



Project: Residential Development on Corner of Crown St & Silver St, Reading
Applicant: Thomas Homes Ltd
Design & Access Statement

June 2017

WOODFIELD BRADY
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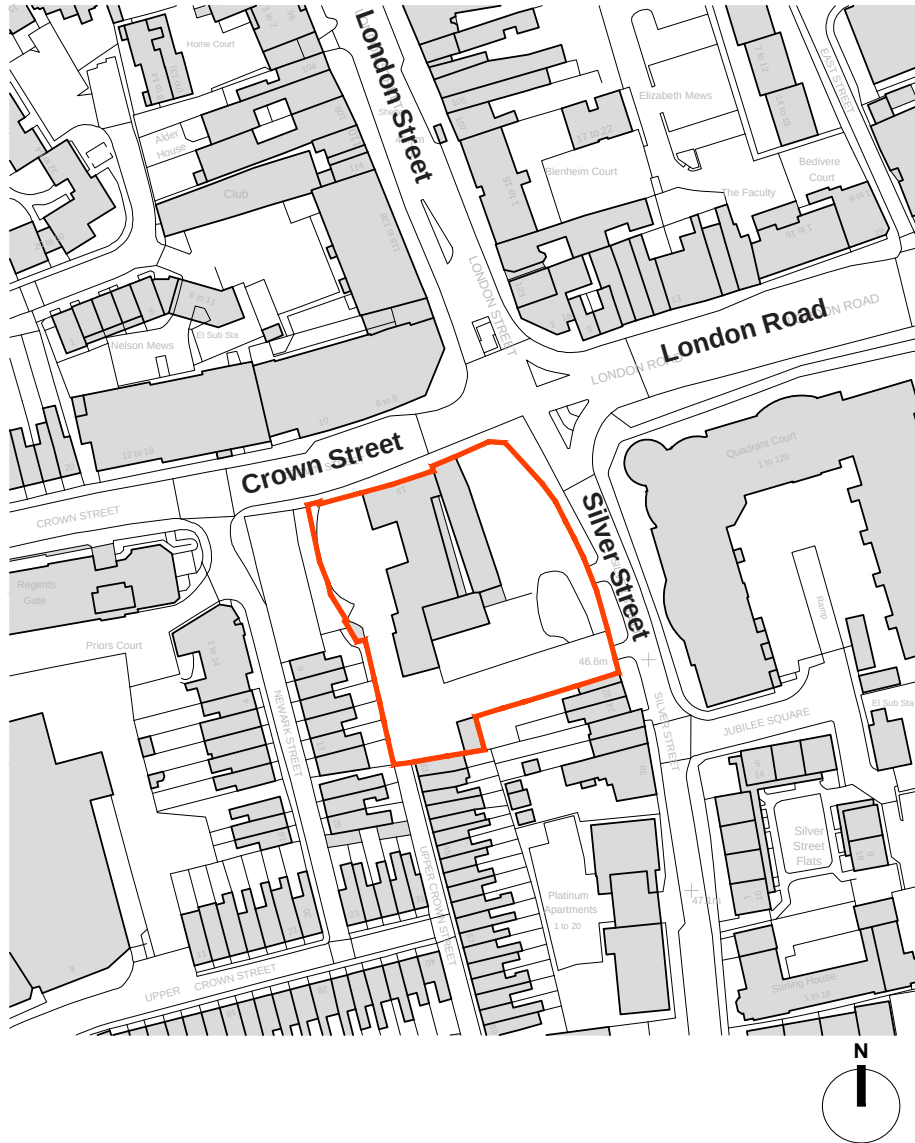
This Design & Access Statement supports a planning application proposal for a residential development of 80 new dwellings on land on the corner of Crown Street and Silver Street, following the demolition of the existing buildings on the site.

The application site has an extant Outline Planning Approval for a Class C2 Residential Institution comprising 84 assisted living units, arranged in an L-shaped block of up to 6 storeys. The permission reference is 160868 and it was approved by Reading Borough Council in September 2016.

The site is allocated for residential development of between 50 and 85 dwellings under site reference RC4I in the Reading Central Area Action Plan.

