

RIDGE

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT
29 AMERSHAM ROAD,
CAVERSHAM,
READING
RG4 5BP

August 2021



Prepared for



Prepared by

Ridge and Partners LLP
Beaumont House
59 High Street
Theale
Reading
RG7 5AL
Tel: 0118 932 3088

Contact

Martyn Few

MFew@ridge.co.uk

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Notes

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INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

Design and Access Statements (DAS) are intended to achieve the following:

- As a design tool, they help to ensure that development proposals are based upon a thoughtful and rigorous design process. It is intended that statements should evolve throughout the design process and that this will improve the quality of the proposals.
- As a communication tool, statements allow the applicant to explain the design process and justify their proposals. In turn, statements help those assessing the application to understand the design rationale that underpins them.

According to Planning Policy Guidance Paragraph (14-031-20140306) a Design and Access Statement should:

- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

The guidance goes on to identify three essential components of a DAS. These include the areas below:

1. Context

A DAS statement should demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development. Therefore, it is important that proposals are technically sound and layouts are robust and withstand scrutiny.

2. Design

To gain a good understanding of context and use it appropriately, applicants should follow a design process which includes assessment, involvement and evaluation. Based on the Reserved Matters facets on the application form, design could include:

- Use- how the use or mix of uses proposed for the land have been derived from an understanding of the context, technical appraisal and best practice.
- Amount - how much development is proposed. The DAS should explain and justify the amount of development proposed for each use, its distribution across the site, how it relates to the site's surroundings and how accessibility to and between all parts of the



Figure 1-1. Wider Site Location Plan

development have been maximised.

- Layout- the way in which buildings, and open spaces (both public and private), are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other and in relation to buildings and spaces surrounding the site. This element remains important even in an outline application since the LPA must be comfortable that the quantum of development proposed can be accommodated within the site area.
- Scale- the size of the buildings (including their height) in relation to their surroundings. The statement should also explain and justify the size of individual building parts and how these relate to each other. This element of the DAS is only useful in establishing likely upper limits of ridge heights.
- Appearance - the visual impression made by the buildings should be explained and justified, including their built form, architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture. The appearance is a matter for future applications but the LPA nonetheless needs to be satisfied that the character of the wider area has been the subject of research and has an informed illustrative layout and street scene illustrations.

- Landscaping- the treatment of private and public spaces to enhance or protect the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated, through hard and soft landscaping measures and how these will be maintained. The degree to which this area is relevant depends to some degree upon the individual site and how enclosed it is.

3. Access

A DAS statement should explain the applicant's approach to access, including a description of any Local Highway Authority (LHA) consultation undertaken in relation to access issues and how the outcome of this advice has influenced the proposals. Access also refers to accessibility and for this reason an illustrative layout has been included.

1.2 Drawings List

DRAWING NUMBER	DRAWING TITLE
5010401-RDG-XX-ST-PL-A-0100	SITE LOCATION PLAN
5010401-RDG-XX-ST-PL-A-0101	ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN
5010401-RDG-XX-ST-PL-A-0102	COLOURED SITE PLAN
5010401-RDG-XX-XX-PL-A-0200	PLOT ONE & TWO- FLOOR PLANS, ELEVATIONS, SECTIONS AND SITE PLAN

Figure 1-2. Drawing contents table

1.3 Site Location Plan



Figure 1-3. Extract from site location and context plan. (red outlines site)

1.4 Site Overview



Figure 1-4. Location of the site on Google Maps snapshot (red outlines site)

This application is for the redevelopment of an existing run-down plot that has been subject to neglect in recent years. Situated on Amersham Road, the proposal seeks to reinvigorate the site in keeping with the surrounding setting, improve existing hard and soft landscaping as well as integrating perimeter fencing to ensure more privacy for the proposed plots and the neighbouring properties.

The site offers good transportation links to neighbouring towns and cities through an array of connection links such as trains, buses and pedestrian walkways. Seen below is the approximate times it takes to reach some main destination points around the area.

- Reading Station = 15 minute walk / 4 minute drive
- Reading Oracle Shopping Centre= 25 minute walk / 8 minute drive
- Central Caversham = 18 minute walk / 4 minute drive

The existing street character along Amersham Road comprises of predominantly terrace housing, with newer developments accommodating one storey flat living over three storey buildings, with the building materiality is that of brick and timber cladding throughout the street scene.

Pedestrian access and walkways comprised as side walk paving with a landscaping buffer between the pavement and the building edge. Boundaries along Amersham road typically consist of either close-boarded fencing and/or bricked walls and dense vegetated hedging.

Parking along the road is typically allocated as on-street parking further along Amersham Road with denoted spaces on the street, therefore does not restrict the flow of traffic down the street or compromise the space for two way traffic. Where as towards the start of the Road, a selection of terrace housing has parking provisions located within the locality of the dwelling boundary.

1.5 The Site



Figure 1-5. Aerial Image indicating viewpoints



Figure 1-6. View looking North East at the plot

As noted in figure 1.5, view one looks North East at 29 Amersham Road. It starts to give an indication of how run down and minimal privacy the vacant plot currently occupies.



Figure 1-7. View Looking North West at the plot

As noted in figure 1.5, view one looks North West at 29 Amersham Road. It starts to give an indication of how run down and minimal privacy the vacant plot currently occupies, especially to the neighbouring properties.

2

ASSESSMENT

2. ASSESSMENT

2.1 Policy Appraisal and Historical Maps

1.4.1 With regard to national policy and guidance the scheme is considered to be an appropriate response to requirements in terms of supporting sustainable development in delivering much needed homes “and thriving local places that the country needs”

1.4.2 Having regard to Policy CS7, as noted, the notion of backland development in this area has been established with the development of the Woodside Business Park. The site is well obscured from the existing setting and more than meets the required separation distances for planning, whilst being designed to provide not additional overlooking or impairment to the existing private amenity.

1.4.3 The site is within a sustainable location and the provision of smaller dwelling units in the scheme is considered appropriate with regard to Policy CS15 which refers to the provision of an appropriate range of housing opportunities to be informed by matters such as the areas character and the sites accessibility as well as the need to achieve high design quality and minimize environmental impacts.

1.4.4 The scheme can provide for levels of cycle parking appropriate to the sites location and the number of units and 2 car parking spaces are also provided for each unit. This level of car parking is considered appropriate for the size of the dwellings and taking account of the level of provision to other established houses in the area and we are of the opinion that the scheme would comply with Policy CS24.

1.4.5 The design has been formed to complement the existing setting whilst incurring on additional negative impact towards existing private amenity. Separation distances comply with planning requirements and as such should be considered acceptable with regards to Policy DM8.

1.4.6 It is considered that there is sufficient usable outdoor amenity space, in accordance with Policy DM10, where that space is relatively private within the context of development in the area and where there is space for such things as sitting out areas, clothes drying and children’s play areas.

1.4.7 This is a sustainable location and it is considered that with proper regard to the constraints posed by the site its opportunities could be realised in a manner that respects the established character of the area and one that is suitable for future occupiers.

1.4.8 The site is considered appropriate for a residential use and it is put here that the scheme as submitted would accord with the development plan context for the area. In this regard, prior to putting the site to market it is hoped that this pre-application request can gain a favourable response from the LPA in order to maximise the sites value and it might be that a meeting with officers would be beneficial to all parties.



