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introduction

OUR VISION:

- To make a positive, distinctive contribution to this part of Reading town centre, meeting local and national aspirations for sustainability and character.
- To improve and sustain the evolving townscape along Chatham Street, creating a high quality frontage which plays an active role in promoting high design standards for this neighbourhood, which is in the process of undergoing significant change and renewal.
- To draw from historic precedent to create a frontage to Chatham Street which makes reference to Reading's characteristic townhouses.
- To give careful and sensitive consideration to the neighbouring Listed public house.
- To make the best use of this sustainable under-utilised site, and to offer a variety of high quality living accommodation - including policy compliant affordable housing - with attractive amenity space and appropriate parking.

We are pleased to offer these development proposals for your consideration, which have been formulated following our appraisal of the unique characteristics of this part of Reading town centre, as well as discussions with the Council and Design Review Panel.

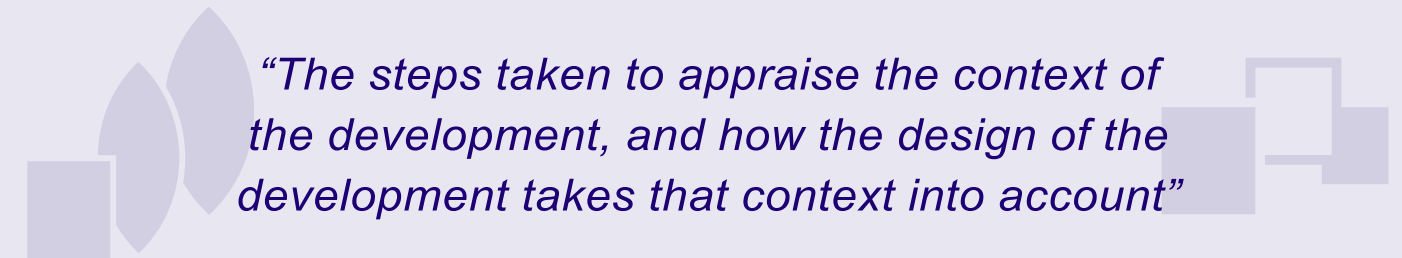
In seeking to develop this site, Archel Homes have aspired to make more efficient use of the land whilst achieving a built envelope and elevational character which is a good fit for its setting, embodies architectural and urban design quality,

and improves the neighbourhood - both the immediate visual townscape, and the wider urban fabric and the way it functions.

In the following chapters we set down our design strategy, detailing the urban design, architectural approach and access principles for the scheme, and describe the way in which the form of the development and the materials and detailing of the proposed building provide a legible and positive experience of the development.



the context of the development



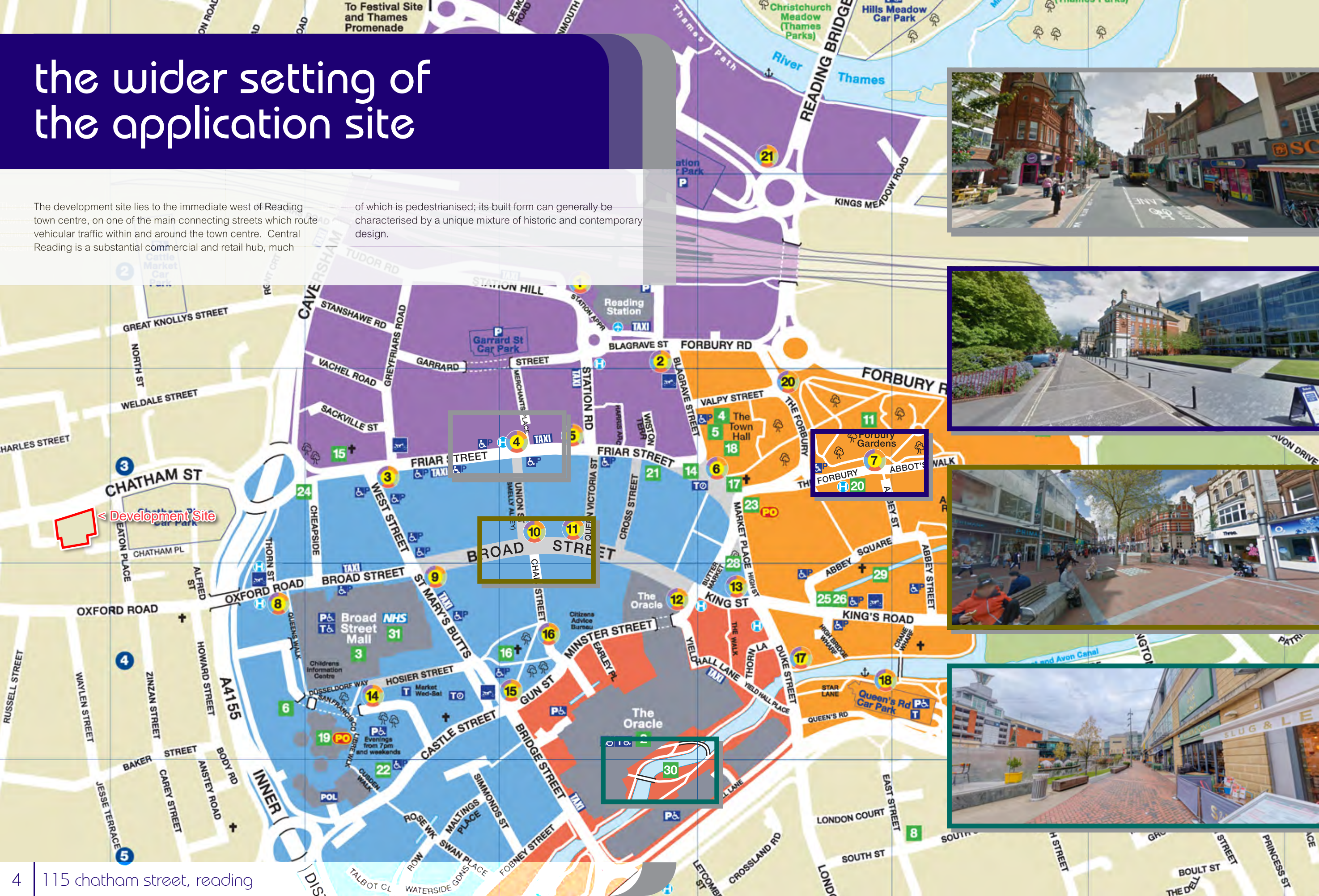
“The steps taken to appraise the context of the development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account”

- ✎ the wider setting of the application site
- ✎ the particular characteristics of the application site and the surrounding context
- ✎ design parameters & approach
- ✎ design evolution

the wider setting of the application site

The development site lies to the immediate west of Reading town centre, on one of the main connecting streets which route vehicular traffic within and around the town centre. Central Reading is a substantial commercial and retail hub, much

of which is pedestrianised; its built form can generally be characterised by a unique mixture of historic and contemporary design.





