

Design and Access Statement

Extension to existing 6 units
and creation of 3 additional units at
106-116 Westfield Road, Caversham
Reading RG4 8HJ



May 2019
Avalon Construction and Design

Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Executive Summary	2
1.1.	The site.....	4
1.1.	The units as existing	6
1.2.	Survey Information	6
1.3.	Access and surrounding	8
2	Planning history	9
2.1	Previous applications.....	9
2.2	Note on approved 07/00822/FUL	9
3	New proposed scheme.....	10
3.1	Principle of development	10
3.2	Density and mix of residential units	11
3.3	Transport/Service: Parking spaces.....	12
3.4	National Standard compliance	13
3.5	Outdoor and amenity spaces.....	16
3.6	Mass, elevations and appearance	19
3.7	Daylight/Sunlight analysis and impact on design and layouts.	21
4	Pre-Application response notes	23
4.1	Reference	23
4.2	Principle of development/design consideration	23
4.3	Mix of dwelling units	27
4.4	Loss of amenity space	28
4.5	Environmental matters.....	29
4.6	Transport matters (comments from the Highway Authority)	29
4.7	Quality of residential accommodation/sustainability.....	31
5	Conclusion	34

1 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

This report outlines the proposal for internal alterations and rear extension to the existing residential dwellings and creation of additional dwelling units at 106-112 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 8HJ.

The proposal substantially retraces two similar applications which were approved in 2006 and 2008 which were never implemented.

Pre-Application has been submitted on the 5th October 2018 by Town Planning Bureau (Ref. 181492/PREAPP) and the Council issued response on the 26th November 2018 (Case Officer Anthony Scholes) stating:

[...] the principle of the redevelopment of the site for further residential development could be acceptable subject to [...] criteria and following other material planning considerations.

The development is acceptable in principle, although a series of material planning considerations need to be addressed:

[...] the development as proposed would constitute overdevelopment of the site. Although - the principle of development and scale of extension may be acceptable, the proposed mix and number of residential units would be inappropriate in current and emerging policy terms. The development would have a number of negative impacts as a result of the overdevelopment of the site. The provision of on-site parking required for the proposed number of units would detract from the private amenity space, and the development would not appear to be achievable due to the constrained access, nor would the loss of a parking space be supported. The scale of the development would appear to lead to overly cramped living conditions in a number of flats which are only capable by National Housing Standards as being 1-person dwellings. This further detracts from the acceptability in terms of a mix of housing units being provided. The loss of a 3-bedroom dwelling is also not supported. The overall design of the extension and its appearance does not match the existing dwelling or surrounding building in terms of its design or scale. Finally, the provision of 10 parking spaces for the proposal would not

be acceptable due to the restricted access width to the parking areas and under- provision.

As consequence, as the principle of the development in terms of scale and extension was acceptable, the proposed scheme has been amended to address all the material planning consideration. The main changes are summarised as follows:

- The development has been downsized from the initial 13 units to 9 excluding any intervention to 114-116 Westfield Road.
- There is no alteration to the provision of on-site parking spaces to the rear, although a parking space for disabled people have been included.
- Quality and quantity of the amenity and communal spaces have been assessed detailing position of bins (general waste, recyclable and composting bin), bike storage above the standards, mailboxes, etc.
- Type and size of the units have been improved both in comparison with the existing flats and the original proposal.

This section describes the site as existing with a specific paragraph about accessibility of services and availability of public transport opportunities.

Section 2 summarised the planning history.

Section 3 "New proposed scheme" describes the proposal by comparing it with the previous scheme submitted for the Pre-Application including a specific paragraph to describe compliance with National Standard.

Section 4 "Pre-Application response" describes in detail how all the concerns expressed by the Case Officer on the previous scheme have been addressed: every single point has been addressed with a specific statement that has been numbered for future reference (e.g. DAS 4.2.1).

1.1. The site

The site has a frontage along Westfield Road of 27 meters and it lies on the northern end of the road close to the traffic light junction with Henley Road and Prospect Street.

The site is accessed via a dropped kerb/private drive between 112 and 116 Westfield Road. There are currently five parking spaces fronting Westfield Road and additional four spaces to the rear.

The site gently falls from 116 to 106 and there is a distinct level change on the boundary between 112 and 116 to the rear. All boundaries to the rear consist of fence panels and retaining walls.

The existing building at 106-112 has currently 6 x 1 bed flats.

As resulting from subdivisions of the original building, the existing flats appear to be inadequate in comparison with current standard (size of the rooms, layout) and the rear front needs to be reorganised.

The site is not located within a conservation area nor is it listed.



Figure 1: front as existing

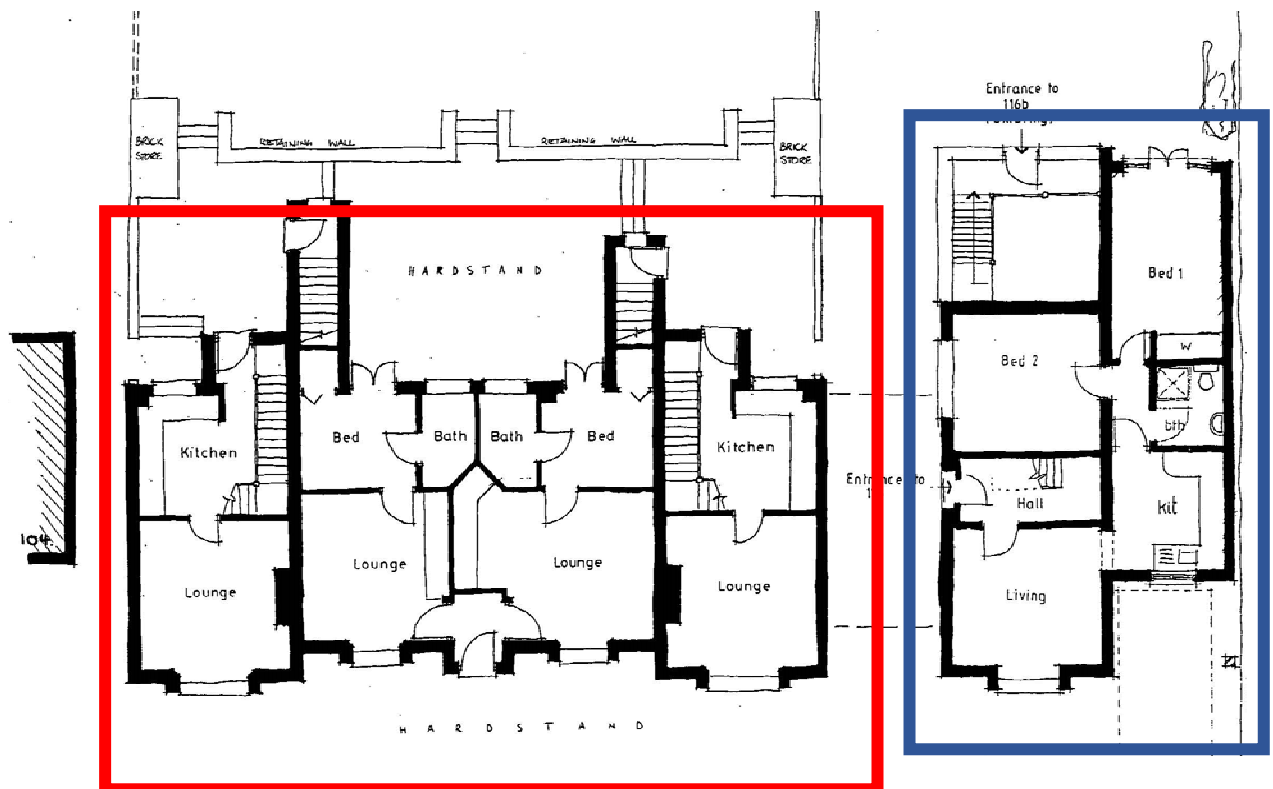


Figure 2: Ground floor as existing. 106-112 Westfield Rd in the red box; 116 Westfield Rd in the blue box.

