

SECTION 2

Population and Housing

2.0. POPULATION AND HOUSING

2.1. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1. Population and housing together with industry and employment are fundamentally the two most important elements to be considered in the preparation of this Local Plan, as decisions on these are likely to affect many other proposals in the Plan i.e. the provision of education, open space and other community facilities. An assessment of the existing and expected future population, its size and make-up, is therefore essential when considering housing provision.
- 2.1.2. The satisfactory provision and location of housing, the main user of urban land, is a complex issue which is continually changing. It is influenced by such factors as land availability, availability of finance, fluctuating trends of household size, social conditions, the aspirations of people, tenure patterns and the political situation.
- 2.1.3. Although population and housing are clearly inter-related, they are dealt with separately for most of this section before being discussed together for the purpose of examining future requirements.

2.2. POPULATION - PAST AND PRESENT

- 2.2.1. According to preliminary Enumeration District counts from the 1981 Census, the population of Ross-on-Wye East and West Wards total 8,454 (the Wards covering the former Ross Urban District and Ross Rural Parish areas).
- 2.2.2. For the former Ross Urban District area the Census revealed a population of 7,182 and it is considered that the Springfield, Greytrees and Overcross Farm areas, which have been extensively developed in recent years and now containing some 420 dwellings, should be included as part of Ross 'town'.
- 2.2.3. To-date therefore, the 'town' of Ross-on-Wye can be said to accommodate some 8,350 people. (In determining some sort of 'town' boundary for this Plan, the Wilton area, which has also received further recent housing development, was considered for inclusion in the 'town'. However, it was felt that although being an important part of the Plan area, the settlement was physically not connected with the 'town' and was more related to Bridstow and the surrounding rural district).
- 2.2.4. The population of the 'town' has increased considerably since 1961, principally following development at Archenfield. The number of people now residing within the Urban District area has increased by over a quarter, whilst the building of 205 dwellings on two sites at Springfield and 90 dwellings at Greytrees (both developments just outside the Urban District area) has almost entirely been responsible for the near fourfold increase to the Ross Rural Parish population total.

	1951	% CHANGE	1961	% CHANGE	1971	% CHANGE	1981
ROSS U.D.	5,399	+(4.5)	5,641	+(13.5)	6,405	+(12.1)	7,182
ROSS RURAL	379	+(2.0)	388	+(38.0)	536	+(137.3)	1,272
TOTAL	5,778	+(4.3)	6,029	+(15.0)	6,941	(21.8)	8,454

Source:- 1951, 1961, 1971 CENSUS, PRELIMINARY E.D. COUNTS FROM 1981 CENSUS.

TABLE 1 POPULATION CHANGE 1951-1981

2.2.5. It is estimated that of those people living in the Ross Rural Parish area, only 100 actually live outside the 'town' and that this total has kept fairly constant. The accompanying graph therefore shows the true expansion rate of the town over the last fifty years.

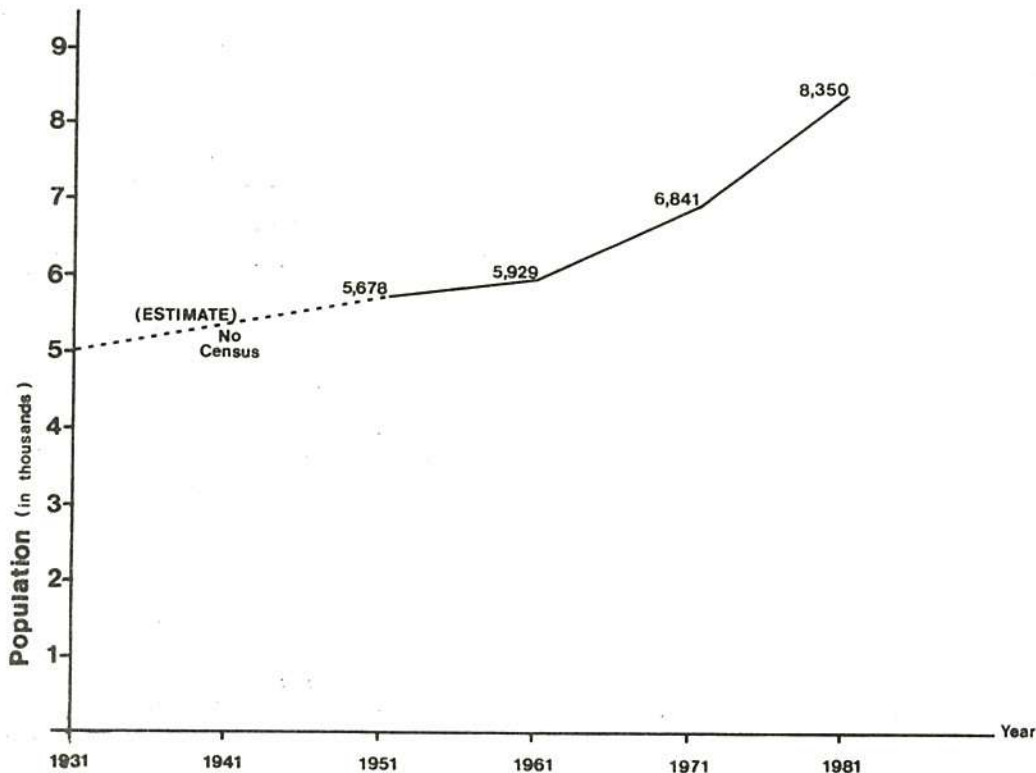


DIAGRAM 1 GRAPH SHOWING THE POPULATION CHANGE OF ROSS 'TOWN' SINCE 1931

Source:- 1951, 1961, 1971 CENSUS, PRELIMINARY E.D. COUNTS FROM 1981 CENSUS.

2.3. POPULATION STRUCTURE

2.3.1. To identify the characteristics of the population and furthermore the needs which may be related to that population, one must understand its make-up.

2.3.2. Unfortunately, detailed information for Ross-on-Wye is not yet available from the 1981 Census. However, it is possible to see, from the accompanying age/sex diagram covering the period 1961 - 1977, which age groups have increased or decreased as a result of the change in the town's population. (It is important to understand that such a diagram will only show which age groups have increased or decreased and that any proportional changes for the period will not be evident).

