



A4080 220-222 Elgar Road, Reading
Design and Access Statement
March 2021

SAWKINGS
H A R P E R
architects

220-222 Elgar Road, Reading

Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of the planning application for the demolition of the existing property at 220-222 Elgar Road, Reading, RG20BW; and the erection of a three-storey building to include 18no. flats (8 x 1b2p, 3 x 2b3p, 6 x 2b4p, 1 x 3b5p).

With this design and access statement we aim to demonstrate that this proposal is designed according to the policies of Reading Borough Council, has taken into consideration the impact it will have on the surrounding area and its specific characteristics. Moreover, we believe that our proposal meets the requirements of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework). Thus responding to the local and national demands for sustainability and high quality developments whilst also being respectful of the surrounding area.

The Site

The site is located on Elgar Road near the centre of Reading and next to the East bank of River Kennet. It lies in the middle of a strip of residential properties surrounded by industrial, commercial and storage buildings to the West, East and South.

Directly to the North of the site are a series of 3-storey blocks of flats that are set right to the edge of the footway while to the South is a line of semi-detached properties that are set back around 10m from the road.

The existing building is a single storey flat roof, brick structure that is set back from the residential blocks to the North and line with the semi-detached dwellings to the South. In front of the building is a grassed area separated from the public walkway by a brick wall.

Directly to the East, in the gap between the site and River Kennet is a large public amenity space with a bicycle track and a basketball court while directly to the West, on the opposite side of Elgar Road lies an industrial-storage development.

Elgar Road leads South-East towards the B3031 where you would find local shops and amenities.



220-222 Elgar Road, Reading



Access and Transport

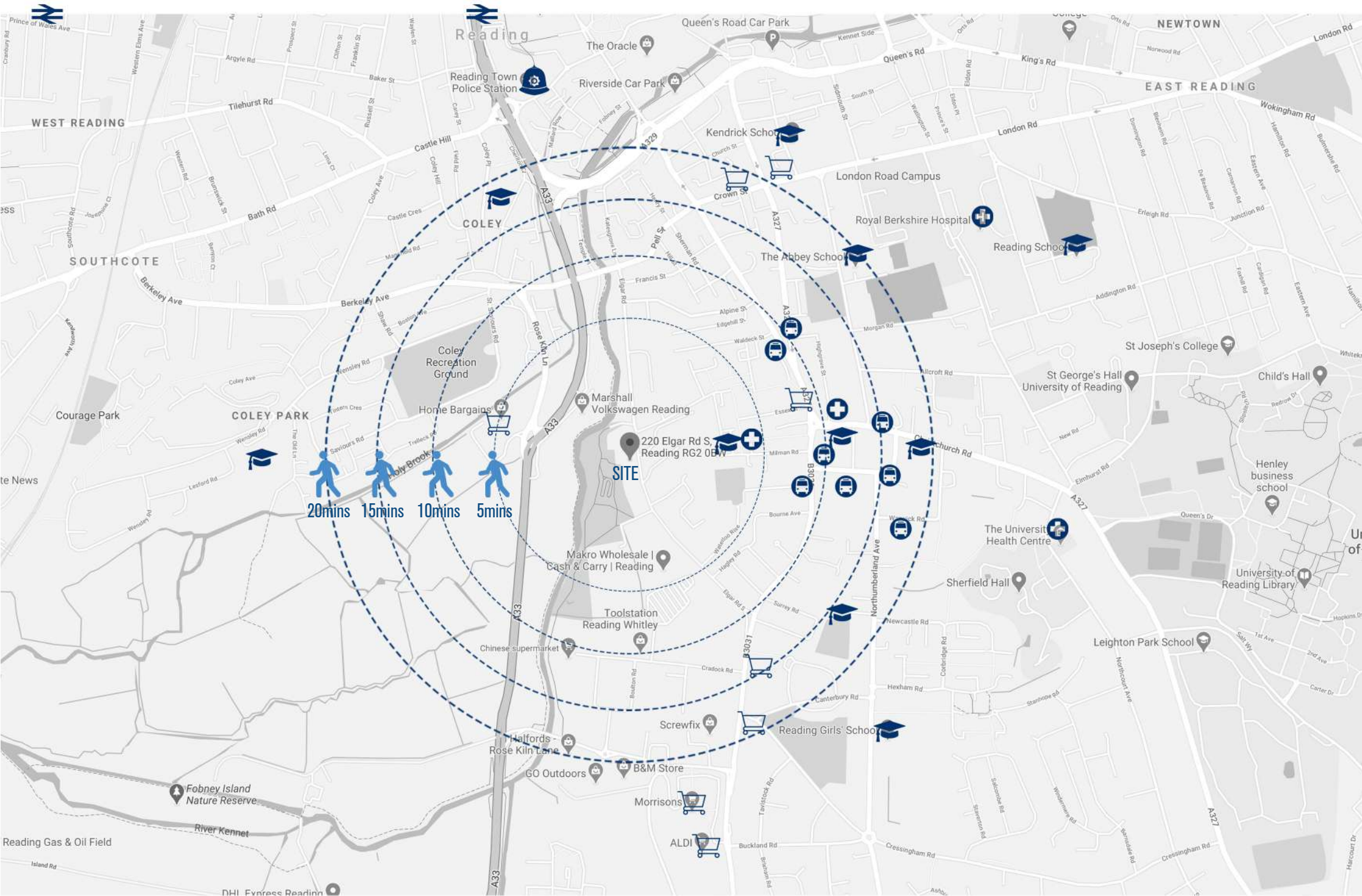
The site is on Elgar Road, which leads off the B3031 which then joins to the A327, therefore is in close proximity to arterial roads in this area. North-West of the site lies the town of Coley and to the East is the University of Reading.

