

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4th March 2020	ITEM NO. 13
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Ward: Abbey

App No: 191659/REG3

Address: Former Reading Family Centre North Street

Proposal: Two buildings of four and five storeys providing 41 dwellings as affordable housing units including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access, parking and hard and soft landscaping

Date validated: 28/10/2019

Application target decision date: 27/01/2020 **Extension of time:** 25/03/2020

RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main agenda report but with the addition of the following conditions:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of an Arboricultural Method Statement
- No removal of any additional trees
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a hard and soft landscaping scheme (including boundary treatments) and subsequent implementation, management and maintenance.

Additional detail regarding the legal agreement heads of terms for carbon off-setting is also provided as follows:

- Submission of an as-built assessment to demonstrate that the residential development achieves a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, no later than six months after first occupation, unless a different timescale is agreed with the Council to reflect the characteristics of the development. This assessment will inform the final contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon off-setting within the Borough (calculated as £60/ tonne over a 30-year period).

1 Trees and Landscaping

1.1 As per paragraphs 4.3 and 6.52 of the main agenda report the Natural Environment Officer has now had the opportunity to review final details of the tree protection measures proposed for existing trees to be retained and final details of additional tree planting proposed as part of the development.

1.2 In terms of tree protection there is one on site tree to be retained which is the large Norway Maple on the corner of North Street and Weldale Street which has been

incorporated into the proposed site layout forming a design feature between the corner gables of the two buildings on the corner of the site. Due to large scale of this tree and its corner position, the proposed siting of the proposed buildings would intrude into the root protection area (RPA) of this tree. The arboricultural method statement submitted with the application sets out that the proposed buildings would encroach into an area equivalent to 10.5% of the RPA while proposed hardstanding areas would encroach into an area equivalent to 15.5% of the existing unsurfaced areas of the RPA.

- 1.3 To mitigate this impact, the application proposes a number of special construction measures intended to ensure the Norway Maple tree can be suitably retained. These include use of 'no dig' surfacing which will reduce the need for excavation and compaction and preserve underlying roots, whilst areas of existing hard surfacing within the RPA - such as the public footway to the front of the site - would be kept as existing to minimise root disturbance. It is also proposed to provide compensatory rooting volume areas for the tree in areas where no incursion occurs. Any root severance required would also be carried out under the supervision of an on-site arboricultural specialist.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding the proposed mitigation measures described above, the Natural Environment Officer continues to object to the level of incursion of the proposed development into the root protection area of the one tree which is proposed to be retained and the associated root severance that would occur. In terms of the impact of the encroachment into the RPA the submitted arboricultural method statement identifies that, *'the encroachment for the foundations (root severance) would occur some distance from the tree stem and as such are unlikely to impact structural supporting roots'*. The Natural Environment Officer notes that whilst this may be true, smaller, feeder roots will be severed of which are also important for water and nutrient uptake, loss of which would be to the detriment of the tree. This objection must therefore form part of the planning balance judgement in the overall assessment of the proposed development.
- 1.5 Should planning permission be granted conditions are recommended to secure that a final arboricultural method statement is submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development and to ensure that no trees other than those detailed within the submitted tree plan are removed from the site.
- 1.6 In terms of replacement tree planting, the Natural Environment Officer notes that the site is located within an area of the Borough with 10% or less tree canopy cover and that the Council's Tree Strategy identifies that in such locations, opportunities for tree planting as part of development should be maximised. Amended plans have been submitted which show an indicative layout of nine new trees being planted as part of the development: four to the Weldale Street frontage and five within the communal landscaped areas of the site. Given the proposals involve loss of nine existing trees the proposals do not represent a net loss or gain of trees on site. Whilst a net gain in tree coverage would align more closely with the intentions of the Tree

Strategy, officers are satisfied that the application proposes an adequate level of tree planting for a site of this size, given the level of development proposed and the spacing and amount of trees is considered to be appropriate on site and will serve to soften the impact of the development. The Natural Environment Officer recommends a condition to secure a detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme and this would provide a further opportunity for the level of tree planting to be provided as part of the development to be revisited. A condition is also recommended to secure details of the proposed boundary treatments.