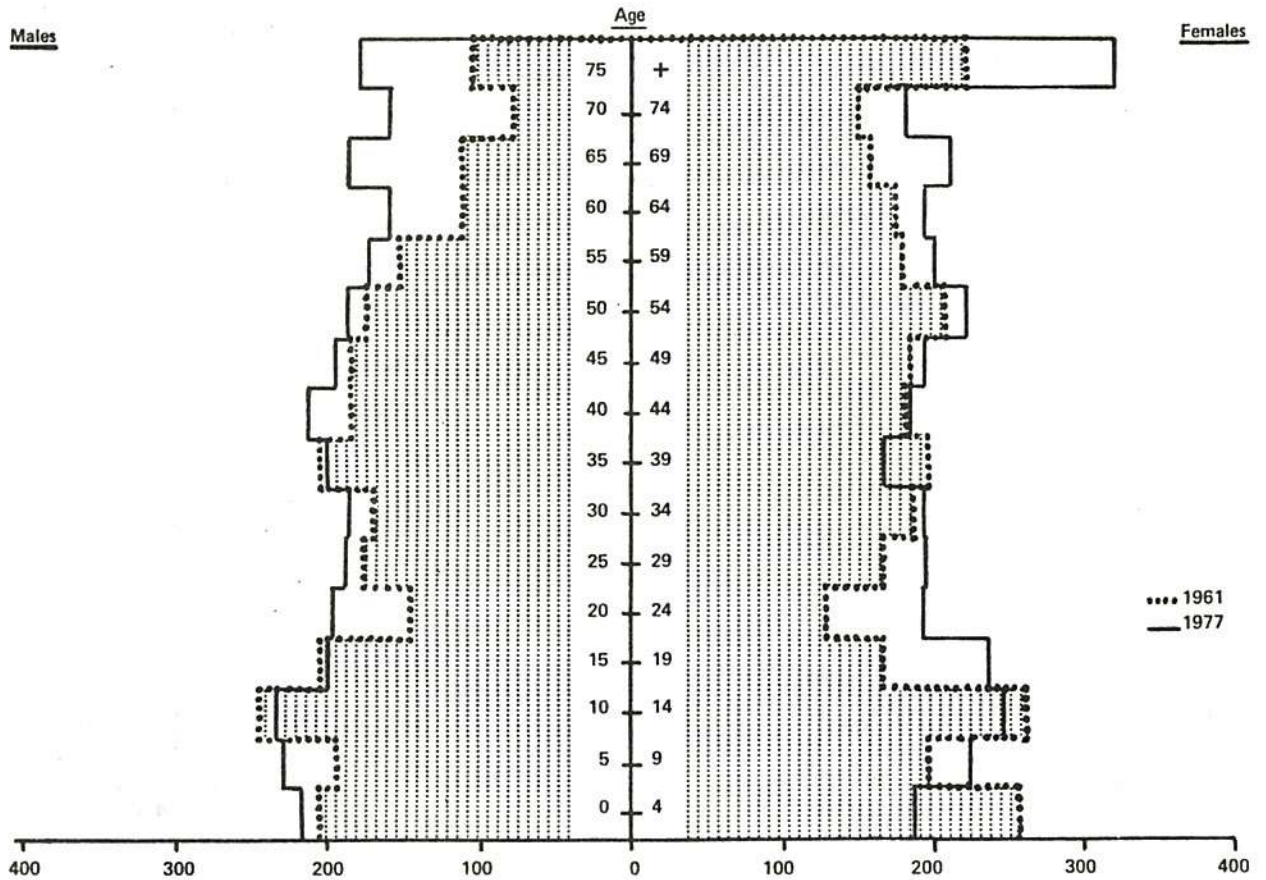


DIAGRAM 2

AGE/SEX STRUCTURE

Source:- CENSUS 1961, 1977 CENSUS UPDATED

2.3.3. In 1977, there were almost half as many more retired persons living in Ross-on-Wye than 1961 and even then, the town accommodated a higher than national average of retired people (i.e. 22% as against 17% U.K.). It is confidently expected that this increase has continued from 1977, particularly when a fair percentage of recent new housing has consisted of two bedroomed bungalows which are seen as ideal for retiring people.

- 2.3.4. The diagram also shows that there has been an increase in the numbers of young people (i.e. 15 - 29 age) in the town. This is thought to be due to the fairly steady house building rate over the past decade which has meant that a home can be more easily obtained by young married couples in the town than in the surrounding rural areas. Unfortunately, there has not been the job opportunities in the town to keep pace but it is thought that employment at nearby firms in the Forest of Dean and at Cheltenham and Gloucester has, to some extent, helped redress this imbalance and that people, until recently have been prepared to travel some distance to their workplace if a home could be purchased in Ross-on-Wye.
- 2.3.5. The larger increase in the numbers of young working age females now living in the town is attributed to the fact that jobs for young girls, especially jobs in shops and offices were more abundant in the town than in the surrounding areas. The smaller increase in young working age males could reflect the fact that fewer are leaving school at sixteen because of the absence of available jobs and are trying to secure some educational qualifications. Alternatively youths could be securing jobs in agriculture or related industries in the outlying areas, therefore not needing to move into town to be nearer their place of employment.
- 2.3.6. The small relative decreases in the number of babies and young children would seem to bear out the national trend for smaller families. However, the decrease is larger than one would expect, bearing in mind that there has been a proportional increase in the town's young people (15 - 29) over this period.

Finally, the middle age groups have remained fairly stable with only minor increases in the numbers of people aged between 40 and 45 and decreases in the numbers aged 35 - 39. Proportionately the representation of the town's population in these groups has fallen.