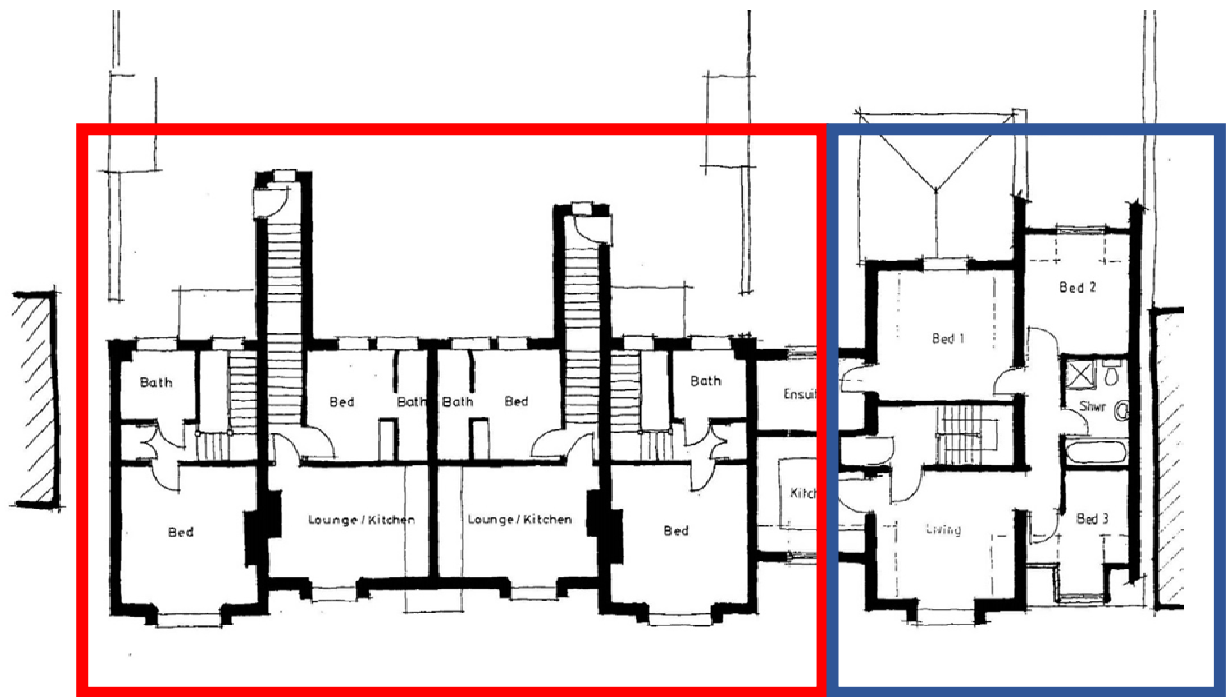


Figure 3: First floor as existing. 106-112 Westfield Rd in the red box; 116 Westfield Rd in the blue box.

1.1. The units as existing

The 6 units at 106-112 Westfield Road are nominally one-bed units. However, just the two-side duplex at 106 and 112 comply with National Standard, as the units at 108 and 110 Westfield Road, both at Ground and First floor, don't comply with National Standard as the footprint is below the minimum requirement for one-bedroom 1 -person dwelling.

Unit	Flat 1	Flat 2	Flat 3	Flat 4	Flat 5	Flat 6
Type	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed
Floor area Sqm	48	21	21	48	25	25
NH Standard	58	37	37	58	37	37
+ / - Sqm	-10	-16	-16	-10	-12	-12

In 4 out of six units the size of the bedroom (at ground and first floor to 108 and 110 Westfield Road) is below the standard (around 6.5 square meters against a minimum of 7.5 for single bedroom).

[Ref. Drawing **ACD 0518 1008 NIA and GIA as existing**]

1.2. Survey Information

The property has been surveyed with Laser Scan technology both internally and externally. Screenshot of the 3D survey model have been enclosed to illustrate the existing condition. Although the block appears to be quite symmetrical, the survey shows that there are few discrepancies (e.g. 106 is slightly smaller than 112 although those units appear to be mirrored; there is a difference of height of 730 mm between the ground floor level at 106 and 112) which have been taken into consideration during the design and which have been reflected in differences in the size of the unit and headroom.

NOTE: screen shot of the 3D survey have been included in the following drawings:

- ACD 0518 1000 General plan as existing
- ACD 0518 1001 Ground floor plan as existing
- ACD 0518 1002 First floor plan as existing



Figure 4 Screenshot of the 3D survey model: the rear of the building

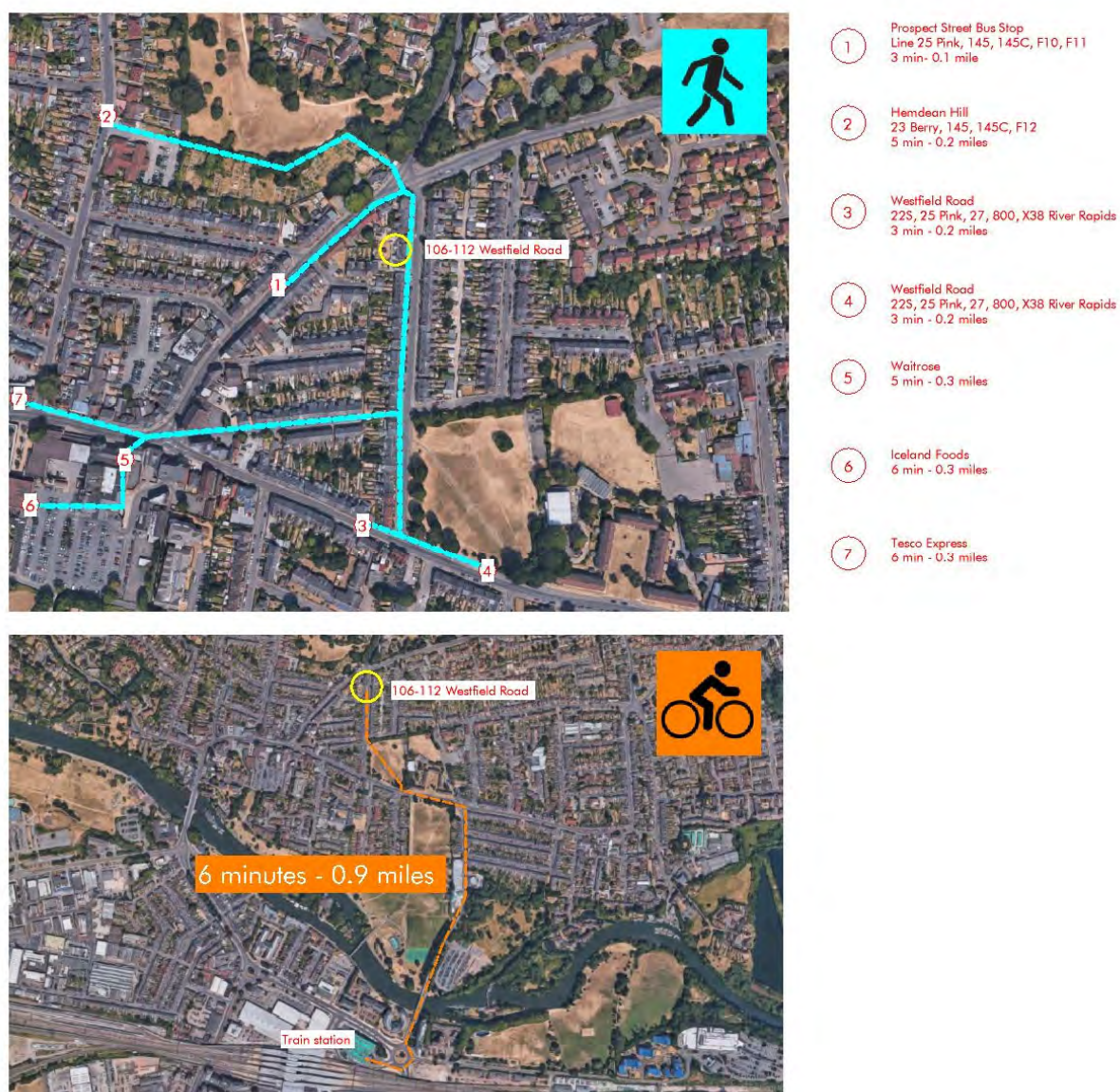


Figure 5 Rear patio as existing

1.3. Access and surrounding

The property is at walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

At least 7 bus stops are within 5 minutes' walk (lines 22, 23, 25S, 27, 145, 146, F10, F11, F12, 800, X38 River Rapids). The train station is 6 minutes (0.9 miles by bike) by bike and a big shopping centre (Waitrose and Iceland Foods) is at less than 500 meters.



