meet key criteria relating to PPG2 policy C4 (a), (b), (c), and (d) in the context of the adopted 1993 Planning Brief for the site.

6.31 The Planning Brief is important as it established a number of basic principles for the future redevelopment of the site, in terms of the quantum of new development that may be considered acceptable. These limits are as follows and are discussed further below:

- total permissible footprint: 90,523 square metres (974,390 square feet) (excluding runways),
- total developable area: 32.28 hectares,
- the height of the existing buildings should not be exceeded. This was established as 18.28m, as confirmed by the 2002 Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council committee reports.

Criteria of PPG2 Green Belts, Policy C4

6.32 Each criterion of PPG2 policy C4 is addressed in turn below, demonstrating how the proposals are compliant with both the purposes and objectives of green belt policy and the criteria of the 1993 Planning Brief. Only where development proposals do not meet the policy criteria, is it necessary to demonstrate the very special circumstances that are required to justify the proposals as a departure from the Local Plan.

Figure 6.1: Landscape master plan



PPG2 states that **redevelopment should:**

C4 (a) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the green belt and the purposes of including the land in it, and where possible have less;

6.33 The fundamental purpose of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land open. In this instance the purpose of the green belt is important in separating the settlements of Watford and Abbots Langley, and it plays a vital role in preventing the coalescence of the two.

6.34 Openness is the most important attribute of a green belt and any uses that may threaten that objective are rigorously constrained. A limited number of uses are, however, considered appropriate for green belt locations: those that can retain its openness. In view of this, the proposed retention, refurbishment and extension of the Studios and the use of the land for filming is considered an 'appropriate' use in the green belt.

6.35 The use of the backlot for outdoor filming and temporary film sets and structures is also consistent with green belt policy. The proposals retain the more open southern and western parts of the site as open land, in line with policy.

6.36 Given the MDS status of the site, a level of redevelopment is permitted. The bulk of the proposed development involves the re-use of the existing buildings. As such they will have no additional impact on the open character of the site. New buildings for film studio use are consolidated in the centre of the MDS, adjoining the existing buildings and the area of land to the east proposed by Three Rivers District Council for housing development. The site of the new buildings is consistent with earlier planning applications that were consented and the development principles agreed by both Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council.

6.37 A landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken and is submitted in support of this application. The purpose of the assessment is to establish the baseline conditions in order to assess the potential effects of the proposals on the key landscape character and visual amenity of the site and its setting.

6.38 The assessment of the site and the surrounding area has been undertaken with reference to the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2002).

6.39 The assessment concludes that the landscape importance of the site is considered to be low and that the character of the site does not accord with the national or regional landscape character assessments. This is likely to be due to the former use of the site as an aerodrome, the construction of which would have altered the landscape, removing old field patterns and hedgerows and the construction of a runway, taxiways and hangar buildings. The site character can generally be split into two areas, the first being the area to the north with the large studio building and ancillary buildings, large areas of hard standing, storage containers, car parks, access roads and mature trees. The second area is the backlot area to the south, where the site is more open with large grassed areas and earth mounds. This includes the remainder of the old runway, taxiway and the Flight Shed stage, an area currently used for temporary film sets, filming and storage. The report concludes that the magnitude of change is expected to be small, as the elements introduced by the proposals are not uncharacteristic with the attributes of the receiving landscape. The significance of the landscape effects on the character of the site is therefore expected to be slight.

6.40 The assessment explored the visual impact of the proposals utilising six representative viewpoints chosen from varying orientations and distances to the site. It demonstrates that the proposals will have only a slight effect on the character of the landscape and slight visual effects from the majority of representative viewpoints.

6.41 In conclusion, the proposals will not increase coalescence between Watford and Abbots Langley and will, therefore, maintain the purpose of the green belt in this location. The re-use of the existing buildings as film studios and the open land for outdoor filming is an appropriate use consistent with maintaining the openness of the green belt.

C4 (b) contribute to the objectives for the use of land in the green belt;

6.42 PPG2 states that once green belts have been defined, the use of land within them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- i to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population,
- ii to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas,
- iii to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live,
- iv to improve damaged and derelict land around towns,
- v to secure nature conservation interest,
- vi to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses (Not applicable in this case).



Figure 6.2: View towards the site from North West Avenue bridge
(extract from landscape and visual assessment)

6.43 The specific use of the site as a film studio and the intense public interest in the Harry Potter series of films and their stars, means the entire studio complex is a "Closed Set" and is not currently open to the public. This means that it is not possible for the land to which this application relates either currently or in the future to contribute to objectives i) or ii) noted above.

6.44 This element of the proposals has been discussed with officers and it is suggested that as this planning application only relates to 66 hectares of the total 153 hectare MDS, objectives i) and ii) can be most effectively achieved through the further development of the wider site. Such public access is more appropriately brought forward as part of any future residential development on the adjoining site.

6.45 The proposals will therefore contribute to achieving objectives iii), iv) and v) by delivering improvements through the refurbishment of the buildings, the introduction of landscape works, ancillary boundary works, earthworks and new planting to improve the once hard industrial site to an attractive employment site.

6.46 Sensitive earth modelling will be undertaken to maximise the screening of the car parks and the new stages for the storage and public exhibition of film sets. In the area of the new stages it is not necessary to create a clear horizon for filming, allowing these areas to be planted with a native species to create a mixed woodland, encouraging biodiversity.

6.47 Nature conservation interests have been fully taken into account as part of the proposals, with necessary surveys undertaken in accordance with current best practice guidelines. Please refer to the separate ecology and arboricultural reports for full details. In summary, a number of trees will be removed throughout the site where they have been identified in the arboricultural condition survey as dead or dying and urgently requiring attention. A limited number of additional trees will be removed where they are close to the existing buildings in areas where extensions are proposed to avoid conflict between the two. New tree planting will be incorporated into the scheme to replace lost trees and enhance the existing landscape.

Reference	+/-	Developable area (ha)	Comment
A. 1993 Planning Brief developable area		32.28	
B. Residential development (1999)	minus	9.10	Built
C. Commercial development (2000)	minus	3.41	Consented and implemented Note: Figures include developable area related to office 4 building
D. Remaining developable area (excluding studios)		19.77	A – (B + C)
E. Studios (Warner Bros. proposals 2010)	minus	18.57	Includes existing where unchanged, refurbished, replacement and proposed elements
F. Developable area remaining when subtracted from 1993 planning brief control figure		1.2	D – E

Table 6: Developable area schedule

C4 (c) not exceed the height of the existing buildings;

6.48 The 1993 Planning Brief stated that new development should not exceed the height of the existing buildings on the site. Subsequently it was agreed in 2001 that even with the demolition of the control tower new development would be permitted up to a maximum height of 18.28m AOD. The refurbished, replacement and new stages have a maximum height of 18.2m and are therefore in compliance with this policy requirement.

C4 (d) Not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings (unless this would achieve a reduction in height which would benefit visual amenity);

6.49 Three Rivers Local Plan Policy GB2 confirms that criterion C4 (d) should be interpreted to indicate that redevelopment will not exceed 32 hectares as stated in condition (4) of the 1995 Outline Permission. The outline permission confirms this as 32 hectares of 'developable area' and not footprint, which PPG2 C4 (d) refers to.

6.50 The adopted Planning Brief defined developable area as 'The totality of the ground level site area to be developed (which is to include all buildings, parking, hardstanding, storage, landscaping about buildings and site access roads)'. The Brief stated that this should not exceed the present developed site area. The maximum developable area was later established to be 32.28 hectares (excluding runways).

6.51 The table 6 below highlights the current position with regard to developable area taking into account the proposed development. It confirms that the proposed development is compliant with the developable area control figure.

Footprint schedule

6.52 This application proposes 64,932 sqm of footprint (698,668sq ft). Table 7 shows the position with regard to footprint in relation to the proposals presented in this application, the control figures of the 1993 Planning Brief and historic implemented / part implement development.