In terms of railway access it is 2.4 miles to Reading Train Station; which is a ten minute drive and 2.6 miles to Reading West Train Station. The bus services that connect this area are 5, 6, 6a, 7, 11, 91, 154 and the 904. These are mainly situated on the surrounding roads and not on Elgar Road itself.

There is a variety of stores, educational buildings and other amenities in very close proximity to the site which make it an excellent location for residential development.

KEY:

-  Educational Buildings
-  Supermarkets/Convenience
-  Bus Stops
-  Train Stations
-  Police Station
-  Surgery/GP/Hospitals



220-222 Elgar Road, Reading

Site Appraisal

Assessment

The site comprises of a one storey flat roof, detached building on Elgar Road.

It's current use is a driving test centre, built with red brick and what looks like a EPDM flat roof.

The windows are white uPVC with black rainwater guttering and drainage pipes.

There is currently parking at the rear of the property and limited roadside parking at the front of the property with a 1 hour time limit Monday to Saturday 8am to 6:30pm.

The property itself is set back from the footway and the road, separated by a grassed area and a brick wall lining the front of the building. The land to the rear of the building provides parking and is dominated by hard surfacing. However, it is in line with the residential dwellings to the left at 224 Elgar Road but placed further back from the block of flats to the right of it. This block of residential units to the right of the proposed site has windows on each storey on its South elevation which overlooks the proposed site.

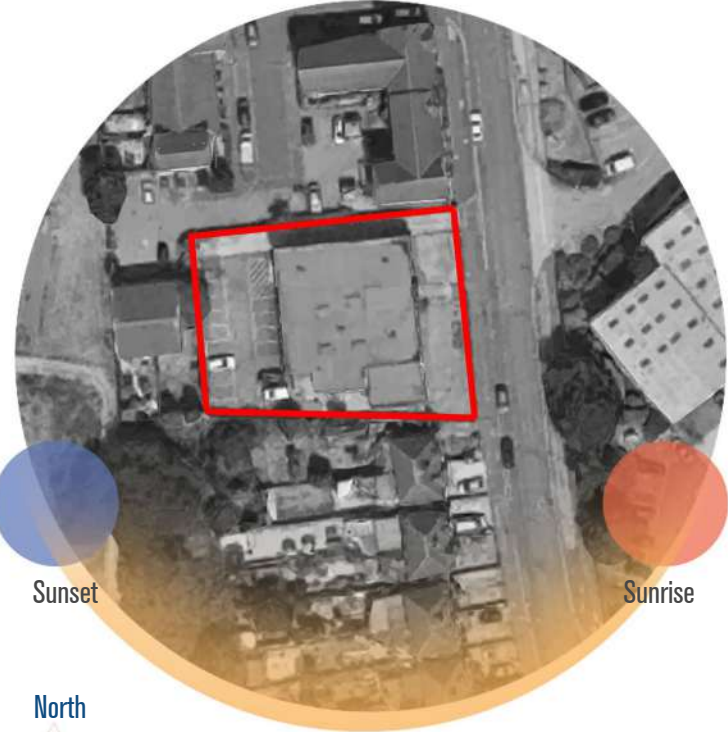
The existing single storey building sits between a 2.0 storey building to the South and a 3.5 storey building to the North. In its present form it provides an uncomfortable transition in terms of scale. This issue is exacerbated by the flat roof form of the existing building against the prevailing pitched roof forms found on the western side of Elgar Road. The combination of these factors mean that the existing building looks disproportionate in the street scene and disrupts the general character of the area.

