



# Background to position papers prepared by The Guildford Society

## Overview

The Guildford Society's purpose includes:

- Conserving the best of Guildford and its environs;
- Promoting high standards of planning and architecture to create a long term sustainable community; and
- Influencing the pace and type of development.

Its activities are focused on the town centre and significant issues in urban Guildford with parish councils safeguarding other areas of Guildford Borough.

The Society is broadly in favour of the development of The Town to ensure it continues to provide a great place to live, work and do business. However development pressures from a range of sources are significant:

- Commercial developers of all types of building;
- Home owners seeking to extract value from their property by development;
- The Council's desire to re-develop parts of the town centre;
- New businesses seeking to move to the Town;
- The continuing success of the University;
- Immigration to the South of England; and
- New business opportunities.

If not properly controlled, such development will irreversibly damage the urban, natural and rural environment valued by citizens. Consequently this desire to develop needs to be balanced with the need to create a long term sustainable community, and preservation of Guildford's heritage and culture, critical factors in The Town's success over many years. Consequently the Society believes that it is vital that The Town's heritage is conserved for the benefit of current and future generations and that this must be a vital consideration when evaluating regeneration and new development opportunities in the town centre and urban Guildford.

## Our position

In response to these challenges, the Society has prepared a series of papers setting out its position on matters related to The Town's heritage. These papers are deliberately aspirational and are intended to provide a basis for communicating consistently with stakeholders on the Local Plan, town planning and individual developments; they will be reviewed and revised periodically as required.

The desired overarching design principles are set out in the paper entitled "Good Design"; other papers provide information on the Society's views on key heritage aspects of The Town.

The Society welcomes early discussion with home owners, developers, businesses and the Council when significant development is planned and this is intended to be facilitated by these papers.

While acknowledging the considerable work already performed by competent authorities in defining polices applicable to Guildford including GBC, SCC and NT, much of which the

Society concurs with, there will always be certain matters which the Society either disagrees with or considers to be under ambitious. The Society's position papers are not intended to be restatements of policies produced by others but are instead intended to represent the Society's own independent views. The Society recognises that, on occasion, these positions may differ from those of other parties due to differing objectives but encourages those parties to actively engage with Society members on areas of difference.

To complement these position papers, the Society also intends in due course to develop a map of The Town highlighting districts, streets, groups of properties and selected buildings which it considers to be of architectural, heritage or community value. It also intends to create a register of principal views of skyline and sightlines.

While in setting out its views proactively, the Society is keen to ensure its message is received by GBC in advance of bringing forward detailed local planning policy and by developers and residents prior to embarking on the development process.

The Society is also active in reviewing planning applications and on occasion engages in pre-application discussions with developers and councillors on major applications. Members of the Society's Planning Group review all planning applications in Guildford town centre, and other applications in the Guildford urban area which it considers to have significant impact on the locality. As the Society's adopted position on a number of facets of Guildford, the views set out in the Society's position papers will form a key component of the Society's responses to future planning applications.

### **Current position papers**

- ▶ Good design - eight points to help ensure good design and future heritage creation
- ▶ Preserving and enhancing the approaches to Central Guildford
- ▶ Preserving and enhancing Guildford's historic High Street
- ▶ Preserving and enhancing Guildford's residential heritage
- ▶ Enhancing Guildford's riverside
- ▶ Preserving Guildford's vistas, roofscapes and skyline

### **Glossary**

The Society's position papers make use of the following terms:

AONB	Area of outstanding natural beauty
Borough	The Borough of Guildford
GBC or Council	Guildford Borough Council
HGV	Heavy goods vehicle
NT	National Trust
SCC	Surrey County Council
Slyfield	Slyfield Industrial Estate
Society	The Guildford Society (see <a href="http://www.guildfordsociety.org.uk/">http://www.guildfordsociety.org.uk/</a> )
SSSI	Site of special scientific interest
The Town	Urban Guildford
University	University of Surrey

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