

COMMITTEE REPORT TEMPLATE

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 15 January 2020

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191144

Address: 49a-51a George Street, Reading, RG1 7NP

Proposal: Residential development for a total of six dwellings (net increase of 4 dwellings), comprising re-modelling of 49A and 51A George Street, two storey and single storey rear extensions, rear dormer windows and external alterations to form four apartments and demolition of existing warehouse and construction of two apartments.

Applicant: Mr Andrew Rosser

8-week target expiry: 30/09/2019 extension of time agreed to 30 January 2020

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 30th January 2020 (unless the planning officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- £18,000 toward the provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough

And the following conditions to include:

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement details of all external materials (including brickwork, roofing, glazing, doors, guttering and downpipes)
4. Pre-commencement construction method statement (including noise & dust)
5. Pre-occupation provision of bin storage facility details
6. Pre-occupation implementation of cycle parking details provided
7. Pre-occupation notification of postal addresses (restricting parking permits)
8. No automatic entitlement to parking permits
9. Pre-commencement contaminated land - site characterisation
10. Pre-commencement contaminated land - submission of remediation scheme
11. Pre-construction contaminated land - implementation of approved remediation
12. Construction hours
13. Pre-commencement hard and soft landscaping details (including biodiversity enhancements) and implementation
14. Communal space management plan
15. Pre-commencement SAP assessment - To be approved (new-build)
16. Pre-occupation SAP assessment (new-build)
17. Pre-commencement BREEAM interim certificate 'Very Good' (Conversion)
18. Pre-occupation BREEAM final certificate 'Very Good' (Conversion)

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Highways works
3. Terms and conditions
4. Building Control

5. Party Wall Act
6. Contaminated land - reporting of unexpected contamination
7. Noise Transmission between residential properties (Building Regulations part E)
8. CIL
9. No burning of waste on site
10. Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreement

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises a single storey former B8 storage building which is accessed via an archway, on the eastern side of George Street. The surrounding area is predominantly residential consisting of two storey terraced properties. The site is located within an air quality management area

Site Location Plan



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal includes two flat roof dormers, infilling of undercroft access, and single storey rear extension to no.s 49a-51a to facilitate their conversion to create 4 flats (1 x 2 bed and 3 x 1 bed) and demolition of the existing structure to allow a new detached single storey building to the rear of the site containing 2 flats (2 x 1 bed) . A central landscaped courtyard is proposed containing a mix of private and communal amenity space.
- 2.2 Submitted Plans and Documentation:
- Drawing No: SU-28 PL-05 Proposed site plan
 - Drawing No: SU-28 PL-08 Proposed Sections
 - Drawing No: SU-28 PL-07 Proposed Roof Plans
 - Drawing No: SU-28 PL-10 Proposed drainage plan
 - Drawing No: SU-28 PL-01 location plan
 - Drawing No: SU-28 PL-06 proposed plans
 - Drawing No: SU-28 PL-09 proposed elevations

Drawing No: SU-28 PL-02 Existing Site plan
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-03 Existing building plans
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-04 Existing building elevations and section
Drawing No: SU-28
Drawing No: SU-28
Planning Statement, Prepared by Freeths LLP
Phase I Geo-Environmental Site Assessment, Ref: 1CO107010/P1/R0
Design and Access Statement
Air Quality Assessment
CIL Forms
As received 12 July 2019

Drawing No: SU-28 PL-06 Proposed plans Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-09 Proposed elevations Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-08 Proposed elevations and sections Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-05 Proposed site plan Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-11 Block plan proposed Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-10 proposed drainage Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-07 proposed Roof plans Rev B
Drawing No: SU-28 PL-08 proposed elevations and sections Rev B
As Received 19 December 2019

- 2.3 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):
In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. *Provide expected calculation/status*
3. **PLANNING HISTORY**
- 3.1 92/0429/DE: Use as a warehouse with ancillary office. Section 64 Determination issued 7/7/1992.
- 3.2 142000/UPA: Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 1 x 2-bed flats and 2 x 2-bed flats - Prior Approval Refused on the basis that it has not been proven that on the balance of probability that the existing use of the whole building was Class B1 (a) (offices) immediately before 30th May 2013. The proposal therefore does not meet the Permitted Development criteria as stated under Class J (b), Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) - Refused.
- 3.3 151090/UPA - Change of use from B8 (storage unit) to C3 dwellinghouses to comprise 2 x 1 bed & 1 x 2 bed flats. Prior Notification under Class P, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order - Granted.
- 3.4 160517/FUL - Demolition of the former storage unit (B8) and erection of two storey building containing 4 x 2 bed (C3) dwellings, including parking and landscaping - Refused.
- 3.5 180252/PREAPP - Creation of 7 dwellings in total through a mix of new build and extension to the current residential properties 49a-51a George Street Reading RG1 7NP
- 3.6 191684/CLP - Rear dormer window at 51A George Street APPROVED

