

01 November 2023

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	201104/FUL
Site Address:	10 Eaton Place, Reading, RG1 7LP
Proposed Development	Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a residential building of up to 5 storeys (Use Class C3) and associated public realm improvements (amended description)
Applicant	Hamble Residential Limited
Report author	Matt Burns - Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	Originally 10/05/2021, but an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant until 31 st October 2023
Recommendation	As per 4 th October 2023 PAC report (and update report)
S106 Terms	As per 4 th October 2023 PAC report
Conditions	As per 4 th October 2023 PAC report
Informatives	As per 4 th October 2023 PAC report

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement and conditions as set out in the attached reports.
- 1.2 The proposal would produce a residential scheme, including on-site affordable homes, provided within land allocated for housing within the Western Major Opportunity Area of the town centre, as defined by Policy CR12c of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The proposals would incorporate an appropriate design, ensure that there would be no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties and provide suitable

accommodation for future residents. The proposal would have no adverse transport impacts and would be acceptable in terms of ecology, biodiversity and sustainability. Whilst the development would result in harm to the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed The Butler Public House, the level of harm identified is 'less than substantial' and in accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) the significant public benefits of the development, including those outlined above, are considered to outweigh this identified harm and the application is therefore recommended to you for approval.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Determination of this application was deferred at Planning Applications Committee on 4th October 2023 in order for an accompanied Committee site visit to take place. This site visit is due to take place on Thursday 26th October 2023.

2. OTHER

- 2.1 In deferring the application, the Committee also sought further clarification as to why officers considered the backdrop of the proposed development behind the Grade II Listed The Butler Pub, as shown in the visual under paragraph 7.39 of the October PAC report, to be acceptable. The October PAC report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and the visual is also shown again below.



Visual of proposed development behind The Butler PH looking south from Chatham Street. Q Park shown in the foreground to the east with the recently completed residential development at 115 Chatham Street shown adjacent to the west fronting Chatham Street. Red brick buildings in the background are

not approved and are a visual interpretation of potential future development on the site of Eaton Court (current pending planning application ref.210639).

- 2.2 Paragraphs 7.37 to 7.42 of the October PAC report consider this issue and acknowledge that the development of a multi-storey residential block immediately to the rear of the of a Grade II Listed pub building that is already surrounded by larger scale buildings, would add to the cumulative negative impact of the setting of the Listed Building.
- 2.3 Furthermore, the October PAC report acknowledges that the architectural composition and detailing of the distinctive colourful front elevation of the pub, which fronts Chatham Street, is one of the key features which contribute to the pub's historic significance (paragraph 7.34 of the October PAC report). Therefore, any introduction of a building of the scale proposed, or of similar scale and mass on the site, would introduce new built form which would alter views to/from the pub along Chatham Street and are considered to cause harm to the setting of the Listed Building.



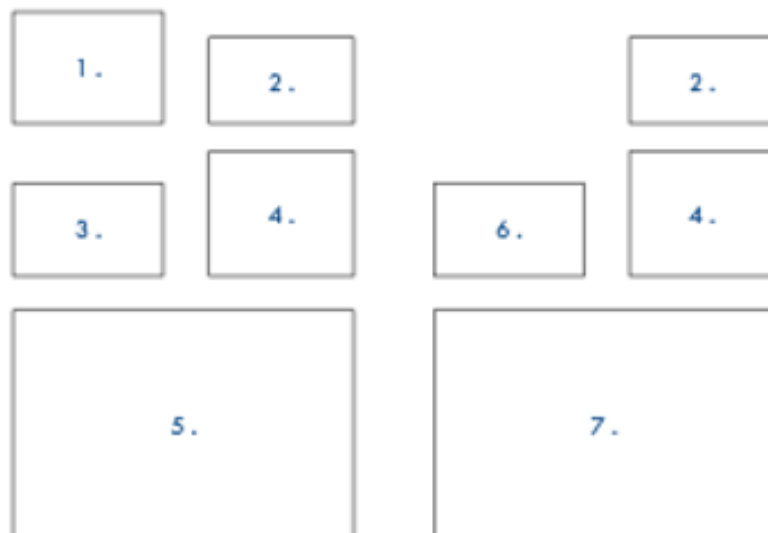
View of the colourful front elevation of The Butler Pub looking south across Chatham Street

- 3.4 This impact has been considered by the Applicant in designing the proposed development and treatment of the northern elevation of the building which would be visible in the background of the pub when viewed from Chatham Street. In this respect this elevation has been designed to predominantly incorporate light buff brick which can be seen on the elevation drawing below with areas of light brown brick being parts of the elevation to incorporate buff brick. Further simple and neutral materials are also proposed to this elevation with terracotta red brick proposed to

the walls of the decked access corridors whilst the top storey is proposed as white glazed terracotta cladding.



