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N. P. Taylor

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Preface

Anyone can find a site; the real skill is to be able to acquire it and know what the market is for the site. So I was told some years ago when giving a talk at a conference on site finding. There is a lot of truth in the observation, so why the need for a whole book on the subject? Well, it is all very well being able to buy a site and know that it is in a prime spot for the type of development proposed on it; but suppose the access to the site belongs to someone else, or the site was refused planning permission for a similar project in the recent past? Acquisition of the site or building without a careful check of the many factors that affects its development potential could prove to be a very expensive mistake. Of course, very few people do this because they know full well that various things need to be checked before they go ahead and buy. What this book attempts to do is to explain some of the factors that matter when one is evaluating a development site (which, incidentally, may include buildings as well as land).

Put in this way, the book would appear to benefit only prospective buyers of buildings or land. However, I hope it will also be of interest to planning officers, particularly those charged with the job of drawing up local plans in their area. All too often in the past plans have not paid sufficient regard to some of the site factors described in this book. The result has been that sites allocated for development in a local plan have remained dormant for many years or have been developed in a quite different way from that intended in the plan.

If this book helps to prevent such things happening it will have more than served its purpose.

I have benefited from the advice and help of many in the preparation of the book; in particular, Ian Trehearne, Peter Barefoot, David Foulkes and Graham Eves. My special thanks to them — the mistakes and omissions that remain are entirely my own.

This book is dedicated to my family who have had to put up with a lot during its preparation.