2 Planning history

2.1 Previous applications

- 00/00909/FUL Two storey rear extension to existing flats. Permitted, not implemented
- 03/00947/FUL Change of use to flats with two storey side and rear extension. Refused.
- 06/00600/FUL Internal alterations and rear extension to existing residential dwellings. Permitted, not implemented
- 07/00822/FUL Extension to building containing 6 one-bed flats to create 4 one-bed and 4 two-bed units

2.2 Note on approved 07/00822/FUL

The Reading Borough Council granted full planning permission for the proposed "Extension to building containing 6 one-bed flats to create 4 one-bed and 4 two-bed units" [07/00822/FUL] on the 23rd January 2008.

In the Design Access Statement enclosed with the Pre-Application, an analysis of that scheme was proposed because of its similarity with the proposed scheme.

However, it has been made clear that, referring to that application, *"approval would not form a material consideration in the assessment of a new proposal as the permission has now lapsed. Further, it was assessed under the then extant Reading Borough Local Plan (1998) which did not contain a specific policy on the protection of residential amenity, whereas current policy now does (DM4: Safeguarding Amenity)."*

For the above, a comparison with that scheme is not proposed anymore, rather focusing on the comparison with the Pre-Application scheme to remark how the scheme has been improved to address all the concerns expressed by the Planning Officer.

3 New proposed scheme

3.1 Principle of development

The Pre-Application response states:

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 amity housing;*
- h) There is no adverse impact on biodiversity, and*
- i) The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.*

The development site is located within close proximity to high frequency transport routes servicing Reading Town Centre. The site is also within close proximity to the Caversham District Centre, and a designated recreation ground. In accordance with Policy CS4 - Accessibility and the Intensity of Development states that "... new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility as set out in other Policies in this document". Accordingly, the increase in density could in principle be supported subject to meeting the requirements as set out under the Local Development Framework (LDF), including the Core Strategy, Sites and Detailed Policies, and Supplementary Planning Documents.

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.

3.2 Density and mix of residential units

Core Strategy Policy CS15 indicates that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by a number of factors, including the nature of the area, its public transport accessibility and the impact on amenities.

The policy goes on to state 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 mix of dwellings should include an appropriate proportion of units designed to Lifetime Homes standard. Net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable.

In comparison with the Pre-App proposal, the scheme has been reduced as the project now regard just the units at 106,108, 110, and 112 (excluding 116) Westfield Road.

The existing scheme comprise six 1-bedroom at 106-112 Westfield Road. However, as the site is on the edge of the district centre, such locations are better suited to single person or two person (couples), therefore, in re-appraising the scheme, we have considered a mix with 2/3 to be 1 and 2-person flats and 1/3 to be 3 and 4-person flats, with a higher density of units, thus contributing to the house supply chain.

The proposed number of units to 106-112 Westfield Road is now 9 (instead of 10 as per the previous proposal), therefore, Policy DM5 (requiring that “development for 10 or more dwelling will ensure that 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more”) doesn’t apply.

Currently there are 6 one-bed units at 106-110 and 4 out 6 (those at 108-110) with bedroom size below National Standard. The proposal provides the same number of 6 one-bed units now complying with National Standard and additional 3 two-bed units pursuing Policy CS15.

Indicative floor plans are set out in the sketch options attached.



Figure 6 Type and GIA [Ref. Drawing ACD 0518 1105 GIA as proposed]

3.3 Transport/Service: Parking spaces

The Highway Authority, on the Pre-Application scheme, made it clear that ***“Transport would not support the increase of the parking at the rear of the site as it would cause intensification of the access situated on a classified road which is insufficient in width to accommodate two-way flows”***.

However, the Highway Authority stated that ***“a lower parking provision for the development could be considered if rationale was put forward”*** as ***“this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone”***.

The Authority also suggested that ***“if a full application is submitted the appropriate conditions and informatives would be applied”*** to ensure that ***“any future occupants of the flats will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits”***.

The proposed scheme provides additional 3 flats to the original 6 so 3 flats out of 9 would be without a parking space assigned within the curtilage of the property.

Given the proximity of facilities and the availability of public transport at walkable distance (as described in paragraph 1.3 "Access and surrounding"), considered the mix of the residential units (as described in paragraph 1.4 "Density and mix of residential unit), it is proposed that three flats offered without parking spaces would be acceptable, as the statement issued by the Highway Authority suggests this proposal would be supported.

There is a precedent with a similar scheme (Ref Application 151875, 66 Prospect Street, RG4 8JN, approved on 18th July 2016) where additional flats were created without creating additional parking spaces.

In that occasion, it was specified in the pre-application response that "the parking demand from the two units could not be accommodated on the street, and therefore a condition could be applied to the planning permission to restrict any future occupants of the new flats from obtaining a parking permit for the surrounding residential streets."

3.4 National Standard compliance

The original building comprises 6 units and none of them comply with National standards (see also paragraph 1.1 "The units as existing"):

Unit	Flat 1	Flat 2	Flat 3	Flat 4	Flat 5	Flat 6
Type	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed
Floor area Sqm	48	21	21	48	25	25
NH Standard	58	37	37	58	37	37
+ / - Sqm	-10	-16	-16	-10	-12	-12

The scheme developed for the Pre-Application comprised 10 units as follows:

Unit	Flat 1	Flat 2	Flat 3	Flat 4	Flat 5	Flat 6	Flat 7	Flat 8	Flat 9	Flat 10
Type	2-bed	2-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	1-bed	Studio	1-bed	1-bed	Studio
Floor area Sqm	77	77	36	33	33	36	29	33	33	29
NH Standard	70	70	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37
+ / - Sqm	+7	+7	-1	-4	-4	-1	-8	-4	-4	-8

The new scheme comprised 9 units as follows:

Unit	Flat 1	Flat 2	Flat 3	Flat 4	Flat 5	Flat 6	Flat 7	Flat 8	Flat 9
Type	1 bed (1p)	2 bed (4p)	1 bed (1p)	1 bed (1p)	1 bed (1p)	1 bed (1p)	1 bed (1p)	2 bed (3p)	2 bed (3p)
Floor area Sqm	37.2	75.3	39.4	35.2	36.6	36.4	37.4	63.5	62.6
NH Standard	37	70	37	37	37	37	37	61	61
+/- Sqm	0.2	5.3	2.4	-1.8	-0.4	-0.6	0.4	2.5	1.6

The proposed scheme would offer an improvement both over the existing and the previously proposed scheme with 6 of the flats (flat 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) basically matching the standard, 2 flats (Flat 2 and 3) exceeding (by 5.3 and 2.4 m²) and just flat 4 being slightly under the standard.

All the units at ground and first floor have more than 75% of the footprint with 2.3 m. floor to ceiling height.

The footprint for the units has been calculated excluding all the floorspace with headroom below 0.9, headroom between 0.9 and 1.5 m has been calculated at 50% and anything above 1.5 m at 100%.