Reference	+/-	Footprint (sqm)	Footprint (sq ft)	Comment
A. 1993 Planning Brief footprint		90,523	974,381	
B. Residential development (1999)	minus	14,130	152,094	Built
C. Commercial development (2000)	minus	10,766	115,884	Consented and part implemented Note: Figures include 1,500 sqm unimplemented office 4 building, which has extant planning permission
D. Total green belt development to date (including unimplemented Office 4 building)		24,896	267,978	B + C
E. Remaining developable footprint, prior to application		65,627	706,403	A– D
F. Footprint assumed by MEPC for housing allocation on adjoining land to be retained by MEPC	-	9,290	100,000	
G. Developable footprint remaining when housing proposals subtracted from 1993 control figure		56,337	606,403	E – F
H. Warner Bros. development proposed by this application	-	64,932	698,668	
I. Developable footprint remaining when Warner Bros. and MEPC housing proposals subtracted from 1993 control figure		-8,595	-92,265	E – (F + H)

Table 7: Footprint schedule incorporating Warner Bros. proposals and footprint assumed by the MEPC housing site

Scheme compliance when considered with adjacent proposed housing land

6.53 To the east of the application site, 13.3 hectares of land within the former Leavesden Aerodrome MDS has been identified as a 'preferred option' development site in the emerging Three Rivers Core Strategy: Further Preferred Options document (November 2009). The site is identified as a location for housing and employment growth, based on its edge of settlement location and good accessibility. Three hundred and fifty to four hundred dwellings are proposed.

6.54 The proposal the subject of this application is made solely by Warner Bros. in its own right, and the application is unrelated to this adjoining land other than having regard for its potential to deliver housing numbers for the district. This application has therefore been developed with regard to site access, traffic generation and design to ensure that it does not compromise future development of the adjoining site. It is clear from table 7, however, that if viewed comprehensively, there would be an imbalance in footprint and likewise developable area figures when compared to the 1993 Planning Brief.

6.55 Table 7 shows that if the Warner Bros. proposals are viewed individually, the scheme is both compliant with policy and the 1993 Planning Brief control figures. However, if it is viewed in conjunction with the future possible housing allocation on adjacent land within the defined MDS, there is a footprint and developable area deficit.

6.56 Green belt policy allows for development where very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Such circumstances can include:

- where a project is in the national interest,
- the expansion of existing businesses with specific locational requirements,
- where economic benefits will arise,
- a lack of alternative sites.

Very special circumstances

6.57 This policy approach is reflected within saved Policy GB1 of the Three Rivers Local Plan.

6.58 Retaining Warner Bros. in the UK, the economic benefits that will be delivered at local, regional and national level (as described in section 5 above), the multi-million pound inward investment and the need for the proposals specifically at Leavesden Studios, provide the very special circumstances that significantly outweigh any impact upon the green belt by virtue of the increase in footprint and developable area over the control figures. These unique and very special circumstances of regional and national importance justify a departure from normal green belt policy to enable the increase in footprint.

6.59 The national benefit of retaining Warner Bros. in the UK in economic terms, and the significant role a major US film producer plays in raising the profile of the British film industry clearly outweighs the limited impact on the green belt in this location. Given its current lack of a permanent base in the UK, Warner Bros. has explored the option of 'offshoring' some of its film and TV production abroad. A number of options are available to the company, with a number of foreign countries offering significant financial incentives to secure Warner Bros' presence and the substantial national kudos that this conveys. The implications for the UK film industry should Warner Bros. relocate out of the UK would be devastating, both in terms of loss of revenue and investment, direct and indirect employment losses and in terms of the long term movement of skilled labour away from the UK.

6.60 This would have the added disadvantage that the Studios themselves would be redeveloped for other higher value uses, with the loss of a valuable asset to the surrounding media cluster, as it is not expected that another studio operator would be able to fund the necessary refurbishment of the site.

6.61 Warner Bros' clear preference is to commit to a permanent base in the UK by investing in the unique location for filming that Leavesden offers and continuing to benefit from the craftsmanship and skill base of the employees who work there and in the surrounding area. In addition to safeguarding and enhancing employment opportunities, the proposals would bring high profile inward investment to Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and assist in its attraction as an internationally regarded film studios.



Figure 6.3: View towards the site from Aerodrome Way
(extract from landscape and visual assessment)

6.62 Warner Bros. has operated from Leavesden for the last 10 years and is highly unlikely to invest to the same level in an alternative site in the UK. Other studios do not offer the same unique attributes as highlighted in paragraph 2.3, which are key elements in making Leavesden such an excellent filming location. These features are fundamental to the philosophy behind the project concept, which could not be supported on an alternative site.

6.63 In addition, the site's location within the Greater London / Hertfordshire film and media cluster, and the successful historic record of film production at Leavesden are of vital importance to Warner Bros. Through this application, the company is seeking to maintain and develop Leavesden's reputation and position within the UK film industry and both enhance and benefit from the development of associated industries in Hertfordshire.

6.64 It is also essential that the new stages are co-located with the existing studios, both in terms of the efficient operation and management of the Studios and in terms of public access to the new stages. There are clearly significant benefits in having all studio facilities centrally located, making resource and service distribution to both the new and existing stages more cost effective and streamlined. Given the very unique nature of the site, it would be difficult to create the integrated studio development that meets Warner Bros' requirements at any other UK studio facility.

Defined need for housing and requirement to make the best use of land

6.65 There is a requirement for Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council to deliver housing numbers that meet the targets set by the East of England Plan. The proposed housing site within the MDS at Leavesden, adjacent to the application site, is viewed by Three Rivers District Council as an important site in contributing to local housing delivery targets, as shown by its allocation as a preferred housing site in the Three Rivers Further Preferred Options document (November 2009).

6.66 PPS3 Housing, in accordance with the objectives of PPS1; Delivering Sustainable Development, requires local planning authorities to make effective and efficient use of land, reusing brownfield land that has been previously developed and achieving the highest possible net density appropriate to the character of the locality and public transport accessibility. The East of England Plan supports this approach. It is therefore incumbent upon the local planning authority to make the best use of land.

6.67 Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council adopted the Planning Brief, which sets the footprint and developable area controls for the MDS, in 1993 as supplementary planning guidance. The control figures within it related to the existing amount of development on the site at that time, and it significantly predates the step change in housing delivery rates and the requirements of PPS1 and PPS3 to make the most efficient and effective use of previously developed land referred to above. Increasing the control totals to enable both the Warner Bros. proposals and the emerging core strategy housing allocation to be delivered is appropriate given the very special circumstances outlined above.

Key considerations

6.68 It has been demonstrated that in large part the proposal accords with green belt policy, and the potential benefits to the achievement of green belt objectives are a material consideration in the determination of this application. The landscape-led approach and the identification of a number of key design principles has ensured that the openness of the green belt is retained at the site, and that the functions and objectives of green belt designation are not compromised.

6.69 For those limited aspects of the development that are at variance with this there are very special circumstances that justify a departure from normal green belt policy. These are largely related to the significant national benefit in terms of the economic effects of the project, and safeguarding this key strategic employment site.



Promoting sustainability and tackling climate change

7.1 Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council have clearly defined targets relating to sustainable design and construction for new development within their jurisdiction. The Sustainability and Low Carbon Energy Statement submitted in support of this application, sets out the approach necessary to comply with all relevant sustainability policy requirements.

7.2 The proposed development will address the intent of the following planning policy documents/assessment methods:

- Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development,
- Planning Policy Statement 1 (Addendum) Planning and Climate Change,
- Planning Policy Statement 22 Renewable Energy,
- The East of England Plan,
- Hertfordshire Building Futures Design Guidance,
- Three Rivers District Council emerging core strategy,
- Watford Borough Council emerging core strategy,
- Three Rivers District Council Sustainable Communities SPD,
- BREEAM.

7.3 Key sustainability planning requirements from an energy and carbon perspective that will be met are:

- attainment of a BREEAM Very Good rating,
- compliance with Hertfordshire's Building Futures Design guidance,
- a minimum of a 25% improvement over Part L2A (2006) Building Regulations for new facilities along with the considerable improvement of the existing building stock in terms of CO₂ emissions,
- following completion of design detail and dynamic energy modelling, incorporation of appropriate low / zero carbon technologies to further reduce CO₂ emissions,
- a comprehensive waste minimisation and management strategy.

