

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st May 2023

Ward: Emmer Green

Application No.: 220189/FUL

Address: 205-213 Henley Road & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 6LJ

Proposal: Demolition of nos. 205-213 Henley Road and rear gardens of nos. 205-219 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks (C3 use-age restricted) including communal spaces with supporting car parking, open space landscaping and associated infrastructure. Access into the site from the adjacent development on Henley Road.

Applicant: Henley Road Ltd

Date Valid: 17/05/2022

Application target decision date: Originally 16/08/2022, but an extension of time has been agreed until 14/06/2023

26 week date: 14/11/2022

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services (AD PTRS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by the 14th June 2023 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTRS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The Section 106 legal agreement to secure the following:

- Secure the **proposed residential units (Class C3) to be age-restricted**, specifically to only be occupied by persons aged 65 years and over, in perpetuity.
- Obligation whereby **no works above ground level for separate planning permission 190887** (which relates to land associated with part of the application site in this proposal) shall be undertaken/proceeded with if this application is permitted and implemented.
- A **payment-in-lieu commuted sum financial** contribution towards Affordable Housing of £75,000, payable prior to the first occupation of any residential unit.
- **Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism** calculation, NOT to take place before the sale or letting of 75% of all units (equating to 41 units in this case) with the following inputs fixed:
 - o Gross Development Value (GDV) determined as part of the assessment of viability at the time of planning permission to be granted: £23,370,000
 - o Total Build Costs determined as part of the assessment of viability at the time of planning permission to be granted: £13,765,000
 - o Developer profit as a % of GDV determined at the time of planning permission to be granted: 17.5%
 - o Deficit determined at the time of planning permission to be granted: £1,896,138
- Should the application site subsequently be extended/alterd to create further residential units then contributions towards **affordable housing would apply on a**

cumulative basis also taking into account this application.

- **Employment, Skills and Training** - The production, implementation and monitoring of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phase of the development. Or, in the event that the developer chooses not to provide the ESP themselves, a financial contribution commuted sum, calculated to be £16,437.50 using the SPD formula will be secured in lieu of an ESP.
- **Zero Carbon Offset financial contribution**, as per the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019. If zero carbon is not achieved the scheme must instead achieve a minimum of a 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus provide a financial contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30-year period).
- Provision of an **off-site reptile relocation strategy**
- **Highway Works** to extend the existing foot/cycleways across the site frontage to promote travel by alternative modes (in accordance with drawing J32-5410-SK-011).
- To enter into a **Section 38 agreement** for a) the new residential road, and not create or retain any ransom strip along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the application site and b) to dedicate the sliver of land to the frontage of the site to provide the footway/cycleway scheme as illustrated on drawing J32-5410-SK-011
- To secure a **S142 licence** which permits the occupier or the owner of any premises adjoining the adopted highway to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, plants or grass on the highway until such time the road is extended.
- Contribution towards **monitoring costs** plus a separate commitment to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs in connection with the proposed S106 Agreement, to be payable whether or not the Agreement is completed.
- Any **unexpended contributions to be repaid** within ten years beginning with the start of the Financial Year after the final obligation payment for each obligation is received. In accordance with Policy CC9.
- **Indexation** - All financial contributions to be index-linked from date of permission unless expressly stated otherwise.

And the following conditions to include:

1. Time Limit – 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement (barring demolition works) details of all external materials to be submitted to the LPA (and sample details to be provided on site) and approved in writing with the LPA. Approved details to be retained on site until the work has been completed
4. * Pre-commencement Demolition and Construction Method Statement (including EP-based matters)
5. Compliance condition for provision of vehicle parking as shown prior to first occupation
6. Compliance condition for provision of vehicular access as shown prior to first occupation
7. Pre-occupation submission and approval of cycle parking details
8. Compliance condition for provision of refuse and recycling storage facilities as shown prior to first occupation
9. Pre-occupation submission and approval of refuse collection details
10. Compliance condition for provision of the road as shown prior to first occupation
11. Pre-occupation submission and approval of EV Charging Point Scheme details
12. Compliance condition for the glazing and ventilation to be installed in accordance with specifications stated within the Noise Assessment
13. * Pre-commencement (including demolition works hereby approved) contaminated land site characterisation assessment
14. * Pre-commencement (including demolition works hereby approved) contaminated land remediation scheme

15. Pre-construction above foundation level contaminated land validation report
16. Reporting of unexpected contamination at any time
17. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works
18. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site
19. Pre-occupation submission and approval of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores
20. Pre-commencement (barring demolition to ground level) archaeological work
21. Pre-occupation completion of water network upgrades or details of a Thames Water agreed development and infrastructure plan (in conjunction with Thames Water)
22. Compliance condition for the development to be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment and mitigation measures detailed within
23. Mix of units restricted to 17 x 1-bedroom and 38 x 2-bedroom units
24. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, SAP assessment (energy) – design stage – including feasibility study assessment for use of GSHP rather than ASHP
25. Pre-occupation of any residential unit SAP assessment (energy) – as built
26. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, details of proposed photovoltaics
27. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission and approval of fire statement / strategy measures.
28. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, Security Strategy details to be submitted and approved
29. Pre-occupation provision of all internal communal areas; retention thereafter & for these to be ancillary to the Class C3 use only
30. Pre-occupation submission and approval of privacy screen details at third floor level of Block A
31. Pre-occupation accessible and adaptable and 5% wheelchair user dwelling details
32. Pre-commencement, barring demolition works, submission and approval of Sustainable Drainage Strategy
33. Compliance condition for SuDS approved in condition above to be completed prior to first occupation and managed/maintained thereafter.
34. * Pre-demolition of existing buildings submission and approval of dusk and dawn bat surveys and licence from Natural England for development works affecting bats
35. * Pre-commencement construction environmental management plan (CEMP) to be submitted, approved and thereafter adhered to.
36. Ecological enhancements: a) Pre-commencement, barring demolition, biodiversity enhancement measures including at least 10 bird and/or bat boxes, bricks or tiles to be submitted and approved b) report evidencing the approved measures to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation, with measures retained and maintained thereafter
37. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, external lighting report demonstrating measures to protect wildlife and Berry Brook and separate requirements for the protection of amenity of occupiers to be submitted and approved and thereafter retained and maintained as such
38. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, Biodiversity Net Gain Plan demonstrating a minimum of a 10% uplift in biodiversity units using the DEFRA 3.1 Metric to be submitted, approved and thereafter implemented.
39. Pre-commencement, barring the demolition works hereby approved, submission and approval of all hard and soft landscaping details, specifically including green roof details, and thereafter carried out in accordance with approved details and replacement planting for first 5 years.
40. Pre-occupation submission and approval of boundary treatment details and thereafter implemented and maintained as such
41. Pre-commencement, barring the demolition works hereby approved, submission and approval of a landscape management plan and thereafter implemented and maintained for the period specified
42. Compliance condition for the development to be carried out in accordance with the arboricultural method statement in relation to the protection of existing trees

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Works affecting highways
3. S278 Agreements
4. S38 Agreements
5. S142 Agreement
6. Sound insulation
7. Section 106 Legal Agreement
8. Terms and conditions
9. Building Regulations approval required
10. Pre-commencement conditions (marked with an *)
11. Encroachment / Party Wall Act
12. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
13. Thames Water - Groundwater Risk Management Permit and other related informatives
14. Environmental permit (recommended by the Environment Agency)
15. In respect of condition 31, strong recommendation to exceed 5% wheelchair user dwelling requirements, given the nature of the proposed accommodation

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises an irregular shaped site, 0.62 hectares in size, on the south side of Henley Road within Emmer Green ward. At present, the site contains five dwellinghouses, namely No's 205, 207, 209, 211 and 213 Henley Road, the respective rear gardens of these dwellings (No's 209, 211 and 213 are circa. 85 metres in length) and also the southern-most part of the rear gardens of No's 215, 217 and 219 Henley Road (see figure 1 below). There is a significant change in land levels across the site, with the topography running from north to south with a circa. 11 metre drop. The site is also bound by Willow View, a recently completed access road to the west, associated with the care home development adjacent to the site, completed in 2022.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (not to scale)

- 1.2 The Environment Agency has confirmed that the site is within 8 metres of a main river, the Berry Brook (to the south) and as a consequence, the application site also lies within Flood Zone 2 and 3a (with Zone 3a solely within the southern-most part of the site), which is land defined by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as having a medium and high probability of flooding.
- 1.3 The overwhelming majority of the site is within an air quality management area (all except the southern edges of the site away from Henley Road). Henley Road is a 'treed corridor' (as defined in the RBC Tree Strategy), is subject to 3 tree preservation orders (TPOs) protecting 2 trees at No. 205, 3 trees at No. 213 and 4 trees to the rear of No. 219.
- 1.4 Immediately to the south of the site is a designated Major Landscape Feature (Thames Valley), as per Policy EN13, and an area of identified biodiversity interest under Policy EN12. Henley Road (see figure 2 below) is part of the classified highway network (Policy TR3) and a cycle route (Policy TR4). The borough boundary with South Oxfordshire, at its closest point, is 60 metres to the south of the site.



Figure 2: Site photograph from Henley Road looking west (June 2022)

- 1.5 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, but increasingly in recent times varying in character. The primary character derives from the early 20th Century detached/semi-detached dwellinghouses, to the east and north fronting onto Henley Road, with many of these properties benefitting from expansive rear gardens (e.g. some are circa. 85 metres in length on the south side of Henley Road). These properties have a degree of variation in the form and appearance, with many having been extended.
- 1.6 There is also a more contemporary character emerging from the early 2000's Ruskin development to the west, comprising an up to 5 storey block of dwellings adjacent to Henley Road and more densely arranged dwellinghouses and townhouses set back from the main road. Furthermore, the recently opened 'Signature' care home is immediately to the west of the application site and accessed via Willow View. The care home building is roughly 'C' shaped and is 4 storeys at the northern (Henley Road) end of the site, 2 storey within the mid-section and 3 storeys in the southern part of the site, providing 82 Class C2 care home units in total (see figure 3 below). The application site does not include any listed buildings and is located outside of any designated conservation areas.



Figure 3: Aerial view looking north (Signature care home to the west under construction at this time)

- 1.7 The application is being considered at Planning Applications Committee as it relates to a major application which is recommended for approval by officers.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is firstly sought for the demolition of 5 existing dwellinghouses on the south side of Henley Road, at No's 205 – 213 (odd). The proposed site redevelopment, which also involves the rear garden areas of these properties and land to the rear of No's 215-219 (odd) Henley Road too, involves the erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks. These will provide 55 Class C3 use age restricted (65 years and over only) residential units in total, in a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments (17 x 1-bed and 38 x 2-bed). The proposals also include ancillary communal indoor spaces, car parking, open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure. Vehicular and pedestrian access into the site will be from the adjacent development (to the west) on Willow View, off Henley Road. These proposals follow on from a separate application submitted in 2021, which was withdrawn by the applicant following officer feedback (see relevant history section below).



Figure 4 – Aerial view of the application site with the neighbouring development layout outlined.

- 2.2 More specifically, Block A fronts onto Henley Road and would be part 3-storey (towards the eastern boundary), but predominantly 5 storeys in height, although the site topography means in practice it would appear as 2 storeys of accommodation in height from Henley Road (with no accommodation within the roofscape apparent from

the street). The southern elevation reveals the lower ground and upper ground levels, together with the first, second and roofspace third floor levels (5 storeys). 33 residential units are proposed in total within Block A, as per figure 5 below. At lower ground floor level a shared lounge, office, parking (33 vehicular spaces, including 2 accessible bays – partly under the footprint of the building and partly externally located – see figure 6 below), mechanical plant and a bin store is proposed, with accommodation on the upper ground floors and above. Pedestrian access to the building is possible via a bridge entry point at upper ground floor level from Henley Road.

Floor	1-bed	2-bed	Total
Upper ground	3	7	10
1 st	3	7	10
2 nd	3	6	9
3 rd	3	1	4
Totals	12	21	33

Figure 5 – The proposed mix of units within Block A

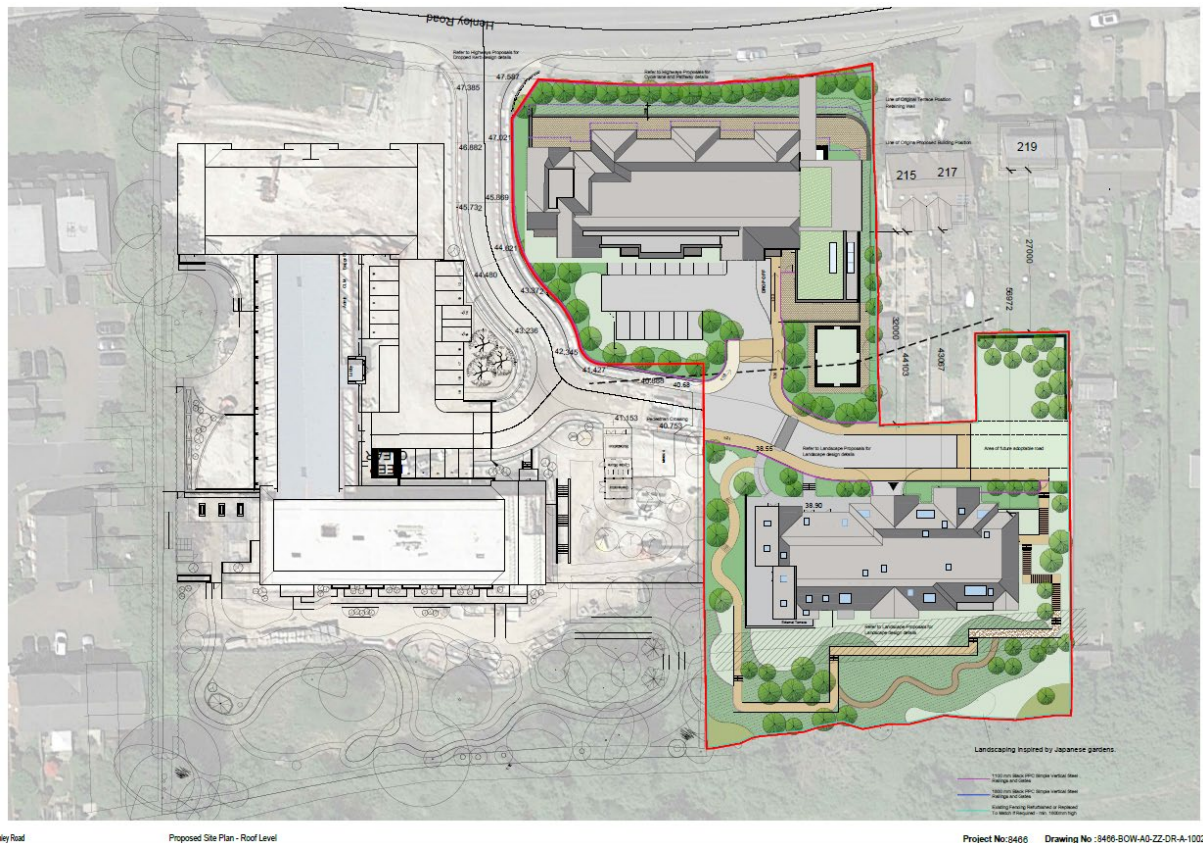


Figure 6 – Proposed roof level site plan (-1002 Rev P15 received 16/05/23)

2.3 Block B is located on the southern part of the site, as seen in figure 6 above, and is 4 storeys in height, although this includes a storey of accommodation in the roofspace. A total of 22 residential units are proposed in Block B, as per figure 7 below. At ground floor level a shared lounge, office, parking (13 spaces), mechanical plant, mobility scooter storage and a bin store is proposed, with accommodation on the first to third floors.

Floor	1-bed	2-bed	Total
1 st	2	6	8
2 nd	2	6	8

3 rd	1	5	6
Totals	5	17	22

Figure 7 – The proposed mix of units within Block B

- 2.4 It is relevant to note that an 82 unit care home building (C2 use class) with associated external structures, access from Henley Road, car parking and landscaping has recently been built immediately to the west of the application site (at 199-203 Henley Road and rear of 205-207 Henley Road), as a result of planning permission 190835 (see relevant history section below). That permission was supported by an adoption/highway extents plan, with the access road (Willow View) since adopted by the RBC Highway Authority. The new access road will be the primary access route to this proposed development, as shown in figure 6 above.
- 2.5 It is also relevant to note that the applicant has submitted information to indicate that works have commenced to implement a permission in relation to part of the application site. More specifically, this relates to land to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road) for the erection of 9 dwellings (Ref 190887 – see relevant history below).
- 2.6 The proposed development also seeks the removal of 21 trees, 12 shrub / hedgerow groups and 2 conifer groups. In addition, 6 trees are also proposed for removal due to their failing condition, cumulatively resulting in an overall removal of 47 trees. The proposal includes 90 new trees (so a net gain of 43) as well as shrub, hedgerow and wildflower meadow planting, as part of the soft landscaping scheme which also includes a nature garden (to the rear of No. 219), landscaping to the south of Block B and wildflower sedum green roofs (on Block A).
- 2.7 During the course of the application's consideration, a number of changes have been made to the scheme, including:
- Reduction in the overall number of residential units proposed, from 59 to 55.
 - Resultant changes in the mix of units proposed (originally 18x1-bed and 41x2-bed; now 17 x 1-bed and 38 x 2-bed).
 - Change in the minimum age of future occupants of the retirement living apartments, from 55 as originally sought to 65 and over as now proposed, with updated information submitted in support of this.
 - The removal of various rooflights in the north and eastern roofslopes of Block A (originally proposed to serve habitable rooms), and removal of accommodation (and windows/Juliet balconies) within the gables of Block A fronting Henley Road.
 - Fenestration and internal alterations to Block A to remove single aspect north facing units at upper ground floor level.
 - The setting back of Block A from Henley Road by 2 metres.
 - The setting in, back and down of the 3 storey element of Block A away from the neighbouring dwelling at No. 215 Henley Road.
 - Alterations to the dormers and rooflights proposed within the roofscape of Block B.
 - The submission of accurate existing floor plans and elevation plans for assessment.
 - Clarification regarding proposed access control measures to the proposed private, communal gardens.
 - The inclusion of a pedestrian pavement path on the north side of the access road, in the area to the rear of No's 215-219 Henley Road.
 - The omission of a path/steps along the eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to the boundary with No. 215 Henley Road.
 - Alterations to the proposed footway/cycleway on Henley Road.
 - Changes to the SuDS and drainage approach, including the incorporation of wildflower sedum green roofs.
 - Increases in the number of new on-site trees proposed as part of the landscaping (from 59 to 90) to assist achieving a biodiversity net gain at the site.