Reading
Station
V

Garrard Street
Car Park
V

Greyfriars
Church
V

Friar Street
Retail Area
V

Oxford Road
Retail Area
V

Broad Street
Mall
V

Recent Residential
Development & Car Park
V

Application
Site
V

Information on the schemes 'ghosted' below are provided in more detail on pages 8 and 9 of this document.



Chatham Place
Car Park
V

ref.3 The Context of the Application Site - viewed from the northeast



The Evolving Development Context

'Butler's Wine Vaults'

The Listing (Grade II) for this building refers to the public house as 'Butler's Wine Vaults' with the following description:

Established as a public house in 1830 and the present 2 storey 'pub front' may just date from then. 2 storeys, brick with slate roof. 5 bays, 4 rendered. 3 central bays articulated as 'pub front' with quoined bay to left and parapet with 2 pedimented panels. Left hand bay has on 1st floor a round headed sash window with marginal glazing, eared architrave and panel over. On the ground floor a good shop front of the period with heavy side piers and side brackets, central entrance and arcaded windows. The main 2 bays on 1st floor have 2 outer acanthus capped pilasters and 2 late glazing bar sash windows with segmental pediments, containing high relief fruit and flower carving, supported on acanthus cap pilasters. With the 'pub front', of considerable importance is the 6 sided central moulded panel with the traditional Old Reading Abbey sign (restored). Ground floor front below this has the usual 2 entrances, 6 panelled pilasters with acanthus caps, and 2 central windows. Dray entrance to left, 1 window dwelling and bar extension to right.

The Butler Public House & Hotel

The public house has recently been granted Planning Permission to convert part of the premises and the rear outbuildings to hotel accommodation (ref 180365 & 180366). This included upgrading works to the frontage space, with trees and planters (shown below right).

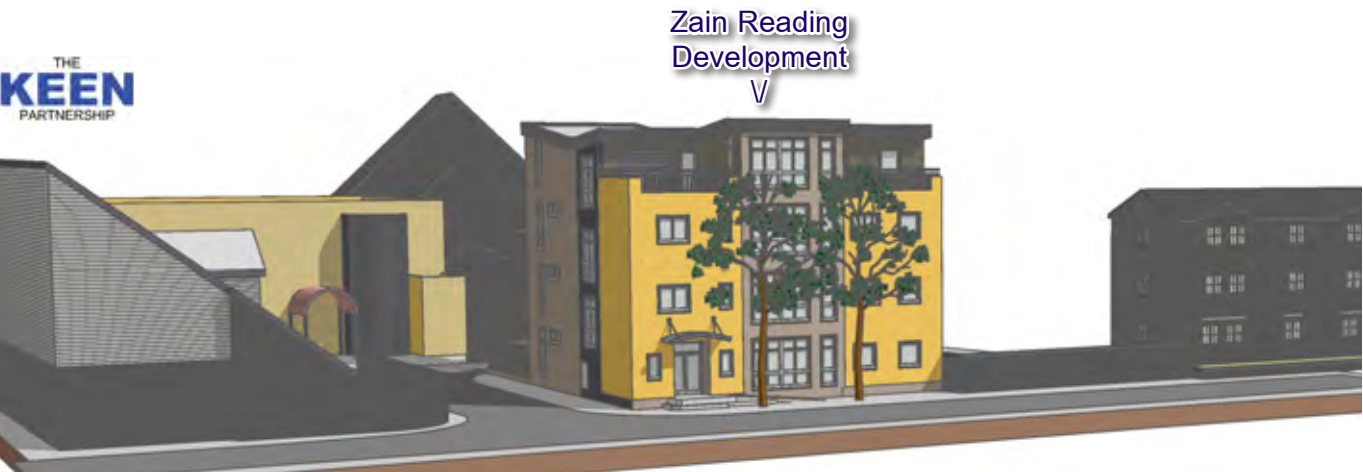


Existing front elevation detailing - as referred to in the Listing

125 Chatham Street

Developer Zain Reading Ltd had a prior approval application agreed in June 2013 for the change of use of the office building from Class B1(a) to C3 (dwellings/houses), to comprise 8 one-bed flats. The developer has recently submitted a planning application (02 June 2020) for a change to the fenestration and an extension of two additional floors, on the existing two storey commercial building, to accommodate 7 new one bed flats, with a decision yet pending (ref 200752).

The new proposal seeks to embody a contemporary design, utilising the original footprint of the building, but increasing the overall height.



Application artist's impression showing the remodelled building



The Butler public house as existing



Application artist's impression of the upgraded public house and hotel

Residential Development, 114-116 Oxford Road

Developer Kentwood House Investments has recently received Planning Permission (ref 150721) for a residential development of 14 dwellings, alongside the Eaton Court Development site.

This development is currently under construction.

