

Design and Access Statement

68 St Johns Road



November 2021

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Bluebird Design Services in support of a full planning application.

This planning application proposes the removal of an existing warehouse and offices and the construction of seven 2 and 2.5 storey family houses with associated car parking to St Johns Road frontage and generous rear private gardens.

Within this proposal are two parking options.

2. Site Location and Setting.

The site is located at 68 St Johns Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AL within the residential area of Lower Caversham in Reading, north of the River Thames.



Site Location Plan

The immediate area and setting:-



Terraced housing opposite
No. 68 St Johns Road



Adjacent semi-detached housing to the
north of No. 68 St Johns Road



Flank wall opposite No. 68 St Johns Road



Adjacent Chiltern House Office to the south of No. 68 St Johns Road
Showing the Hawthorn Hedge

- To the north are 2 storey semi-detached houses and a 2 storey office building with roof windows, both with raised ground floor levels.
- Immediately to the east boundary is South View Park which is a light industrial commercial development with associated service space and parking.
- To the south is a warehouse style office building with first floor offices overlooking the site. This building has hawthorn hedges to the road frontages which helps to soften the impact in relation to the public realm and domestic setting.

Further to the south and within walking distance is the River Thames, Reading Rail Station and the Town Centre.

- To the west along St Johns Road are a mixture of terraced and semi-detached houses together with other related uses including schools, church and open spaces and Caversham Village Centre within walking distance beyond.

It should be noted the site is within a predominantly residential area with associated complementary uses in an accessible location in the heart of Lower Caversham with good public transport access to local bus routes and train station.



Axonometric of No. 68 St Johns Road
(Warehouse)

3. Existing Development

The site is generally flat and rectangular with an approximate area of 1500sqm. The existing warehouse / office building has a large footprint effectively covering circa 90% of the site area, the remaining external area is hardstanding service space adjacent to St Johns Road and dwellings to the north. The building floor areas are significantly higher than the surrounding ground areas, this is due to the site falling within Flood Zone 3a as indicated on the Environmental Agency Flood Map.

Please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Clive Onions.

The scale, massing, visual impact and unneighbourly usage of the site, existing office and commercial building, service parking and vehicle turning are completely incompatible and out of keeping with the predominantly residential setting.

In particular service areas adjacent to the road frontage and to the side are out of keeping and detrimental to the adjacent houses.

It should be noted that no rear access is available to the rear of the site, as the South View Park development and associated road is in private ownership.



Front View of No. 68 St Johns Road
(Warehouse)



Side Perspective of No. 68 St Johns Road
(Warehouse)



Rear Elevation of No. 68 St Johns Road
(Warehouse)



Front Perspective of No. 68 St Johns Road
(Warehouse)