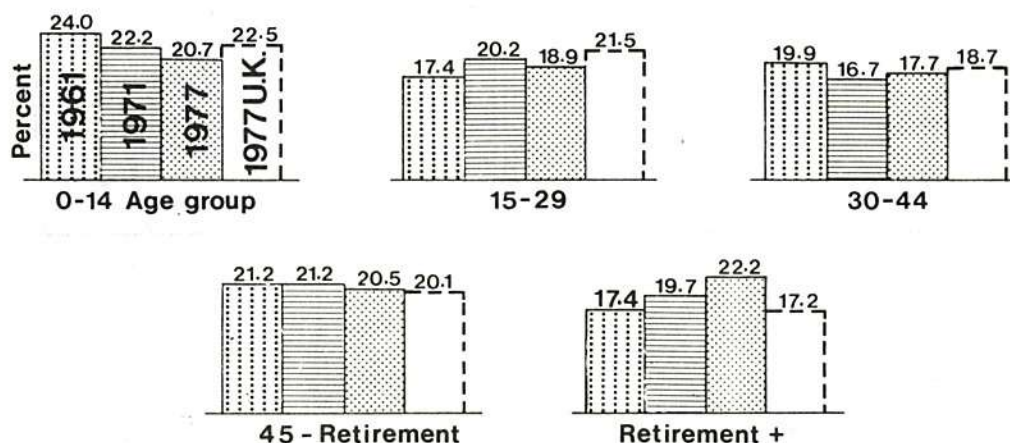


DIAGRAM 3 PROPORTIONS OF POPULATION IN AGE GROUPS

Source:- 1961, 1971 CENSUS, 1977 CENSUS UPDATE O.P.C.S.

2.4. MIGRATION

2.4.1. The population of the 'town' has increased by some 1500 since 1971. The majority of this rise is though to be due to in-migration, as natural change (i.e. the increase of births over deaths) has either been slight or has been negative in character. For instance, over the last five years in South Herefordshire District (and it is assumed that Ross-on-Wye is no exception) the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births, thus resulting in a small natural decrease (0.22% of the mean population).

2.4.2. It can be clearly seen from the accompanying diagram that the large increase in the 'town's' population over the last twenty odd years has therefore been almost entirely due to in-migration.

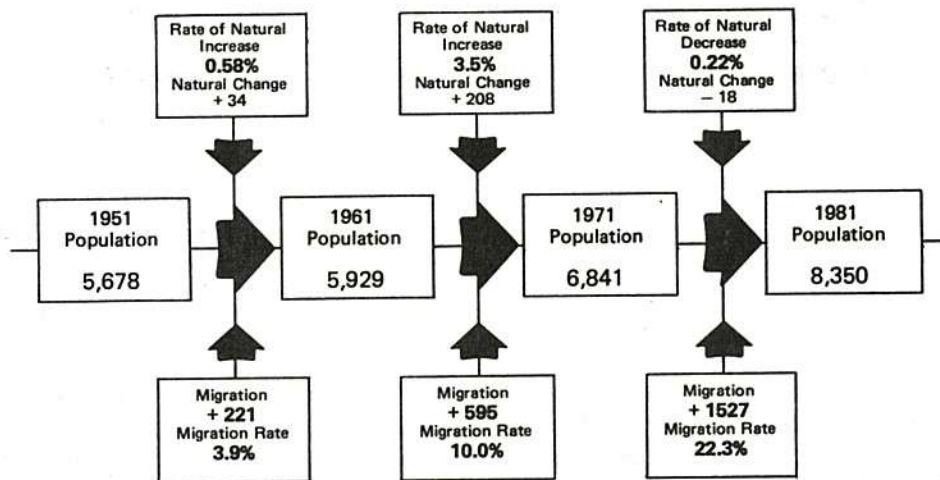


DIAGRAM 4 AN ANALYSIS OF POPULATION CHANGE

Source:- 1951, 1961, 1971 CENSUS, 1981 CENSUS PRELIMINARY COUNT
O.P.C.S. BIRTHS AND DEATHS SD 25, SD 52.

NOTES

1. Population totals include Ross Urban District and the Greytrees, Springfield areas of Ross Rural Parish.
2. The migration and natural change totals for the period 1971 - 1981 are estimates only based on O.P.C.S. statistics for South Herefordshire District as a whole.

2.4.3. An analysis of migration into the town in the five year period preceding the 1971 Census revealed that nearly one third of migrants were from other areas of Herefordshire, with a quarter specifically from the outlying Ross and Whitchurch area. Significant movements were being made from neighbouring Gloucestershire, in particular the Forest of Dean areas (18%). Over one person in ten were migrating from the Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and the Birmingham, Solihull areas, whilst there were noticeable migration movements from South Wales.

2.4.4. Over a half of those migrating in to the town were aged between 15 and 44, a quarter were nearing retirement or were actually in retirement, whilst only 16% were children aged between 5 and 14.

2.5. HOUSING - THE PRESENT SITUATION

2.5.1. At the time of the 1981 Census (5th April, 1981) there were some 3,200 dwellings in Ross-on-Wye, an increase of 1,326 or 70% on the 1961 Census total.

	<u>No. of Households</u>	<u>No. of Dwellings</u>	<u>Rate of Increase of Dwellings</u> <u>in 10 Year Period</u>
1961	1,837	1,874	
1971	2,284	2,392	27.6%
1981	3,056	3,200	33.8%

TABLE 2 HOUSEHOLDS AND DWELLINGS 1961-1981

Source:- 1961, 1971 CENSUS, 1981 CENSUS PRELIMINARY E.D. COUNT

2.6. NEW DEVELOPMENT

2.6.1. According to this Council's House Completion records, well over a half (59%) of this increase has taken place in the six year period up to the end of December, 1980 and has accounted for almost a quarter of the town's total housing stock.

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Total
PUBLIC	0	0	17	0	160	74	30	19	0	20	320
PRIVATE	20	3	3	12	18	61	77	83	122	106	505
TOTAL	20	3	20	12	178	135	107	102	122	126	825

TABLE 3 HOUSE COMPLETIONS IN ROSS-ON-WYE 1971-1981

Source:- HOUSE COMPLETION REGISTER

2.6.2. Since the end of December 1980 however, the house building rate has slowed (in the year ending December 1981 only 79 dwellings had been completed). At Archenfield, the largest area of Ross to be developed since 1971, there are now only 20 houses yet to be built on existing estates and only two sites with unimplemented planning permissions (for 54 dwellings and 40 dwellings respectively). When the present developments are completed and excluding the two unimplemented permissions, there will be some 459 dwellings in the Archenfield area which have been built for sale. Almost two thirds of the whole development are three bedded units, the majority being houses. Only a fifth are small two-bedded dwellings whilst the remainder are four-bedded units.