- 3.7 191985/CLP - Rear dormer window at 49A George Street APPROVED

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- 4.1 Ecology - The current building is unlikely to contain suitable habitat for roosting bats. As such, since bats (and other protected species) are unlikely to be affected by the proposals, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds. A condition is recommended (to be included in the landscaping conditions) to ensure appropriate wildlife friendly landscaping is incorporated into the scheme.
- 4.2 Waste - The proposed development would provide adequate bin store for the number of flats. Residents would be responsible for moving the bins out for collection days.
- 4.3 Environmental protection (Trees) officer - Conditions to ensure appropriate remediation of the site to improve soil quality to facilitate landscaping will be required. In addition, details of landscaping and a management scheme are recommended.
- 4.4 Environmental protection officers - Conditions are recommended to ensure appropriate mitigation for: noise transmission between dwellings, air quality impacts, contaminated land and remediation, construction and demolition, bin storage.

4.5 Public

189 Great Knollys Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7HA
45 George Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7NP
187 Great Knollys Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7HA
191 Great Knollys Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7HA
193 Great Knollys Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7HA
195 Great Knollys Street, Reading
1b Cambridge Street, Reading, RG1 7PA
1a Cambridge Street, Reading, RG1 7PA
181 Great Knollys Street, Reading, RG1 7HA
10 Stanley Street, Reading, RG1 7NY

- 4.6 One comment has been received in support of the application.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 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) which states at Paragraph 11 "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development".
- 5.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

CC1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC2	Sustainable design and construction
CC3	Adaptation to climate change
CC5	Waste minimisation and storage
CC6	Accessibility and the intensity of development
CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
EN9	Provision of open space
EN12	Biodiversity and the green network
EN14	Trees, hedges and woodlands
EN15	Air quality
EN16	Pollution and water resources
EM3	Loss of employment land
H1	Provision of housing
H2	Density and mix
H3	Affordable housing
H5	Standards for new housing
H8	Residential conversions
H9	House extensions and ancillary accommodation
H10	Private and communal outdoor space
TR1	Achieving the transport strategy
TR3	Access, traffic and highway related matters
TR5	Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging
CR2	Design in central Reading
CR3	Public realm in central Reading
CR6	Living in Central Reading

5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Affordable Housing (2013)
 Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)
 Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
 Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
 Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations and effect on character
- Impact on residential amenity
- Standard of Residential Accommodation
- Transport
- Landscape/ecology
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters
- Equalities impact

Principle of development

- 6.1 The NPPF states that LPAs should “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value”.

- 6.2 Therefore, the priority for development should be on previously developed land and, particularly, vacant and derelict sites and buildings. There is no in principle objection to use for residential purposes. In accordance with Policy EM3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) the loss of the B8 storage use and use of employment land for alternate uses must be considered. The site is not located within a Core Employment Area. The site is surrounded by residential properties and has the potential, were it to revert to its previous use, of being a cause of disturbance to surrounding occupiers. Given these considerations there is no in principle objection to the proposed loss of employment land.
- 6.3 The accessibility of the site is considered acceptable for the proposed development (CC6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)) and the principle of C3 residential use would align with the broad objectives of policy H1, in assisting meeting the annual housing targets.
- 6.4 The Council has a Supplementary Planning Document which specifically relates to conversions. This stipulates that in order for residential dwellings to be suitable for conversion to flats they should be a minimum of 120m² or have a minimum of 4 bedrooms. In this instance the two existing dwellings individually would not have floor areas of more than 120m² or have 4 bedrooms. However, the proposal relates to both existing dwellings of which the combined floor space would exceed 120m². In addition the conversion of the two existing dwellings is part of a wider development including the land and large outbuilding. As such in this instance it is not considered that there would be an "in principle" objection to conversion of the existing two dwellings as part of a wider redevelopment of the site. However, this would be subject to other material policy and planning considerations as set out below.

