

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7 February 2018

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 172118/FUL

Address: 40 Silver Street

Proposal: Demolition of existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 62 studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works.

Applicant: Silver Street Developments Ltd

Date validated: 29 November 2017

Major Application: 13 week target decision 28 February 2018

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE Full Planning Permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development due to the height and bulk of Block A, the cramped layout between the blocks and the dominating design would result in the site appearing over developed and a harmful addition to the streetscene, of detriment to the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy and para. 17 of the NPPF.
2. The proposed development due to the height, position and bulk (of Block A in particular) will result in the loss of amenity for neighbouring residents through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and noise and disturbance arising from the use of this small site to accommodate 62 students. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DM4 of the Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document.
3. The proposed development would lead to a concentration of student accommodation in this area that would detrimentally impact on the lives of adjoining occupiers and would fail to provide a mixed and balanced community contrary to the aims of Policy CS15, NPPF para.50 and emerging Policy H12.
4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure:
 - i) an acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development,
 - ii) a contribution of £5,000 towards the changes to the parking restrictions to facilitate access into the development,
 - iii) a travel plan and highway alterations,
 - iv) a restriction on occupancy to students only,
 - v) implementation of the student accommodation management plan,the proposal fails to provide adequate controls over the use of the development, including its highways and other travel impacts, contrary to Policies DM4, DM12, CS20, CS22, CS23 and CS24 and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011. The proposal also fails to contribute adequately to the employment, skills or training needs of local people with associated socioeconomic harm, contrary to Policies CS3, CS9, DM3 and the Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013).

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. IF1 Positive and Proactive Working - refusal
2. Refused plans

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is on the western side of Silver Street. The site is occupied by a tall single storey commercial building of 610m² with 3 no. pitched roofs, which is the former HSS light industrial warehouse, vacant for a number of years, which largely fills the site. The plot is ca. 23.7m wide to the frontage, 41.2m deep and overlaps slightly behind the vacant adjacent commercial building at 62-68 Silver Street (granted permission for conversion to 16 student flats in 2012 - 110915 - now lapsed).
- 1.2 The site boundary is such that part of the site area is located behind nos. 62-68 Silver Street. To the west of the site is Rimaud House, which is a 3 no. storey residential block at an elevated position approximately 2m higher than the application site. To the north-west the site immediately adjoins no 69 Upper Crown Street, indeed part of the northern flank wall of the existing commercial building forms part of the southern boundary of that property. Immediately to the north is a flatted scheme called Platinum Apartments which is 2.5 storeys with a third floor of accommodation in the roof, which has private amenity space and parking to the rear (west).
- 1.3 The existing building is set back from the highway edge by just over 7m in contrast to the adjacent buildings, which are set much closer to the highway edge.
- 1.4 At present vehicular access to the site is from Silver Street via two dropped kerbs at either end of the site's frontage. Pedestrian access is also via the site's frontage on Silver Street. There is existing parking to the front (7 no. spaces) and a layby by the road. Silver Street is a one way street, with vehicles passing in a north to south direction.
- 1.5 The area is predominantly residential with a mix of traditional terraces and semis, but there are some commercial premises in the area. There is no one single prevailing architectural style which characterises the area, but the majority of the buildings are traditional brick and tile construction. There are a range of different building styles, heights, ages of property and materials, with large scale modern flat blocks located north of the site towards the town centre, and around the site 3-4 storey flats, 2-3 storey courtyard offices (Windsor Square) and to the south 2-3 storey Victorian terraces.
- 1.6 The site lies within an area that has less than 10% tree canopy cover as identified within the Council's adopted Tree Strategy and within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and area of Archaeological Potential as identified within the Council's Sites and Detailed Policies Proposals Map.



Site Plan - not to scale

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Full Planning Permission is sought for demolition of the existing commercial building, which takes up most of the site, to replace it with a part 4 and part 3 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 62 studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works. The scheme would take the form of two wings (Blocks A & B) running almost parallel to each other between 16 metres and 10 metres apart with the taller Block A on the Silver Street frontage. The two wings would be connected by a single storey with basement link on the north boundary of the site. The section drawing at the end of this report illustrates this.
- 2.2 The proposed external surfaces are shown to be grey multi facing brick, zinc cladding to the dormer and roof and aluminium window frames.
- 2.3 The development would be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy. The CIL regulations allow the floor area of relevant existing buildings to be discounted from the chargeable area provided the premises have been in active use for 6 months from the last 3 years. It is apparent that the site has been vacant therefore if permission were to be granted a CIL of £289,719 would be charged to the total floor area of the proposed building.
- 2.4 Supporting information and plans submitted:

Design & Access Statement Version 1.3
 Landscape Statement
 Planning Statement
 Ground Investigation Summary
 Below Ground Drainage Strategy
 Daylight & Sunlight Study
 Purpose Built Student Accommodation Management Plan
 Planning & Heritage Statement

Plans:

PL_001 Rev B Location Plan
 PL_002 Rev B Site Plan
 PL_009 Rev B Sections
 PL_100 Rev B Lower Ground Floor Plan

PL_101 Rev B Ground Floor Plan
PL_102 Rev B 1st Floor Plan
PL_103 Rev B 2nd Floor Plan
PL_104 Rev B 3rd Floor Plan
PL_105 Rev B Roof Plan
PL_106 Rev B Elevations - sheet 1
PL_107 Rev B Elevations - sheet 2
PL_108 Rev B Elevations - sheet 3
2892 201 Planting Plan

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 150885/FUL - The proposed redevelopment of 40 Silver Street, demolition of existing light industrial building and erection of 14 flats (8x2bed & 6x1 bed, including 14 parking spaces and landscaping - Approved 21/3/16
- There have also been pre-application enquiries including one for the current scheme.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Statutory:

No statutory consultations were required given the nature of the application.

4.2 Non-statutory:

- **RBC Transport Development Control/SUDS**
This application is for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey building to provide 62 studio rooms for student housing with associated ancillary services and landscaping works.

The application site is outside the town centre area but is within close proximity to frequent premier bus routes that run to and from the town centre and Reading University. The site is therefore accessible to good public transport links, town centre services and employment areas.

Parking Provision

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. The parking standards set for Halls of Residence located in this zone are 1 space per FTE member of staff and no requirements for students, however, there are no adopted parking standards for student accommodation which are provided "off campus" and operate as independent providers of higher education accommodation. Therefore, an application of this type is likely to be considered on its own merits considering local circumstances including access to public transport provisions and the availability of parking and on-street regulations.

The site is proposed to be car-free aside from 3 parking spaces set into the building frontage will allow vehicles to service the site including loading and unloading of student belongings at the start and end of the university year.

The development will operate with 'no-car' leases precluding students from bringing a car to the site or to central Reading.

