

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGULATORY SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 6 October 2021

Ward: Battle

App No.: 210811

Address: 39 Brunswick Hill

Proposal: Conversion and extension of existing building to form 9no. flats

Applicant: Mr Eric Benjamin

Date received: 19/05/21

8-week target decision date: Eot agreed until 08/10/21

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to

- i) **GRANT** full planning permission, subject to conditions and satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or
- ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 5th Jan 2022 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

The legal agreement is to include the following heads of terms:

1. Off-site affordable housing contribution of £22,500 (payable prior to occupation of the 5th unit) (Subject to confirmation by the Council's Valuations Team)
2. Deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism;
3. Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis;
4. Contribution of £5,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for alterations to the on-street parking bays on Brunswick Hill and relocation of lamp post (payable prior to commencement of development)

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of sample of materials
4. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation and maintenance of a hard/soft landscaping scheme, including boundary treatments
5. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements
6. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of an access control strategy

7. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of a construction method statement (including noise and dust control measures)
8. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a design stage report demonstrating that the development would achieve a BREEAM Very Good standard
9. Pre-occupation submission and approval of post construction certificate confirming that the development has achieved the BREEAM level approved under condition 8
10. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of SuDS scheme
11. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a level 1, archival recording of existing building and garage in accordance with Historic England guidelines;
12. Pre-occupation notification - no access to parking permits
13. Pre-occupation notification of addresses - no access to parking permits
14. Pre-occupation submission, approval and provision of bin store details (pest control)
15. Pre-occupation provision of cycle store
16. Pre-occupation provision of vehicle parking spaces
17. Pre-occupation provision of widened vehicle crossover
18. Pre-occupation provision of new driveway access
19. Pre-occupation submission and approval and subsequent implementation of an electric vehicle charging point
20. Pre-occupation implementation of glazing and ventilation specifications
21. Control of construction hours (0800-1800 Mon-Fri, 0900-1300 Sat & not on Sundays or Bank Holidays)
22. Monitoring for unexpected contamination
23. No burning of waste on site
24. Unit mix as proposed only - no change permitted

Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Pre-commencement conditions
3. Terms and conditions
4. Need for Building Regulations approval
5. Construction nuisance informative
6. No Parking Permits
7. Highways
8. Building Regulations Approved Document E
9. Bats and work to roof
10. Community infrastructure levy (CIL)- Liable
11. Trees in relation to construction

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This revised application relates to the conversion of a substantial Edwardian detached house on the west side of Brunswick Hill, a residential road running north from Tilehurst Road. The site is 0.14 hectares, with a 25-metre frontage and 56 metre depth, equating to 1400 square metres in area).
- 1.2 Brunswick Hill slopes downhill from south to north and contains a variety of types and sizes of dwellings, though they are predominantly two-storey. Opposite the application site is a gap in the street scene where the houses are set down at a lower level from the road. There has been some more modern infill in the road, including at number 35 adjacent to the application site.
- 1.3 Number 39 has a three-storey gable on the front elevation and a two and a half storey element on its southern side. It is a grand property in a 'Queen Anne Revival' style and dates from the early Twentieth Century. Internally, the property is largely unaltered, although a previous application site visit in 2017 found evidence of informal subdivision to create separate accommodation over the basement and part of the ground floor.
- 1.4 There is a single-storey detached garage on the northern side of the dwelling (probably original or of similar age to the property itself) and this is also in partially separate residential use as a dwelling/artist's studio, although there is no kitchen or bathroom, these facilities being shared with the tenanted unit in the basement/ground floor of the main house.
- 1.5 The property has a large rear garden that backs on to vegetated railway land, and beyond, the railway, which is sunk into a cutting at this point beyond the pedestrian access slope down to Reading West station. The subject property is the largest plot within the immediate area, being nearly twice the width of the prevailing plots. The garden has a brick wall running down the North, East (front) and South sides and a wooden fence on its Western frontage towards the railway. The garden is a mature mix of lawn, vegetable garden and shrubs and some fruit trees.



Location plan



Site photo - View from Brunswick Hill

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This revised planning application follows a number of previous planning applications on the same site. The most recent application was for conversion and extension of the property to create 8 flats ref. 201843. This application was approved at Planning Applications Committee on 3rd March 2020 subject to completion of a legal agreement. The planning history of the site is set out in section 4 of this report.
- 2.2 As Members will recall from previous decision including the recent approval, it has been established that whilst the building is unlisted and has been found to be unsuitable for the inclusion on the Council's Local List, it possesses sufficient architectural significance to warrant its treatment as a non-designated heritage asset in accordance with Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
- 2.3 This application has been called-in for Committee determination by the request of Ward Councillors due to the planning history on the site and local interest.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for conversion of the existing dwelling and two-storey side and part three/part single storey rear extensions to provide 9 flats with associated parking and amenity space and demolition of existing garage.
- 3.2 The main differences between this current scheme and the approved 8 flat scheme are:
- i) The storage area on the lower ground floor will be enlarged and re-used to provide an additional one bedroom flat, bringing the lower-ground rear element in line.
 - ii) External changes consist of a small front window being slightly enlarged (See Fig 1 and 2 below);
 - iii) Flat 1 has been slightly enlarged to provide a one bedroom flat as opposed to a studio flat.
 - iv) The bike store is enlarged to accommodate an additional space.