This proposal for C3 residential will provide much needed market and affordable dwellings in Reading. The proposal closely follows the footprint, massing, height and scale of the approved C2 scheme and references to the 'approved scheme' are made within this statement. Visual comparisons of the two schemes are also shown on the submitted plan and elevation drawings. It is considered that by its inherent nature and through careful design, this C3 proposal offers a scheme that is more animated and interactive with its context and therefore more appropriate to its urban setting than the approved C2 scheme. This proposal is considered to better exploit the particular characteristics of the site for the benefit of both the new residents and existing neighbours.

This statement commences with a description of the site and its local context, then outlines the design strategies given the site constraints and opportunities. Finally the statement explains the design proposals in terms of its functional, technical and visual rationale. The proposals are detailed on the project drawings and documentation prepared by the full project team.



Location Plan @ 1:1250 (@A3)

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The application site is located to the south of the town centre within the Reading Central Area. It forms an important urban street corner onto the busy east-west thoroughfare of London Road/ Crown Street to the north and London Street/ Silver Street to the East. Both of these highways are one way streets running east-west and north-south respectively.



Aerial View from the south

The application site is approximately square with an area of 3,340m². Its topography is essentially level rising by about a metre from west to east along the Crown Street frontage. A number of low rise brick workshop-type buildings occupy the centre of the site with the eastern section of the remaining site covered in foliage, following recent demolition of terraced housing in that location. There are existing vehicular accesses onto the site both from its north-west corner onto Crown Street and from its south-east corner onto Silver Street and these two accesses are connected within the site by a concrete road which skirts the western and southern perimeter edges. There is a third dropped kerb access from the site onto Silver Street which is currently disused. The site has most recently been occupied by a hand car wash firm.

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Photo: View from opposite site looking towards Application Site corner on Crown St/ Silver St with Quadrant Court on left of image



Photo: Existing brickwork buildings on Site looking from opposite side of Crown St



Photo: View looking north down Silver St with Site on left hand side



Photo: View towards corner of Site on Silver St, taken from Quadrant Court with Crown House on right of image

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Photo: View of existing Silver St site access, on right, with gable of 22 Silver St and former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern beyond



Photo: View from bottom of Newark St looking south

The surrounding context is diverse in height, scale and character and comprises a mix of residential, commercial and retail uses:

To the immediate south of the site are the gable ends and gardens of two storey Victorian terraced housing (22 Silver St/ 33 Upper Crown St) and the rear gardens of a similar terrace (9-19 Newark St) backs onto the lower western half of the site

Further to the west of the site and on the far side of Newark St, there is a more recent three storey block of apartments (1-14 Priors Court). A raised three storey commercial building (Regents Gate) fronts onto Crown St to the north of Priors Court and there remains a redundant infill site, currently in Reading Borough Council's ownership, between the application site and Newark St. This infill site and the application site are separated by a narrow track giving right of access to the rear of the Newark St terraces

To the east of the site is the large modern residential block of Quadrant Court. This rises from three storeys immediately opposite the previously mentioned Silver St terrace, through four and five storeys directly opposite the site, to six storeys at its corner onto Silver St/ London Rd

Directly opposite the site, on the other side of Crown St, there is a six storey student housing block with retail at ground floor (Crown House). Beyond this block to the west is a further residential block (12-18 Crown St) of five storeys reducing to four storeys as it terminates adjacent the two storey end terrace house of 20 Crown St

Diagonally opposite the corner of the site is the end of London Street and its corner with London Road. This comprises a mix of older and more recent properties of typically three and four storeys, with the exception of the two storey 3 and 5 London Road, which are listed, see below. Much of the end of London Street is retail at ground floor with residential or commercial space on upper levels

Whilst red brick walling predominates in this part of Reading, there are a



Photo: View of 1-14 Priors Court from north



Photo: View of Regents Gate from east

variety of other materials also used particularly on more recent buildings surrounding the site: 7

Buff brickwork is the main material used at *Quadrant Court* but red brick is also used.