Site Photographs

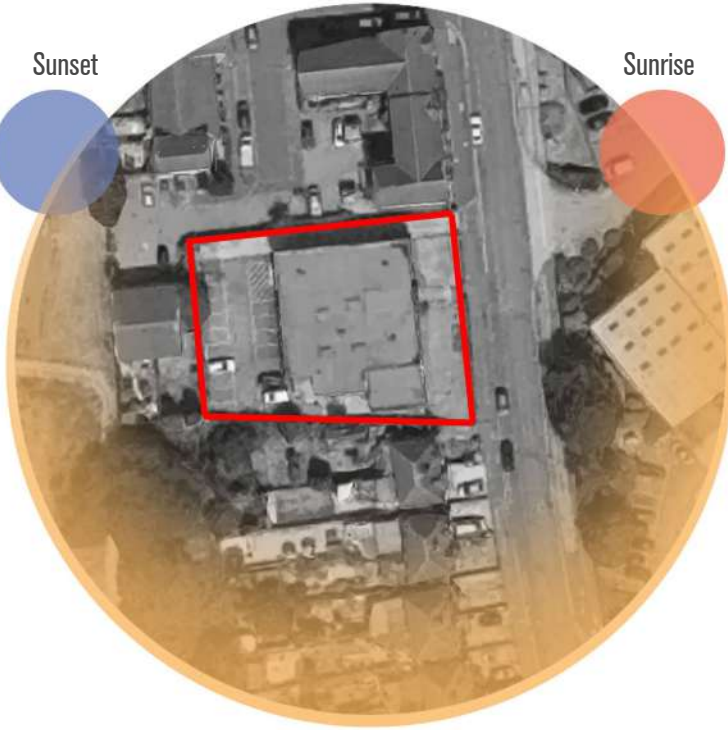


Site Constraints

Winter Solstice



Summer Solstice



Constraints Analysis Diagram

Design Considerations

1. Proximity to properties either side of site.
2. Set back from one property and in line with the other.
3. Main road, limited traffic
4. Pedestrian pathway
5. Site parking
6. Mature trees.
7. Aesthetical connection with residential existing properties.
8. Opposite an industrial site
9. Dwelling behind proposed site.