7.4 Leavesden Studios is already a significant energy user. The existing buildings on site are in the main over 60 years old with very poor levels of insulation and air tightness. Both regulated (space heating / cooling, hot water and lighting) and unregulated (eg stage lighting, cooking and IT equipment) energy sources currently rely heavily on the use of oil-fired generators for electrical power and diesel oil-fired heaters for space conditioning.

7.5 As part of the proposed development, costs estimated at between £2M and £3M have been set aside to secure electrical power and gas supplies from the National grid and gas networks respectively. These new provisions will negate the need for diesel oil supplies, thus significantly reducing the CO₂ emissions from the existing building stock because of the difference in carbon factors for the proposed fuels.

7.6 The Sustainability and Low Carbon Energy Statement submitted with this application demonstrates that switching between the two fuel sources will reduce site-wide CO₂ emissions by approximately 29%.

7.7 In addition to the switch to gas and in line with the energy hierarchy, the design specifications will be reviewed in order to improve the energy efficiency of the development. The following measures will be investigated as part of the detailed modelling work;

- new gas fired condensing boilers, centrally located to serve the offices, dressing rooms and catering areas,
- new Building Energy Management System (BEMS) to provide optimised control of the heating and ventilation plant serving the kitchens and toilets,
- improved thermal insulation standards to heat / cold store vessels and distribution pipe systems to minimise losses,
- high efficiency lighting systems to include eg time clock / PIR control systems within office areas and photocell lighting controls to external lighting,
- new ventilation systems serving the kitchen and restaurant areas with dual speed fans allowing for improved control,
- removal on-site oil fired generators, which currently provide most of the site's existing operational energy,
- ventilation systems serving the new stages and workshops to include heat recovery where possible, (via thermal wheels, run around coils or with plate heat exchangers),
- variable speed drives to large fans and pumps with speeds suited to match occupancy and load variations,
- high efficiency chillers and motors,
- enhanced energy metering (over and above Part L metering).

7.8 In addition to the elements listed above, the following will be reviewed:

- improve thermal insulation and air tightness of the existing stages,
- new local heaters to the stages with improved controls,
- all new construction (new offices, stages, workshops etc) to be fully compliant with Part L (U values, air tightness etc.),
- investigate use of solar shading to new office blocks to reduce cooling loads. Also, the use of a natural ventilation strategy in lieu of mechanical ventilation to the offices is proposed,
- investigate seasonal commissioning benefits.

7.9 Factoring in the above measures will cause a considerable reduction in the development's energy demand and overall CO₂ emissions. As a comparative exercise the use of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) good practice benchmarks has also been investigated, and indicates that the use of such an approach will further decrease the overall CO₂ emissions by approximately 14%. This is shown in further detail in the Sustainability and Low Carbon Energy Statement submitted with this application.

7.10 To validate these conclusions fully, a more detailed energy modelling exercise will be undertaken at the detailed scheme design stage. It is anticipated that the modelling will demonstrate cost effective ways of achieving at least a 25% improvement in CO₂ emissions over Part L 2006 Building Regulations for the new build areas, thus complying with the planning policy requirements of emerging Three Rivers Core Strategy Policy DC10.

Achieving quality design

7.11 The principles of achieving quality design in the proposed development have been at the core of the project, acknowledging the value that such principles add in terms of environmental performance, community and social well-being and commercial viability. They also contribute to and create a more legible and understandable built environment, which is considered imperative on this visually and strategically important site.

7.12 The design-led approach endeavors to reinforce historic patterns of development, respects the grain of the surrounding landscape, both built and open, and complements the character of the surrounding area in terms of scale, quality and materials while allowing good accessibility and ease of movement into and around the site in line with the design principles advocated in the Three Rivers District local plan and emerging draft policy DC7 Design of development.

Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, landscape and trees

7.13 PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005) seeks to promote sustainable development by conserving and enhancing biological and geological diversity; conserving, enhancing and restoring England's wildlife and ensuring that development proposals take account of the role and value of biodiversity.

7.14 Site evaluations have been undertaken in accordance with national and local policy guidance. A phase 1 and 2 habitat survey and series of protected species surveys (bat, badger, dormouse, invertebrates, amphibians and breeding birds) were undertaken on the site by ECOSA in 2007 and 2008, all of which are considered to be representative of the current environmental characteristics of the site. In addition Terence O'Rourke Ltd was commissioned to undertake a badger survey in December 2009 to update previous badger surveys conducted in 2008 by ECOSA. These surveys have been submitted in support of the planning application.

7.15 Several protected species have been identified on the site. With appropriate habitat management, it is concluded that these will not be significantly affected by the proposed development and that enhancement of habitats can be achieved through the development

of the site. The local wildlife sites within the application boundary, protected for their grassland value, will not be affected by the built development proposals.

7.16 A tree survey and arboricultural constraints report has been produced to guide the development proposals, and in line with good practice, an arboricultural impact appraisal and method statement is submitted with the planning application indicating the trees to be retained and protected during construction, and the limited number to be removed.

7.17 A landscape and visual assessment was undertaken to understand the existing landscape character of the site and inform the design. A summary of this document is provided at paragraphs 6.37– 6.40. The landscape led approach and the identification of a number of key design principles has ensured no detrimental effect on the character of the immediate environment, or on any important long distance views or skylines. It has also ensured that the openness of the green belt is retained at the site, and that the functions and objectives of green belt designation are not compromised. A summary of the landscape proposals are provided at paragraphs 4.3 – 4.4

Protecting cultural heritage

7.18 PPG 15 Planning and the historic environment and PPG16 Archaeology and planning, set out the government's position with regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and archeological resource. The highest level of protection is afforded to historic and archaeological areas, sites and monuments of international, national and regional importance. Planning policy at all levels seeks to ensure that new development preserves or enhances historic buildings and their landscapes, conservation areas and important archaeological features and their settings.

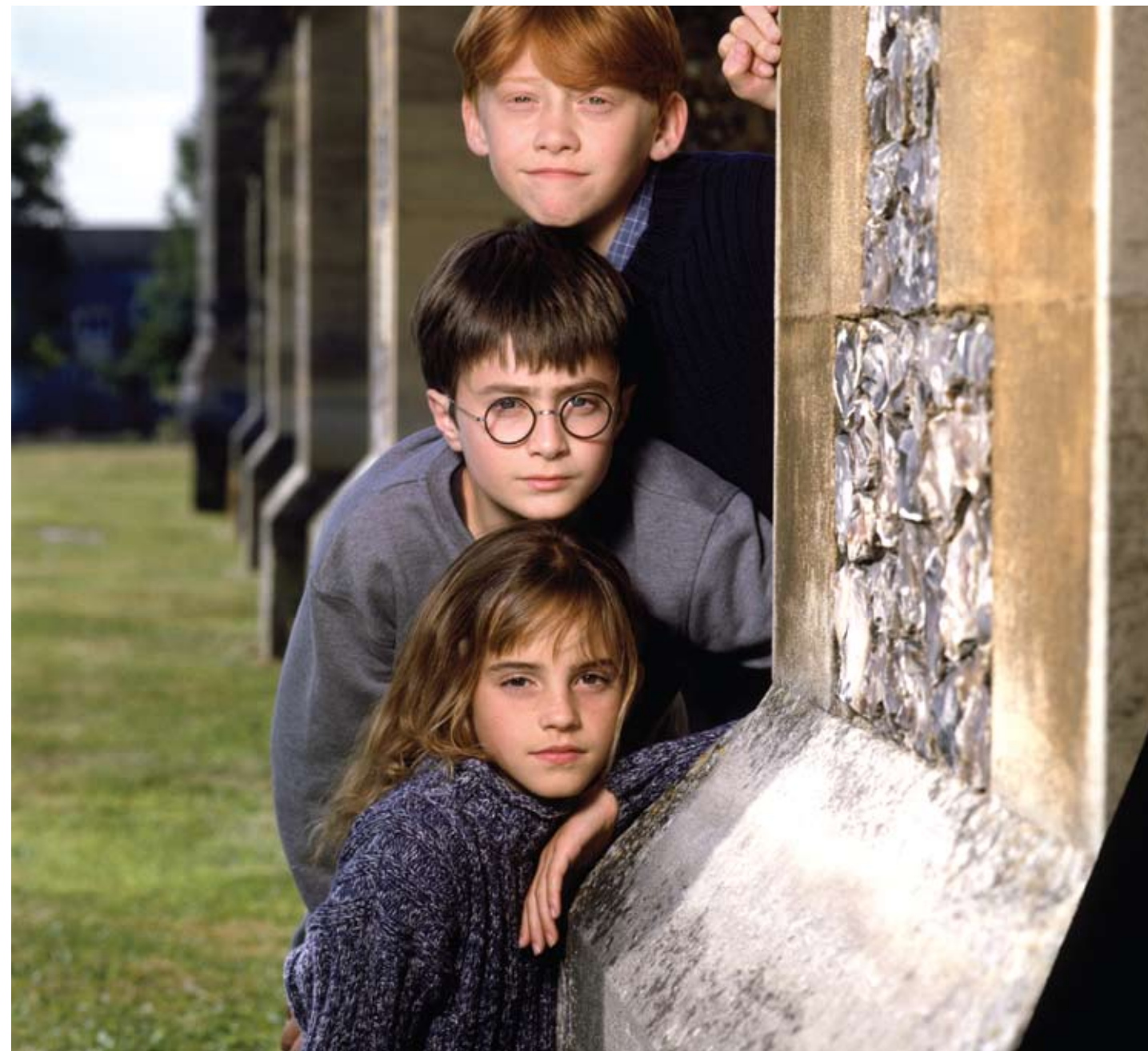
7.19 A heritage statement is submitted in support of the application, which was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Desk-based Assessments* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (revised 2008). The report outlines the known cultural heritage of the site, its historic development, the effect of the building of the airfield and factory in 1940 and subsequent use. It outlines the results of the archaeological evaluations undertaken for previous development proposals at the site and the current understanding of the survival