The diagram below shows how these surfaces have been calculated.

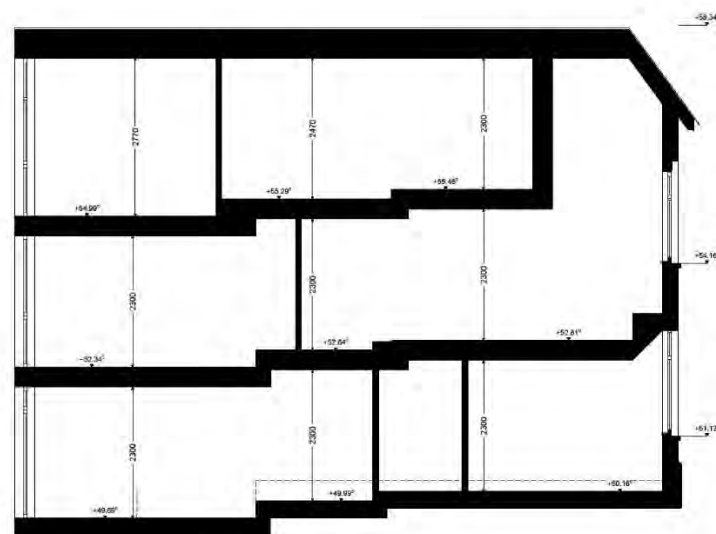


Figure 7 Typical section showing headroom at ground and first floor

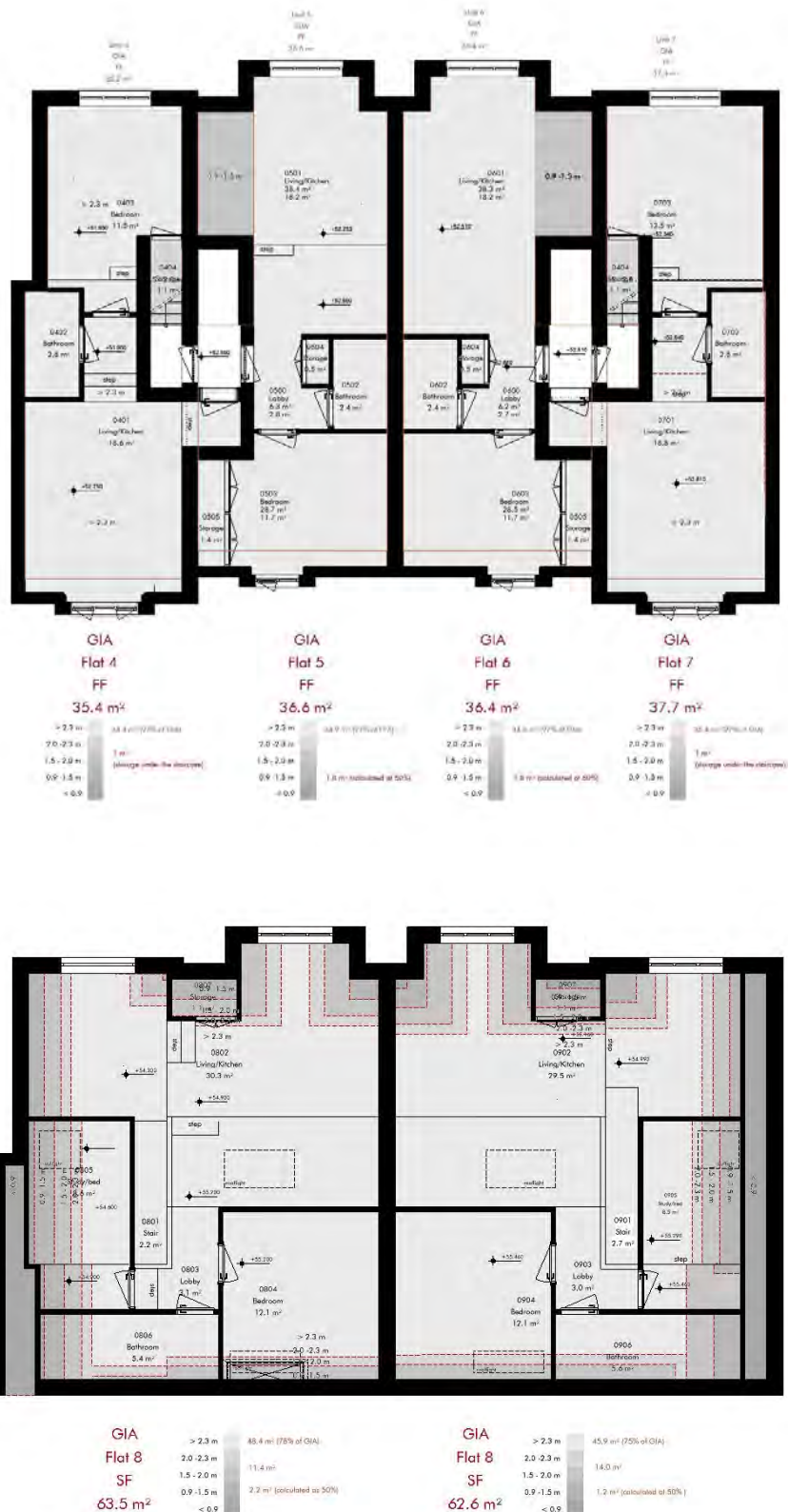


Figure 8 Headroom at first and second floor [Ref. Drawing ACD 0518 1104 Floor to ceiling height First and Second].

All the units comply with NS requirements for the provision of built-in storage (minimum 1 m² for one-bed unit and 2 m² for two-bed unit).

All the units have at least one double bedroom complying with NS as footage (11.5 m² minimum) and width (2.55 m minimum).

The single bedrooms to units 8 and 9 have a footprint of 8.6 m²: 6.9 m² with headroom above 1.5 m (counted at 100%) and 1.4 m² with headroom between 0.9 and 1.5 m for storage (counted at 50%) for a total of 7.6 m² (see also Figure 6 showing headroom second floor).

3.5 Outdoor and amenity spaces

The Case Officer expressed concerns as the increased number of parking spaces to the rear (Pre-Application scheme) would result into a loss of amenity space. Additional information and clarifications were required in regard to bin and bike storage provision (size and location) and lack of parking space for disabled people.

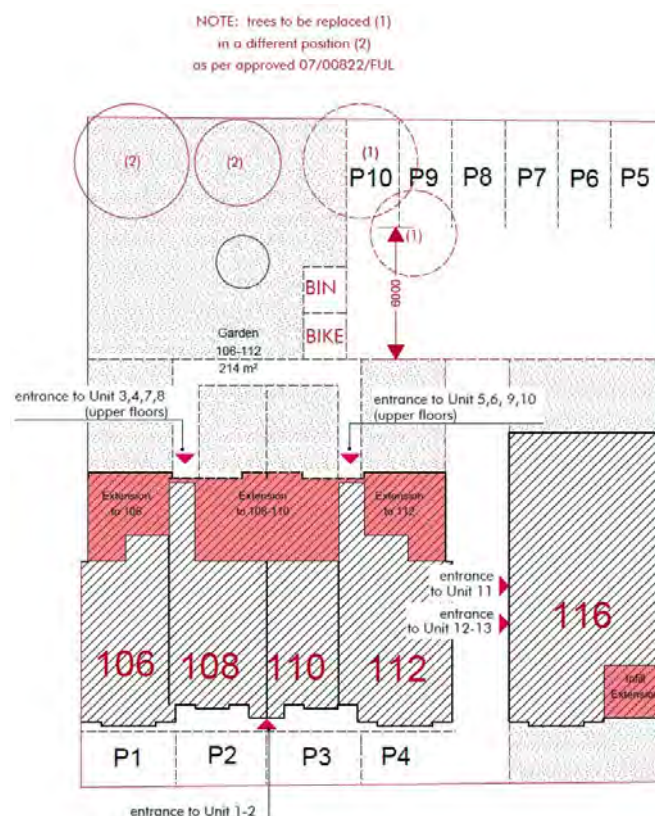


Figure 7 Diagram of the external area as per the Pre-App scheme

See also Drawing **ACD 0518 1000 General Plan as existing**

The new scheme address all those concerns as showed in the plan below:

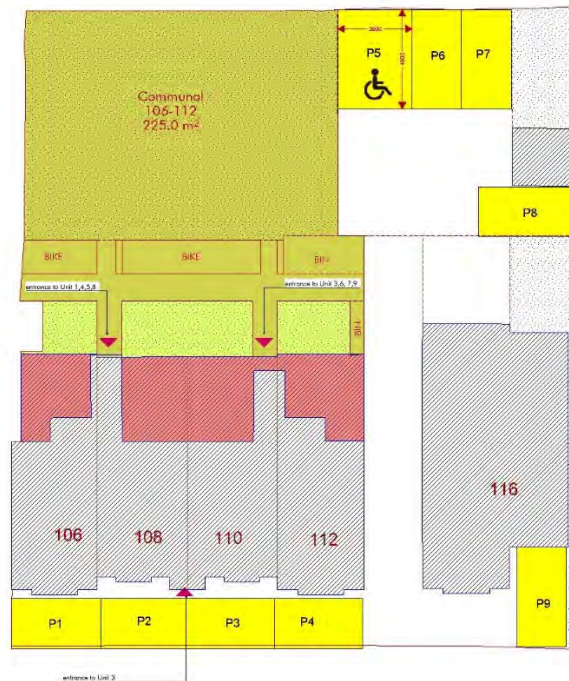


Figure 8 Diagram of the proposed outdoor space.

See also drawing **ACD 0518 1100 General plan as proposed**

The new proposal doesn't increase the number of parking spaces (see above paragraph 3.3 "Transport/services: parking spaces).

As shown in the plan below, the provision of bike spaces has been increased to 18 (2 for each unit).

The location of bin is as existing as the collection arrangements. The number has been increased providing 2 bins for each unit (general waste and recycle) plus one composting bin. The bins for the units accessible from the rear are in the courtyard where the two bins for unit 2 – which is accessible from the front – are next to the access door (as existing).

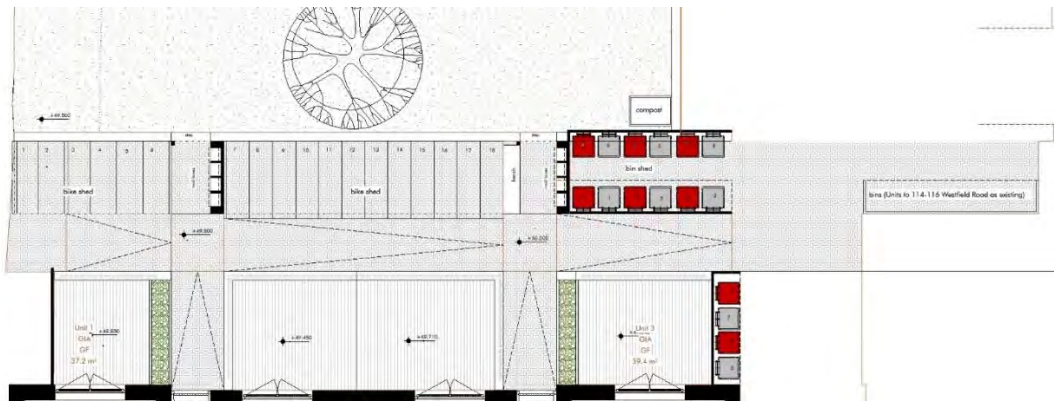


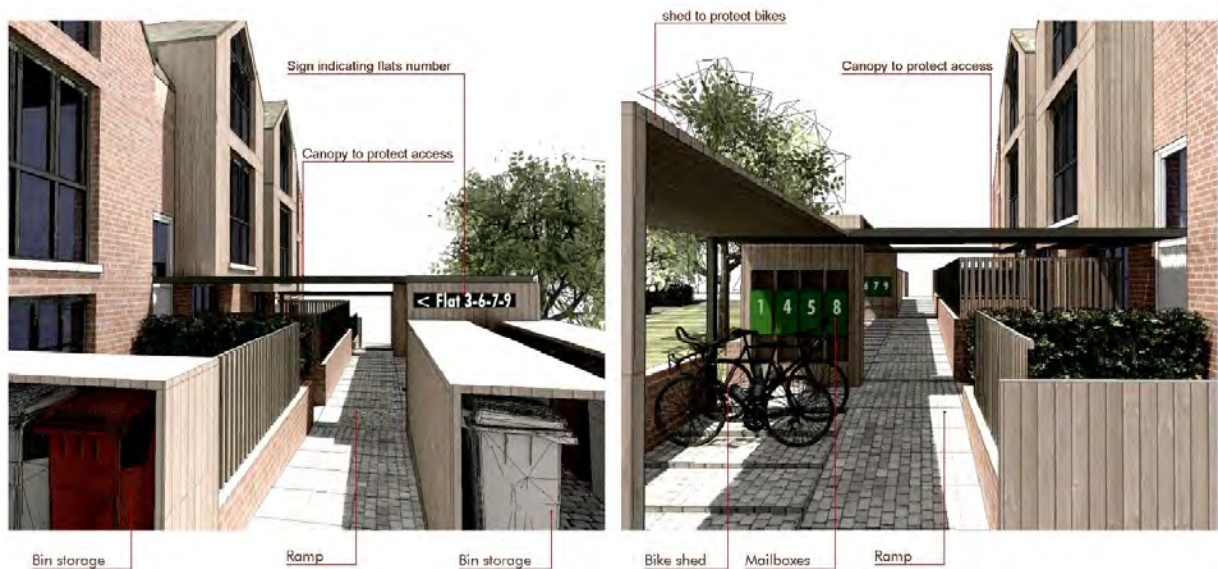
Figure 9 Detail of the bike and bin area next to the rear access

[Ref. drawing **ACD 0518 1100 General plan as proposed**]

As described below in paragraph (4.4 “Loss of amenity space” DAS 4.4.2), the proposal allocates 225 square meters of communal space corresponding to 25 square meters for each property (as recommended by “Site and Detailed Policies Document”, at point 5.6.10). The extension to the building (footprint around 50 square meters) will be compensated by the demolition of the shed to the back of the garden (footprint around 25 square meters).

The communal area includes space for 18 bikes (2 for each flats), a more rational and ordered area for the bins, green waste composting, and to the back there is potential for six allotments to be assigned to the units upstairs (for home food production, play area, etc). In addition to that, the three units at ground floor have private outdoor space.





View 03: rear garden, pedestrian access to flats from north

View 04: rear garden, pedestrian access from South



View 05: rear facade from the garden

View 06: rear garden

3.6 Mass, elevations and appearance

The proposed scheme keeps the same footprint of the previous scheme without substantial alteration to the mass of the building.

In comparison with the original proposal (see figure below), there is no alteration to 116 Westfield Road (B) and the two rooflights (A) have been moved to avoid overlooking issues (see 4.2 "Principle of development/design consideration" and DAS 4.2.2).



Figure 10 Front elevation as proposed for the Pre-App

Referring to the rear façade, the Pre-Application response stated that ***“It appears the design is unsympathetic to the overall design of the existing dwellings”***, suggesting a more traditional approach. Therefore, this façade has been redesigned accordingly.



Figure 11 Rear elevation as proposed for the Pre-App



Figure 12 New rear elevation [Ref. Drawing ACD0518 1501 Elevations as proposed]

3.7 Daylight/Sunlight analysis and impact on design and layouts.

The Pre-Application report made required a Daylight/Sunlight report to be provided as concerns were expressed about the level of natural light in the proposed scheme.