Design Considerations and effect on character

- 6.5 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and Policy CR (Design in Central Reading) seek to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located. Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) seeks to ensure residential extensions respect the scale and character of the host and surrounding dwellings.
- 6.6 The existing single storey mono-pitch B8 storage flat roof building is of no particular architectural merit. The site, accessed by an existing under-croft from George Street, is enclosed by two storey terraced properties on all sides such that the existing single storey building is not visible from outside of the application site apart from these properties. There is no objection to the loss of the existing outbuilding structure.

Extensions and alterations to nos 49a-51a

- 6.7 The proposal involves alterations to the existing terraced dwellings. The proposed design includes enclosing the undercroft between the existing dwellings to create a bin storage area and secure access to the rear dwellings. The proposal would also introduce three roof lights to the frontage of the dwellings and would include a part single-storey, part two-storey rear extension. The two-storey portion to the development would be in the centre of the dwellings and provide only for a staircase to access the flats at first floor.
- 6.8 There is evidence of significant single storey rear extensions to properties within the terrace including the two properties which directly adjoin the

application site. The proposed development includes a 3.7m deep single storey rear extension between the existing single storey rear extensions to each dwelling. The plans also include a first-floor rear extension of 2.8m located at the centre of the two dwellings. The single storey rear extension is considered appropriate in this instance. The proposed central first floor rear extension above the proposed ground floor extension would be located at the centre of the two dwellings, and appropriately separated from adjoining properties to ensure there is no adverse impact in terms of overbearing nature, loss of light or outlook to adjoining properties and is therefore considered acceptable.

- 6.9 The proposed development includes two flat roof dormers which would fill the majority of the rear roof slope. This results in the loss of the majority of the pitched roof form of the rear roof slope and is considered a significant overdevelopment of this space harmful and out of keeping with the character of the property and would not be acceptable. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has stated that the proposed flat roof dormers would fall within their current permitted development rights. As is generally accepted by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal, the permitted development rights must not be purely hypothetical and thus could not be considered unless the applicant has shown a clear and reasonable intention to make use of these rights. In this instance, the applicant has sought a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed dormer windows over the existing dwellings (application references 191684 and 191685 above). As such, it is considered that the applicant would have a realistic fall-back position in this regard to allow the creation of the dormers in a similar arrangement to that of the current proposal. As such, it is not considered that a reason for refusal based on this concern would be defensible at appeal in this instance, subject to the development being acceptable in all other regards.
- 6.10 The proposed development also includes the addition of 3 no. roof lights within the front elevation. There are a number of rooflights and other frontage alterations within the immediate vicinity of the site, and the reduction from the 6 (as originally proposed) would not create an unduly convoluted or harmful appearance as viewed from the street. As such, the proposal would be acceptable in this regard
- 6.11 The proposed development will enclose the existing vehicle access between the two dwellings with a recessed timber door which would resemble an original doorway. The proposal includes a timber doorway to be separated to allow for the accesses and services.
- 6.12 This will result in a redundancy of the dropped kerb in front of the property. Highways officers have recommended the redundant access be re-instated as footpath. Notwithstanding this, the retention of the mostly cobbled access driveway, in tandem with the substantive retention of the arched vehicle access (although not a functional retention) would speak to the historical development of the area and retain an interesting feature in the footpath. As such, no condition is recommended to re-instate the footpath in this instance.
- 6.13 In conclusion the alterations and the scale and extent of proposed extensions to the existing terraced properties are, on balance, considered acceptable in regard to Policy CC7, CR2 and H11.

New Building to Rear of the Site

- 6.14 The proposed single storey detached building would be located at the rear of the site directly on the boundary with the rear gardens of the surrounding properties on Stanley Street to the South and Great Knollys Street to the North. The siting of this building is such that it would not be visible from the street-but would be readily visible from the rear of surrounding properties and their gardens.
- 6.15 Given the presence of the existing outbuilding on a much larger footprint its replacement with a smaller building is considered to be an improvement to the appearance of this part of the site as viewed from adjoining properties. The proposed replacement building is not materially greater in height/massing than the existing structure and would remove the clutter of structures in this part of the site. As such, the proposed building would not have a harmful impact on the outlook for neighbours to the rear and it would improve the appearance of the site for many as viewed from adjoining properties.