220-222 Elgar Road, Reading

Site Appraisal

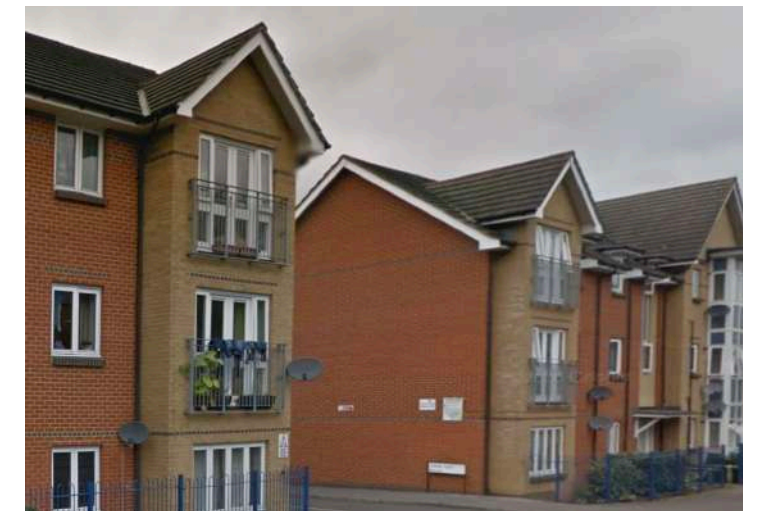
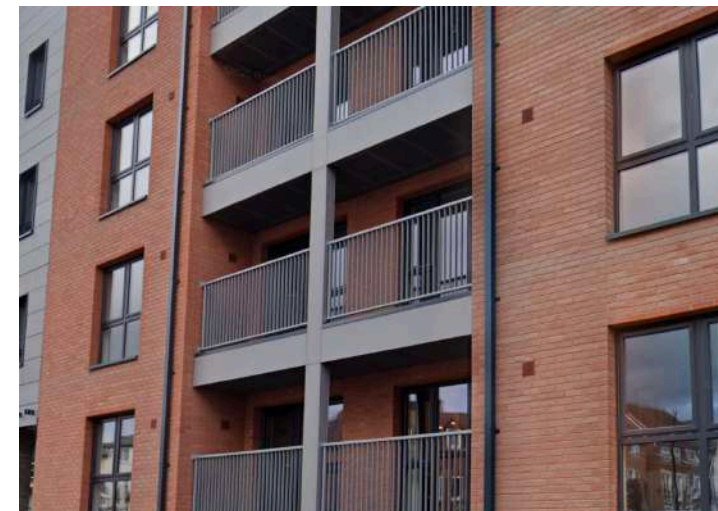
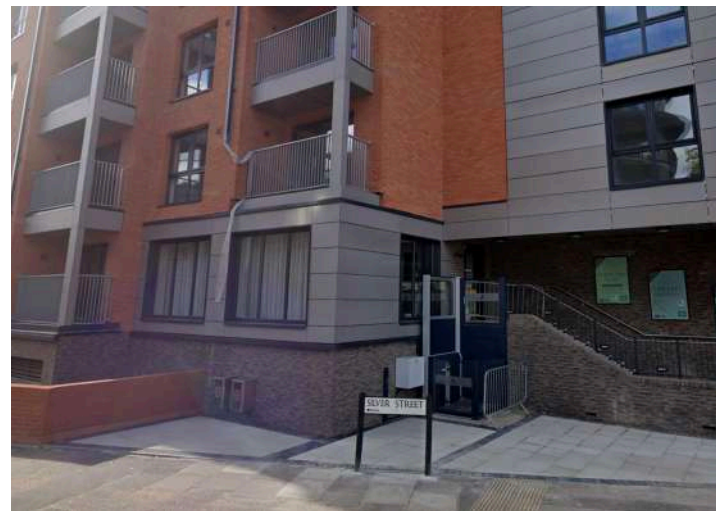
Character Assessment

Our proposal aims to provide connection with the surrounding architecture and the character of the area.
The pictures to the right demonstrate that the area includes a mixture of architectural styles.

a) Traditional brick townhouses and semi-detached residences with a mixture of pitched or gable roofs and dormers. We notice extended use of brick decorations that outline the edges, openings or provide a horizontal division amongst the storey lines.



b) Contemporary residential blocks. These blocks maintain the brick cladding and use a differentiation in the colour of the brick in order to define different volumes or areas. In some cases we note the use of render or metal cladding to further enhance the overall appearance. A new development at no.195 Crown Street shows a very contemporary approach in terms of design and material.



c) Industrial-Store buildings. Mostly rectangular buildings with metal cladding and shallow gable roofs. Colours-mainly grey, brown, red and green.



Amount:

Proposed are 18No. Dwellings. Sawkings Harper have estimated that this will allow for a economically viable, functional and spacious means of accommodation which are all also in compliance with National Space Standards. The proposed flats will also comply with the local boroughs demand for housing. The two ground west facing apartments offer their own amenity space on its associated exterior. In addition, one of the top floor flats has access to 2no. roof terraces. All dwellings have access to the outdoor seating amenity space allocated on the Western side of the site.

Layout:

- Ground Floor: Parking, Amenity Space, Cycle Store, Refuse Store, 2x 1b2p, 1x 2b3p, 1x 2b4p, 1x 3b5p
- First Floor: 3x 1b2p, 1x 2b3p, 2x 2b4p
- Second Floor: 3x 1b2p, 1x 2b3p, 1x 2b4p
- Third Floor: 2x 2b4p