- Increase in the initial affordable housing offer, from nil to a payment in lieu of £75,000 plus a deferred contribution mechanism.
 - Various other revised and additional information and reports to address comments raised by consultees.
- 2.8 None of these changes to the scheme were considered to be of a nature or extent which warranted formal public re-consultation to occur.
- 2.9 In terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the applicant duly completed a CIL liability form as part of the submission of this application. Based solely on the information provided on the completed form (which will be required to be verified in due course), there would be a net increase of 5,606.21sqm residential floorspace across the site (6,575sqm new build proposed – 968.79sqm existing to be demolished – on the proviso that this all qualifies as being able to be deducted from the liability). Based on the 2023 CIL rate of £167.06 per sqm of residential accommodation, the CIL liability is likely to be £936,573.44.
- 2.10 Plans:
- 8466-BOW-A1-XX-DR-A-0003 Rev P0 – Topographical Survey
 8466-BOW-A0-XX-DR-A-0001 Rev / – Location Plan
 As received 25/03/2022
- 2200122/205 – Gross Internal Areas – 205 Henley Road
 2200122/207 – Gross Internal Areas – 207 Henley Road
 2200122/209 – Gross Internal Areas – 209 Henley Road
 2200122/211 – Gross Internal Areas – 211 Henley Road
 2200122/213 – Gross Internal Areas – 213 Henley Road
 As received 01/11/2022
- 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3205 – Existing Elevations: No. 205
 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3207 – Existing Elevations: No. 207
 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3209 – Existing Elevations: No. 209 and 211
 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3213 – Existing Elevations: No. 213
 As received 14/12/2022
- 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3007 – Existing Site Elevations
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3008 – Existing Site Sections
 As received 25/03/2022
- 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2002 Rev P11 – Block A Lower & Upper Ground Floor Plans
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2003 Rev P10 – Block A First & Second Floor Plan
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P6 – Block A Elevations
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3009 Rev P1 – Proposed Building Sections Block A
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-2001 Rev P7 – Block B Ground & First Floor Plans
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-3010 Rev P1 – Proposed Building Sections Block B
 As received 20/01/2023
- 8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-3002 Rev P6 – Site Sections
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2004 Rev P10 – Block A Third Floor & Roof Plan
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3011 Rev P3 – Sections showing link to 215
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-5002 Rev P5 – Block A – CIL Area Schedule
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P6 – Block B Proposed Elevations
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-2002 Rev P10 – Block B Second & Third Floor Plans
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-5002 Rev P5 – Block B – CIL Area Schedule
 As received 21/02/2023

8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P9 – Contextual Elevations
As received 08/03/2023

8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1001 Rev P17 – Proposed Site Plan – Carpark Level
8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1002 Rev P15 – Proposed Site Plan – Roof Level
As received 16/05/2023

2.11 Other plans and documents:

Noise Assessment by Suono Ref 2730.RP.1.4 Final // 1 February 2022
Travel Plan Statement by Mode Transport Planning Ref 220131 325410 TPSv1.1, dated 01/02/2022
Transport Statement by Mode Transport Planning Ref 220131 325410 TSv1.1, dated 01/02/2022
Air quality assessment for the proposed development at 199 – 207 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading by Aether Ref AQ_assessment/2016/199-207_Henley_Road dated 19/09/2016
Update Statement to the Air quality assessment for the proposed development at Henley Road, Caversham by Aether Ref325/2022/HenleyRd_Update, dated 01/02/2022
Design and Access Statement by Bowman Riley
Flood Risk Sequential Assessment by Turley dated February 2022
Planning Statement by Turley dated January 2022
Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Judwaa Revision 2 dated 31/01/2022
Addendum No. 1 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Judwaa dated September 2021
Addendum No. 2 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Judwaa dated January 2022
Henley Road, Caversham M&E Utilities Report by Clancy Consulting Rev 01 dated 02/08/2021
As all received on 11/02/2022

Policy H5 Document by Bowman Riley Ref 8466-BOW-ZZ-XX-RP-0001_ Policy H5 Assessment Rev P1, dated 25/03/2022, as received 12/04/2022

Financial Viability Appraisal Executive Summary by S106 Management dated 13/04/2022, as received 17/05/2022

Daylight and Sunlight Impact Report by Planning for Sustainability Rev 03 dated July 2022, as received 12/07/2022

C2827-02 Rev B – Roof Level SuDS Layout Plan
As received 05/10/2022

J32-5410-001 – Vehicle Swept Path Analysis Refuse Collection
As received 05/10/2022

SUDS Report for 205-213 + rear gardens of 215-219 Henley Road, Caversham, RG4 6LJ by Nimbus Engineering Consultants Ref C2827-R1-REV-B dated October 2022
Geo-Environmental & Geotechnical Assessment (Ground Investigation) Report by Jones Associates Ltd Rev V1.1 dated 02/05/2018
Desk Study / Preliminary Risk Assessment by Jones Associates Ltd Ref P9413J811b/SRC Rev V1.1 dated 04/02/2020
As received 05/10/2022

8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-RP-A-0010-P0 Rev X Design Response by Bowman Riley dated 27/10/2022

Ecological Appraisal of 205-213 Henley Road by Crossman Associates Ref A1113.004 Issue Two, dated 15/07/2022

As received 01/11/2022

Sustainability & Energy Statement by Bluesky Unlimited, dated 18/10/2022

Response to the Hoare Lea review of the Sustainability and Energy Statement prepared by Bluesky Unlimited dated 1st February 2022, dated 18/10/2022

CIL form

As received 02/11/2022

8466 0010 Rev * Locality Plan, as received 10/11/2022

Email from Turley 'Henley Road', dated and received 10/11/2022

C3 Restricted Age Note by Turley, dated November 2022

As received 17/11/2022

Email from Nimbus Engineering Consultants 'RE: 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189) – SuDS', dated and received 31/01/2023

Email from S106 Management 'Fwd: 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)' dated and received 14/02/2023

8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-7010 Rev P1 – Visuals

J32-5410-SK-003 – Proposed Extension of the Foot/Cycleway

J32-5410-SK-004 – Proposed Extension of the Foot/Cycleway

Redacted version for public viewing of 'Financial Viability Appraisal by S106 Management dated 13/04/2022'

Redacted version for public viewing of '205-213 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 6LJ by S106 Management dated 22/08/2022'.

As all received on 21/02/2023

C2827-03 Rev C – Management & Maintenance Plan

Arboricultural Report Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement by Clever Tree Consultants Ref CTC220713-PD-11a dated February 2023

As all received on 08/03/2023

Henley Road: 1 in 100 year + 40% Climate Change Adoptable Road Area to Soakaway by Nimbus, dated 08/03/2023

Henley Road: 1 in 1 year + 40% Climate Change Adoptable Road Area to Soakaway by Nimbus, dated 13/03/2023

Henley Road: 1 in 30 year + 40% Climate Change Adoptable Road Area to Soakaway by Nimbus, dated 13/03/2023

As received 14/03/2023

Letter from Crossman Associates 'Henley Road, Caversham' Ref A1143.004_let1503023, dated 15/03/2023

Letter from Crossman Associates '205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)' Ref A1143.004_GS_let1503023, dated 15/03/2023

As all received on 15/03/2023

J32-5410-SK-011 – Proposed Footway/Cycleway on Henley Road - Site Frontage

As received on 19/04/2023

Bat survey plan Ref Figure 4

Email from Crossman Associates 'Re: 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)'

As received 21/04/2023

Photographs x 8

Site Inspection Report by Thames Building Control Ltd dated 22/03/2023

RBC Initial Notice acknowledgement letter to Thames Building Control Ltd, dated 13/03/2023

Email from Turley '205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)' dated 04/05/2023

As received 04/05/2023

C2827-01 Rev F – SuDS & Surface Water Drainage Layout Plan

J32-5410-SK-012 Rev A - Extent of Carriageway for Adoption

Biodiversity Metric 3.1 – Calculation Tool assessment – Henley Road Caversham by A Crossman

06-999-301 Rev P - Landscape Masterplan

As received 10/05/2023

Letter from Crossman Associates 'Reptile Relocation Strategy: Land at Henley Road, Caversham' Ref A1144.004_10052023

As received 17/05/2023

2.12 Information submitted on a private and confidential basis on grounds of it containing commercially sensitive information:

Financial Viability Appraisal by S106 Management dated 13/04/2022, as received 05/05/2022

S106 Management Schedules 1-5, as received 05/05/2022

205-213 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 6LJ by S106 Management dated 22/08/2022, as received 05/10/2022

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Application site only

- 3.1 210975 - Demolition of no.s 205 to 213 Henley Road and rear gardens of no.s 205-219 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartment blocks (C3 use) comprising a mixture of 60no. 1 & 2 bedrooms with several communal spaces such as lounges, terraces, external gardens and associated access from the adjacent development on Henley Road, car parking and landscaping. Withdrawn 20/09/2021.

Previous applications relating to part of the application site

205 – 219 Henley Road

- 3.2 071074 (07/00081/FUL) - Erection of a 60-bed care home and 60 dwellings including access, parking and landscaping. Refused 24/05/2007. Appeal (Ref APP/E0345/A/07/2048856/NW) dismissed 19/12/2007.

Land to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road

- 3.3 181102 - Erection of 9 dwellings to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road with access road and associated landscaping. Withdrawn 11/02/2019.
- 3.4 190887/FUL - Erection of 9 dwellings to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road with access road and associated landscaping. Granted following completion of Legal Agreement 25/03/2020 (see details in figure 8 below).



Figure 8 – Approved site plan, section & streetscene looking south as part of 190887

- 3.5 200618/APPCON - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (materials), 11 (cycle parking), 12, (electric vehicle charging), 14 (sustainability) and 19 (levels) of planning permission ref. 190887. Conditions discharged 12/08/2020.
- 3.6 201019/APPCON - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 6 (construction method statement), 7 (landscaping), 8 (biodiversity enhancements), 16 (construction and environmental management plan) and 17 (archaeology) of planning permission ref. 190887. Conditions discharged 11/11/2020.

Applications of relevance at nearby sites

199-203 Henley Road and land to rear of 205-207 Henley Road

- 3.7 161842/FUL - Demolition of nos 199-203 Henley Road and erection of 60 dwellings at 199-203 Henley Road and to the rear of 205-207 Henley Road with associated access from Henley Road and landscaping. Refused 18/01/2017. Appeal lodged, but later withdrawn on 08/03/2018.
- 3.8 170959/FUL - Demolition of 199-203 Henley Road and erection of 42 dwellings at 199-203 Henley Road and to the rear of 205-207 Henley Road with associated access from Henley Road and landscaping. Granted following completion of legal agreement 06/06/2018.
- 3.9 180418/OUT - Outline application for the demolition of nos 199-203 Henley Road and erection of 42 dwellings at 199-203 Henley Road and to the rear of 205-207 Henley

Road with associated access from Henley Road (considering access, appearance, layout and scale). Granted following completion of legal agreement 07/01/2019.

- 3.10 190835/FUL - Demolition of 199-203 Henley Road and erection of part four, part three and part two storey 82-unit residential care home building (C2 use class) with associated external structures, access from Henley Road, car parking and landscaping. Granted following completion of legal agreement 19/12/2019 (see details in figure 9 below).



Figure 9 - Approved site plan and elevations as part of permission 190835

- 3.11 201382/NMA - Non-material amendment to planning permission ref. 190835 to correct the care home beds to be provided from 82 to 86. Agreed 30/11/2020.

98-102 Lower Henley Road and 177-197 Henley Road (Ruskin)

- 3.12 020859 (02/00657/FUL) - Proposed residential development comprising of 75 units including access roads and parking. Granted following completion of legal agreement 11/10/02.

4. CONSULTATIONS

i) Internal and External consultees

1) RBC Transport

- 4.1.1 Considering access matters first, Transport officers advise that the application site will be served from the recent access arrangements from Henley Road serving the neighbouring site to the west. The internal road layout conforms to Reading's adoptable standards with a 5.5m wide carriageway and 1.8m wide footways. The proposed development incorporates the continuation of the access up to the eastern boundary of the site to prevent future development being restricted by third party land ownership. The applicant has submitted a plan entitled, 'Extent of Carriageway for Adoption' (J32-5410-SK-012 Rev A – see below in figure 10) which shows the area of land to be adopted by the Highway Authority.



Figure 10 – Left: Extent of carriageway for adoption (left). Right: Extract of site plan until such time development comes forward to the east (if at all)

- 4.1.2 A footway along the northern side of the access road is provided to the site boundary (following revisions during the application), which would aid pedestrian access between Block A and the nature garden, and secure a future pedestrian footway into the adjacent land. Given that future development is unknown, the provision of the access road does not need to be constructed in full until such time development comes forward. This enables the area to be soft landscaped until access is required to the adjacent land, as shown above in figure 10.
- 4.1.3 The landscaping proposals will require a S142 licence, which permits the occupier or the owner of any premises adjoining the adopted highway to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, plants or grass on the highway until such time the road is extended.
- 4.1.4 Pedestrian connections will be provided connecting the site directly to Henley Road from the external terrace of Block A, predominantly via an accessible sky-bridge link suitable for mobility impaired residents, providing access to bus stops and nearby local amenities. Mobility impaired residents would be able to utilise the lifts provided within Block A to reach the accessible bridge link. The gradient of the pedestrian routes between Block A and Block B is acceptable being between 1:20 and 1:23.
- 4.1.5 Turning to parking considerations, the site is located within Zone 3, the Secondary Core Area of the Parking SPD. This requires the development to provide a parking provision of 1 space per unit & 1 space on-site for staff. 46 car parking spaces are proposed for the 55 units, which are split across two car parks, one serving Block A and the other serving Block B. The applicant has clarified that the exact number of staff are not known at this stage but that *“assisted living developments/ communities typically see residents living in their own apartments more independently than care homes”* and therefore minimal staff are required on site.
- 4.1.6 The proposed parking ratio for the site falls slightly below the maximum adopted parking standards providing a ratio 0.83 parking spaces per unit. It is stated that the age restricted living units inherently generate low levels of car ownership, and ownership also tends to diminish over time due to the age of the residents. To suitably justify a lower parking provision, comparisons in parking ratios have been made using the TRICS surveyed sites to equating to an average parking ratio of 0.7 across 9 independent sites.
- 4.1.7 Policy TR5 requires that communal car parks for residential development of at least 10 spaces should provide 10% of spaces with an active Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point. Therefore, the development will be provided with 6 EV spaces. Full

details will be covered by condition. Communal stores will be provided within both blocks which will provide space for buggies and 6 cycle spaces in each block. Full details will be covered by condition. Cycle measures along Henley Road are separately discussed below.

- 4.1.8 The vehicle parking layout is generally acceptable and provides adequate manoeuvring space. The SPD requires a minimum of 3 disabled spaces or 5% of total capacity is met, with 3 disabled parking bays across both residential blocks. All disabled spaces will be provided with EV charging capabilities.
- 4.1.9 A storage area for refuse and recycling will be provided in both Blocks A and B. The ground floor areas for both blocks have been redesigned to allow for larger bin stores and collection distances. These are acceptable from a transport perspective, although guidance from RBC Waste Services should be followed.
- 4.1.10 With specific regard to trip generation, part of the site has planning permission for 9 residential dwellings (Ref 190887 – see relevant history above). The consented development had the potential to generate 4 two-way vehicle movements during the AM peak hour (08:00-09:00) and 5 two-way movements during the PM peak hour (17:00-18:00). The proposals also comprise the demolition of 5 existing residential properties fronting Henley Road. Combined, the application site under existing and consented conditions could generate in the order of 7 two-way vehicle movements during the AM peak period, 8 two-way vehicle movements during the PM peak period and 63 two-way vehicle movements over a daily period.
- 4.1.11 The applicant states that age-restricted living units inherently generate low levels of car ownership, and ownership also tends to diminish over time due to the age of the residents. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the proposed age-restricted living accommodation would generate less vehicle movements than typical residential flats, especially during peak hours. To determine appropriate trip rates for the existing traffic generation potential of the site, the TRICS Database has been interrogated. Based on this the proposed units have the potential to generate 9 two-way total vehicle movements during the AM peak and 6 two-way vehicle movements during the PM peak period which is comparable to the combined vehicle movements of the existing and consented development. Over a daily period, the proposed units could generate an additional 51 two-way vehicle movements over the day, which is equivalent to an average of 4-5 vehicles per hour. This is not a material increase in traffic flow and as such would not have a severe impact on the Highway Network.
- 4.1.12 Turning to consider potential impacts during construction, it is acknowledged that there could be significant transport implications constructing the proposed development within the existing urban area of Reading. To ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others during construction, a condition will secure a Demolition & Construction Method Statement (DCMS). The DCMS will, amongst other matters, manage the number of HGV movements are demonstrate measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road network around the construction site.
- 4.1.13 In terms of S106 legal agreement matters, the applicant will firstly be required to secure the new residential road, including a provision not to create or retain any ransom strip along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the application site. This will also be secured via a Highways Section 38 agreement.
- 4.1.14 The development also proposes to provide an extension to the pedestrian/cycle infrastructure across the frontage of this site (adjacent to Henley Road) to promote travel by alternative modes. This would be an extension to the foot/cycleway scheme

secured on the adjacent site to the west under permission 190835 (see relevant planning history above). The proposed footway/cycleway improvements are illustrated in figure 11 below. The proposals within the red line boundary of the site are designed to be able to accommodate the widening of the footway. However, given that the existing wall is to be removed and a new boundary treatment installed, some works will be required to in fill that space and provide a new edging to the back of the footway. It is therefore proposed that the sliver of land to the frontage of the site is dedicated under a S38 agreement.