Fig 1 - Previously approved elevations under application 201843 (dotted line shows comparison with proposals under the last refused scheme 191915)

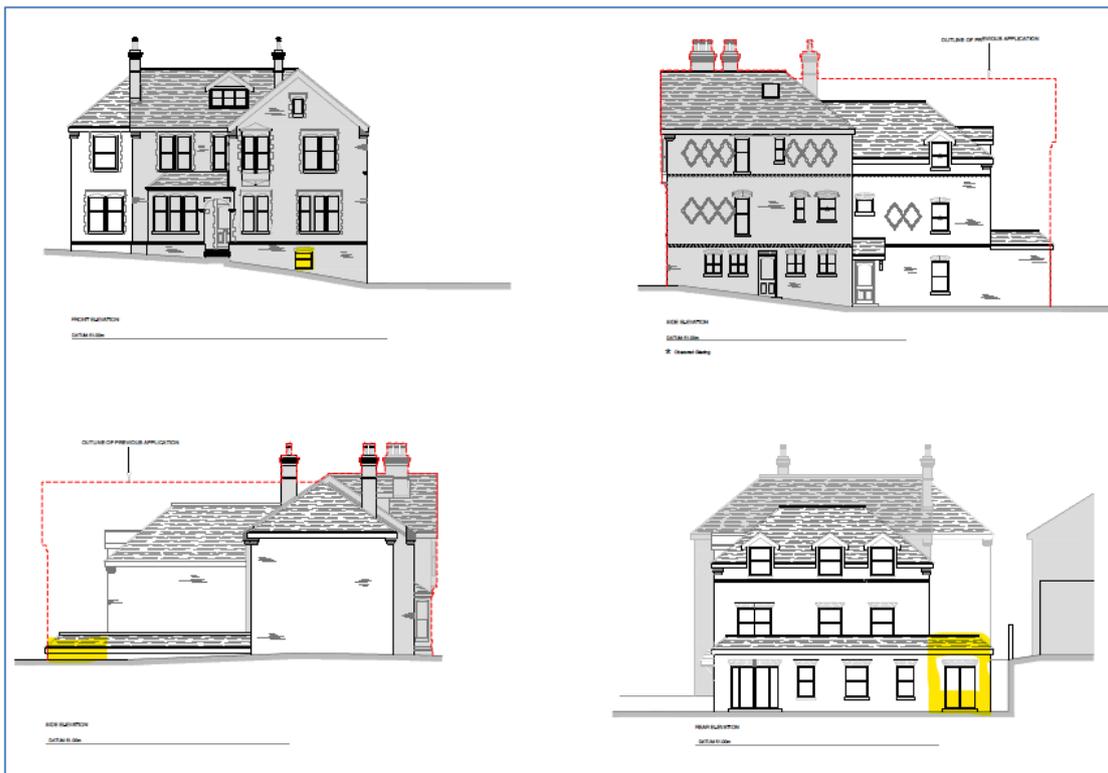


Fig 2 - Proposed elevation (yellow highlight showing the main changes when compared with the approved scheme in Fig 1)

4. PLANNING HISTORY

201843	Conversion of existing dwelling and two storey side and part three/part single storey rear extensions to provide 8 flats with associated parking and amenity space and demolition of existing garage	Approved at committee 3/3/2020
191915	2-storey side and 3-storey rear extension and conversion of dwelling to contain 8 flats (6 x 1-bed, 2 x 2-bed) parking, demolition of existing garage and associated works	Refused at committee 3/6/2020 (Appeal APP/E0345/W/20/3254293 Dismissed 1 October 2020)
190522	Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings	Refused at committee 4/9/2019 (Appeal APP/E0345/W/19/3237799 dismissed 23 January 2020)
171719	Erection of part two/part three storey building containing 10 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.	Refused 07/03/2018 (Appeal APP/E0345/W/18/3200081 dismissed 14 November 2018)
05/00886/OUT	demolition of nos 35-39 and erection of 4no townhouses	Refused 1/11/2005.
891317/891318	demolition of existing house and garage, construction of 10 flats with associated car parking	Refused 18/5/1989.

5. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Transport

No objection subject to conditions and s106 obligations to secure the following:

- Provision of the proposed vehicle parking spaces, widened vehicular cross over, access driveway and cycle and bin stores prior to occupation of the units.
- Submission, approval and implementation of a scheme of electric vehicle charging prior to occupation of the units
- Submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of development
- Restriction of access to on-street parking permits for future occupiers of the units.

- S106 obligation to fund TRO works to change the on-street residents parking and shared use bays and relocation lamp column on Brunswick Hill to facilitate widened vehicular access to the site

RBC Planning Natural Environment Team

No objection subject to conditions to secure submission and approval of a hard and soft landscaping scheme, including replacement tree planting, prior to the commencement of development.

RBC Ecologist

No objection subject to a condition to secure submission and approval of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements prior to the commencement of development.

RBC Environmental Protection

No objection subject to conditions to secure the following:

- Implementation of the all glazing and ventilation in accordance with the proposed specifications prior to occupation of the units
- Monitoring condition for any unexpected contamination
- Control of construction hours to the Councils standard noisy construction working hours of between the hours of 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, with no noisy works taking place at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.
- Submission and approval of pest control measure for the bin store prior to occupation of the units

Berkshire Archaeology

No objection

Reading Civic Society

No comments received.

