

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 6 March 2019

ITEM NO.9

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 181849/FUL

Address: Existing Car Park East Street Reading

Proposal: Erection of a part 4 part 5 storey building (plus basement) to provide 135 units of purpose built student accommodation and associated facilities (Sui Generis), landscaping and access

Applicant: Studios Development (Reading) Limited

Date Application Valid: 6th November 2018

Target decision date: 5 February 2019

Extension of time date: 20 March 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 20th March 2019 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- Use of three parking spaces for arrival and departures located to the rear of New Century Place Building 1
- An Employment, Skills and Training Plan (construction phase only) or equivalent financial contribution.

And the following conditions:

1. Standard 3 year time period for implementation
2. In accordance with the approved plans
3. Pre-commencement submission of a construction method statement
4. Pre-commencement submission (excluding groundworks, piling, excavation and other preparatory works) and approval of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements
5. Pre-commencement submission (excluding groundworks, piling, excavation and other preparatory works) and approval of a final SuDs scheme including maintenance proposals
6. Pre-occupation implementation of SuDs scheme
7. Pre-occupation stopping up of existing vehicular access and reinstatement of kerb and footway
8. Pre-occupation provision and retention of cycle parking
9. Pre-occupation provision and retention of bin storage
10. Pre-occupation implementation and retention of proposed glazing and ventilation specifications

11. Pre-occupation submission and approval of student accommodation management plan (including arrival and departure procedures)
12. Pre-occupation implementation of energy strategy measures
13. Pre-occupation confirmation of implementation of sustainability strategy measures
14. Materials as approved (any changes to be submitted and agreed prior commencement of relevant works)
15. Removal of vegetation outside of the bird nesting season only
16. Flooding - development to be carried out in accordance with submitted flood risk assessment
17. Landscaping - Implementation of proposed landscaping scheme
18. Landscaping - replacement planting within 5 years
19. Submission and approval of details demonstrating that the proposed external lighting would not be harmful to wildlife prior to relevant works (i.e installation of any external lighting)
20. No burning of waste on site
21. Hours of construction: 8am-6pm (Mon-Fri); 9am-1pm (Sat); no Sundays/holidays
22. In accordance with proposed scheme for control of construction noise and dust
23. Reporting of unexpected contamination
24. Submission and approval of a noise assessment prior to installation of any additional plant equipment
25. Submission and approval of a final travel plan document within 3 months of first occupation of the development
26. Submission and approval of annual travel plan review
27. No parking permits - pre-occupation notification of postal addresses
28. No parking permits - notification of future occupiers
29. Use of the development as Sui Generis student accommodation only

Informatives

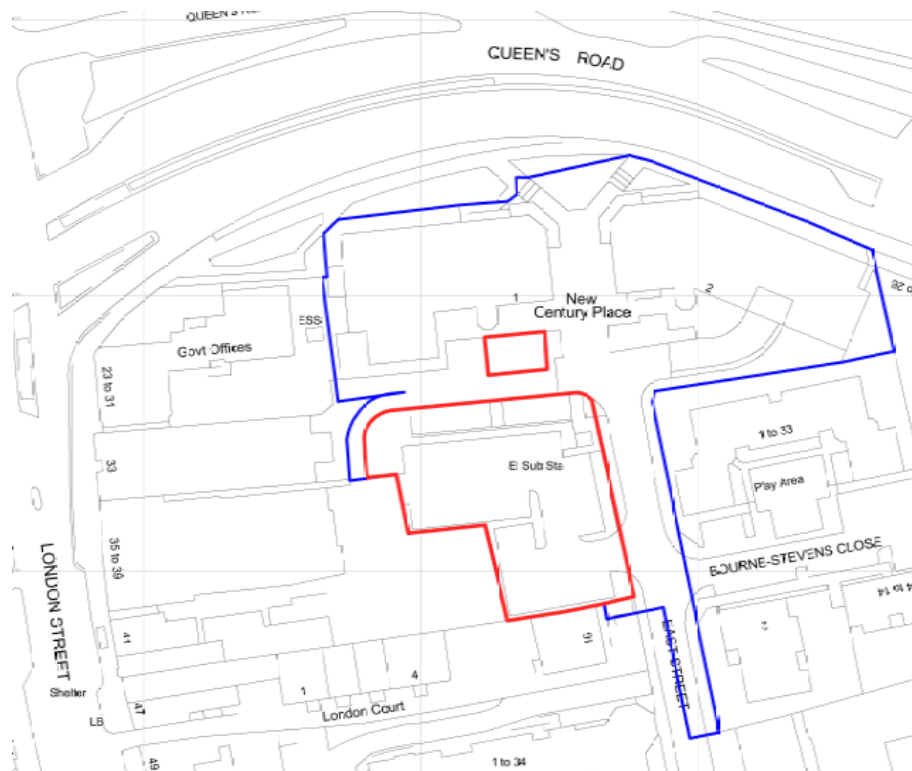
1. Positive and proactive requirement
2. S.106 applies
3. CIL-labile
4. Terms and conditions
5. Pre-commencement conditions
6. No parking permits
7. Works affecting the Highway
8. Fee for conditions discharge
9. Building Regulations
10. Thames Water requirements

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises a redundant private car park previously used by the nearby former office buildings at New Century Place located at the north end of East Street. The site slopes gradually downwards towards Queens Road to the north and is accessed from East Street.

- 1.2 The adjoining area is in mixed uses with residential, offices and community buildings. Adjoining to the north are buildings 1 and 2 New Century Place, which are former office buildings which have both been converted to residential flats via prior approval permitted development rights. The New Century Place buildings are four storey blocks of the same design fronting on to Queens Road.
- 1.3 On the opposite (east) side of East Street is Bourne-Stevens Close, a residential cul-de-sac. To the west is a separate raised level car park accessed by a vehicle ramp and the backs of properties on London Street, including listed buildings Nos. 33, 35 to 39 and 41 London Street.

Location Plan (not to scale)



- 1.4 The site lies within easy walking or cycling distance of both the town centre and railway station whilst Reading University's Whiteknights and London Road campuses are on the same side of the A4. The site is within the Reading Central Area but just outside of the Central Core area as defined by the Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009). The site is also located within the eastern edge of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, the boundary of which runs along the centre of East Street. A small part of the site to the east corner falls within Flood Zone 2.
- 1.5 Planning permission was refused for the erection of 4 storey building to provide 103 student accommodation units (Sui Generis), landscaping, access and ancillary works following removal of a 49 space car park at Planning Applications Committee in May 2017. There were 4 reasons for refusal:

(1) The proposed building by reason of its scale, form and dominant massing, use of inappropriate materials and lack of detailing is unsympathetic to and would fail

to enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. Furthermore, it would have a detrimental impact on the settings of the rear of listed buildings in London Street and thus harm the significance of those buildings. It is thus contrary to Policies CS7 and CS33 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and to S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- (2) The proposal fails to demonstrate in a sequential test that there is no alternative location for such development, which is classified by the Environment Agency as “more vulnerable” and part within Flood Zone 2, and that the potential risks from flooding such as reduced flood water storage, impedance to flow or risks to life and property are acceptable or can be mitigated. It is thus contrary to Policy CS35 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).*
- (3) The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority’s standards in respect of arrival and departure procedure at the beginning and end of term and as a result constitutes a highway safety hazard in conflict with Policy CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy DM12 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).*
- (4) In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan and use of the living accommodation to be occupied as student accommodation (Sui Generis) only, the proposal will not mitigate its impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the borough, contrary to Policies CS3 and CS9 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), Policy DM3 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and the Council’s Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents on Employment, Skills & Training (2013) and Planning Obligations (2015).*

1.6 However, this application was subsequently allowed on appeal (ref. APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) in August 2018 following a hearing. Reasons for refusal 2 (flooding), 3 (highway safety of arrivals and departures) and 4 (lack of a section 106 legal agreement) were overcome following submission of additional information by the appellant during preparation for the hearing. In terms of reason for refusal 1 (harm to the setting of listed buildings and the conservation area) in allowing the appeal the inspector concluded that the proposal would result in a minor adverse impact upon the setting of the rear of the adjacent grade II listed buildings to the west along London Street but that this was offset and outweighed by the proposal resulting in minor enhancement to the character of the conservation area (noting the existing larger modern buildings to this end of East Street) together with wider public benefits of the proposal.