The A327 Silver Street is part of the "A" road network carrying between 9,000 and 10,000 vehicles a day. Silver Street has "No Waiting" parking restrictions (DYL) preventing on-street parking and peak hour loading bans between 8.15-9.15am and 4.00-6.15pm. Therefore, any overflow in parking would not affect flow of traffic on the classified road network. The residential roads (adopted roads) surrounding the site consists of a mixture of double yellow lines and permit holder only parking bays.

Considering the proximity of the site to the town centre and given that Silver Street has extensive parking restrictions which are enforced by Reading Borough Council, the non-provision of student parking spaces is acceptable. However, three parking spaces at the front of the property will be available for loading / unloading on move in and move out days, which is discussed later in the report.

The site will be managed by a 24/7 management team consisting of 1 full time member of staff and 3 part time members of staff. It is indicated that the site will be managed in conjunction with the recently approved scheme by the same developer at 79 Silver Street. In accordance with the Council's adopted standards, parking provision for staff parking should be made within the site. Therefore, the three parking spaces at the front of the property could be available for staff use outside of the moving in and out periods.

Access & Servicing

A layby currently runs across the site frontage and there are currently two access points which are protected by "No Waiting" parking restrictions (double yellow lines). The applicant has not demonstrated the proposed access arrangements on the submitted plans. However, the proposal includes the provision of 3 parking spaces which will require introduction a new footway crossover and changes to the existing no waiting restrictions. This process involves changes to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which will require approval by the Traffic Management Sub Committee (TSUB) and will be subject to statutory consultation. The Council's Network Management team would need to be consulted on this to advise on the necessary processes to follow. Any costs associated with the changes to the TRO and on-street signage and markings would have to be paid upfront by the applicant. The costs associated with this process are in the region of £5,000 and the development could not be implemented until the process has been followed. The Traffic Regulation Order contribution should form part of the S106 obligations and the full access arrangements should be covered by condition.

On-street refuse collection will occur and bins will be collected weekly on a contract with a private or council operated refuse collection. The refuse store is located to the side of the site, approximately 15m from the highway. The management team will bring the bins to a holding area at the front of the site on collection days to ensure easy collection by the refuse collectors. Once the bins have been collected they will be returned to the secure bin store at the rear of the site by the management team. This arrangement is acceptable.

Arrival & Departure

Given that students will be prohibited from bringing vehicles to the site, the proposed uses would attract very little in the way of vehicular movements. However, the peak demand for parking spaces will be during the arrival and departure periods when students are moving into and departing from the site.

A Student Management Plan has been submitted with this application which outlines the move in process at the start and end of term times. Student arrivals will be a managed process over two weekends each academic year. The three available parking spaces at the front of the property will be available for loading / unloading on move in and move out days. A pre-booked timeslot approach will be implemented by the management team to use the parking spaces at the front of the site during the moving in period to facilitate the process and minimise the highway impact.

Sustainable Travel

Travel plans are used to initiate modal shift away from the private car and towards a more sustainable modes. A framework for the Travel Plan has been included within the Student Management Plan which should be formalised prior to occupation.

The travel plan measures include:

1. The appointment of a travel Plan co-ordinator which will be funded for a period of five years after first occupation of the site.
2. Provision of sustainable travel packs to all residents including bus network and cycle network maps
3. Restrictions in tenancy agreement for ownership of car in Reading
4. Student travel surveys
5. Monitoring of cycle parking provisions

In accordance with the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 cycle parking space per 3 staff and 1 space per 5 students. The plans indicate an on-site cycle store within a covered area to the rear of the site equipped with sheffield cycle stands. The proposed cycle storage provision complies with the Council's adopted standards and is acceptable.

Construction

The applicant should be aware that there would be significant transport implications constructing the proposed building in this prominent location. Any full application would be conditioned to ensure a Construction Method Statement is submitted and approved before any works commence on-site.

SuDs

The application is submitted with a Sustainable Drainage application which is acceptable subject to conditions.

- **RBC Environmental Protection**

Concerns exist for noise impact on development: A noise assessment should be submitted in support of applications for new residential proposed in noisy areas.

The noise assessment will be assessed against the recommendations for internal noise levels within dwellings and external noise levels within gardens / balconies in accordance with BS 8233:2014 and WHO guidelines for Community Noise. The report should identify any mitigation measures that are necessary to ensure that the recommended standard is met.

Where appropriate, the noise assessment data should also include noise events (LAMax) and the design should aim to prevent noise levels from noise events exceeding 45dB within bedrooms at night. Noise levels above 45dB are linked with sleep disturbance.

Internal noise criteria (taken from BS8233:2014)

Room	Design criteria	Upper limit
Bedrooms (23:00 to 07:00)	<30dB LAeq,8hour	
Living rooms (07:00 - 23:00)	<35dB LAeq,16hour	
Gardens & Balconies	<50dB LAeq,T	<55dB LAeq,T

As a noise assessment has not been submitted and the proposed development is by a busy road, I recommend a condition is attached to any consent requiring a noise assessment to be submitted prior to commencement of development and any approved mitigation measures implemented prior to occupation to show that recommended noise levels in the table above can be met.

The noise assessment will need to identify the external noise levels impacting on the proposed site.

Noise mitigation is likely to focus on the weak point in the structure; glazing. Given that the acoustic integrity would be compromised should the windows be opened, ventilation details must also be provided, where mitigation relies on closed windows. Ventilation measures should be selected which do not allow unacceptable noise ingress and should provide sufficient ventilation to avoid the need to open windows in hot weather, however non-openable windows are not considered an acceptable solution due to the impact on living standards.

Conditions regarding sound insulation from external noise, implementation of approved noise mitigation scheme are recommended.

Air Quality - Although the proposed development is within the AQMA, nearby monitoring shows that air quality is well below the objective levels and the scale of the development is below the thresholds likely to have an adverse impact. Therefore it will not be necessary to carry out an air quality assessment for this development.

Contaminated Land - The development lies on the site of an historic works which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.

Ideally a 'phase 1' desk study should be submitted with applications for developments on sites with potentially contamination to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether further investigation is necessary.

Investigation must be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action.

Conditions are recommended to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

Construction and demolition phases - concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).

Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be

harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability. Conditions are recommended.

- **RBC Planning Natural Environment Team**

As with previous applications on the site, there is an expectation that suitable tree planting is proposed on the Silver Street frontage.

The site plans shows 5 trees in front of the building, the elevations show three trees (two in front of the building and one on the other side of the access) and the landscape plans show four trees (three in front of the building and one on the other side of the access). It is assumed that the landscape plan reflects the tree planting actually proposed.