Public consultation

Letters were sent to neighbouring properties on Brunswick Hill. In total, 4 objections have been received, these can be summarised as:

- Increased parking/traffic impacts;
- Characterful building will be destroyed;
- The development will be unduly large and out of keeping with the character of the street;
- Neighbour amenity impacts from intrusion into back garden;

- Overlooking for houses nearby;
- Sufficiency of the drainage sewer system to cope with the additional sewerage and waste water;
- Lack of natural light/windows to basement level;
- Too many flats in Reading spoiling the aesthetics of the town;

6. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

The following policies and documents are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC2	Sustainable design and construction
CC3	Adaption to climate change
CC5	Waste minimisation and storage
CC6	Accessibility and the intensity of development
CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
CC9	Securing infrastructure
EN1	Protection and enhancement of the historic environment
EN6	New development in a historic context
EN10	Access to open space
EN12	Biodiversity and the green network
EN14	Trees, hedges and woodland
EN15	Air quality
EN16	Pollution and water resources
H1	Provision of housing
H2	Density and mix
H3	Affordable housing
H5	Standards for new housing
H8	Residential conversions
H9	House extension and ancillary accommodation
H10	Private and communal outdoor space
TR1	Achieving the transport strategy
TR3	Access, traffic, and highway-related matters
TR5	Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Revised S106 Planning Obligations (2013)
Affordable Housing (2013)

Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance (2021)
National Design Guide (2019)
National Model Design Code (2021)
National technical housing standards - nationally described space standard (2015)
Section 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)
Department for Transport Manual for Streets
Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues raised by this planning application are:

- i. Principle of development
- ii. Design and impact on the character of the area
- iii. Mix of units
- iv. Amenity of future occupiers
- v. Impact on neighbouring properties
- vi. Transport and parking
- vii. Natural Environment
- viii. Affordable Housing
- ix. Sustainability
- x. Other Matters

(i) Principle of development

7.2 The application site currently contains a large detached Edwardian property within residential use. The extent of the current accommodation is such that it would only be suitable for a very large family or subdivided to smaller units as appears to be the case currently, albeit this is somewhat informal. The site is within close proximity to high frequency bus routes along Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road and adjacent to Reading West Station. The proposed development would extend the current building to provide 9 dwellings with a mix of unit sizes (1 and 2-bedroom flats) in a sustainable location. The principle of the conversion of the property for use of flats did not constitute any previous reason for refusal nor was a reason to withhold permission when committee approved application 201843. Therefore, in making best use of the land available and meeting an established need for housing, this revised proposal continues to comply with Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) and

Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) and the principle of development is therefore established.

(ii) Design and the impact on the character of the area

7.3 In design terms, the proposal includes two main elements: the two-storey side extension, and the part 3 storey/part single storey rear extension.

7.4 Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) seeks to ensure all extensions to a house would: respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling; respect the pattern of neighbouring properties, location and arrangement of windows, and avoid overbearing, or large blank facades to public areas. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development proposals maintain and enhance the character of the surrounding area. Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) seeks that historic features and elements of the historic environment, including their setting, are protected and where possible enhanced. Policy EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) states that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development.

7.5 The design acceptability of the proposed two-storey side extension was established under the approval of application 201843. The extension would continue to be set-down from the ridge height of the main dwelling and set-back from the main façade and includes architectural detailing to match the front facing windows of the main dwelling. The two-storey extension is identical to that approved at committee under application 201843 and largely the same the previous appeal in which the Planning Inspector did not object to this element.

7.6 The separation from the two-storey side extension to the neighbour at no. 41 would remain the same as the approved scheme. So too will the roof, which Member will recall as amended to be hipped rather than a gable on account of the dismissed appeal decision. Officers consider the proposal remains subservient to the host building and softens the transition to the neighbour at no. 41 when viewed from the street-scene. The design and subservient nature of the extension continues to integrate satisfactorily with the host dwelling and street-scene.

7.7 The massing of the part three/part single storey rear extension is unchanged except at ground floor where the single-storey element has been brought in line with the main ground floor extension. The three-storey extension continues to have a depth of 7.2m with the hipped roof set 0.5m below the ridge of the roof of the main house whilst the north flank wall of the extension would be set in 1m from the north flank elevation.

7.8 The rear extension proposed under this current application continues to retain the patterned brickwork and fenestration approved under the previous scheme reflecting that of the main house. These measures continue to result in an extension which integrates satisfactorily with and appears subservient to the existing

dwelling. In this respect it is considered that the current proposal continues to preserve and respect the significance of the host non-designated heritage asset.

- 7.9 A condition will once again be applied to secure submission and approval of the detailed materials prior to the commencement of development to ensure high quality finishes are to be used.
- 7.10 As with previously approved application 201843, the most recent proposal is considered to integrate satisfactorily with the host non-designated heritage asset in a manner which preserves and respects its significance, and the general character of the surrounding area. The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, H8, H9, EN1 and EN6 subject to the recommended conditions.

(iii) Mix of units

- 7.11 Policy H2 of the Local Plan indicates that the appropriate density and mix will be informed by assessing the characteristics including land uses in the area; the level of accessibility; the requirements for good design; and the need to minimise environmental impacts, including impacts on adjoining occupiers. Policy H8 sets out that in cases of conversion of houses to self-contained flats at least 25% of the units should be suitable for family accommodation in that they have at least 2-bedroom units. The proposals are now to create 9 flats, an increase in a single unit from the approved scheme. The proposal would consist of 2 x two-bedroom units and 7 x one-bedroom units.
- 7.12 This equates to 22.2% of the units being suitable for family accommodation. As set out previously, the principle of conversion and extension of this property to create flats is not considered to be detrimental to the existing mixed and sustainable community in terms of loss of single-family housing and whilst marginally below the requirement for 'family units', the proposal is not considered to cause a level harm for which permission could justifiably be withheld. Therefore, the scheme is considered to remain in accords with the objectives of Policies H2 and H8 of the Local Plan.