Proposed North Elevation



MATERIAL PALETTE DEVELOPMENT

Key

1. White Honed stone with polished finish
2. Light grey Precast concrete with exposed aggregate and smooth finish
3. Metal railing with PPC light grey finish
4. Metal frames with PPC dark grey finish
5. Red coloured brick
6. Steel railing with PPC white finish
7. Light Buff brick

3.5 The proposed use of light buff brick and other simple materials to the north elevation of the proposed building, is considered to soften and lighten views of the development as would be seen in the backdrop of the listed pub and its principal elevation when viewed from Chatham Street. Officers consider that these materials and the simple architectural approach proposed would not compete with the distinctive colourful front façade of the pub and would allow the façade to retain its prominence as a landmark feature to Chatham Street. The proposed development would also create a new standalone identity on the site rather than seeking to directly replicate or compete with the scale of the more modest Listed Building.

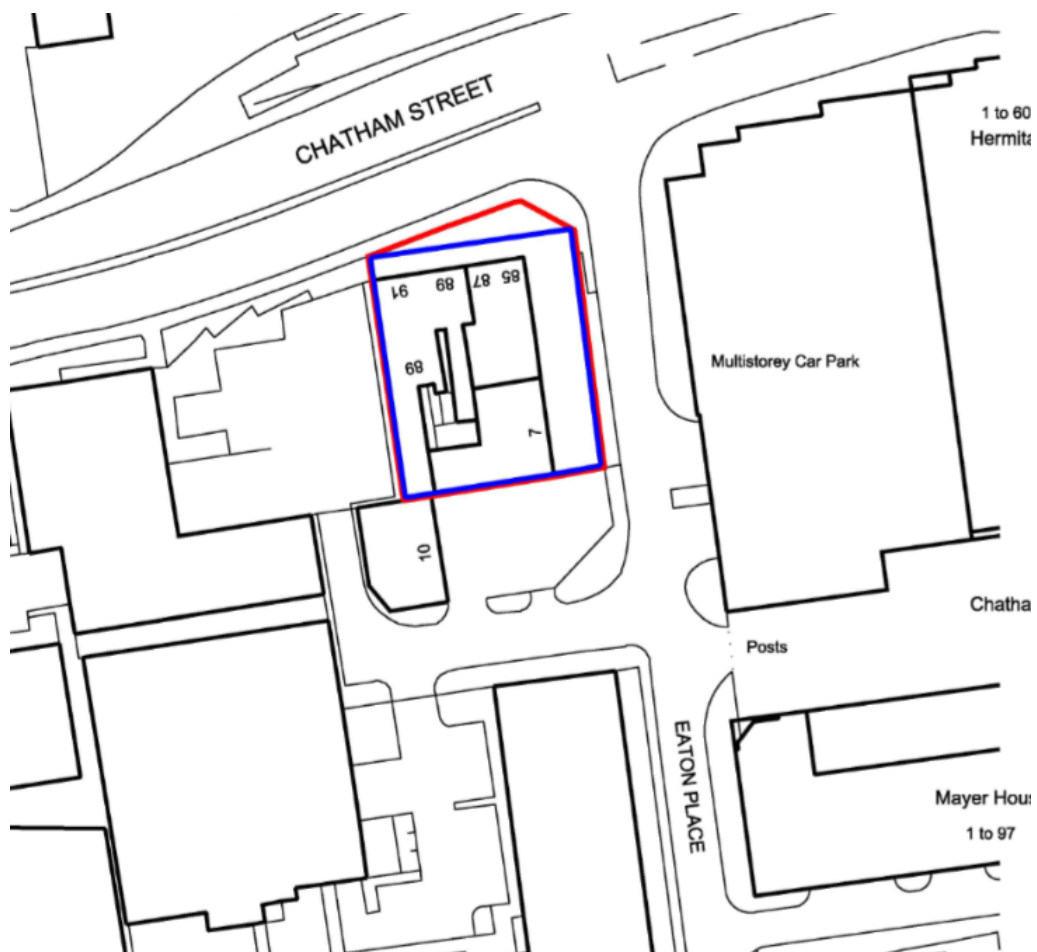
3.6 The above has been considered as part of the wider assessment of the impact of the development upon the setting of the Grade II Listed pub building within the October PAC report (paragraphs 7.32 to 7.42) and conclusion that the level of harm caused to the setting of the Listed Building would be 'less than substantial' in the context of paragraph 202 of the NPPF and would result in a limited negative impact on the character and appearance of the building.