2 BED MAISONETTE.	2 BED BUNGALOW	3 BED BUNGALOW	4 BED BUNGALOW	2 BED HOUSE	3 BED HOUSE	4 BED HOUSE	TOTAL
8	51	26	2	33	252	87	459

TABLE 4 DWELLING TYPES AT ARCHENFIELD

Source:- L.A. REGISTER

2.6.3. Other recent housing built for sale has been constructed at Greytrees, where substantial infilling and rounding-off has occurred together with small housing developments; Overcross Farm and part of Chase Park. The remainder of the new private development in the town has been small, mainly infills.

2.6.4. The majority of recent public housing has been built at Springfield where 205 flats and houses have been constructed. In addition smaller housing schemes have been constructed at Nursery Road, Smallbrook Gardens, Rudhall Close and Purland where 24 old houses were demolished and 36 bungalows and houses built as replacements.

2.7. VACANT DWELLINGS AND HOUSEHOLDS

2.7.1. Information from the Council's Treasurer's Department, suggests that some 2.25% of all dwellings in the town, at March, 1981, were vacant. Whilst this figure may not account for all properties that are unoccupied and is therefore dangerous to be used in comparison with the 1971 Census figure which showed a 3.6% vacancy rate, it would appear safe to assume that there are now fewer unoccupied dwellings than there were ten years ago in the town.

2.7.2. The average household size for occupied dwellings has fallen (i.e. 2.78 persons per household from 3.00) which bears out the trends of smaller families, that young people are setting up separate households earlier, and that Ross has increasing numbers of retirement households.

2.7.3. An analysis of household sizes (taken from the 1977 Census update figures) showed that the town had a higher than national average proportion of one and two person households - i.e. 59% as against 53% nationally. More significantly, over a third of all households (37%) were pensioner households, which was much higher than the 23% national average. Such figures would seem to imply a need for smaller dwelling types.

2.8. AGE OF DWELLINGS

2.8.1. Of the present housing stock, it is estimated that approximately 29% were built pre-1919 whilst around 55% were constructed since 1945.

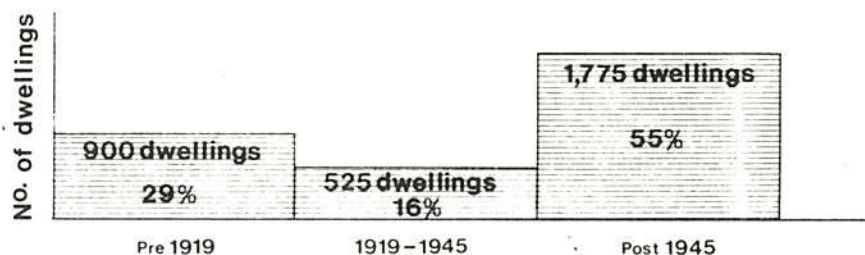


DIAGRAM 5 AGE OF DWELLINGS

Source:- CENSUS AND HOUSE COMPLETION RECORDS

2.8.2. Although only estimates, the figures display the growth of the town since the Second World War. However, what is important, and is not shown in this diagram is the fact that almost half of the post war growth has taken place since 1974. The existence of such a significant amount of new housing will mean that a smaller percentage of housing in Ross is likely to be lacking one or more of the basic amenities.

2.9. TENURE

2.9.1. Of the town's total housing stock of 3,200, it is estimated that some 58% are owner occupied. This is only a marginal percentage increase since 1971 and whilst in the last four years new house building has been almost totally dominated by private housing for sale, in the mid-seventies some 200 plus local authority houses were constructed at Springfield, with smaller developments at Rudhall Close and Nursery Road.

2.9.2. It is thought unlikely that the actual numbers of private rented accommodation available in the town has fallen to any degree but is obviously now reflects a smaller proportion of the total housing stock.

	<u>TOTAL NO. OF DWELLINGS</u>	<u>OWNER OCCUPIED %</u>	<u>COUNCIL RENTED %</u>	<u>PRIVATE RENTED %</u>
1971	2,392	56	24	20
1981	3,200	58	27	15

TABLE 5 HOUSING TENURE

Source:- 1971 CENSUS, HOUSE COMPLETION RECORDS, COUNCIL HOUSE RECORDS

2.10. OWNER OCCUPIED

2.10.1. The majority of these dwellings can be found on estates south of the town around Archenfield, Ashfield and Merrivale, together with Greytrees in the far north which contains a notable concentration.

2.10.2. The average household size for this sector (in 1971) was 2.71 persons compared with 3.58 for the public rented sector, whilst the average dwelling size was slightly larger than its public rented counterpart - 5.68 habitable rooms per dwelling as against 4.85 (House Condition Surveys, undertaken by the Council in 1975 and 1978 confirmed a further steady increase in the District generally).

2.10.3. Whilst the increase in owner occupation in percentage terms has not been significantly large, there have been over 500 new dwellings built for sale since 1971, which does reflect the national trend where people find it increasingly more desirable to own their own home.

2.10.4. The condition and amenities of the owner occupied stock appears to be fairly good. Whilst detailed information from the 1981 Census is not yet available and the results from the Councils Sample House Condition Survey for the town have still to be presented it is confidently expected that a marked improvement has been made to basic amenities in recent years.

2.10.5. In 1971, 1,015 owner occupied households (85%) had the exclusive use of the basic amenities (i.e. hot water, fixed bath and inside w.c.). Only 5.3% of all owner occupied households were without fixed bath or shower, whilst 6.2% had to make do with an outside w.c. only.

2.10.6. Since 1974 some 55 housing improvement grants have been approved which must have gone some way to reducing the number of owner occupied properties lacking certain facilities.

2.11. PRIVATE RENTED

2.11.1. In 1971, 425 households were renting accommodation from private landlords and whilst up-to-date information is not available it is thought that this figure is unlikely to have increased due to the problems facing landlords over increased tenants security and the fact that property commands good prices in private sale.

2.11.2. Three quarters of the private rented property in 1971 was being rented unfurnished, whilst only 45% of all furnished accommodation and 61% of unfurnished accommodation had exclusive use of hot water, a fixed bath and an inside w.c.

2.11.3. In view of the fact that local authority housing stock in the town is going to dwindle because of council house sales a growing reliance is going to be made upon this sector for accommodation. Whilst provisions were made in the Housing Act, 1980 to encourage private rented as a temporary form of housing, it will be interesting to see whether the powers given to private landlords are successful in creating more private rented accommodation, without having adverse affects on tenants.