2 Other

- 2.1 Additional detail is also provided in the recommendation box above regarding the detailed wording of the legal agreement heads of terms in respect of carbon off - setting to confirm that this contribution would be secured at the policy compliant level of £1, 800 per tonne of carbon as per Policy H5.
- 2.2 Consultation comments on the application from Berkshire Archaeology have also been received which confirm that the development history of the site has diminished its archaeological potential such that no additional information or further action is required as regards to buried archaeological heritage.
- 2.3 The list of drawings and documents considered in assessing the application is also updated as follows and to reflect revised tree and landscaping details submitted and the updated drawings are included at the end of this report:

70012984-TP-001 P01 - Proposed Highway Adoption
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 28th January 2020

7916_PL_109 rev B - Rendered Elevations
7916_PL_107 rev B - Proposed roof plan
7916_PL_106 rev B - Proposed fourth floor plan
7916_PL_105 rev B - Proposed third floor plan
7916_PL_119 rev B - Proposed second floor plan
7916_PL_104 rev B - Proposed first floor plan
7916_PL_103 rev B - Proposed ground floor plan
7916_PL_102 rev B - Proposed site plan
7916_PL_118 rev B - CIL area calculation
7916_PL_116 rev B - View from junction of North Street/Weldale Street
7916_PL_115 rev B - Section B-B
7916_PL_114 rev B - Section D-D & E-E
7916_PL_113 rev B - West elevation
7916_PL_112 rev B - South elevation and section A-A
7916_PL_111 rev B - East elevation & section F-F
7916_PL_100 rev B - North elevation & section C-C
WSP Drainage Strategy Statement ref. 70012984
WSP Detailed Arboricultural Report ref. 70012984-ARB-04.3
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 26th February 2020

7916_PL_117 - Proposed material elevation
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 24th January 2020

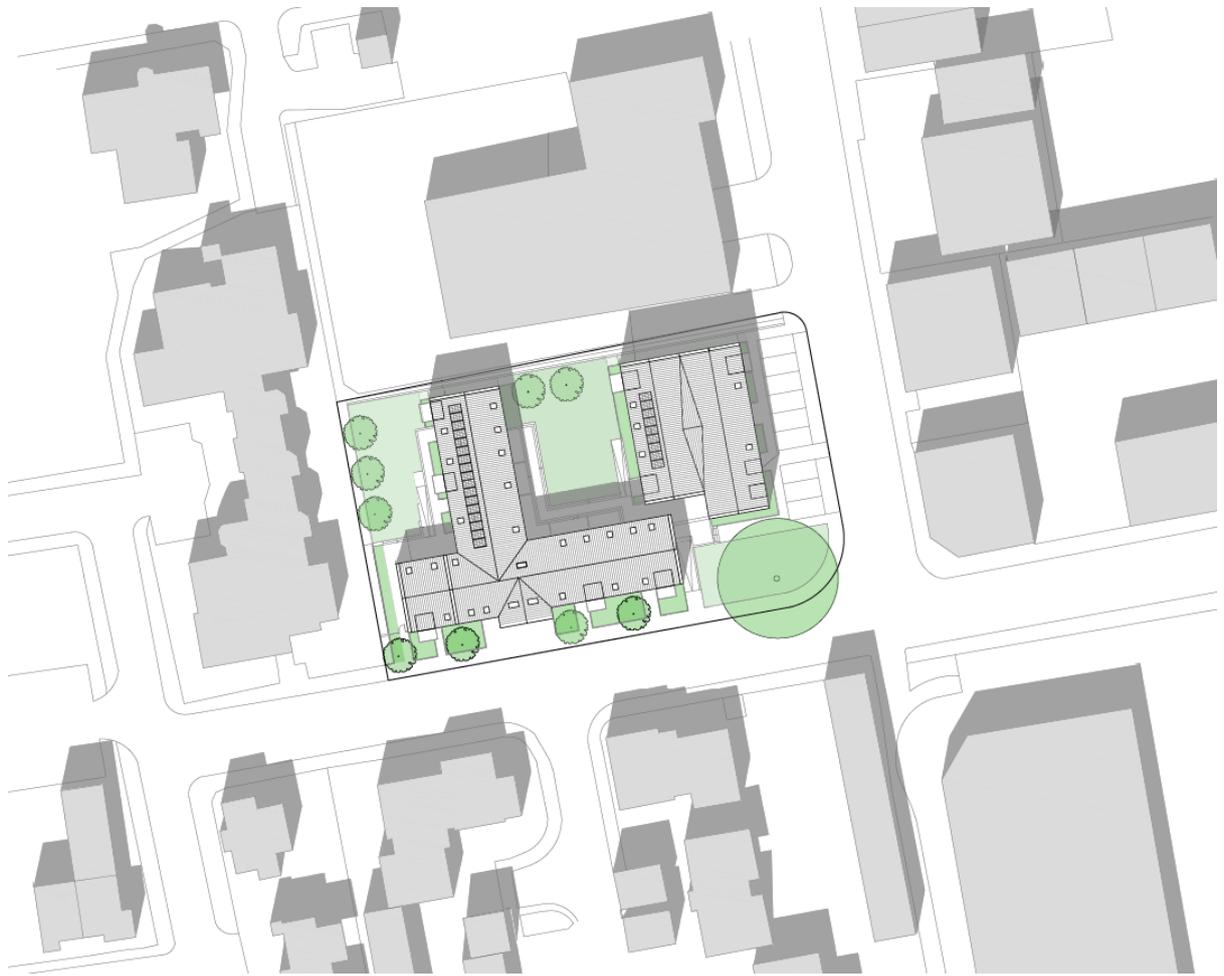
7916_PL_101 - Location plan
WSP Transport Statement ref. 70012984 v1
WSP Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment ref. 70012984
WSP Noise Assessment Report ref. 70012984-005
WSP Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ref. 70012984 rev 02
WSP Air Quality Appraisal ref. 70012984-007
LDA Design Planning Statement ref. 5853 (October 2019)
Saunders Design & Access Statement (October 2019)
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 16th October 2019