- 1.7 Application ref. 182251/VARIAT which seeks a variation to the approved plans of the appeal decision for internal alterations to provide an additional 5 student rooms to the ground floor of the building is also under consideration at this meeting.

PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for a proposed part 4 part 5 storey building (plus basement) within an L-shaped footprint to provide 135 units of purpose built student accommodation and associated facilities (Sui Generis) together with landscaping and access.
- 2.2 The main entrance would be on the north side opposite New Century Place and there would be a small garden at the rear towards the south-west boundary of the site alongside the separate raised car park. The south wing of the building fronting East Street would be set back from the road by 3m landscaped with low level planting and new trees.
- 2.3 The ground floor of the building would include the reception office and foyer whilst a resident's lounge, dining and study area along with plant rooms is to be provided at basement level. There is no vehicle parking but three drop off and collection spaces are to be provided to the north of the site adjacent to New Century Place Building 1. Cycle and refuse storage is to be provided internally at ground floor.
- 2.4 The proposal is very similar to that allowed on appeal under the previous application at the site (ref. 170019) to provide 103 student rooms in a part four part three storey building. The building footprint and layout are essentially the same but the current proposal incorporates an additional storey of accommodation creating a part five part four storey building to provide 135 student rooms (an additional 32 student rooms to that allowed on appeal).
- 2.5 During consideration of the current application officers sought input from the Local Planning Authority's Design Review Panel (DRP) of the design and visual impact of the proposed additional storey to the building. Following this review and discussions with officers the applicant submitted amended plans taking on-board the comments and suggestions of the DRP. The amended plans showed the following alterations to the proposed development:
- Fourth storey level parapet increased and handrails removed
 - Stone effect plinth to ground floor changed to matching brick
 - Roof overhang introduced to top (fifth) storey
 - Fenestration positioning and form adjusted to give more vertical emphasis
 - Additional windows and textured brick added to south flank elevation
- 2.6 The application is being reported to your meeting as a Major category planning application.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Application Site

- 3.1 170019 - Erection of 4 storey building to provide 103 student accommodation units (Sui Generis), landscaping, access and ancillary works, following removal of a 49 space car park - Refused - Allowed on Appeal (ref. APP/E0345/W/17/3190317).
- 3.2 181629/NMA - Non-material amendment to application 170019 (Allowed under appeal APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) for re-configuration of consented basement arrangement and associated changes to internal layout at ground floor level - Agree non material amendment.
- 3.3 181650/APPCON - Application for approval of details pursuant to condition 17 (archaeology) of planning permission ref. 170019 (APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) - Condition discharged.
- 3.4 181654/APPCON - Application for approval of details pursuant to condition 7 (Trees) of planning permission ref. 170019 (APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) - Condition discharged.
- 3.5 182013/APPCON - Application for approval of details pursuant to condition 3 (materials) of planning permission ref. 170019 (APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) - Condition discharged.
- 3.6 182015/APPCON - Application for approval of details pursuant to condition no. 4 (landscaping) of planning permission ref. 170019 (APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) - Condition discharged.
- 3.7 182179/APPCON - Application for approval of details pursuant to condition no. 12 (control of noise and dust) of planning permission ref. 170019 (APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) - Condition discharged.
- 3.8 182184/APPCON - Application for approval of details pursuant to condition 14 (Construction Method Statement) of planning permission 170019 (APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) - Under consideration.
- 3.9 182251/VARIAT - Variation of condition no. 2 (approved plans) of planning permission ref. 170019 (allowed on appeal ref. APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) for minor internal and external alterations to provide 5 additional student accommodation rooms at ground floor level - Under consideration.

New Century Place Buildings 1 & 2

- 3.10 172272/OPA - Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 72 self-Contained studio apartments. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 - Prior Approval Given (Building 1).
- 3.11 172271/OPA - Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 63 self-Contained studio apartments. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 - Prior Approval Given (Building 2),

- 3.12 171822/FUL - Replacement of various windows on all elevations, various trickle vents on north, south and west elevations, new balustrades on north and west elevations and associated external works - Granted (Building 2).
- 3.13 172254/FUL Replacement of various windows on all elevations, installation of various trickle vents on north, south east and west elevations, new windows and to the east elevations and associated external works - Granted (Building 1).
- 3.14 181050/VARIAT - Replacement of various windows on all elevations, various trickle vents on north, south and west elevations, new balustrades on north and west elevations and associated external works without complying with conditions no. 2 (approved plans) of planning permission ref. 171822 to facilitate relocation of trickle vents, replacement windows and additional aluminium curtain walling - Granted (Building 2).
- 3.15 181051/VARAIT - Replacement of various windows on all elevations, various trickle vents on north, south and west elevations, new balustrades on north and west elevations and associated external works without complying with conditions no. 2 (approved plans) of planning permission ref. 172254 to facilitate relocation of trickle vents, replacement windows and alterations to fenestration and doors - Granted (Building 1).
- 3.16 172327/ADV - Temporary (for a period of 1 year) advertisements affixed to hoarding on the north and eastern sides of the car park, plus advertisements affixed to a pair of portable cabins (part retrospective) - Granted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 1.1 Environment Agency: No objection.
- 1.2 Historic England: Do not wish to comment.
- 1.3 Thames Water: No objection.
- 1.4 Berkshire Archaeology: No objection subject to securing implementation of a scheme of archaeology work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation.
- 4.5 RBC Transport: No objection, subject to conditions to secure provision of vehicle parking, cycle parking, bin storage, removing access to permit parking, submission and approval of a student arrivals and departures vehicle parking management plan, stopping up of the existing site access, submission and approval of a travel plan, implementation of the proposed sustainable drainage scheme, submission and approval of a scheme of maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme and securing provision of three arrival and departure parking spaces by way of a legal agreement.
- 4.6 RBC Environmental Protection: No objection, subject to conditions to secure implementation of proposed glazing and ventilation specifications, submission and

approval of a noise assessment of prior to installation of any mechanical plant, reporting any of any unexpected contamination, submission and approval of a scheme for control of construction noise and dust, controls on hours of working and restricting any burning of materials on site.