The Daylight/Sunlight assessment is enclosed with the application (see **ACD 0518 Daylight and Sunlight report**) and it shows that the scheme ensures acceptable level of natural light in all the habitable room of the amended scheme.

The Daylight/Sunlight analysis has been used as guidance throughout the whole design process as means to improve the quality of the internal spaces, leading to amend the scheme where the findings of the analysis were showing insufficient levels of illumination.

One of the alterations suggested by that analysis has been the introduction of two large windows to the kitchen at ground floor, flats 1 and 3. Those windows, which would require obscured glass to avoid overlooking issues, although opening towards partially enclosed space, help in bringing natural light to the kitchen area (see diagram below).

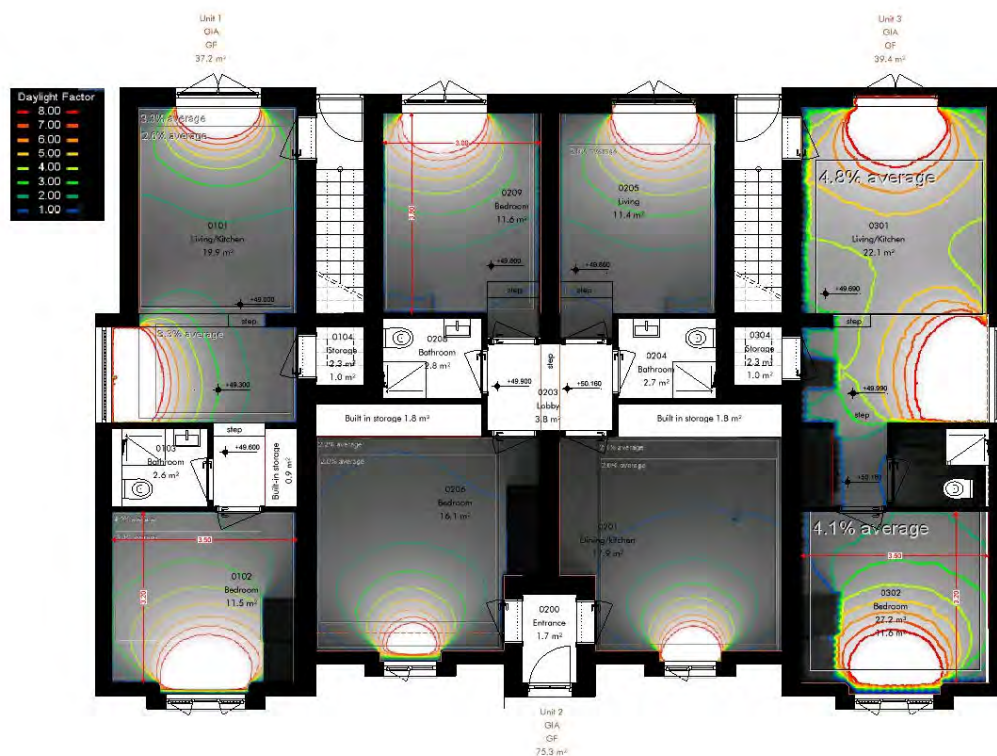


Figure 13 Daylight Factor analysis at Ground Floor

During the design process, the Daylight/Sunlight analysis led to change the layout of the central unit at first floor (Flat 5 and 6).

Initially, the layout proposed the bedroom to the rear and the kitchen/living area to the front towards Westfield Road. The analysis showed that the kitchen/living in that position would result with poor level of natural light being illuminated by the small existing window to the main façade (which is supposed to be inalterated to preserve the streetscape and the appearance of the window). On the contrary, the bedroom to the rear, being illuminated by a big new window, had levels well above the requirement. Swapping the living/kitchen with the bedroom it has been possible to find the right balance as shown in the diagram below.

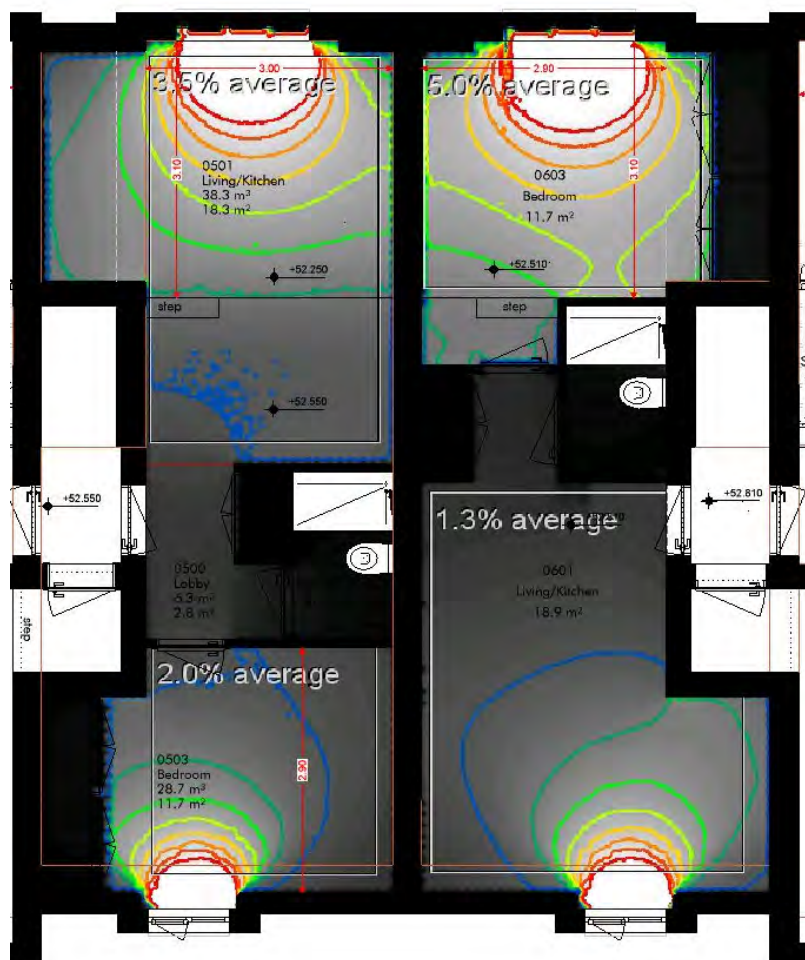


Figure 14

Original Layout (on the right): the living room is poorly illuminated by the existing small window to Westfield Road and the bedroom to the rear has level well above the standard;

New Layout (on the left): The small existing window to Westfield Road is sufficient to provide minimum level of natural light (2% Average Daylight Factor) and the living/kitchen to the rear is well illuminated by the new large window.

4 Pre-Application response notes

4.1 Reference

Pre-Application has been submitted on the 5th October 2018 by Town Planning Bureau (Ref. 181492/PREAPP) and the Council issued its response on the 26th November 2018 (Case Officer Anthony Scholes).

In this section we will refer to that document describing, point by point, which parts have been kept unaltered (as they have been considered acceptable in the first proposal), which are not relevant anymore (as the project changed), and how some other issues have been addressed in the new proposal.

We will proceed quoting from the Pre-App response followed by a short statement enlightened in a box referring to the specific point quoted just above.

4.2 Principle of development/design consideration

The redevelopment of the site has been considered acceptable in principle, subject to specific criteria:

[...] the principle of the redevelopment of the site for further residential development could be acceptable subject to [...] criteria and following other material planning considerations:

The proposal includes an addition to the primary facade of 116 Westfield Road to fill in an area currently used as off-street parking. The infill portion should be set no further forward than the existing addition to sit comfortably within the street scape. [...]