Proposed development at The Butler Public House

3.7 In deferring consideration of the application, the Committee also requested further information on the current planning application at the adjacent site of The Butler Public House ref. 230558. This separate adjacent application seeks planning permission for 'Demolition of existing outbuildings and part of the existing pub, to construct an

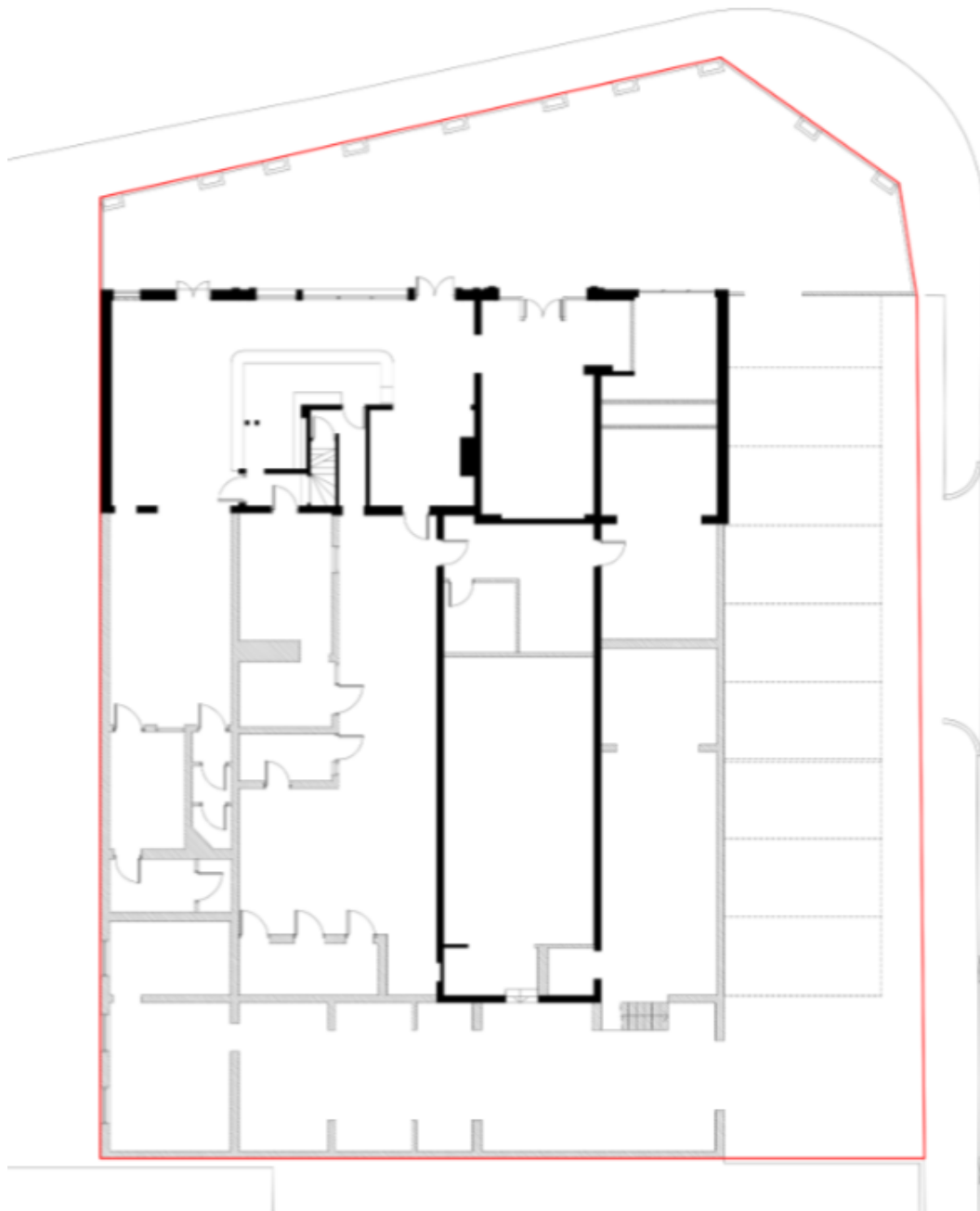
extension housing a 19-bed hotel room with parking (C1 use) and associated works’.