7916_PL_120 rev B - Tree plan
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 3rd March 2020

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 Overall, the proposed development is considered to demonstrate a good level of adherence to the policy objectives of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Whilst the potential impact of the proposals upon the Norway Maple tree on the corner of North Street and Weldale Street is sub-optimal, the impact on this tree is not considered so substantial as to outweigh the significant number of other tangible planning benefits of the proposed development. Of particular note are the provision of 41 units of affordable housing of a tenure (social rented level); a mix most in need within the Borough on a site allocated for residential development within the Reading Borough Local Plan; a high-quality design approach; and securing adherence to zero carbon homes standards. Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations, the benefits of this development are considered to outweigh the concern regarding the risk to the longevity of the Maple tree. As such, the officer recommendation remains as per the main agenda report - to grant full planning permission, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the Legal Agreement.

Officer: Matt Burns



Proposed site plan



Room No.	No. Units	Bed spaces	Unit cost	Total cost	No. Parking	Comments
001 - Type A	10	20	50.0	500		
002 - Type B	2	2	10.0	20		
003 - Type C	5	10	20.0	100		
004 - Type D	3	6	15.0	45		
005 - Type E	2	4	10.0	20		
006 - Type F	1	2	5.0	10		
007 - Type G	4	8	20.0	80		
008 - Type H	3	6	15.0	45		
009 - Type I	2	4	10.0	20		
010 - Type J	1	2	5.0	5		
011 - Type K	3	6	15.0	45		
012 - Type L	2	4	10.0	20		
013 - Type M	1	2	5.0	5		
014 - Type N	3	6	15.0	45		
015 - Type O	2	4	10.0	20		
016 - Type P	1	2	5.0	5		
017 - Type Q	3	6	15.0	45		
018 - Type R	2	4	10.0	20		
019 - Type S	1	2	5.0	5		
020 - Type T	3	6	15.0	45		
021 - Type U	2	4	10.0	20		
022 - Type V	1	2	5.0	5		
023 - Type W	3	6	15.0	45		
024 - Type X	2	4	10.0	20		
025 - Type Y	1	2	5.0	5		
026 - Type Z	3	6	15.0	45		
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029 - Type AC	3	6	15.0	45		
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Proposed ground floor plan