Amenity Space/Courtyard Area

- 6.16 Policy H10 seeks that residential proposals are served by appropriate levels of private or communal amenity space. The policy acknowledges that flats in central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor space as houses in other parts of the Borough.
- 6.17 The need to provide access to the building to the rear of the site through the George Street properties creates a limited opportunity for the arrangement of amenity space for the dwellings/flats to the front. The defensible planting to the ground floor windows facing the courtyard area of both buildings would result in a cohesive amenity space arrangement. Although the 2-bedroom flat as proposed would not be served by private amenity space it is considered, within the context of the application and comprehensive development of the site, that this shortfall would be acceptable in this instance.
- 6.18 By virtue of the separation of the two aspects of the development (the detached rear building, and the two terraced properties) it is important to note that the permission may be part-implemented initially (by way of demolition of the rear building and its replacement structure. Although the introduction of the rear dwellings would not be incompatible with the existing dwellings, the early provision of services and amenity space is important. It is proposed that a condition be attached to the permission, that requires the provision of all shared services (bins and bicycle storage, and the rear amenity space) and associated landscaping prior to first occupation of the development.

Impact on residential amenity

- 6.19 Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.
- 6.20 It is considered that the bulk and mass of the proposed extensions (3.7m at ground floor, and 2.8m at first floor) would not result in an overbearing structure when seen from adjoining properties and would not be harmful to their residential amenity.
- 6.21 The proposed detached building to the rear of the site would be located on

the boundary with neighbouring properties. It is acknowledged that this is an existing situation and as set out above the replacement building in this location would not be materially greater in height or bulk/massing than the existing building and as such would not result in any further overbearing impact or result in a loss of daylight/sunlight reaching adjoining properties.

- 6.22 The single storey dwellings to the rear would not result in overlooking to residential properties to Stanley Street or Great Knollys Street properties.
- 6.23 The proposed single storey building to the rear of the site would have the potential to be overlooked by adjoining first floor windows. In this instance, the proposed development would be particularly visible from first floor windows of no's 32, 30, 28, 20 and 18 Stanley Street. The windows would be located ~8.8m from the boundary of the proposed dwellings. As shown on the plan below, the window positions on adjoining buildings have been plotted against the window positions of the proposed dwellings. The view from the first floor window of no. 32 would be obscured by its own two storey rear extension and has been discounted. No's 28 and 30 would have direct but oblique views into the proposed dwellings dining/living rooms. The window positioning for the Southern dwelling has been amended to further minimise the potential for privacy impacts. The properties at no's 20 and 18 Stanley Street would have again, oblique views into the bedrooms of the proposed dwellings. It is therefore considered that due to the limited direct views into the proposed dwellings in the rear of the plot, that there would not be a sufficiently harmful level of overlooking to the proposed dwellings to warrant a reason for refusal in this regard.



Possible overlooking diagram

building to the rear. Some of the first floor rear windows of the Stanley Street properties are located as close as 6m to the boundary with the pre-application site. This would allow for clear and direct views to the amenity space and windows which is considered to result in unacceptable overlooking and levels of privacy, contrary to Policy DM4. This and the constrained nature of the site represents a very significant constraint to the proposed development and any additional detached building proposed to the rear of the site. Given these concerns and those outlined above regarding impact on the amenity of the Stanley Street properties themselves it is my opinion that a new residential building to rear of the site would be very unlikely to be considered acceptable.

- 6.29 The communal space proposed as part of the development would require management by the landowner as a management plan would be secured by condition.
- 6.30 A BS4142:2014 noise assessment of any mechanical plant proposed such as for ventilation purposes would need to be provided as part of an application to demonstrate that this would not result in any undue disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings (Policy CS34).
- 6.31 The proposed development would comply with policy CC8.

Transport matters

- 6.32 The development, as proposed, is for a car-free development. The area is predominantly terraced properties, with limited off-street parking. The site is located within close proximity to the town centre, high frequency bus routes, and the Reading Central Station. The provision of a car-free development in this location is considered wholly appropriate and is in-line with the aspirations of the Council's climate emergency declaration.