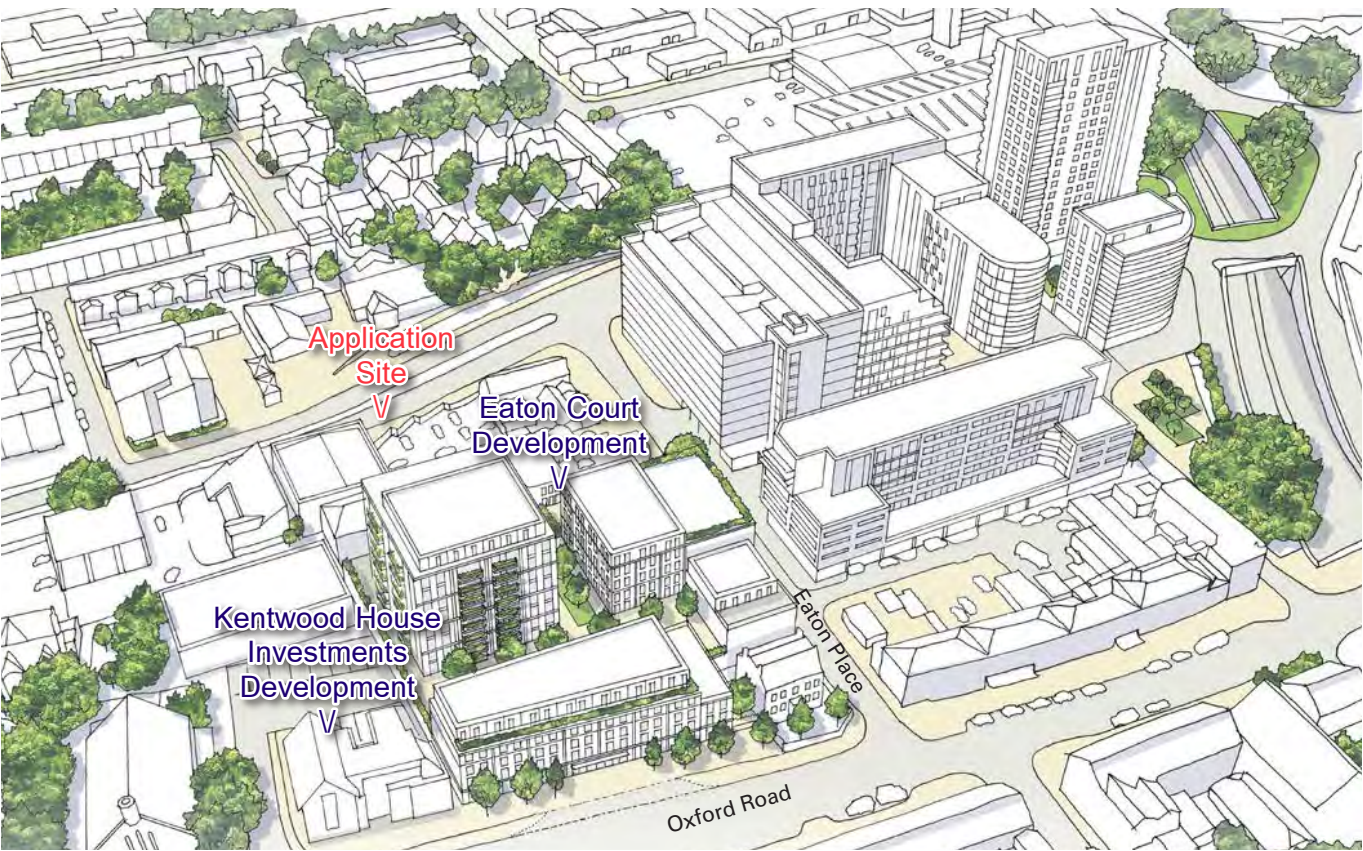


Eaton Court Redevelopment, Oxford Road

Developer Cannon Capital Developments has consulted on a new development of circa 160 dwellings, with two 5-storey buildings addressing Oxford Road and Eaton Place (including retail space at ground floor level), and a 10-storey building behind. Parking is proposed to the ground floor level, with a raised communal garden square above.

This proposal seeks to use materials and proportions which respond to the neighbouring Listed Mannson House, with traditional proportions.

This emerging development lies to the south of the development site.



the particular characteristics of the application site and the surrounding context

DESIGN MATTERS:

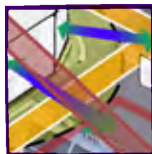
INCREASE IN HEIGHT AND SCALE ALONG CHATHAM STREET.



CAREFUL CONSIDERATION FOR THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WITH THE LISTED BUILDING.



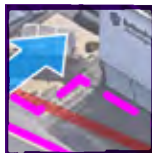
CONSIDERATION TO THE OUTLOOK OF THE NEIGHBOURING OFFICE WINDOWS.



CONSIDERATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RECENT AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VICINITY.



TAKING INSPIRATION FROM THE EXISTING AND HISTORIC FOOTPRINT ALIGNMENT ALONG CHATHAM STREET: THE STEPPED BUILDING FRONTAGE ADDRESSING THE SINVOUS STREET.



SITE MATTERS:

APPLICATION SITE BOUNDARY: 1623M².



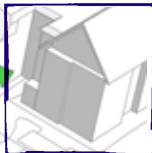
EXISTING DISUSED BUILDING AND HARDSTANDING: REPRESENTING POOR USE OF THE LAND AND CREATING AN UNATTRACTIVE TOWNSCAPE.



NEIGHBOURING MEDICAL PRACTICE LIES CLOSE TO THE WESTERN BOUNDARY.



RECENT/EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE APPLICATION SITE: EITHER APPROVED OR IN THE PRE-APPLICATION STAGES.



LANDSCAPE MATTERS:

APPROVED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC HOUSE INCLUDE FRONTAGE TREES AND PLANTERS.



ONE PROMINENT TOWNSCAPE TREE ALONG THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF CHATHAM STREET TO THE EAST OF THE SITE...



...OTHERWISE THIS IS AN URBAN SETTING WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY HARDSTANDING AND STRONG BUILDING FRONTAGES.