Figure 1-8. Historic map 1910

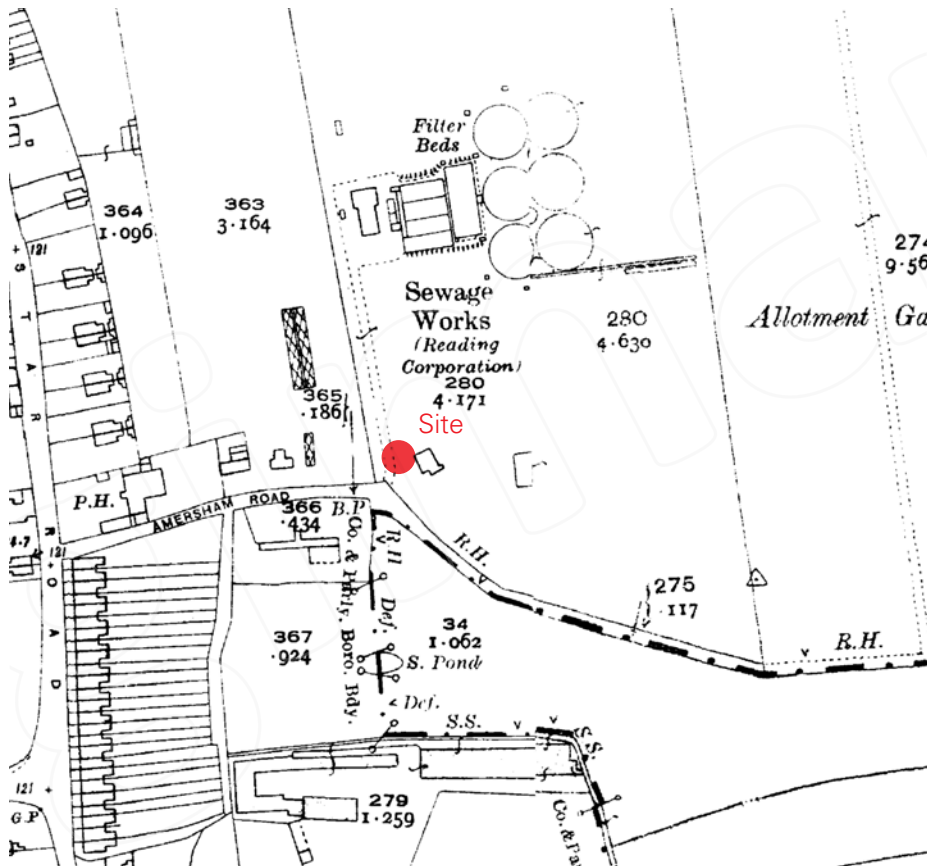


Figure 1-9. Historic map 1930

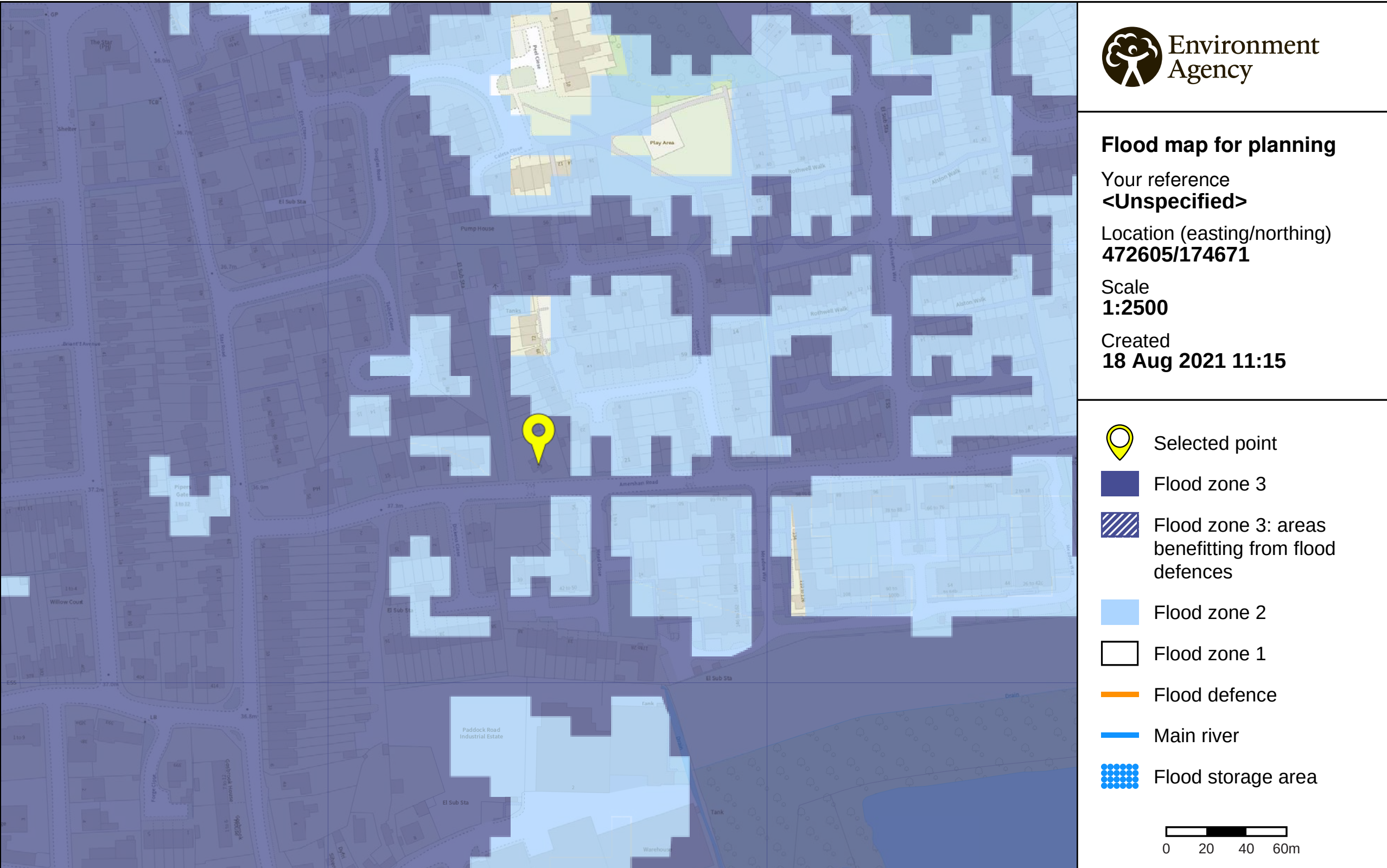


Figure 1-10. Historic map 1950



Figure 1-11. Historic map 1990

2.2 Flooding Map



2.3 Flood Risk Assessment Conclusion

- In accordance with Environment Agency requirements, the proposed finished floor level will be 1000mm above the 1 in 100 (1%) flood level (37.35mAOD) as provided in the EA Product 4 'Detailed Flood Risk Information' for the site; the finished floor levels will therefore be 38.35mAOD. This is based on the higher central climate change allowance for the Thames Area (700mm) with an additional 300mm freeboard allowance.
- No dry emergency egress route is available from the development site in times of extreme fluvial flooding. Given the slow catchment response time associated with the Thames, and significant advance warning provided by the Environment Agency for anticipated flood events, this would provide residents with sufficient time to evacuate the properties if necessary. However, the properties will be designed with raised threshold levels regardless to ensure safe refuge is available to occupants during times of flood if required.
- As it is not feasible to provide floodplain compensation on a level-by-level basis, the flood waters displaced due to the combined footprint of the buildings will be accommodated within the site through the use of voids under the residential buildings.
- Surface water flood risk will not be increased on or off site with the effective use of sustainable drainage techniques (infiltration and/or rainwater attenuation) in accordance with the sustainable drainage hierarchy.
- Although it is recognised that some of the proposed mitigation measures do not comply with the criteria specified by the Reading Borough Council Emergency Planning Team, this flood risk assessment has attempted to demonstrate a proportionate approach to mitigation, commensurate with the scale of the development and the principles established in the Reading Borough Council SFRA.
- Given the preference of new development to be focused on previously developed land, and the limited availability of previously developed/ brownfield sites in the centre of Caversham and Reading, by applying the principals of the Sequential Test it is concluded no alternative sites (at lower risk of flooding) have been identified in the vicinity of the proposed development site.
- The requirements of the Exception Test have been applied to the development as follows:
Requirement 1: It must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment where one

has been prepared. Restricting redevelopment in areas designated as 'Flood Zone 3a- High Probability' could compromise the viability of existing communities within the borough. Given a significant proportion of Caversham is located within Flood Zone 3, preventing local redevelopment would impact the longer-term development and future of the community. Furthermore, the proposed buildings will be more resilient to fluvial and pluvial flooding compared with the existing residential building, improving usability of the site and helping build flood resilience within the community.

Requirement 2: A site-specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

This flood risk assessment has set out comprehensive mitigation measures (e.g. raising building threshold levels, maintaining available floodplain volume at the site, restricting surface water runoff from site) for the proposed development. Furthermore, the SFRA recommends a flexible approach in relation to safe access, for example "if redevelopment results in an overall reduction in flood risk (e.g. through redevelopment of dwellings currently at risk of flooding, to dwellings incorporating safe refuge) and it is considered that sufficient advance warning of potential flooding would be available in order to adopt a 'managed' approach to safe access as part of the overall mitigation strategy". The proposed redevelopment satisfies this criterion.

As such, the proposed development is considered to pass the Exception Test.