Landscaping/Ecology

- 6.33 The site is currently vacant of vegetation and has compacted and likely depleted of nutrients by virtue of the historic development. A condition will be attached to the proposed to ensure that a detailed landscaping scheme is provided, as well as a methodology for the improvement of the soil quality to sustain substantive landscaping. The management of the communal areas will be the subject of a management plan to be submitted at a future date which is to be managed by the landholder.
- 6.34 The existing roofing, including the flat roofed B8 structure is unlikely to be suitable for roosting bats. As such, the proposed development would not have a negative effect in terms of ecology. The landscaping condition mentioned above shall also include a number of ecological enhancements to be included on the new build, the scheme will detail:
- Biodiversity enhancements, including integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings;
 - Specifications for fencing demonstrating how hedgehogs and other wildlife will be able to continue to travel across the site (e.g. fences slightly raised above ground level);

Affordable Housing

- 6.35 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 4 additional dwellings units, would be liable for affordable housing. The minor extensions to the main dwelling will mean

that the conversions will not trigger an affordable housing contribution. However, the two dwellings to the rear will be affordable housing liable, and a financial contribution of £18,000, calculated using the formula set out in the SPD, is proposed. The figure has been confirmed by the Council's valuations team and has been agreed by the applicant.

Other Matters

CIL

- 6.36 The proposed development would result in the demolition of ~220m² and addition of ~120m². The B8 building to the rear is currently in use, and appears by the Council's records, to have been in use for at least 6-months of the last 3-years, as such the additional CIL charge would be wholly offset by the floor space to be demolished.

Sustainability

- 6.37 The proposed development would require two separate measures to address Policy CC1, and the Council's climate emergency declaration. The new build (to the rear) would be required to be built to the standards as outline in Policy H5 (water efficiency and energy reduction). Whereas the conversion would be required to meet the BREEAM standards as they relate to conversions, and conditions as outlined above are recommended in this regard.

Equalities Impact

- 6.38 When determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above.

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

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Figure 2 - Adjoining window position diagram (superseded plans)