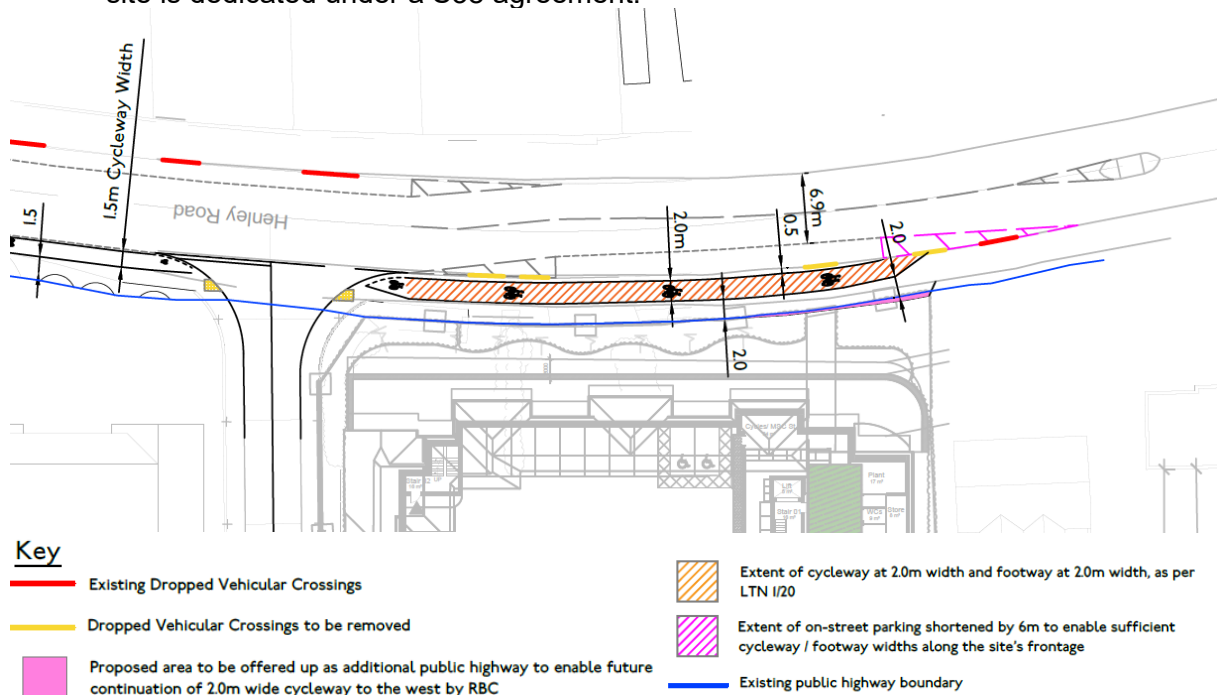


Figure 11 – Proposed footway/cycleway on Henley Road (extract of J32-5410-SK-011)

4.1.15 Given that the applicant is required to enter into a S38 Agreement to dedicate the sliver of land to the frontage of the site as well as the extended road within the site, it is the Highway Authority's view that the cycle lane works should be undertaken by way of a S278/38 agreement, which should be secured within the S106 requirements.

4.1.16 The landscaping proposals (as largely discussed elsewhere within this report) will require a S142 licence which permits the occupier or the owner of any premises adjoining the highway to plant and maintain, or to retain and maintain, trees, shrubs, plants or grass on the highway. A series of conditions are also recommended, as referenced above.

2) RBC Environmental Health – Environmental Protection (EP)

4.2.1 In terms of noise matters, the noise assessment submitted shows that the recommended standard for internal noise can be met, providing the assessment recommendations are incorporated into the design. A condition will ensure that the glazing (and ventilation) recommendations of the noise assessment (and air quality assessment, where relevant) will be followed. A separate informative is recommended in relation to sound insulation to minimise noise disturbance between residential units.

4.2.2 With regard to air quality, the submitted assessment concludes that no further assessment or mitigation is required for the development in terms of its impact on air

quality and in terms of the exposure to poor air quality of the occupants. EP officers are satisfied in this regard.

4.2.3 Turning to contaminated land matters, the development involves the introduction of a large number of new sensitive receptors to land where there is the possibility of contamination. In the absence of site specific information which covers the whole site (some information was submitted during the application to seek to prevent the need for further submissions, but this did not encapsulate the entirety of the application site) the standard four-stage contaminated land condition is required to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

4.2.4 Conditions are also recommended in relation to external lighting (to protect the amenity of existing nearby occupiers), several construction stage measures (to manage airborne pollutants, noise and pest control; working hours; no bonfires) and to ensure bin stores are vermin proof. With these conditions secured the proposals are satisfactory from an Environmental Protection perspective.

3) RBC Planning Natural Environment

4.3.1 The careful consideration of trees and other natural features, the provision of sufficient landscaping (including tree planting on the frontage) and the retention of a buffer on the south portion of the site is required for any development in this location, given the characteristics identified at paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above.

4.3.2 As means of context, part of the application site is subject to planning approval 190887 for 9 dwellings (see paragraph 3.4. above). The approved layout at that time is shown below left, application stage tree protection plan below centre and landscaping approved under 201019/APC below right at figure 12:

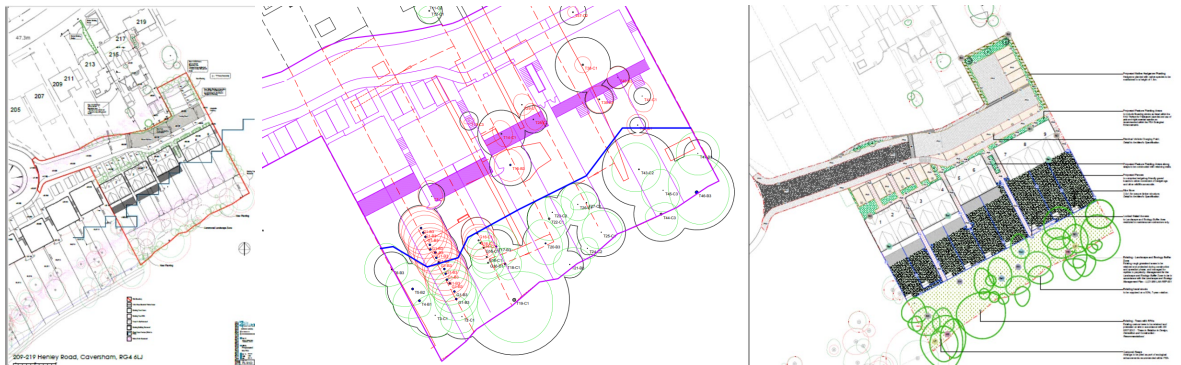


Figure 12 – Permission 190887 approved layout, tree protection plan & landscaping details.

4.3.3 The adjacent site to the west was completed in late 2022 following planning approval 190835, with tree elements amended by 210829/NMA (see paragraph 3.10 above). The approved Landscape Masterplan is shown below left and tree protection plan below right at figure 13:

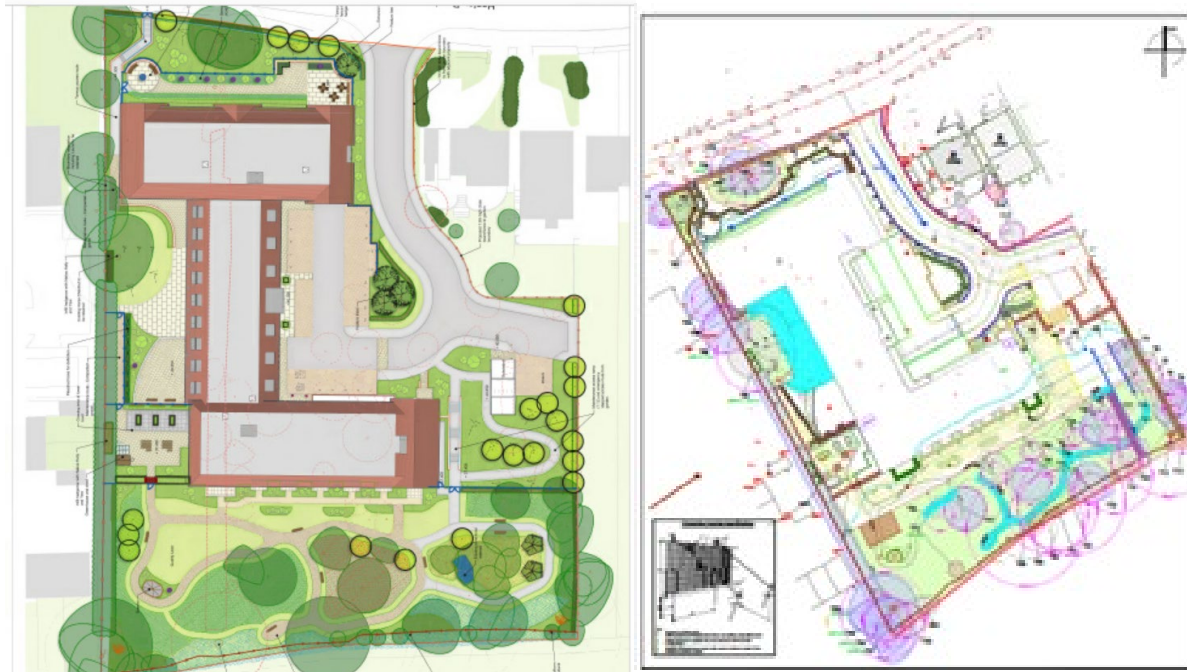


Figure 13 – 190835 approved landscape masterplan & tree protection plan (by 210829)

- 4.3.4 Based on the original information submitted with the application a series of concerns were raised. These ranged from the age and accuracy of the arboricultural impact assessment and tree survey, to the omission of information and a lack of reference to the Reading Tree Strategy within the originally proposed land. Further rounds of revised submissions and comments followed, with various comments continuing to arise as a result of changes incorporated in the proposals.
- 4.3.5 In overall terms in relation to trees at the site, the revised proposals indicate a net gain of 43 trees at the site, with 47 trees to be removed (plus shrubs and hedgerow), with 90 trees (plus other landscaping) to be planted.
- 4.3.6 More specifically, the tree removals include 4 TPO trees (3 Poplars & 1 Robinia / Cherry). Three are proposed to be removed due to their condition (2 are Category U trees [T33 & T43] and one is Category C2 [T44]). One Category B2 Poplar (T14) is proposed to be removed due to its limited amenity value, with paragraph 6.3 of the Arboricultural Report stating: *“the poplar tree T14 is not highly visible from the surrounding landscape and was noted to be of lower moderate amenity value, the categorisation owing to high growth potential and future amenity value”*. This acknowledges that it is a tree that should be retained as it is a Category B tree with good potential, and in reality it is to be removed only because the development design requires it (as confirmed in the submitted Tree works schedule). This Poplar, along with the two conifer groups (G45 & G47 – not subject to TPOs) are the only Category B trees to be removed, as shown below in the plan and photographs at figure 14. All the remaining trees to be removed are either Category C or Category U trees. It is considered that the loss of a B Category tree is unfortunate but the limited, current amenity value is agreed and this loss can/will be mitigated with new tree planting. In relation to the other TPO trees to be removed (the two Poplars and Robinia/Cherry), it is worth noting that the TPOs are from 2007, so are 16 years old, hence the change in tree condition (worthiness of retention) since serve of the TPOs is understandable and justified in this instance.

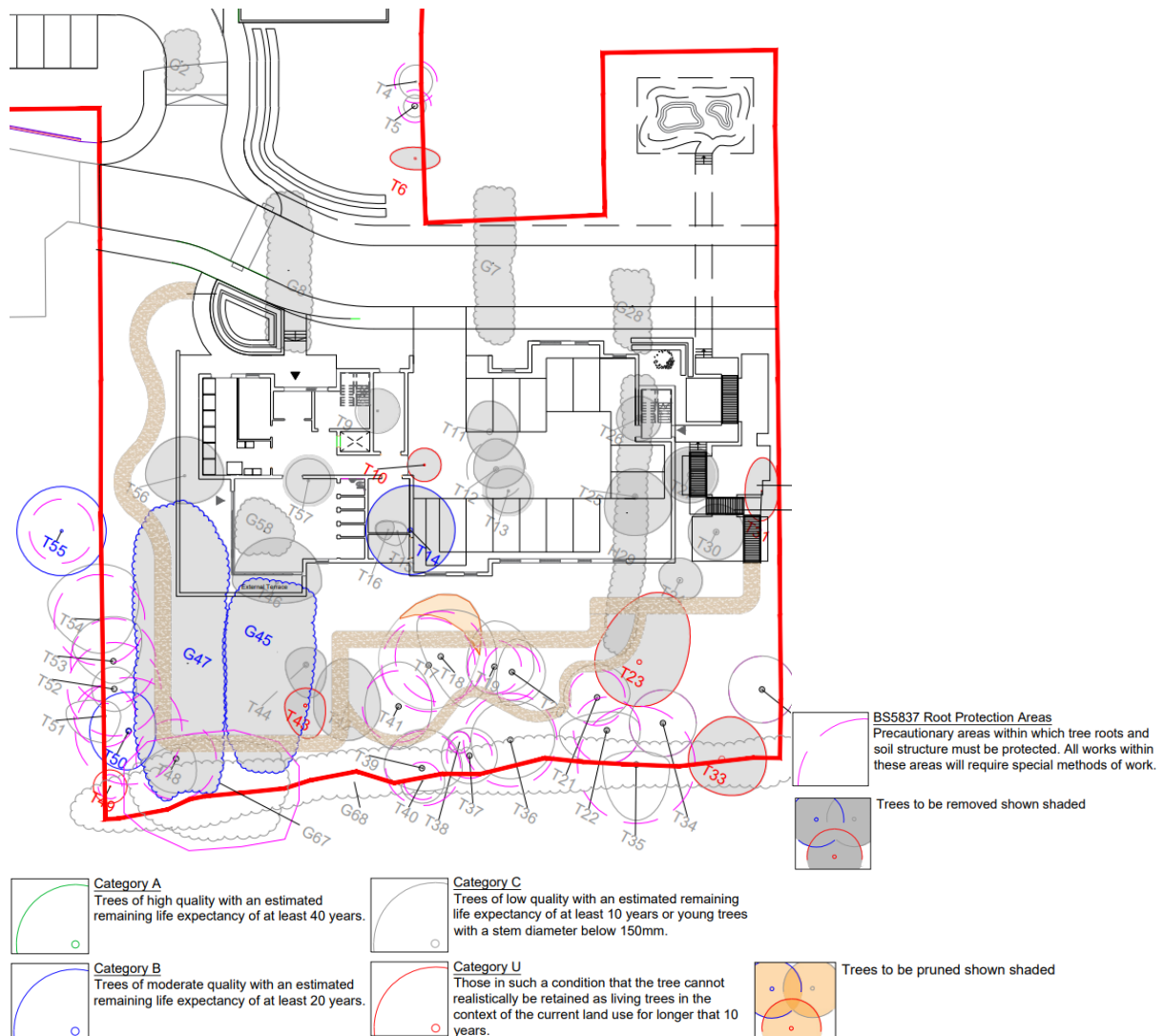


Photo 1: view of the poplar tree T14, distant view of poplar tree T44 and Leyland cypress groups G45 and G47.



Photo 5: crown failure within cypress groups G45 and G47 likely resulting from storms in February 2022.

Figure 14 – Extract of the proposed layout and tree removals plan, with photographs from the Arboricultural Report showing TPO trees T14 (Category B2) and T44 (Category C2) proposed to be removed. The photographs also show the Category B2 groups of G45 and G47, which are also proposed to be removed.

4.3.7 Within the submitted arboricultural report the applicant has demonstrated in full how retained trees will be protected during the construction stage, with the submitted details being secured via a compliance condition.

the edge of the Borough. As a combined unit and in association with the adjacent green space these gardens make an important contribution to biodiversity and form part of Reading's green network.

4.4.2 However, GS Ecology also recognise and appreciate that this is the exact same context in which developments to the west of the site at Ruskin and the Signature care home have ultimately been considered appropriate and come forward. In particular, the Signature care home scheme was approved under the current local plan (Ref 190835 – see paragraph 3.10 above). Moreover, the southern part of the application site also has permission for 9 dwellings under permission 190887, again approved under the current local plan (see paragraph 3.4 above). As such, it is for planning officers to weigh whether the benefits of these proposals outweigh the loss of the gardens. The remainder of the ecology advice is provided on a notwithstanding basis to the above.

4.4.3 So, notwithstanding the above, a series of concerns were also raised in relation to the originally submitted ecological appraisal and biodiversity offsetting information. In short, this related to the detail of the information provided and, in some areas, the proposed approach (e.g. the reptile survey identified reptiles on site and originally proposed to move these to a site in Somerset, which does not comply with guidelines on reptile translocations). As such, GS Ecology advised at the initial stage that the information submitted was not sufficient to determine the ecological impacts of the scheme or that the development will result in a net gain for biodiversity.