- 3.8 At the time of writing of the October PAC report, this planning application was invalid because information was missing from the application which is required by the Local Planning Authority in order to determine the planning application. This meant that the application was not ‘live’ and that the proposed plans and details were not publicly viewable on the Council’s website (which is the ‘Planning Register’). The application was made valid on 19th September 2023. On 9th October 2023 the application was added to the ‘Planning Register’ of ‘live’ planning applications and the application and supporting documents became publicly viewable on the Council website. The consultation period for this application expires on 30th October 2023 and the target determination date is 14th November 2023.
- 3.9 The location plan submitted with the application is shown below and shows the relationship of the existing site with no. 10 Eaton Place directly to the south.



Location Plan submitted with the adjacent planning application at The Butler

- 3.10 The proposed plans show demolition of the majority of the existing single storey rear extensions to the pub and their replacement with more extensive rear extension of between one and three storeys.



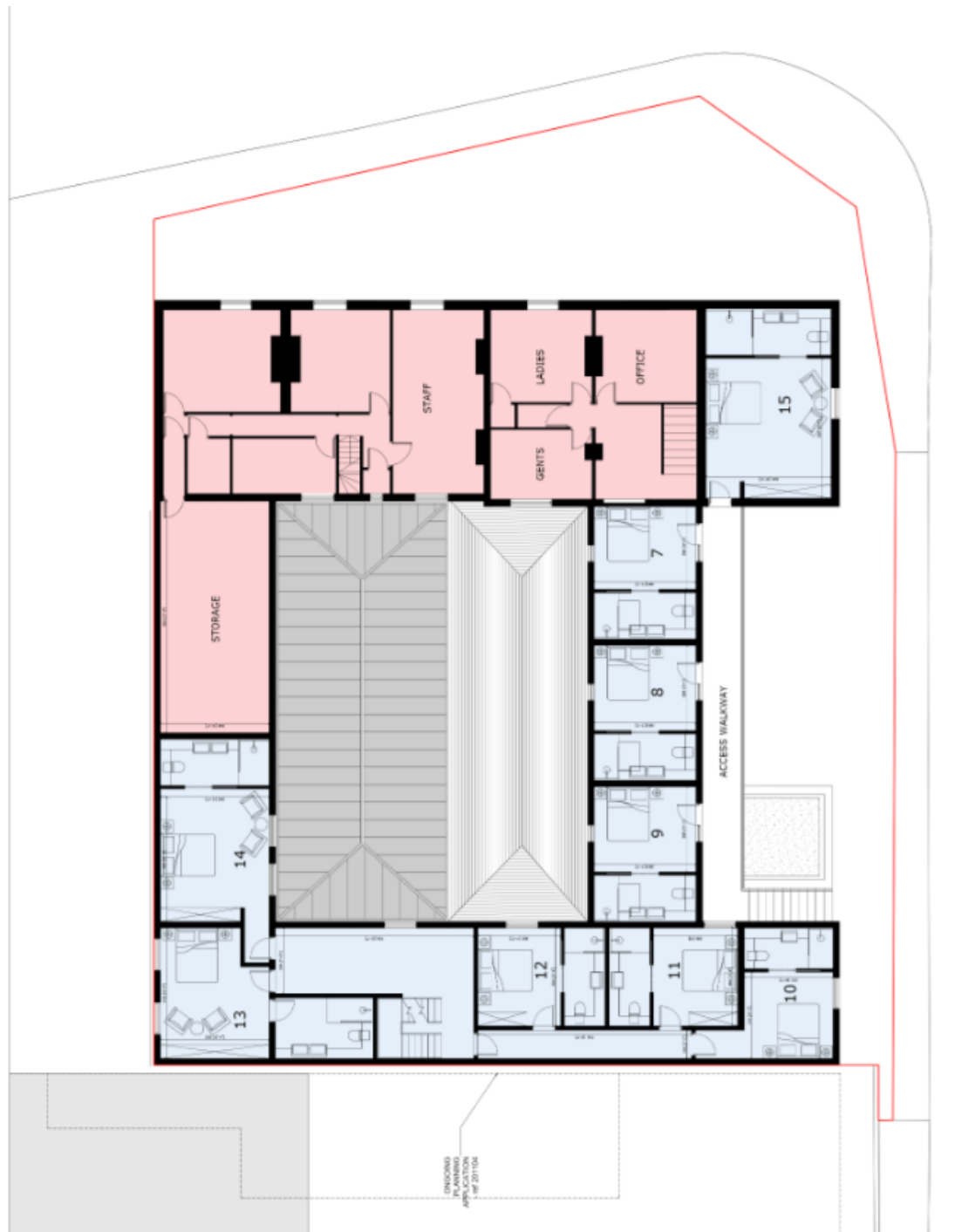
Existing ground floor plan (proposed demolition shown in light grey)