Red/orange terracotta vertical panels are used on *Crown House*, and these are divided by large panels of render, a material which also features largely at 12-18 *Crown St*. A number of older properties, including those Buildings of Townscape Merit at 7-11 *London Road* are also finished in render/ stucco

Secondary materials used in the immediate locality include timber boarding (at 12-18 *Crown St*) and zinc cladding on the corner of *Crown House*.

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Photo: View of Quadrant Court, Silver Street



Photo: View of 12-18 Crown Street, with Crown House on corner beyond



Photo: View of 3-5 London Road (timber-framed) with 7-11 London Road to their right



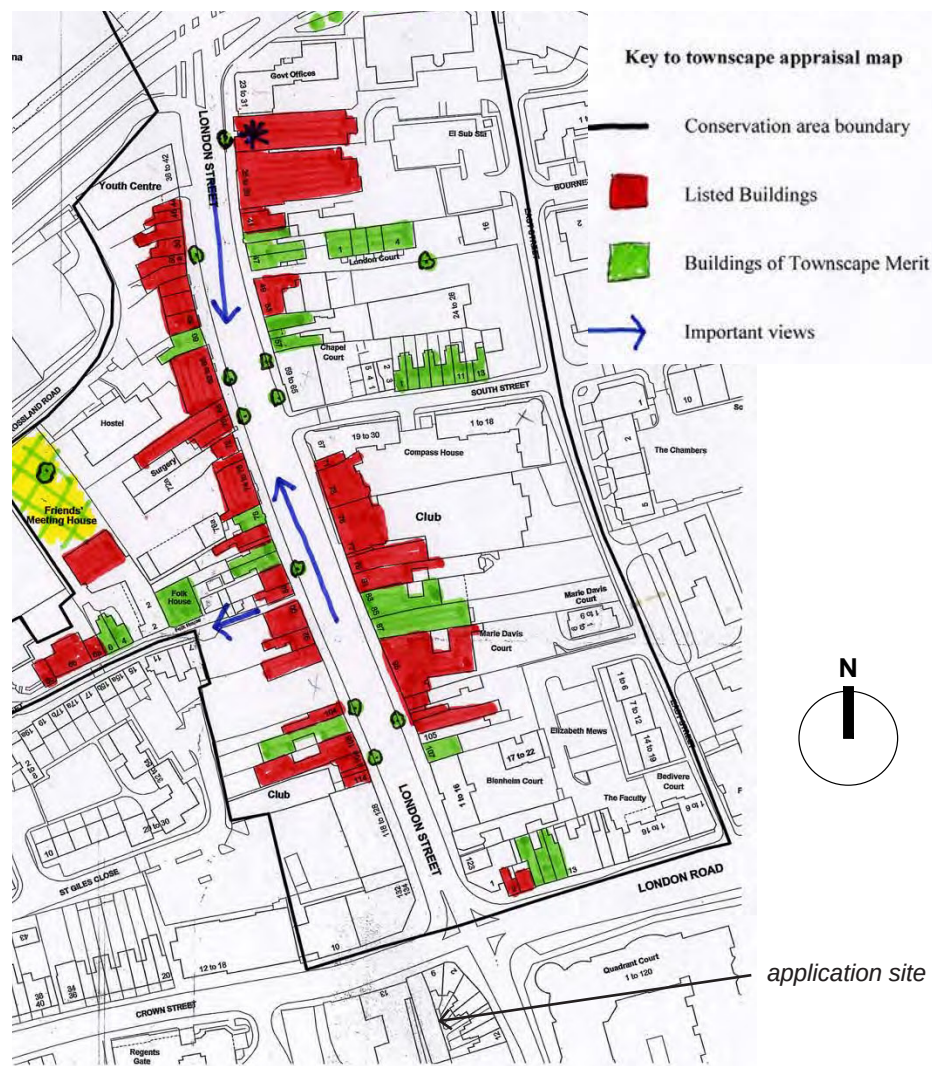
Photo: View of 30 Silver Street showing grey feature brickwork

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Extract from Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area Map, NTS

(from Reading Borough Council's Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area Appraisal)

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The site itself is not covered by any heritage designations. The southern edge of the Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area (CA) is on the north side of Crown St/ London Road. Within this CA are the six storey Crown House opposite the site, the listed buildings of 3 and 5 London Road and adjacent to these are 7-11 London Road which are noted as Buildings of Townscape Merit.