Proposed first floor plan



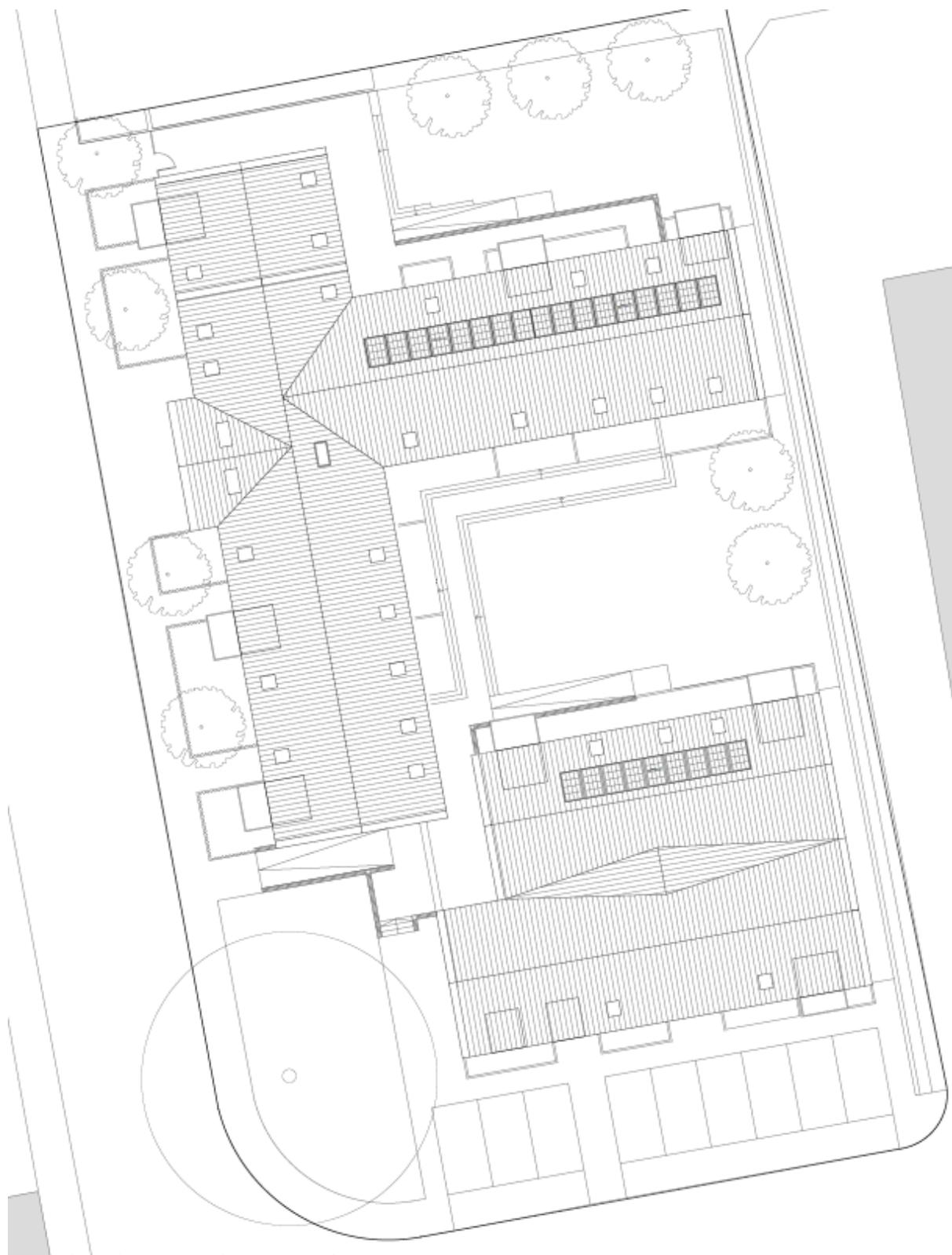
Proposed second floor plan



