

SECTION 4

**Constraints upon
Development**

4.0. CONSTRAINTS UPON DEVELOPMENT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. An important element of the Local Plan is concerned with the allocation of sufficient land to meet the needs of housing and industry during the Plan Period.

4.1.2. The selection of this land is dependent on a number of constraints which are outlined in the following sections. The first part of the report consists of a broad appraisal of constraints leading to the identification of possible sites whilst the second part deals with detailed constraints to development on these sites.

4.2. LANDSCAPE

4.2.1. Much of Ross-on-Wye and its surrounding area lies within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, the town is abutted by two defined 'Areas of Special Landscape', one to the north west following the boundary of the Wye Valley and the other to the south east of the town including Chase Wood and Penyard Park (see Constraints upon Development Plan No. 3).

4.2.2. In an attempt to help protect and enhance such areas, (Policy L.2.vii) of the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan, Written Statement (now with Secretary of State awaiting approval) states:-

"IN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, ATTENTION WILL BE PAID PARTICULARLY TO THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON THE LANDSCAPE. WHERE APPROPRIATE ANY PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF ACCOMPANYING LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS. THERE WILL BE GENERAL PRESUMPTION AGAINST LARGE SCALE BUILT DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AND AREAS OF GREAT LANDSCAPE VALUE..."

4.3. FLOODING

4.3.1. The 'Constraints upon Development Plan 3' shows broadly the land liable to flooding along the Wye Valley and the smaller area along the Rudhall Brook. Whilst it is likely that the Welsh Water Authority would advise against any development on the land liable to flood from the River Wye, the Rudhall Brook has already been subject to investigations by the Council's Engineering Consultants - A.H.S. Waters and Partners in 1976 when the Council were previously examining that area for possible industrial development. In these circumstances, the Water Authority - have emphasised that it is essential that work is done to alleviate flooding in this area before any development is commenced.

4.4. AGRICULTURE

4.4.1. The 1 inch to 1 mile Agricultural Land Classification Sheet for this part of Herefordshire indicates that much of the town is abutted by the two top grades of agricultural land - grades 1 and 2. These grades represent the best land in the country; land with greatest versatility for a wide range of crops giving good yields at low cost.

The approximate area of these top grades has been shown on Plan 3. The remaining farm land around Ross is middle Grade III and is often very productive even if its versatility for cropping is somewhat restricted.

4.4.2. Policy A1 of the Structure Plan Review states:-

"WHILST IT WILL NOT BE THE SOLE CRITERION BY WHICH APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ARE DETERMINED, FULL RECOGNITION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE HIGH QUALITY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND WITH THE AIM OF RETAINING AS MUCH LAND OF VALUE AS POSSIBLE".

4.4.3. Therefore, in considering possible development sites, considerable attention will need to be given to the agricultural importance of land. The verbal comments of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Fisheries on selected sites are included in a later section of this part of the Report.

4.5. TREES AND WOODLAND

4.5.1. Although there are a number of Tree Preservation Orders operative in and around Ross the existence of such Orders should not in itself be a constraint to development. Most of the trees protected by these Orders are in small groups or belts and could be adequately retained in any potential development areas.

4.5.2. It is really large tracts of woodland that form a constraint to development and in this category there are only the extensive wooded areas on the twin hills of Chase Wood and Penyard Park which are within the defined Area of Special Landscape.