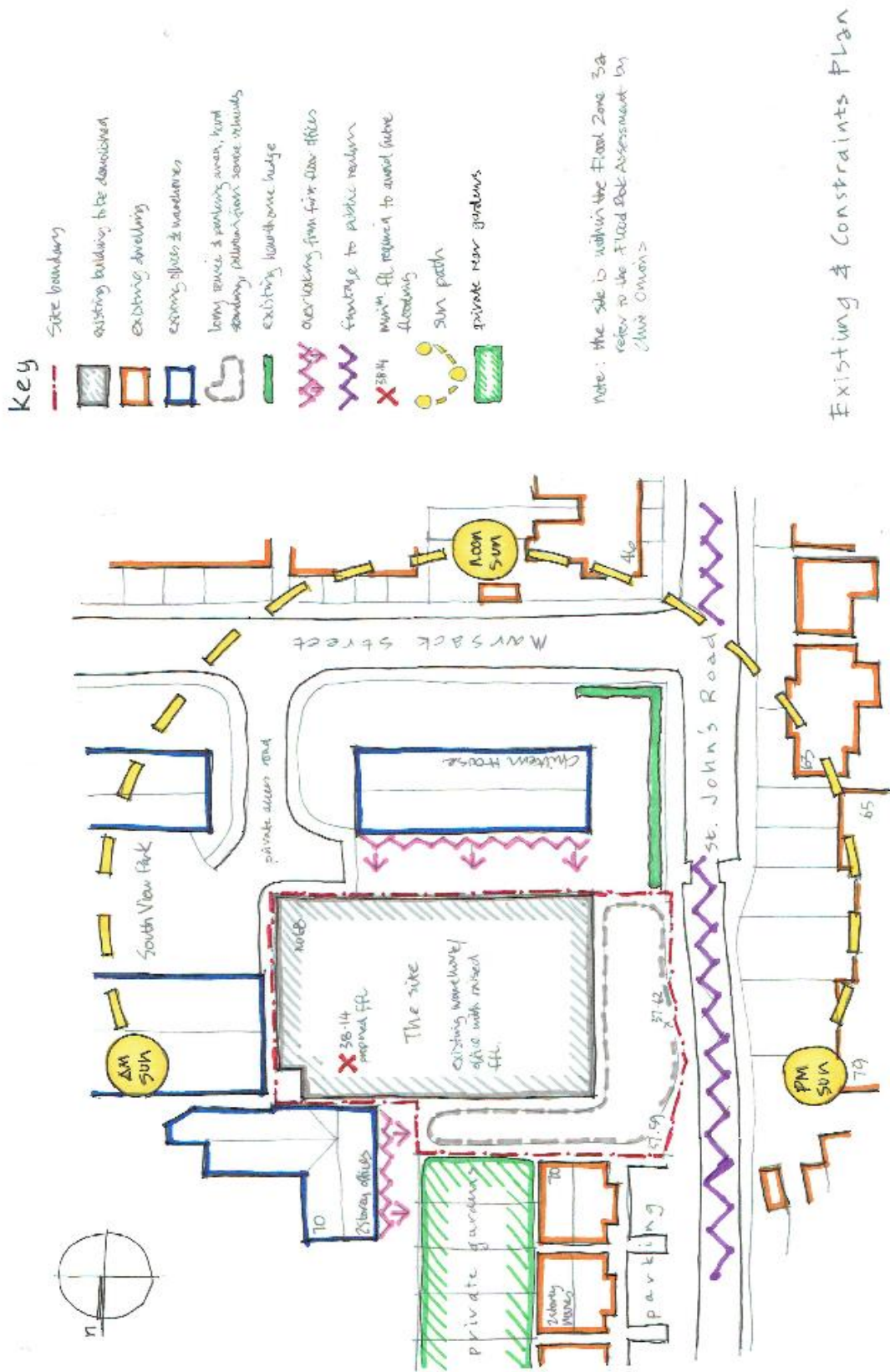


Front Side North View of No. 68 St Johns Road
(Warehouse)