and potential for archaeological remains. The report then assesses the effect of the proposed development on the cultural heritage interest of the site and surrounding area.

7.20 In summary with regards to archaeology the report concludes:

- Investigations on the Studios site in 1998 in advance of development, found settlement evidence dating from the middle Iron Age to the later Roman period. Further prehistoric remains were found across the eastern portion of the site following a scheme of evaluation trenching in 2000.
- Archaeological investigation has taken place over the majority of the area intended for direct impact from construction. Besides the prehistoric features identified, the majority of remains have been truncated or possibly destroyed by agricultural activity and later airfield development. There would not appear to be any features that warrant preservation *in situ*.
- In order to mitigate any potential effects on archaeology close liaison with the relevant archaeological advisors will take place and the provision of an archaeological watching brief will be considered across areas proposed for groundworks, as appropriate.
- Two grass covered former air raid shelters immediately south east of the Studios fire station are scheduled for demolition in the proposals. Photographic recording will be undertaken prior to demolition with descriptions of their construction and type. Information should be presented to the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record, as their existence is not currently recorded.

7.21 In relation to buildings of historic value the report confirms there are a number of listed buildings in the surrounding area, of which the closest is the house at Hunton Park, listed grade II*. In summary the report concludes:



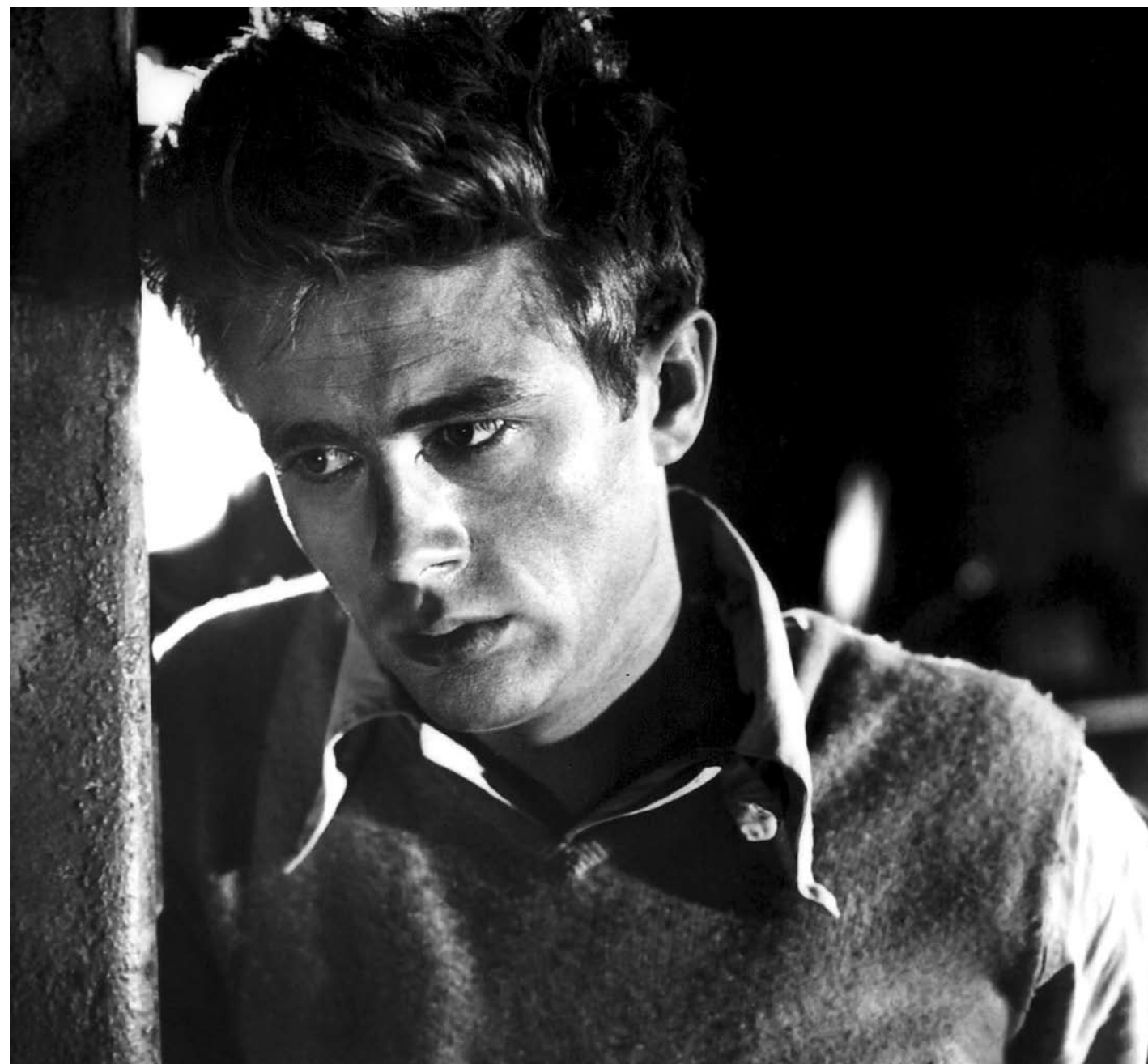
- The closest listed buildings at Hunton Park are set within the surrounding new development as part of the conference centre use, with formal gardens to the south of the house and a well wooded small parkland. Established boundary plantations screen external views. The development would be obscured by the existing Studio buildings, themselves based on the WWII hangars. No traffic is proposed to be routed along the lane. No adverse effects are therefore predicted on the setting of the listed buildings at Hunton Park as a result of the development.
- No effects are predicted on any of the other listed buildings in the wider area given their separation from the development site, the intervening development, the valley topography and the lack of any historic or functional links to the site. Similarly, no effects are predicted for either of the conservation areas at Hunton Park or Grove Mill.

Improving ground conditions and avoiding pollution

7.22 In accordance with government policy, which seeks to protect surface and groundwater resources and ensure that contamination will not be a threat to the health of future users or occupiers of the site or adjoining land, ENVIRON, has undertaken an environmental assessment of potential land contamination issues at Leavesden Studios. The assessment included a desk study (Phase 1), updating past Phase 2 environmental site investigations, a risk assessment, and a remediation statement, which are submitted in support of this application.

7.23 The site was historically part of an aerodrome and aeroplane manufacturing facility. Phase 1 and 2 investigations have been undertaken to investigate this potentially contaminative land use, including chemical analysis of soil and groundwater samples. Residual contamination was identified by these investigations, although based on ENVIRON's risk assessment this does not represent a significant risk to the proposed development or other environmental receptors.