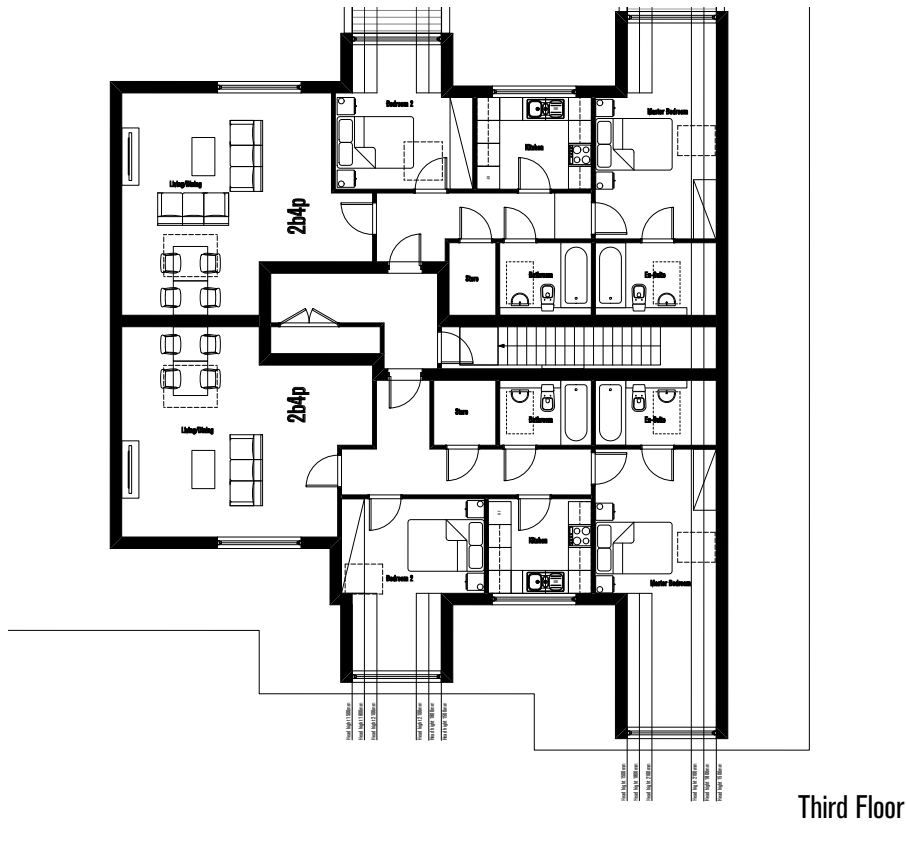
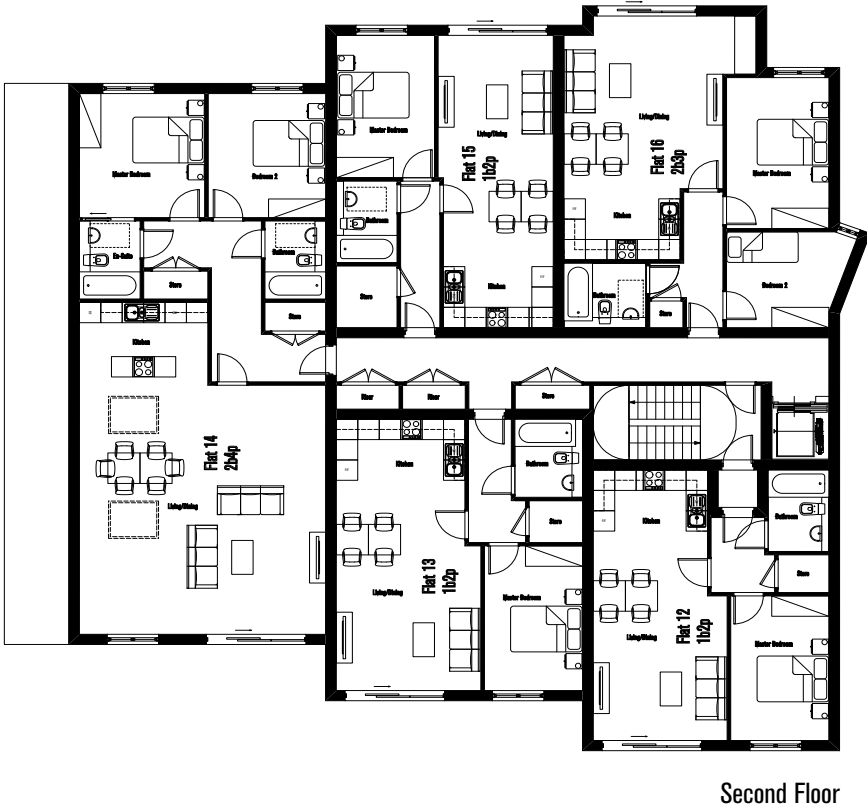
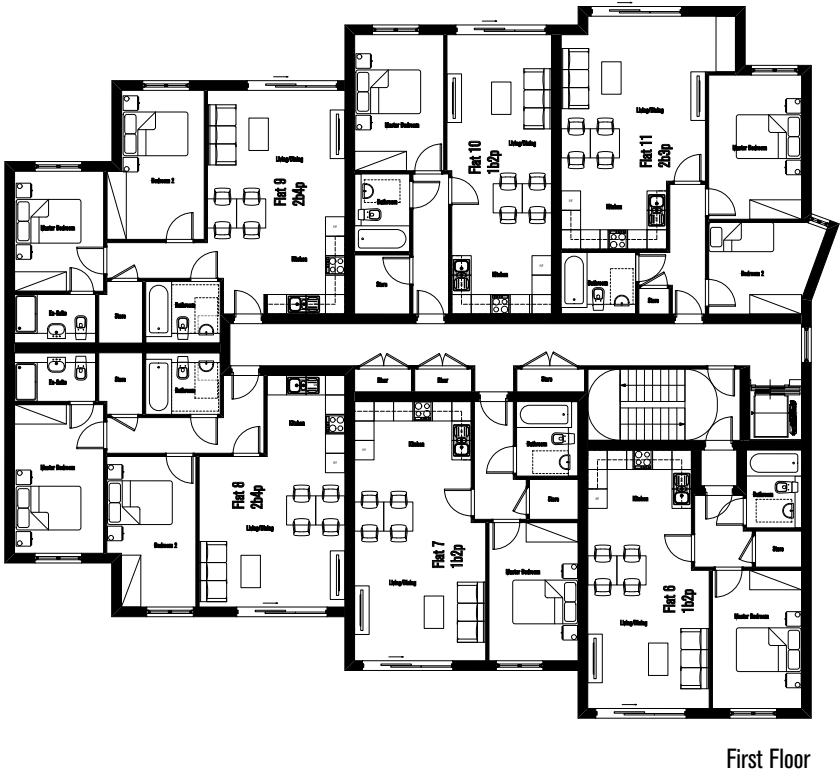
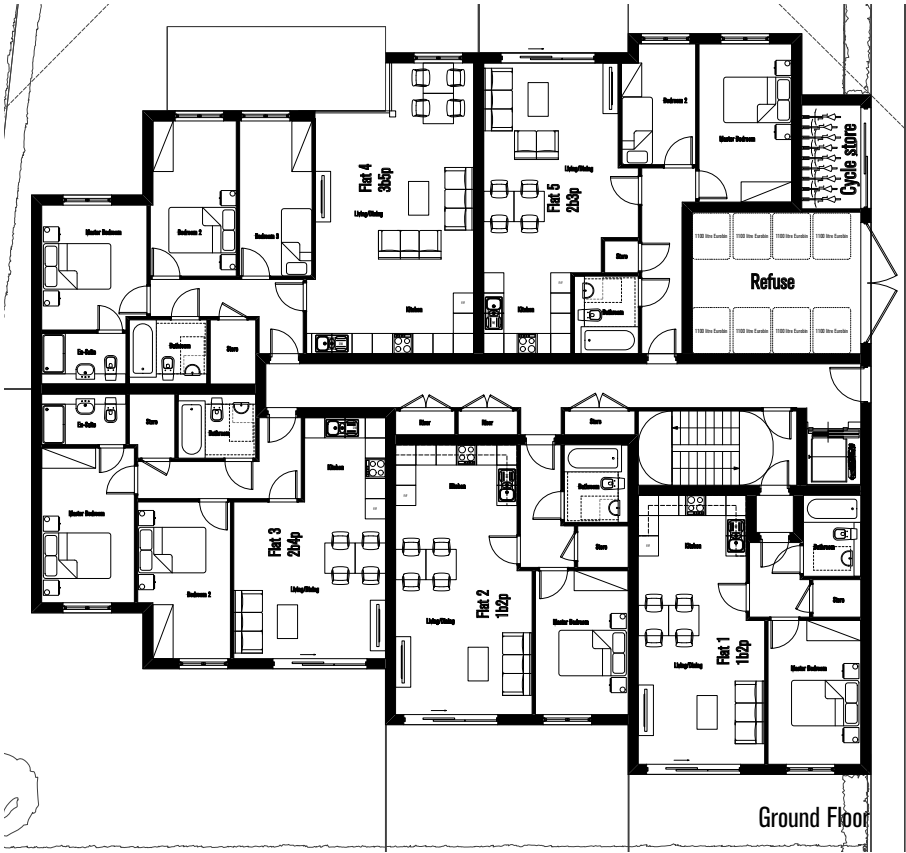
The layout proposes a solution to the pre-application advice and is set back from the property at no.1-12 and steps back so that it lies in line with the dwelling at 224; all providing sufficient light past the 45 degree angle to these properties.