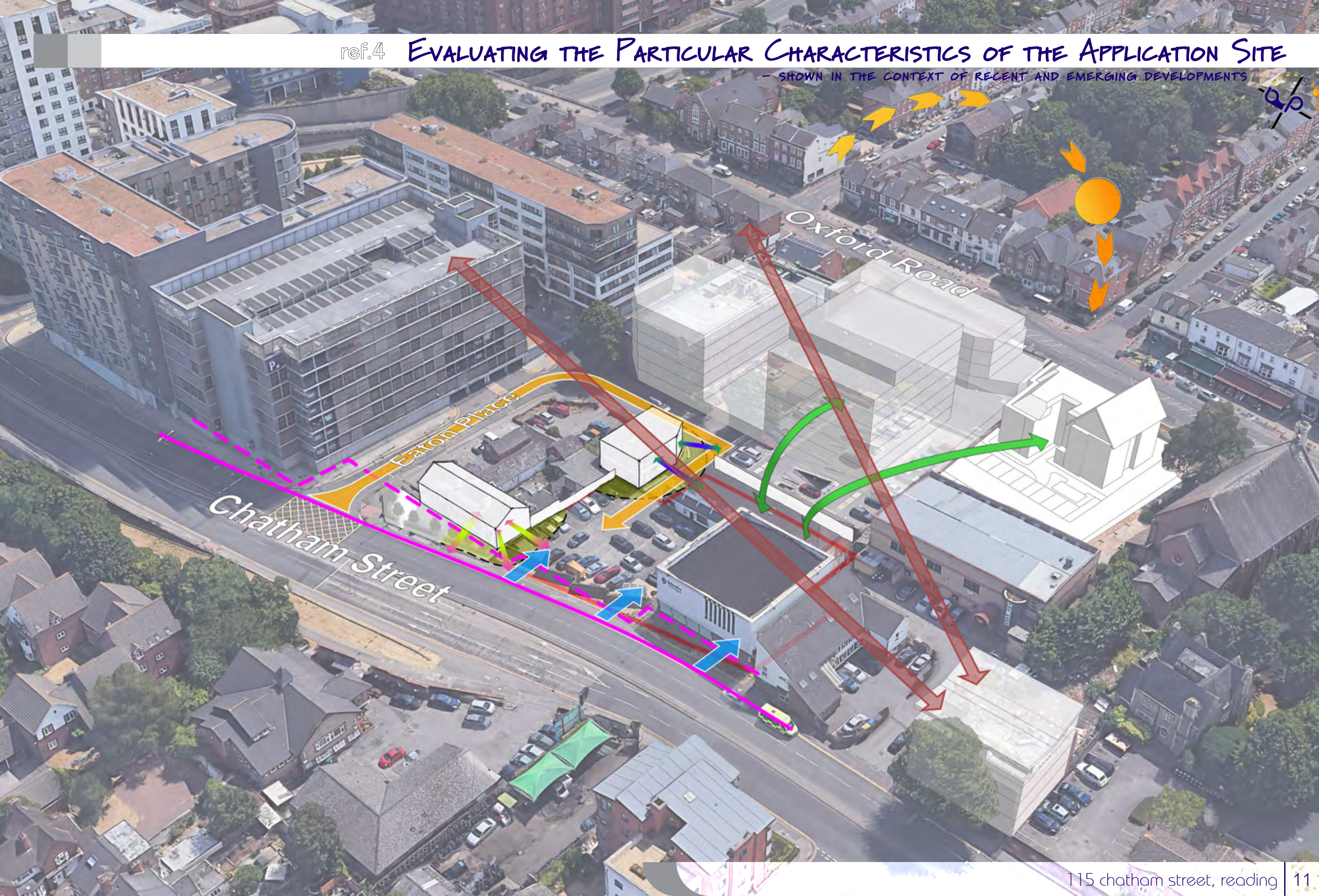
ACCESS MATTERS:

EXISTING VEHICULAR ACCESS INTO THE SITE FROM EATON PLACE - NO DIRECT VEHICULAR ACCESS POSSIBLE FROM CHATHAM STREET.



DIRECT PEDESTRIAN ACCESSES INTO THE CORE OF THE BUILDING FROM CHATHAM STREET.





design parameters & approach

Design Matters:

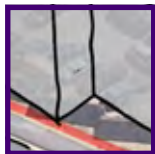
Create a scale and form of building which recognises and reinforces the established increase in intensity of development from west to east along Chatham Street.



The wing of the building which lies alongside the Listed public house to be lower in height - creating a compatible and sensitive relationship.



Stepped build line created along Chatham Street - responding to and reinforcing this characteristic element of the townscape.



Allow sufficient distance to the rear of the development to not significantly fetter the future development of the adjoining land.



Allowing the building form to respond to the elongated 'catslide' of the medical practice.



Site Matters:

Create an appreciable visual gap between the public house and the proposed building.



Create undercroft parking accessed via Eaton Place.



Set out building to maintain daylight into the neighbouring office windows.



Landscape Matters:

Create space for possible street trees between the proposed building and the public house.



Create landscaped amenity space to the rear of the building.



Access Matters:

Eaton Place provides the vehicular access to the development for residents, visitors, deliveries and refuse collection.



Pedestrian accesses into the building from Chatham Street as well as from Eaton Place.





design evolution

Stage1: Initial Design Proposals - 3rd July 2020



The Initial Design Proposals contained within the Pre-Application Document were to reinstate the appearance of a Regency Terrace originally on site, infilling the site's frontage.

This scheme illustrated a repetition of vertical lines, with a traditional mansard roof. This is achieved through the use of materials, colour palette and larger window apertures creating a contemporised building with traditional references.

Reading Borough Council's thoughts were that this building was overly commercial in appearance and suggested the relationship with the Listed public house required a more sensitive transition. It was recommended that a greater set back of the building frontage was required to create more public realm and also an area for soft landscaping. In place of the mansard roof, it was suggested that a more modern recessed flat roof may be an alternative option.

Stage 2: Design Evolution - 28th July 2020



Following the initial virtual design meeting, the building was fully reconsidered; this included the elevation, building footprint, form, scale and massing.

The building was set further back, although still retaining a stepped frontage, to align more appropriately to the public house to address the Conservation Officer's comments.

A gentler transition to the adjoining public house was proposed through the removal of the mansard roof. In place of this the building was reduced in height through the introduction of a lightweight top floor construction, which has been set back off the main building façade and is constructed mainly in glazing panels. Accommodation was removed from upper floors of the western portion of the site reducing the building from 4-storey to 3-storey closest to the Public House. The reduced building footprint along the Chatham Street frontage allowed an additional area for planting.

Stage 3: Further Design Evolution - 22nd October 2020



During the third virtual meeting, the design team had the opportunity to present the updated 3D model work and discuss alterations to the materials of the building.

Through presentation of the 3D model, the Council's Urban Designer had suggested we revert back to having material changes at the ends of the buildings rather than within the vertical façades and also to introduce an alternative coloured ground floor plinth. Further discussions revolved around the redesign of the roof and architectural detailing.

The Officers also noted that the 3-storey part of the development closest to the public house should also provide more of a contrasting simpler material palette so that it does not compete with the ornate detail of the Listed building.



Stage 4: Design Review Panel - 21st January 2021



The illustrations above demonstrate how the design team responded to the comments received from the Council. The changes included the redesign of the upper storey roof form to now show a further recessed back pitched roof on the upper floors.