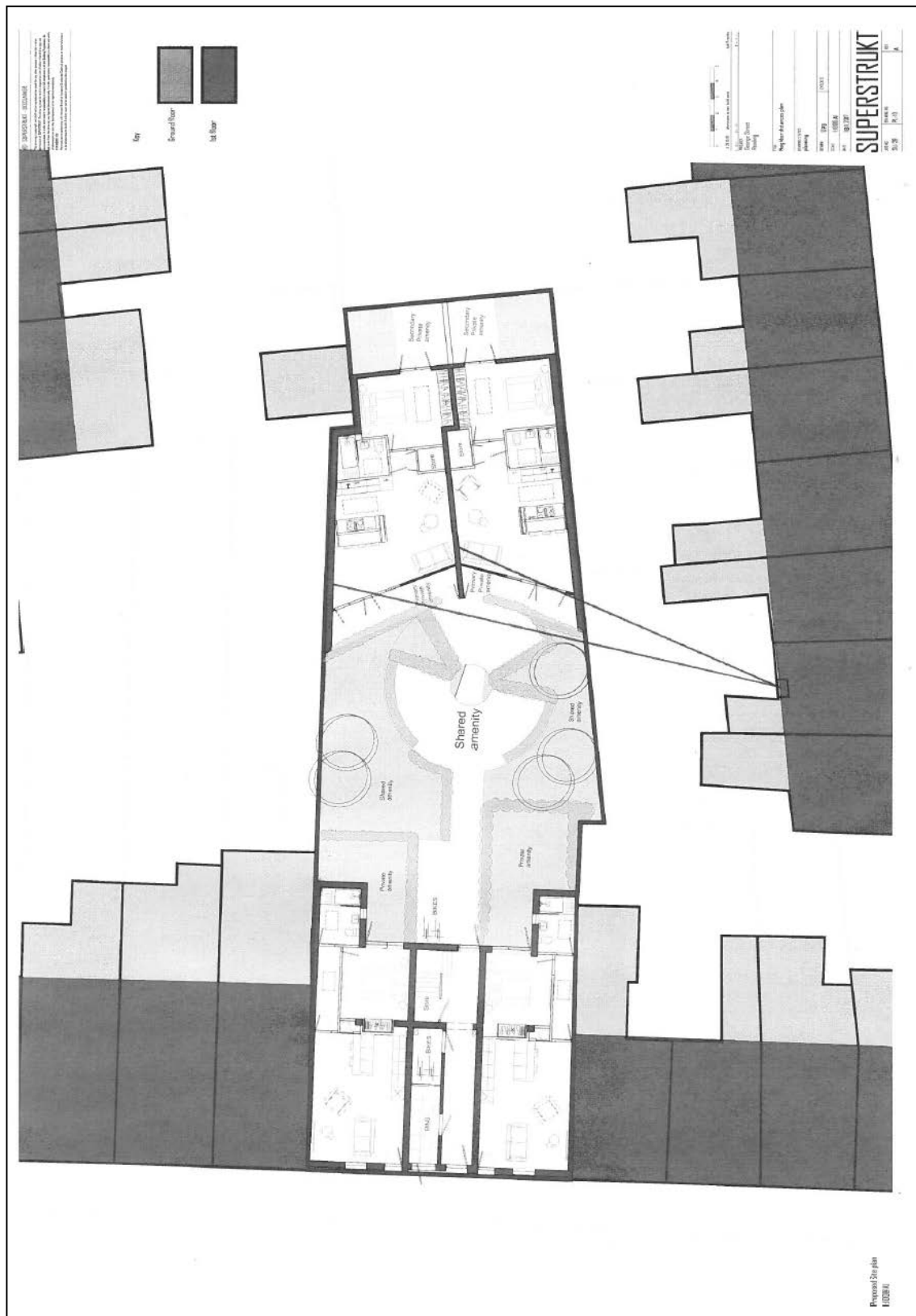


Figure 3 - Amended plan showing key window position regarding potential overlooking

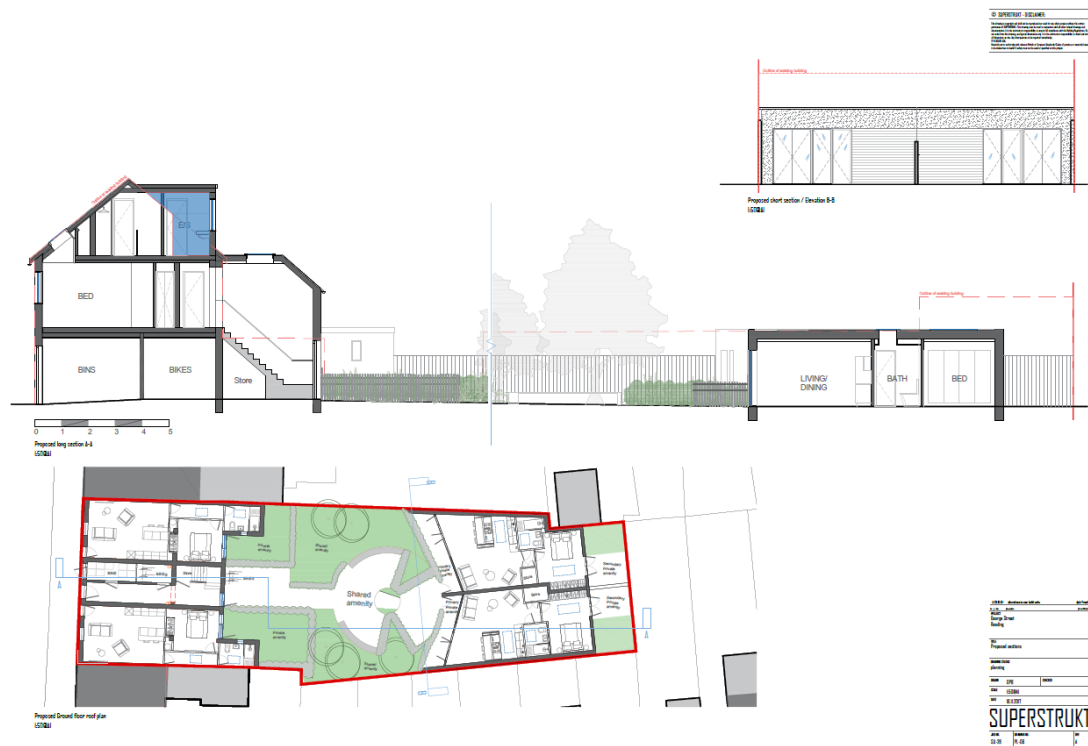


Figure 4 - Proposed Site Plan and GF plan (including sections)



Figure 5 - Proposed Roof Plans



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Figure 6 - Proposed Floor Plans



Figure 7 - Proposed Elevations