2.12. PUBLIC RENTED

2.12.1. There are now some 854 publicly rented properties in the town, accounting for 27% of the total housing stock and up until recently local authority house-building had been increasing its proportion of the town's housing stock. For instance, in the five year period from April 1974 to April 1979, some 277 dwellings were built.

2.12.2. Almost a half of all Council accommodation is three bedroomed (47%) and up until 1964 this size of accommodation accounted for over two-thirds of the Authority's stock. Since 1964, the building of 275 one and two-bedroomed flats, bungalows and houses has helped to redress this imbalance.

1919-1945			1945 - 1964						POST 1964								
HOUSES			HOUSES				FLATS		BUNGALOWS		HOUSES			FLATS		BUNGALOWS	
2B	3B	4B	2B	3B	4B	1B	2B	3B	1B	2B	3B	4B	1B	2B	1B	2B	
65	103	12	14	243	21	6	14	4	23	78	54	3	120	33	38	6	

TABLE 6

DWELLING TYPES AND AGE

Source:- HOUSING DEPARTMENT RECORDS

In recent years the Council have been restricted in their house building programme mainly due to the non-availability of suitable housing land. Failure to purchase land for house building will only result in the authority's housing stock diminishing due to the Housing Act, 1980 'Right to Buy Scheme'.

2.13. COUNCIL HOUSE SALES

- 2.13.1. Between March 1981 and December 1981, under the Housing Act, 1980 'Right to Buy Scheme', this Council has sold 94 dwellings, 24 of which have been in Ross-on-Wye.
- 2.13.2. The majority of the dwellings sold in Ross were three bedroomed houses, mainly semi-detached, with some end-of-terrace. Only four of those houses were built before 1950 and two have been the subject of recent modernisation by the Council. It is thought that recent rent increases has prompted a larger number of tenants to apply to buy and with rents likely to continue rising it is unlikely that the current rate of applications will fall to any great degree in the next few months. Estimates of future sales are obviously difficult to predict, yet it is likely that applications to buy and subsequent sales will level off.

2.14. MORTGAGES

- 2.14.1. In addition to mortgages given to persons buying privately, the Council, under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1980, are also required to offer tenants buying their Council home, a mortgage.

2.15. NEW BUILDS

- 2.15.1. With Morley Square now completed (20 O.A.P. Units), work is presently progressing on the construction of 8 one-bedded units on two sites at Three Crosses Road and Springfield Road. At the time of this report, the only development on the Council's present new build programme is at Woodside, about 20 mixed 1, 2 and 3 bedded units are proposed. (Also at Woodside, the County Council have recently completed construction of nine sheltered units, but to-date none have been occupied due to the current restraints on local authority expenditure).

2.16. HOUSE CONDITION/IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

- 2.16.1. Only two dwellings at Millpond Street and 27 of the 44 pre-war homes at Springfield Road and Hillview Road currently being modernised, do not comply with the five point standard.* Whilst this Council have decided not to undertake any further major improvements after the Springfield Road/Hillview Road programme, only minor improvements including replacement of windows, tile battens, modernising kitchens, improving internal layouts to comply with current regulations, renewing damp-proof membranes and rewiring are being carried out where necessary. Minor and major adaptations to old persons units to cater for special needs are also programmed. (*See Appendix V).

2.17. HOUSING WAITING LISTS/RE-LETS/HOMELESSNESS

- 2.17.1. At the present time some 280 persons/families are registered on this Councils housing waiting list for the Ross-on-Wye area, the majority seeking one or two bedded accommodation. Of these applicants, 120 are

considered to be urgent or fairly urgent cases. With re-lets in the town averaging only 30 to 40 per year, it is presently thought that most applicants will have to wait three to four years before securing accommodation and this waiting period is lengthening.

2.17.2. In the twelve month period up to March of last year approximately half of the 149 cases of alleged homelessness in the District presented to the Council have been in Ross-on-Wye. Because of a shortage of available accommodation, these cases have had to be investigated most stringently, and whilst many are being maintained in their present accommodation on a temporary basis a small number have been rehoused within the period.

2.18. HOUSING COMMITMENTS

2.18.1. As a result of surveys and base information taken from County Planning Department analysis of outstanding planning permissions it was found that at 22nd July, 1981 work on some 218 dwellings on various sites with planning permission, had not commenced. A further 54 dwellings were under construction, whilst 12 were substantially completed but not occupied. (See Appendix 1).

2.18.2. In 1968, a number of areas were identified in the Ross Informal Local Plan as areas of land suitable to accommodate future housing for the town. Most of the areas identified have been built upon, however the following sites remain undeveloped and without the benefit of a current planning permission.

- i) At Springfield, land known as phase 4, once had the benefit of outline permission for 86 dwellings - this has now lapsed. Development of this site would be resisted as it is considered to be detrimental to the visual setting of Ross.
- ii) A small parcel of land adjacent to St. Josephs Primary School and fronting onto Walford Road at Ashfield - would be resisted as being backland development within a Conservation Area.
- iii) At Fernbank Road - a frontage site could accommodate 4/5 dwellings.
- iv) Land at Redhill - has recently been the subject of a planning application and subsequent refusal.

2.19. RELEVANT HOUSING POLICIES FOR THE TOWN

2.19.1. In 1968, a non-statutory informal local plan was approved by the former Herefordshire County Council to update the Ross-on-Wye Town Map approved in 1961 and identified the town's needs until the end of the Structure Plan period in 1986. Whilst this Informal Local Plan was not adopted by the new County Council and therefore has no statutory significance, it does nevertheless, represent the most up-to-date detailed plan currently available.

2.19.2. The current Herefordshire Structure Plan is under review. Policies and proposals contained in the Written Statement of the new Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan have now been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. For Ross-on-Wye, the review proposes that housing growth should be restricted to 600 new dwellings for the period 1981 - 1991. This Local Plan therefore, is being prepared within the context of the County Structure Plan Review and must provide sufficient land to cater for the maximum level of growth. Should the eventual approval County Structure Plan housing growth target for Ross-on-Wye differ from that as submitted to the Secretary of State, then this Local Plan will be modified accordingly. Failure to accord to the County Structure Plan would mean that the Local Plan would not be certified by the County Council and therefore could not be adopted by the District Council as a statutory Local Plan.