(iv) Amenity of future occupiers

- 7.14 Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H8 (H8 (Residential Conversions) seeks that development proposals should not provide unacceptable living conditions for future occupiers in terms of a range of factors including privacy, lighting, internal space, outlook, noise and disturbance. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that new residential development is provided with suitable private or communal outdoor amenity space). Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) requires that future occupiers of development are not adversely impacted by pollution.
- 7.15 When considering the previously approved application and the dismissed appeals prior to that, the Planning Insorate and this committee found there to be no conflict

with the need to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The internal layout of all proposed flats under the current proposals would continue to be satisfactory, with all flats containing a primary outlook over the front or rear garden for all living rooms and bedrooms served by suitable daylighting. The floor spaces of all flats continue to meet the nationally prescribed space standards. Measures to manage noise transmission between flats within the development would be secured under Building Regulation requirements.

- 7.16 The development would continue to be served by a generous landscaped communal garden. One of the proposed 2-bedroom family units within the scheme would continue to be located at lower ground floor level and would have direct access to the amenity space from the living room. All other units within the development would be able to access the amenity space via landscaped paths to the perimeter of the building as approved. Policy H10 sets out that 1 to 2-bedroom flats outside central Reading should be served by 25m² of private or communal amenity space, which for a scheme of nine 1- and 2-bedroom units equates to 225m² of amenity space. This application proposes an amenity space of over 250m² and therefore exceeds this requirement. The proposed amenity space is considered to be of good quality with soft landscaping proposed and ample areas for sitting out, children's play and outdoor storage and drying areas.
- 7.17 A noise assessment and mitigation scheme has been submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Officers who are satisfied that the proposed glazing and ventilation specifications would ensure acceptable internal noise levels for future occupiers of the flats. Implementation of the glazing and ventilation specification would be secured by way of condition. A vibration assessment has also been submitted which demonstrates that future occupiers would not be adversely impacted by vibration from the railway line to the rear of the site. The application is also accompanied by an air quality assessment and the Environmental Protection Officer is satisfied that the air quality levels at the site are acceptable for residential occupation and that the proposed development would not significantly impact upon air quality conditions at the site.
- 7.18 The proposals are considered to continue comply with Policies CC8, H8, H10 and EN16 in terms of provision of acceptable levels of amenity for future occupiers, subject to the recommended conditions.

(v) Impact on neighbouring properties

- 7.19 Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H8 (H8 (Residential Conversions) seeks that development proposals should not result unacceptable impacts upon the living conditions of existing surrounding occupiers in terms of a range of factors including privacy, lighting, internal space, outlook, noise and disturbance. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that development does not result in harmful pollution to sensitive receptors such as existing residential dwellings.

- 7.20 The relationship to neighbouring properties through the extended building and the increased intensity of residential use has been established under approved application 201843.
- 7.21 The proposed three storey rear extension would retain sufficient separation (4m) to the south site boundary with no. 41 Brunswick Hill such as to avoid any undue overbearing impact. The proposed three-storey and single-storey rear extensions would continue to respect a 55-degree angle from the rear ground and first floor windows of no. 41 such that no adverse loss of light is considered to result. The relationship with No. 41 would essentially be unchanged with that of the approved scheme.
- 7.22 As acknowledged under application 201843, any such development will result in additional residential activity when compared to the present situation, with additional comings and goings and access to and use of the parking area to the rear of the site. This will remain an unchanged relationship from the approved application with the occupants of No. 35 continuing to share a common boundary. However as concluded under 201843, no. 35 has a long garden itself, and there remains sufficient space within the plot to accommodate the access road and it is not considered that the intensification of use on site would result in a substantial number of vehicle movements or uncharacteristic uses at unsocial hours. Officers continue to be of the view that the residential amenity to No. 35 would not be significantly harmed.
- 7.27 A construction method statement would again be secured by way of condition to ensure the construction works are carried out in manner which does not result in undue noise, dust and other disturbances to existing surrounding occupiers.
- 7.28 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC8, H8 and EN16 in respect of impact on existing surrounding occupiers, subject to the recommended conditions.

(vi) Transport and parking

- 7.29 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 7.30 The site is located on the western side of Brunswick Hill which is in close proximity to frequent bus services travelling along Tilehurst Road. The proposed flats will be accessed from Brunswick Hill via the existing access which will be widened to 4.8m to facilitate two-way vehicular traffic for a distance of 8.5m from the edge of the carriageway. A driveway is proposed on the northern side of the building, reducing in width to 3m for a short section. A parking courtyard is located at the rear of the site, comprising of 8no. parking spaces. The site is situated within a designated Resident Permit Holders zone and a permit-holders only bay currently runs across

the site frontage terminating just before the existing access. A shared use bay commences from this point across the vehicular access.