There are various potential issues with the proposed tree planting on the frontage and a response is required to these:

- It is very difficult to tell but the trees appear to be either right on the front boundary or straddling the boundary with the Council pavement. It would seem that the tree pit (see comments below) would therefore need to be partly on Council land. Clarification is required.
- The trees are located between car park spaces which raises two concerns:
 - How will the trees be physically protected to prevent accidental damage from vehicles and do they pose any issue with visibility splays?
 - No tree pit drawings/specifications appear to have been proposed which is required to show that these can feasibly be provided. These should use root cells to provide sufficient soil volume to allow the trees to mature and root barriers to prevent damage to adjacent hard surfacing
- It appears there is direct conflict between the drainage strategy (surface water chamber) and the northern-most tree. Comment is required on this.
- The first floor extends further towards Silver Street than the ground floor resulting in potential conflict with tree canopies in the future. What is the distance from the centre of the tree pit (trunk position) and front elevation (nearest point to Silver Street)?
- In terms of the proposed species, the *Betula Jacquemontii* (arguably overused in landscape schemes) should be replaced with a native Birch (or other species) to improve biodiversity.

- **RBC Ecology**

The application site comprises a single-storey industrial unit. It is proposed to demolish the unit and to replace it with a 4-storey building providing up to 62 studio dwellings. Considering the building's structure (the roof is unlined with no void, and there are rooflights on the rear elevation [as shown in the Design and Access statement photographs]) and the poor suitability of the surrounding habitats for use by commuting or foraging bats, it is unlikely that the demolition will adversely affect bats. As such, since the works are unlikely to adversely affect any protected species, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

Moreover, the proposed landscaping scheme (including a green wall, trees, ornamental plantings and climbers) will be improve the wildlife opportunities offered by the site (the design which now includes a much more intensive landscaping scheme overcomes previous concerns about the tree planting along the frontage).

Silver Street hosts a large population of swifts which nest under the eaves of the houses. Swifts numbers have been declining in recent years in part due to the loss of and lack of nesting sites. As such, and in accordance with the NPPF

(paragraph 109 of which states that the planning system should provide “net gains in biodiversity where possible”) and Policy CS36 of the Core Strategy opportunities to enhance the site for swifts would need to be provided. A cheap and easy way of doing this is to provide swift bricks in the walls of the new buildings, see: http://www.swift-conservation.org/swift_bricks.htm for details. A condition requiring the proposed measures and swift boxes to be provided was recommended.

- **Berkshire Archaeology**

There are potential archaeological implications associated with this proposal. The site is located on the line of the civil war defences as shown on a 1643 map. The location of these defences has been proven by previous excavations immediately to the east, west and north of the proposal site. These excavations recorded a large ditch and other features possibly associated with the defences. In addition to the civil war defences the site lies within an area of medieval potential, located on the periphery of the medieval town. A medieval tiler was discovered during excavations at Jubilee Square about 400m to the north. With the discovery of the civil war defences adjacent to the proposal site there is the potential that similar buried remains may be present at 40 Silver Street. A scheme of work consisting of trial trenching after demolition of the existing building would allow the potential for and significance of any buried features or deposits to be assessed.

A condition is recommended requiring an archaeological investigation is attached to any planning permission granted, to mitigate the impact of the development.

4.3 Public consultation:

59 properties were consulted by neighbour consultation letter. A site notice was displayed. 4 objections were received from residents living in Platinum Apartments, Stirling House, Windsor Square and Upper Crown Street. The comments are, in summary:

- Platinum Apartments will be overshadowed by the proposed development's Block A in height and depth. This raises substantial concern as the overdevelopment of the area fails to take into consideration the restrictions on the provisions of daylight reaching surrounding properties and the adequacy of the daylight survey is questioned.

The proposed moving in and out arrangements for the development are vague and need to be re-presented to prove their clarity and effectiveness. The provision of only 3 parking spaces which directly front on to a busy one way route from the city centre are inadequate for these numerous manoeuvres. The route is also regularly used by emergency vehicles. Road safety will be compromised and congestion will be further exacerbated by the similar lack of drop off and pick up facilities directly opposite at the developer's 79 Silver Street site.

As the developer is offering luxury student accommodation it is a fair assumption in the 100 plus occupants at the two sites several will be affluent enough to own their own car. Parking in the Katesgrove area is problematic for the local community without additional potential pressures and nuisance impacting upon council tax-paying residents. Normal expectations with regard to parking should be applied to this development. It is unrealistic to expect particularly low levels of car ownership and use.

Approval of another large student residence on Silver Street would change the neighbourhood's character and fundamentally alter the shape and balance of the local community. It would diminish the quality of life of existing residents and harm many people's enjoyment of the area. Such being the case, the application flies in the face of the stated intention in the Reading Borough LDF (para 2.11) that planning in an urban area such as Reading should be framed by overarching themes including improving quality of life and creating sustainable communities.

- Opposed to the use with too many studios and student rooms provided. Compromise of security and privacy as well blocking the day light into the property and back garden. Parking problems. Noise and nuisance caused. Harm to property value.
- This is already a very busy area and residents in Silver Street already park in the parking spaces in Windsor Square. Without adequate parking of the new development the situation will become untenable.
- The proposed use; loss of light, overlooking and loss of privacy, lack of parking

Ward Councillor Rose Williams also commented.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS4 Accessibility and the intensity of development
- CS5 Inclusive Access
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS9 Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
- CS11 Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
- CS23 Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans
- CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
- CS26 Network and Hierarchy of Centres
- CS31 Additional and Existing Community Facilities
- CS32 Impacts on Community Facilities
- CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources
- CS36 Biodiversity and Geology
- CS38 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

- SD1 Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development

- DM1 Adaptation to Climate Change
- DM3 Infrastructure Planning
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- DM13 Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres
- DM18 Tree Planting
- DM19 Air Quality
- SA14 Cycle Routes

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Revised SPD Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)
- Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Principle of use/location
- b) Design quality
- c) Density and mix
- d) Impact on amenities of adjoining occupiers and future tenants
- e) Highways and transport issues
- f) Landscape
- g) Other (S106, CIL, noise, drainage)

a) Principle of use/location

6.2 The existing commercial building is of poor quality and its replacement with a new building that improved the appearance of the area would be welcome.

6.3 The site is located on the edge of what was once quite a large area of industrial use but is now dominated by residential uses with some business, commercial and community uses. It is an accessible location on the edge of the town centre with its many facilities, shops and public transport options. The redevelopment of this brownfield site would represent a sustainable development and an effective reuse of the site, removing commercial development from a residential area, which would accord with national and local policies, in particular Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, Core Strategy Policy CS14, and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy SD1.

6.4 The site has been vacant for a number of years and no viable commercial user has come forward. Core Strategy Policy CS11 considers when assessing proposals outside of the Core Employment Areas that would result in loss of employment land whether a site is accessible by a choice of means of transport, if continued employment use is viable or detrimental to the amenity and character of the area. The principle of the loss of the commercial use for residential use was accepted with the granting of planning permission for application 150885/FUL.