7.24 Based on current information, no specific remediation is considered necessary. However, further Phase 2 investigation work is currently being undertaken to provide additional reassurance of environmental conditions at the site. A watching brief has also been recommended during redevelopment should, for example, unexpected contamination be encountered.



Protecting the noise environment

7.25 An assessment of environmental noise considerations associated with the proposed refurbishment and development of the Studios has been carried out, including an extended survey of existing environmental noise conditions in accordance with best practice methodology.

7.26 The assessment has considered key noise issues relating to construction work on the site, building services plant associated with the new and refurbished buildings, film production in the extended backlot areas and increased road traffic on the surrounding public road system.

7.27 The assessment concluded that the environmental noise effects of the proposals are not considered to be significant and should not therefore have a detrimental impact on residential amenity in accordance with draft policy DC14 of the Three Rivers Draft Core Strategy Preferred Options (February 2009) and policy SE22 of the Watford Local Plan 2000 (Saved Policies). For full details of the findings please refer to the detailed noise impact assessment submitted with this application.

Sustainable travel

7.28 Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) published in March 2001 sets out the government's objectives for transport within new developments. The objectives of the guidance are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional and local level to:

- promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight,
- promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling,
- reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

7.29 Three Rivers policy T7 seeks to ensure that new development is designed and located to minimise the impacts of travel by car on the district. It seeks to avoid high levels of traffic and congestion and

ensure that new development is located where it is or can be made compatible with the transport infrastructure in the area and meets relevant standards for access.

7.30 Colin Buchanan has undertaken detailed a assessment to understand the anticipated development traffic, propose appropriate access and parking (including cycle parking) arrangements, assess the traffic impact of the proposals and subsequently develop an appropriate framework travel plan for the site. The anticipated development traffic, and proposed access, parking and sustainable transport strategies are outlined in Chapter 4.

7.31 A transport assessment is submitted in support of the planning application, which indicated that the Studios are well served by bus and rail services. Whilst traffic generation as a result of the proposals will increase, it is demonstrated that no noticeable impact will arise in the morning peak hour and there is surplus capacity in the network to comfortably accommodate the additional traffic in the weekday evening peak. The redevelopment proposals will not therefore have a material impact on the surrounding highway network.

7.32 As part of the traffic impact assessment, the implications of future residential development to the north of the Studios have also been examined. It is demonstrated that the proposed development and associated changes to the roundabout junctions of Aerodrome Way does not preclude the provision of a residential development of 400 units, in line with the current Three Rivers Core Strategy, Further Preferred Options document.

Services and utilities provision

7.33 PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, saved Three Rivers local plan policy GEN6 and draft emerging core strategy policy CP9 seek to ensure that appropriate infrastructure and facilities required to serve a development are available or will be delivered in an agreed timescale. Hoare Lee has prepared a utilities statement confirming how the site is currently serviced in respect of gas, electricity, IT, water supply and sewerage facilities and a proposed utility strategy to support the proposals put forward in this planning application. Included within this is relevant correspondence and record information received from utilities companies.

EDF energy

7.34 The site is currently fed from an existing EDF intake substation with a site capacity of 2MVA, supplemented by two banks of diesel powered generators with a further supply capacity of approximately 8MW. This generator backed power supply is arranged to provide electrical supplies to studio/stage lighting and special effects loads as required across the site.

7.35 The proposed new development will enable all loads to be supplied from the EDF network. The increased network supply capacity for the site is estimated at 10MVA and an application has been made to EDF for a new connection at this increased capacity. Initial discussions with EDF have established that the primary network substation will require reinforcement to make this capacity available.

7.36 A number of new distribution substations will be installed on the site to provide low voltage service supplies to the new buildings and load centres. Each substation would occupy a plant room space as indicated on the planning drawings with level access for plant and with louvred openings to allow for natural ventilation. The new infrastructure will have sufficient capacity to support the site's estimated demand.

Gas

7.37 All heating loads are currently fuelled by oil. The sustainability statement describes the environmental and economical disadvantages associated with this arrangement. As part of the development it is proposed to transfer this heating load to gas supply taken from a new connection to be provided on the existing Southern Gas Distribution Network. Each of the proposed and existing heating load centres will therefore be supplied by gas. Enquiries have been placed with licensed gas distributors.

Surface water drainage and sewerage

7.38 The drainage strategy, provided within the flood risk assessment, details the methods by which surface water is to be dealt with sustainably by means of soakaways or attenuated to the River Gade as existing. The final solution will be subject to Environment Agency approval.

7.39 It is not intended to change any of the existing surface water drainage from the existing buildings although a CCTV survey will be undertaken and any repairs deemed necessary will be carried out as part of the refurbishment.

7.40 It is proposed to capture the run off from the new buildings and car parks and attenuate water through the provision of three soakaways. There is also scope to provide a grey water tank, to enabling recycling of water from the roofs of the two new stages.

7.41 The foul discharge from the existing site goes to Thames Water main sewers. It is proposed to connect any new foul drainage from the new development to the existing system on the site.

Water supply

7.42 The increase in site water demand as a result of the proposals is considered small. Enquiries have been placed with Thames Water to establish that the present existing infrastructure has the capacity to serve the proposed development without reinforcement.

7.43 It is assumed that water will continue to be provided by Thames Water via the existing site distribution network and that the new buildings and facilities will have a metered water supply with new connections made from the existing network.

British Telecom

7.44 BT record drawings of their buried services and plant within the area of the new development have been requested.

A strategy to minimise and manage waste

7.45 Cyril Sweett has prepared a waste statement in support of this application to demonstrate how construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) waste prevention, reduction and recovery will be pursued for the refurbishment and new built elements at Leavesden Studios. The statement describes how pollution from the production of waste on and offsite will be minimised, how operational waste will be managed and that a site waste management plan will be produced. This is in accordance with national policy objectives and best practice guidelines.

7.46 A site waste management plan (SWMP) will be written for the development proposals by the principal contractor. The SWMP will comply with the legislation and include a forecast of construction, demolition and excavation waste, actions to prevent, reduce and recover waste, and waste reduction targets. The SWMP will also name the individuals responsible for delivering specific actions.

7.47 The SWMP will be initiated by the design team who will record actions taken to prevent waste through the application of design solutions. The principal contractor will then create a SWMP document, which will include a detailed waste forecast. The principal contractor will also list the waste reduction and recovery actions that will be pursued. The SWMP will be reviewed regularly to assess progress against actions and include quantities of waste arisings.

Lighting strategy

7.48 The proposed lighting scheme will be designed to provide as a minimum the required lighting levels for public safety and security. All roadway and footway lighting will be designed in accordance with county council adopted standards and in accordance with Three Rivers Local Plan policy N13, emerging core strategy proposals, and Watford Borough Council's policy SE23.

7.49 The proposals will be designed to ensure there is no unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring, nearby properties, the surrounding countryside or areas of wildlife interest, in accordance with the policy objectives, and current best practice guidance notes as part of an active strategy to reduce light pollution.

7.50 Light pollution is a generic term for wasted or nuisance light, made up of three main components: light encroachment & trespass, glare and sky glow. It represents light which is poorly controlled and distributed, and embodies energy wastage. Controlling and reducing these elements of light pollution will be achieved by carefully considering and designing an appropriate lighting scheme that addresses the following:

- Luminaire light distribution
- Mounting heights
- Light output
- Local environmental factors
- Light spectrum
- Surface finish
- Lighting control regime

Signage strategy

7.51 Warner Bros. will utilise the established WB Shield trademark. The strategy relies on the strong graphic character of this symbol to develop an effective but simple wayfinding signage. The materials used for this type of signage are limited to light and dark bronze with concrete or stone support elements used when required.

7.52 Identification lettering may be used at roof height on the end elevation of the new stages, reflecting the mansard roof signage of the existing main Studio building.

7.53 Entrance signage, characterised by the WB Shield and corporate colours, will be located at the main access points into the site. These will be used to direct Studio visitors to the appropriate entrance.