The building materials have also been considered to provide a simpler materials palette with the detailing of the building's frieze simplified.



Stage 5: Proposed Scheme



The illustrations shown are the revised scheme forming part of the Full Application submission. These respond to the most recent meeting with both the Design Review Panel and Local Authority.

The panel proposed an additional floor of accommodation to the rear of the building. They considered that the additional height would not adversely impact upon the Listed building as the increased massing would not be fully seen from Chatham Street, especially at street level.

Our design team felt this comment had merit, however, due to previous dialog with Local Authority over the design, and transition between the two buildings, this additional floor could be at detriment to what has been agreed.

Key elements of change are as follows:

- 1) By flipping the internal layout of the building the north facing apartments have a wider frontage which allows more daylight into this façade. These wider apartments also alter the proportions of this front elevation thus lessening the overall verticality of the building form and rebalancing the window proportions.

- 2) The recessed upper floor has been reconsidered in its design and appearance. A stronger parapet wall is now included beyond the third floor window head height with the pitched roof and dormers behind this feature. The parapet wall has the benefit of almost hiding the upper floor completely from view when seen from street level.
- 3) The flank end walls of the upper storey have been re-introduced as a result of discussions with the Design Review Panel to create a much simpler and contemporary roof detail. This replaces the earlier proposed pitched roof which detracted from the character and style of the building.
- 4) The materials have been reconsidered avoiding the need for fussy detailing. The building is now designed using just brick to the building façades. Ornate brick detailing and a second contrast lighter grey brick is proposed to provide consistency throughout. The lighter grey brick is used to the wings of the building, being particularly important in its relationship to the white and coloured rendered Listed public house to be a sympathetic response to the materials colour palette but without replicating it. The feature bay windows are now detailed with projecting brickwork with an ornate “chequerboard” pulled header pattern.





design principles & concepts



“The design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development”

- ☛ layout form & scale
- ☛ parking & servicing
- ☛ dwelling mix & tenure
- ☛ amenity & landscaping
- ☛ architectural language

layout form & scale

Development Character

The locality and the policy context call for an imaginative building and a high standard of design, materials and landscaping which respond positively to the local context. Crime prevention and community safety are also key elements of the townscape design, with strong passive surveillance and the avoidance of ambiguous spaces which are not overlooked.

The scale of the body of the building recognises the established stepping-up in scale and form from the 3-storey apartments further west, the upwards-extended 4-storey apartments to the west, and the very large-scale new development to the east. On this basis the form of the body of the building is four storeys in height, with an upper storey which is visually recessive in its detailed design.

The scale of the eastern wing of the building alongside the public house is moderated to three storeys in order to create a compatible built relationship which settles the right balance between the substantial scale of the surrounding built character and maintaining the distinctiveness of the Listed building.



The proposed building form and scale



3 storeys



4 storeys

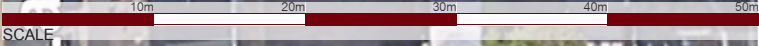


5 storeys

Eaton Place

Chatham Street

Scale Line

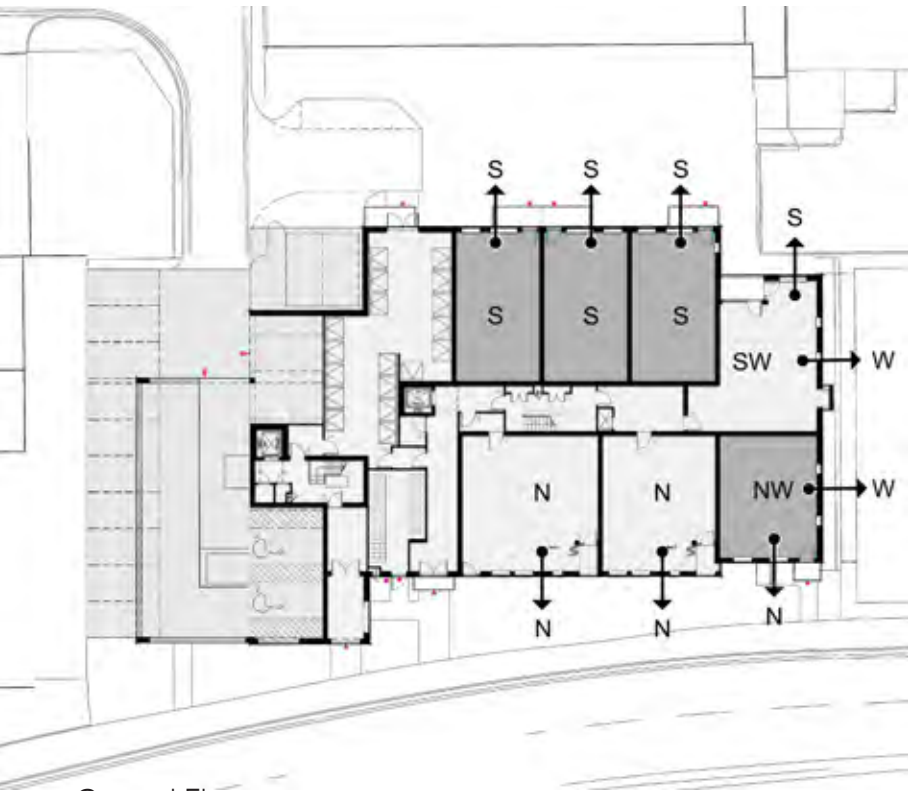


Aspect & Outlook

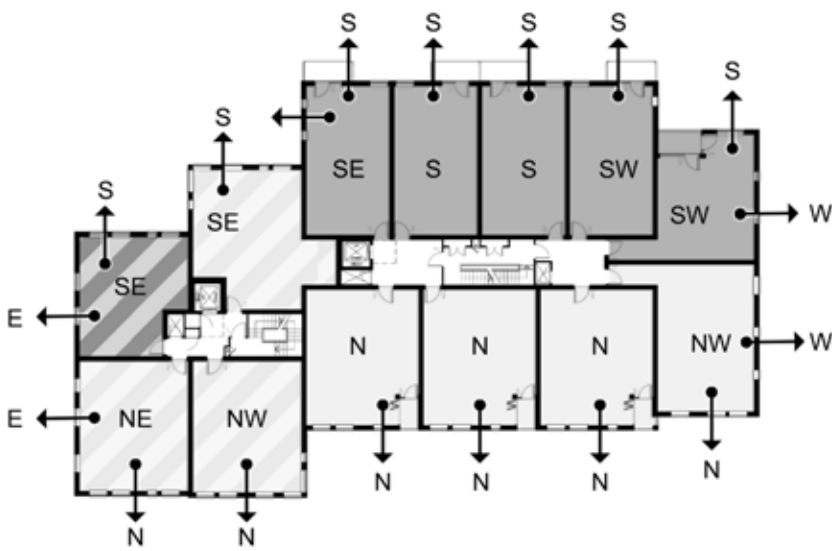
⌘ We are aware of Reading Borough Council’s opposition to single aspect dwellings. Given the constrained size and orientation of the development site, this presented a particular design challenge.