- Based on the results of this flood risk assessment it is considered that the risks of fluvial and pluvial (surface water) flooding are manageable, and can be mitigated/ addressed by:
 - Providing voids under the residential buildings to negate any loss of floodplain, since level-for-level compensation is not viable within the development site area. This means floodplain storage will be provided within the proposed building footprints, whereas the existing building does not facilitate this;
 - Reprofilling of site levels to make new floodplain storage available where practicable. In addition, existing surface water flood risk (ponding) shall be mitigated through prudent landscaping design of the proposed rear garden levels at detailed design stage, ensuring flood risk off-site is not increased;
 - Managing surface water runoff from buildings through the use of

infiltration and/or rainwater attenuation systems, with a controlled discharge to a public sewer if necessary;
- Ensuring that the finished floor level of the building is set 300mm above the 1 in 100 plus climate change flood level;

- Providing a flood proofed building design e.g. concrete floors and raised electrical sockets; and

2.4 Bat Survey Report - Ecology by Design



4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre returned 338 records of at least nine species of bat within 2km of the site, a summary of which is given in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Records of bats within 2km of the site

Species	Latin Name	Designation	Earliest record	Most recent record	Num of recor
Bat species	Chiroptera	EPS, WCA5, S41	2014	2015	2
Brown long-eared bat	Plecotus auritus	EPS, WCA5, S41	1995	2017	15
Common pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	EPS, WCA5	2005	2019	98
Daubenton's bat	Myotis daubentonii	EPS, WCA5	1998	2015	29
Leisler's bat	Nyctalus leisleri	EPS, WCA5	2013	2016	5
Long-eared bat species	Plecotus sp,	EPS, WCA5, S41	2005	2018	5
Myotis species	Myotis sp.	EPS, WCA5, S41	2015	2018	22
Nathusius' pipistrelle	Pipistrellus nathusii	EPS, WCA5	1997	2018	15
Noctule bat	Nyctalus noctula	EPS, WCA5, S41	1999	2018	51
Pipistrelle bat species	Pipistrellus sp.	EPS, WCA5, S41	1995	2017	14
Serotine	Eptesicus serotinus	EPS, WCA5	2016	2018	4
Soprano pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	EPS, WCA5, S41	2007	2019	76
Western barbastelle	Barbastella barbastellus	EPS, WCA5, S41	2016	2018	2

4.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.2.1 The c. 9m by 10m building is brick built and c. 6m in height with a pitched roof and clay tiles. The top section of the building has a pebble dash render. There is a single-storey lean-to extension on the eastern elevation which is of the same construction. Access into the loft void was not possible due to the occupants of the building shielding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following external features were identified:

- Gaps under the lead flashing beneath the dormer window on the western elevation (see Photograph 2);
- Gaps under the lead flashing beneath the chimney on the southern elevation (see Photograph 3);
- Lifted tiles on all elevations, including the lean-to extension (see Photograph 5);
- Missing mortar under ridge tiles on the northern and southern elevations (see Photograph 6); and
- A gap along the top of the wall on the eastern elevation of the lean-to.

4.2.2 No evidence of bats was identified on the exterior of the building. The building was assessed as being of moderate suitability for roosting bats.

4.3 Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys

4.3.1 The timings and weather conditions of the surveys are detailed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Survey weather conditions

Date	Sunset/sunrise	Start	End	Weather
14/07/2021	21:15	21:00	22:45	23-19°C, 2 cloud cover ¹ , 1 Beaufort ²
29/07/2021	05:23	03:50	05:23	13-11°C, 4-3 cloud cover, 1 Beaufort

Dusk emergence 14th July 2021

4.3.2 During the survey, there was constant common and soprano pipistrelle foraging around the site. Pipistrelle bats were recorded using the garden around the building to forage and commuted across the site on several occasions. A noctule bat was recorded at 22:41 but not seen. No bats were recorded emerging from or entering the building.

Pre-dawn re-entry 29th July 2021

4.3.3 During the survey, common and soprano pipistrelle bats were recorded foraging close to the site between 03:53 and 04:38. Activity was lower than during the dusk emergence survey. No bats were recorded emerging from or entering the building.

Conclusion

4.3.4 No bats were recorded roosting within the building during either bat survey. There was common and pipistrelle foraging activity around the site during both surveys.

4.3.5 The building is not considered likely to support roosting bats and therefore there are no constraints to this development regarding roosting bats.

5 Potential Impacts and Recommendations

5.1 Potential Impacts

5.1.1 No bats were observed roosting within the building and therefore there are no potential impacts regarding roosting bats.

5.1.2 Bats including noctule, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle were recorded commuting through and foraging at the site and therefore commuting and foraging habitat could be impacted through increased artificial lighting.

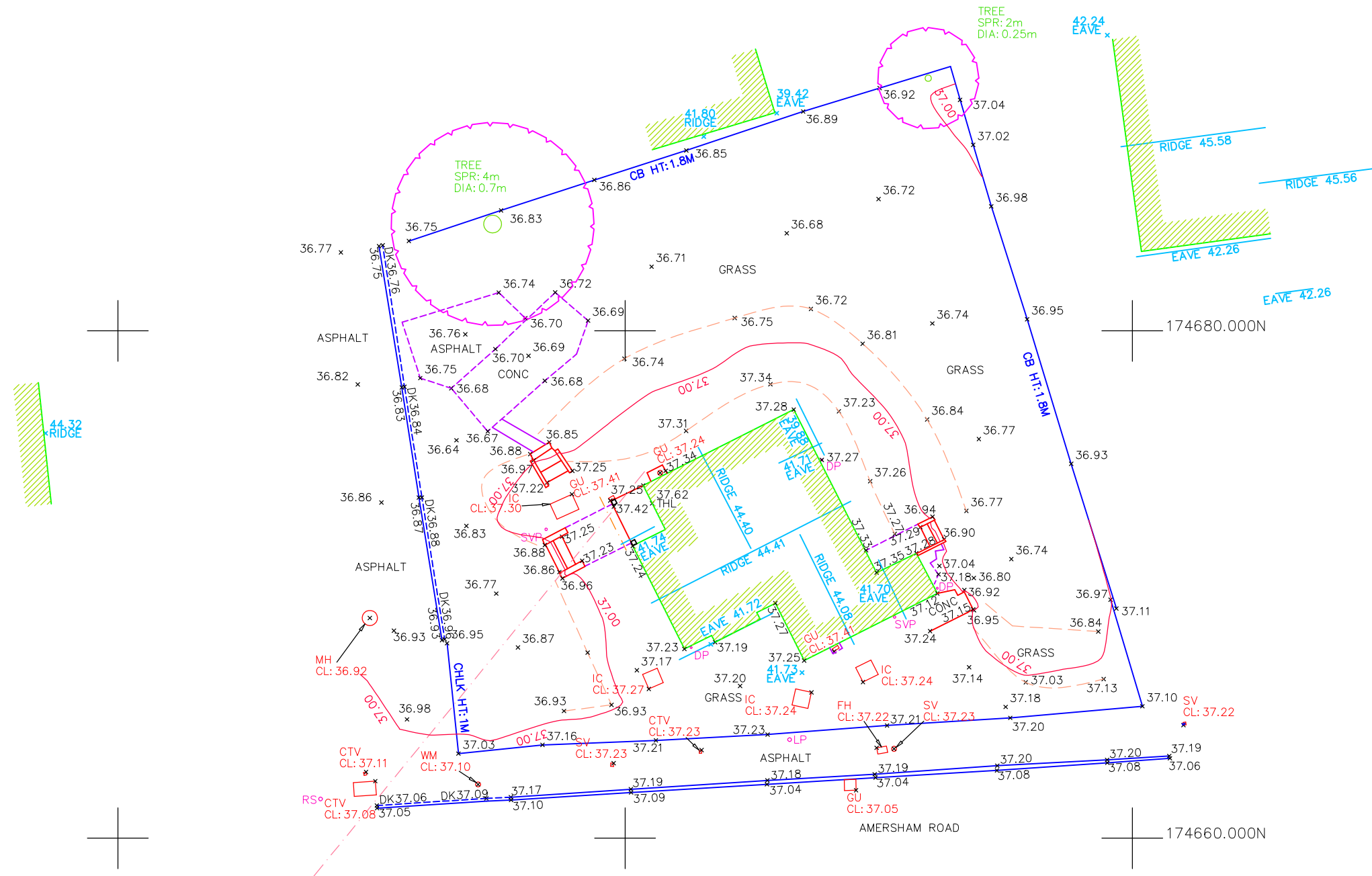
5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 The lighting strategy will be sensitively designed, adopting the following principles:

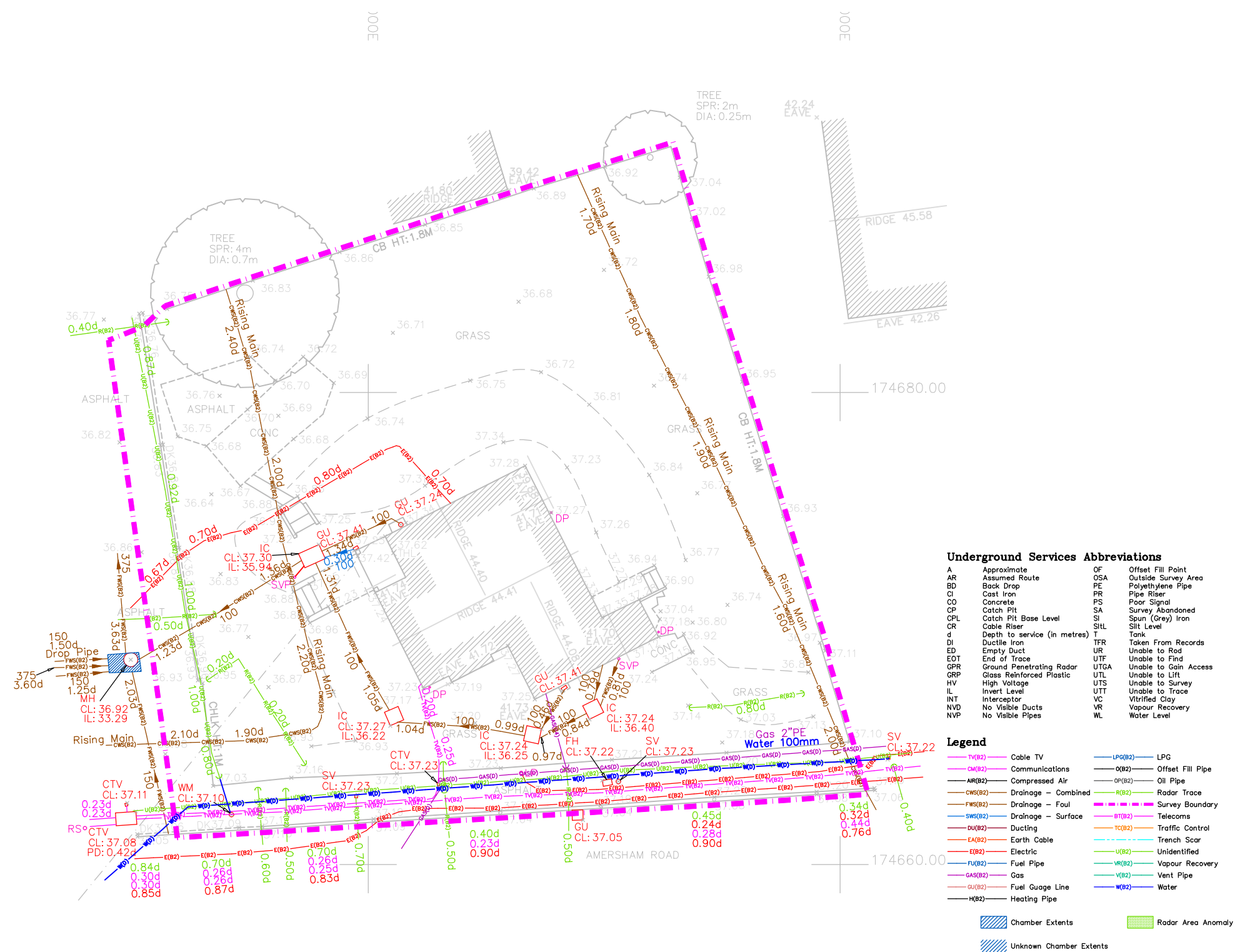
- Maintaining dark corridors along the site boundaries;
- Not illuminating the off-site hedgerow to the west of the site; and
- Where lighting is required, ensuring:
 - Light levels are less than 3 Lux;
 - LED luminaires with a warm white spectrum ideally <2700Kelvin (to avoid
 - blue / UV elements);
 - Bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires are used and mounted on the horizontal (with no upward tilt); and
 - Security lighting, if required, is motion-activated with short (1 minute) timers.

5.2.2 As a biodiversity enhancement, it is recommended that two integrated bat boxes are installed into the proposed building(s). Bat boxes should be placed at a minimum height of 4m, on a southern or western aspect. Example boxes are given in Appendix 3.

2.5 Topographical Survey



2.6 Utility Mapping Survey



2.7 Planning Application History



Figure 1-13. Google earth image - Identifying local planning applications

Reference number	Type of application	Details	Address	Date	Decision
060685	Full planning	Erection of 31 residential units (to include 27 affordable units) with associated landscaping, access and car parking	2 Amersham Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5BP	21 February 2007	Application Permitted
992519	Full planning	Demolition and removal of all engineering buildings and erection of 77 dwellings on site.	6 Clonmel Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5BF	14 February 2000	Application Permitted

Figure 1-12. Planning application map

2.8 Local Planning Context

- 1.3.1 The Development Plan for the area is made up of national planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the adopted documents forming part of the Local Development Framework particularly, in this case, the adopted Core Strategy (CS) document and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD).
- 1.3.2 One of the main principles of national policy is to concentrate development in sustainable locations such as this. The provision of housing to meet the needs of a sustainable and buoyant economy is also a principle theme. Among the core land-use planning principles identified at paragraph 17 of the NPPF is to; pro-actively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.
- 1.3.3 Core Strategy Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of climate change.
- 1.3.4 Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 1.3.5 Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by:
- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;
The need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and
The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 1.3.6 Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking) indicates that maximum car and cycle parking standards will be applied which relate to the accessibility of the location.
- 1.3.7 SDPD Policy DM6 (Affordable Housing) requires the provision of 10% affordable housing on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, subject to viability.
- 1.3.8 Policy DM8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure that development does not have a significant detrimental impact on the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of, among other things:
- Privacy and overlooking;
Access to sunlight and daylight;
Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development.
- 1.3.9 Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) requires that new dwellings are provided with functional private or communal open space which for flats can include balconies or roof gardens.

3

**PRE-APPLICATION
RESPONSE**

3. PRE-APPLICATION RESPONSES

Site description

The pre application enquiry relates to a residential plot on the north side of Amersham Road containing a single two storey detached dwelling with rooms in the roof space which is in a poor state of repair. The surrounding area is predominantly residential and consists of two storey terraced and semi-detached dwellings whilst there are also some three and four storey blocks of flats in road opposite the site.

The site is located within Flood Zone 3A and within an area of potentially contaminated land.

The proposal

The enquiry relates the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and replacement with either 3 two storey terraced dwellings or a two storey (with rooms in the roof space) building containing 5 x 1 bedroom flats.

Relevant Planning History

None relevant to the application property.

Appraisal

Principle

The NPPF states that LPAs should “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.”The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed land’ excludes private residential gardens.

Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, that does not mean that the development of private residential garden land is unacceptable in principle, rather that previously developed land should be the first choice for housing development.

The Council’s LDF SDPD Policy DM11 Development of Private Residential Gardens requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- a) It makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- b) The site is of an adequate size to accommodate the development;
- c) The proposal has a suitable access;
- d) The proposal would not lead to an unacceptable tandem development;
- e) The design minimises the exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
- f) It does not cause detrimental impact on residential amenities;
- g) The emphasis is on the provision of family housing;
- h) There is no adverse impact on biodiversity, and
- i) The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

Therefore, the principle of the redevelopment of the site for further

residential development could be acceptable subject to the above criteria and following other material planning considerations:

Flooding

The site is located within flood zone 3A, as set out in the Council’s ‘Strategic Flood Risk Assessment’ (June 2017). Whilst is currently in use for residential purposes as a single dwelling the proposal seeks to intensify the use of the site for residential purposes forming either 3 dwellings or 5 flats and would therefore be subject to the sequential test process in accordance with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

A Flood Risk Scoping Assessment has been submitted as part of the pre-application enquiry which notes the need for a sequential test to be undertaken but has not undertaken an assessment of the test.