- 4.7 RBC Natural Environment Trees: No objection, subject to conditions to secure submission and approval of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, implementation of the landscaping and future maintenance.
- 4.8 RBC Ecologist: No objection, subject to conditions to require vegetation clearance where birds may nest to be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (March to August), submission and approval of report detailing how the lighting scheme will not adversely impact upon wildlife and submission and approval of details of on-site biodiversity enhancements.
- 4.9 RBC Conservation Consultant: Objects, on the basis that the proposal would not enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and would harm the significance of the adjacent listed buildings along London Street.

Public Consultation

- 4.10 Neighbouring properties at Bourne-Stevens Close, London Court East Street, Buildings 1 & 2 New Century Place, no.6 & 16 East Street, Wessex House 25-31 London Street, no.s 33, 33 A, B & C, Great Expectations PH, 35-39, 41, 41A, 43, 43A, Flats 1-5 45, 47 London Street and no. 22 Queens Road were notified of the application by letter. Three site notices were displayed around the site and the application was also advertised in the local newspaper. Neighbours were also re-notified following submission of amended plans.
- 4.11 Fourteen letters of support have been received based on the need for student accommodation in Reading and benefits to the local area. No objections have been received.

5. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.3 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'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

- 5.4 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 5.5 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
CS2 Waste Minimisation
CS4 Accessibility and the intensity of development
CS5 Inclusive Access
CS7 Design and the Public Realm
CS9 Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
CS23 Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans
CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
CS34 Pollution and Water Resources
CS35 Flooding
CS36 Biodiversity and Geology
CS38 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

SD1 Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
DM1 Adaptation to Climate Change
DM2 Decentralised Energy
DM3 Infrastructure Planning
DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
DM18 Tree Planting
DM19 Air Quality
SA14 Cycle Routes

Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009

RC5 Design in the Centre
RC6 Definition of the Centre
RC9 Living in the Centre
RC10 Active Frontages

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Revised SPD Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

- 5.6 The Council is preparing a new local plan (to cover the period up to 2036), which in time will supersede the present suite of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents. The Submission Draft version of the Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration in March 2018 and this was then the subject of the Local Plan Examination, hearings for which were held in September-October 2018.
- 5.7 In accordance with the Revised NPPF (2018) Annex 1, the weight that should be given to emerging Local Plans depends on the stage of preparation, the degree to which there are unresolved objections to a policy and degree of consistency with the NPPF.
- 5.8 Unlike the existing Development Plan the emerging Local Plan does contain a policy specific to student accommodation (Policy H12). This policy states that *‘New student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation. There will be a presumption against proposals for new student accommodation on other sites unless it can be clearly demonstrated how the proposal meets a need that cannot be met on the above sites’*. However, there are significant unresolved objections to this policy and therefore the weight that can be attached to it is limited at this time.

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Principle of use/location
- b) Design, massing, scale & effect on character of the Conservation Area/settings of listed buildings
- c) Amenities of surrounding occupiers
- d) Amenities of future occupiers
- e) Transport issues
- f) Sustainability
- g) Flooding
- h) Natural Environment

Principle of use/location

- 6.1. The former car park use of the site is now redundant with the office buildings at the adjacent New Century Place buildings having been converted to residential flats. These flats include their own basement level car parking such that the car park is no longer required. The site is located within a mixed use area with business and community uses adjoining residential development. It is an accessible location on the edge of the town centre with its many facilities, shops and public transport options. The redevelopment of this brownfield site would represent a sustainable development and an effective reuse of the land site. This would accord with

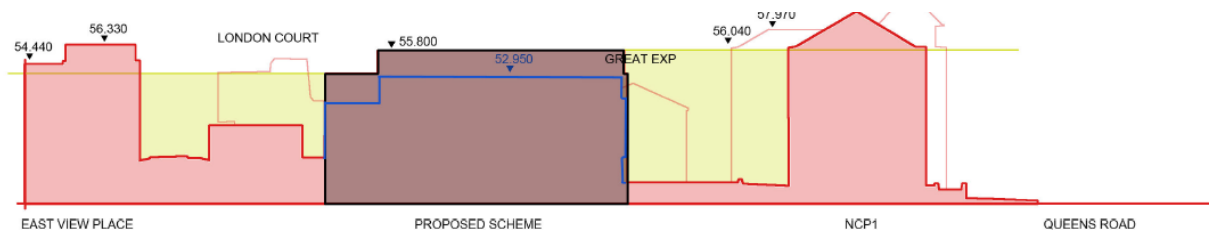
national and local policies, in particular the NPPF, which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as well as Policy SD1 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

- 6.2 The Council has no current adopted policy relating to the location of student accommodation. As set out in the 'Relevant Policy and Guidance' section above, whilst the emerging new Reading Local Plan does include a policy specific to the location of new student accommodation (Policy H12), this policy can only be given limited weight at this time. The weight that can be given to the emerging policy is not considered to have changed from that when the planning inspectorate allowed the recent appeal for student accommodation development at this site.
- 6.3 As such, the principle of student accommodation on the site was established under the recent appeal. There are not considered to have been any other material changes in terms of planning policy or the context of the site at the time of writing this report would change this position. However, the acceptability of the proposed development must still be assessed in relation to the other relevant planning policies and material planning considerations discussed below.
- 6.4 The recent appeal decision also sought to control the use of the development as Sui Generis student accommodation only by way of condition. This was on the basis that the standard of amenity to be provided by the units, particularly in terms of their size, would not be suitable for C3 use as self-contained flats. A similar condition is recommended to be applied in respect of the current application for the same reason.

Design, massing, scale & effect on character of the Conservation Area/impact on settings of listed buildings

- 6.5 Policy CS7 seeks to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located and Policy RC5 seeks to secure appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and frontages within the centre of Reading. Policy C33 seeks to preserve or enhance the historic character of heritage assets.
- 6.6 As set out earlier in this report an application for a part four part three storey building for 103 student accommodation rooms (application ref. 170019) at the site was recently allowed on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 6.7 The current application is for a similar student accommodation development to that allowed on appeal with the building having the same siting and L-shaped footprint. The main difference is the additional of an extra storey of accommodation to provide an additional 32 student accommodation rooms (135 rooms in total) resulting in a part four part five storey building as opposed to the scheme allowed on appeal which was part four part three storeys.
- 6.8 Proposed materials are the same as those approved under the appeal consent and include red facing brick (Wienerberger Olde Wealden Multi), slate grey powder coated aluminium windows and doors, glass spandrel panels and aluminium rainscreen cladding and curtain walling.

- 6.9 The proposed additional storey results in an extra 2.8m in height to the building. As shown by the section drawings which also indicates the massing of the consented appeal scheme the proposal would remain lower in height the two existing larger buildings either side of the site along East Street in New Century Place Building 1 and East View Place.