6.5 There is no specific policy relating to the location or provision of student accommodation although the draft Local Plan includes Policy H12: Student

Accommodation, states that *“New student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation. There will be a presumption against proposals for new student accommodation on other sites unless it can be clearly demonstrated how the proposal meets a need that cannot be met on the above sites.”* At the time of making this recommendation this policy should be given limited weight when assessing the principle of the proposed development.

- 6.6 The conclusion is that there are no current relevant policies or material considerations that would count against the principal of changing the use of the site from a commercial employment use to student accommodation. However, the acceptability of the proposed development as submitted now needs to be assessed for compliance with other adopted Policies relating to the character of the area, quality of the layout and design, residential amenities and transport, which are now discussed below.

b) Design quality

- 6.7 Policy CS7 requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials.

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to a number of urban design objectives. This part of the report will look at the layout, scale and architectural detail of the proposed scheme.

- 6.8 The proposed scheme is for a single building linked at ground and basement level to give the appearance of being two buildings. Block A, would appear to have a pitched roof with dormers when viewed from ground level from the west and east but would have a sunken section between the dormers in an attempt to minimise the apparent height and bulk of the building. At its highest above ground level it would be 13 metres with lower eaves (9 metres) on the Silver Street frontage than at the rear. Three parking spaces are shown in a recess beneath the first floor.
- 6.9 The existing commercial building on the site is approximately 2 domestic storeys in height and when viewed in the context of the surrounding taller buildings is incongruous in the streetscene. The extant planning permission granted for application 150885/FUL for residential development proposed an acceptable building 3.5 storeys in height. By contrast, the proposal at 4 storeys (plus roof) would be significantly higher than the buildings on either side as can be seen from the Silver Street elevation below.



6.10 The existing neighbouring buildings on either side attempt to reflect a more traditional design approach with domestic sized windows and small dormer features, which fits in with the proportions of Silver Street. The proposed approach seeks to introduce a modern design with emphasis on rectangular forms with large window openings. In isolation the design is not displeasing but it would appear odd in this context.

6.11 It is relevant that the scheme that has just been approved for the same developer at 79 Silver Street has a similar architectural style but a comparison of the illustrations provided demonstrates how that scheme was found to be acceptable whereas the bulky design now proposed across the street is unacceptable in context.



79 Silver Street - 170685



40 Silver Street proposal

6.12 Block B at the rear is 3.5 storey (c.8 metres high above ground level) high above ground level and with a narrower footprint. The two blocks are angled so the gap between them tapers from 15 metres wide at the north end of the site down to 10 metres wide at the southern end where the site overlaps the rear of 62-68 Silver Street. This neighbouring site is currently vacant and was last in employment use but was granted planning permission to convert to student residential use in 2012. That permission has now lapsed but the potential for this site to come back into use either for light industry or residential use via the current prior approval process is relevant when considering how close proposed Block B is to this site.

6.13 The central courtyard is shown to be pleasantly laid out but at 170 Square metres would be inadequately sized to cater for the proposed 62 students. Also, the short distance between the two blocks would make this space feel

very over looked and dominated by the mass of the buildings. Block A's elevation would be about 14 metres high on the east side and Block B's elevation would be 11 metres high on the west side. The illustrations shown below suggest how this may appear:



West facing rear of Block A



East facing front of Block B

- 6.14 In conclusion it is considered that the height and depth of Block A would be excessive and the bulky design would be exaggerated further by the repetition of large rectangular openings and the use of dormers that give a top heavy appearance. Block B benefits from being less high and deep but the design still gives an appearance of bulk which would appear incongruous in the cramped courtyard setting. Due to their proximity the two blocks with the link building would read as one block from many aspects so it is considered that the proposal would be an overdevelopment of the site. The proposed development would fail to secure the high quality design required by Policy CS7, with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the area.

c) **Density and mix**

- 6.15 Policy CS15 explains that an "appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by: -
- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
 - Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;
 - The need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and
 - The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures. The aim being, in accordance to long standing national planning policy and now Paragraph 50 of the National Planning Policy Framework, to provide mixed and balanced communities.

- 6.16 It is also the intention of emerging local plan policy H12 to control where student housing will be provided in the future to prevent the over-concentration of student accommodation which needs to be balanced against other types of housing. It was found to be inappropriate to apply this policy against the issue of the principle of the proposed development as the applicant is not currently required to demonstrate the need for it. However, the background to the policy refers to the need to retain sites for general housing too. The supporting text explains "*Whilst it is likely that purpose built student housing can free up some existing homes to meet more general needs, there are many sites where development for students prevents a potential housing site being used to help to meet the more*

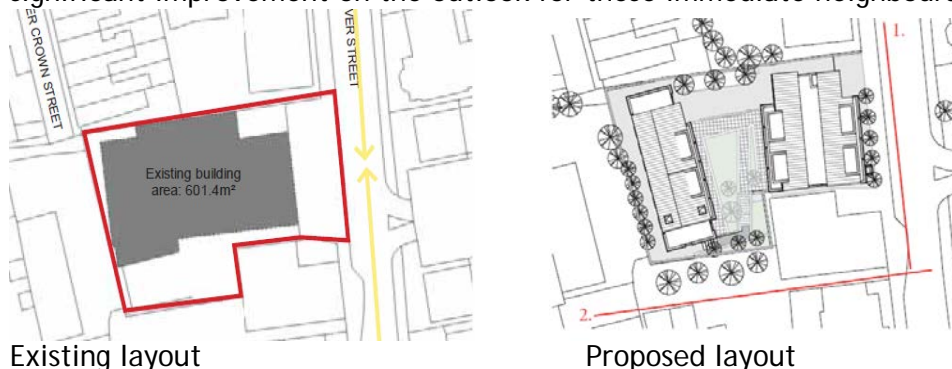
pressing needs for general housing, including affordable housing. Development for students should therefore be limited to established student locations, unless a specific need for a development in a certain location can be clearly demonstrated”.

- 6.17 With 62 studios on a site with an area of 0.1113 ha the resulting density is 558 dwellings per ha. For this edge of town centre site a high density is not unusual (the approved residential scheme has a density of 125 dph) and this density for student accommodation could work if other policy considerations were met. However, there is a significant concern that the potential concentration of student accommodation in this area, with 79 Silver Street (56 rooms) across the road and the 99 room student accommodation to the north on Crown Street, will detrimentally impact on the lives of adjoining occupiers and by failing to provide a mixed and balanced community would be contrary to Policy CS15, NPPF para.50 and emerging Policy H12.

d) Impact on amenities of adjoining occupiers and future tenants

- 6.18 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that development should not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight, visual dominance and overbearing, noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, crime and safety. Policies CS7 and CS15 also refer to the need to ensure that the amenities of neighbours are not significantly harmed.