- 3.11 Single storey extensions are proposed across the entire site but covering a greater extent of the site than existing, with the existing small central courtyard area to be infilled and extensions extending further east, towards Eaton Place, where existing parking spaces are located. The extensions at ground floor level would provide extended pub floor space, with associated events and functions space as well as hotel rooms and facilities.



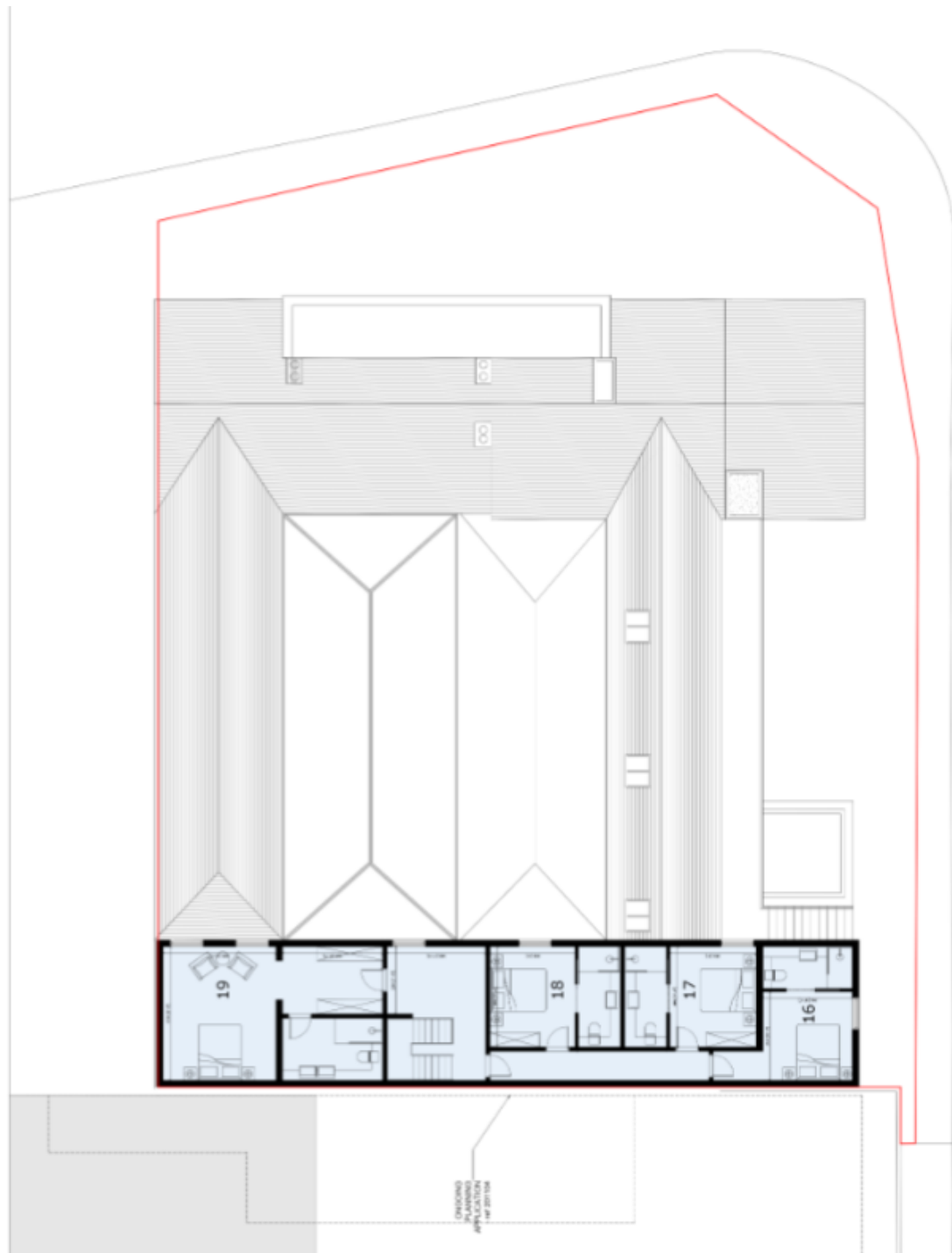
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Floorspace shown in pink would be pub use, floorspace shown in blue would be hotel use and the existing building at no.10 Eaton Place is shown in grey in the top left-hand corner)