DAS 4.2.1

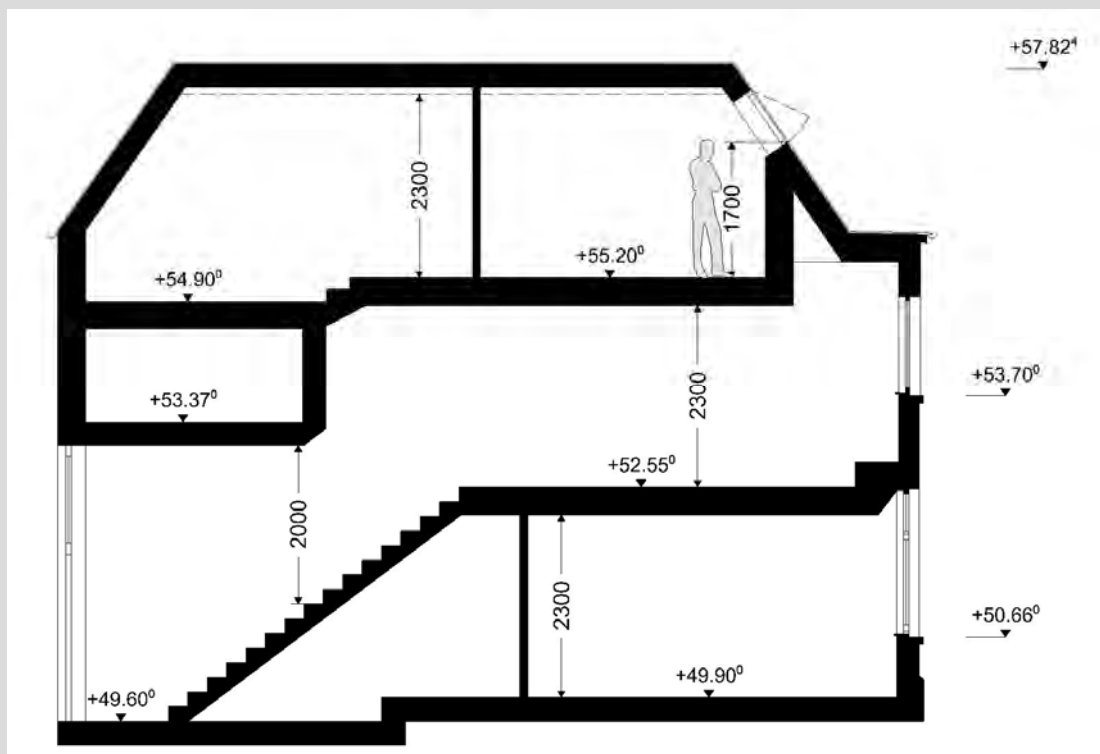
The proposal has been limited to 106-112 Westfield Road and it doesn't include any more any work to 116 Westfield Road. Therefore, this issue is not relevant anymore.

The proposal currently includes the provision of two front facing rooflights sitting on the plane of the existing roof and two South facing (toward 104 Westfield Road). The proposal incorporates two South facing windows which would result in the potential for overlooking and/or loss of privacy to the

adjoining property. As such, it is not considered appropriate that windows be located where there would be a perceived or real loss of privacy due to

DAS 4.2.2

There are no new South facing window to the existing façade and there are two rooflights sitting on the plane of the existing roof. However, these rooflight have been set with the lower edge at 1.70 meters from the Finish Floor Level (see section below) to avoid overlooking and/or loss of privacy to the adjoining properties.



This solution has been preferred to obscured glass since it maximizes daylight and sunlight and it ensures the sight of the sky that is beneficial for the quality of the space.

The window located at ground floor level and the rooflight towards 104 Westfield Road will be obscured glass.

overlooking.

[...] The existing rear facade is approximately 21m from the rear property boundaries. Due to the length of the plots, an extension of the built form as proposed may be suitable where appropriately located windows and rooms are proposed to minimize the potential overlooking including perceived or actual loss of privacy to adjoining property occupiers on Short Street and Prospect Street.

Additionally, to avoid resulting in an overbearing impact on the adjoining property at 104 Westfield Road, it could be acceptable where any extension does not exceed the length of extension of the adjoining property.

DAS 4.2.3

The closest window (106) to the closest property on Short Street at ground floor level (B) is at 19.90 m with an angle of 78°. The same property at the upper level (A) is at 20.80 m with an angle of 73°. The closest property to Prospect Street (C) from 106 Westfield Road is at 37.80 m. The trees in the garden (1, 2, 3 and 4) impeded any overlooking between 108 and 110 Westfield Road and the property to Prospect Street (D). From 112 Westfield Road the closest property in Prospect Street is at more than 25 meters.

As shown in the diagram below, the proposed rear front is aligned with the rear to 118 Westfield Road and it is set back from the extension at 104 Westfield Road.



Policy CS5 - Inclusive access, identifies an inclusive environment as one that "... can be used by everyone regardless of age, gender or disability and recognizes and accommodates differences in the way people use the built environment".

The proposed development does not appear to allocate space for the provision of disabled parking or otherwise.

As such, it is recommended that appropriate standards be considered for the provision and ensure that the development provides suitable access and facilities for disabled people in accordance with Policy CS5.

DAS 4.2.4

One of the parking spaces to the rear has been resized to provide one disabled parking space. All the external area, including the approach to the building are step free and change of levels connected with ramps.

The units have been designed to meet requirements of "Visitable dwelling" as specified in the Building Regulation Approved Document Part M.

As recalled by point 1.16, the internal steps to the unit – which are necessary considering the slope of the site and the necessity of keeping standard floor to ceiling height – comply with the provision of Part K.

The rear extension as proposed appears to be proposed as modern building materials and design.

The gable ends with windows which follow the gable roof lines appear to be inconsistent with the overall design of the area, as viewed from adjoining properties. It appears the design is unsympathetic to the overall design of the existing dwellings.

DAS 4.2.5

The rear extension has been totally redesigned to make it sympathetic with the adjoining properties and the surrounding area.

Windows and opening in general have been resized and positioned symmetrically to the façade which is made mostly of brickworks except the two central slightly protruding volume upstairs which are timber cladded.

4.3 Mix of dwelling units

The proposed development would result in 13 flats (6 x 1 bedroom, 4 x 2 bedroom) pursuant to Policy CS15 seeks to ensure an appropriate mix of residential development within the Borough.

Policy DM5 states that development for 10 or more dwelling will ensure that 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, and the majority to be in the form of houses rather than flats, having regard to all material considerations.

As the development is for new development comprising 10 or more dwellings outside of the central areas and defined local centres as defined under Policy DM5, a greater emphasis on 3- bedroom dwellings should be provided. In addition, the proposed mix would not meet the emerging market requirements as identified in the market assessment supporting the emerging local plan.

The proposed development would also result in the loss of a 3-bedroom dwelling, which is not supported.

DAS 4.3.1

The scheme has been reduced as the project has been limited to the properties at 106, 108, 110, and 112 (excluding 116) Westfield Road. The proposed number of units is now 9 (instead of 10 as per the previous proposal at 106-112), therefore, Policy DM5 doesn't apply.

Currently there are 6 one-bed units at 106-110 and 4 out of 6 (those at 108-110) with bedroom size below National Standard. The proposal provides the same 6 one-bed units (all compliant with National Standard), plus additional 3 two-bed units pursuing Policy CS15.

4.4 Loss of amenity space

The proposal would result in the reduction/loss of private and communal outdoor space on the site.

The proposed car park extension would further encroach on the communal amenity space to the rear, as well as the relocation of the bin store and cycle storage area.

DAS 4.4.1

The extension footprint is around 50 square meters and it will be partially compensated by the demolition of the shed to the back of the garden (footprint around 25 square meters).

Besides the small extension to one of the existing parking spaces – to make it suitable for disabled people as described in the above DAS 4.2.4 – there are no other alteration to the parking area resulting with a reduction of private and communal outdoor space on site.

Policy DM10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE defines “private or communal open space” as that “allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space”. As such, bin store and cycle storage are should be considered part of the communal open space rather than a factor reducing it.