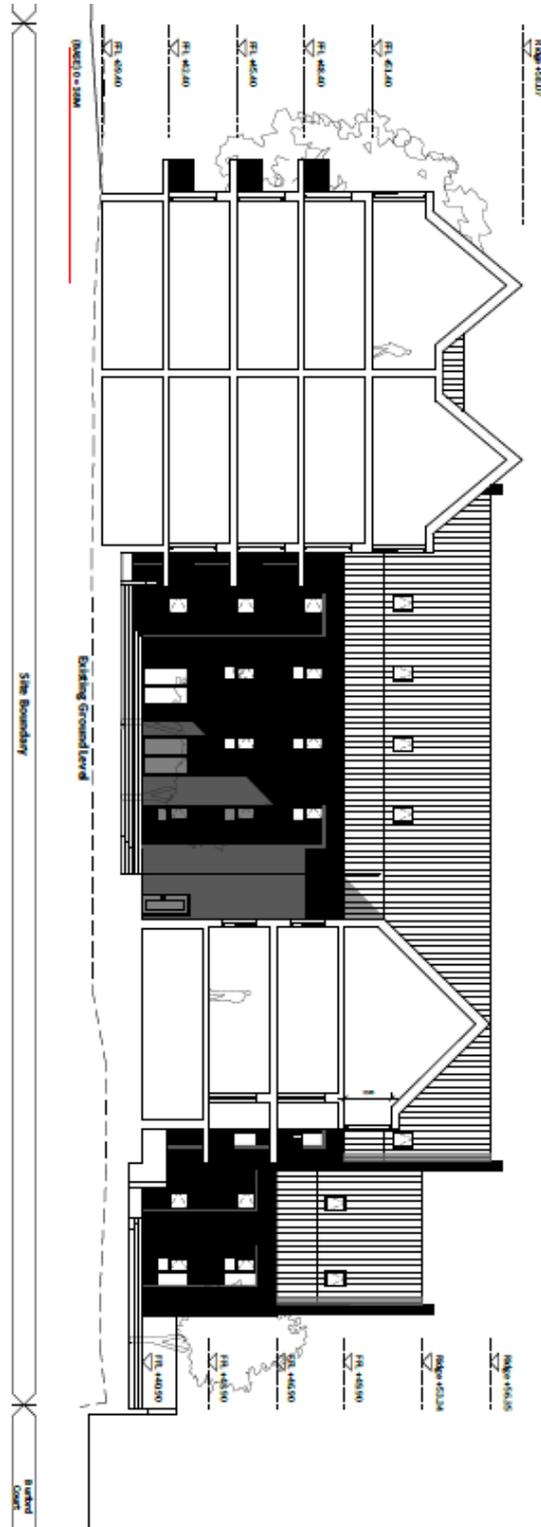
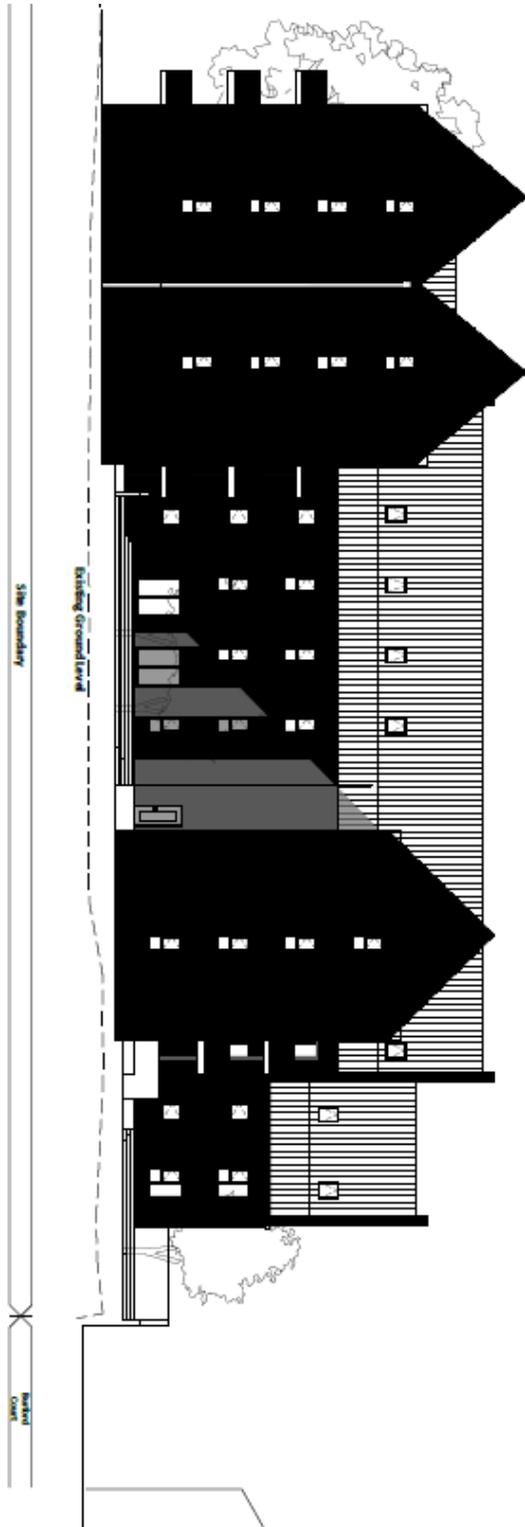
Proposed third floor plan