The Sequential Test seeks to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities in their decision making should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of river or sea flooding), applying the Exception Test if required. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 (areas with a high probability of river or sea flooding) be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required.

Within each flood zone, surface water and other sources of flooding also need to be taken into account in applying the sequential approach to the location of development.

The Council’s latest ‘Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment’ (May 2017) notes that ‘there are not sufficient sites to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in Reading on sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2’. Therefore, subject to a detailed sequential test assessment being submitted as part of any application it may be possible to demonstrate that an application for additional residential development on the site could pass the sequential test. However, the onus is on the applicant to present a detailed sequential test for this particular development and demonstrate the case to the Council.

If a planning application could successfully demonstrate that either proposal could pass the sequential test on this site then as a ‘more vulnerable’ development in flood risk classification terms, additional residential development in flood zone 3A would also be required to pass the exception test. This is also acknowledged in the Flood Risk Scoping Assessment submitted as part of this application.

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF indicates that for the exception test to be passed: - it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider

sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment where one has been prepared

- a site-specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall

In this respect the Councils latest ‘Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment’ (May 2017) goes on to note that ‘one of the criteria of passing the Exception Test is that a Flood Risk Assessment must have demonstrated that the site can be safely developed. At this stage, no Flood Risk Assessments have been carried out for any of the sites that have not yet been considered suitable or potentially suitable. Until such work is done, it is not possible to take a view on suitability, and in Flood Zone 3 the assumption must be that, in most cases, by its nature, an Exception Test would be unlikely to be passed.

Again the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the exception test and whilst work could be undertaken to prepare a detailed site specific flood risk assessment for the site with regard to floor levels, flood storage and other specific measures, officers consider that it would be very difficult to demonstrate wider sustainability benefits of the development given its scope and small scale nature.

In this instance officers consider that the proposal would be very unlikely to pass both the required sequential and exceptions tests and therefore could not be supported in principle on flood risk grounds. Therefore, the proposal would be considered contrary to Policy CS35 of the Reading Core Strategy (2008, 2015).

Full examination of the submitted FRA on technical flooding grounds has not taken place and the EA has a separately chargeable service for pre-application enquiries.

Notwithstanding the above issues in respect of flooding, the acceptability of the use of the site for residential purposes would also be subject to the following material planning considerations:

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

The surrounding area is predominantly characterized by groups of terraced dwellings set in fairly small plots. In terms of built footprint to plot ratio it is considered that both development options would fit adequately within the site, with the three plots proposed for the terraced house development considered to be in keeping with the plots sizes and grain of development found in the surrounding area.

The existing dwelling is proposed to be demolished and the proposal would not result in a ‘tandem’ form of development.

In terms of appearance and siting of development there is no clear building line evident to this part of the street-scene but this part of the road appears very green. The existing building is off-set and angled towards the site frontage with Amersham Road with a green area between the house and

road, whilst there is green space opposite the site serving the flats in Mead Close and general vegetation lining this part of the road. The rear gardens of no.s 23 and 25 Clonmel Close are adjacent to the east of the site with the next frontage building in this direction being the flank elevation of no. 21 Clonmel Close around 30m from the application site. Whilst adjacent to the west of the site is an access track to a pump house and sub-station building to the north of the site with the front elevations of the terrace of dwellings at no. 23-27 Amersham Road beyond this, around 10m from the pre application site.

Officers acknowledge this lack of distinct building line but consider that the front elevations to both scheme options should be set back in the site further from the road frontage to result in a more gradual step from the frontages of the terraced row at no. 23-27 Amersham Road, whilst importantly this would also allow for more substantial tree/hedge planting to the front of the development. In this respect there is concern about the proposed parking spaces and extent of hardstanding set forward in site towards the road in the scheme for 3 terraced houses which further erodes the green nature of this part of the road.

In terms of separation to the site boundaries both schemes are considered to retain sufficient separation such as to retain an element of spaciousness found within the existing site but taking note of the denser development to the surrounding area.

Both scheme options are considered to allocate adequate usable private (terraced houses option) and communal (flats) amenity space. However, given the officer comments above with regarding to increasing the set back of the built development from the site frontage this would lead to a reduction in amenity space, in particular with regard to the proposal for three terraced houses. The current proposed provision is considered adequate but a further reduction is likely to result in unacceptably small private amenity space provision.

Given the identified need to increase the set back from the front of the site to retain an element of greenery to the site frontage, together with concerns regarding hardstanding for parking and reduced amenity space provision, officers consider that the site is suited to a two dwelling development (pair of semi-detached houses). On the basis of the issues identified above it is considered that the three terraced house development proposed results in a cramped form of development harmful to the green character of this part of Amersham Road.

With regard to design of the buildings and appearance with the street-scene officers are satisfied that the design for option 1 would integrate satisfactorily with the character of the area, subject to fuller details. Officers consider that the larger building for scheme 2 and the five flats would appear as somewhat of an anomaly and fail to reflect many of the built elements found in this part

of the street-scene and the new estate development opposite and to the east of the site. Officers’ view is that a scheme for flats (or maisonnettes) in a building style of similar design to option 1 would integrate more comfortably with surrounding character, but retain concerns regarding the extent of hardstanding to form the parking spaces and access drive.

(Policies DM10 and DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015 and Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015).

Amenity of surrounding occupiers

The separation and proposed siting of both scheme 1 and 2 is not considered to result in any undue loss of light, overbearing impact, overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbouring dwellings (subject that any side windows to the east elevation are obscurely glazed).

(Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015)

Standard of Residential Accommodation

Proposed floor plans have not been provided as part of the pre-application enquiry therefore is it not possible to comment in this respect. Either scheme should ensure suitable room sizes, outlook, ventilation and daylighting for future occupiers. The indicative unit sizes as a whole set out within the supporting statement (70m2 per house or 50m2 per 1 bed flat) would be adequate.

(Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015).

Mix of units

Policy CS15 of the Reading Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015) states that “Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, in accordance with the findings of a housing market assessment.” The supporting text to this policy states that the provision of at least an element of family housing in all developments is a priority, based on the findings of the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The policy also states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development will be informed by the characteristics of the area in which it is located and accessibility. No details of number of bedrooms for option 1 and the terraced houses has been provided however it is assumed these would be at least 2 bedroom and therefore family units which would be acceptable. It is my opinion that scheme 2 for five flats should include at least one family sized unit (at least one 2 bedroom (minimum) flat).

Transport

The site is located within Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.

Option 1 (3 x terraced houses)

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 2 off road parking spaces for each 3 + bedroom house. Please note that parking spaces proposed should be 2.5 x 5m.

Plans submitted do not indicate the size of the dwellings although it has been proposed to provide 2 parking spaces each for each of the 3 proposed dwellings; therefore an assumption has been made that these will be 3 bedroom dwellings. Therefore the number proposed complies with the Council’s standard.

However, in order to access the parking areas, 2 new access points are proposed to be created off Amersham Road. There is a traffic calming island close to the proposed western access and therefore this would create a conflict of movement. The existing property currently has access from the adjacent service road and therefore options should be investigated if this could be retained as an alternative to the access mentioned above.

Visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m will need to be illustrated for the new access points.

Option 2 (5 x 1 bed flats)

Plans submitted illustrate provision of 5 off road parking spaces for the 5 x 1 bedroom flat which would be accessed from a newly created access point from Amersham road. Visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m will need to be illustrated for the new access points.

It should be noted that the new access point should be a minimum of 4.1m wide to facilitate vehicles entering and exiting the site. Parking spaces proposed should be 2.5 x 5m with a 6m forecourt depth.

General transport comments for both schemes

In accordance with the Council’s Parking Standards and Design SPD, each 1 bedroom flat should be provided with 0.5 secure lockable cycle storage spaces, therefore equating to a total storage provision of 3 and each 3 bedroom dwelling should be provided with 1 totalling a provision of 3. The Pre Application Statement states that cycle storage would be provided appropriate to the size of each development. Should a full application be submitted a detailed plan illustrating the cycle storage for the each proposal would be required in accordance to the requirements detailed above.

Details of the bin storage and collection should also be submitted for each proposal if a full application is submitted. Bin storage should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. The demolition of the existing property and construction of the proposed

dwelling will be subject to a Construction Method statement (CMS).

All of the above comments would need to be addressed and illustrated in plans if a full application is to be submitted.

(Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015, Policies CS24 and CS34 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015 and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011).