7.54 Internal road signs, building signs, informational signs, and historical signs will be of a size and proportion consistent with the intended use for either wayfinding or communication. These will be chosen from a generic family of signs in terms of colour, font and materials as shown below and will be consistent with the Warner Bros. corporate style.

Key considerations

7.55 The proposed development has been carefully considered to ensure that it will meet the requirements and aspirations of the government in terms of national, regional and local plan policy. Through the refurbishment and development of the application site, Warner Bros. will make a positive contribution to the local economy and the natural environment and ensure the future of this strategic employment site is secured.



Figure 7.3: Example directional signage



1. Subject to planning permission, Warner Bros. intends to proceed with the construction and delivery of this project in order to commence operations in December 2011, and is looking forward to continued success at Leavesden.
 2. The project will safeguard and enhance a substantial local and national film industry asset assisting Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, the East of England and the UK achieve their economic objectives. This consideration should be given significant weight at a time of economic recession and having regard to the advice of PPS4 (December 2009), which states that planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably.
- Accordance with planning policy considerations**
3. The proposals adhere to the very stringent development and environmental principles set out in the various planning policies for the site, which forms part of the London Arc and is specifically identified as a strategically important employment area for film and media businesses. The proposals have been carefully designed to safeguard the existing open character of the undeveloped parts of the site and to improve the building environment.
 4. Consistent with the approved 1993 Planning Brief for the site, the building footprint of the built development has been kept to the minimum, commensurate with operational requirements, maximising the re-use of the existing buildings. A building footprint of 64,932 sqm is proposed and a total floor area of 71,027 sqm (GIA), including 56,169 sqm (GIA) of existing replacement and refurbished building and 14,858 sqm (GIA) of new build.
 5. A key policy consideration pertinent to the site is its status as a major developed site within the green belt. In view of the council's proposal in the Three Rivers Draft Core Strategy to redevelop part of the site for housing, it is acknowledged that there is likely to be an increase in the building footprint of the site as a whole. In any event, Warner Bros. considers that there are very special circumstances surrounding its planning application for the Studios that justify a departure from normal green belt policy. These are:
 - the unique nature of Warner Bros., the Harry Potter film legacy and its business requirements,
 - the global success and reputation of Warner Bros. and the importance its continued inward investment for the UK film industry,
 - the importance of Leavesden Studios as location with its large scale stages, unique backlot and highly skilled work force,
 - the lack of viable alternative sites in the UK,
 - the economic contribution that Warner Bros. makes to the local and regional economy,
 - the commitment of Warner Bros. and its track record of success at Leavesden.
 6. The proposal accords with a number of economic strategies from the local to the national level. At this particularly difficult economic time, the success of the proposed new Warner Bros. venture will make an important contribution to the UK film industry, and to delivering long-term investment and economic benefit to the regional and national economy.
 7. The landscape-led approach and the identification of a number of key design principles has ensured that the openness of the green belt is retained at the site, and that the functions and objectives of green belt designation are not compromised. The following design principles have been incorporated to ensure a sensitive approach to the green belt setting:
 - observance of a height limit of 18.28m AOD,
 - expansion and continuation of established sensitive earth modelling with planting proposed between new buildings and existing residential development,
 - retention of the established trees and hedgerows within the site,
 - the re-use of existing buildings wherever possible,
 - the orientation and siting of the new stages alongside the existing stages,
 - retaining the openness of the site by continued use for outdoor filming,
 - creating berms and new landscape features to fully integrate the new buildings into the landform,
 - creation of two new access entrance points to improve traffic flow and enhance public transport access.
 8. It is concluded that the very special circumstances demonstrated, alongside the safeguarding of the openness of the green belt, ensure that any green belt considerations are outweighed by the economic benefits of the project, and thereby justify a departure from normal green belt policy.
 9. The proposals have also been developed with regard to sustainability, design quality and environmental policies. The proposals will achieve BREEAM 'very good', and new tree and shrub planting will enhance biodiversity and the ecological value of the site.

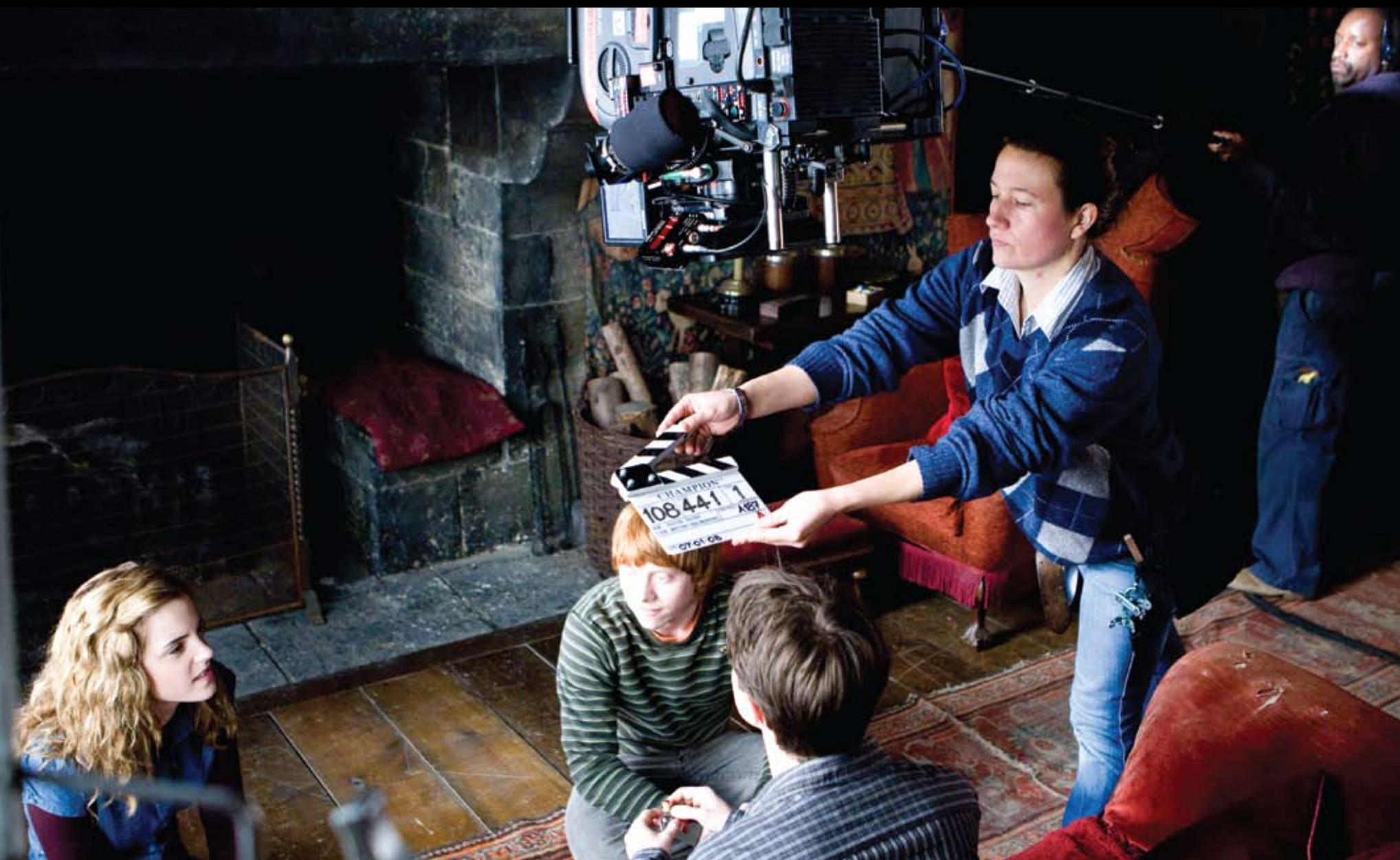


The following documents are submitted to Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council in support of the full planning application:

- 1APP forms and certificates
- Architectural drawings, elevations, sections and illustrative master plan
- General arrangement drawings: hard and soft landscape, tree protection plans
- Heads of terms
- Environmental impact assessment screening report
- Planning supporting statement
- Design and access statement (including refuse and lighting proposals)
- Arboricultural impact appraisal and method statement
- Flood risk assessment (including drainage strategy)
- Transport assessment
- Framework travel plan
- Ground conditions desk study report
- Ecology report
- Sustainability statement (including energy statement)
- Heritage statement
- Landscape and visual assessment
- Waste statement
- Noise impact assessment