⌘ The outlook and orientation of the individual apartments has been careful considered to maximise internal daylight. The constraints and dimensions of the site are such that it is only possible to have single aspect apartments in most cases.

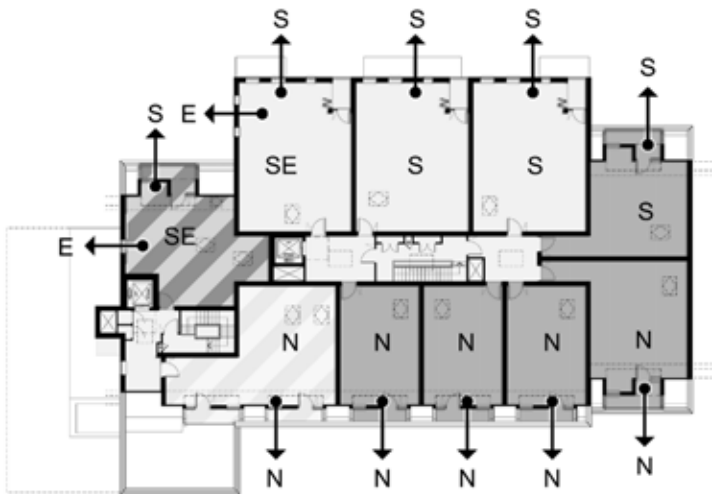
⌘ In order to maximise daylight on the northern facing dwellings, the design team underwent discussions with the Local Authority and the Design Review Panel to flip the building design so that the wider frontage apartments are located on the northern façade increasing daylight to these dwellings.



Ground Floor



First - Third Floors



Fourth Floor





Eaton Place

Chatham Street

c.23.2m

See Line

SCALE

10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

parking & servicing



Refuse Strategy

- Communal refuse stores will be provided both within the building, to allow residents to access a store within 30m of their dwelling.
- The refuse stores are located such that operatives can access every eurobin within 10m of the vehicle.
- 11 recycling bins and 7 general bins have been provided, space for food recycling bins has been accounted for and will meet the Councils requirements.

Emergency Access

- Emergency vehicles will be able to access the building via Chatham Street or Eaton Place. Dry risers will be located alongside each stopping place (less than 18m from the vehicle) to allow operatives to work within the building, with the furthest point within each dwelling within 45m of the dry riser outlet within the core.
- Provision for refuse collection and emergency vehicle turning is provided in the form of a turning head at Eaton Court and partially within the site which accords to the adoptable highways standards.



Pedestrian access through building core

Secure refuse and cycle storage

Dry riser inlet

Dry riser outlet

SCALE 10m 20m



Parking

Cycles

- Cycle parking will be provided as per Reading Borough Council, Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011), being 0.5 per 1 and 2-bed dwelling, and 1 per 3 bed dwelling.

Vehicles

- 17 parking spaces are provided, which represents a parking provision of circa 0.3 spaces per dwelling. The parking numbers have been discussed during pre-application stage and are considered acceptable.
- This provision balances the developer's aspiration to provide parking for most of the dwellings, against the Council's objective (as well as that of the Design Review Panel) for developments to provide closer to zero-car developments.
- As well as the communal spaces, charging points, disabled spaces and car club parking are also proposed.

- Communal parking spaces
- Spaces with electric vehicle charging points
- Disabled parking spaces
- Car Club parking

SCALE 10m 20m

dwelling mix & tenure

PRIVATE HOMES	No.
1-bed apartment	20
2-bed apartment	18
Total	38

AFFORDABLE HOMES (30%):	No.
1-bed apartment	6
2-bed apartment	8
3-bed apartment	2
Total	16

TOTAL DWELLINGS	54
-----------------	----

- The proposed dwelling mix is summarised above. A total of 54 dwellings is proposed, of which 16 are affordable.
- This proposed affordable housing quantum (30%) is policy compliant against Local Plan policy H3.
- All of the dwellings have been designed in accordance with both the Nationally Described Space Standards and M4(2) of the Building Regulations.
- In addition, four M4(3) (disabled) dwellings have been designed on the ground floor.



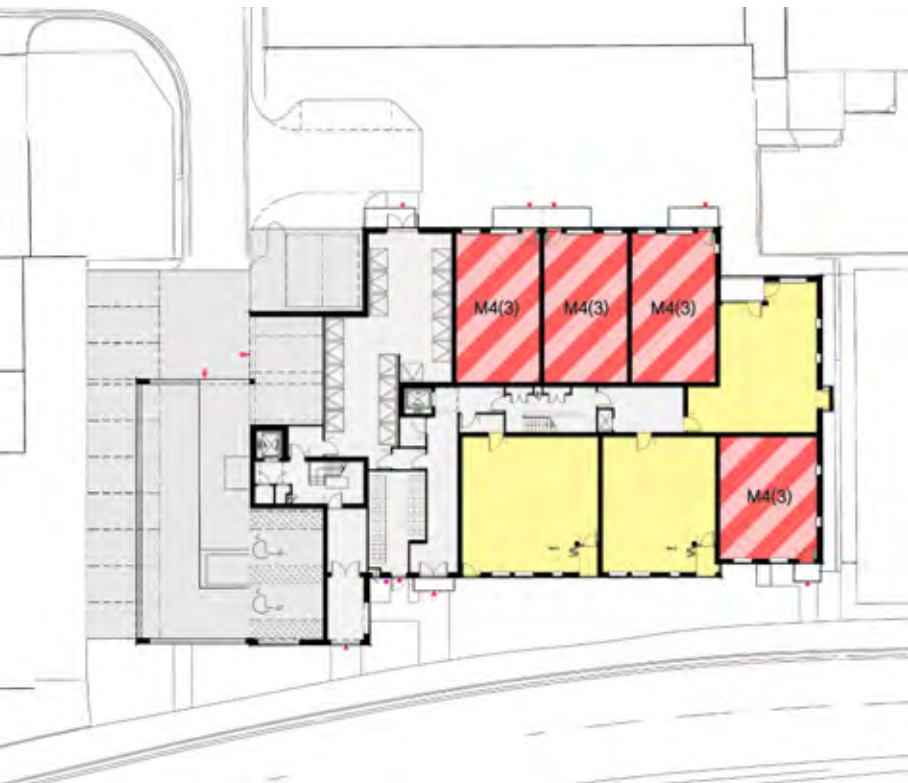
- 1-bed apartment
- 2-bed apartment
- 3-bed apartment
- Affordable apartments