- 6.19 The existing building is approximately two domestic storeys high and at the boundaries with adjacent residential development presents a dominant and overbearing relationship, particularly on the northern boundary with Upper Crown Street and Platinum Apartments. The proposed development would radically change this relationship and in plan form, see below, could be a significant improvement on the outlook for these immediate neighbours.



- 6.20 However, due to the proposed height and mass of the new buildings, more residents living nearby would find their outlook and amenities harmed through either loss of light, over bearing development and loss of privacy. This would particularly apply to residents living to the north of the site in Upper Crown Street and Platinum House and residents that might be introduced if 62-68 Silver Street were to change to residential use. Rimaud House, to the west, is a part three, part two storey building set on higher ground than the application site so that relationship is of less cause for concern.

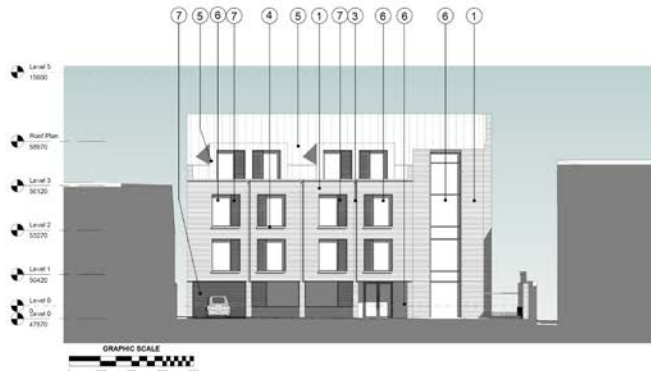
- 6.21 The submitted Daylight & Sunlight Study analyses the impact of the proposed development against a baseline of the existing buildings and that approved by the previous planning permission. This confirms that the properties most impacted would be 69 Upper Crown Street and south facing units in Platinum Apartments. Of the 10 windows in these properties overlooking the site 5 would suffer an adverse impact and in 3 cases an over 40% reduction in daylight is anticipated.
- 6.22 The amenities of occupiers of the development also need to be considered. The proposed room sizes and facilities to be provided are acceptable with the smallest room being 17 sq.m rising to the largest being 32 sq.m. A window-less common room (67 sq.m) is provided in the lower ground floor as well as bin and bicycle storage rooms. However, as referred to above, the outdoor amenity area is cramped and with 62 studios on site it is unlikely that this area will prove to be more than a strip of landscaped setting for the buildings with little attraction for use as sitting out space.
- e) **Highways and transport issues**
- 6.23 The transport comments are provided in full above. The nature of the proposed use, the proximity of the site to facilities and public transport routes, the ability to provide some on-site parking and a management plan to describe how students will be instructed to access the site have led to the conclusion that there are no transport objections to the proposal subject to a number of planning conditions to ensure all happens as planned and a S106 agreement to secure payment towards road restriction works and compliance with the Student Travel Plan.
- f) **Landscape**
- 6.24 The natural environment officer has raised a number of questions about the detail of the proposed landscaping. The agent has not responded to these questions. However, there is no fundamental objection to the landscape scheme as proposed and the additional tree planting on the Silver Street frontage is welcomed. This aspect of the proposal would be acceptable subject to conditions to ensure the landscaping is carried out as proposed and to secure additional detail.
- g) **Other (S106, drainage, equalities)**
- 6.25 **Planning Obligations**
Had the planning application been found acceptable negotiations for a S106 legal agreement would have progressed to secure:
- i) an acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development,
 - ii) a travel plan and highway alterations,
 - iii) a restriction on occupancy to students only,
 - iv) implementation of the student accommodation management plan,
- The absence of such an agreement would form a further reason for refusal of planning permission.
- 6.26 **Drainage**
The sustainable drainage details submitted have been assessed and confirmed to be acceptable.
- 6.27 **Equalities impact assessment**
In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected

characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

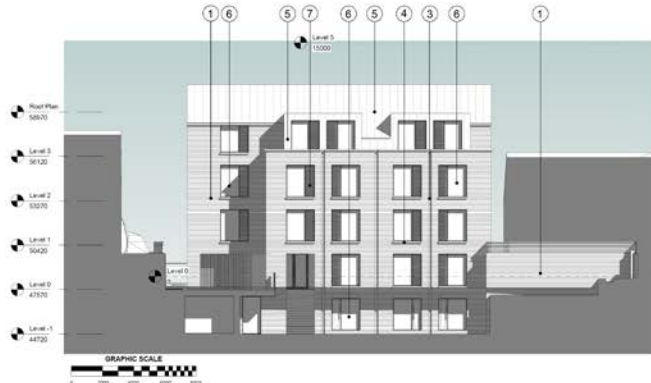
7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed redevelopment is not considered to comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that it should be refused planning permission for failing to provide an acceptable design, for leading to a loss of amenity for neighbours and future tenants, for failing to provide for a mixed and balanced community and for the absence of a S106 legal agreement.

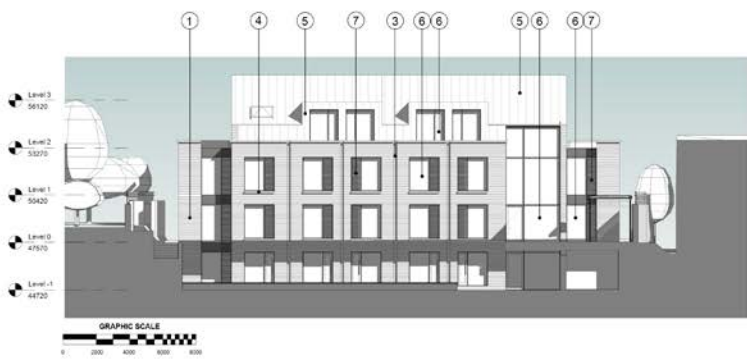
Case Officer: Alison Amoah



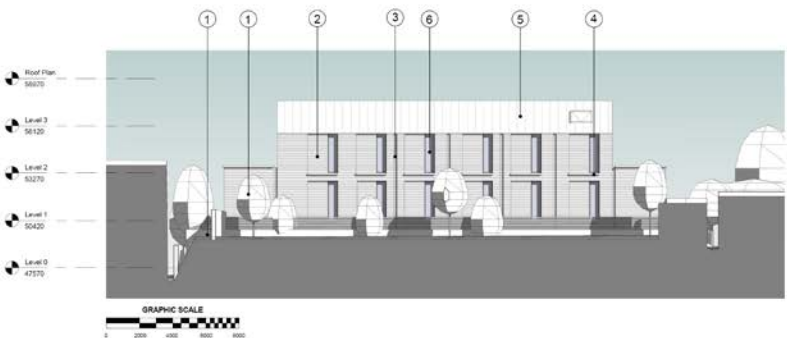
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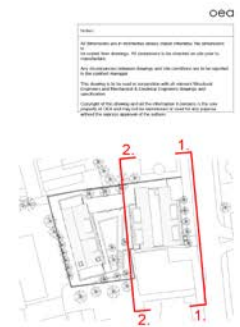
2 Elevation 2 - Block A Courtyard
1: 100