- 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
- A Clockwork Orange (1971)
- Barry Lyndon (1975)
- The Shining (1980)
- Full Metal Jacket (1987)
- Performance (1970)
- Superman (1978)
- Greystoke (1984)
- 13 at Dinner (1985)
- Under the Cherry Moon (1986)
- Club Paradise (1986)
- The Mission (1986)
- Little Shop of Horrors (1986)
- Frantic (1988)
- Batman (1989)
- The Secret Garden (1993)
- Trauma (1993)
- Black Beauty (1993)
- Surviving Picasso (1995)
- The Avengers (1997)
- Perfect Murder (1998)
- Eyes Wide Shut (1999)
- Red Planet (1999)
- Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone (2001)
- Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets (2002)
- Possession (2002)
- What a Girl Wants (2003)
- Young Adam (2003)
- Troy (2004)
- Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban (2004)
- Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire (2005)
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005)
- Batman Begins (2005)
- V for Vendetta (2005)
- Tim Burton's Corpse Bride (2005)
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005)
- Alien Autopsy (2006)
- Sweeney Todd (2007)
- Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix (2007)
- Fred Claus (2007)
- 10,000 BC (2008)
- The Dark Knight (2008)
- Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (July 2009)
- Sherlock Holmes (2009)
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part I (2010)
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 (2011)



Films:

- GoldenEye (1995)
- Mortal Kombat: Annihilation (1997)
- An Ideal Husband (1998)
- Onegin (1999)
- Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace (1999)
- Sleepy Hollow (1999)
- Longitude (2000) – a TV movie
- Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (2001)
- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)
- Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)
- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005)
- Harry Potter And The Order of the Phoenix (2007)
- The Dark Knight (2008)
- Sherlock Holmes (2009)
- Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (July 2009)
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part I (2010)
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 (2011)

The Studios has also provided additional supporting production services to numerous movies, television productions and music videos including the following:

- Titanic
- The Disney Club
- The Beach
- Jamiroquai
- Possession
- What a Girl Wants
- Troy
- Pepsi
- 10,000 BC
- The Island
- Fred Clause
- Syriana
- Batman Begins
- V for Vendetta

- Pump It Up TV game show
- Speed Racer
- Charlie And The Chocolate Factory
- Body of Lies
- Sweeney Todd
- Corpse Bride
- Blood Diamond
- Ninja Assassin
- Smashing Pumpkins
- Bewitched (music video)
- Inception
- Hereafter
- Sex and the City 2
- Clash of the Titans
- Letters to Iwo Jima
- Invictus (Mandela)
- Golden Compass
- Inkheart
- Hereafter

National, regional and county planning policy review

POLICY PRINCIPLE	NATIONAL POLICY	REGIONAL POLICY		COUNTY POLICY	
		East of England Plan, May 2008	East of England Economic Strategy, 2008 – 2031	Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991 – 2001 (Saved Policies)	Hertfordshire's draft economic strategy 2009 – 2021
Sustainability					
Be in a suitable location, making use of previously developed land and achieving mixed use development	PPS1 – Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1, PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, Policy EC2: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth	SS1 – Achieving sustainable development, SS2 – Overall spatial strategy, LA1 – London Arc			
Address accessibility for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG13 – Transport,		Priority 6.1 – Equipping people with the confidence, skills and choices for employment and entrepreneurship,		Objective 5 – Creating Vibrant Towns and Vibrant Communities,
Be of a good design that responds to climate change and seeks to ensure usable, durable and adaptable places	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development,	ENG1 – Carbon emissions and energy performance, ENG2 – Renewable energy targets			Objective 1 – Creating a vibrant, low carbon economy
Make an efficient and prudent use of scarce resources	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development		Priority 4.1 – Improving resource efficiency through behavioural change		Priority 1.3 –A low carbon economy
Implement sustainable construction methods	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS22 – Renewable Energy				
Securing an efficient use of land (including the use of brownfield)	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development	E4 – Cluster Development			
Economy					
Support and enhance economic assets, sectors and clusters	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, Policy EC2: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, Policy EC10: Determining Planning Applications for Economic Development, Policy EC11: Determining Planning Applications for Economic Development (other than main town centre uses) not in accordance with an up to date development plan	E1 – Job Growth E2 – Provision of Land for Employment E3 – Strategic Employment Locations, E4 – Clusters	Priority 1.1 – Strengthening the region's enterprise culture, Priority 1.2 – Increasing opportunities for international trade, investment and collaboration, Priority 2.4 – Positioning the East of England and Greater South East as global innovation regions, Priority 8.2 – Increasing economic gain from the region's distinctiveness and vitality, London Arc ambition – make sure employment land and premises meet the needs of businesses and high-growth clusters	Policy 15 – Key employment site,	Priority 1.1A – Old and new economies, Priority 1.1B – Firms serving global and local markets, Priority 1.1C – Large and small enterprises. Priority 1.2 – Building on our strengths: a cluster approach
Promote employment generating activities	PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth	E3 – Regionally Strategic Employment Locations	Goal 1 – Enterprise: Improving business performance and a stronger culture of entrepreneurship	Policy 15 – Key employment site,	Priority 3.3 – Expect all employment sites to maximise number of high value jobs created to ensure best use of available land, Priority 5.3 – Build on opportunities to increase economic and social benefits of Hertfordshire's cultural, leisure and tourism attractions
Stimulating enterprise, innovation and inward investment			Goal 2 – Innovation: Realising the value of innovation by bringing ideas to market, Priority 2.1 – Developing a thriving culture of innovation and creativity		Objective 2 – Stimulating enterprise, innovation and inward investment, Priority 2.1 – Reinforce and build on the existing entrepreneurial culture, Priority 2.3 – Support accelerated and sustainable growth, productivity and competitiveness of the county's businesses
Support creative media and film clusters			Priority 1.3 – Enabling high-growth businesses to realise their potential, Priority 2.3 – Strengthening clusters around leading private sector R&D companies and research-intensive universities, Goal 3 Digital Economy: Accelerating use of digital technologies, Priority 3.1 – Improving efficiency and innovation through the application of digital technologies, London Arc ambition – support the expansion of important, high-value sectors such as pharmaceuticals, aerospace and film production		Priority 1.2C – Digital creativity and media, Priority 1.2D – Tourism, culture and sport, Priority 2.1 – Reinforce and build on the existing entrepreneurial culture, Priority 1.2 – Building on our strengths: a cluster approach, Priority 3.8 – Create innovation and incubation centres for new entrepreneurs at strategic locations particularly based on sectors, clusters and new industries
Maintain and enhance skills and knowledge transfer	PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, Policy EC2: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth		Priority 3.1 – Improving efficiency and innovation through application of digital technologies, Priority 5.1 – Increasing the demand for and supply of higher-level skills, Priority 5.4 – Providing education and training that meets the needs of individuals, employers and the economy.		Objective 3 – Developing a well-skilled workforce, Priority 2.5 – Stimulate demand for R&D and knowledge transfer among county's SMEs. Priority 2.6 – Ensure strong links between the University of Hertfordshire, research institutions and private sector, Priority 3.1 – Developing skills that better meet businesses current and future needs, Priority 3.4 – Supporting wider career choices (including Apprenticeships), Priority 3.5 – Encouraging skills for innovation and entrepreneurship, Priority 3.6 – Attract and retain graduates