2.20. DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY

2.20.1. The following policies are contained in the Housing Investment Programme for the District and reflect the Council's approved Housing Strategy for the year 1982/82:-

2.21. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

- 2.21.1. "The Council will actively encourage house owners and occupiers to improve their properties with grant aid with Improvement and Repairs Grants being offered where there is housing need. As priority is to be given to basic improvement applications with the objective of bringing a larger number of houses up to a decent standard rather than a smaller number to a higher standard, it is proposed to approve some 500 house renovation grant applications in the next five years. The Council intends to further stimulate renovation activity by taking into account personal circumstances and housing need. It is also proposed to visit properties which lack modern amenities or are in poor repair, with a view to assisting owners or occupiers to obtain grant aid.
- 2.21.2. The renovation of unfit houses as opposed to their demolition will be sought. Owners of occupied and unoccupied substandard and unfit dwellings who do not wish to carry out improvements themselves will be encouraged to sell these properties to the Council. Once improved, these properties will be sold.
- 2.21.3. In an attempt to improve the Council's programme in dealing with unfit properties the Council will allocate 10% of its casual vacancy relets and/or new build accommodation to persons from properties of this nature. This will then allow these unfit properties to be brought up to standard by the action of either the public or the private housing sectors.
- 2.21.4. Tenants of substandard property will be afforded their rights under Section 89 et al of the Housing Act, 1974, only when the usual approaches to the owners of the properties have failed. It is hoped that this will allow better progress in dealing with a substantial number of substandard dwellings.

- 2.21.5. Preference will be given to applicants requiring mortgage loans for the purchase of older dwellings which they intend to improve, or for the improvement of dwellings which they own at present. Preference will also be given to tenants in the public sector to either purchase their existing house or one in the private sector. To encourage this process the Council are prepared to consider and grant maturity loans in approved cases.
- 2.21.6. Consideration will be given to entering into short term leasing or other arrangements with the owners of vacant properties to enable them to be brought into occupation.
- 2.21.7. The Council is actively involved in the Building Society Lending scheme through the Abbey National Building Society and have also agreed to consider applications for a local Authority indemnity for a Building Society Mortgage in accordance with the provisions of Department of the Environment Circular 5/81."

2.22. PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING

- 2.22.1. "It appears from the demand indicated by the housing waiting list, homeless persons and to some extent agricultural workers and families living in properties which it is proposed to demolish or close, that there is a need for new housing which exceeds the likely level of production, taking into account the staff, land and cash resources which are currently available. It is therefore considered that our target of 125 new housing units per year, over a five year period, is still a reasonable compromise between the demand and the resources available.
- 2.22.2. The casual vacancy rate of existing Council owned dwellings is a little over 70 per year, and this fact has been taken into account in determining our target over the five year period.
- 2.22.3. The Council will continue its present policy of building principally one and two-bedroomed dwellings in order to provide a better mix of dwelling sizes and to reflect the trend towards the need for smaller dwellings.
- 2.22.4. Where possible, new dwellings will be provided in association with existing sites of predominantly three-bedroomed dwellings to enable the Council to make further inroads into the problems of under-occupation (following the guidelines laid down in circular 76/77). The houses thus released will then be used to meet the needs of applicants requiring three or more bedrooms.
- 2.22.5. The objective will be to distribute new dwellings throughout the District. To facilitate this, the Council has subdivided the District into ten groups of parishes for the purpose of assessing housing need, since it is impracticable to provide housing in every village and hamlet. Even allowing for the grouping of parishes, a relatively large number of smallish developments will be necessary - typically of 8 to 16 dwellings.
- 2.22.6. The Council's objective is to acquire 10 acres of land each year and so enable them in the long term to regularly have a two year supply of land.

- 2.22.7. Pre-1945 dwellings falling short of the five point standard will be improved to at least that standard. A planned phased programme has been prepared. Houses built between 1945 and 1964 will be repaired/improved. A planned phased programme is being prepared.
- 2.22.8. The Council will continue within their financial limitations, to co-operate with housing associations, where the proposals accord with the Council's housing strategy.
- 2.22.9. The Council will endeavour as far as they are authorised so to do to purchase existing privately owned houses.
- 2.22.10. The Council are selling Council houses in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act, 1980.
- 2.22.11. It is the Council's policy to update the information as to the condition of the housing stock and to this end a detailed survey is being carried out in various parishes throughout the District."

2.23. POPULATION AND HOUSING ISSUES

- 2.23.1. If one presupposes that the policies and proposals as contained in the Written Statement of the new County Structure Plan are adopted, then the growth of the town for the Local Plan period will have already been determined. However, under this umbrella of planned growth there are likely to be a number of issues, many of which have already been identified in the previous section of 'survey' highlighting the problems and needs of the town's population for housing.
- 2.23.2. Such issues on which decisions have to be taken are listed below:-
 - i) The identification of possible sites to accommodate the additional dwellings required to meet the reviewed County Structure Plan target for the town up to 1991.
 - ii) The release of such sites to give a phased house building programme and hence a controlled growth.
 - iii) Provision of the required type of private housing to meet local and community needs - i.e. one and two bedroomed dwellings to cater for an increasing number of first time buyers and retired persons.
 - iv) Provision of more purpose built public housing to cater for the increasing number of elderly and infirm persons.
 - v) Availability of housing for low income families - either for rent or for sale.
 - vi) Maximum possible use of the present housing stock so that existing resources are not wasted.
 - vii) Improvement of existing private and public housing and neighbourhoods to provide increased quality of housing, pleasant amenities and good environmental standards.

viii) Adequate choice of tenure, in order to retain local young households and to attract new households.

2.23.3. Wherever possible the housing market will be expected to accommodate such needs and demands, however, there will inevitably be conflict between economic circumstances and the social needs. It is hoped therefore that the policies of the approved Local Plan will achieve a balance between demand and need to the advantage of the town's population.

2.24. SUPPLY OF DWELLINGS

2.24.1. If one takes the housing commitments as at 22nd July, 1982 (218 dwellings) plus recent permissions at Archenfield, Woodside and Smallbrook Gardens and add to that figure the total number of dwellings that at that date were under construction or built but not occupied, then some 317 of the 600 total Structure Plan target for the town over the plan period will have been accounted for. Sites, therefore, need to be found for in the region of 283 dwellings.