4.4.4 The applicant was provided with an opportunity to respond to the various shortcomings raised. This resulted in the submission of various amended and additional reports, which have involved a number of rounds of negotiation with GS Ecology to further clarify, confirm, amend and improve the revised information submitted. Based on these further discussions, GS Ecology advise the following, in summary:

- Reptiles – the further revised strategy is considered appropriate for the relocation of reptiles at the site. More specifically, reptiles will be relocated to an off-site out-of-borough location to the east of the site at nearby Playhatch, at land owned by Tarmac (a site of a former gravel quarry which consists of rough grassland, woodland, scrub, hedgerows and waterbodies). The receptor site will be improved with the installation of three reptile refugias, with the strategy for relocation specified. Given this relates to works outside of the red line boundary of the application site this component of the scheme should be secured via S106 Legal Agreement.
- Bats – Concerns continue to be raised with the validity of surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2021, owing to their age and the chance that conditions may have changed (the reports concluded that none of the buildings host roosting bats). Based on the applicant's position statement received on 21/04/2023 it is considered that further surveys and a licence from Natural England should be secured via condition in advance of the demolition of the existing buildings in order to resolve this matter.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – following a thorough assessment of the metric, which initially identified a habitat net loss (rather than the gain suggested by the applicant and required by Policy EN12), a revised metric and inter-linked landscaping strategy (significantly increasing the amount of proposed trees to 90) demonstrated under the 3.1 metric that the proposals will achieve the required 10% BNG in habitat and hedgerow units. However, as the landscape plan is not a final version and further landscaping details will be secured via condition, it correspondingly means full details of at least a 10% BNG should also be secured via condition too.

4.4.5 Ultimately, if the planning balance subsequent results in the application being approved, the reptile relocation strategy should be secured via S106 Legal Agreement and the following planning conditions should also be secured:

- Pre-demolition of existing buildings submission and approval of dusk and dawn bat surveys and licence from Natural England for development works affecting bats
- Pre-commencement construction environmental management plan to be submitted, approved and thereafter adhered to.
- Ecological enhancements: a) Pre-commencement, barring demolition, biodiversity enhancement measures including at least 10 bird and/or bat boxes, bricks or tiles to be submitted and approved b) report evidencing the approved measures to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation, with measures retained and maintained thereafter
- Pre-commencement, barring demolition, external lighting report demonstrating measures to protect wildlife and Berry Brook to be submitted and approved and thereafter retained and maintained as such
- Pre-commencement, barring demolition, Biodiversity Net Gain Plan demonstrating a minimum of a 10% uplift in biodiversity units using the DEFRA 3.1 Metric to be submitted, approved and thereafter implemented.

5) RBC Valuers / BPS Chartered Surveyors (RBC viability consultants)

4.5.1 RBC Valuers instructed BPS Chartered Surveyors to undertake an independent viability review of the financial viability assessment submitted with the application. The applicant's original submission concluded that the scheme shows a deficit of approximately £3.27m and therefore no affordable housing can viably be offered. BPS has assessed and tested the various input stipulated by the applicant in reaching their conclusion. Key elements such as the benchmark land value are not agreed, but other components such as the sales values and build costs are agreed as accurate. BPS's overall conclusion is that whilst the deficit is not as significant as that stated by the applicant, based on BPS's calculations the scheme would be in deficit. BPS conclude that *"the scheme returns a deficit of £590,000 and if considered in isolation as a standalone application would therefore not be able to viably support an Affordable Housing contribution"*.

4.5.2 However, BPS also notes that if either the gross development value (GDV) or building costs were to decrease by 5% together, or alternatively with a GDV growth of 5% this would erode the deficit and return a surplus position on the scheme. Therefore, mindful of the Council's aim to provide affordable housing on site, if a policy compliant contribution is not secured the scheme should be subject to future reviews (Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanisms). This is so the viability can be assessed over the lifetime of the development by reference to the actual costs and values it generates.

4.5.3 This feedback was provided to the applicant, together with suggested terms of a late stage review of the viability, with view to this being agreed between the parties. The applicant provided a response to the BPS review, seeking to alter its originally proposed methodology towards scheme viability (in relation to the benchmark land value and build costs – externals) and suggesting the scheme deficit has actually increased to £3.47m. Furthermore, amendments to the inputs for any late stage review were also put forward, whilst also questioning the necessity of a review given the size of the deficit.

4.5.4 In between the submission of this response and BPS's subsequent further review (as discussed below), planning officers liaised with the applicant and negotiated, notwithstanding the current viability position, that a payment-in-lieu commuted sum

financial contribution towards Affordable Housing of £75,000 would be secured. This is independent of any Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism.

- 4.5.5 BPS's further review of the scheme viability, based on the response by the applicant, counters a number of points raised (for example, the benchmark land value is not agreed). However, BPS's review has accepted that there has been an evidenced increase in build costs (although not as significant as the applicant has suggested) which results in the scheme being in deficit by £1,896,138. Whilst BPS agree the scheme is in deficit, the deficit is lower than the £3.47m put forward by the applicant. Based on a sensitivity analysis, BPS advise that the deficit is eroded if costs decrease by around 5% and values increase by a similar amount (RBC Valuers later verified this as precisely 5.8%). BPS therefore reiterate that a late stage review monitors the viability of the scheme over the lifetime of the project should be secured. BPS put forward alternative inputs for the late-stage review (based on BPS's calculated deficit and benchmark land value).
- 4.5.6 The applicant subsequently agreed to the fixed inputs put forward by BPS. These are reflected in the Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism referenced in the recommendation at the outset of this report, to be secured via S106 legal agreement.
- 4.5.7 RBC Valuers have overseen negotiations in respect of viability matters and consider in this specific instance the proposed offer of an upfront financial contribution of £75,000 and the agreed Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism represents an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing. In this case, whilst the proposal does fall short of the Policy H3 target, this is as a result of viability considerations, which have been clearly demonstrated and tested to justify a lower affordable housing contribution in this case. Such instances are recognised within the wording of Policy H3.

6) RBC Access Officer

- 4.6.1 At the outset of the application a series of comments and queries were raised in relation to matters such as: the accessibility of EV Charging Points for disabled people; the number and location of disabled parking bays; and, whether the proposed balconies are wheelchair accessible. Most substantially, a query in relation to the accessibility of the outdoor landscaping for wheelchair users was raised, given the presence of steps throughout the landscaping.
- 4.6.2 The applicant provided responses to all of the initial comments and queries raised, satisfactorily providing responses in the vast majority of instances. With specific regard to the accessibility of the external landscaped areas, the applicant has explained that alternative ramp routes are provided to some of the landscaping and the steps are designed as Part M accessible and have been minimised. Ultimately, steps within the southern section of the site are unavoidable owing to site topography and the competing demand to retain areas of green within the site. The applicant also points out that the external balconies provide private outdoor space for residents. The Council's Access officer concedes that reasonable provision has been included and inherent constraints means access to all parts of the landscaping will not practically be possible on this occasion.

7) RBC Lead Local Flood Authority

- 4.7.1 Initial comments raised queries in relation to the outfall rates from the originally proposed cellular storage crates and the actual run off rates. Wider concerns were also raised in relation to the location of the crates being partly below the extended

road, which in due course would be designated as public highway. Owing to this the applicant was advised to relocate any crates to outside the area of the future public highway, as these would not be taken on as adopted infrastructure given that it is attenuation of private drainage.

4.7.2 The applicant subsequently amended the proposed strategy, splitting the proposed drainage strategy into three sections. In short, the northern area of the site will result in the collection of surface water into a soakaway tank as well as porous paving and an underground rainwater harvesting tank. Surface water within the central part of the site will drain into two separate attenuation tanks that will discharge into the Berry Brook to the south, in addition to a soakaway within the nature garden to the rear of No. 219 Henley Road. The southern area contains three bio-retention areas all of which are likely to result in a reduction in discharge in surface water from the site. This is indicated in the SuDS and surface water layout plan shown in figure 16 below. The submission of further additional information in respect of the infiltration and discharge rates has sought to address further officer comments raised, together with continued questions relating to the interaction between the drainage strategy and landscaping proposals. There remain some unanswered questions in relation to this latter point, meaning that conditions will be required to secure the final details of the drainage strategy. Based on the information submitted at application stage it is evident that a strategy can be advanced which meets the policy requirements, including reducing the risk of flooding on site or elsewhere, with this being particularly pertinent in this instance given the location and topography of the site. The level of information provided at application stage is considered to be reasonable, with the final fuller details secured via condition.

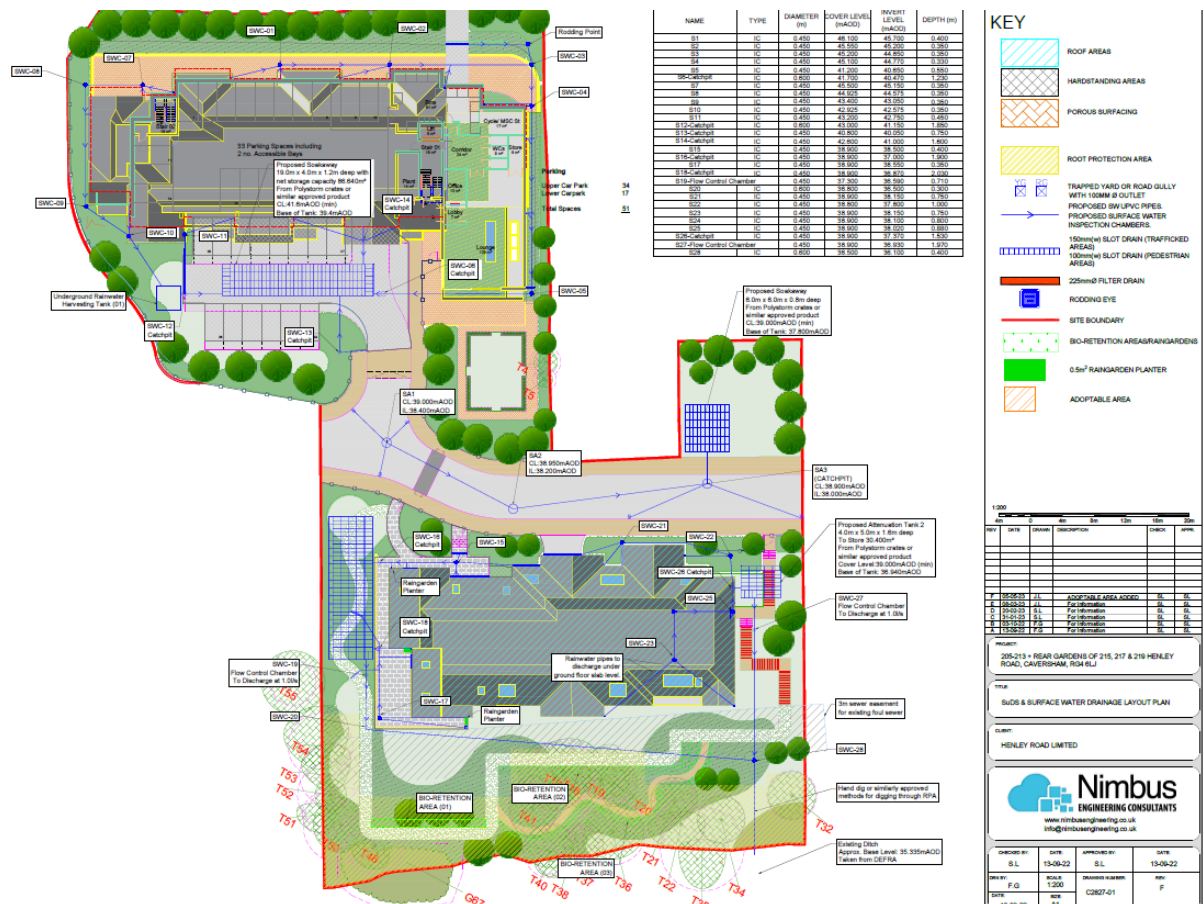


Figure 16 - SuDS & Surface water drainage layout plan

8) RBC Waste Services

- 4.8.1 Initial comments at the outset of the application advised that the bin stores for both Blocks A and B were not of sufficient size or capacity for the provision required. Further details were also sought in relation to the turning circle into Block A, to enable vehicles to access this proposed store.
- 4.8.2 Following revisions to the scheme, whilst issues regarding the provision and capacity were addressed, concerns were raised in relation to the distance between the vehicle and the stores not adhering to the maximum 10m distance. Accordingly, a management strategy will be required to be secured via condition to ascertain the details for the presentation of bins on collection days.

9) Delva Patman Redler Chartered Surveyors (DPR) (light consultants for RBC)

- 4.9.1 DPR undertook an independent review of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing components of the development (report by 'Planning for Sustainability' for the applicant) on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. DPR's initial review in June 2022 firstly confirmed, in the context of the application being submitted and validated prior to the updated version of the BRE guidance being published in June 2022, it was reasonable for the proposals to be assessed against the 2011 BRE guidance, rather than the June 2022 version. DPR's initial conclusions on the assessment by the applicant were:
- The scope of the report is considered acceptable.
 - In terms of internal daylight and sunlight within the proposed development, the results indicate that all proposed dwellings within Blocks A and B will satisfy the BRE guidelines.
 - The sunlight is expected to meet the BRE guidelines, although the technical results should be provided to clarify this.
 - The proposed amenity spaces within the development will benefit from adequate levels of sunlight.
 - In terms of the effects on existing surrounding properties, the results indicate that all neighbouring properties are expected to satisfy the BRE guidelines.
- 4.9.2 However, DPR caveated the above conclusions with four technical clarifications being required from the applicant. The applicant duly provided an updated report in July 2022, which DPR re-reviewed and confirmed satisfaction with three of the four technical matters. In relation to the original query concerning window location plans showing the neighbouring and proposed windows assessed, DPR confirmed that window location plans were provided for proposed Blocks A and B, but not the neighbouring properties.
- 4.9.3 DPR's follow up conclusions, were as follows:
- With the exception of the window location plan to the neighbouring residential properties, all main elements raised in the initial review have been addressed and the responses are appropriate.
 - Overall, the results indicate that proposed Blocks A and B will satisfy the BRE guidelines in daylight and sunlight terms and are expected to benefit from good levels of daylight and sunlight.
 - Based on the results documented in the report, all proposed dwellings are expected to be well-lit in the post development condition, and the neighbouring property will retain acceptable levels of light in the post development condition.

10) Hoare Lea (sustainability consultants for RBC)

- 4.10.1 Hoare Lea undertook an independent review of the sustainability and energy components of the development on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. In Hoare Lea's initial review, received in July 2022, a series of shortcomings and lack of information in relation to the various components required to be demonstrated in sustainability and energy strategies (as per the SPD checklists and the relevant policies of the SPD) were raised by Hoare Lea. This facilitated the submission of a revised strategy and response from the applicant in November 2022. Hoare Lea's subsequent review of the updated strategy, as provided in January 2023, outlined that there were still three remaining elements which remained outstanding in relation to demonstrating compliance with Policies CC3 and CC4. The applicant subsequently provided further information in respect of the outstanding areas. Hoare Lea subsequently reported to officers in February 2023 that there were no further elements that were outstanding from the applicant. More specific information in relation to these matters is discussed in section 6.7 of the report.

11) Berkshire Archaeology

- 4.11.1 Berkshire Archaeology recommends that a condition is attached, securing a scheme of archaeological works, should the proposal be permitted. This is on account of the archaeological potential at the site and the impacts of the proposal, including a large lower ground floor.

12) Environment Agency

- 4.12.1 No objection subject to a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment submitted and the following mitigation measures being implemented prior to occupation and retained/maintained thereafter:
- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 40.75 metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) for Block A and 38.90m AOD for Block B
 - Compensatory storage shall be provided on a level for level basis as shown in Table 2-2: Fluvial Floodplain Compensation and Figures 2-1: Fluvial Floodplain Compensation Plan
- 4.12.2 This condition would ensure that the development complies with Policy EN18 and paragraph 167 of the NPPF. An informative in relation to the possible need for an environmental permit is also recommended.

13) Reading's Economy & Destination Agency (REDA)

- 4.13.1 No objection to the further development of the residential area on Henley Road, but would welcome the opportunity to develop a construction stage employment and skills plan for the site (via S106 legal agreement), assuming the requirements of the SPD of April 2013 will apply based on the scale of the new residential development.

14) Thames Water

- 4.14.1 In terms of foul waste, the scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such Thames Water have no objection. An informative is recommended in relation to a Groundwater Risk Management Permit being required from Thames Water.
- 4.14.2 With regard to surface water drainage, if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water Thames Water would have no objection. Prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required should surface water be proposed to discharge to the public sewer.

4.14.3 Thames Water has no objection based on the information provided with regard to waste water network and sewage treatment works.

4.14.4 In terms of water matters, an informative is recommended given the proposal is within 15m of Thames Waters' underground water assets. Thames Water has also identified an inability of the existing water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. This hasn't been addressed at present, so Thames Water recommends a condition to ensure all water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional demand to serve the development have been completed, or that a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water. This is to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to accommodate additional demand anticipated from the new development. A series of other related informatives are also recommended.

15) Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police; RBC Education; South Oxfordshire District Council; SSE Power Distribution.

4.15.1 No responses have been received from these consultees. If any responses are subsequently received they will be set out in an update report.

ii) Public consultation

4.16.1 Notification letters were sent to nearby occupiers on 17/05/2022. A site notice was erected by the applicant on 23/05/2022, expiring on 12/06/2022. This was visible at the time of the officer site visit on 16/06/2022. A press notice was published on 28/07/2022, expiring on 18/08/2022. A total of 9 objections have been received from 8 separate addresses (6 from Henley Road and 1 each from Mayfield Drive and All Hallows Road). A summary of the issues raised are:

4.16.2 Height, massing and impact on character

- Height and size of the two blocks not in keeping with a residential location and will dwarf the surrounding housing.
- Block B too large in the context of the previous (more in keeping) 3-storey 9 houses. Block B even more 'slab like' than previous application 210975.
- The existing ground level at Block B is being built up, so the real effect is closer to a five-storey block in comparison with existing (see site section).
- Loss of view of Berry Brook (semi-rural location), with existing properties low lying and including gaps to enable views. Harmful to Henley Road residents and pedestrians.
- Adverse impact on the character of the area, when combined with the neighbouring development, decreasing views into the Thames Valley.
- Loss of beautiful 20th century Henley Road buildings.