- 3.12 The proposed extensions at first floor level would be set around the east, south and west perimeter of the site and provide hotel rooms and facilities.



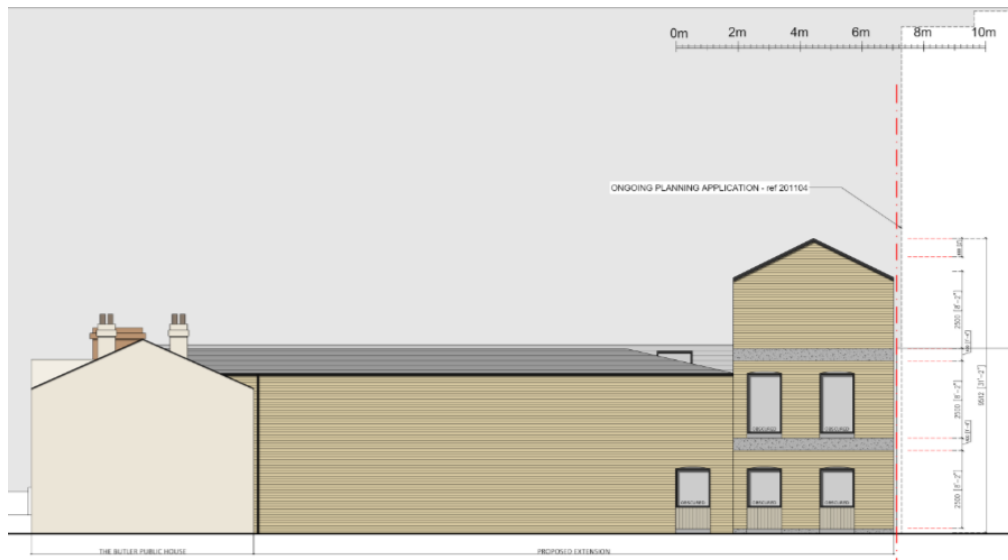
Proposed First Floor Plan (Floorspace shown in pink would be pub use, floorspace shown in blue would be hotel use and the existing building at no.10 Eaton Place is shown in grey in the top left-hand corner)

- 3.13 The proposed extensions at second floor level would be set along the southern boundary of the site shared with no. 10 Eaton Place and would provide hotel rooms and facilities.



Proposed Second Floor Plan (Floorspace shown in blue would be hotel use and the existing building at no.10 Eaton Place is shown in grey in the top left-hand corner)