2.24.2. Although the Local Plan must allocate sufficient land to accommodate the revised County Structure Plan growth, mere allocation of land does not guarantee that development will take place. In addition to the demand for dwellings, i.e. the number of people who want a house and the rate at which they can be built it may not in all cases (where land has been identified as suitable housing land), be easy for land to be released. For instance, one site which is likely to be identified on planning grounds as being suitable housing land has problems regarding access and also objections from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Such problems will have to be overcome before development will be allowed.

2.25. PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT

2.25.1. It has already been seen that construction rates in the last 6 years has been in the order of 110 dwellings per year, and whilst only 79 dwellings have been built in the last year up until 31st December, 1981, there should not be any difficulty in achieving the Structure Plan target of building 60 dwellings per year, for the complete Plan period, subject to land being available.

2.25.2. Even bearing in mind government advice - Circular 9/80 - "Land for Private House Building," there should be no difficulty in demonstrating that Ross-on-Wye has at present a 5 year supply of land genuinely available for private house building for the area where people want to live.

2.25.3. Perhaps the main problem, for the first half of the plan period initially, will be to limit the house building rate to the required annual target. Should land with planning permission be easily freed and consequently developed, it may be difficult to hold back other housing land identified as possible housing land in this Plan, for development in later years.

2.25.4. In addition, it may also be difficult to resist the type of development that builders identify as being required. For instance, a need obviously exists for the smaller dwellings. However, builders may only be able to build such units and offer them at prohibitive prices, or they may feel there is not the profit or return to be made on such sites.

- 2.25.5. Finally, it is very likely that small areas of land within the built-up area of the town and not identified in this Local Plan as possible housing land, will be put forward for development and possibly approved. It is important therefore to understand that the possible housing sites identified are sites, which in the opinion of this Council are capable of helping to achieve the housing growth of the town for the Plan period and are not comprehensively or exclusively the only sites capable of being developed for housing.

2.26. POSSIBLE SITES SUITABLE FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 2.26.1. It has already been identified that there is a need for an additional 283 dwellings during the Plan Period however there are a number of both physical and financial constraints which will restrict the selection of sites.

- 2.26.2. Initially, investigations were undertaken to ascertain how much of the future housing growth could be accommodated within the built-up area of the town.

2.26.3. Infilling and town centre redevelopment

There are a number of sites which fall into the category of 'infilling' and 'rounding off' within the existing housing areas. It is expected that development of such sites along with redevelopment of unfit houses and town centre sites will accommodate approximately 15% of the total need i.e. about 50 to 60 dwellings,

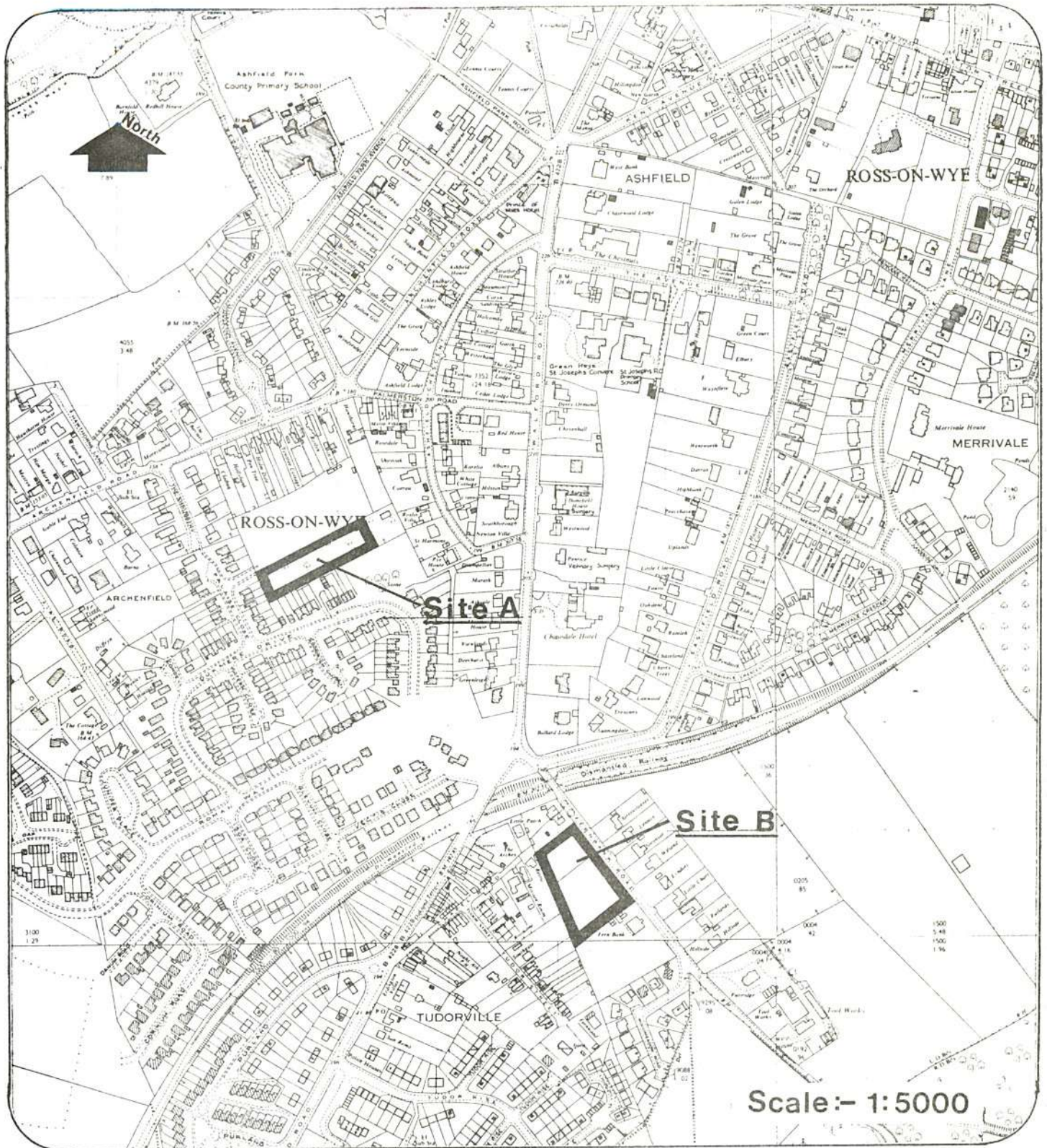
2.26.4. Small housing sites outside the town centre