The western edge of the Kendrick Conservation Area terminates to the east of Quadrant House. There is one other listed building close to the site, namely 30 Silver St, formerly the Rising Sun Temperance Tavern.

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Perspective view of principal entrance detail, from the north

Site Constraints

- Planning policy allocation for residential development of between 50 and 85 dwellings under site reference RC4I in the Reading Central Area Action Plan.
- Consideration to proximity of edge of Market Place/ London St Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings and their settings
- Land use and density: development proposals to ensure an efficient and appropriate use of land, relative to the existing context and planning policy allocation limitations. Consider proposals in light of approved scheme
- Scale of the development, including building heights and massing, should be appropriate to the surrounding context
- Amenities of adjacent and nearby residents to be safeguarded. Ensure new development does not have an overbearing effect on, overlook or significantly block light to adjoining properties
- Particular site constraints: frontage onto primary thoroughfares; preferred access onto Silver Street from south-east corner of site

Site Opportunities and Design Aims

- Local distinctiveness: design of development to reinforce the existing character and appearance of the locality
- Quality design: proposals to connect to and integrate with the surrounding area. The design of the development should relate in terms of scale, form and appearance of the locality
- Built form: to be designed to reinforce the public/ private realms
- Public realm: provide clear boundaries between public and private space; create clear routes; avoid 'hidden' spaces and ensure good surveillance to reduce opportunities for crime
- Site orientation: exploit size, nature and orientation of site wherever possible to optimize solar gain and aid energy efficiency.
- Inclusive access: proposed development to be accessible to all members of the community. Design to provide suitable means of access, parking and facilities for people with disabilities



Perspective view of principal corner, from the north



Perspective view of principal corner, from the east

The proposal is for a total of 80 residential apartments of which 30% (24 units) will be affordable.

Market housing is made up of 19x 1-beds, 30x 2-beds and 7x 3-beds. The affordable housing is made up of 12x 1-beds and 12x 2-beds of which 75% will be for affordable rent and 25% in shared ownership. This total mix of beds is compliant with RCAAP Policy RC9 which seeks a maximum of 40% 1-bed units (38.7% included in proposal) and a minimum of 5% 3-bed units (8.7% included in proposal). A detailed Schedule of Areas is included in Appendix 1 of this document.

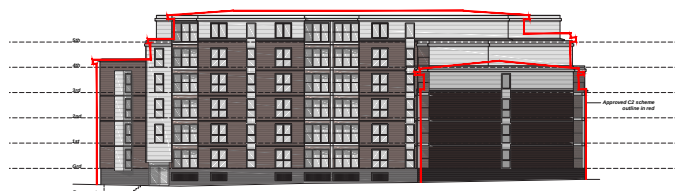


Typical/ 1st to 3rd Floor Plan (NTS): showing proposal compared with the footprint of the approved C2 scheme in red dashed line

The proposal is arranged as an L-shaped footprint with each wing addressing either Crown St or Silver St, leaving the enclosed area within as shared amenity space. Given the predominantly small size of the flats (1 or 2 bedroom) and relatively small scale of the footprint, most apartments are arranged efficiently as single aspect either side of an access corridor looking out towards the aforementioned streets or the inner courtyard. This effectively means that each wing has two 'fronts' with good surveillance over the streets and inner courtyard. Where possible, at the ends and corners of blocks, the apartments have been designed as dual aspect; this arrangement is possible as the stair cores are set in from the ends of the blocks. The higher block facing Crown St (which rises to six stories, plus basement), has lift access within the central stair core.

