

42 -48 Mount Pleasant, planning response to comments

council response: CLAIRE RINGWOOD EMAIL 21 April 2021

Hives Architects, Design Team response 12 June 2021

General / Officer comments

Proposed changes and justifications:

1	The communal hardstanding to the front of the properties – I feel the lack of landscaping here is disappointing, the area could provide soft landscaping and it could be a pleasant space for the residents to use, it would also stop any unregularized parking (of both cars and motorbikes which is a concern particularly as no car parking is proposed). I appreciate there is a requirement for access for emergency services but has consideration been given to landscaping the frontage? It would be important that members of the public did not feel they could use this space whilst having some presence to the street is important, so controlling access into the site whilst retaining its sense of space needs to be considered. The proposal aims to create a little street but having an outlook onto hardstanding and the side wall of 50 Mount Pleasant does not seem to quite achieve this. If this space became a private communal garden for the residents it would significantly improve the scheme. An indicative landscaping scheme is required as I feel we are at the limits of the scheme being an overdevelopment of the site.	Please refer to drawing 002. The area of soft landscaping has been increased significantly. A fence has been added to the front of the property to increase the feeling of a semi-private access, and tall cypres trees planted at either side of the entrance to the new street. The width of the street has been reduced to discourage parking, whilst widening at the road to suit reversing out from parking spaces. The width of the new street is suitable for future vehicle access to the rear of the listed building, as it is the intention to provide 3 parking spaces for residents as part of a further planning application.
2	The properties would be south facing and 5.8m from the side of 50 Mount Pleasant. I appreciate why they have been orientated this way however it needs to be demonstrated that the properties would benefit from sufficient daylight and sunlight and as such a daylight/sunlight assessment is required. I note the windows along the south are inset to provide natural shading but I wondered whether this is necessary considering the side of the listed building is only 5.8m away. I also note the false windows to the side elevation facing Mount Pleasant, one of these is to a dining room and to increase the light in to this room I wondered whether a glazed window would be better?	Please refer to "Response to planning comment number 2 – Daylight and sunlight assessment" (document attached). The review has resulted in a small increase in window sizes at first floor, as can be seen on the revised elevations. This shows sufficient daylight and sunlight, and views can be achieved within the houses.
3	A proposed section showing the difference in levels with the properties on Southampton Street is required. Although there is some distance between these properties and the proposed end of the terrace property it is directly along the rear boundary of the Southampton Street properties. The difference in levels could make the last property in the row visually dominant and overbearing.	As requested, a section with further context was added. Please refer to drawing 015
4	there should be additional screening on the roof terrace for the end property to retain privacy to the properties on Southampton Street.	As requested, a 1.7m screen has been introduced, as seen on drawing 015
5	The proposal is being offered as family dwellings however the rear amenity space is very small and would be in shadow all of the time. Due to this there is reason to consider that a contribution towards open space is required as the development does not suitably meet the open space requirement on site.	Please refer to "Response to planning comment number 5 – North facing Gardens" (document attached). The client would consider a contribution as part of S106 negotiations should this be required.
6	The bike and bin store is located directly onto the street and for this reason it needs to look more purposeful. A green roof is welcome but if we are accepting it at the front of the site it needs to be a good building and we are not convinced at this stage that it is. Ideally a smaller number of units fronting the street would probably have removed the majority of the concerns raised above but proposing 6 properties has led to the development as proposed and why it is felt that the proposal is at the limits of being overdevelopment. It will be the finer detail that determines whether the proposal can work.	The bike stores were moved to the rear gardens as per your suggestion, thus making them more secure and reduce impact on the street scene. The bin store was reduced to a smaller building and set back from the street, allowing further soft landscaping to be introduced. A new drawing for the bin store shows intended materials and elevations; 016. The building is proposed to be overgrown with climbing plants to
7	Can it be confirmed that there is no chance of the billboards coming back? Although they have been removed it would be important that there is no way they will return.	The client has confirmed that there is no chance for billboards to return.
	Affordable Housing – It is noted in the DAS that the applicant is willing to enter into a S106 agreement in terms of contributing to affordable housing. No valuations have been provided to calculate the affordable housing contribution and a minimum of 2 independent valuations are required providing the GDV.	The client has obtained 2 valuation as attached, for forwarding to your legal team.
	Ecology – the drawings should be modified to show 6 swift bricks in appropriate locations (could be secure via condition but would be preferable to have these details shown on the approved plans.	Swift bricks have been added, as requested. They are shown on drawing 015 Proposed Elevations and Section in Context (Proposed North Elevation 03)
Highways		
A	Rationale as to why a lower parking provision should be considered is therefore required.	Please refer to "Technical Note: Mount Pleasant, Reading Site Assessment" by MODE Transport Consultants
B	Submitted block plan 2787 002 P1 illustrates the proposed 2 parking space of which 1 will have an EV charging point. The dimensions of the parking spaces will need to be provided in accordance with the Councils current Parking Standards and Design SPD. Tracking diagrams will be required illustrating vehicles entering and exiting the proposed parking spaces as well as tracking for small delivery vehicles entering and exiting the site.	The parking dimensions have been added to drawing 002. Please also refer to "Technical Note: Mount Pleasant, Reading Site Assessment" by MODE Transport Consultants for tracking diagrams