Proposed section along East Street

- 6.10 The Council's Conservation Consultant maintains an objection to the proposed development, having also objected to the allowed appeal scheme. The reasons for the objection remain very similar for the enlarged proposal, with the scale and massing of the building and its proximity to the rears of the adjacent listed buildings along London Street considered harmful to their historic significance. Similarly the objection considers that the height of the proposed development, when taken in conjunction with the mass of the proposed building and its flat roofed form would represent a dominant and oppressive presence within the East Street street-scene which would be harmful to the conservation area and fail to preserve or enhance its setting.
- 6.11 The Conservation Consultant's objection to the application is considered significant and to be of merit, however in assessing the proposal officers have had to have particular regard to the findings and conclusions of the appeal inspector in allowing the similar application for student accommodation building at the site. This decision is a material consideration in assessment of the current proposal. The inspector's key findings were:
- Views across the appeal site towards the rear of the London Street Grade II listed buildings (no.s 33, 35, 37, 39 and 41) are curtailed by existing modern development (notably the existing raised car park area and surrounding larger buildings) and are not considered to be historically representative. Concluded that the current views available across the car parking make a limited contribution to the heritage significant of the conservation area.
 - The site's current openness is at odds with the prevailing urban grain and has a negative effect on this part of the conservation area.
 - The presence of a number of larger modern buildings surrounding the site (such as New Century Place, East View Place and Bourne-Stevens Close) give the built form of this end of East Street an unmistakably modern scale and character.

- The buildings chamfered corner helps acknowledge the junction between its frontage and the rear of the New Century Place buildings, whilst its height would be below that of the existing buildings either side of the site along East Street at New Century Place to the north and also East View Place to the south. It was also noted that the buildings 3m set back from the East Street frontage provided visual relief and the potential for soft landscaping, whilst the use of red brick as the predominant material would be characteristic of both the existing modern and older buildings in the area. Concluded that the building would not be dominant or out of keeping with the evolved character of this part of East Street and would have a minor positive effect of the conservation area.
- The historic significance of the London Street listed buildings primarily relates to the London Street frontages and not the rear of these buildings and that any historic associations (notably there is evidence to suggest that William Penn worshiped at no. 39 and that Charles Dickens once read at no. 33 which was formerly the Everyman Theatre) was to do with the interior of the buildings and would not be impacted upon by development within the setting to the rear of the buildings. The majority of the London Street listed buildings have also been extended to the rear beyond their original form.
- The proposal would have minor harmful effect on the setting of the rear of the London Street grade II listed buildings (no.s 33, 35, 37, 39 and 41) resulting in less than substantial harm which in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF must be balanced against the planning benefits of the proposal.
- In overall terms the Inspector concluded that the proposal would result in a minor enhancement of the conservation area which, as a benefit to a designated heritage asset carries significant weight and balances the minor harm to the settings of the listed buildings. The inspector went on to conclude that taking into account the other planning benefits of the proposals (provision of student accommodation, amenity benefits of reducing reliance on HMO accommodation and the economic benefits of employment, construction and local expenditure by students) this would also outweigh any minor harm to the settings of the listed buildings and overcome any limited conflict with Policy CS33.

6.12 Taking into account the detailed considerations of the Planning Inspector with regard to the consented appeal scheme on the site it is not considered that the current proposal, for a building of the same footprint but with an additional storey of accommodation (an extra 2.8m in height to the building), would result in a development of a scale or massing which would materially alter the Inspector's conclusions.

6.13 Notably, the proposed building would still be below that of the adjacent larger modern buildings either side of the site along East Street (New Century Place and East View Place) in terms of height, whilst the positive elements of the design identified by the Inspector; such as the 3m set back of the building frontage from East Street and chamfered corner elevation towards the junction with the rear of the New Century Place buildings, would be retained as part of the design for the enlarged building. In this respect, noting the Inspector's acknowledgement of the

modern and large scale character of buildings to this part of East Street and conclusion that the open form of the existing car parking is out of keeping with the surrounding urban grain and a current negative feature of the conservation area officers conclude the current proposal would represent a similar minor enhancement to the conservation area.

- 6.14 In terms of the impact upon the significance of the London Street listed buildings the Inspector identified that this was primarily associated with the London Street frontages of the buildings and internal elements. The Inspector attached limited significance to the views of the rears of the listed buildings from East Street across the application site. The consented appeal scheme would largely obscure these views and officers do not consider that this impact would be materially altered by the proposed additional storey to the building. In the context of the appeal decision officers conclude the current proposal would result in a minor harm to the settings of the listed buildings (less than substantial harm) but that would be balanced against the identified minor enhancement to the conservation area.
- 6.15 Furthermore, following a review of the current proposal by the Council's Design Review Panel a number of aesthetic alterations have been proposed to the building in the form of amended plans. In particular the increase in height of the parapet to the fourth storey assists in reducing the prominence of the top fifth floor of accommodation whilst the introduction of additional windows and textured brickwork to the southern flank wall adds visual interest and details to a previously rather blank looking elevation visible to longer views past the site looking north along East Street. These detailed design alterations are also considered to contribute to mitigating any additional visual impact of the proposed enlarged building.
- 6.16 In accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF (as also noted by the Appeal Inspector) the less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building must also be balanced against the planning benefits of the proposal which will be set out in the later sections of this report.

Impact on amenities of surrounding residential properties

- 6.17 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers and Policy CS34 (Pollution) seeks to protect from the impacts of pollution.
- 6.18 An assessment of the impacts of the proposal on the daylight and sunlight to be received by the surrounding residential properties has been undertaken. Those considered to have the potential to be most impacted upon are the flats within New Century Place Building 1 and the dwellings within Bourne-Stevens Close which front onto East Street. As with the appeal proposal this assessment notes that the existing condition of the site is an open surface car park within the centre of Reading, therefore any meaningful development is likely to have some impact upon surrounding buildings, and that these buildings currently benefit from uncharacteristically high levels of daylight and sunlight, due to the existing site context. The study finds that the proposed scheme displays a strong compliance to the BRE recommended target values for daylight and sunlight criterion and where breaches do occur, they are generally minor and the retained daylight levels are

good and commensurate with levels in the surrounding area. The study also includes a comparison of the impacts of the consented appeal scheme against those of the application proposal scheme and concludes that the impacts would be largely similar and where there are differences these would only be minor.

- 6.19 In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy the separation of the proposal to surrounding buildings is generally sufficient to prevent any undue impacts. This was noted by the Planning Inspector in his assessment of the appeal proposal of which the footprint is the same as the current application proposal. The closest effected neighbouring windows would be those to the flats to the southern (rear elevation) of the New Century Place Building. Windows to student rooms to the north elevation of the proposed building would mainly face this elevation of New Century Place at a separation of around 15m which is considered sufficient to prevent any undue loss of privacy to these neighbouring occupiers. A small section of New Century Place would be located only 10m from the student windows to the north elevation of the proposed building. On balance, this separation, to what is only a small part of the adjacent building, is considered adequate for a town centre urban location and only a minimal number of windows would be affected. This relationship and separation was also the same for the appeal proposal and was considered acceptable by the Inspector. The proposed additional storey of accommodation is not considered to result in any significant additional impact in this respect.
- 6.20 In terms of potential noise and disturbance to surrounding properties from use of the site as student accommodation, it must be acknowledged the appeal decision for student accommodation on the site has already established the principle of this use. However, the Planning Inspector considered it reasonable to secure a student management plan by way of condition to address how matters that could cause noise and disturbance will be managed and as such a similar approach is recommended in this instance.
- 6.21 A condition is also recommended to require that should any additional external mechanical plant be installed to serve the building in the future then a noise assessment must be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to its installation. This condition is recommended in order to protect the amenities of surrounding occupiers from potential associated noise disturbance.
- 6.22 A construction management plan is also proposed to be secured by way of condition to ensure that the construction works associated with the proposed has regard for existing surrounding residential occupiers. Construction will also be controlled to reasonable hours by way of condition.
- 6.23 Subject to the recommended conditions the proposal is considered to adequately safeguard the amenities of surrounding occupiers and to protect existing residents from pollution, in accordance with Policies DM4 and CS34.