The orientation has rotated from the entrance initially being on the East elevation but is now on the North elevation; this provides a more private way of entry. In addition to this; there are no windows on its South elevation which maintains privacy and security for the residents at no. 224. This means there are no windows that allow for overlooking onto their amenity space/back yard.

Scale:

The surrounding area is mainly residential and industrial units, however either side of the site are dwellings and opposite is an industrial site. The dwelling to the left of the site is a single family, 2.0 storey dwelling and to the right is a 3.5 storey block of flats. Both utilise a gable front or hipped roof; therefore the proposal has both in order to fit in appropriately.

The left side of the East elevation (as shown below) brings the eave line height to match the smaller dwelling next to it and the right side lies higher up to match the 3.5 storey height. This creates a harmonious elevation that doesn't seem overbearing on its street elevation whilst addressing the pre-application advice.



Landscaping:

The landscape scheme will create a series of attractive spaces and elements to the proposed development, this includes: private patios and gardens areas, a communal garden and planting to soften areas of hard surfacing.

Planting is to be used to form a buffer between the parking areas and private gardens paces as well as to soften the boundary along Elgar Road and to provide a 'green' outlook from the adjacent ground floor properties.

The communal garden area will form an attractive outdoor space for use by residents, with a series of benches set within a self-binding gravel surface; planting is to be used to provide a setting to the space and create a sense of enclosure and privacy, with new trees used to provide shade and give seasonal interest.

Private garden spaces are to be defined through the use of metal railings at a height of 1.2m to give a robust boundary with planting used to soften these and provide a green outlook to the gardens, which are to be laid to lawn.

The proposed planting includes a range of flowering varieties in combination with evergreen plants to provide year round structure, combined with species to provide a range of seasonal effects and interest. The use of various pollinator species in the planting mix will provide a resource for insects and help enhance biodiversity on the site.

Permeable block paving is to be used to areas of hard standing with different coloured blocks used to define parking areas, access and circulation and also pedestrian routes; the use of permeable surfacing relates to the drainage strategy for the scheme; with parking bays defined through the use of a contrasting block. The use of block paving will provide a high quality and robust finish to the external routes and provide clear definition between the scheme and the adjacent highway finishes.



Appearance:

Our design intends to create a development that fits in with the local character of the street; the gable fronts, dormers of varying shape and size and detailed brick, whilst also adopting a more contemporary approach.

We propose a 3.5-storey building that serves as an in-between step from the semi detached properties in the South to the block of flats to the North.

The eave lines match the properties on each side of the building and provide a smooth transition, the height gradually increases from South to North. The same approach is followed in the floor plan. The South side of the building is aligned with the semi-detached houses and through three steps the building gradually comes closer to the road and the line of the block of flats in the North.

In order to further enhance this stepped approach, the building has three gable roofs that provide a natural visual connection with the surrounding properties.

Regarding material finishes, we are proposing that all external walls will be light coloured brick and sexlected areas will have a contemporary brick decoration similar to the one in the photos. This will have the double benefit of enchancing the looks of the building and at the same time provide a visual connection with surrounding properties and to break up the roof and massing of the building as viewed from Elgar Road. The top floor flats(roof) will have a dark-metal finish similar to the industrial buildings accross the road.

To avoid any overlooking issues with the adjacent properties, the development windows will only be facing East and West.

- 1. Light colour brick, to match adjacent property
- 2. Decorative brick
- 3. Juliet balcony with metal railing
- 4. Window and door frames to be contemporary style, colour to be anthracite grey
- 5. Rooflight
- 6. Concrete tiles
- 7. Sliding doors, colour anthracite grey
- 8. Obscure glass fixed light
- 9. SEAM, Metal cladding to match industrial buildings in the area



2. Proposed decorative brick detail



Proposed East Elevation



Proposed West Elevation

220-222 Elgar Road, Reading



Access

Vehicular and Pedestrian Access:

Currently the access to the site consists of a combination of street parking and on-site parking to the rear. The proposed development includes a total of 12no. allocated parkings spots. One of the parking spots will be reserved for disabled and one will include an electric vehicle charger.

Cycling:

To promote sustainable transport, the proposed development includes a cycle store at the entrance of the property that can host up to 10no. bicycles.

Refuse:

A communal bin store will be provided for the apartments which is within 30m of horizontal distance from each apartment and is placed directly at the front of the property in a distasnce of 15m of the pavement for easy collection.

Emergency Services:

Access for emergency vehicles such as a fire truck remains as existing. All dwellings are within 18m of the street where an emergency vehicle can park.