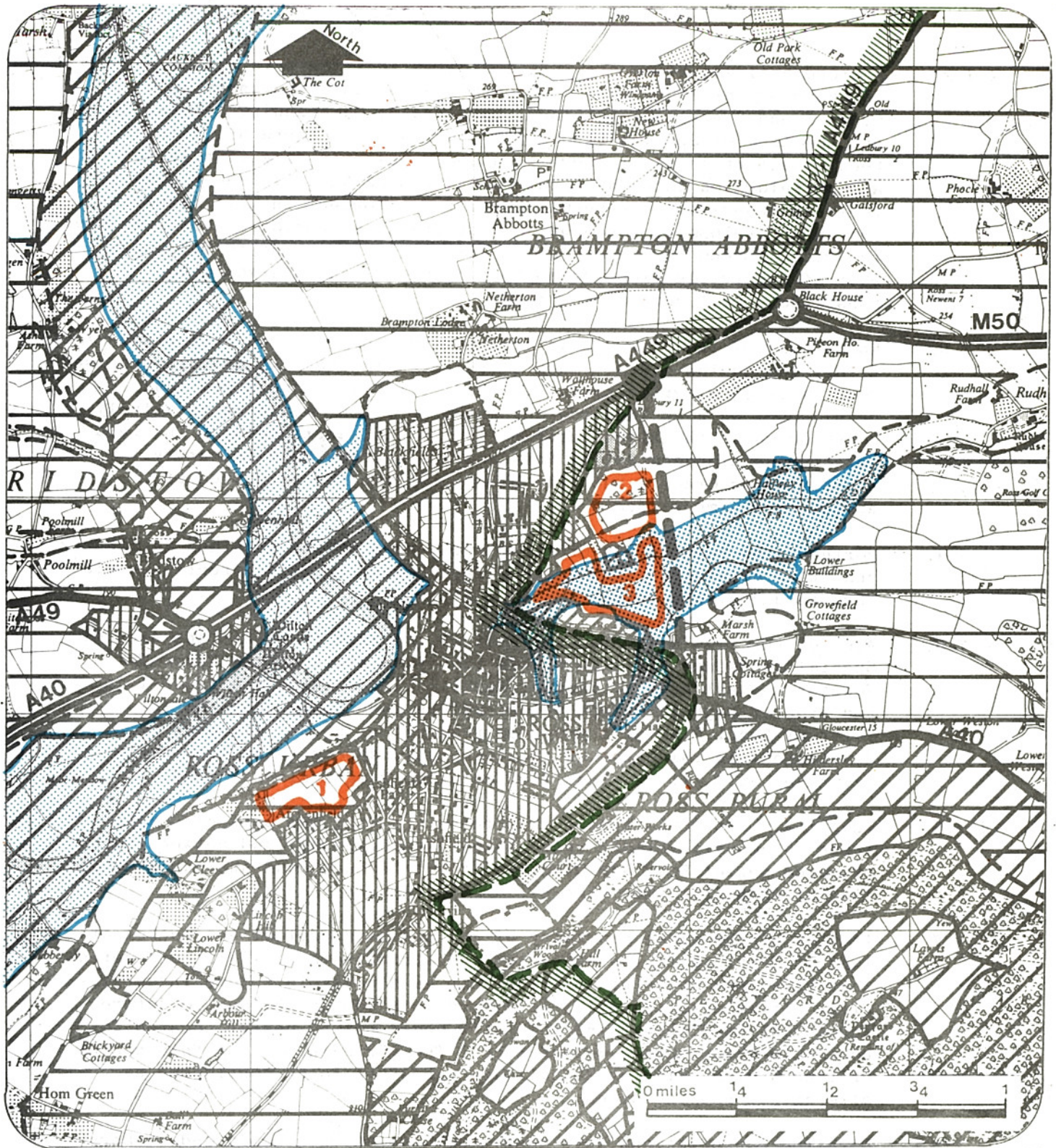
4.6. ECOLOGY - SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

4.6.1. Under the provisions of Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, the Nature Conservancy Council notified the District Council in September, 1979 that the River Wye is of special scientific interest for the flora and fauna which it supports. The site comprises the river from source to mouth and includes both banks.

4.6.2. The Nature Conservancy is charged with the duty of protecting such sites and will be concerned with any development proposals which either immediately affects the river or its banks or by reason of its close proximity, might have some affect.









4.7. SELECTION OF POSSIBLE SITES

4.7.1. Paragraph 2.24.1. 'Population and Housing' estimates that sites are required for 285 additional dwellings but paragraph 2.26 3/4 shows that approximately 100 dwellings could be accommodated on small sites within the existing developed area of the town including the town centre. Thus a need exists for new sites to accommodate approximately 185 dwellings and assuming an average density of 10 houses per acre, about 18 to 19 acres are therefore required. In addition, the section on Employment and Industry estimates that an additional 20 acres (8 hectares) of industrial land would be necessary to provide sufficient employment opportunities.



Plan 3.