Proposed fourth floor plan



Proposed roof plan



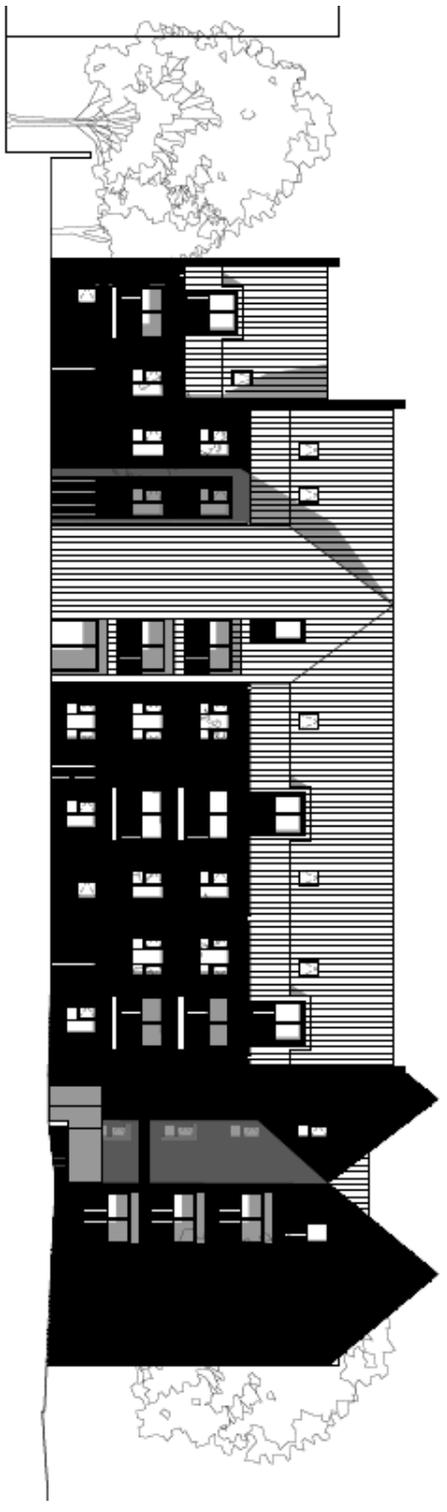
Proposed north elevation and section



Proposed east elevation and section

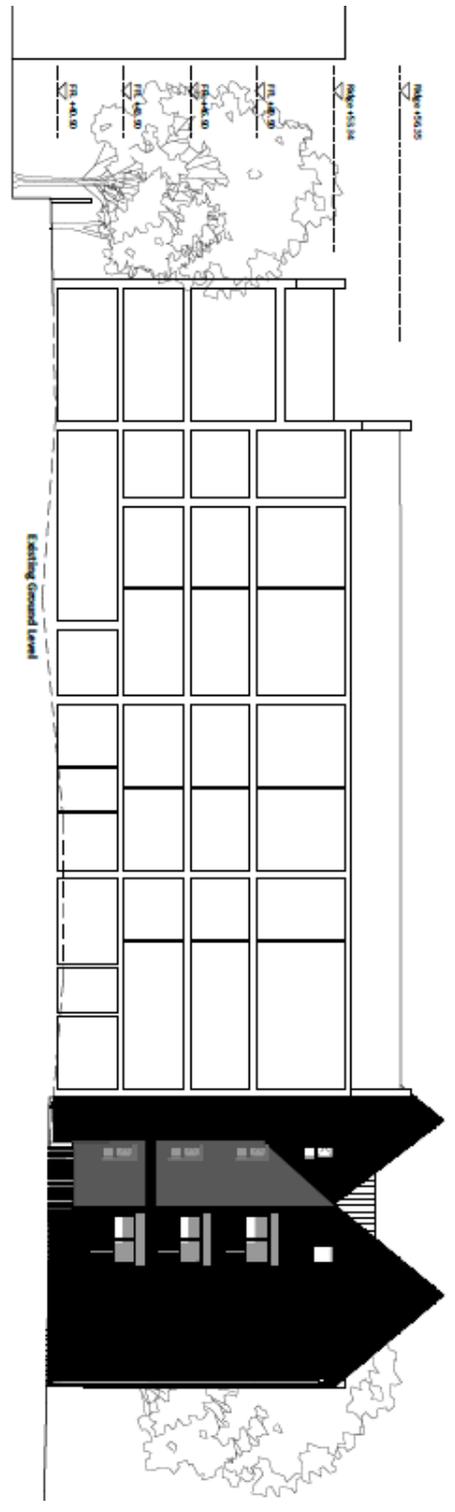
North
Arrow

Site Boundary



North
Arrow

Site Boundary



Proposed south elevation and section