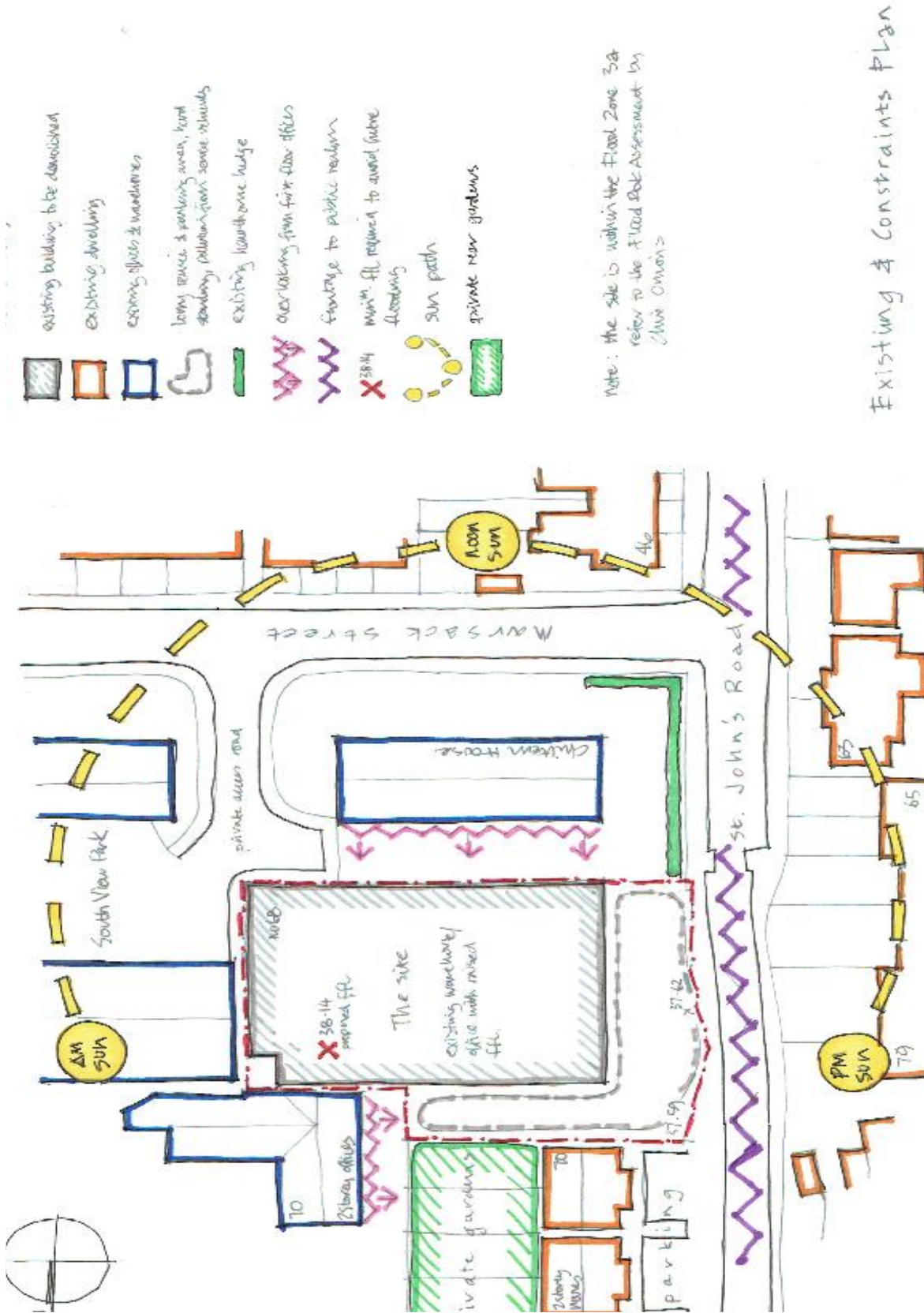
4. Planning History

We understand that a planning application was recently refused for the provision of 12 flats with associated car parking and amenity space.

5. Existing Site & Constraints Plan.



6. Opportunities & Concept Plan.



7. Proposed Development.

The concept of this residential proposal is to provide an attractive well landscaped parking 'courtyard' to St Johns Road with proposed dwellings to the north and east reinforcing two sides of the courtyard, and to the south, screen planting linking to the existing hawthorn hedge and the Chiltern House office building beyond completing the enclosure.

To the rear are substantial private gardens similar in size to existing gardens found in this area. The garden lengths vary and are between 12 - 20m long, the significant length of these gardens help to reduce the impact of the scale and massing of the adjacent industrial buildings on the proposed dwellings.

The dwellings have been carefully designed as a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Victorian housing found in the area.