Natural Environment

Trees

On submission of a full application, soft landscaping principles should be provided to confirm that soft landscaping will be incorporated into the layout and space allowed for the future growth of trees and hedges. Comments set out in the design and character section of this letter above should also be noted regarding increasing the set back of both developments from the site frontage.

(Policy CS7 and CS38 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015).

Ecology

The Council’s Ecologist has reviewed the proposal and existing building and has advised that any application for demolition or extension of the existing property will need to be accompanied by a bat survey.

(Policy CS36 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015)

Environmental Protection

To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E. Building Control must be consulted on this application.

Affordable Housing

West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council applied for a judicial review of the Secretary of State’s Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) to Parliament in 2014 on changes to national planning policy. Those changes sought to exempt developments of 10 or less dwellings from planning obligations for affordable housing and social infrastructure contributions and to introduce a new measure known as the Vacant Building Credit.

The High Court handed down its judgment on the case on 31st July 2015. The High Court found in favour of the challenge by the local authorities and quashed the amendments to the NPPG. The Secretary of State appealed the judgment and the Court of Appeal then quashed the decision of the High Court.

At its meeting of the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on 13th July 2016, the Council discussed the outcome of the Court of Appeal’s decision on its challenge (http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5651/Item09-SEPT-C-Report-on-C-of-Appeal-judgement-05-16/pdf/Item09_SEPT_C_Report_on_C_of_Appeal_judgement_05_16.pdf).

Having considered its options, the Committee agreed the following as the basis for determining planning applications where Policy DM6 of the SDPD is relevant:

To implement Policy DM6 as currently adopted in the SDPD but excluding proposals that solely involve the conversion of an existing property, where the conversion involves the provision of 10 or less dwelling units (i.e. not HMOs), or the replacement of dwellings by the same number of replacement dwellings where there is no net increase.

Scheme 1 would entail a net increase of 2 residential units (3 minus the 1 existing unit on the site) and scheme 2 would entail a net increase of 4 residential units (5 minus the 1 existing unit on the site). In accordance with Policy DM6 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015) either scheme would be required to make a contribution towards off site affordable housing provision elsewhere in the Borough. The required contribution would equate to 5% of the gross development value of either scheme.

If any subsequent application would not comply with the requirements of DM6 in terms of affordable housing provision or contributions then this would need to be supported by a comprehensive viability appraisal. Content of a viability assessment should reflect that outlined under Item 27 of the Councils Validation Checklist (Council’s website).

As the consideration of viability appraisals by the Council often involves negotiation and can be time consuming we advise that applications where viability is going to be an issue should be submitted as a pre-planning application enquiry. Applicants who submit planning applications without doing pre-app but rely on a viability appraisal to justify not complying with policy will be required to pay the Council’s costs for considering the document (for a scheme of between 1-4 dwellings this fee would be £1000).

Community Infrastructure Levy

From April 1st 2015 development will be subject to the Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and this will include charges for residential development. Both proposed schemes would be liable for the levy.

Further information on CIL is available to view on the Council’s website at: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/Planning/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/>

Conclusion

For the reasons above set out above, it is my opinion that officers would be unable to support an application for the proposed development, most substantially in principle owing to the flood zone constraints but also the identified issues with regard to cramped nature of development, loss of green character to this part of Amersham Road and also vehicular access concerns for option 1.

Whilst not encouraged, if you were to submit an application of the nature shown at present, please note the validation requirements set out in the Council’s Validation Checklist (December 2016). Please refer to the Council’s website for details.

This advice is given on a without-prejudice basis and not all policies have been considered. This advice is in good faith and will not over-ride the formal consideration of a planning application by the Council. If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact me on the number given above.