Comparison with the footprint of the approved C2 scheme (highlighted as a red-dashed line) is provided on the floor plans and in summary it will be seen that:

- the proposal closely follows the approved C2 footprint
- there are both additions and reductions at each floor level but overall the proposed C3 scheme has a lesser floor area compared to the approved scheme of around 185m²
- important reductions include the lack of floor plate projections into the inner courtyard (present in the approved C2 scheme), meaning that window to window distances between new residents and existing neighbours are greater on the proposed scheme



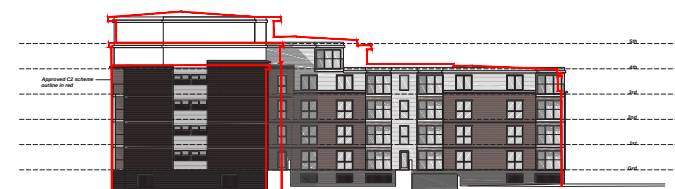
SOUTH ELEVATION (internal court)
scale @ 1:200



Crown St block elevations (NTS): showing proposal compared with the profile of the approved C2 scheme in red line overlay



EAST ELEVATION (on to silver street)
scale @ 1:200



Silver St block elevations (NTS): showing proposal compared with the profile of the approved C2 scheme in red line overlay

The building is arranged as two inter-connected orthogonal blocks with the higher block (onto Crown St) providing most of the market apartments, and the lower block (onto Silver St) providing the affordable apartments. The ground floor level of both blocks is raised by approximately 1200-2000mm above street level (as external levels vary around the site) to allow for a naturally ventilated parking level within a partly submerged basement which extends over the full footprint of the upper floors. A similar arrangement is employed opposite the site at Quadrant Court. A summary of the relative heights follows:

- the Crown St block is largely six stories in height with a roof eaves level at the same height as the approved C2 scheme which is 470mm less than the eaves of Crown House opposite
- the western end of the Crown St block reduces to five then four stories, in acknowledgement of the lower Regents House (at 3 commercial stories) some 35 metres to the west. It is assumed that the infill site between these two sites might mediate this transition further with a similar block height of 4 stories.
- from comparison studies of the South/ courtyard side elevation (proposed and approved C2 schemes) of the Crown St block it will be seen that the extent of the proposed mass is very similar to that of the approved scheme at the western upper levels. On the North/ street elevation side the mass is slightly less at 4th floor and it should be noted that Crown House opposite extends across its full frontage length at six stories, and this is greater than the length of the proposed block
- the Silver St block is predominantly four stories in height stepping up briefly to five stories before the corner/ end of the main block's six stories which echoes the tower of Quadrant Court opposite. The mass is less than that of Quadrant Court which is an equal mix of five and four stories. The eaves heights of the four storey elements of Quadrant house and the proposal are essentially the same
- the reduction in height to four stories acknowledges the more domestic scale of the terrace on Silver St immediately beyond the site. The eaves height of the proposal is lower than the ridge height of the Rising Sun, in common with the approved scheme.

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Aerial view from northwest



Aerial view from southeast



Aerial view from southwest



Aerial view from northeast

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Silver St Street Elevation (NTS), showing proposal in context

Appearance and Materials

The massing of the proposal has been carefully articulated so that the elevations are broken down into discrete vertical elements which run full height to roof level - which together with the recessed balconies create a much more animated and dynamic roofline than is present in the approved scheme. The brick bays of the vertical elements, which generally stop one storey short of roof level, echo the more domestic scale and width of the older properties whilst also reflecting the elevational strategy used at Crown House. One of the more important design features employed on the proposal which contribute to the animated elevational treatment and the varying depth of the proposed facades are the recessed balconies. Every residential unit has the benefit of a balcony giving valuable private outside amenity space, even the ground floor units which are raised above street level, ensuring a good degree of privacy to the residents but also surveillance over the public domain along the frontage.

The proposal will be predominantly finished in a red/orange facing brick in keeping with the character of the area, with the plinth and feature brickwork carried out in a grey brick as is found on a number of older terraces in the vicinity. A grey boarding has been selected to distinguish the entrance tower element, the walls of the uppermost levels and window spandrel panels. A darker grey colour will be carried through to the structural steelwork framing the balconies and all doors/ windows.

The top floor is notionally set back to the same degree as the approved C2 scheme; the use of a different material at this level helps to create a more recessive upper floor. The setback is further emphasized by the introduction of a projecting cornice/ sill at the base of the upper floor setback.