4.16.3 Transport and related matters

- Insufficient parking will cause vehicle overspill on to the footpath on the south side of Henley Road and All Hallows Road, already problematic during neighbouring development construction.
- Further increase in pollution and traffic during and after completion of the buildings (recent significant increase since a quarry opening between Playhatch and Shiplake).
- Increased traffic from the proposed development itself; Henley Road delays and bottlenecks only worsening (neighbouring care home) and making crossing dangerous.
- Proximity of the site to a school represents a safety risk to children from increased car numbers.

4.16.4 Trees, wildlife and open space

- Moving reptiles found on site to the Mendips appears contrary to the Boroughwide nature conservation goal in the Local Plan to protect, enhance and increase biodiversity
- Page 47 of RBC's Climate Emergency Strategy details managing existing natural habitats and ensuring that new development delivers a 'net gain' for the environment. Fail to see how this proposed development could comply with the legal requirement to "restore or enhance a population or habitat"
- Significant loss of privately owned green space
- Loss of many well-established trees
- An area equivalent to the loss of existing is not even remotely replaced by the suggested landscaping.

4.16.5 Amenity impact on neighbours

- Overbearing impact on neighbouring properties.
- Loss of natural light to Henley Road, especially in winter.
- Loss of privacy to neighbouring properties/gardens to the east and properties on the north side of Henley Road opposite.
- Loss of amenity living near a construction site (for the neighbouring development) for 18 months.
- The existing neighbouring development has had a major impact on quality of life (implied this will be repeated): traffic disruption, inconsiderate parking, hazardous manoeuvres and flooding a local nursery with raw sewage.
- A number of the plans do not include 219 Henley Road and therefore do not correctly illustrate the impact of the proposals.

4.16.6 Flood risk / drainage

- The lower level of Block B is on or below the floodplain.
- Unacceptable to add any additional flood pressures to lower Caversham.
- Block B will interfere with Caversham Park Village sewer which could flood nearby gardens.

4.16.7 Impact on services

- Impact on overstressing local medical facilities (due to the proposed age of residents) e.g. GP services and dentists.
- This area of Caversham is unsuitable for such a large scale development. Lack of local services (15 minute walk to convenience shop / 30 minutes to Caversham centre where a dentist and doctor's surgery are), very limited public transport service and no green space within an easy walk other than the cemetery.

4.16.8 Need

- Questioning the need/desire for more flats in Reading and at the expense of family homes.
- Questioning the need for retirement apartments given brochures and leaflets trying to sell retirement apartments in Berkshire and Oxfordshire are received weekly.

4.16.9 Quality of accommodation

- The design of Block A would expose elderly residents to adverse noise levels, with noise amplified in wet weather (not accounted for in the noise report). Existing residents cannot open front windows due to the noise.

4.16.10 Other matters

- Some neighbours sold part of their back gardens on the understanding that a smaller, more sympathetic development was planned (for which planning permission has already been obtained). Indicated that neighbours would not have sold had this proposal been put forward initially.

- Land Registry Restrictive Covenants relate to the land required to build this development.
- The changes in comparison with withdrawn application 210975 are minimal and insignificant.
- Various complaints that plans do not show all elements (e.g. south context elevation not showing existing properties).

4.17 **iii) Local Groups**

4.17.1 Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA) have made two separate submissions. In August 2022 CADRA specified an objection to the scheme, as the scale of the two buildings, alongside the large adjacent development for the nursing home, would be overbearing and unduly dominate the area.

4.17.2 In March 2023 CADRA commented that the landscaping proposals *"seem to us to show a well thought-out approach, with suitable density and choice of planting and care in accommodating wildlife. Within that supportive view, we have some detailed comments"*, summarised as follows:

- Mislabelled annotations on the landscape masterplan.
- The proposed LEAP is very welcomed, but with limited natural overlooking concerns regarding safeguarding and vandalism are raised.
- Suggestion that privet is an invasive species and should be replaced with native beech or hornbeam hedging, which are more characteristic of the area
- Street lighting should minimise light pollution within and beyond the site
- Support the proposed hedgehog routes, but ask for provision for crossings on the road
- Natural England are currently reviewing the AONB boundary, with the site within the search area.

5. **LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

5.1 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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The application has been assessed against the following policies:

5.3 **National**

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

5.4 The relevant Reading Borough Local Plan policies are:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC4: Decentralised Energy
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
CC9: Securing Infrastructure
EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Historic Interest
EN9: Provision of Open Space
EN10: Access to Open Space
EN11: Waterspaces
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN13: Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN18: Flooding and Drainage
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People
H7: Protecting the Housing Stock
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR2: Major Transport Projects
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
Section 8 Caversham and Emmer Green

5.5 **Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents**

Affordable Housing (March 2021)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

5.6 **Other particularly relevant documentation**

DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015)
Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A guide to good practice, 2nd edition (2011) / BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A guide to good practice (BR 209, 2022 edition)
Reading Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2017) (HEELA)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Land use considerations, including age-restricted accommodation, provision of affordable housing, flood risk and interaction with permission 190887
- ii) Demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets
- iii) Quality of accommodation for future occupiers
- iv) Amenity for nearby occupiers
- v) Transport and Highways
- vi) Trees, landscaping, ecology and SuDS
- vii) Sustainability and energy
- viii) Other matters – Archaeology, Thames Water, S106, Pre-commencement conditions & Equality

i) **Land use considerations**

Loss of existing use and principle of residential use

- 6.1.1 The proposals would result in the loss of 5 family sized dwellinghouses. From a purely land use perspective, this represents 5 residential units within the Class C3 use. Whilst the loss of family sized dwellings is acknowledged, the proposal would ultimately result in 55 Class C3 residential units, equating to a net increase in 50 Class C3 residential units at the site. Policy H1 recognises the pressing need for housing in the Borough, with an average annual requirement for 689 dwellings. There is no specific local policy protecting family sized dwellings in the context of a proposal which increases the total number of residential dwellings at a site, according with Policy H7. From purely a land use perspective the proposal would positively contribute to the required provision in the Borough, thereby not raising any in principle concerns.

Development of private residential gardens

- 6.1.2 Section 11 of the NPPF (Making effective use of land) states planning “*decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions*” (paragraph 119) and decisions should “*give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs*” (paragraph 120).
- 6.1.3 Set within this context, at the local level there is also a specific policy relating to the development of private residential gardens (Policy H11), applicable in this instance owing to the nature of the proposals, where a series of criteria are required to be met for the development to be considered acceptable. This ranges from the scheme making a positive contribution to the character of the area in a number of ways, to more specific matters including access, design, amenity and biodiversity amongst others. A number of the subsequent sections of this appraisal pick up on individual matters referenced in Policy H11. With specific reference to part 7) of the policy where proposals will be acceptable where the emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing, officers acknowledge that the proposed scheme would not provide this. Instead, the proposal seeks to provide specific age-restricted accommodation, with this justified in a separate section below. This justification is considered to

outweigh this specific component part of Policy H11. In summary, it is concluded that the proposals comply with the general thrust of Policy H11 and have been carefully advanced in order to demonstrate appropriate compliance with this overarching policy.

Principle of age restricted residential use

- 6.1.4 With the principle of residential use context in mind, it is also relevant to note that the proposal is actually seeking for the Class C3 accommodation to be age-restricted retirement living units. At the outset of the application the minimum age of future occupants was proposed as 55 year olds, but following officer feedback the now proposed minimum age is 65.
- 6.1.5 In support of the proposals the applicant has submitted evidence, updated during the application to reflect the altered minimum age restriction proposed, in order to seek to justify the proposals. Whilst the design of the scheme has fully considered future resident needs, for example including communal lounge areas, a series of outdoor amenity spaces, mobility storage areas and a support staff office, the mandatory level of care offered on site is not at a level which constitutes a Class C2 care / nursing home use. Instead, whilst age restricted to residents being aged 65 and over, the applicant outlines that the accommodation, *"...enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly for older people and people with physical disabilities, whilst having opportunities for interaction with others and care support as required"*.
- 6.1.6 The provision of accommodation that allows elderly people to continue to live independent lives is broadly in accordance with Policy H6, in particular in seeking to move away from institutional accommodation towards more independent living. The data provided by the applicant in relation to the number of older people who under-occupy homes in the Caversham area ably demonstrates that a considerable amount of family housing could be freed up in the local area (albeit also acknowledging that there would be a direct net loss of 5 family homes in this instance). The applicant's submission also evidences an aging population within Caversham within the past decade. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (background evidence to the Local Plan) identified a need for 1,189 specialist homes for older people in Reading up to 2036, with the SHMA considering older people as being 65+ (which aligns with the proposed accommodation). As such, the proposal would assist in meeting this identified need.
- 6.1.7 Furthermore, the applicant has responded to the specific criteria referenced in Policy H6 within their supporting statement, suitably demonstrating that the proposals adhere to the criteria. Other sections of this assessment will discuss a number of these points in more detail; but in short components such as access, green space and aligning with the character of the area are considered to be met. Furthermore, there is scope for future operational linkages with the recently opened specialist care home at the neighbouring site to the west. Accordingly, the broad principle of this development catering for residents aged 65+ is considered to have been justified.
- 6.1.8 With the principle of age-restricted accommodation considered to be appropriate, it is important that this is secured as such as part of any planning permission, to avoid this in time becoming non-age-restricted accommodation (i.e. general Class C3 residential units), which is not the basis on which the proposals have been considered and assessed. In the circumstances it is considered necessary and reasonable for the age-restriction to be included as part of the S106 legal agreement, to ensure this is robustly secured in perpetuity.

Residential Mix

- 6.1.9 Turning to consider the residential mix of accommodation, the proposal seeks to create 17 x 1-bedroom and 38 x 2-bedroom Class C3 residential units. As per policy H2, in an out of central area and defined district and local centre location such as this, the normal requirement is for 50% of the dwellings to include 3-bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations. In this instance no 3-bedroom units are proposed. However, this is a result of the age-restricted nature of the accommodation proposed, meaning in practice the provision of larger units would not align with the type of accommodation proposed. Accordingly, the type of accommodation sought in this instance, as secured in perpetuity via legal agreement, means that officers consider it is not feasible, practical or realistic to insist on the provision of 3-bedroom accommodation in this instance. Accordingly, the non-provision of 3-bedroom accommodation is accepted on this specific occasion and the provision of 1 and 2-bedroom units, as proposed, aligns with the anticipated needs of the future residents. The larger proportion of 2-bedroom units (69%) proposed in this instance is welcomed in the context of the type of accommodation proposed and only assists the quality of the overall accommodation for future occupiers.

Density

- 6.1.10 In respect of residential density, the proposal seeks to create 88 dwellings per hectare (ha.) (55 dwellings on a 0.62ha. site), which is slightly above the indicative density range of 30-60 in suburban locations, as set out in the Local Plan. As Policy H2 however recognises, the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by a range of factors, with those factors possibly being a basis for justifying a different density to the indicative range. In this instance, the accessibility of the site close to public transport options and a cycle route (both on Henley Road), the need to maximise the efficiency of the land use and the character of the area (noting that the adjacent Signature care home has a comparable density of 79) means a deviation from the indicative density range is considered to be justified in this specific instance. Furthermore, the inclusion of solely 1&2-bed units (owing to the type of accommodation proposed) slightly increases the density figure..

Affordable Housing

- 6.1.11 Given the proposed Class C3 use class of the proposed units, there is a requirement for the development to provide affordable housing, as per Policy H3. The 30% on-site policy requirement equates to 16.5 on-site units in this case. The applicant, at the outset of the application, submitted a viability report seeking to evidence that the proposed development cannot viably provide any contribution towards affordable housing. The consideration of viability matters is fully recognised by Policy H3, with the onus on the applicant to clearly demonstrate the circumstances to justify a lower affordable housing contribution.
- 6.1.12 In this case the viability evidence has been independently reviewed on behalf of the Council by BPS Chartered Surveyors, with input, assistance and verification by RBC Valuers. As per section 4.5 above, it is advised that BPS concluded, with this confirmed by RBC Valuers, that the scheme is in deficit by £1.896m. However, noting that relatively small changes in build costs and/or values achieved could easily move the development into a profit, the need for a future late-stage reassessment of viability is particularly necessary in this case, with a need to secure a Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution.

- 6.1.13 Officers consider that the above context is clear, specifically that in this particular instance the scheme simply cannot viably afford to make a contribution to affordable housing at this juncture. Such instances are reflected in local policy and therefore the proposals in this context, with a deferred contribution mechanism being secured, are policy compliant. Officers are however also acutely aware of the critical need for Affordable Housing within Reading Borough and the associated need to provide for sustainable and inclusive mixed and balanced communities. On this basis, despite the viability context, the applicant was urged to improve its contribution towards affordable housing. This facilitated the applicant making an upfront £75,000 payment-in-lieu contribution, with this being in excess of what the scheme can viably support at this juncture, as independently verified. Accordingly, officers advise that the proposals are policy compliant in respect of affordable housing matters, owing to the viability evidence submitted and independently verified.
- 6.1.14 Both the payment-in-lieu and deferred contribution mechanism will be secured via the S106 legal agreement. A further affordable housing related clause is considered to be necessary in this case too. This involves the scenario that should the application site subsequently be extended/alterd to create further residential units (e.g. through the conversion of a 2-bed unit into 2 x 1-bed units, ancillary spaces being converted into units or either building being extended to create further units) then contributions towards affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis, rather than a standalone basis. This stems from Policy H3 requiring different levels of affordable housing depending on the number of units. The proposed approach therefore prevents this proposal being the first of a succession of applications, with the later applications having lesser requirements, or put another way, if all applications had been submitted collectively it would have generated a larger requirement. It is considered reasonable and necessary for this to be secured in this case so the site makes an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading Borough. This clause has been incorporated within a number of other permissions in the Borough in recent years, including being accepted at planning appeals.

Flood Risk

- 6.1.15 Given the application site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3a (albeit no built form is proposed within 3a), another principal land use consideration revolves around the suitability of the proposed development within this context.
- 6.1.16 In this regard the applicant has submitted both a sequential test assessment and a site specific flood risk assessment, in order to seek to demonstrate the appropriateness of the proposals against the established national and local policies. Considering first the sequential test, the submission by the applicant has considered reasonable available sites in areas with a lower risk of flooding within the Borough, as per a scope discussed in advance of submission. In short, the identified sites are either not available, for a variety of reasons, or are unsuitable (e.g. not comparable in size/capacity to the application site). Accordingly, the applicant's data concludes that the assessment suitably demonstrates that the application site is the most sequentially preferable.
- 6.1.17 Officers are mindful that the Borough is presently expecting to exceed housing needs over the plan period, so a site at higher risk of flooding is usually unlikely to pass the sequential test based on current figures. This is in contrast to the position at the point when previous sequential assessments have been considered at the site (in relation to 190887 at part of the application site) or the neighbouring site (e.g. 190835 – see relevant history section above). However, the proposal is for a specialist type of accommodation, in this instance retirement living apartments

(which as discussed separately above at section 6.1 will be secured as such via legal agreement). The SHMA identified a need for 1,189 specialist homes for older people in Reading up to 2036. This need has not yet been met, thereby assisting in justifying the proposals passing the sequential test in this instance, when supplemented alongside the information submitted by the applicant. As per PPG, the exceptions test is not relevant in this instance.

- 6.1.18 With the above established, it is acknowledged that a site-specific flood risk assessment (FRA) has been submitted in support of the proposed development. This has been assessed by the Environment Agency (EA), who as per section 4.12 above, are satisfied that with the mitigation measures secured (relating to finished floor levels and compensatory flood storage) via condition, the proposals are policy compliant. It is also noted in this regard that no residential units are proposed to be located in the lowest floors of either Blocks A and B, with the lowest levels given over to parking, servicing and the shared lounge areas. Accordingly, the proposals are considered to be appropriate in terms of Policy EN18, with the condition recommended within the EA response to be attached.

Consideration of permission 190887 at part of the application site

- 6.1.19 The permission for nine dwellings to the rear of No's 209-219 Henley Road (part of the application site – see paragraphs 3.3 to 3.6 above for details – ref 190887) is considered to be a material consideration in the determination of this application. This consideration follows the submission of information during the course of the application (Photographs x 8, Site Inspection Report and RBC Building Control Initial Notice acknowledgement letter) indicating that works have recently commenced (excavations for foundations for the houses having been undertaken) prior to the expiry (on 25/03/2023) of the three years for implementation. The applicant had previously confirmed on 08/03/2023 that the permission had not at that time been implemented.
- 6.1.20 This is an important point of clarification, as parts of the design justification, viability case and transport implications of the development (to name but three examples) are inter-connected with this permission. There are also possible separate CIL implications too.
- 6.1.21 By implementing permission 190887, as appears to be the case based on the information provided, this provides the opportunity for that permission to be built out at any time in the future, irrespective of the outcome of this separate application on a wider site. One potential concern with such an approach is the full implementation of the nine residential scheme and, should this current application be permitted too, the subsequent partial implementation of this scheme (e.g. Block A only and not Block B). Such a scenario would result in an unsatisfactory cumulative development in design terms and the inefficient use of land, together with a range of potential highway and amenity concerns and ambiguity. To prevent such complications, the applicant has proactively suggested the following:

We are in agreement for a clause to be included within the S106 agreement along the lines of: *“No works above ground level for permission 190887 shall be undertaken if permission 220189 is implemented.”*

- 6.1.22 Such a clause would prevent the unsatisfactory potential scenario envisaged above and is welcomed by officers in providing clarity in terms of the future development of the area where contrasting permissions could be in place simultaneously. Put another way, it means either permission 190887 will be implemented, or the current application will be, but not any substantial element of both. This obligation, secured

via S106 legal agreement, is therefore duly referenced within the Recommendation at the outset of this report.