Amenities of future occupiers

- 6.20 It is considered that the proposed internal layout would provide suitable short-term accommodation for students during term time but due to the rooms small size they

would not be considered suitable for permanent residential use and so as discussed earlier in this report it, is considered necessary to limit the use to Sui Generis student accommodation only by way of condition.

- 6.24 The application is accompanied by a noise assessment and mitigation scheme. This has been reviewed by Environmental Protection Officers who are satisfied that the glazing and ventilation specifications proposed would ensure acceptable noise levels with the student accommodation rooms. Implementation and retention of these specifications can be secured by condition. Internal noise insulation between rooms would be secured by way of the appropriate building regulation controls.
- 6.25 An air quality assessment has also been submitted as part of the application. Environmental Protection Officers have confirmed that this suitably demonstrates that future occupiers of the building would not be subject to unacceptable air quality standards.
- 6.26 The building would be well served by communal facilities with dining, study, library and lounge rooms located at basement level and a reception and foyer area at ground floor. A small area of landscaped communal outdoor space is also proposed to the rear of the building. The town centre location also allows for easy access to nearby public recreation and leisure facilities.
- 6.27 Subject to recommended conditions officers are satisfied that the proposal would provide for suitable standard of student accommodation.

Transport

- 6.28 Policies DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015 and CS20, CS23 and CS24 of the Core Strategy seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.
- 6.29 The site is located on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. The site is within 250m of the Oracle shopping centre and multi-storey car park and within 500m of Broad Street with a range of shops and services. East Street and the surrounding classified road network all have parking restrictions in the form of residents parking bays, pay and display bays and double yellow lines preventing on-street parking.
- 6.30 The site was most recently in use as a private car park with a total of 49 spaces. These spaces formed part of the parking provision associated with the adjacent office buildings at 1 and 2 New Century Place but these private car parking spaces are now redundant due to the conversion of these buildings into C3 use.

Parking

- 6.31 The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to

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

- 6.32 The redevelopment proposals will not provide any car parking spaces for staff or students reflecting the sustainable location of the site. It is also proposed that students and staff would not be permitted to apply for a parking permit to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on local on-street parking. This approach complies with policy and is accepted by the Highway Authority and was the approach considered acceptable with the allowed appeal decision at the site.
- 6.33 However, it is proposed that three of the ten car parking along the northern side of East Street to the rear of New Century Place Building 1 will be used for pick up / drop off of students during the start / end of term. These spaces are included within the red line area as shown on the location plan and are under the same ownership as the application site. Students will not be permitted to use these spaces at any other time of the year and the use of the spaces will be monitored. This is an increase from two spaces which were previously included within the S106 relating to the consented appeal scheme and this reflects the, albeit modest, increase in rooms numbers (an increase in 32 rooms from the appeal scheme). As per the previous application, the provision of these parking spaces will be secured through a S106 legal agreement.
- 6.34 In addition, a Management Plan has been submitted as part of the application with the aim to minimise disruptions to the local area and to avoid unnecessary queues and delays at the site at the start and end of the academic year. This document has been reviewed by transport officer who advise that that it is very limited in terms of management of the moving in/out process and refers to use of kerbside capacity to accommodate some movers which is a concern in terms of highway safety and being hazardous to other highway users. Whilst the on-street parking regulations may permit loading and unloading, the development must manage the allocated three parking along the northern side of East Street to minimise disruptions on East Street. The information submitted provides very little clarity over how many students would be able to arrive at the site at any one time and no assurance that the loading and unloading procedure will be entirely within the site boundary. Officers will need to be satisfied that the moving in procedure must be suitably managed to ensure that an excessive number of vehicles does not try to gain access to the site at the same time. On this basis and as per the consented appeal scheme a condition will be attached to require submission and approval by the Local Planning Authority of an arrival and departures management plan prior to occupation of the development.

Trip Generation

- 6.35 The proposed development would result in a reduction in vehicle trips on the network in comparison to the previous office parking use of the site. Given the reduced trip rate the site is considered suitable for the proposed use in this respect.

Sustainable Travel

- 6.36 A framework Travel Plan has been submitted as part of the application to demonstrate and encourage safe, healthy and sustainable travel options and this document is considered acceptable. A condition is to be attached to the planning permission to require submission of further travel plan document 3 months after occupation of the building so that full survey data can be provided of the residents.

Cycle Parking

- 6.37 In accordance with the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 cycle parking space per 3 staff and 1 space per 5 students.
- 6.38 The proposed redevelopment of the site will provide a total of 34 cycle parking spaces, in accordance with Reading Borough Council standards. The cycle parking spaces will be located inside the building, 30 of which will be double stacked and 2 Sheffield stands. Provision and retention of the cycle parking can be secured by way of condition.

Access & Servicing

- 6.39 The bin store is located on the north-west corner of the ground floor to enable on-street servicing from East Street. This arrangement is acceptable as a refuse vehicle will be able to access the bin store and turn within the existing turning head which is regulated by no waiting parking restrictions.
- 6.40 A swept path analysis drawing of a large refuse vehicle accessing the Site's curtilage in forward gear from East Street and then reversing into the collection point and driving out in forward gear has been submitted as part of the application. Servicing of the adjacent buildings is undertaken from the same location and Transport Officers are satisfied with these arrangements.
- 6.41 The existing vehicular access into the site from East Street will no longer be required. A condition is recommended to ensure this access is abandoned and with the footway reinstated to line and level. This will be secured by way of condition.
- 6.42 The proposal is not considered have any detrimental transport impacts subject to the recommended conditions and section 106 obligations and is considered to accord with Policies DM12, CS20, CS23 and CS24.

Sustainability

- 6.43 Policies CS1 and DM1 seek that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy DM2 seeks that developments of more than 1000m² should consider the inclusion of combined heat and power plant (CHP) or other form of decentralised energy provision.
- 6.44 An energy statement assessment has been submitted in support of the proposal and incorporates commentary in respect of sustainability and energy matters. More

specifically the proposals will include a variety of sustainability and energy features, including provision of an on-site CHP. The energy statement demonstrates that the proposals could achieve a 19% improvement in emission rates over the target emission rate, as per Part L of Building Regulations (2013). This shall ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards, in accordance with Policies CS1 and DM2. A sustainability statement has also been submitted which demonstrates that the proposal would be an acceptable BREEAM level of 'very good'. Implementation of the measures within the energy strategy and sustainability statement will be secured by way of condition.

- 6.45 A scheme for a sustainable drainage system (SuDs) has also been submitted as part of the application. This has been reviewed by Local Flood Authority via RBC Transport Officers and is considered to be acceptable. A scheme for the future management and maintenance of the SuDs as well as its implementation is to be secured by way of condition.

Flooding

- 6.46 Policy CS35 seeks that proposal should not increase the risk of flooding on site or elsewhere with the Borough.
- 6.47 A small part of the north of the site is located within flood zone 2 and as such, in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG, the proposal is required to demonstrate via a flood risk sequential test that the development cannot be located in an area at a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test has already been successfully demonstrated under the recently allowed appeal consent on the site and is therefore considered to have been passed.
- 6.48 A site specific flood risk assessment has also been submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the proposed flood levels will be well above the flood level of the site and as such dry access and egress to the building can be obtained. The proposed SuDs scheme would also be satisfactory to manage surface water run off from the development. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy CS35.