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Ground Floor Plan (NTS): showing proposal in context

Within the westernmost unit of the market housing block, the windows are designed with controlled views away from the rear gardens of Newark Street, in common with the approved C2 scheme. Bedroom windows within the heart of this end unit facing west will be fitted with obscured glass above eye level to protect the amenity of the undeveloped site to the west. Most balconies and windows east of this westernmost bay are set a further 1.4 metres back in the case of windows (and 2.65 metres back in the case of balcony doors) in comparison with the approved C2 scheme, to further protect the amenity of Newark Street residents.

Balconies are considered an essential private amenity space in this scheme and also important contributory elements to the facade articulation. They are particularly suitable on the south and west facades, given this optimum orientation. Since the proposed window/ balcony to existing neighbour window distances are around 40 metres (i.e. well in excess of the 20 metre privacy distance within DM4 and greater than the approved C2 scheme), they are not considered to be detrimental to neighbouring amenity.

The units adjacent the vehicular access have been designed so that the principal windows face east. Second bedroom window openings facing south will be fitted with windows that have obscured glazing and non-opening casements.

Views across Crown St and Silver St to existing residential accommodation are considered acceptable given the public nature of the street and good distances of around 20 metres (as per the approved C2 scheme).

Reference should be made to the Daylight and Sunlight Assessment prepared by GVA, which shows that some reduction in daylight and sunlight is inevitable in such previously under-developed densely urban locations such as this, but that the reduction would not be sufficiently harmful. Similarly from a potential overbearing viewpoint, whilst there is bound to be a significant change from its previous under-developed nature, the proposal is considered to be sufficiently distant from neighbouring buildings to avoid its height or massing being overbearing. The proposal is virtually the same in footprint and massing as the approved C2 scheme.

Access generally

Access to apartment blocks by residents and visitors are anticipated to be mainly from the basement and ground floor car/ cycle parking areas. There are therefore level building entrances on the courtyard side at ground and basement levels. An additional grander entrance is provided on the corner of Crown St/ Silver St as this is considered to be an important urban corner that requires a suitable entrance statement. This access will be designed to be accessible to ambulant disabled visitors in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

Inclusive Access

The following inclusive design strategies have been incorporated into the scheme design and will be developed as the detailed design of the project progresses.

- Car parking surfaces will be smooth and even
- 'Gently sloping ramps' (i.e. of 1:20 fall or less) have been incorporated within the landscaped courtyard to ensure that the approach to the dwelling entrances are safe and convenient for everyone. Access to the base of the ramp from the curtilage of the site is via a shared vehicular/ pedestrian surface
- Entrances into building blocks and individual dwellings (including balconies) will have flush thresholds
- Access within buildings will be designed to accord with Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations

Car parking provision, bicycle and refuse storage

Refer to Transport Statement for car parking matters and Sustainability Statement for refuse matters and how these are addressed in the proposal.

Bicycle storage has been calculated at 0.5 bicycles for each of the 1 and 2-bed dwellings and 1 space for each of the 3-bed dwellings in accordance with Reading BC's Parking SPD; this gives a total minimum provision of 44 spaces. Bicycles have been located within the basement with secure storage facilities.

Bin numbers and storage: these have been calculated in accordance with Reading BC's Waste Management Guidelines for:

- a weekly collection of both Grey/ Landfill and Green/ Recycling bins by privately managed company

The Sustainability Statement shows a sum total requirement of 12 bins x 1100 litre 4 wheeled flat lid type for both landfill and recycling. Refuse storage has been provided in a discreet area of the site, for ease of disposal, collection and maximisation of the remaining usable site area for residents' shared amenity. The bin store is fully contained with roof and secure doors; ventilation is by means of louvred vents within the doors and side walls at high level.

Sustainability and Accessibility

Refer to Transport Statement for sustainability matters and how these are addressed in the proposal and by virtue of its location.

Landscape and External Works Proposals

Overall landscape, external works proposals are described on fabrik's proposal plans

The proposals seek to accommodate and integrate the built development, access, storage and parking functions within the contextual townscape setting.