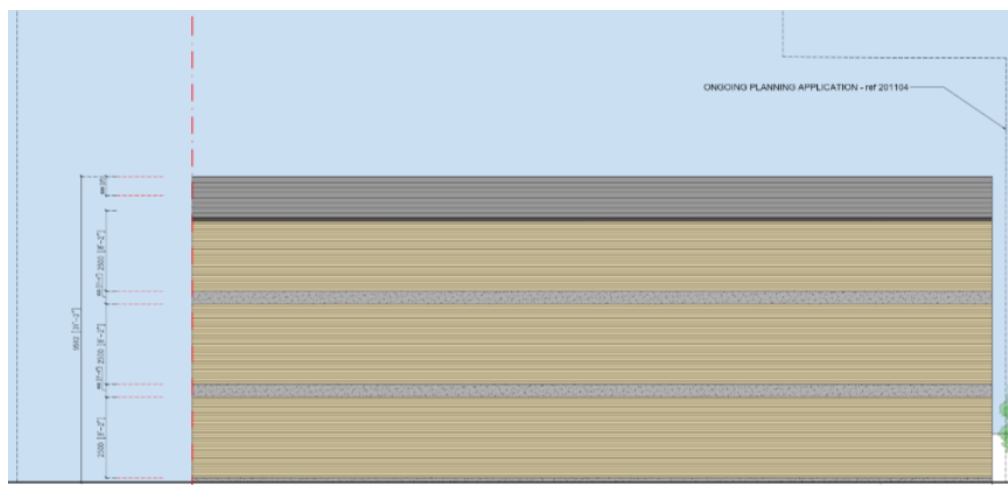
3.14 The elevations for the proposed development at The Butler are shown on the next page with explanations of their context.



Proposed West Elevation on boundary with new development at 115 Chatham Street (proposed development at 10 Eaton Place shown in white on right)



Proposed East Elevation on to Eaton Place (proposed development at 10 Eaton Place shown in white on left)



Proposed South Elevation (on the boundary with proposed developemt at no. 10 Eaton Place)



Proposed North Elevation on to Chatham Street (proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place shown in white in the background)

3.15 The plans set out above and associated planning application at The Butler are still under consideration by the Local Planning Authority.

3.16 As set out within paragraph 2.4 of the October PAC report, part of the site of The Butler (single storey rear extensions only) is located within the West Side Major Opportunity Area (MOA) covered by Policy CR12 and forms part of the same sub-area as the site at no. 10 Eaton Place, which is sub-area C of Policy CR12. Part vii) of Policy CR12 states that development in the West Side MOA will:

vii) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and

3.17 Therefore, officers must consider how the two sites would relate in terms of fulfilling the aspirations of Policy CR12.

3.18 The proposals at The Butler would see continuation of the current pub and ancillary live events use of the site but with the addition of hotel accommodation. The impact of the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place on the continued operation of the pub and live events was considered in the October PAC report within the amenity section (starting at paragraph 7.45) and found to be acceptable subject to conditions to secure implementation of agreed noise mitigation measures. The new plans for the development at The Butler are not considered to change this assessment.

- 3.19 The proposed hotel rooms at the Butler development would have outlooks east, north and west (no south facing windows) and therefore would not face the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place (no south facing hotel room windows). Whilst daylight to hotel windows is not a material consideration, the proposed orientation of hotel windows to The Butler is considered to ensure there would be no adverse impacts in terms of receipt of daylight to these windows. Similarly, in terms of privacy and overlooking, impacts upon hotel windows are not a material consideration, but nonetheless no windows of the hotel would directly face the decked access to the upper floors of the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place which is considered to ensure no unacceptable overlooking impacts would result in either development.
- 3.20 Notwithstanding the above there is conflict between the two proposed developments along the shared boundary in regard to the relationship of the five-storey north elevation of the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place and the three-storey south elevation of the proposed extension to The Butler.
- 3.21 The north elevation of the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place would incorporate private balcony amenity spaces and habitable room windows at first floor level and decked corridor access and habitable room windows at second floor level, which would be located directly on the rear boundary of the site of The Butler. On the opposite side of the boundary the proposed development at The Butler seeks to locate a three-storey extension directly on the rear southern boundary with no. 10 Eaton Place meaning the two developments would be set centimetres apart.
- 3.22 The proposed three storey extension to The Butler would not incorporate any windows facing south towards no. 10 Eaton Place but would present a blank brick façade which would completely obstruct the proposed private balcony amenity space, habitable room windows and decked corridor accesses at first and second floor of the development at no. 10 Eaton Place. This would be significantly detrimental to the quality of accommodation that would be provided to the occupiers of the dwellings to the first and second floor of the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place by completely obscuring access to daylight and outlook.
- 3.23 Whilst the planning application at The Butler is yet to be determined, it is considered reasonable to acknowledge that the above means that if the development at no. 10 Eaton Place were granted then this would have an impact on the consideration of the proposed development at The Butler, in particular the resulting adverse impact on the standard of

amenity to future occupiers of the flats to the first and second floor of the development at no. 10 Eaton Place.