Construction Management:

Construction will access the site from Elgar Road. It is proposed that a full construction management plan will be issued if the development is granted permission, which will detail any mitigation measures needed to avoid any inconvenience to traffic flow during construction.

Inclusive Access:

The proposal has been designed to meet the criteria set out in the approved document of building regulations part M. All apartments are M4(2)compliant.

Sustainability:

The scheme benefits from a highly sustainable location with safe pedestrian and cycle access to a range of facilities and amenities. The site also benefits from access to high frequency public transport connections. In combination these benefits encourage residents to use sustainable means of travel as an alternative to the private car. An electric car charger is provided to further enhance the sustainability merits of the scheme.



Conclusion

The site is located in the built-up, suburban area of South Reading, in close proximity to existing amenities and public transport links. The site presents an opportunity to intensify and create a new residential development. The scheme recognises the need for more housing in Reading and has sought advice from Reading Borough Council to find the most appropriate way to meet this demand.

The western side of Elgar Road where the site is situated is residential in terms of land use context and character. The site occupies a transitional point in this character area, between more traditional 2.0 storey housing and 3.5 storey flatted development .

At present, the single storey flat-roofed commercial building is at odds with every aspect of this context. The proposal represents an opportunity to make more efficient use of the site by introducing residential development to compliment the surrounding land use context. This is in a form that 1) is more proportionate and consequently provides better balance to the streetscene; and 2) enhances the appearance of the site and its contribution to the wider area through significantly better architecture.

Matters concerning the impact of the development on the surrounding area through scale, layout, amount, density, orientation and material have been carefully considered in order to produce a proposal that responds to the local character and achieves a level of modernity. These have all been outlined in this Design and Access Statement.

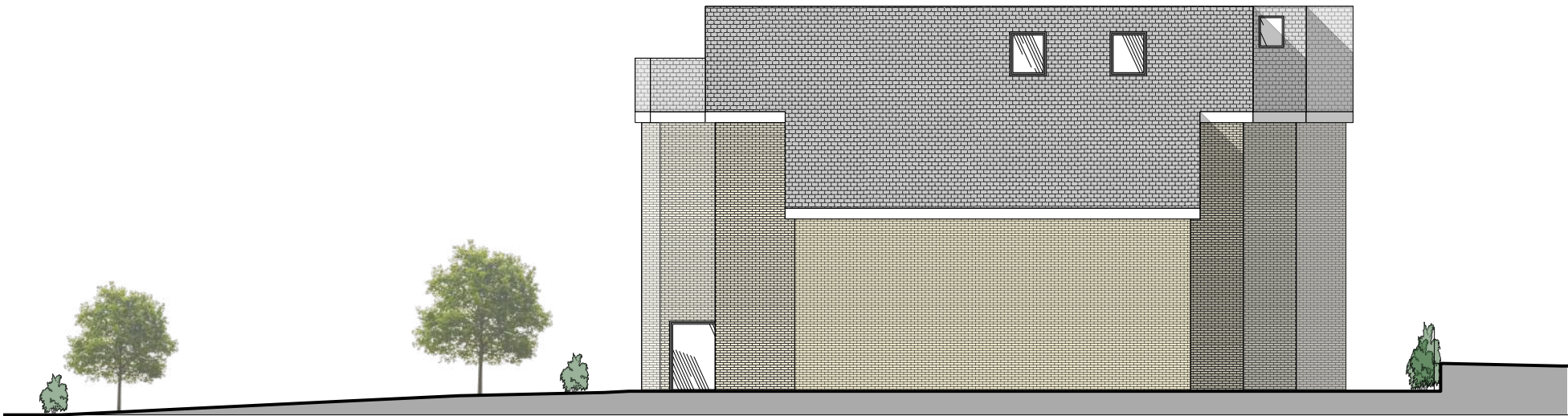
The proposal seeks to add to the current townscape and serve as an example of suitable intensification for the area around Elgar Road. The scheme has sought to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and travel thus making the scheme sympathetic to its context.

Through all the considerations made in this Design and Access Statement, the proposal aims to address the local authorities’ policies and development concerns. Sawkings Harper Architects believe that this proposal will constitute a sustainable form of development and will be a valuable, high-quality contribution to the current boroughs housing supply.

In line with this, we welcome the opportunity to work with the Local Authority to ensure that their policy requirements are met to their satisfaction, whilst achieving a positive outcome for the applicant. As such, we respectfully request the support of the Local Authority.



Proposed North Elevation



Proposed South Elevation