6.1.23 Officers also consider that the implementation of permission 190887 does not unduly prejudice or compromise the overriding assessment of this application, which would deliver an overall significantly greater number of residential units than 190887, with the safeguard of the obligation being a necessary, reasonable and relevant one too.

6.1.24 Furthermore, it is also recognised that the legal agreement obligation could potentially result in the opportunity loss of 9 family sized dwellings (ref 190887) together with the 5 existing family sized dwellings fronting onto Henley Road. As per earlier sections of this appraisal, there is a pressing need for age-restricted residential accommodation, which the proposed scheme would help to meet, as part of an overall pressing need for housing in the Borough. There is also a need for family sized housing, but as outlined above part of the justification for the proposals is that it could free up a considerable amount of family housing in the area, thereby mitigating the 'loss' of family housing at the site.

ii) **Demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets**

Demolition

6.2.1 Considering first the demolition of the existing dwellings at the site, these are not considered to be of any particular or special architectural or historic importance to warrant their retention. Accordingly, providing the replacement development is of suitable design quality, the demolition of the existing structures is accepted.

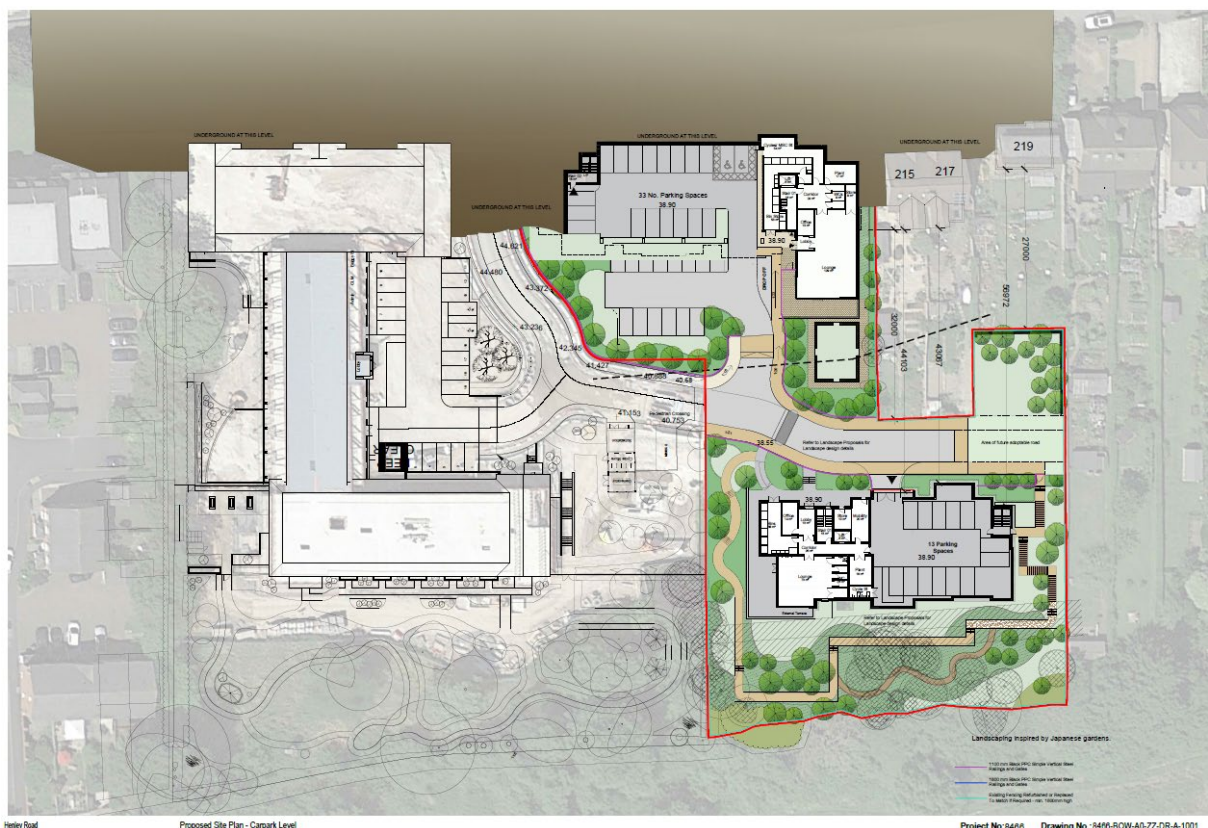


Figure 17 – The proposed site plan at car park level (Rev P17)

Layout

- 6.2.2 Moving onto the proposed development, the proposed development layout comprises two residential blocks, with Block A fronting Henley Road and Block B to the south, with a highway between the two (as seen above in figure 17 above). This layout integrates with the surrounding area by continuing the pattern of development started by the Ruskin development and continued by the Signature care home to the west, with the continuation of the access road acting as a guide to the pattern of development. The applicant has explained that incorporating the access route through the site is of strategic importance to assist the amenity of future occupiers in terms of accessibility (ensuring an accessible route for pedestrians), whilst also supporting the servicing arrangements, given the existing sewer and significant drainage requirements due to the site topography.
- 6.2.3 As such, the proposed layout reinforces the relatively recently created pattern along this part of Henley Road. This is acknowledged to differ from the historic character of mainly substantial single houses set in generous grounds along this part of Henley Road, but the Ruskin and Signature schemes demonstrate a further local context which the proposals respond to. In particular, attention has been paid to the building lines of both blocks. During the course of the application the front building line of Block A has been moved a further 2m back from Henley Road, to respond more positively and appropriately to the established building line of the blocks to the west and, moreover, the existing dwellings to the east. Block B broadly aligns with corresponding block at the neighbouring site to the west, thereby providing a degree of continuity at this point.

Scale and massing

- 6.2.4 In terms of the scale and massing, the proposals have taken cues from the surrounding area and have been respectful of the existing context. Furthermore, the site topography is particularly pertinent in this regard too, with there being a significant 11m drop from north to south from Henley Road. The changes in land levels have been utilised to reduce the proposed scale of Block A when viewed from Henley Road. Whilst the building is up to 5 storeys in height in total, it would appear as 2 storeys when approaching from Henley Road, owing to the change in land levels and the proposals being cut into the site in order to create a basement (at Henley Road) car park, which owing to the changes in land levels would be at ground floor level when accessed via a vehicle.
- 6.2.5 The existing and proposed street elevations (see figure 18 below) demonstrate that the proposed height of Block A is only marginally greater than the existing properties at the site and would be comparable with the height of the Signature care home to the west. In addition, the proposed building intentionally reduces in scale on the boundary with the existing single dwellings to the east, with the step down respecting the existing prevailing scale of development at this point. There is also a reduction in scale at the western end of Block A, to ensure the scale of the building does not compete with the care home and also adds variety in the overall streetscape. Both in street scene and full elevation terms the proposed height of Block A is evidently (as per figure 18 below) in line with the prevailing character along the south side of Henley Road at this point.

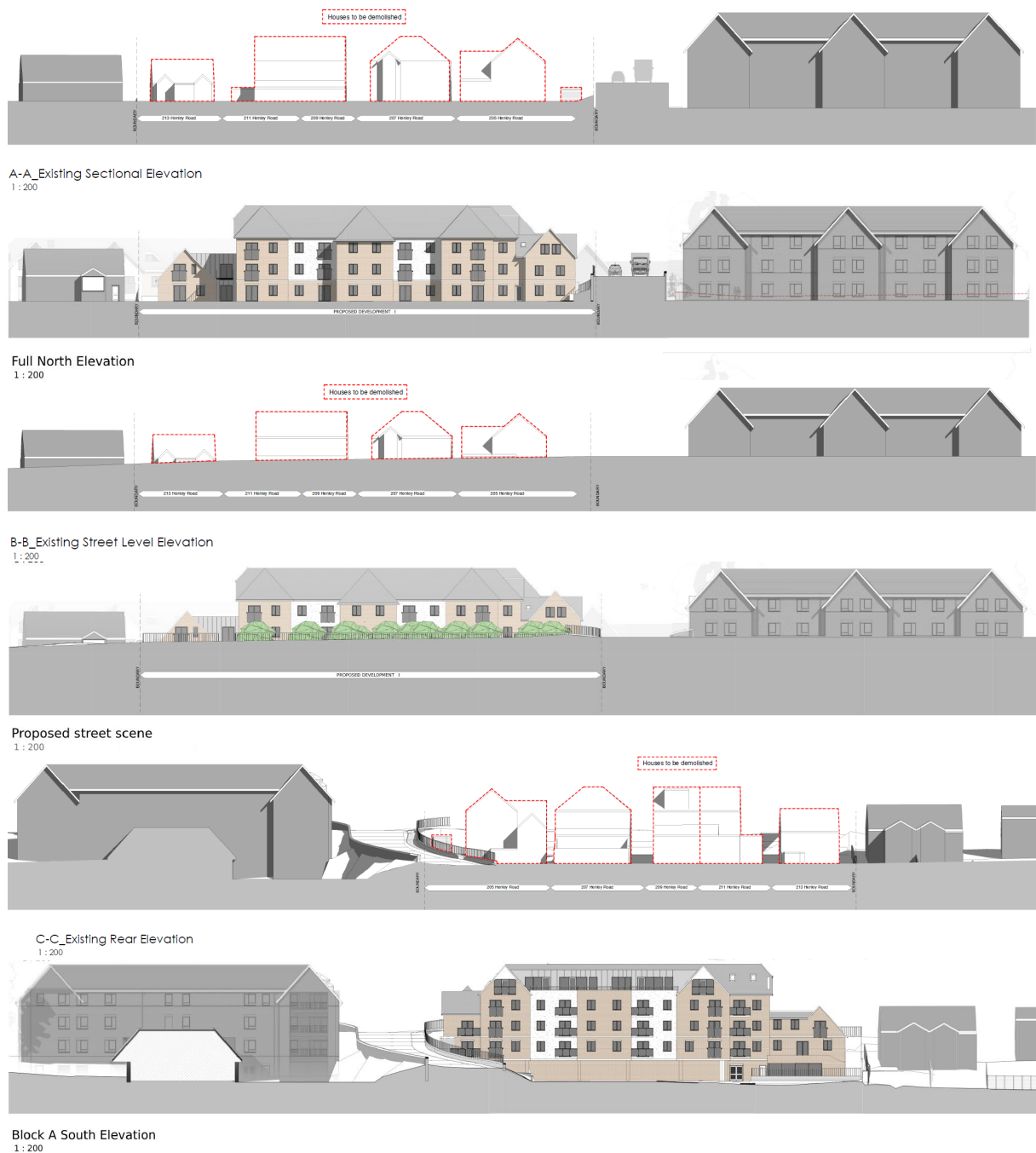


Figure 18 – Existing and proposed front and rear full elevations and streetscenes (taking account of topography) within the context of neighbouring buildings

6.2.6 Whilst it is acknowledged that the overall massing of Block A would represent a change in the streetscene (with the series of existing buildings breaking up the massing and enabling glimpses through to the south), set within the context of the Ruskin and Signature care home schemes, it is considered difficult to resist the proposals on this basis alone. Furthermore, gaps on the boundary of the site (naturally created through the access road into the site to the west) and the reduction in massing at either end of the building assist in maintaining some, albeit reduced, glimpses through to the south from Henley Road.

6.2.7 In terms of the scale and massing of Block B, this will be 4 storeys in total, with the upper-most floor incorporating accommodation in the roofscape. Whilst slightly taller than the corresponding block on the Signature care home to the west, based on the full southern elevation submitted (see figure 19 below) this is not considered

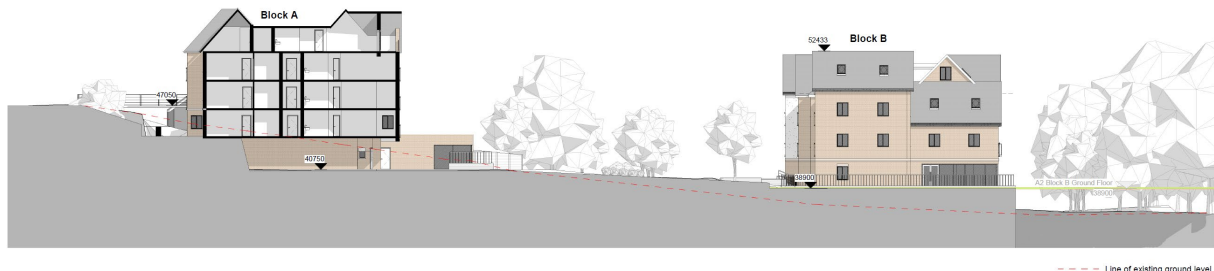
harmfully taller within this setting and, on its own merits, is considered suitable given the spaciousness of the site at this point, without built form in close proximity in any direction (including existing Henley Road dwellings to the east). It is also relevant that the 9 dwellings approved at this part of the site under permission 190887 broadly follow the front (north) elevation building line of the proposal, with the proposed accommodation within the roofscope representing the only increase in height in comparison with that scheme. Accordingly, the proposed scale and massing of Block B is considered appropriate.



South Full Elevation
1 : 200

Figure 19 – South elevation of Block B, in the context of the neighbouring Signature care home block (left) and the corresponding blocks fronting Henley Road (in the background)

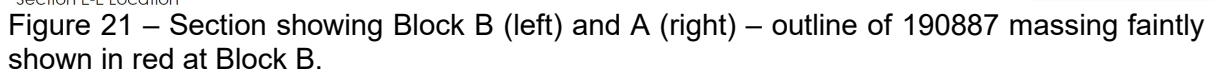
6.2.8 The applicant has also explained that Block B is proposed to be at a slightly higher level than the existing ground level at this part of the site. This has been necessary to assist in creating an accessible route up to Henley Road for future residents (with a reduction of the gradient aligning with the age restricted accommodation proposed) and will also be favourable in respect of separate flood risk matters. Moreover, to assist the sustainability benefits of the scheme, the supporting documentation specifies the build-up in the land levels for Block B will be constructed using the fill material obtained from Block A (where excavation is proposed to create the lowest floor) to reduce the need to remove material from the site. The existing ground level is shown by a hatched line in figure 20 below, showing how the proposal will increase the land level in respect of Block B, but reduce it for Block A.



Site Section

Figure 20 – Site section north to south (also showing existing ground levels)

6.2.9 In terms of the interaction between Blocks A and B at the application site, there is a linear relationship between the blocks akin to that which exists at sites to the west. There is a considerable 40m+ distance between the blocks, they are off-set from one another and there is a change in land levels (as seen in figure 21 below), so as to ensure that the buildings appear as separate entities and do not seek to compete with one another or merge into a single massing. There are also similarities, such as the general design approach and choice of materials to evidently demonstrate in time that they are being brought forward as a single development. It is not considered that the proposals represent an unacceptable form of tandem development for the reasons outlined above.



6.2.10 Turning to consider detailed design components, the proposals are predominantly red-brick buildings, with secondary recessed elements of the frontages including a white render to add variety and visual interest. The choice of these materials reflects the prevailing character in the area, therefore reinforcing the local vernacular as Policy CC7 promotes. Along the street, the simple limited palette of materials compliments the pattern of development to the west, thereby providing a suitable addition to the streetscene which is intentionally modest in its detailed design. On the rear elevation of Block A a further contrasting material is proposed, with the roof level comprising red zinc which adds a layer of distinctiveness to this elevation, as shown in the visualisation shown below at figure 22. A stone banding is proposed between the ground and first floors to differentiate the 'base' and 'middles' of the buildings.

6.2.11 The architectural language continues at Block B, in order to align the character of the two blocks at the application site. The accommodation in the roofslope, with Juliet balconies and small terrace areas with contrasting fenestration, adds a subtle difference in the finished appearance in comparison with Block A. Beyond the buildings themselves, the surrounding built form will include boundary walls and railings which appear to align with the character and finished appearance of the buildings (see the design intention in figure 22 below). In order to ensure the design quality of the proposed scheme, all material details will be secured in full via condition, including samples being erected on site for inspection as part of the future approval of these details. With this condition secured it is considered that the appearance of the proposed development complies with Policy CC7.

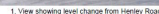


Figure 22 – Visualisation of the rear (south) elevation of Block A and access road towards Henley Road

6.2.12 Linking back specifically to Policy H11 9) the proposed development would not prejudice the development of the wider area, evidenced by the proposed road layout 'futureproofing' any potential development to the rear gardens of the Henley Road properties to the east, should this come forward in the future. As per the Transport comments, a S106 obligation will prevent the creation or retention of any ransom strip along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the application site. Overall, the proposals are considered to comply with design-based Policy CC7, whilst also being cognisant of related policies such as H11, EN12 and EN13.

6.2.13 In terms of the impact of the proposals on designated heritage assets, the site is located outside of a conservation area and there are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the site. In respect of the protection of significant views within the borough with heritage interest, as per Policy EN5, it is acknowledged that the site is within two of the views which merit special protection. More specifically, this relates to the view over Alexandra Road Conservation Area towards the Chilterns escarpment (view 5) and the view towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M), railway and surrounding streets (view 8). In these regards, owing to the scale of development set against the existing context and the site topography, whilst it is acknowledged that the development would potentially be visible, it is not considered to be visible in a harmful manner.

iii) **Quality of accommodation for future occupiers**

6.3.1 At the outset of the application a series of concerns were raised with the applicant in relation to the quality of the accommodation proposed, ranging from habitable rooms initially only being served by rooflights rather than conventional windows, to insufficient waste storage areas being provided. This has resulted in a number of changes to the scheme, reducing the number of units proposed from 59 to 55 during the application. Following revisions, the proposals are considered to provide a suitable standard of accommodation for future occupiers, with a number of specific matters being subject to conditions to secure the precise details.