- 3.24 The relationship between the two developments is challenging. In terms of the assessment of the application under consideration by this report (10 Eaton Place), officers need to be satisfied that it is not preventing the neighbouring site (The Butler pub) from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy. Both sites are located within sub area C of Policy CR12 where the aspiration for future development is:

Development of this area will be primarily for residential, with potential for community uses. There may also be some small-scale retail and leisure uses on the Oxford Road frontage. This area is surrounded by heritage assets or low-rise residential, and inappropriate building scale at the fringes of the site will not be permitted. There is an opportunity to enhance the Oxford Road frontage, including with tree planting

- 3.25 Therefore, and as set out within the October PAC report, it is considered that the development at no. 10 Eaton Place, in providing new residential accommodation, would align with the site allocation policy for this part of the MOA. However, the proposal at The Butler, in providing hotel accommodation, would not specifically align with that type of development anticipated within the site allocation sub-area. It is the hotel accommodation which is located to the first and second floors of the development where the conflict with the proposed flats to the development at no. 10 Eaton Place arises. In terms of redevelopment and extension of the pub and its live music events, this is an existing use and therefore reasonable to be retained and the extended facilities would be located at ground floor level not resulting in conflict with the adjacent development at no. 10 Eaton Place.
- 3.26 Whilst noting that the site allocation description does not preclude other uses from being provided; based upon the above, it is officers' view that the proposed development 10 Eaton Place is more aligned with the nature of development sought to be provided within the MOA by Policy CR12c than that which is proposed under the separate planning application at The Butler.
- 3.27 The Butler has previously been subject to planning permission for redevelopment to a hotel with retention of the pub (application ref. 180365). This development sought conversion of the existing rear extensions to the building only. This previously proposed development would not have conflicted with the current proposal at no. 10 Eaton Place. Whilst this planning permission has now lapsed it indicates that

a similar development could be achieved without conflict between the two sites.

- 3.28 It is considered that the Applicant has taken reasonable steps in designing the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place to consider future development at The Butler. In this respect they have located the main and majority of habitable room windows on the south elevation of the building facing away from The Butler onto Eaton Place, whilst in proposing the decked access to the north elevation facing The Butler, this provides activation to this façade rather than presenting a blank elevation visible in the background of views of The Butler's primary front façade from Chatham Street. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development would borrow some outlook over the pub site from the balconies and habitable room windows to its north elevation, it must also be considered that the application site at no. 10 Eaton Place is long and narrow which limits the options for the layout of flats whilst providing the necessary dwelling mix and sizes (in accordance with National Space Standards) and access to daylight for new residential accommodation on the site as envisaged by the Western MOA under Policy CR12. Furthermore, this is a dense urban location where close relationships between adjacent buildings and uses are more common and in this instance, as discussed above and in the October PAC report, the siting of the residential development on the boundary with the rear of the pub site is considered to be acceptable.
- 3.29 Officers have considered the scale of the proposal in relation to the Butler within paragraphs 7.16 to 7.26 of the October PAC report and consider this to be acceptable. The impact of the proposed development on the existing first floor flat to the pub is also considered under paragraph 7.57 of the October PAC report. It should be noted that the first floor flat is not included with the proposed plans for development at The Butler. It is considered unlikely that the level of development envisaged by the MOA could be achieved on the narrow site without a development being set upon some or all of the site boundaries.
- 3.30 In consideration of adjacent developments there is also an element of first past the post. In this respect the application at no. 10 Eaton Place has been under consideration by the Local Planning Authority for some time and officers have been working with the Applicant to reach a position where the application can now be recommended for approval. Given the proposals and planning application at The Butler are at a comparatively early stage (consultation period ongoing at the time of writing this report), the officer recommendation is not yet known, and it is possible that the proposed plans may be subject to changes, it is considered that only limited weight can be attached to these proposals

in assessment of the relationship between the two developments. There is also no guarantee that both developments, if planning permission were to be granted for either, would ever be implemented.

- 3.31 Overall, officers consider that the proposed development at no. 10 Eaton Place has demonstrated that it is part of a reasonable comprehensive approach to contributing to development of the Policy CR12c site allocation area and that it would not prevent neighbouring sites, including The Butler pub, from fulfilling the aspirations of this Policy within the West Side Major Opportunity Area.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The officer recommendation remains as per that set out in the October PAC report (attached as appendix 1 to this report).

Case Officer: Matt Burns