Natural Environment

- 6.49 Policy CS7 seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy RC5 seeks that development provide appropriate, well designed public spaces, public realm and street-scape. Policy CS36 seeks that development should retain, protect and incorporate feature of biodiversity and Policies CS38 and DM18 seek that the Borough's vegetation cover be extended.
- 6.50 A scheme of landscaping with planting proposed to the East Street frontage of the building and to the rear communal garden area has been submitted with the application. The Natural Environment Tree Officer is satisfied with the proposed landscaping which is similar to that secured under the appeal consent at the site.

Implementation and maintenance of the landscaping will be secured by way of condition.

- 6.51 An ecological appraisal was also submitted with the application which concludes that due to the nature of the site as an existing hardstanding car park, the proposal would not affect protected species. The Council's Ecological Consultant has reviewed the proposal and does not object to its findings. A small number of trees and areas of vegetation are to be removed as part of the works and a condition is recommended to ensure removal of this vegetation does not take place during the bird nesting season. Conditions to secure submission and approval by the Local Planning Authority of a scheme to demonstrate how lighting on the site will not adversely impact upon wildlife as well as a scheme of on-site biodiversity enhancements are also recommended.
- 6.52 Subject to the above recommended conditions the proposal is considered to accord with Policies CS7, RC5, CS36, CS38 and DM18.

Other

- 6.53 In accordance with the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD the proposal would be required to provide an Employment Skills and Training Plan for the construction phase of the development (or make an equivalent financial contribution. This is to be secured as part of the section 106 legal agreement.
- 6.54 A contaminated land assessment has been submitted as part of the application which demonstrates that no remediation is required with regard to contamination impacts. Environmental Protection Officers have are satisfied that the report has been carried out to an acceptable standard in accordance with Policy CS34 (Pollution). A condition is recommended with regard to necessary actions if any unexpected contamination is discovered during construction works.
- 6.55 An archaeological assessment has also been submitted as part of the application. Archaeological investigation has been undertaken on site in accordance with a scheme agreed under the consented appeal proposal. This investigation works did not uncover any archaeological findings and as such no further investigation is considered necessary as part of the current application.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.56 The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule sets out that student accommodation is CIL liable. The proposed floor area of the development is 4196m² which equates to a levy of £622, 015.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in this report.
- 7.2 With regard to heritage impact as set out in paragraph 6.15 of this report officers consider the proposal to result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the rears of the listed buildings at no.s 33, 35, 37, 39 and 41 London Street. As such and

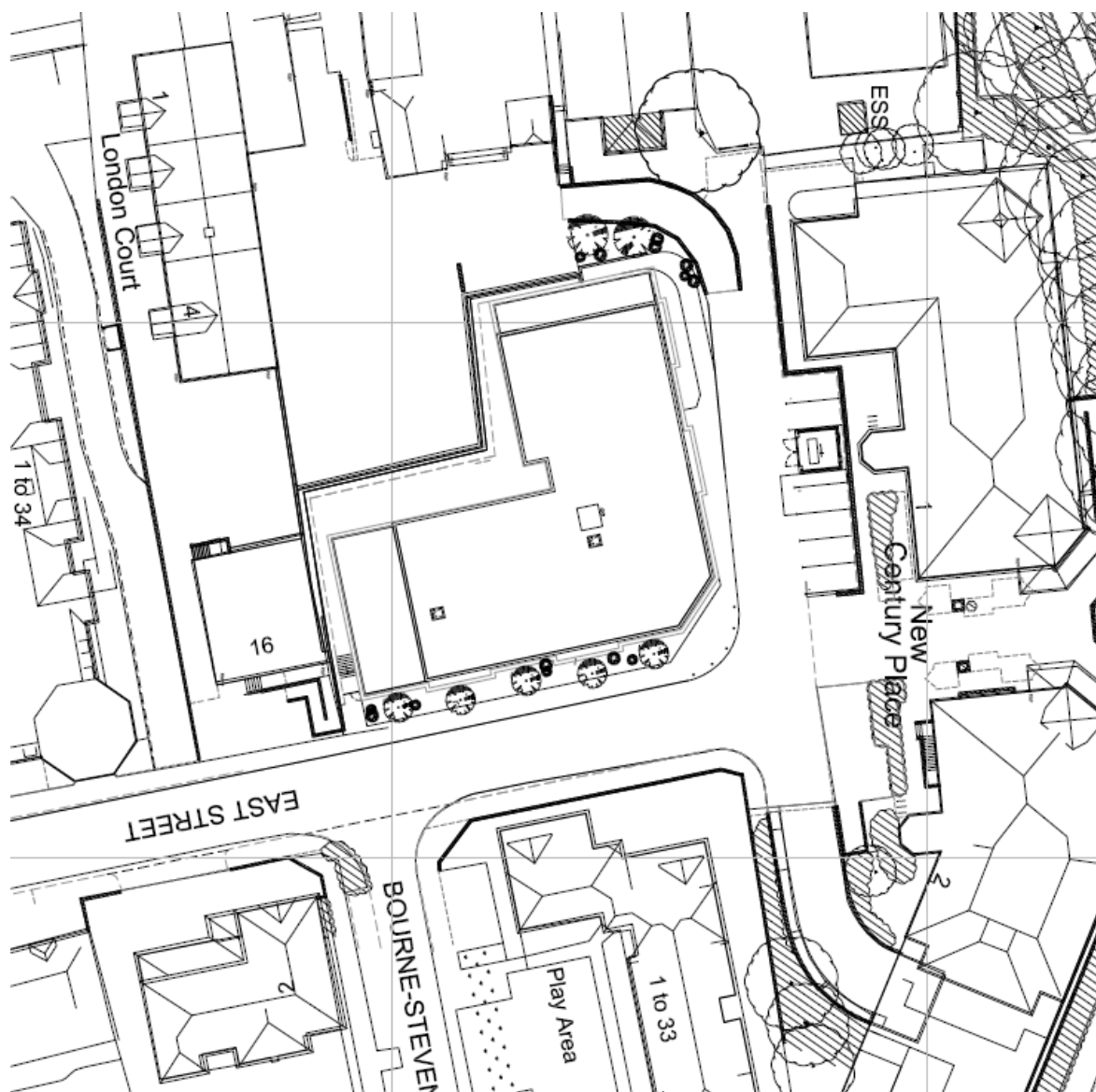
as per paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2018) this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.

- 7.3 As discussed in the main body of the report there are a number of public benefits of the proposal, including the sites sustainable location, provision of on-site sustainability, landscaping and ecological enhancements as well as the wider economic benefits of the proposal acknowledged by the Planning Inspector in allowing the similar recent appeal consent on the site.
- 7.4 Officers are satisfied that the proposal demonstrates a number of public benefits, most notably the sustainable use of land in an accessible location and whilst also considering the fall-back position of the recently consent appeal scheme for student accommodation on the site, it is recommended to grant full planning permission subject to the recommended conditions and informatives and satisfactory completion of a section 106 legal agreement.