- 7.31 The proposed widening of the access would require changes to the residents parking and shared use parking bays. This process involves changes a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). In addition, and as illustrated on the site plan, the lamp column adjacent to the existing vehicular access would need to be relocated to accommodate a widened access point. Costs associated with the changes to the TRO, on-street signage, markings and relocation of lamp column (£5,000) would be paid by the Applicant prior to commencement of works on site and this would be secured by way of a section 106 agreement.
- 7.32 Future residents of the properties would not be entitled to apply for a residents parking permit for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This would be secured by condition and would ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.
- 7.33 In respect of parking provision, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per 1-2 bedroom flat. The development provides a total of 8 parking spaces. Whilst marginally under the required standard, this slight reduction in parking is justified on the basis of the site's sustainable location, the permit controls in the surrounding rounds and a desire for the LPA to actively encourage private car usage in light of the Council's declared climate emergency after the formal adoption of the Local Plan. As such the proposed parking is considered acceptable in this regard.
- 7.34 Policy TR5 seeks that residential developments of at least 10 spaces should provide an active electric vehicle charging point. Whilst this development is for 9 units and falls below the threshold, it is proposed to secure a charging point by way of condition to align to future proof the development and in accordance with the wider sustainability policies of the Local Plan and declared climate emergency.
- 7.35 In accordance with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 5 cycle parking spaces are required to be provide for a development of nine 1 and 2-bedroom flats. The site layout provides for secure cycle storage for 9 bicycles to the rear of the building adjacent to the access road which provides for convenient access. A proposed bin store is conveniently located at the front of the site which will provide easy access for refuse collection and would be discreetly hidden behind the existing brick front boundary wall.
- 7.36 Given the extent of the works proposed and location of the site within a residential area a construction method statement would be secured by way of condition to ensure the construction works are carried out in a manner which would not adversely impact on the surrounding highway network.

7.37 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 and to be acceptable in respect of transport related matters subject to the recommended conditions and s106 obligations.

(vii) Natural Environment

7.38 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable. Policy EN14 (Trees Hedges and Woodlands) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended with new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site.

7.39 A tree survey has been submitted with the application. There are thirteen existing trees on site, nine of which have been surveyed as being Class C trees (poor quality) and four as being Class U trees (dead/dying). Nine trees are proposed to be removed from the site as part of the proposed development. The Natural Environment Officer raises no objection to removal of these trees on the basis that they are not significant specimens whilst the proposals include replacement planting of seventeen trees to mitigate for their loss which would result in a net gain in tree coverage on the site.

7.40 Similar to the previous approval, the Natural Environment Officer advises that one of the trees to be planted will need to fulfil the requirements to replant a previously removed beech tree that was protected by TPO 105/05 and removed in 2014. This will need to be another beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) planted as close to the position of the original tree as practicable to provide it with sufficient future space to reach maturity without interfering with access or light. Details of the proposed hard and soft landscaping works, including tree planting, would be secured by way of condition.

7.41 An updated bat survey has been submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by the Council's Ecological Consultant who is satisfied that the building has limited potential for use by roosting bats. The site backs on to a railway corridor, with connected gardens with trees to the north and south and a line of trees 40m southeast. Since the site is connected to habitat of good ecological value a scheme of biodiversity enhancements including bat and bird boxes and wildlife friendly planting is to be secured by way of condition.

7.42 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies EN12 and EN14 and to be acceptable in respect of natural environment matters subject to the recommended conditions.

(viii) Affordable Housing

- 7.43 Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires that for development proposals for between 5 and 9 dwellings, the applicant should make a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 20% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. The policy goes on to state that where, as a result of viability considerations, proposals fall short of the policy target the onus is on the developer to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.
- 7.44 The Applicant has submitted an updated viability assessment as part of this application. Like the previous viability assessment, this report concludes that the development would not be viable with the inclusion of an affordable housing contribution. In reviewing the previous viability information, it was determined that the earlier approved scheme would not be viable with the full affordable housing contribution levied. Instead, it was agreed that a financial contribution of £20,000 (payable upon occupation of the 5th unit) be paid together with a deferred contribution mechanism to ensure any future uplift in value of the site was shared.
- 7.45 Whilst the Council's Valuations are reviewing the updated viability information, it is unlikely there will be any substantial change in this established viability position. As such, until confirmed by our Valuers, officers are content to proceed with an increased financial contribution calculated proportionately against the previous approved scheme (12.5% uplift). At present, this constitutes an increased financial contribution of £22,500 (payable upon occupation of the 5th unit), however may be subject to change. The finally agreed contribution together with wording for a deferred payment mechanism, would again be secured as part of a section 106 legal agreement. On this basis the proposals are considered to accord with Policy H3.

(ix) Sustainability

- 7.45 Policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) seeks that uses energy and resources efficiently and incorporates measures to adapt to climate change. Policy CC2 also states that all minor category (less than 10 units) residential conversions are required to meet a BREEAM Very Good Standard as a minimum.
- 7.46 The proposed development continues to incorporate a number of sustainability measures including high rated insulation to roofs, walls and floors, energy efficient lighting fittings, provision of natural lighting to all habitable rooms, water saving fittings and rainwater harvesting. Submission of evidence to confirm compliance with BREEAM Very Good standard would be secured by way of condition.
- 7.47 The development incorporates sustainable drainage proposals through use of soakaways and permeable surfacing for new areas of hardstanding. A detailed SuDS scheme and its implementation is proposed to be secured by condition.
- 7.48 The proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of sustainability matters and to accord with Policies CC2 and CC3 subject to the recommended conditions.

(x) **Other Matters**

Archaeology

- 7.49 Berkshire Archaeology previously advised that they have no concerns relating to buried archaeological heritage at the site and that no further action is required by the applicant in this regard.

Matters Raised in Representations

- 7.51 All matters raised in representation are considered to have been addressed in the appraisal section of this report.

Equality Act

- 7.52 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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, 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.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This proposal has been carefully considered carefully against the relevant Reading Borough Local Plan Policies as set out within the report in with due regard to the previous approval and the upheld appeal decisions before that. The officer recommendation is to grant full planning permission subject to the conditions and Section 106 legal agreement heads of terms set out in the recommendation box at the top of this report.