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Ground Floor



First - Second Floors



amenity & landscaping



The proposed development seeks to provide both private and communal amenity spaces for the needs of residents, in the form of balconies for each dwelling and a landscaped communal garden to the rear of the building.



Ground Floor



First - Second Floors



Third Floor



Forth Floor

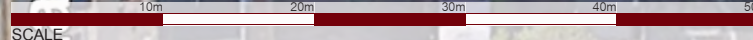




Eaton Place

Chatham Street

See Line



architectural language

- These proposals have been designed in response to Local Authority and Design Review Panel comments to reinstate the Chatham Street frontage in a form which architecturally relates to the surrounding streets - thereby 'righting the wrongs of the past'.
- The proposals have been designed as a contemporised response to Reading's terraced townhouses, creating a strong continuous frontage to Chatham Street which contributes to a much more characterful townscape than the poor quality building and car park which presently occupy the site.
- Through the articulated building line the scheme creates the impression of being individual terraced townhouses.
- This is reinforced by the individual entrances and the roof level parapets on what would be the 'party wall' line.
- In keeping with the traditional Regency terraced format, the proportions of the windows reduce in scale further up the building.
- The mansard roof form utilised for the upper storey is a contemporised iteration of a traditional townhouse roof, making the upper part of each 'house' more visually recessive and reinforcing the more traditional proportions of the building - whilst incorporating a modern interpretation of dormer windows.





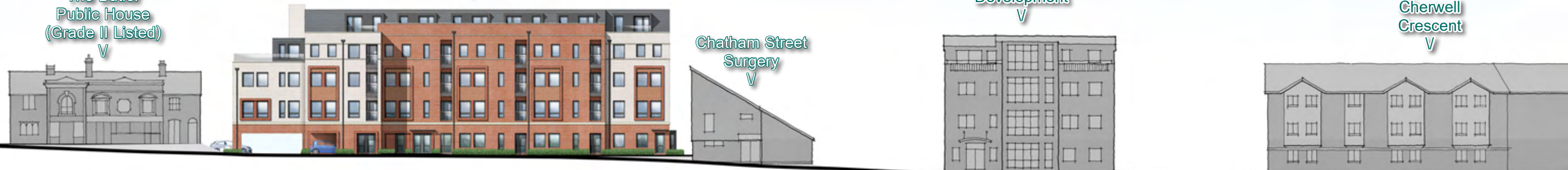
Application
Site
V

The Butler
Public House
(Grade II Listed)
V

Chatham Street
Surgery
V

Zain Reading
Development
V

Cherwell
Crescent
V



Sensitive and Compatible
Architectural Language

- In response to negotiations with the Local Authority and the Design Review Panel, the materials and architectural detailing has evolved and have been considered at great length. The use of the red facing brickwork on the central part of the building unifies the rhythm of the terraced appearance which is enhanced by a strong ground floor level horizontal brick plinth. The brick plinth ties together the contrasting lighter grey brick located at both ends of the building.
- The lighter brick finish is a direct response to the adjacent dwellings, in particular the public house to the east of the site. The use of brick rather than white render finish was considered to provide a gentle transition from the white wing of the public house to the red brick used within the main body of the building façade.
- Through Local Authority discussions, the feature frame windows have now been simplified in material and design detailing. These windows are now framed by projecting brick course with inset ornate 'pulled header' chequerboard brick patterning. The use of chequerboard patterning brings a playful and appealing feature to the schemes design, whilst tying the scheme together.
- Other significant alterations in the appearance of the design include the readdressing of the vertical and void to mass window proportions by flipping the internal layout of the building to create wider frontage north facing apartments. This has allowed for 3 central bays rather than the previous 4, the result of which is clearly demonstrated between the Stage 4 and 5 elevations. The building is now positively considered to have a less vertical appearance.
- Another significant change from the last Design Review Panel is the roof design which is now set back behind a parapet wall, reducing the overall appearance in height from ground level. This demonstrated in the 3D views where this upper floor is almost completely hidden from sight.
- It was confirmed through the Design Review Panel that there was a strong preference to continue the side gablets of the building up to the top floor for simplicity rather than step the sides in. This has now been reflected within the design.





conclusion

Archel Homes aspires to create attractive places that will stand the test of time. The company's objective is to create new developments which make a positive contribution to the existing setting - places in which future occupants are able to integrate into the existing wider community.

We are therefore proud to present these development proposals for your consideration, which will provide 54 new homes of which 16 will be affordable. The development has been planned positively in order to embody high quality and inclusive design, following a considered appraisal of the identity of Reading and Chatham Street in particular, and will make a positive contribution to this neighbourhood and the significant change which is taking place here.

The site has been identified within the Reading Local Plan (2019) as being within the 'West Side Major Opportunity Area'. Specifically, the allocation notes that the future development of this area will be primarily for optimised residential use.

Currently, the area displays a generally poor quality of built environment and streetscape, with the buildings on site currently 'turning their back' to Chatham Street. As such, the proposals have taken this important opportunity to redevelop the application site and introduce new buildings of architectural merit which repairs the streetscene by reintroducing an active street frontage.