6.3.2 More specifically, each of the 55 units proposed are regular in size and shape, complying with the various nationally-described space standards in terms of overall flat sizes, bedroom sizes and the other technical requirements. Single-aspect north-facing units have been minimised, including being removed at upper ground floor level of Block A. A total of 12 single-aspect north-facing units do remain, although these are all at either first or second floor level.

6.3.3 Furthermore, given the age-restricted nature of the proposals, the layout also indicates some additional ancillary spaces within each building. Most prominently, a south-facing shared lounge for each building is proposed, together with mobility scooter storage and an office room within each block. Whilst no form of specialised care or supported living is proposed in this instance (hence the Class C3 use proposed, rather than Class C2), in practice these ancillary spaces and functions are welcomed and supported in light of the nature of the age-restricted accommodation. In this regard, it is considered necessary to secure a condition for the pre-occupation provision of all internal communal areas and retention thereafter, together with the stipulation that they are used ancillary to the Class C3 use, rather than becoming separate planning units. These facilities are all in addition to the usual supporting functions such as parking (both vehicular and cycles) and waste storage, as discussed within the Transport consultation response.

6.3.4 In terms of amenity space, all bar one of the 55 units will either include an individual protruding balcony (18 units), an inset balcony within the roofslope (6 units within Block B) or a Juliet balcony (30 units). The protruding balconies are proposed on the

south-facing elevations, with the Juliet balconies predominantly serving the north-facing units. In addition, occupiers will have access to the communal on-site hard and soft landscaping areas, most substantially the area along the southern edge of the site, but also including areas to the south of No. 219 Henley Road (a 'nature garden' including trees and a lawn area) and to the south of the Block A lounge. Collectively this provision is welcomed for the benefit of future occupiers, providing adequate on-site provision for future occupiers to use.

- 6.3.5 Linked to this, it is noted that under Policy EN9, as the proposals are for over 50 dwellings, new provision of open space will be sought. In this instance, based on the latest landscape plan, the only open space on site which will be fully publicly accessible will be the nature garden to the rear of No. 219 Henley Road. This is welcomed in principle, although in practice it is unlikely to be used by the wider public. The remaining spaces are all enclosed by railings and gates (owing to site safety and security reasons for future and neighbouring occupiers, as per Policy CC8, as recognised by Policy H10). In this instance it is considered that an appropriate level of private and communal open space for the new development has been incorporated within the proposals.
- 6.3.6 With specific regard to the Policy H5 requirements, beyond the space standards referenced above, it is confirmed that the water and energy components are incorporated within the sustainability and energy section of the report below. In terms of the accessible/adaptable/wheelchair user elements, at the outset of the application the applicant specified that all of the units have been designed to comply with Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. However, the submission lacks specific commentary and explicit plans to evidence this. In terms of the 5% wheelchair user dwelling requirement in line with Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations, at the outset of the application the applicant outlined that units 02, 05, 08 and 11 at upper ground floor level of Block A are designed to be fully compliant (at that time 4/59 units equated to 6.8% provision – wheelchair units within Block B are not possible given all accommodation is at first floor level and above, owing to site topography and flood risk factors). However, in the context of the various revisions to the scheme during the course of the application the layout of units have changed at the site as a whole, so it is unclear which units would now be the specified wheelchair user dwellings (and the numbering of units has altered too, with no unit 11 at upper ground floor level for example). Set within this context a pre-occupation condition is recommended to secure details of evidence of all units complying with Part M4(2) and at least 5% of the units complying with Part M4(3) too. This will adhere with the policy requirements, but noting the age-restricted nature of the accommodation, an informative will be included too. This will strongly encourage the applicant to exceed the minimum 5% wheelchair user requirement, to assist the quality of accommodation and anticipated needs for future occupiers.
- 6.3.7 With regard to Policy CC8, where it is required to provide acceptable living conditions for new residential properties, it is considered that the layout has been designed with suitable residents' amenity in mind. In terms of privacy and overlooking, the footprint and orientation of units are such that no significant harm would occur for future occupiers, either in terms of from existing occupiers or fellow new residents within the development (e.g. there is a suitable distance between Blocks A and B). It is noted that no details have been submitted regarding the boundary treatment (likely privacy screens) between the external terrace area at third floor level of Block A, so a condition will secure details to protect the privacy of units 31, 32 and 33.
- 6.3.8 In relation to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing matters for future occupiers, the independent review by DPR (see section 4.9 above) confirms that future occupiers

are expected to benefit from good levels of daylight and sunlight. Furthermore, the proposed amenity spaces within the development will benefit from adequate levels of sunlight. More specifically, all three of the amenity spaces will 100% comply with the BRE requirement of providing at least 2 hours of sunlight at the Spring equinox, due to the relative openness of the site.

- 6.3.9 This assessment was undertaken at the outset of the application and it is acknowledged that the proposals have been altered since this point in time. However, officers consider that the proposals have not altered to such an extent which would lead to a different overall conclusion being reached by DPR, with in many instances the changes to the scheme only helping to increase day/sunlight levels (e.g. omitting single aspect north-facing units on the upper ground floor of Block A). Officers are satisfied that the proposals are acceptable in terms of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing for future occupiers.
- 6.3.10 In terms of visual dominance and overbearing impacts, it is not considered that Block A would dominate or overbear Block B, or vice-versa, given the suitable 40m distance between the blocks. The neighbouring care-home and the other surrounding existing buildings are not considered to dominate or overbear future occupiers either. In terms of outlook, all future occupiers are considered to benefit from good levels of outlook from all habitable rooms proposed.
- 6.3.11 Turning to consider crime and safety matters, the DAS submitted with the application specifies that the proposals will conform to Part Q of the Building Regulations, with windows and doors meeting British Standards. No consultation response has been received from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police, and officers consider that the level of detail included within the submission is fairly limited, lacking robust detail in relation to entry into and through the building for example. In the circumstances it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure a full security strategy via condition.
- 6.3.12 With regard to fire safety, the proposals do not include 'gateway 1 buildings', with both buildings below 18m in height (Block A is 15.8m and Block B is 13.2m). Hence, no fire statement was required to accompany the application, or consultation with the Health & Safety Executive. Despite this, given the obvious sensitivities around this matter and the need to protect the future safety of occupiers (and the general area), a pre-commencement (barring demolition) condition is recommended. The plans show that both buildings include two separate stair cores as part of the proposed layout. In practice the condition will secure an appropriate fire strategy, to be provided prior to first occupation and then maintained as such thereafter.

iv) **Amenity for nearby occupiers**

- 6.4.1 It is noted that a number of public consultation responses have raised concerns about the impact of the proposals on the living environment of existing residential properties, as per section 4.16 above. Accordingly, the proposals have been carefully considered with Policy CC8 particularly in mind.
- 6.4.2 In relation to privacy and overlooking matters, the impact on the neighbouring property to the east, No. 215 Henley Road, has been accounted for in the proposed design. The three storey element of Block A, adjacent to No. 215, includes no windows on the east side elevation facing the neighbouring property, ruling out overlooking at this point. It is acknowledged that the set-in five storey component of Block A includes a single window at upper ground floor level (towards the front of the site) and a single window at third floor level, which are 12m from the boundary with No. 215 and 16m from the outrigger at No. 215, with this existing property including

an external terrace at this point based on the officer site visit on 16/06/22 (see photographs below at figure 23 and visualization at figure 24). The closest proposed external terrace on Block A is 16m from the boundary with No. 215 and 20m from the outrigger. Furthermore, the walkway off Henley Road leading to the upper ground floor entrance at the front of the site is 8m from the boundary with No. 215, where significant vegetation presently exists (see photographs below at figure 23). In overall terms it is considered that the proposals have included a range of measures to reduce overlooking to this neighbouring property, with none considered to result in a loss of privacy sufficient to resist the proposals on this basis.



Figure 23 - The relationship with No. 215, from No. 213 (officer photographs 16/06/22)



2. View showing boundary between proposed development and 215 Henley Road

Figure 24 – Visualisation of the proposed scheme looking north at relationship with No. 215 Henley Road

6.4.3 In relation to privacy and overlooking to other nearby occupiers, the proposals are considered too distant from the properties on the north side of Henley Road or the care home to the west for there to be a detrimental impact. In terms of the impact of Block B overlooking the rear of properties at No. 215 and onwards to the east, the back-to-back distances between buildings are 44m (to No. 215), 43m (to No. 217) and almost 57m (to No. 219). These are all comfortably in excess of the 20m back-to-back distance referenced in Policy CC8. The distance of windows at Block B to

the rear boundary of the neighbouring gardens are 12m (to No. 215), 10m (to No. 217) and 30m (to No. 219) respectively. Accordingly, whilst the proposals would introduce possibilities for overlooking towards the rear of the Henley Road properties to the east which do not exist at present, such overlooking would not be of a harmful nature, given the significant back-to-back distances involved.

- 6.4.4 Turning to consider daylight and sunlight impacts on neighbouring and nearby properties, DPR undertook an independent review on behalf of the local planning authority. As per section 4.9 above it was firstly confirmed that the scope of the assessment was considered appropriate. This verifies the approach of the applicant to assess only No. 215 Henley Road to the east and the care home to the west. In this regard, other properties, such as those on the north side of Henley Road, are too distant from the proposed development for there to be any harmful day/sunlight or overshadowing impact. DPR report that the impact on the care home will be negligible, while for No. 215 all four flank windows will satisfy the BRE guidelines, although a location plan specifying the exact locations was not provided. On the basis of the officer site visit, together with subsequent alterations to the scheme to reduce the bulk of the proposed scheme closest to the boundary with No. 215, it is considered by officers that the daylight/sunlight impacts of the proposed development on these occupiers will not cause a significant detrimental impact. Accordingly, in line with the DPR advice, officers are also satisfied in terms of the day/sunlight impacts of the proposed development.
- 6.4.5 In relation to outlook, visual dominance and the overbearing effects of a development, it is fully acknowledged that the proposed development will introduce a new relationship for existing nearby occupiers when compared with the existing context of the five current dwellings and expansive rear gardens. In some respects the site topography means such impacts will be particularly noticeable. However, when considered within the context of the existing neighbouring developments to the west (including the recently completed care home) it is considered that there are no sustainable grounds to resist the proposals in these regards. Furthermore, the reduction of height and scale proposed away from No. 215, and the revisions to the massing and footprint of Block A during the application, also assist in reaching an overall conclusion that the development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties to an extent to resist the proposals on.
- 6.4.6 With regard to noise and disturbance matters, including vibration and dust, fumes and smells, a specific concern has been raised in the consultation responses relating to the construction stage of the development, borne out of recent experiences with the neighbouring development. As per the Transport (section 4.1) and Environmental Protection (section 4.2) comments, a demolition and construction method statement would be secured via pre-commencement condition, in order to seek to protect nearby amenity in such regards. The hours of construction and preventing the burning of materials or green waste on site are separately recommended conditions too. With these conditions secured, such impacts will be managed. A series of other conditions would also assist in these regards in the longer term, such as the refuse collection details.
- 6.4.7 In terms of the impacts from artificial lighting, external lighting details are recommended to be secured via condition (also required for ecological reasons). With regard to crime and safety matters, although no comments have been received from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police, it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure details of a robust security strategy via condition, for the benefit of existing nearby occupiers as well as future occupiers too. Hence, in overall terms, it is considered that the proposals will comply in full with Policy CC8, subject to the recommended conditions being secured.

v) **Transport and Highways**

- 6.5.1 As per the observations at section 4.1 of this report, the proposals are considered acceptable from a transport perspective, subject to a series of conditions and S106 obligations. This conclusion has been reached following the submission of various further information submitted during the application, to address a series of initial comments raised by RBC Transport.
- 6.5.2 In particular, it is noted that the vehicular access would continue the adopted highway created by the Signature development to the west, albeit until such time any development further the east comes forward, soft landscaping will terminate the road, with a footway for pedestrians on both sides. Whilst the parking provision is below that required in this location, this has been justified and evidenced by the applicant and is accepted. The proposed development itself is not considered to result in a material increase in traffic flow and consequently no severe impact on the highway network is anticipated. On Henley Road it is proposed to extend the foot/cycleway scheme delivered by the Signature development, which is welcomed in promoting travel by alternative modes. These works will be secured via legal agreement, together with other specific highways related works and conditions.

vi) **Trees, landscaping, ecology and SuDS**

- 6.6.1 There are a number of interconnected considerations in respect of these elements of the proposals. As such, the relevant specialist officers have worked closely together to ensure a joined-up approach has been taken. Considering first the tree and landscaping elements of the proposals, as section 4.3 above details, the Natural Environment officer is in overall terms satisfied with the proposals subject to a number of conditions. It is fully acknowledged that four protected trees will be removed as part of the proposed development, with three justifiably removed owing to their condition and one poplar being required to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. This is a Category B tree, with the only other Category B trees to be removed being two groups of conifers. All other trees to be removed, with the total number being 47, are low quality Category C or no value Category U trees. The Natural Environment officer considers the loss of the TPO Category B tree to be regrettable, but concurs with the applicant that its amenity value is limited and its loss can be mitigated through new tree planting. Furthermore, it is also relevant that it has previously been accepted under permission 190887 for the Category B trees to be removed as part of that separate scheme (see figure 12 above); as such, there is considered to be limited means to sustainably resist these proposals in light of that recent context.
- 6.6.2 In terms of the proposed landscaping strategy, this importantly maintains a significant buffer on the south side of the site (minimum 18m in depth across the full width of the site), which assists in maintaining a screen to Berry Brook and the Major Landscape Feature. A combination of retained trees and vegetation, together with the proposed new trees within this area will assist in this regard. Along the Henley Road frontage it is considered positive that this will be tree-lined along the entire width of the site, barring the space required for the pedestrian access to Block A. The nature garden is another welcomed element of the proposal, providing another suitable space for the benefit of future occupiers. In total, 90 newly planted trees are proposed, equating to a net gain across the site of 43. The proposals also incorporate significant areas of sedum green roofs on Block A, which is a benefit of the proposals. Further details of these, together with the landscaping proposals as a whole will be secured as part of a series of Natural Environment based recommended conditions, with the proposals considered to comply with Policy EN14 in overall terms.

- 6.6.3 In terms of ecology matters, as per section 4.4 above, it is acknowledged that there are significant concerns raised by RBC's Ecology consultants GS Ecology. This is associated with the principle of development within the rear gardens of the site, owing to the likely considerable ecological value of the site and location next to a designated Major Landscape Feature, meaning the site is sensitively located and forms part of Reading's green network. Policy EN13 guards against development which detracts from the character and appearance of a Major Landscape Feature, while Policy EN12 states the green network shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. This is also backed up by Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens). By the very nature of the proposals there are acknowledged to be inherent difficulties in meeting all elements of these policies.
- 6.6.4 However, the positioning of Block B has been set back a minimum distance of 18m from the site boundary and Berry Brook to the south. This maintains what is considered to be a reasonable and suitable buffer between the built form and the site boundary, with this space scheduled to include a variety of soft landscaping forms including lawn areas and wildflower grassland planting. Furthermore, areas of soft landscaping are also proposed in other parts of the site too, meaning the ratio of soft landscaping to built form is relatively generous when compared with developments to the west. Other mitigating factors include that existing reptiles already evidenced at the site will be protected through the relocation strategy to be secured via S106 Legal Agreement, the proposals seek to increase the number of trees at the site, and biodiversity enhancement measures (including at least 10 bird/bat boxes) being secured via condition and the anticipated overall biodiversity net gain (BNG) at the site. The BNG has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of GS Ecology, following a series of revisions during the course of the application. As per section 4.4 above, the final details will be secured via condition.
- 6.6.5 In addition, the applicant's supporting ecological appraisal considers the site to be of local (i.e. Caversham) overall ecological value, rather than being of Boroughwide or regional/national significance. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that development has recently been permitted in the southern half of the application site (Ref 190887 for 9 dwellings), together with separate developments to the west at Ruskin and the neighbouring newly completed Signature care home. Taking all factors into account, the previous permissions and mitigation measures combine to form a reasonable case that the shortfalls of the proposals in these regards advised by GS Ecology need to be considered further in the overall planning balance. This matter is therefore returned to within the planning balance conclusion at the end of this appraisal.
- 6.6.6 Turning to the separate but related matter of SuDS, the proposed strategy has altered during the course of the application to address initial comments raised by RBC Lead Local Flood Authority. In light of the location and topography at the site, together with the nature of the proposals, this is a complex site from a SuDS perspective. A series of soakaways, attenuation tanks and bio-retention areas are shown to be proposed, which following the submission of further information during the course of the application is considered, as per the comments at section 4.7 above, to demonstrate that a policy compliant proposal can be achieved. The final details are yet to be submitted at application stage, so in the circumstances details will be secured via condition, with the expectation for details to build on the considerable information submitted at application stage. With the conditions secured, which will be required to align in full with the landscaping proposals being advanced (which themselves link into the BNG strategy), this will ensure the

drainage proposals are satisfactory and will reduce the risk of flooding at the site and in the wider area.

vii) **Sustainability and energy**

6.7.1 The sustainability and energy statement submitted by the applicant can be summarised as follows:

- Installation of a communal air source heat system within the buildings. Each block will have its own common chiller unit, which will serve a medium temperature loop and each apartment will have its own internal unit.
- Installation of a total of 81 x 400W photovoltaic panels on the roofs of the two blocks (54 to Block A and 27 to Block B, inclined at circa 20 degrees and orientated toward due south).
- A series of passive design measures, such as allowing for natural ventilation and exposed thermal mass, together with high levels of insulation, air tightness and the control of solar gain.
- A combination of active design measures, such as efficient lighting and controls and space heating and hot water.
- Overall, the applicant outlines that the proposals are anticipated to result in a 73.85% reduction in emissions over the 2013 Building Regulations, when all factors are taken into account.