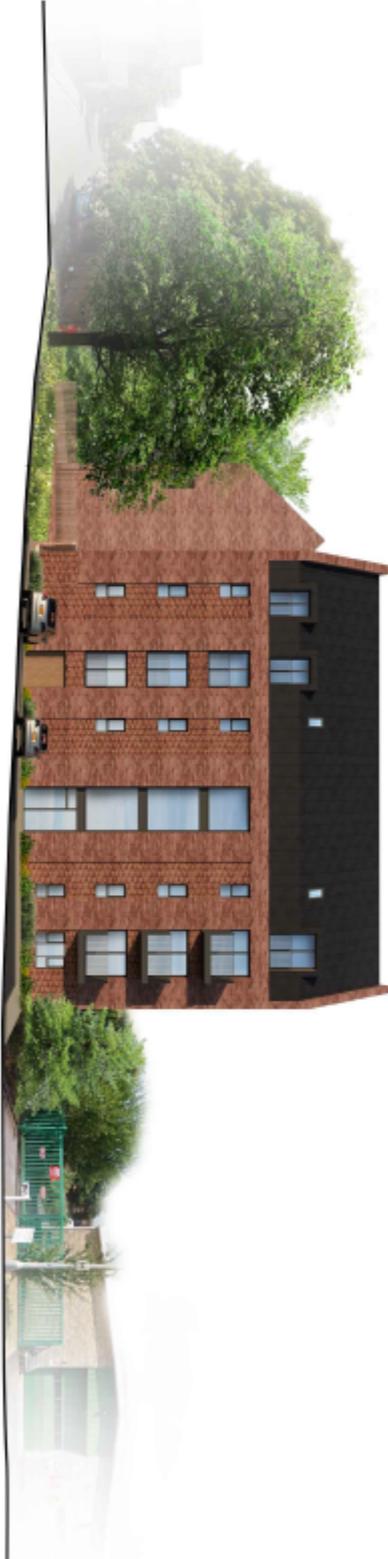
Proposed west elevation and section





Proposed sections

East Elevation



South Elevation



Proposed rendered Weldale Street (south) and North Street (east) elevations



Proposed visual - corner of North Street and Weldale Street