Small parcels of land have been identified off Falaise Close adjacent to the British Legion housing site (Site A), in Fernbank Road (Site B) and possibly on the site of the present cattle market (Site C). Plans 2A and 2B indicate the location of the above sites and a brief appraisal of each site is set out below:-

Site A - Construction has recently commenced on the adjoining British Legion Housing Association site (40 dwellings). It is likely that up to 7 dwellings could be accommodated on this site of 0.35 hectares (0.86 acres) with access from the British Legion service road. Again it is anticipated that there would be no problems in the provision of services or access following discussions with the statutory undertakers and Highway Authority.

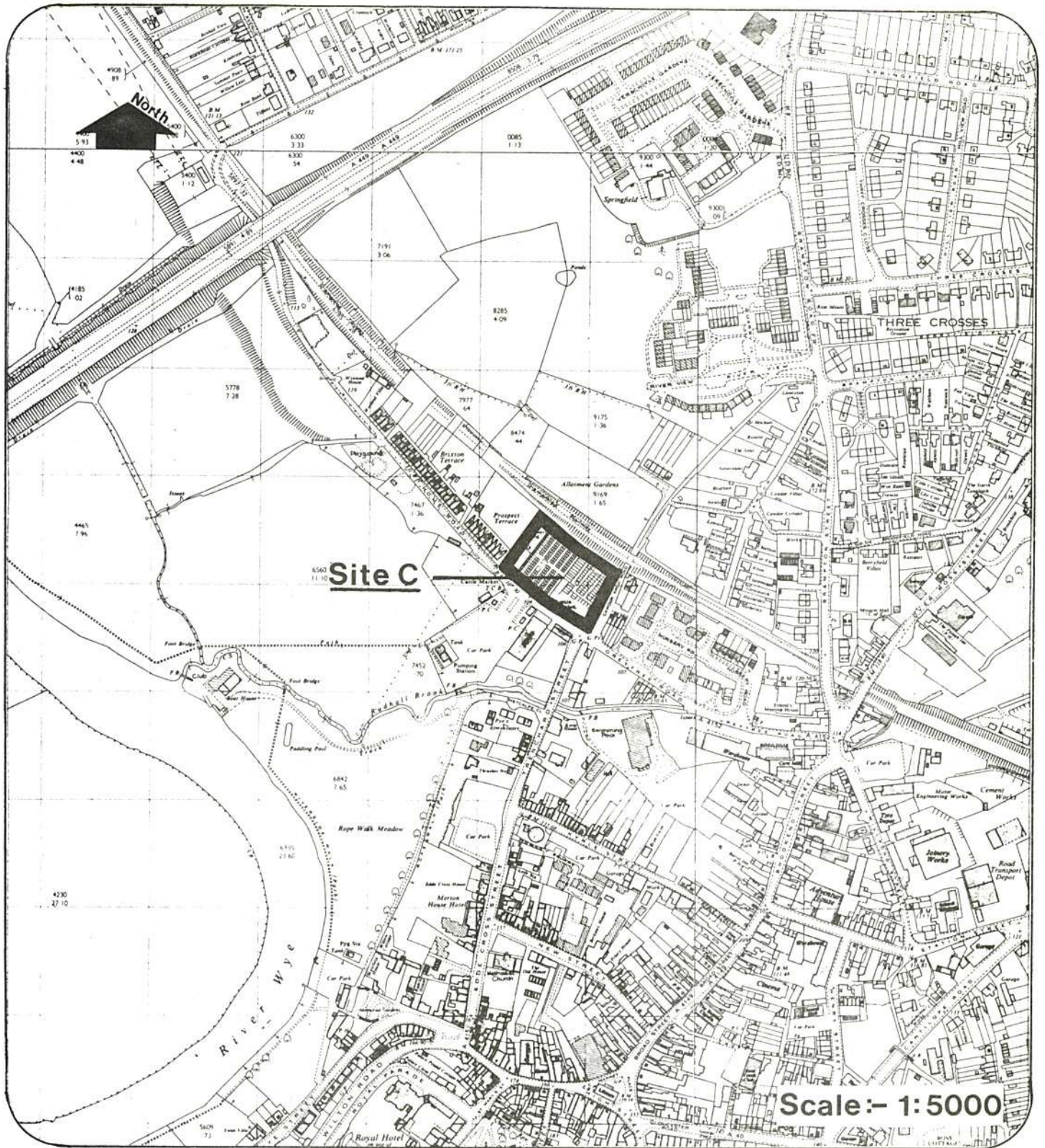
Site B - This undeveloped site of 1.3 acres (0.52 hectares) on the east side of Fernbank Road is capable of accommodating about 12 dwellings. There are unlikely to be any problems in providing the necessary services but the Highway Authority have stated that development of this site should include the improvement of the unclassified highway - Fernbank Road.

Site C - In Section 9.10.1. 'Town Centre and Shopping' the advantages of relocating the present cattle market from Greytree Road are discussed in detail. The location of this site in close proximity to the town centre is ideal for residential development and would considerably improve the environmental qualities of this area. Informal discussions with the Highway Authority have indicated that access to the site could be from Cawdor Arch Road. No major problems



Plan 2A.

Small Housing Sites Outside The Town Centre



Plan 2B.

Small Housing Sites Outside The Town Centre

are envisaged in respect of services although the low voltage overhead lines across the site will need to be replaced with underground cable. However, it would appear from the 1979 flood levels that flooding is restricted to the site frontage. It may be possible to overcome this problem by limiting development to the rear two-thirds of the site but this aspect will require detailed investigation.

2,26.5. Further need for housing sites

Of the total need for sites for about 283 dwellings, a total of about 100 dwellings could therefore be accommodated within the existing built-up area leaving a need for approximately 183 units. This need will have to be met by the development of a 'green field' site adjoining the existing development. The selection of possible sites is discussed in Section 4.0. 'Constraints upon Development'.