Case Officer: Brian Conlon

Plans & Documents Considered:

20-J3471-101 - Proposed Site Plan

20-J3471-102- Proposed Refurb Floor Plans

20-J3471-103- Proposed Elevations

20-J3471-104- Proposed Street Scene & Site Section

20-J3471-105 - Proposed Bin and Cycle Stores

20-73471-106 - Existing Buildings

20-J3471-107 - Proposed Details Plan

20-J3471-CP - Context Plan

20-J3471-LP - Location Plan

Paragon Acoustic Consultants Groundborne Vibration Screening Assessment ref. 4122_VNM_1

GHA Trees Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report ref. GHA/DS/128560:19

GHA Trees Tree Protection Plan

Air Quality Consultants Air Quality Assessment ref. J7062A/1/F1

Paragon Acoustic Consultants Environmental Noise Assessment ref. 4122_ENA/001

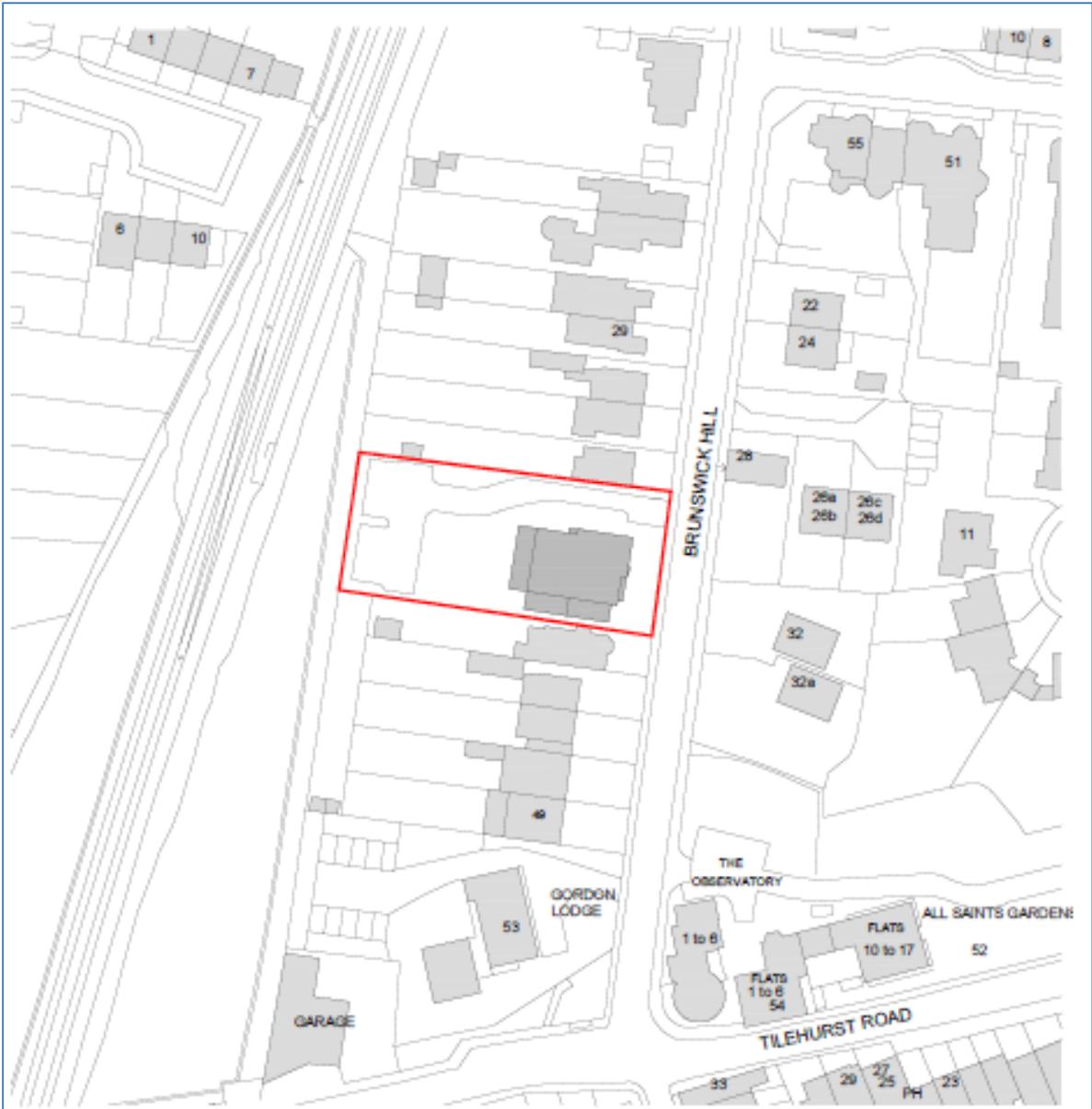
Davis Planning Ltd Planning, Design, Access and Sustainability Statement