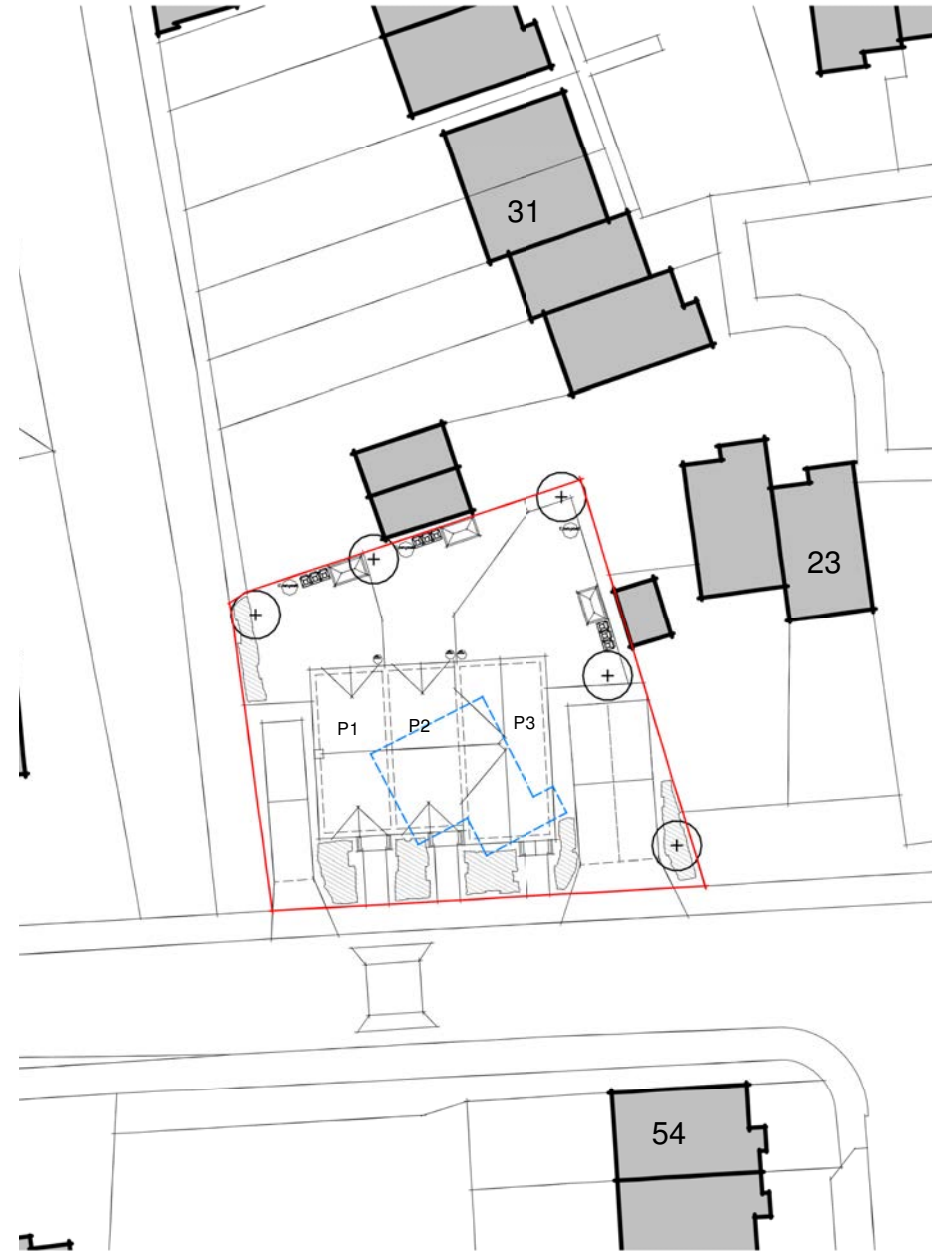
4

DESIGN
EVOLUTION

4. DESIGN EVOLUTION

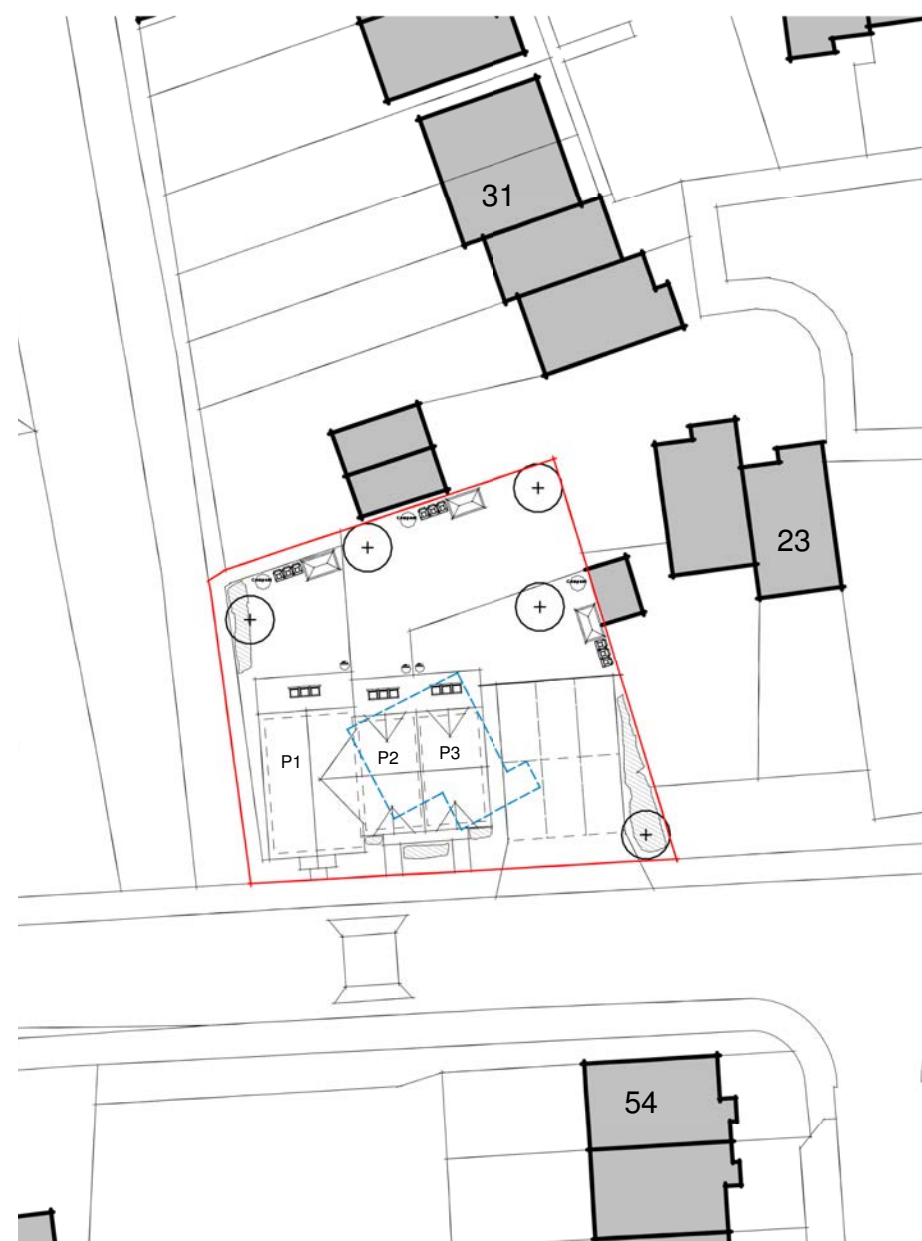
4.1 Pre-Application Submission

Options were developed for pre-application advice in which we explored the idea of incorporating both a block with five-one bed flats (option 1) and then also a block of three-terraced houses. The advice from the planning officer informed us that the site was being over developed and inturn interrupting the green landscaping of the area. This then informed our next iteration of the design phase which can be seen later in this document.



Design Option 1

As submitted for the pre-application 22/04/20

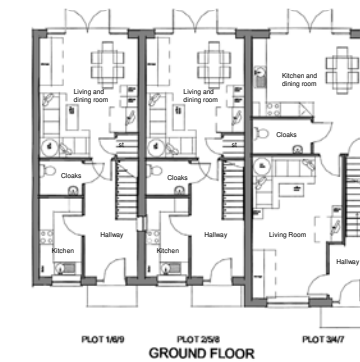


Design Option 2

As submitted for the pre-application 22/04/20



FRONT ELEVATION



4.2 Post Pre-Application

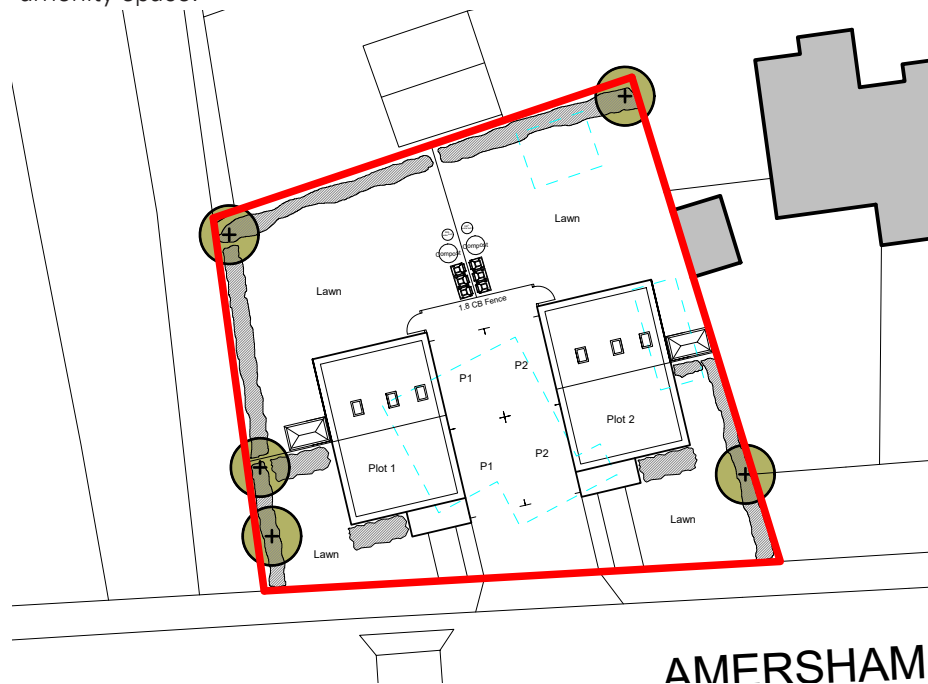
Design development has been undertaken for the proposed scheme in order to ascertain development criteria and principles. The accommodation is to be set out to meet the life time homes, space standards and incorporate a high level of sustainability into its fabric and running measures.

The initial iterations of design sought to create a collection of flatted properties on a previously redundant and vacant plot and then later developed to accommodate a set of three-bed five-person detached properties. The proposal now sits on the site as a pair of semi-detached dwellings that has taken into consideration underground services and existing building foundations. The options that were explored utilised:

- The existing boundaries and vegetation as well as responding to neighbouring built forms of the site.
- The existing boundaries and proposed additional sympathetic shrub and tree planting
- A built form that utilises a low roof-scape, this would minimise the visual impact that the new dwelling would have on the surrounding properties and overall area.

The internal layout of the dwelling explored a range of different configurations. The number of bed spaces were explored, which affected the overall footprint the dwelling has on the site. Configuring the site layout along with the internal proposals have been considered together, creating a harmonious home which has been designed to modern day family user requirements.

Following consultation with the planning officer regarding the initial proposal for the site, we reduced the number of plots that would be integrated onto the site, this opens up both the plots allowing landscaping to come through, as well as serving both of the homes with a far greater amount of private amenity space.



5

PROPOSAL

5. PROPOSAL

5.1 The Proposal

The main design principles of the proposal are to facilitate a family home that encapsulates modern family living needs, while interacting harmoniously with the existing access setting.

The proposal is predominately achieved within the existing building’s footprint and facilitates accommodation over two stories via a simply pitched roof.

The Ground floor principle accommodation looks towards the front, with the principle rooms looking to the garden as the principle outlook for the dwelling. First floor accommodation introduces height level windows to the front elevation.

Parking arrangements are to be enhanced via an additional space located on site. Parking provision is to be set out to current design standards with the driveway finish to match existing coverage of bound gravel.

Shared boundaries of the property are to remain unaltered with the highways facing boundaries altered to a 1.8 close boarded fence with trellis on top, a timber sleeper retaining wall to the garden frontage is to be included to allow the lawn to become levelled and improve usability of the family household.

The materiality of the proposal is intended to match the locality and setting with multi stock facing bricks and timber cladding. The roof tile mix to be confirmed. The proposal has been formed and designed entirely to enable family life to occur and fully utilise the present setting.

Amount:

The proposal is for a new residential family home with principles incorporated from the recently permitted scheme. The proposal seeks to promote modern family living needs, which will make effective use of the site in accordance with guidance in the NPPF. The site is not of any public or ecological interest which might otherwise preclude its development, however the site does sit within a flood level 3 risk zone in which the finish floor levels have been proposed to sit 1m above the existing ground level. The proposal sits down in comparison to the existing eave and ridge lines of the neighbouring dwellings, which in turn helps to provide a complimentary outlook within the existing street setting.