Option A Landscape layout

Option B Landscape layout

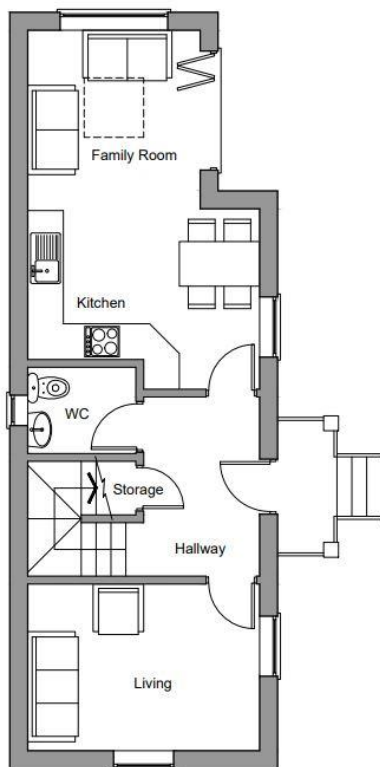


8. Scale and Amount.

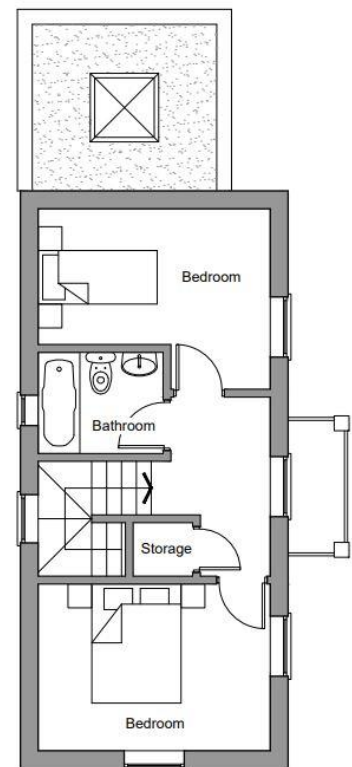
Seven houses are proposed, to the north is one double fronted 2 storey house designed to provide wrap around elevations fronting St Johns Road and parking court. This dwelling also successfully conceals the existing blank side elevation of No. 70 St Johns Road. To the east is a 2.5 storey terrace of 6 No. townhouses forming the main frontage which is set back from the public footpath by circa 22m. This setback provides space for a substantial area for car parking and the much needed 'greening' of this part of St Johns Road to the benefit of the public realm.

9. Schedule.

1 x 2 bedroom 3 / 4 person house at 79sqm Plot 1

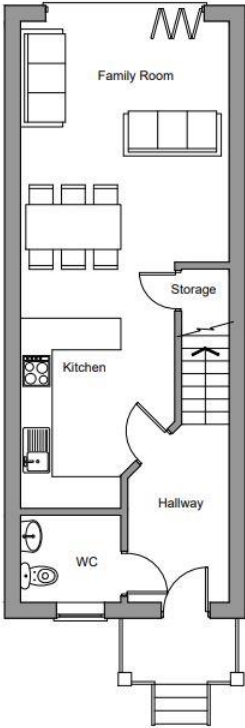


Ground Floor Plan

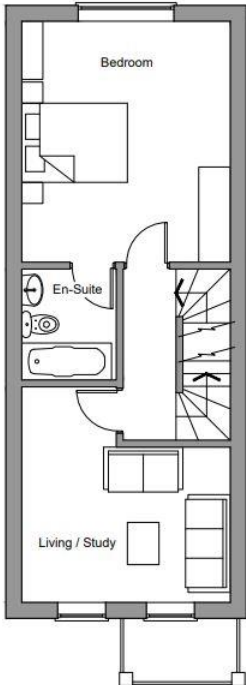


First Floor Plan

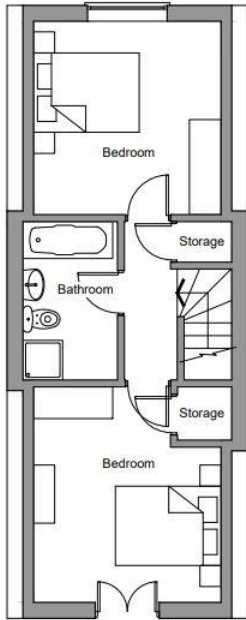
6 x 3 bedroom 6 person town houses at 125sqm Plot 2-7