Specifically, Units 11, 12 and 13 would lose private amenity space. Despite the built form being considered appropriate, it is unclear as to whether the increased parking areas, and bin store/ cycle store (which appear smaller than the existing) would not result in an unreasonable loss of private amenity space to the rear, and lack communal open space for the increased number of units.

DAS 4.4.2

"Site and Detailed Policies Document", at point 5.6.10 (b), recommends at least 25 square meters outdoor space for each one and two-bed unit outside central Reading. The proposal allocates 225 square meters of communal space (as defined by Policy DM10) corresponding to 25 square meters each.

The communal area includes space for 18 bikes (2 for each flats), a more rational and ordered area for the bins, green waste composting, and to the back there is potential for six allotments to be assigned to the units upstairs (for home food production, play area, etc).

In addition to that, the three units at ground floor have private outdoor

4.5 Environmental matters

DAS 4.5.1

There were no objections from the Environmental Protection Officer *"as there is no significant change in the proposed building's relationship with road noise or local air quality"*.

4.6 Transport matters (comments from the Highway Authority)

Transport would not support the increase of the parking at the rear of the site as it would cause intensification of the access situated on a classified road which is insufficient in width to accommodate two-way flows; therefore, the parking space at the front should remain.

DAS 4.6.1

The new proposal doesn't change the position to the front of 116 Westfield Road, and it doesn't increase the number of parking spaces to the rear.

The development [...] is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area [...]. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

A lower parking provision for the development could be considered if rationale was put forward and there was no detriment to highway safety.

The site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 1R, therefore unauthorised on street parking can be controlled and regulated via the administration of the scheme and the other parking restrictions in place; there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the flats will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits.

Our records indicate that this property is listed in the exclusion list for permits for Westfield Road. If a full application is submitted the appropriate conditions and informatives would be applied.

DAS 4.6.2

The new proposal keeps the same number of the existing parking spaces which is lower than the required 1 on-site for each of the proposed flats as the unit at 106-112 share the space with the three units at 116 Westfield Road.

However, as mentioned above, *"This zone directly surrounds the Central Core and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone."*

At least 7 bus stops are within 5 minutes' walk (lines 22, 23, 25S, 27, 145, 146, F10, F11, F12, 800, X38 River Rapids). The train station is 6 minutes (0.9 miles by bike) by bike and a big shopping centre (Waitrose and Iceland Foods) is at less than 500 meters.

The provision of bike spaces is well above the requirement with 2 for each unit.

Conditions and informatives could make sure that *"that any future occupants of the flats will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits"*.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 7 cycle parking spaces which should be in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store. The Design and Access statement states that all flats are to be provided with lockable bicycle storage sheds in the rear garden. A revised drawing would therefore be required illustrating the storage units to be provided.

DAS 4.6.3

The drawings show the location of the bike storage units.

Submitted plans illustrate the bin storage area at the rear of the development; given that refuse vehicles are unable to access the site the refuse bins will therefore need to be moved out to Westfield Road on collection days. It is assumed that this is the existing process. The Council's Recycling and Refuse team should be contacted to ensure the correct capacity of bins is provided for the size of the proposed development.

DAS 4.6.4

There will be no change in the collection process.

4.7 Quality of residential accommodation/sustainability

It is unclear if the proposed layout would result in an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupants.

DAS 4.7.1

See DAS 4.4.2

The proposed layout would result in a number of one-bedroom units with minimal windows/ rooflights. Particularly, units 4, 5, 8 and 9 are dual aspect flats but with only one small window at each end. Similarly, all other flats provide only minimal access to sunlight potentially exacerbated by the orientation of the property. Finally, unit 13's bedroom appears to not have any access to natural light. It would be expected that a daylight/sunlight assessment be provided with the application to ensure that a minimum standard of daylight is achieved in each flat.

DAS 4.7.2

See paragraph 3.7 above and enclosed daylight/sunlight assessment.

It appears that greater care could be given to the proposed stacking of bedrooms within the flats. For example, ground floor flats 1 and 2 contain bedrooms at the front of the dwelling, whereas the units directly above have bedrooms to the rear, this could be easily amended to have all the bedrooms of the flats stacked more appropriately and would also result in living spaces, rather than bedrooms, being oriented toward the street.

DAS 4.7.3

The possibility of stacking all the bedroom to the rear of the property has been taken into consideration.

However, internal layout and position of the bedrooms depend on several factor as the access to the units, the position of the amenity spaces for the unit at ground floor and the finding of the Daylight/Sunlight analysis (see paragraph 3.7 above):

- Units 1 and 3 at ground floor have the access from the rear and, as consequence, the bedrooms on the opposite side.
- Unit 2 at ground floor has two bedrooms, one is towards the patio (02.09), the other towards the street (02.06). The latter could be easily swapped with the living room (02.05). However, it has been preferred Units 4 and 7 at first floor have the bedrooms to the rear because of the position of the entrance door
- Unit 5 and 6 have the bedroom to the front because of the findings of the Daylight/Sunlight analysis (see paragraph 3.7 above).
- Units 8 and 9 have the main bedroom toward the street. As described in Das 4.2.2, the bedroom in those units has a rooflight at 1,70 m from FFL to avoid overlooking issues which will be not ideal for living space where having a view towards the external spaces is recommended.

Possible issues coming from the bedrooms not being on the same side and/or towards the street are linked to sound insulation between units and between internal and external spaces. Therefore, measures will be taken as follows:

- All the existing internal slabs will be demolished and re-build to be compliant with Approved Document E Resistance to the passage of sound.
- keeping the access to the patio from the living room.
- All the windows will be double glazing, including those to the existing façade.

The proposal includes the intensification of the access to the rear of the dwellings through utilising the rear stairs for access to eight dwellings.

Due to the location of the access it may not be appropriate to intensify this access point and lead to difficulty in finding the non-ground floor units for emergency services/deliveries, as part of the substantial redevelopment of the site it is considered that a common access via Westfield Road may be more appropriate and consideration should be given to this in any future proposal.

DAS 4.7.4

The suggestion of a common access via Westfield Road has been taken in consideration.

However, with a communal entrance in the middle of the building, it would not be possible to give access to the side units at first floor. The position of the access has been designed to minimise the footprint of the communal staircase favouring the footprint inside the units.

The design of the rear external area has been improved to clearly identify the access with ramped footpath, the mail-box artefact (showing the number of the unit) and it will be developed with appropriate external lighting.

[...] in any future application , all floorspaces be clearly identified, and measurements and methodology be provided for the calculation of habitable floor space, including any spaces with <1.5 m head height, and that a full analysis of the National Housing Standard be included (i.e. a table showing compliance with requirements) to aid assessment. This should include identification of head heights of 2.3m for 75% of each unit. Sectional plans would assist.

DAS 4.7.5

See paragraph 3.1.

5 Conclusion

The Pre-Application process clarified that the development of the site at 106-112 Westfield Road is acceptable in principle.

The amended scheme, proposed with this application, addresses all the concerns expressed by the Local Authorities as described in the above Section 3 and 4 as follows:

- The development has been downsized from the initial 13 units to 9 excluding any intervention to 114-116 Westfield Road addressing concerns about the overdevelopment of the site.
- Since a lower provision of parking space could be supported by the Highway Authority (under specific informatives and conditions issued with Planning Permission), there is no increasing of on-site parking spaces to the rear (as this would not be supported by the Highway Authority).
- One parking space for disabled people have been included improving the accessibility of the site
- Quality and quantity of the amenity and communal spaces have been improved and assessed detailing position of bins (general waste, recyclable and composting bin), bike storage above the standards, mailboxes, etc.
- Type and size of the units have been improved both in comparison with the existing flats and the original proposal and they are compliant with National Standard.
- Overlooking issues and consideration about the appearance of the building have been addressed by redesigning the facades.

Therefore, we are confident that the proposed scheme would be considered acceptable and supported by the Local Authority.