6.7.2 The proposed strategy has been independently reviewed by Hoare Lea on behalf of the local planning authority, as outlined at section 4.10 above. In short, following two re-reviews of the original information submitted (to address various concerns raised), Hoare Lea confirmed that there were no further elements that were outstanding. Officers therefore conclude that Hoare Lea are satisfied that the proposals are policy compliant, subject to a legal agreement obligation and conditions being secured.

6.7.3 More specifically, whilst the proposals would not achieve zero carbon homes, the residential units are anticipated to achieve a 73.85% reduction in carbon emissions. It is noted that this is significantly above the SPD referenced minimum 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, where homes are not designed to be carbon neutral (as is the case here). The shortfall based on zero carbon attracts a carbon off-setting financial contribution (to be secured via S106 legal agreement), which the applicant has estimated to amount to £29,506 using the SPD formula. However, the S106 will not specify a figure, with the amount ascertained as part of the finally proposed energy strategy (which may differ to the approach currently proposed), as secured via the usual two-stage energy condition approach recommended. The subsequent carbon offsetting financial contribution will be secured via the legal agreement.

6.7.4 In terms of decentralised energy, an air source heat pump (ASHP) system is proposed. Hoare Lea (for the LPA) raised an issue with the submission in that technical analysis to justify ASHP over the SPD preferred ground-source heat pumps (GSHP) was not provided. The applicant chose not to provide further justification at this stage, but advised that GSHP could be further considered at detailed working drawing stage. Hoare Lea therefore recommends that a feasibility study in relation to the use of GSHP, as suggested by the applicant, is welcomed to ensure all of the opportunities for decentralised energy have been explored. Therefore, in practice, the first of the two energy strategy conditions will include a specific requirement for a feasibility study for inclusion of GSHP over ASHP be included, so that this can be further explored with view to potentially being included as part of the proposed energy strategy.

- 6.7.5 With specific regard to the photovoltaics (PV), whilst these are welcomed in principle, it is noted that these are shown as proposed in the energy strategy, but have not been indicated on the planning drawings submitted. Given the roof profiles of the two blocks – see figure 25 below, there is considered to be scope within the flat roof sections of the roofscapes for PV to be installed without causing any significant visual harm. Nevertheless, given PV are a fundamental element of the energy strategy but plans haven't specified the exact details of these, a planning condition will secure details to ensure that PV is appropriately designed and actually provided in the scheme.



Figure 25 – Sections of Block A (left) and B (right) showing scope for PV panels on flat roof areas set behind roof profiles.

- 6.7.6 In summary, it is concluded that the proposals have been independently verified as being appropriate and policy compliant, subject to the recommended conditions and obligation relating to carbon offsetting.

viii) **Other matters**

- 6.8.1 **Archaeology:** As per section 4.11 of this report a condition to secure a scheme of archaeological works is recommended by Berkshire Archaeology. This will be accordingly secured, to ensure the development complies with Policy EN2.
- 6.8.2 **Thames Water:** As per the consultation response at section 4.14, Thames Water has recommended a condition to ensure the local water supply has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional demand anticipated from the new development. Thames Water has also recommended a series of informatives. Both the condition and informative are to be secured, as per the recommendation at the beginning of this report, for the reasons explained by Thames Water. When details are submitted in due course Thames Water will be engaged to provide input.
- 6.8.3 **S106 Legal Agreement:** Various components of the required S106 Legal Agreement have been referenced within previous sections of this report. One matter not specifically focussed upon is the requirement for a construction phase Employment and Skills Plan (ESP). The REDA response at section 4.13 above identifies this, with it presently unclear whether this will be a contractor-led ESP or an equivalent financial contribution payment. As per the ESP SPD formula, any financial contribution would amount to £16,437.50. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.
- 6.8.4 All of the obligations referenced within this report would comply with the NPPF and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that they would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. A S106

Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure these obligations, in the event of a positive resolution at the Planning Applications Committee meeting.

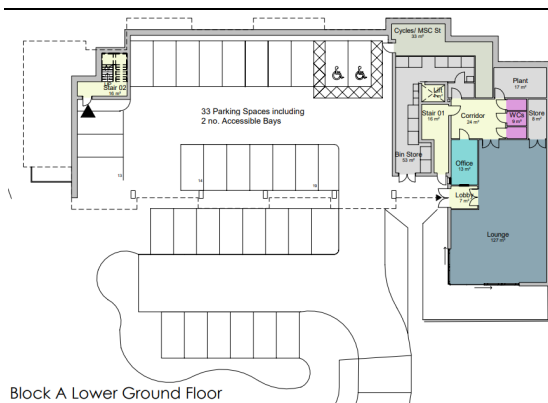
- 6.8.5 Pre-commencement conditions: the number of pre-commencement (any development, including demolition) has been limited, in line with national guidance. The detailed wording of the pre-commencement conditions, in relation to the demolition and construction method statement and contaminated land have been agreed in writing with the agent of the applicant (on 14/03/2023) in line with the requirements of section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act. At the time of writing officers are awaiting a response from the applicant in terms of the ecology based pre-commencement conditions (fed into the applicant on 15/05/2023).
- 6.8.6 Equality: In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

7. CONCLUSION, INCLUDING THE OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 7.2 The harmful impacts of the proposed development are therefore required to be weighed against the benefits. On the basis of the assessment above, shortcomings of the proposals are considered to include the loss of garden areas to the rear of the site (in the context of the local policies associated with the major landscape feature and green corridor to the south) and some existing Category B trees, the change in context along the Henley Road streetscene (such as the reduction in glimpsed views through to land to the south of the site) and the loss of existing family sized dwellings.
- 7.3 As already referenced above, the identified harmful impacts are required to be weighed against the benefits of the proposals. The appraisal above has outlined a series of planning benefits which would arise from the proposed development, with those of particular note summarised as follows:
- The provision of 55 retirement living units – complying with a need identified in the Borough and by Policy H6, which could also assist in freeing up family sized accommodation elsewhere in the north of the Borough
 - An application stage financial contribution towards affordable housing, with this being in excess of what the scheme can viably support at this juncture, as independently verified.
 - The sustainability credentials of the proposals, with the residential units anticipated to achieve a 73.85% reduction in carbon emissions, significantly above the SPD referenced minimum 35% improvement.
 - The inclusion of appropriate flood mitigation measures, as supported by the EA
 - The scale, massing and detailed design quality of the scheme being suitable and maintaining the character of the area
 - The quality of the accommodation being provided for future occupiers, with the inclusion of suitable private and communal amenity spaces internally and externally, together with ancillary facilities and services required to support independent living

- The extension to the pedestrian/cycle scheme across the frontage of the site (adjacent to Henley Road) to promote travel by alternative modes.
 - Not prejudicing the development of the wider area, for example the road layout being futureproofed to the east, whilst simultaneously maximising soft landscaping close to the boundary at this point until such time any neighbouring development comes forward.
 - Delivery of a community infrastructure levy, estimated to be £936,573.44.
- 7.4 When weighing up the benefits and shortfalls of the proposals, officers consider that cumulatively the benefits specified above ultimately outweigh all of the shortfalls, most notably the loss of the garden spaces to the rear of the site, when balancing competing factors. Therefore, officers advise that the conflicts with the development plan are considered to be outweighed by the benefits of the proposals in this particular case. It is considered that officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion.
- 7.5 Accordingly, in overall terms the proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement, the Heads of Terms for which are summarised at the beginning of this report.

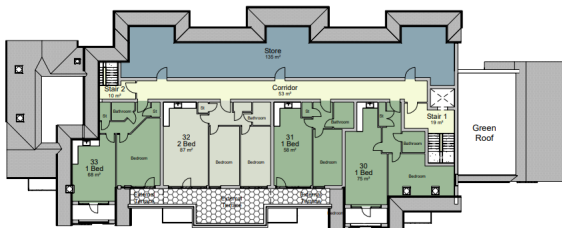
Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell



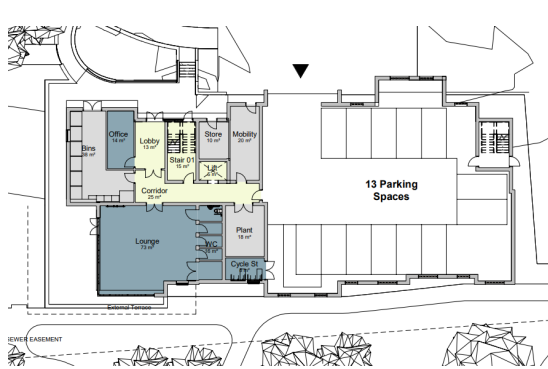
Block A Lower Ground Floor



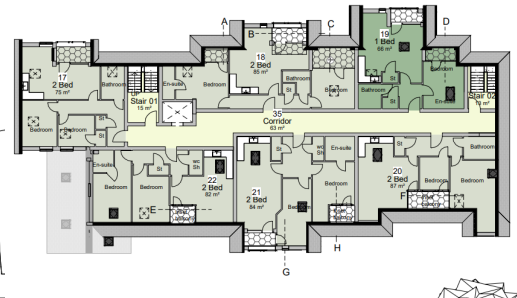
Block A Upper Ground



Block A floor plans – lower ground to third floor



A2 02 Second Floor

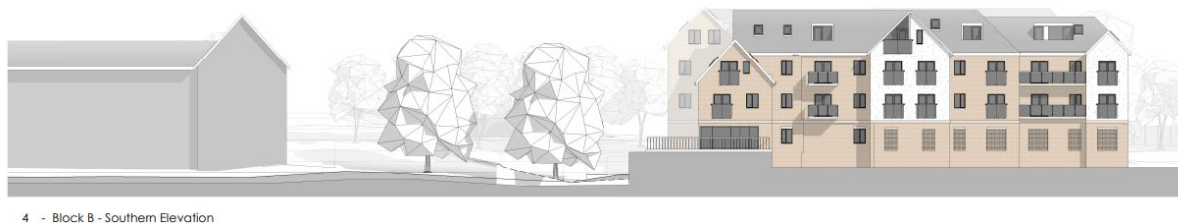


A2 03 Third Floor

Block B floor plans ground to third floor



Block B elevations – north (above) and south (below) showing the context of the Signature Care Home



The setback from Henley Road of neighbouring blocks - Signature (23/03/23) left, Ruskin (16/06/22) right and the application site as existing (below)





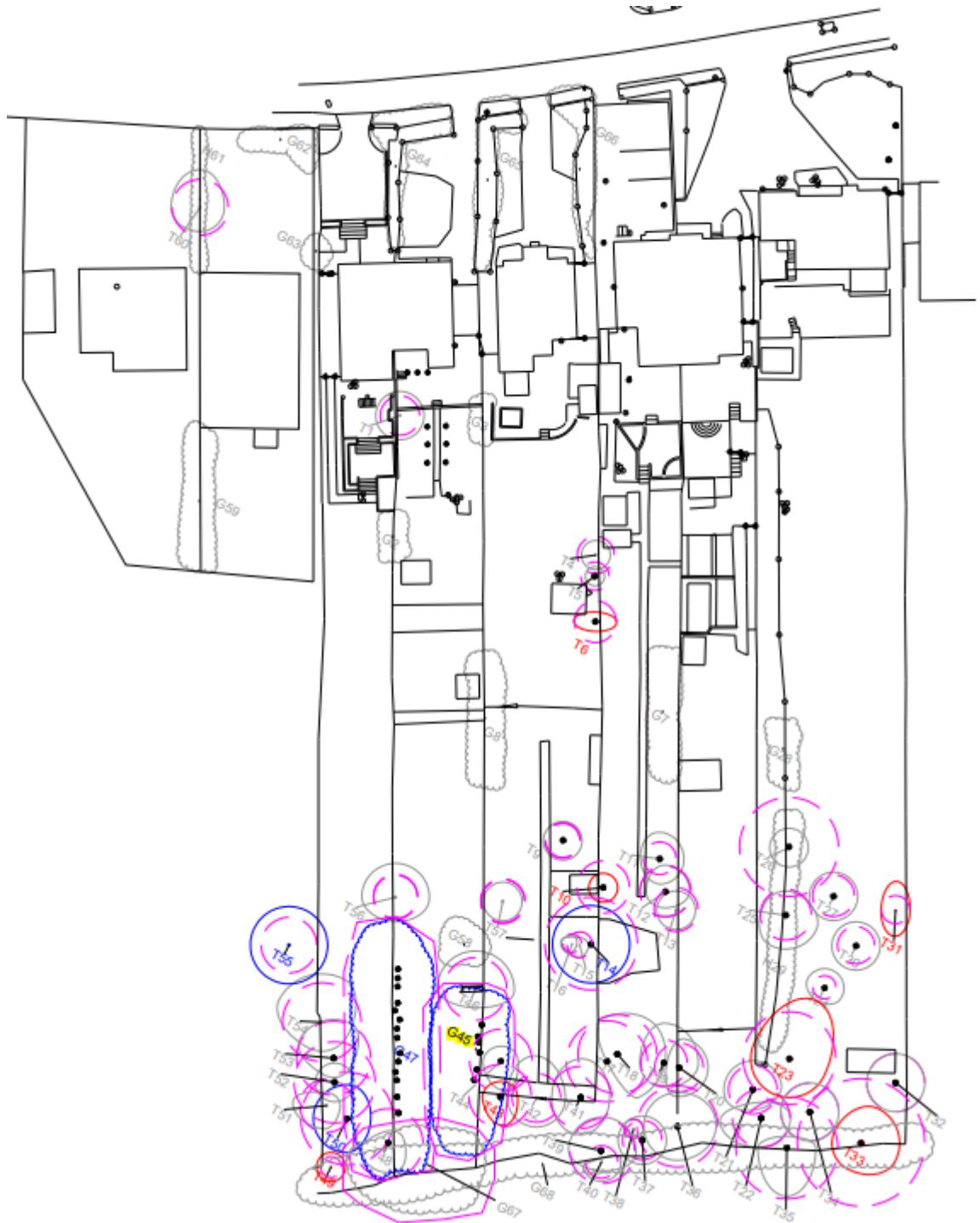
Officer site photos from rear of No. 207 on 16/06/22 (above) & 23/03/23 (below)



Willow View looking south from Henley Road



Officer photograph 23/03/2023 – recently installed pedestrian/cycleway to west



Existing Tree Survey

BS 5837:2012 TREE RETENTION CATEGORIES



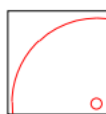
Category A
Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.



Category B
Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.



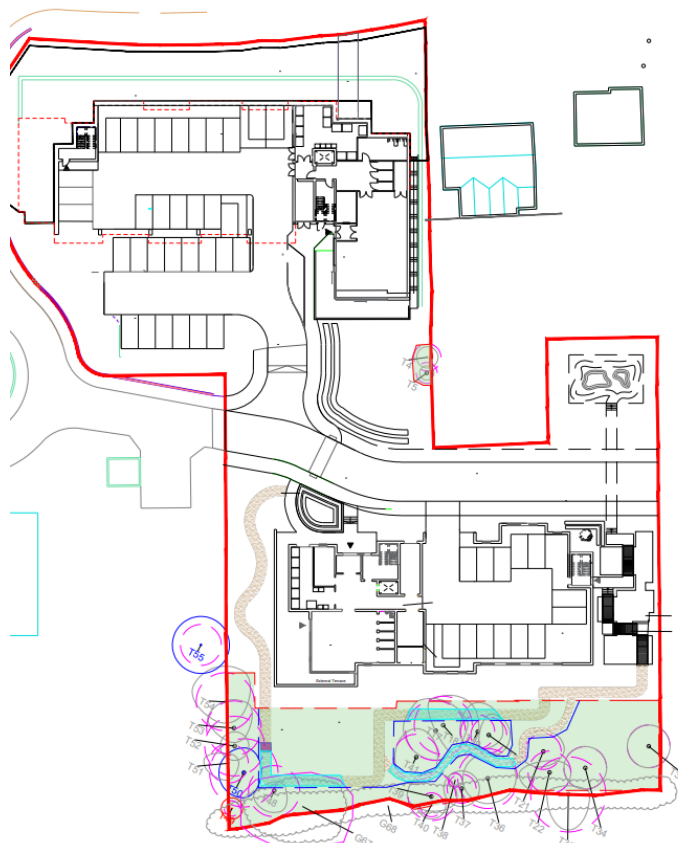
Category C
Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm.



Category U
Those in such a condition that the tree cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.



BS5837 Root Protection Areas
Precautionary areas within which tree roots and soil structure must be protected. All works within these areas will require special methods of work.



The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.

BS 5837:2012 TREE RETENTION CATEGORIES

- Category A**
Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.
- Category B**
Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.
- Category C**
Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years or young trees with a stem diameter below 100mm.
- Category U**
Those in such a condition that the tree cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.

BS 5837 Root Protection Areas

Precautionary areas within which tree roots and soil structure must be protected. All works within these areas will require special methods of work.

Position of protective fencing and tree protection zones during construction. Position may be amended for landscaping.

Secondary position of protective fencing and tree protection zones during landscape works.

Bark chip landscaped paths with pegged timber edging to be installed above-ground under arboricultural supervision during the landscape stage.

Proposed steps to be of light construction working with existing levels. Any excavation required to insert steps to be carried out manually using hand-held tools, avoiding any significant roots uncovered measuring >25mm diameter.

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN
		Base Drawing	

Title

Tree Protection Plan

Client

Cube Securities.

Project

Henley Road, Caversham.

Date

February 2023

Drawn by

EC

Checked by

-

Drawing No

220713-P-12

Rev

b

Scale

1:500@A3

Proposed Tree Protection Plan



Photo 3: view of the dead cherry tree T33 believe to be covered by TPO 165-07.



Photo 5: crown failure within cypress groups G45 and G47 likely resulting from storms in February 2022.



Photo 4: mature southern boundary vegetation.



Photo 6: typical site frontage vegetation.

Extracts of further photographs included within the Arboricultural Report



Further aerial views via Google





Further aerial views via Google





Further aerial views via Google