C	The Design and Access Statement states that the new street provides safe access to each of the houses whilst retaining access to the rear of the listed building, to a number of small workshops. Further details are required as to the type of workshops and what the existing parking provision for these workshops is.	It should be noted that the client wishes to remove some of the structures at the rear of the Listed Building to create parking spaces for the building. This is subject to further planning application. Currently There are 3 workshops. One is used by a carpenter using a small van. The other is used by a picture framer, with no vehicle. Another one is used for arts and crafts, without reliance on vehicle access/parking. The workshops are accessed through a side door behind the listed building, and this would be retained as shown on the block plan.
D	It is noted that there is an extensive area of hard standing, which could be utilized by future occupants of the proposed dwellings for unrestricted parking and could impact the Highway as this could cause vehicles to reverse out onto Mount Pleasant. Information as to how this will be managed is required, this may require reviewing landscaping.	To reduce potential for unregularized parking space, the width of the road is reduced. Soft landscaping and low level brick walls, with additional 'defensible space' in front of the houses has been introduced to prevent parking and reviewed to transport consultant comments. Please refer to the block plan 002 and "Technical Note: Mount Pleasant, Reading Site Assessment"
E	The Design and Access Statements states that secure cycle storage is to provided at the front of the site within a bike store with 6 individual secure cupboards for each household. Details of the proposed storage units is required. In a development of this nature storage within the private gardens of each dwelling in the form of a garden shed would be acceptable.	Bicycle storage has been moved to rear gardens, as per your suggestion. For details of storage units please refer to drawing 016 Bin Store and Bike Store Details; for locations of bike stores please refer to drawing 002.
F	Plans indicate that a shared bins store is to be provided at the front of the site. The Design and Access Statement states that the bin store will be fitted with a sliding door for access directly off the street. Detailed plans of the bin storage are required.	A revised design and further detail is presented on drawing 016 Bin Store and Bike Store Details. For the bin store plans, please refer to drawing 010 also.
Natural Environment		
G	EV charging port that is not attached to a building, is likely to be supplied via underground service line. How will this and the parking provision provide appropriate soil volume within a tree pit?	The proposed tree has been moved in order not to interfere with EV charging point. Please refer to drawing 002.
H	Unclear how the tree can sustainably be placed between/directly adjacent to 2 parking spaces in terms of future trunk growth and potential damage to the trunk. Further consideration is required on the feasible provision of this tree, which is a positive addition – the applicant should provide further details to address the above concerns.	The green landscape provision has been increased within the area to provide comfortable space for planting of the tree.
I	existing shrub/hedge vegetation on the site's northern boundary (which appears to be growing over the existing boundary wall), it is unclear whether this is growing within or beyond site boundary and whether following development it is to be retained, removed or cut back – clarification is required wouldn't it be possible to retain the existing N-boundary vegetation and save costs by just planting to fill in the gaps – if any	The vegetation is growing on the site boundary. It is now proposed that the vegetation will be retained where possible and replaced where necessary to maintain a green boundary.
J	Our default position is to promote landscape led SUDs, hence landscaping could be expanded to provide a filter of site runoff, thereby cleaning it and slowing down the water before it reaches the public drain (important in high rainfall events). A bigger landscape bed could be located along the frontage or the boundary with no.50 and function as part of the drainage design. Applicant could be directed to this website https://greenblue.com/gb/solutions/stormwater-management/ for ideas. I note drainage design is not included in submissions, as it should be at this early stage, in order that landscape SUDs can be considered. Combinations of tree pit/SUDs improve site landscaping, functional use of space and biodiversity. Amendments to adopt a modern solution for this topic would be positively received.	The soft landscape provision has been increased significantly and permeable surfaces have been proposed for hard standing areas. This would significantly decrease the surface water run-off, as currently the site is covered in concrete. It is suggested that further SUDS attenuation, if required, could form part of conditions.