Constraints Upon Development

-  Grade I and II agricultural land
-  Areas of Special Landscape
-  Existing development
-  Existing industrial areas
-  Proposed Relief Road
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  POSSIBLE AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
-  Limit of flood area

- 4.7.2. A broad analysis of constraints indicates that there is little potential for development south east and south west of the town in view of Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Area of Special Landscape. Furthermore, there has already been considerable development in a south westerly direction in the Archenfield area into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it would be undesirable to permit further development in this direction. Any such development would be an undesirable extension of the town over the ridge formed by Lincoln Hill. Similarly, the land to the south east of Tudorville slopes steeply from Chase Wood and would be conspicuous from outside the town.
- 4.7.3. North east of the town, it is proposed to construct the Relief Road from Hildersley to the A.449. Much of the area to the east of this proposed road is Grade 2 agricultural land and it is also considered that development on high land adjoining the Ross Spur would be relatively conspicuous on the ridge parallel to the dual carriageway. The land between the proposed Relief Road and the Ledbury Road is partly classified as Grade 2 but will be severed from the main area of agricultural importance.
- 4.7.4. North of the town in the Greytrees area, much of the farmland is Grade 2 and it is considered that further development in this direction would form an undesirable extension to the town.
- 4.7.5. West of the town a substantial part of the area is within the Area of Special Landscape and also within the flood plain of the River Wye. However a small area of land at Redhill lies outside the floodplain and area of high landscape value and was previously shown on the Informal Local Plan as a proposed residential area. Although development in this area of the town would appear to be reasonable 'rounding off', it is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land.
- 4.7.6. In summary, it would appear that there are only two possible major areas for consideration; these being the pocket of land between the proposed Relief Road and Overross Street/Ledbury Road and the area of land at Redhill. (See Plan 3).
- 4.7.7. In view of the close proximity of the southern part of the pocket of land at Overross to the Ashburton Industrial Estate, it is considered that this area would be more suitable as a possible future industrial site. It is also essential to afford good communications to future industrial development and this site could not be better located for access to the proposed Relief Road. The northern part of this pocket of land and the site at Redhill are therefore to be considered as alternative housing sites.
- 4.7.8. Detailed consultations have been made with the statutory undertakers and other appropriate bodies on these sites and the following Table 14 is in effect, a detailed assessment of the three sites:-

DETAILED SITE ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT	SITE 1 - REDHILL (POSSIBLE HOUSING SITE)	SITE 2 - OVERROSS (POSSIBLE HOUSING SITE)	SITE 3 - RUDHALL (POSSIBLE INDUSTRIAL SITE)
Agricultural Land	Grade II - Ministry of Agriculture would object to this site since Good quality agricultural land would be developed	Grade II - Although good quality agricultural land would be developed, Ministry of Agriculture are less likely to object since the land will be severed by the Relief Road	Grade III - Objection from Ministry of Agriculture unlikely
Access	Development of this site would require the construction of a spine road connecting an improved Middleton Avenue with a new junction to the Archenfield Road west of Cleve Lane	Access from the Relief Road would be objected to by the Department of Transport. Development of this site would therefore rely upon an access being made available from the Ledbury Road A.4149.	No difficulties - access from extension of existing Ashburton Industrial Estate distributor road and new access from proposed Relief Road
Sewerage and Land Drainage	Nearrest public sewer to which site could drain by gravity is 150mm sewer in field west of the Cleve. This would involve passing through private land and upgrading size of existing sewer. No difficulty in treating foul drainage. This site is preferable to Site 2 from a foul drainage point of view	Sewer in Ledbury Road appears adequate for foul drainage but whether site could be drained by gravity into Ledbury Road via Tanyard Lane or higher up could only be determined by site survey. Sewage will drain from Ledbury Road to Hope and Anchor pumping station which is already overloaded and not capable of accepting any additional discharge. No inclusion in capital programme to improve this asset, likely to attract low priority for improvement	Remedial works required to overcome flooding of part of site. Levels of site suggest that majority of site cannot be sewered by gravity. Firmer information can be given when detailed layouts are available but similar problems to Site 2 in that there is a foul drainage problem
Water Supply	This site preferred by Welsh Water Authority and can be fed at less expense than Site 2	This site will require considerable off-site mains, costs to be met by developer	Although southern part of the site can be fed with water from Gloucester Road at present, the northern part of the site would have to be fed with water requiring considerable off-site mains to be paid for by developer
Electricity	Will require extension of high voltage cable network, establishment of sub-station site together with low voltage distribution. Providing development is not carried out in a fragmented way - no problem	As for Site 1 but will also require diversion or undergrounding of existing 11KV overhead line	Will probably be necessary to carry out some off-site reinforcement to high voltage system in addition to necessary site distribution and substation work plus under-grounding of 11KV overhead line
Gas Supply	South Western Gas Board unable to assess demand at this stage however there is a network of low pressure mains in close proximity to the site.	As Site 1, there is a network of low pressure mains in the vicinity of the site principally along Ledbury Road	As for Site 2, in addition to which there are medium and low pressure mains on the Ashburton Industrial Estate which abutts this site