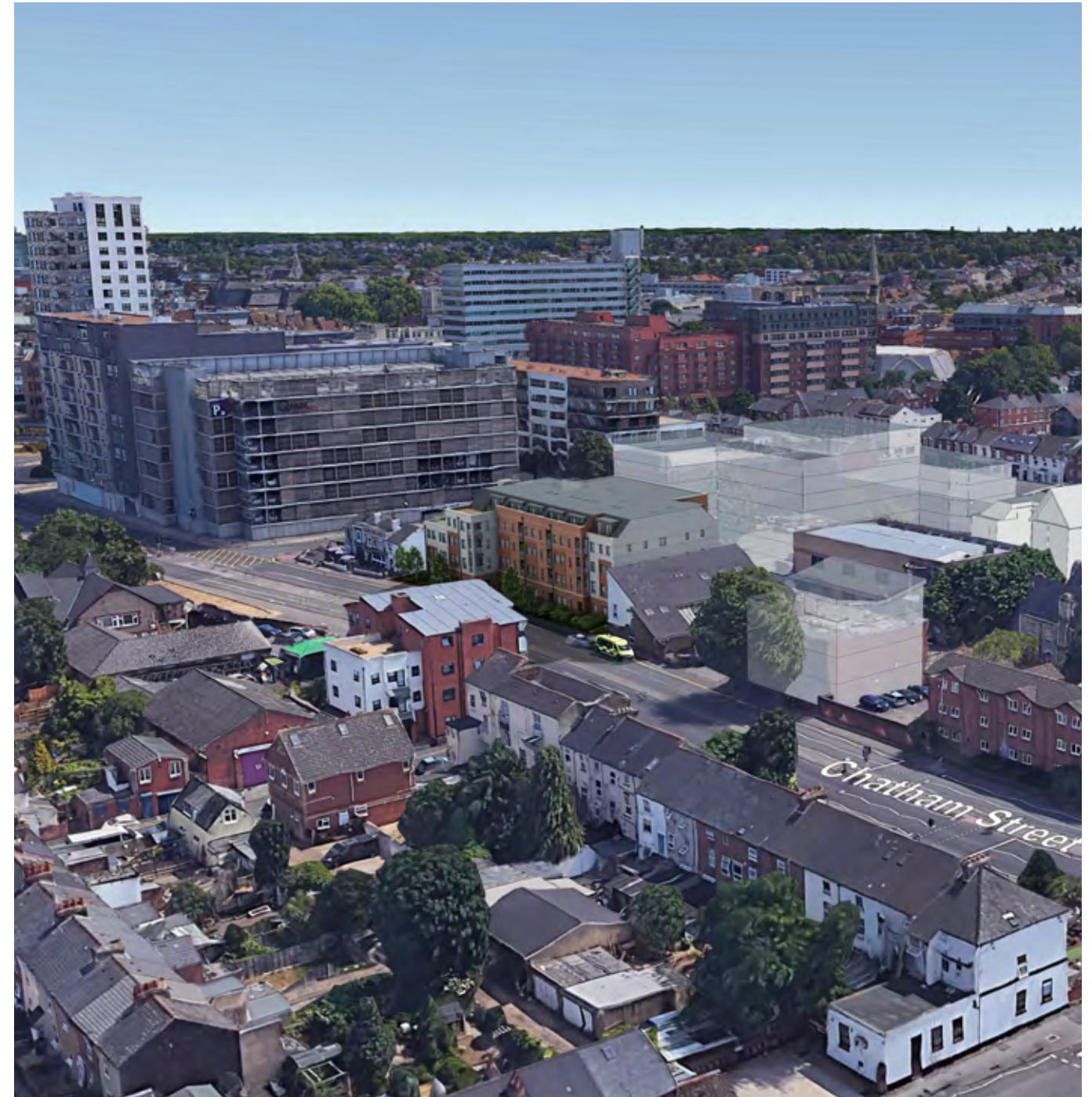
Crucially, a policy compliant quantum of affordable housing is proposed, and this is considered to be a significant scheme benefit. The density and scale of the development would integrate successfully into the evolving fabric of the area, regenerating the Site and making a significant contribution

to the delivery of much needed affordable housing in the Borough.

Throughout the preparation of this application the development team has strived to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of Chatham Street and the way it functions:

- Following the principles of best practice in urban design, landscape, movement and sustainability.
- Contributing to overcoming the region's significant shortfall in housing land supply in a situation where there is very considerable housing need.
- Offering a mix of housing, which responds to local need.
- Ensuring a good residential environment, with the incorporation of landscaped amenity space for the residents to enjoy.
- Integrating with the neighbouring pattern of residential development, and successfully restoring the lost street frontage to Chatham Street.
- Benefiting from the good public transport links as well as the services and facilities of Reading.

These application proposals represent high quality, contextual design, of which Archel Homes, the Local Planning Authority and the residents of Reading can be rightfully proud.





company profile

DHA Architecture was established in 1990 to provide specialist Urban Design and Architectural services to Housebuilders, Residential Developers, Housing Associations and Local Authorities. We provide our clients with all of the expertise necessary, to **appraise** the policies, **apply** the guidance, **assess** the local character, and **address** the commercial necessities influencing a potential development site.

We have an established reputation for recognising the possibilities and having the creativity to deliver designs within the constraints; together with the design flair to develop solutions which are right for the locality, sustainable, and make the most of a site's potential.

The increasing importance of high quality design within residential developments - to both national and local strategies - has highlighted the value of the range of skills we possess. We are experienced in preparing site appraisals, urban design assessments and character appraisals, masterplanning, architectural concept design and detailing, and community liaison.

The success we have enjoyed in all of these disciplines is illustrated by the growth of the practice; from 4 team members - achieving planning permission for 122 dwellings in the first year - to a team of over 25 achieving planning permissions for more than 2,500 dwellings in the last year.

The practice is actively involved in the development and implementation of methods to improve the sustainability of sites including the use of sustainable urban drainage systems. Where appropriate we promote the incorporating of home zones into housing developments, broadly based on the Dutch Woonerf principle, where traffic speeds are restrained and the public realm becomes a social environment, shared between pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.

Our clients include all of the national housebuilders, regional developers, housing associations, Local Authorities and private clients requiring one-off designs. In recent years the quality and success of our work has been recognised; the practice has won eleven WhatHouse? Awards; including **Best Luxury House - Gold** on three occasions, **Best Luxury Development - Gold** and the highly sought-after **Best Brownfield Development - Gold** and **Silver** in consecutive years.

The practice wishes to continue to be recognised as a leading name in its specialist field; providing a quality of service and product to meet firstly the needs of its clients and just as importantly the long term needs of the communities the work integrates within.





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