Preliminary bat roost assessment ref. CE1874

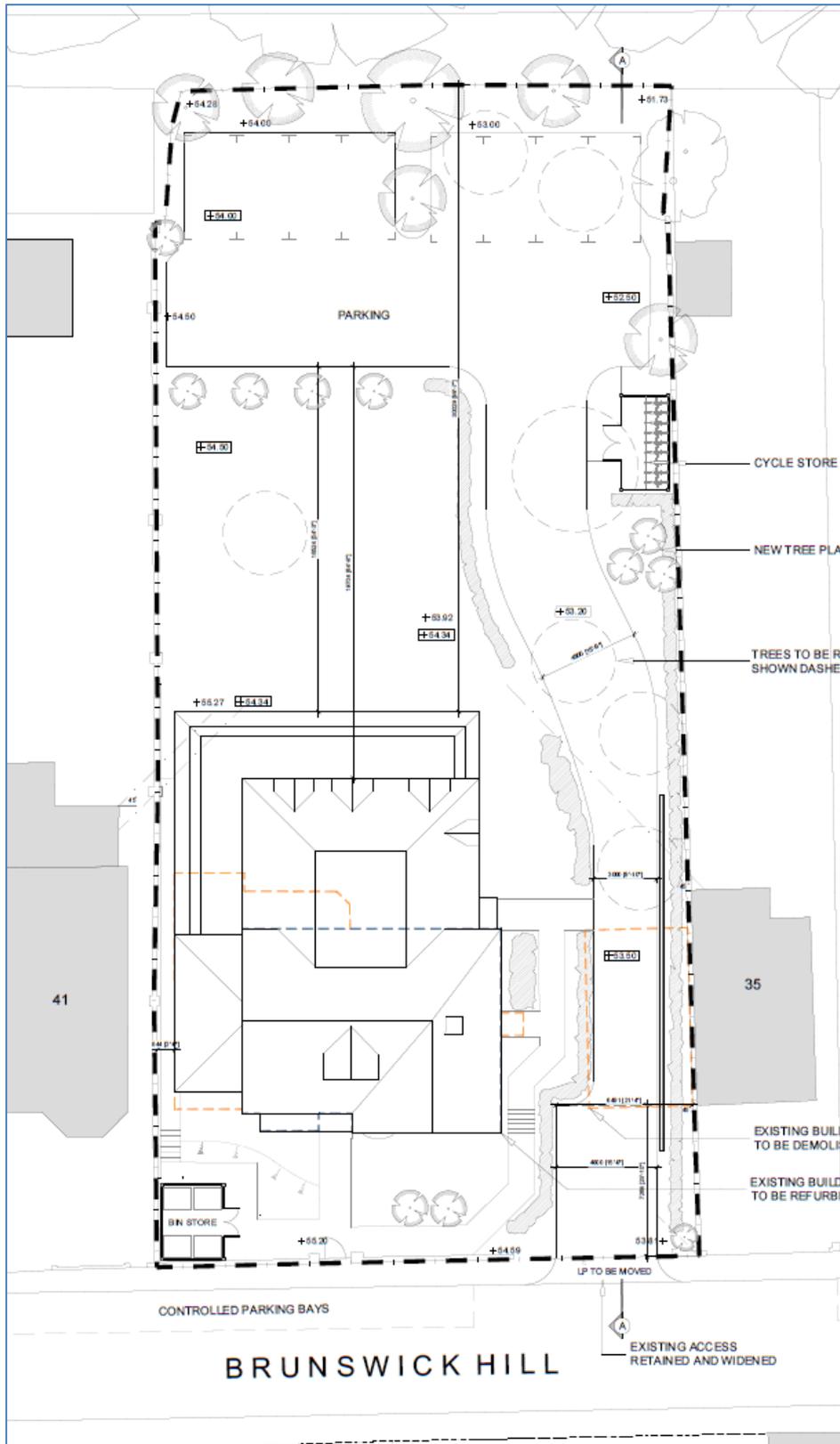
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th May 2021