POLICY PRINCIPLE	NATIONAL POLICY	REGIONAL POLICY		COUNTY POLICY	
		East of England Plan, May 2008	East of England Economic Strategy, 2008 – 2031	Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991 – 2001 (Saved Policies)	Hertfordshire's draft economic strategy 2009 – 2021
Natural & Built Environment					
Maintain and enhance the natural and built environment	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG2 – Green Belts, PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment, PPG16 – Archaeology and Planning	SS7 – Green Belt			
Account for physical and environmental constraints	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG2 – Green Belts, PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, PPG13 – Transport, PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment, PPG16 – Archaeology and Planning, PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control PPG24 – Planning and Noise, PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk	ENV1 – Green infrastructure, ENV2 – Landscape conservation, ENV3 – Biodiversity and earth heritage, ENV5 – Woodlands, ENV6 – Historic environment		Policy 43 – Landscape Conservation Areas	
Provision of appropriate infrastructure and facilities	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG13 – Transport	WAT2 – Water infrastructure			Objective 4 – Providing quality locations and infrastructure, Priority 4.5 – Quality infrastructure to support growth
Constitute an appropriate scale and form	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG2 – Green Belts	E4 – Cluster Development			
Mitigation of negative environmental constraints	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG2 – Green Belts, PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, PPS10 – Planning for Sustainable Waste Management, PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment, PPG16 – Archaeology and Planning, PPG24 – Planning and Noise, PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk	WM1 – Waste management objectives, WM6 – Waste management in development			
Leisure, Recreation and Tourism					
Support and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities	PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, PPG21 – Tourism Good Practice Guide on Planning For Tourism,	C1 – Cultural Development C2 – Provision and Location of Strategic Cultural Facilities, E4 – Clusters			Priority 1.2D – Tourism, culture and sport
Maximise the benefits of tourism, enabling development to reach its potential and for local communities to enjoy the benefits	PPG21 – Tourism, Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism	E4 - Clusters			
Transport					
Reduce the need to travel, especially by car and promote accessibility to jobs, services and facilities by public transport, cycling and walking	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG13 – Transport	T1 – Regional Transport Strategy Objectives and Outcomes, T2 – Changing Travel Behaviour T9 – Walking, cycling and other non-motorised transport, T13 – Public transport accessibility			
Be accompanied by an appropriate level of infrastructure	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG13 – Transport		Priority 7.2 – Investing in transport to maximise economic growth, Priority 7.3 – Increasing economic benefit to the East of England from major international gateways		
Mitigation of negative impacts of development on the local road network by adopting sustainable transport measures which make prudent use of natural resources	PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG13 – Transport	T3 – Managing Traffic Demand, T14 – Parking			

Local planning policy review

POLICY PRINCIPLE	THREE RIVERS LOCAL POLICY		WATFORD LOCAL POLICY	
	Three Rivers Local Plan, 2002 (Saved Policies)	Three Rivers Core Strategy Preferred Options, February 2009	Watford Local Plan, 2000 (Saved Policies)	Core Strategy Preferred Options, February 2008
Sustainability				
Be in a suitable location, making use of previously developed land and achieving mixed use development	GEN1 – Making development more sustainable, GEN1a – General location of development, GEN2 – Location of Major Development, Building Futures: A Hertfordshire Guide to Promoting Sustainability in Development	Draft policy CP1 – Overarching policy on sustainable development, Draft policy PSP2 – Development in the Key Centres	SE1 – Making Development Sustainable	SS1 – Overall Spatial Strategy
Be of a good design that responds to climate change and seeks to ensure usable, durable and adaptable places	D1 – Design Statements Building Futures: A Hertfordshire Guide to Promoting Sustainability in Development	Draft policy CP1 – Overarching policy on sustainable development, Draft policy DC7 – Design of Development, Draft policy DC10 – Carbon emissions and on-site renewables	SE4 – Energy Efficient Design	Preferred Policy approach BWP 6 – Design Principles
Make an efficient and prudent use of scarce resources		Draft policy CP1 – Overarching policy on sustainable development, Draft policy DC10 – Carbon emissions and on-site renewables, Draft policy DC12 – Waste Management	SE7 – Waste Storage, Recovery and Recycling in New Development	
Implement sustainable construction methods	D2 – Energy Efficient Building Forms Building Futures: A Hertfordshire Guide to Promoting Sustainability in Development	Draft policy CP1 – Overarching policy on sustainable development, Draft policy DC7 – Design of Development		
Securing an efficient use of land (including the use of brownfield)		Draft policy CP1 – Overarching policy on sustainable development	SS1 – Overall Spatial Strategy, Preferred policy approach AP9 – Employment areas	
Economy				
Support and enhance economic assets, sectors and clusters	E3 – Safeguarding of Employment Areas	Draft policy CP6 – Employment and economic development	E1 – Employment Areas, E3 – Small Units	Preferred policy approach BWP2 – Employment
Promote employment generating activities	E1 – New Development for Employment, E3 – Safeguarding of Employment Areas, E4 – Small Business Units	Draft policy CP6 – Employment and economic development		SS1 – Overall Spatial Strategy, Preferred policy approach AP9 – Employment Areas, Preferred policy approach BWP2 – Employment
Stimulating enterprise, innovation and inward investment		Draft policy CP6 – Employment and economic development		
Maintain and enhance skills and knowledge transfer		Draft policy CP6 – Employment and economic development		
Natural & Built Environment				
Maintain and enhance the natural and built environment	GB1 – Development within the Green Belt, GB2 – Leavesden Studios Site	Draft policy DC1 – Green Belt	SE9 – Green Belt: New Development, SE13 – Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt	SS1 – Overall Spatial Strategy, Preferred policy approach AP10 – Green Spaces
Account for physical and environmental constraints	N1 – Nature Conservation, N2 – Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, N3 – Protected species, N15 – Trees, hedgerows and new development, N16 – Protection of trees and hedgerows during development N23 – Landscape Regions, C9 – setting of listed buildings,	Draft policy DC1 – Green Belt, Draft policy DC2 – Biodiversity, Trees and Woodland, Draft Policy DC3 – Landscape Character, Draft Policy DC13 – Historic Built Environment	SE37 – Protection of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows, U10 – Setting of Listed Buildings	Preferred policy approach AP10 – Green Spaces, Preferred policy approach BWP7 – Built Heritage Conservation, Preferred policy approach BWP8 – Natural Heritage Conservation
Provision of appropriate infrastructure and facilities	GEN6 – Provision of Utilities and Services	Draft policy CP9 – Infrastructure and planning obligations	SE29 – Utilities Infrastructure	Preferred policy approach BWP5 – Infrastructure
Constitute an appropriate scale and form			SE14 – Leavesden Studios Site	
Mitigation of negative environmental constraints	N13 – Light Pollution	Draft policy DC2 – Biodiversity, Trees and Woodland, Draft Policy DC3 – Landscape Character, Draft Policy DC9 – Flood risk and water resources (drainage), Draft Policy DC12 – Waste Management, Draft Policy DC13 – Historic Built Environment, Draft policy DC14 – Contamination and Pollution Control	SE22 –Noise, SE23 – Light Pollution	

POLICY PRINCIPLE	THREE RIVERS LOCAL POLICY		WATFORD LOCAL POLICY	
	Three Rivers Local Plan, 2002 (Saved Policies)	Three Rivers Core Strategy Preferred Options, February 2009	Watford Local Plan, 2000 (Saved Policies)	Core Strategy Preferred Options, February 2008
Leisure, Recreation and Tourism				
Support and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities	N23 – Landscape Regions	Draft policy DC4 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities, Draft policy DC6 – Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities	L13 – Arts, Culture and Entertainment, L14 – Tourism and Hotels	
Maximise the benefits of tourism, enabling development to reach its potential and for local communities to enjoy the benefits		Draft policy DC6 – Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities	L14 – Tourism and Hotels	
Transport				
Reduce the need to travel, especially by car and promote accessibility to jobs, services and facilities by public transport, cycling and walking	T10 – Cycling, T11 – Walking	Draft policy CP8 – Transport	T5 – New Development and Green Travel Plans, T7 – Pedestrian Facilities in Development, T9 – Cycling, T10 – Cycle Parking Standards	Preferred Policy approach BWP 4 – Transport
Be accompanied by an appropriate level of infrastructure	T8 – Car Parking Provision	Draft policy CP8 – Transport, Draft policy DC15 – Parking, Draft policy CP9 – Infrastructure and planning obligations	T4 – Transport and New Development	Preferred Policy approach BWP 5 – Infrastructure
Mitigation of negative impacts of development on the local road network by adopting sustainable transport measures which make prudent use of natural resources	T7 – Highways and New Development	Draft policy CP8 – Transport	T22 – Car Parking Standards, T23 – Non-Residential Development	Preferred Policy approach BWP 4 – Transport