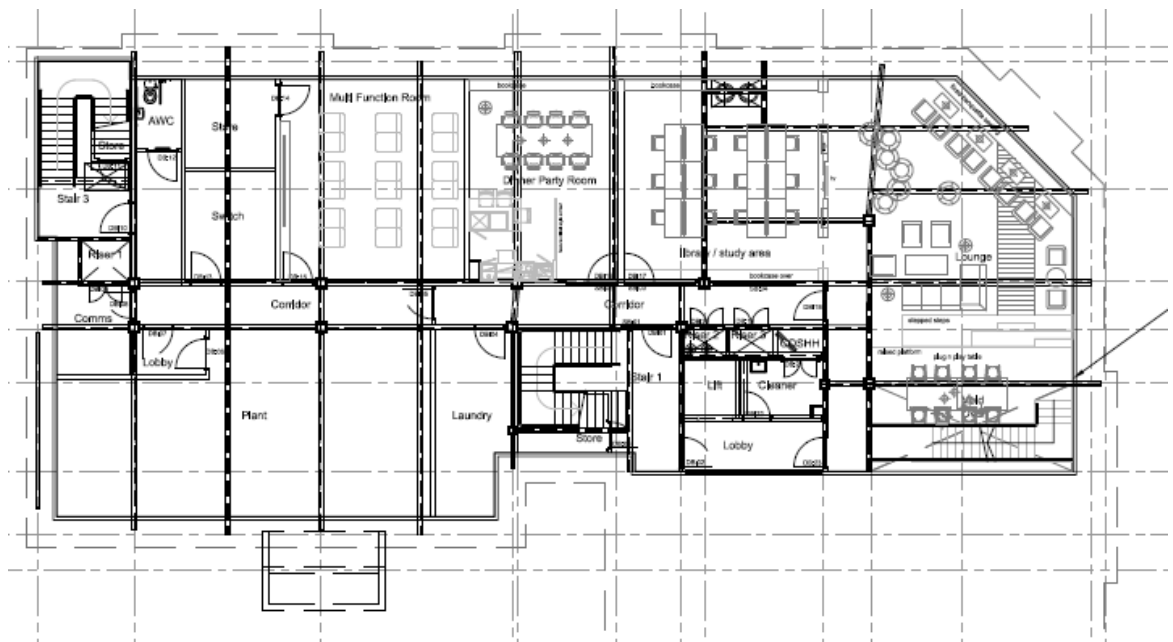
8 PLANS CONSIDERED

Location Plan 18053_001A_ A1_Location Plan A
Existing Site Plan 18053_002_ A1_Existing Site Plan
Existing Topographical Plan 18053_003_ A1_Existing Topographical Plan
Existing Site Sections 18053_004_ A1_Existing Site Sections
Proposed Site Plan 18053_007A_A1_Proposed Site Plan A
Proposed Site Sections 18053_008B_ A1_Proposed Site Sections B
Proposed Block Plan 18053_009_ A1_Proposed Block Plan
Level 0 As Proposed 18053_5100_A1_Level 0 E
Level 1 As Proposed 18053_5101_A1_Level 1 D
Level 2 As Proposed 18053_5102_A1_Level 2 D
Level 3 As Proposed 18053_5103_A1_Level 3 D
Level 4 As Proposed 18053_5104_A1_Level 4 C
Level B As Proposed 18053_5105_A1_Level B C
Roof Level As proposed 18053_5106_A1_Roof Level C
Proposed Elevations _North & East 18053_017 _A1_Proposed elevations Planning
Proposed Elevations_ South & West 18053_018 _A1_Proposed elevations Planning
Proposed Elevations _West 18053_019 _A1_Proposed elevations Planning
Proposed site Elevations _ North & East 18053_024 _A1_Proposed site elevations Planning
Proposed Sections 18053_025 _A1_Proposed Sections Planning C
Proposed Elevations Colour - North & East 18053_035 Proposed Elevations Colour
Proposed Elevations _Colour- South & West 18053_036 Proposed Elevations Colour
Proposed Elevations Colour - West 18053_037 Proposed Elevations Colour
Subservience 18053_VS001 subservience A3 A
Cycle Storage 18053_VS010 A3 cycle storage

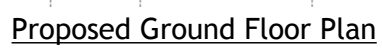
Case Officer: Matt Burns



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Basement Plan



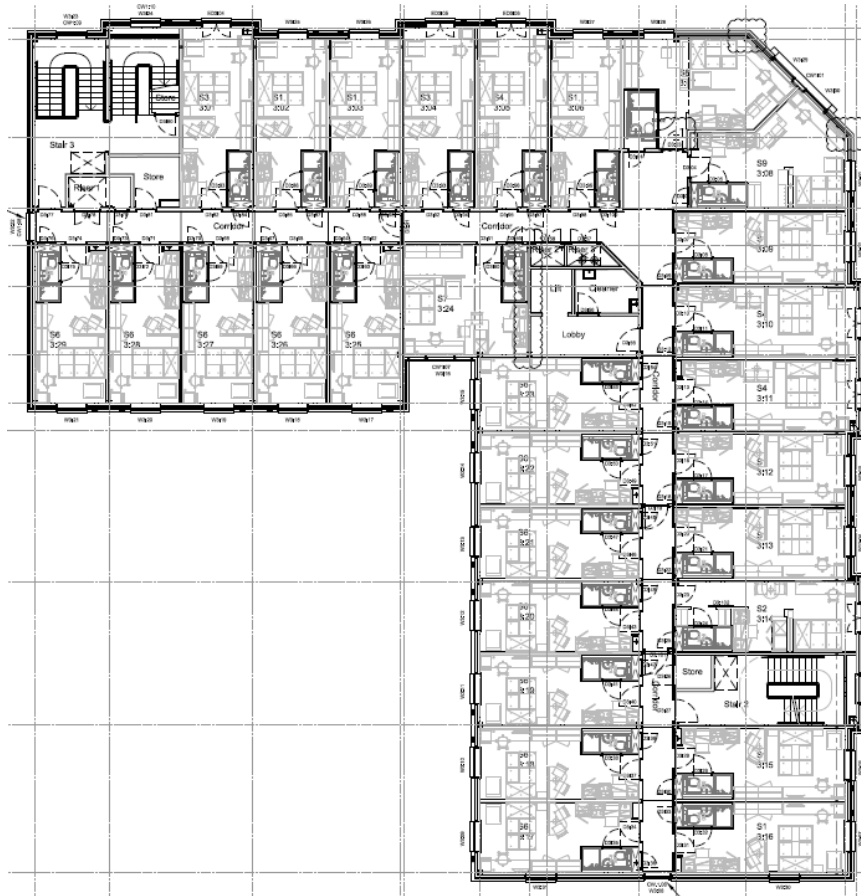
Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan



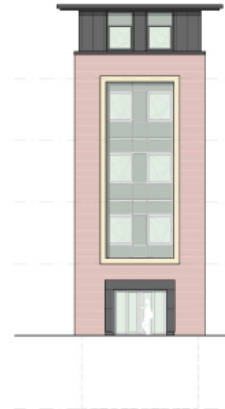
Proposed Third Floor Plan



Proposed Fourth Floor Plan



EVATION - NORTH ELEVATION



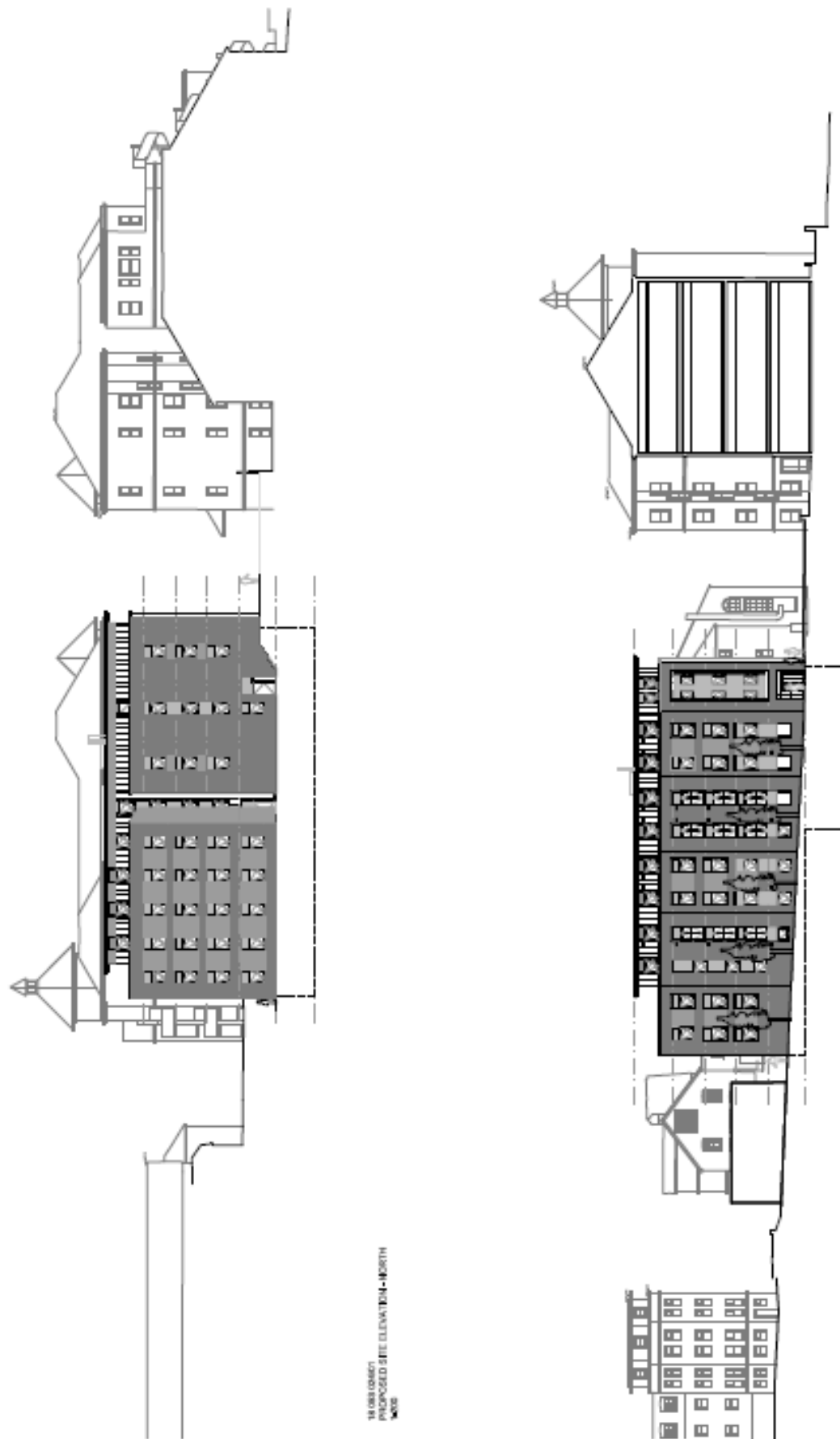
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PROPOSED ELEVATION - NORTH EAST ELEVATI
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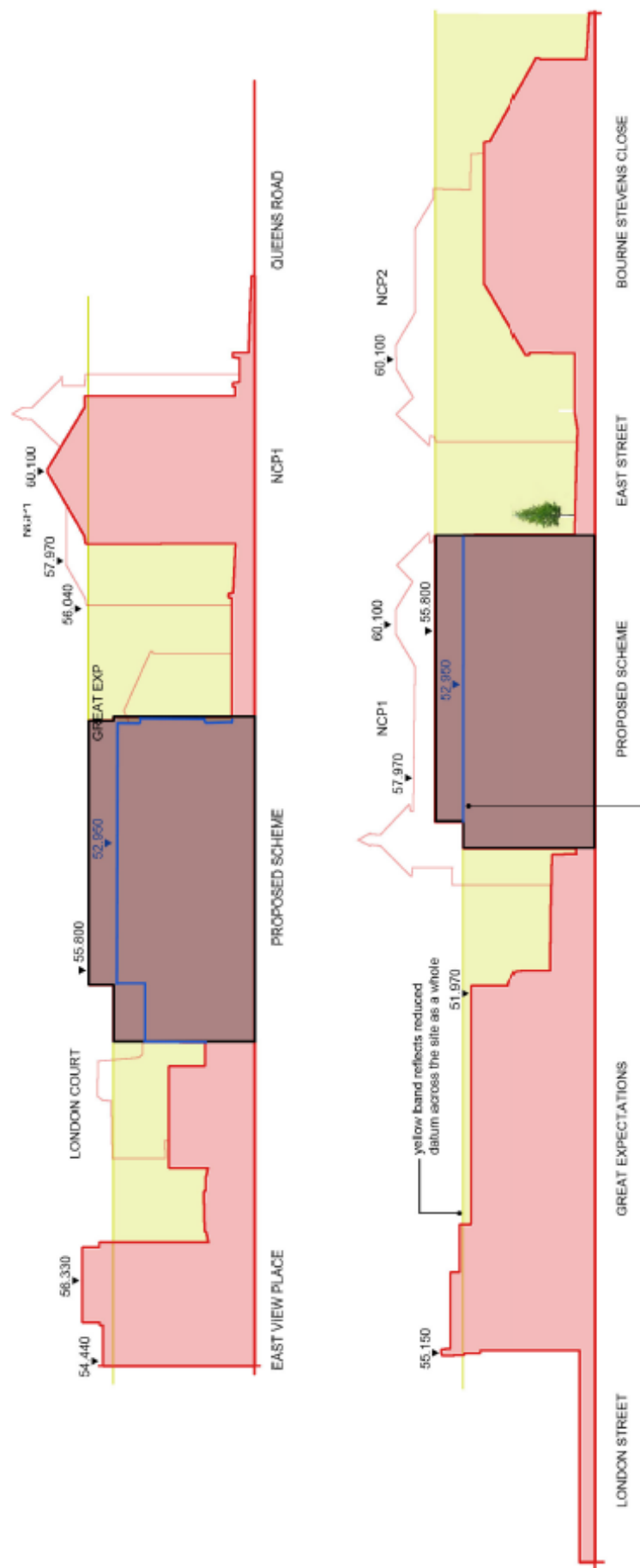
2N - WEST ELEVATION



Proposed Elevations



Proposed North and East Site Sections



Site Sections with comparison to consented appeal scheme



Proposed East Street Visual



Proposed East Street Visual