Surveillance and security

This is inherently provided by the incorporation of balconies and windows on all primary building faces, both overlooking the street and inner courtyard. Spaces have been designed to avoid 'hidden' areas and ensure good surveillance to reduce opportunities for crime.

AW/ 12.06.17

APPENDIX A

- *Schedule of Areas*

Corner of Crown St & Silver St, Reading: Residential Development for Thomas Homes Ltd

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977: Silver Street, Reading
Rev:

Issued scheme date: 08/06/17

Schedule of Areas: Revised Planning Application Submission June 2017

Tenure/ Unit #	Level	Type	Number	Each Sq m	Each Sq Ft	Total Sq m	Total Sq Ft
Affordable							
01,03,06	Ground	1 bed	3	51.4	553	154.2	1,660
04,05		2B/3P -A	2	61.3	660	122.6	1,320
02,		2B/3P -B	1	62.5	673	62.5	673
11,13,16	1 st	1 bed	3	51.4	550	154.2	1,650
14,15		2B/3P -A	2	61.3	660	122.6	1,320
12		2B/3P -B	1	62.5	673	62.5	673
21,23,26	2 nd	1 bed	3	51.4	550	154.2	1,650
24,25		2B/3P -A	2	61.3	660	122.6	1,320
22		2B/3P -B	1	62.5	673	62.5	673
31,33,36	3 rd	1 bed	3	51.4	550	154.2	1,650
34,35		2B/3P -A	2	61.3	660	122.6	1,320
32		2B/3P -B	1	62.5	673	62.5	673
Sub-totals			24			1357.2	14,579
Market							
03,04,08	Ground	1 bed	3	51.4	553	154.2	1,660
02,05,07		2B/3P -B	3	61.3	660	183.9	1,979
09,		2B/4P -C	1	90.6	975	90.6	975
6		2B/4P -A	1	70.6	760	70.6	760
01,		3B/4P -A	1	80.3	864	79.0	864
13,14	1 st	1 bed	2	51.4	553	102.8	1,107
12,15,17		2B/3P -B	3	61.3	660	183.9	1,979
19,		3B/4P -B	1	94.0	1,012	94	1,012
16,18		2B/4P -A	2	70.6	760	141.2	1,520
20		1 bed	1	51.7	556	51.7	556
11		3B/4P -A	1	80.3	864	80.3	864
23,24	2 nd	1 bed	2	51.4	553	102.8	1,107
22,25,27		2B/3P -B	3	61.3	660	183.9	1,979
29,		3B/4P -B	1	94.0	1,012	94	1,012
26,28		2B/4P -A	2	70.6	760	141.2	1,520
30,		1 bed	1	51.7	556	51.7	556
21,		3B/4P -A	1	80.3	864	79.0	864
33,34	3 rd	1 bed	2	51.4	553	102.8	1,107
32,35,37		2B/3P -B	3	61.3	660	183.9	1,979
39,		3B/4P -B	1	94.0	1,012	94	1,012
36,38		2B/4P -A	2	70.6	760	141.2	1,520
40,		1 bed	1	51.7	556	51.7	556
31,		3B/4P -A	1	80.3	864	79.0	864
43,44	4 th	1 bed	2	51.4	553	102.8	1,107
42,45,47		2B/3P -B	3	61.3	660	183.9	1,979
46,48		2B/4P -A	2	70.6	760	141.2	1,520
50		1 bed	1	51.7	556	51.7	556
49		1 bed	1	51.6	555	51.6	555
41		2B/3P -D	1	63.6	685	63.6	685
53,54	5 th	1 bed	2	51.4	553	102.8	1,107
55,57		2B/3P -B	2	61.3	660	122.6	1,320
56,58		2B/4P -A	2	70.6	760	141.2	1,520
60		1 bed	1	51.7	556	51.7	556
Sub-totals			56			3550.5	38,260
Totals			80			4907.7	52,839

Note: 80 units x 30% = 24 Affordable units

31	1 beds	38.7% of total	(must be 40% max)
42	2 beds	52.6% of total	
7	3 beds	8.7% of total	(must be 5% min)

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