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

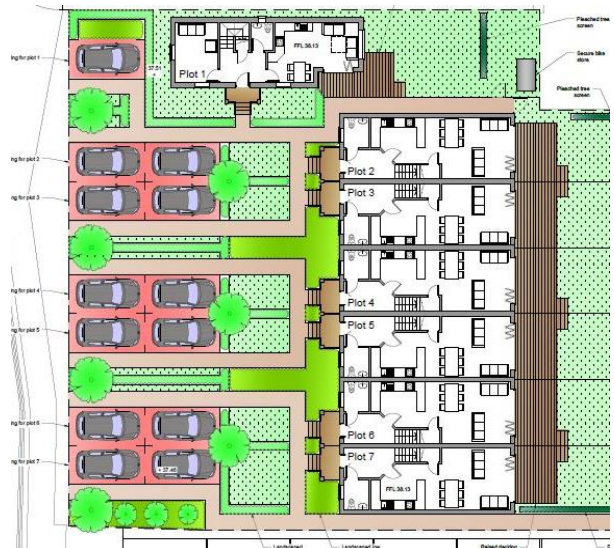


Second Floor Plan

10. Car Parking.

This application proposes 2 alternative car parking arrangements within a landscaped setting, for agreement with RBC, these are as follows, either:-

- A. All assigned parking within private front gardens, @ 2 spaces each for the 3 bedroom and 1 space for the 2 bedroom dwelling



- B. One space to be assigned per dwelling, plus 4 unassigned spaces for residents, due to fewer crossovers additional on street parking will be available for visitors or existing residents.



External electric charging points will also be provided.

11. Bicycle and Refuse Storage Collection.

Secure bicycle storage to LA requirement will be provided within lockable storage sheds within each private rear garden.

Refuse storage will be located within individual resident's private rear gardens. Refuse bins will be taken to the back edge of the public footpath in St Johns Road on bin collection days. As previously noted South View Park and access road is privately owned, therefore access for bin collection is not possible in this area.

12. Landscaping Strategy.

As previously noted the heart of the development revolves around a central landscaped car parking area, which enhances the greening of St Johns Road. Tree and hedge planting will help to reduce the visual impact of the car parking within this area, and to visually link to the existing hawthorn hedge to Chiltern House frontage.

Tree planting to the south boundary will define the green 'courtyard', screening planting to side and rear boundaries will also filter out any overlooking from adjacent first floor office accommodation.



13. Materials

With reference to the sketch elevations, the external envelope materials will be drawn from those found in the immediate area, with slate roof tiles, red/orange brickwork with textured decorative brickwork to gables and between first floor windows as indicated on the drawings. Due to the need to raise the floor levels to avoid flooding all dwellings are accessed via steps and timber porticos with glazed balustrading. Raised timber deck patios are located within the private rear gardens.



Materials

- red-orange brickwork
- brick verges
- (ph) projecting headen to gables & between 1st floor windows
- dove grey window frames & porch window
- glass balustrade over porch
- slate roof

14. Sustainability.

The site is within a highly sustainable location with good access to public transport, open spaces, schools, churches and local shops.

The sustainability has also been enhanced due to the fact that this is a proposed redevelopment of a brownfield site, which is currently out of keeping with the predominant residential setting.

Each dwelling has been orientated east/west, consequently there are no north facing windows serving habitable rooms. Furthermore half the floor area of each dwelling has south facing pitched roofs in order to maximise the efficiency of roof mounted solar panels.

All dwellings will incorporate energy efficient gas boilers and 'A' rated fittings. The drainage strategy will provide soakaways and the use of rainwater butts which will result in the reduction of discharge in to the existing surface water system.

15. Conclusion

This distinctive residential development proposal arranged around new 'private' landscaped courtyard within St Johns Road will have the following benefits:-

- removal of existing unneighbourly building use.
- removal of bulky and ugly buildings.
- improved vehicular and safer vehicular movements.
- reinforcing the domestic character of the area in a sustainable location.
- significant new green landscaping visible to the public realm.
- provide much needed modern family housing on a brownfield site.
- significant improvement to the setting of St Johns Road.

We believe this application demonstrates the many benefits this residential development will deliver and provide an attractive environment where families will want to live and urge Reading Borough Council to approve this well considered proposal.