1 Elevation 3 - Block B Courtyard
1: 100



2 Elevation 4 - Block B West
1: 100



External Finishes

- | Ref. | Description |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Fair Faced Brick |
| 2. | Feature Brick Panel |
| 3. | Recessed Joint in Brick |
| 4. | Brick Cill |
| 5. | Standing Seam Zinc Roof |
| 6. | PPC Aluminium Window |
| 7. | PPC Aluminium Ventilation Louvres |
| 8. | Glazed Balustrade |

PLANNING

Silver St
Developments Ltd

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Proj No:	Elevations - Sheet 1
Proj Title:	40 Silver Street, Reading
Scale:	As indicated @ A1
Date:	15/06/17
Proj No:	PL_108

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External Finishes

- | Ref. | Description |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Fair Faced Brick |
| 2. | Feature Brick Panel |
| 3. | Recessed Joint in Brick |
| 4. | Brick Cill |
| 5. | Standing Seam Zinc Roof |
| 6. | PPC Aluminium Window |
| 7. | PPC Aluminium Ventilation Louvres |
| 8. | Glazed Balustrade |

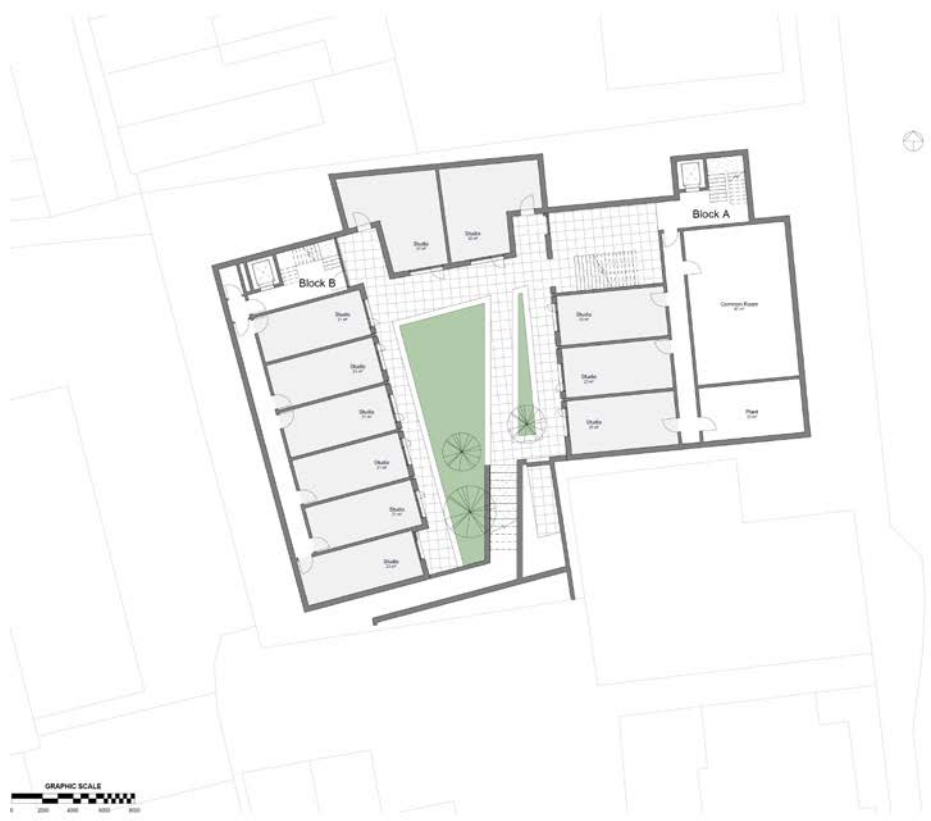
PLANNING

Silver St
Developments Ltd

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Proj No:	Elevations - Sheet 2
Proj Title:	40 Silver Street, Reading
Scale:	As indicated @ A1
Date:	15/06/17
Proj No:	PL_107

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1 Level -1
1:100

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PLANNING

Item	Description	Area (sqm)	Volume (cu m)
1	Garage Floor	1000	1000
2	Plant Room	100	100
3	Storage	200	200
4	Office	1000	1000
5	Office	1000	1000
6	Office	1000	1000
7	Office	1000	1000
8	Office	1000	1000
9	Office	1000	1000
10	Office	1000	1000

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Project Information:

Project Name: Lower Ground Floor Plan
 Address: 40 Silver Street, Reading
 Scale: 1:100 @ A1
 Date: 15/04/17
 Drawing No: PL_100
 Revision: 1

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1 Level 0
1:100

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PLANNING

Item	Description	Area (sqm)	Volume (cu m)
1	Garage Floor	1000	1000
2	Plant Room	100	100
3	Storage	200	200
4	Office	1000	1000
5	Office	1000	1000
6	Office	1000	1000
7	Office	1000	1000
8	Office	1000	1000
9	Office	1000	1000
10	Office	1000	1000

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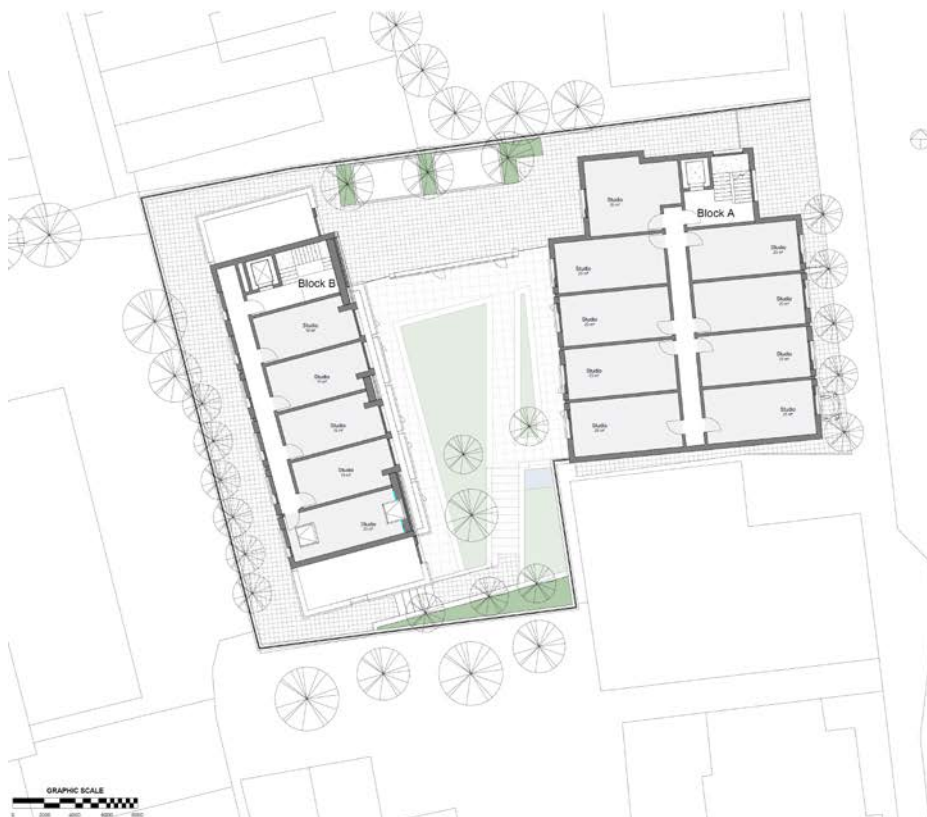
Project Information:

Project Name: Ground Floor Plan
 Address: 40 Silver Street, Reading
 Scale: 1:100 @ A1
 Date: 15/04/17
 Drawing No: PL_100
 Revision: 1

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Level 1
1:100



Level 2
1:100

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 2. All dimensions are to be checked on site.
 3. The architect is not responsible for the construction of the building.
 4. The architect is not responsible for the construction of the building.
 5. The architect is not responsible for the construction of the building.

PLANNING

1	Level 1 Floor Plan	06/17/17	06
2	Level 2 Floor Plan	06/17/17	06

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 40 Street Street, Reading
 MA 01867
 Tel: 978.271.1717
 Fax: 978.271.1717
 www.oea.com

Project No: 161 Floor Plan
 Address: 40 Street Street, Reading
 Scale: 1:100 @ A1
 Date: 06/17/17
 Project: PL_102
 Sheet: B

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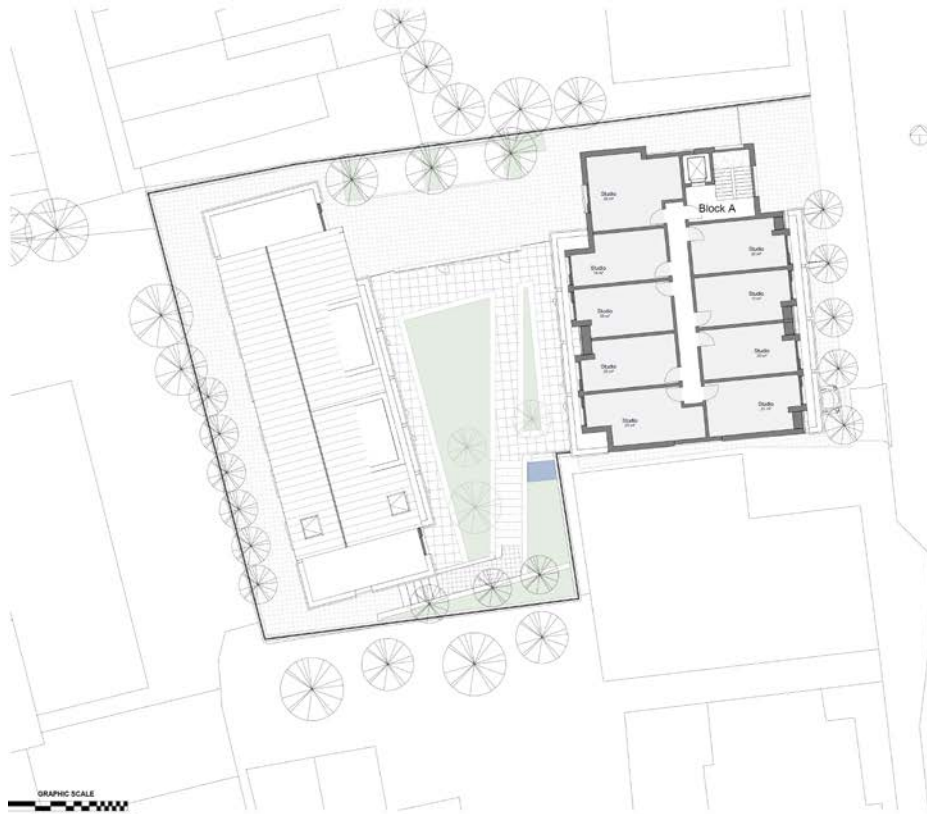
PLANNING

1	Level 1 Floor Plan	06/17/17	06
2	Level 2 Floor Plan	06/17/17	06

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Project No: 40 Street Street, Reading
 Address: 40 Street Street, Reading
 Scale: 1:100 @ A1
 Date: 06/17/17
 Project: PL_102
 Sheet: B

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Level 3
1:100

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 2. All dimensions are to be taken from the finished face of the work.
 3. All dimensions are to be taken from the finished face of the work.
 4. All dimensions are to be taken from the finished face of the work.
 5. All dimensions are to be taken from the finished face of the work.
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PLANNING

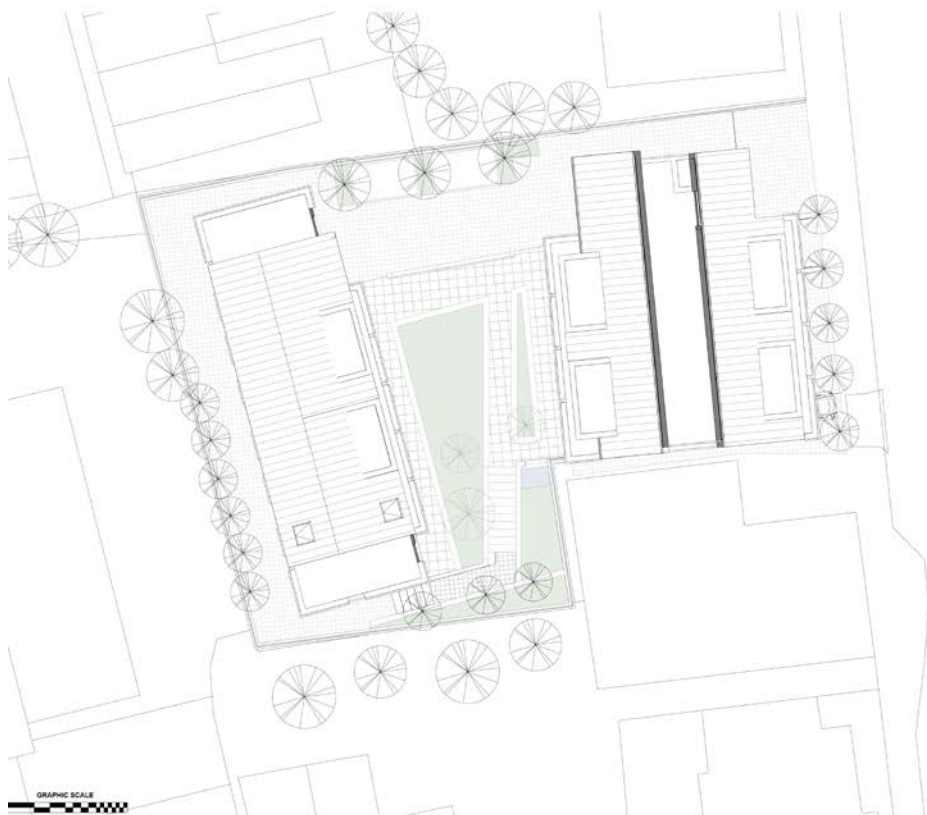
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8	Level 3	1:100	PG
9	Level 3	1:100	PG
10	Level 3	1:100	PG