Emergence Survey Report- Bats Ref CE1874-01

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 24 August 2021



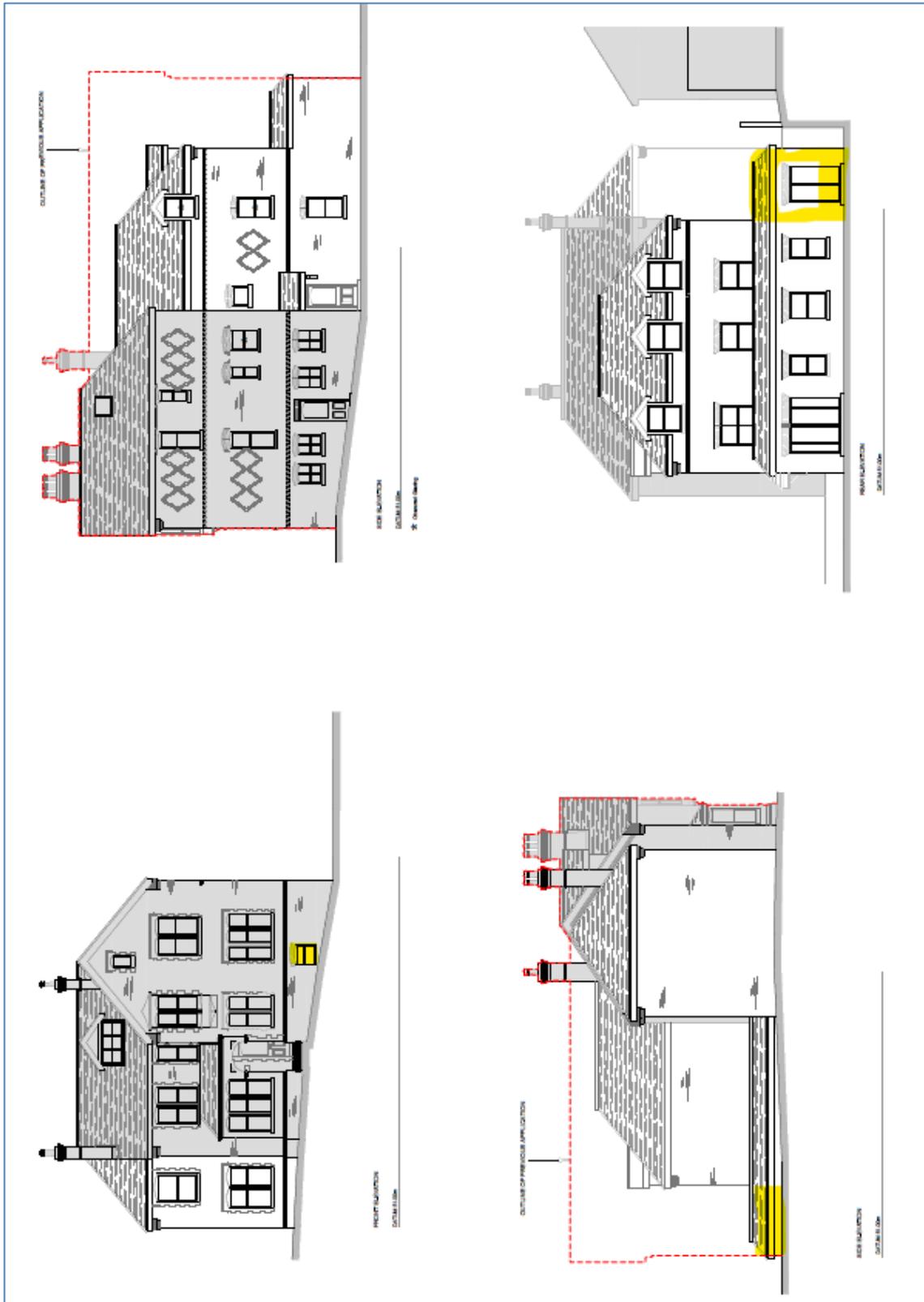
Proposed Block Plan



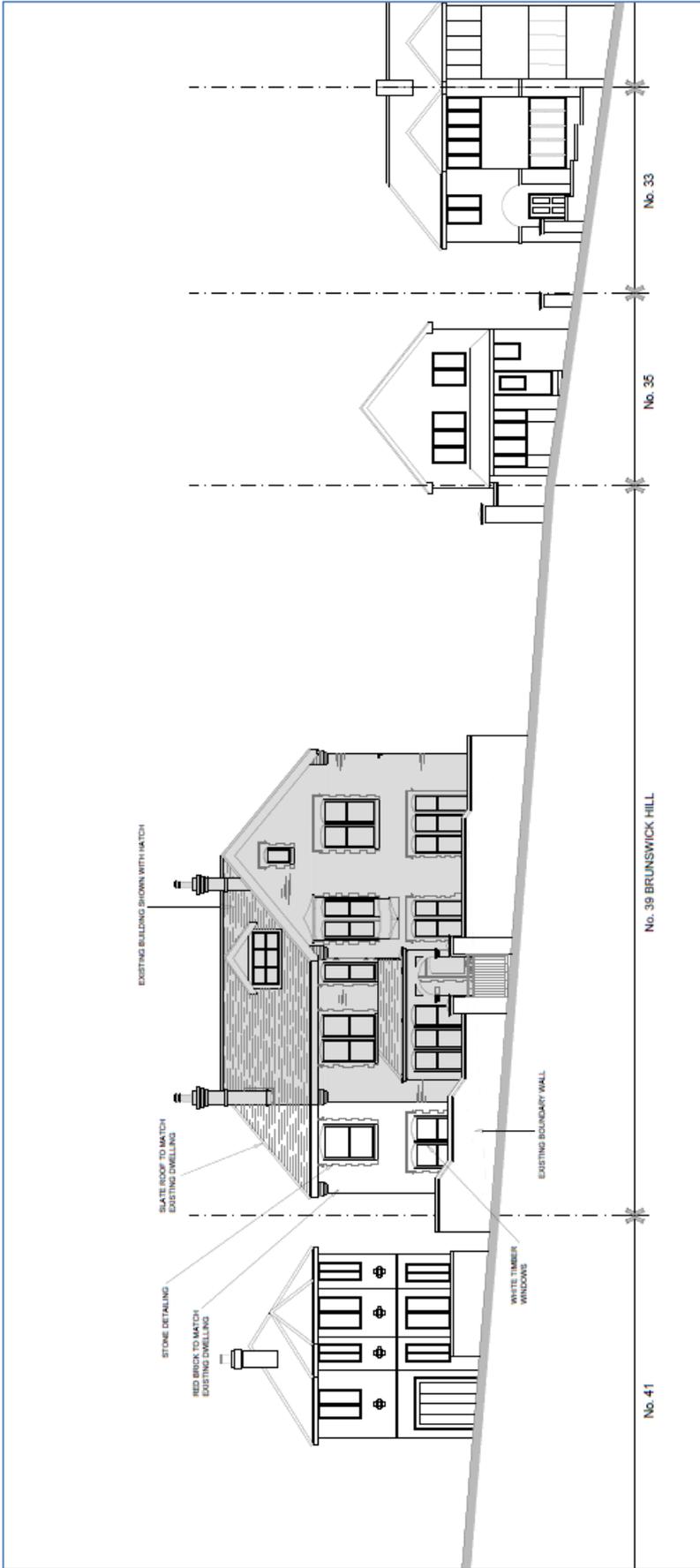
Proposed Site Layout Plan



Proposed Floor Plans



Proposed elevation (yellow highlight showing the main changes when compared with the approved scheme) Dotted line showing outline of previous proposals dismissed at appeal under application ref. 191915)



Proposed Street-Scene and Site Section