Layout and Siting:

The existing two storey property is to be demolished with the boundaries to be retained.

Parking arrangement to be enhanced through adequate parking requirements for both of the plots that are proposed for the site.

Scale:

There is a great diversity of building styles, scale, height and massing in the local area. The proposed development has been designed appropriately for the plot. The proposal has been developed in keeping with the existing dwelling and the street setting this has been achieved via the following;

- The proposal maximises the existing plot with more than adequate building footprints all the while upholding the integrity of the surrounding landscape and surrounding amenity space.
- General soft and hard landscaping has been considered to improve the outside space of the family home so to insure all areas are usable and appropriate for the users.

Due to the above considerations the proposal should therefore not be viewed as out of character or over bearing towards the street scene. Proposed landscaping to the front and rear gardens will incorporate low-level shrub and tree planting.

Form & appearance:

The form of the proposed development reflects the advice in the local design guides for simple building forms.

The pitch of the roof is appropriate and of simple design.

The character of the building is in keeping with the existing setting, remaining unaltered to ensure the proposal does not detract from the existing setting character. Every effort has been made to make this proposal as simple as possible allowing the age, form and character of the setting to be retained. Overall the building form is simple and attractive.

Materials:

Minimal decoration/detailing have been proposed in order to preserve the simplicity of the design in keeping with the architectural styling, ensuring that the existing buildings character remains intact.

Trees & Landscaping:

Where new planting is proposed trees/plants will be appropriately sourced and mainly native in order to provide an appropriate visual stimulus and ecological habitat where appropriate.

Access:

Access into the plots will form a new entrance from Amersham Road onto

the shared driveway between the plots. The access surface material will be of a permeable nature to further ensure and mitigate the risk of potential future flooding.

Sustainability

The following demonstrates how the proposal will improve its current usage of non-renewables. Measures to be incorporated to ensure efficiency;

Water, water-efficient taps will be fitted in the bathrooms and kitchen. Materials – materials will have a Green Guide rating of at least D for windows, doors, external walls and roof structures.

Surface water - run-off soakaways will be created to drain the house and hardstanding areas. The site offers excellent ground soakage capability. Waste- a recycling and waste bin area will be constructed unobtrusively next to the entrance.

Health and well-being- the site has a large garden to provide space for children’s play and adult leisure pursuits such as gardening and sport. The garden would be reasonably flat and accessible to all. The interior would be light and airy with windows to all elevations. The outdoor environment would be particularly conducive to outdoor recreation.

Ecology - the garden will retain many new planting features to support indigenous species and promote a varied wildlife.

Alongside the improvement of non-renewables, the site will also make best use of renewable energy sources, through the implementation of a photovoltaic roof array, that is indicatively shown on the front elevation, as well as the proposed air source heat pump that can be seen on the ground floor plan.

5.2 Proposed Illustrative Site Plan



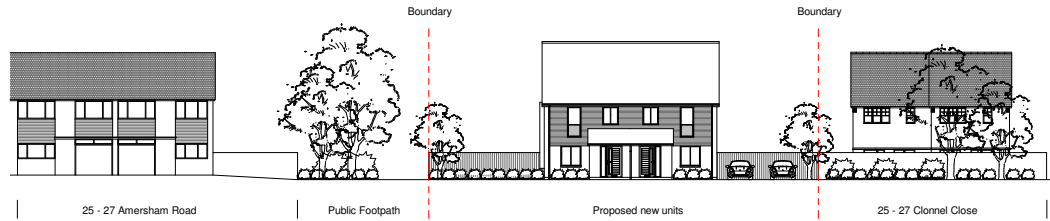
5.3 Proposed Coloured Site Plan



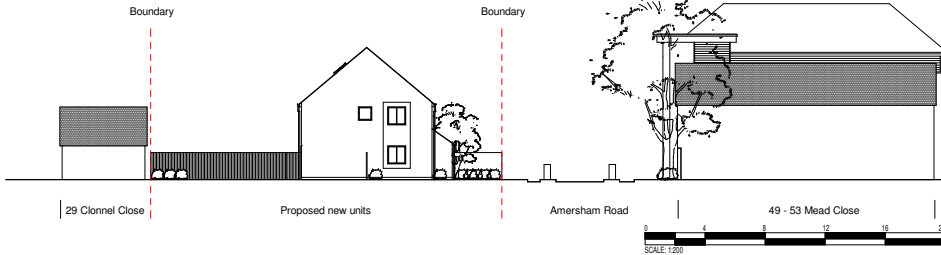
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Section A-A



Section B-B



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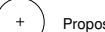
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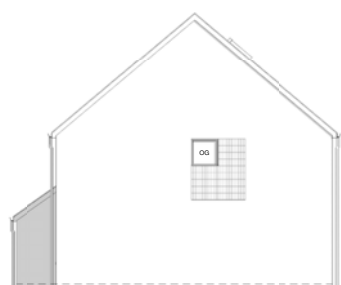
KEY PLAN:

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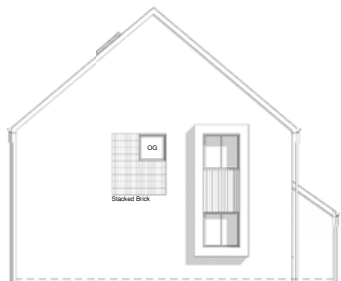
Front Elevation



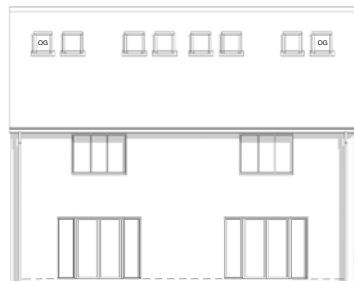
RHS Elevation



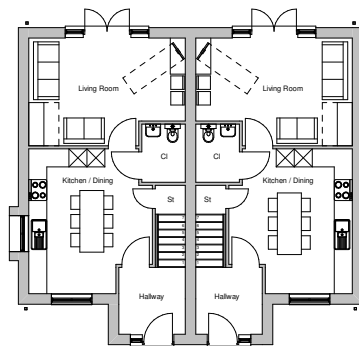
LHS Elevation



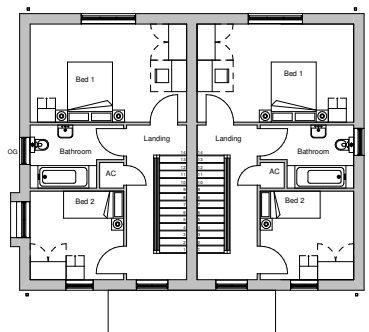
Rear Elevation



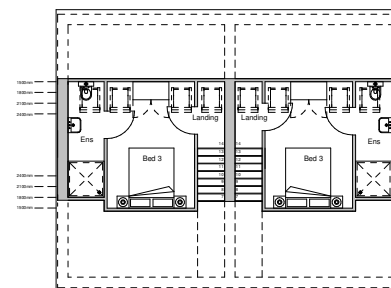
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



6

COINCUSION

6. CONCLUSION

The proposal will enhance the existing site through the development of a pair of semi-detached homes that maximise the space while upholding the green landscaping of the setting.

The proposal will incorporate high levels of sustainable measures to reduce carbon in both its construction and on-going use.

Improvements to the setting via landscaping and parking will enhance the street setting.

This document demonstrates that a logical process of assessment and design evolution has taken place to arrive at a robust design solution which has taken consideration of the constraints and opportunities of the site.

Main Benefits

- Enhancement of existing street scene in term of landscaping, security, water runoff.
- Use of a redundant site which is in need of development in terms of both modern family living requirements and the expected thermal performance and sustainable measures of housing in today’s society.
- Improved vehicular access.

7

APPENDICES





6.3 Detached Iteration Development





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RIDGE
PROPERTY & CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS

BEALMONT HOUSE
59 HIGH STREET
THEALE
READING, RG7 5AL

TEL: 0118 932 3088
WWW.RIDGE.CO.UK

CLIENT:

Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

PROJECT:
29 Amersham Road, Caversham, Reading,
RG4 5BP

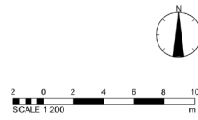
TITLE:
Proposed Residential Development -
Coloured Site Plan

DRAWN BY: EC
CHECKED BY: MF
STATUS: PLANNING

SCALE: 1:200
DATE: 18/08/2021
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DRAWING No:

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