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Project Name: 2nd Floor Plan
 Plot No: 42 Silver Street, Reading
 Scale: 1:100 @ A1
 Date: 06/12/17
 Project: PL_104
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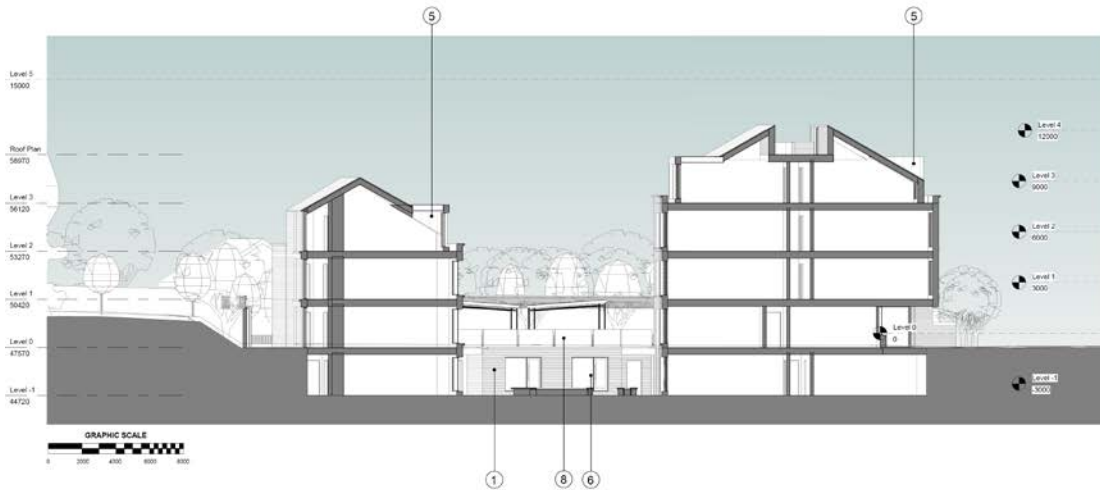
Roof Plan
1:100

PLANNING

1	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
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3	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
4	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
5	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
6	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
7	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
8	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
9	Roof Plan	1:100	PG
10	Roof Plan	1:100	PG

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Project Name: Roof Plan
 Plot No: 42 Silver Street, Reading
 Scale: 1:100 @ A1
 Date: 06/12/17
 Project: PL_104
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1 Section A - A
1 : 100

Notes

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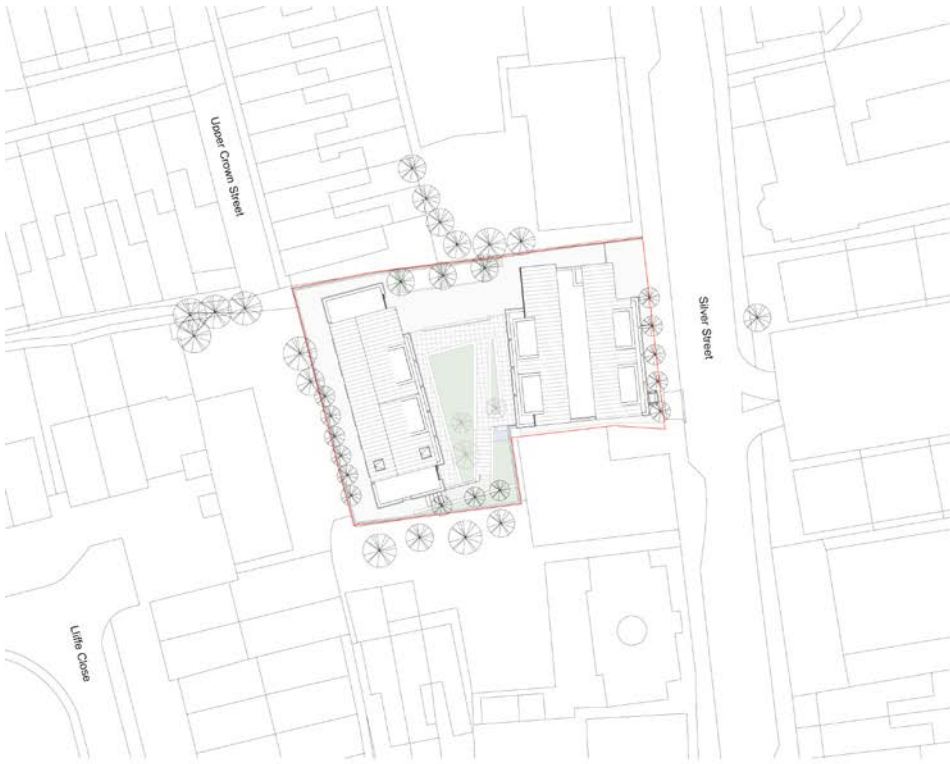
External Finishes

Ref.	Description
1.	Fair Faced Brick
2.	Feature Brick Panel
3.	Recessed Joint in Brick
4.	Brick Cill
5.	Standing Seam Zinc Roof
6.	PPC Aluminium Window
7.	PPC Aluminium Ventilation Louvre
8.	Glazed Balustrade

PLANNING

Ref.	Description	Area (sqm)	Volume (cu m)
1	Open for development	25,127	0
2	Residential	25,127	25,127
3	Site Area	25,127	25,127

Section



Site Plan
1 : 200

Notes

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PLANNING

Ref.	Description	Area (sqm)	Volume (cu m)
1	Open for development	25,127	0
2	Residential	25,127	25,127
3	Site Area	25,127	25,127

Site Plan

Site No.	40 Silver Street, Reading
Scale	1 : 200 @ A1
Drawn	10/04/17
Check	13/04/17
Rev	PL_002

Site Plan