

Design and Access Statement

Goldsmith Mews,
Lower Higham Road,
Chalk, Gravesend,
DA12 2NB

Planning Application

Gravesham Borough Council

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Introduction

This application is for the construction of four new houses on a backland site in Chalk.

The scheme comprises of three number three bed four person terraced houses and one number two bed four person semi-detached house along with parking, amenity, refuse and cycle storage, and boundary treatments. The houses are two stories tall, plus a room in the roof. There are no listed buildings, conservation areas, or biodiversity issues.

The proposal responds to national, regional and local planning policy, local character, and planning precedent, in order to propose a high quality addition to the area. The proposals meet contemporary planning and building regulations standards, and will be high quality, sustainable and energy efficient.

We understand that Gravesham is committed to providing a choice of housing for people in the area. We believe this proposal is a small, but important, part of delivering more housing and better homes.

The design and access statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and supporting documents.

Design Team

OFFICE
S&M

Office S&M
Architects

The applicant is committed to building a high quality addition to the street, as such they have appointed us as architects. We have delivered several high-quality housing projects around the country, notably on small sites such as this one. Office S&M is an award winning architecture practice which delivers buildings that celebrate the colour, materiality, and narratives of the everyday use of these new spaces. The practice's work has been recognized by being named Young Architect of the Year by BD in 2020, a Rising Star by RIBA Journal in 2019, and part of the AJ 40 under 40 in 2021. The practice has been part of workshops with Croydon, Lewisham and Tower Hamlet Councils on infill development policy, and have given lectures to Urban Design London on densifying suburbia. Office S&M sit on the Design Council Expert Panel, the Hackney Design Review Panel, the Essex Quality Review Panel and the Newham Design Review Panel. As such, our work is of demonstrably high quality in the field of residential and infill design.

The design team is supported with a team of specialist consultants. All consultants have a wealth of experience in work at this scale, and are committed to the highest quality scheme in order to satisfy policy.



Winner Young Architect of the Year Award 2020



Winner AJ 40 Under 40 2020



Winner RIBA Rising Stars 2019



Winner NLA Don't Move, Improve! 2018



AJ Small Project Award Finalist 2018



Member of the Design Council Expert Panel



Member of the Hackney Design Review Panel



Member of the Essex Quality Review Panel



Member of the Newham Design Review Panel



Maddox Planning Consultants



Paul Mew Associates Transport Consultants



T16 Design Daylight Sunlight



Herrington Flood Risk Consultants



Maude Pinet Landscape Architect



Wessex Archaeology Archaeology Consultants



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Technical housing standards – nationally
described space standard

March 2015
Department for Communities and Local Government

Policy Review : National Policy

At the national level any application would be considered under the National Planning Policy Framework (Updated 20 July 2021). The NPPF sets out, in paragraph 11, “a presumption in favour of sustainable development”, which means “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”. At the same time, it includes several paragraphs which encourage the use of small sites for the delivery of housing - which are specific to this application and detailed later in this document in section 2.0.

Key policies considered are :

- Paragraph 11
- Paragraph 38
- Paragraph 60
- Paragraph 61
- Paragraph 62
- Paragraph 69
- Paragraph 119
- Paragraph 120
- Paragraph 125
- Paragraph 130
- Paragraph 134

In addition the Technical Housing Standards (2015) are relevant to this application and an audit of these is provided later in this document in section 3.16.



Policy Review : Regional Policy

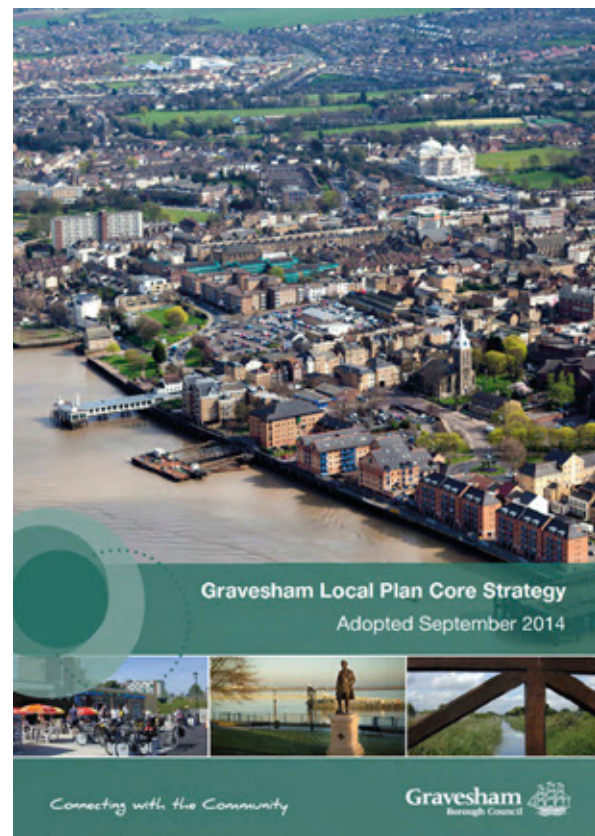
At the regional level, the Kent Design Guide is Relevant, apart from those items superseded by Gravesham's own policy. The policies that are relevant and have been adhered to in the development of this design are as follows:

Key Policies are :

- transport (policies 1.6, 2.3, 2.3.1 and 2.12),
- Design (policies 1.3, 1.5, 2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 2.2.13, 2.4 and 2.4.2), flooding (policy 2.11), and sustainability (policies 1.4, 2.2.7, 2.2.8, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5 and 2.4.6).
- Policy TC7: Other Archaeological sites
- Policy T1: Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- Policy TC2: Primary and District Road Network
- Policy T5: New Accesses onto Highway Network
- Policy P3: Vehicle Parking Standards
- Policy LT6: Additional Open Space in New Housing Development

Key Documents are :

- Kent Design Guide (SPG 5 published December 2005, adopted July 2006);
- Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG 4 published in 2003 and adopted in 2006);
- Vehicle Accesses on Classified Highways (SPG6 November 1992);
- GBC Residential Layout Guidelines, SPG2, February 1996; updated June 2020;
- Housing Standards Policy Statement, 1st October, 2015;
- Technical Housing Standards: Nationally Described Space Standards;



Policy Review : Local Policy

At the Local level, there are a number of housing specific policies that have informed the development. In the first instance, the Gravesham Local Plan has been addressed in terms of the principal of development. For the more detailed aspects of the proposal the SPG2 and SPG4 documents have been referred to. An explanation of how the proposal meets the SPG2 requirements is set out later in this document. A report on how the proposal meets SPG4 requirements is set out in the separate transport note.

Key policies are :

- Core Strategy Policy CS01: Sustainable Development
- Core Strategy Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development
- Core Strategy Policy CS11: Transport
- Core Strategy Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure
- Core Strategy Policy CS14: Housing Type and Size
- Core Strategy Policy CS15: Housing Density
- Core Strategy Policy CS18: Climate Change
- Core Strategy Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles
- Core Strategy Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment

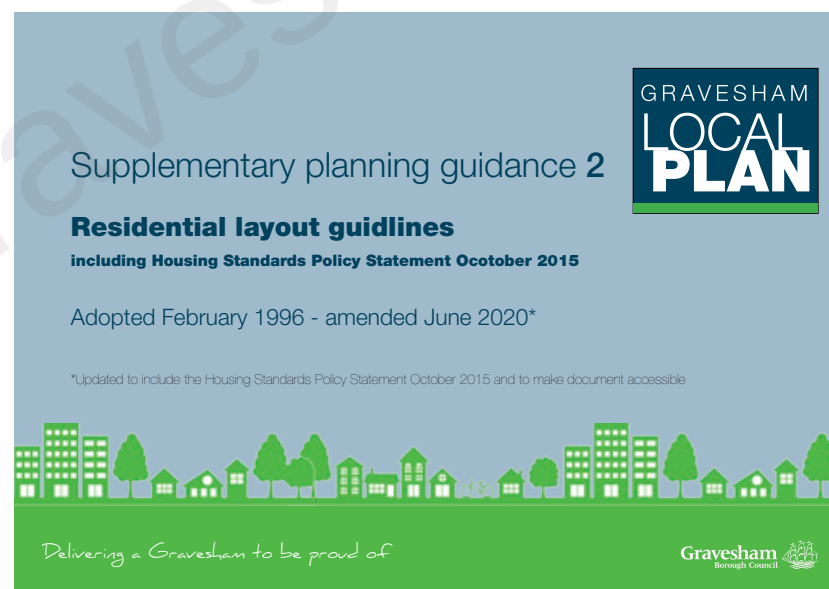
Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006
Mapping out the future

Supplementary Planning
Guidance SPG 4

Kent Vehicle Parking Standards
July 2006



Strategy and Planning Division
Environment and Regeneration Directorate
Kent County Council
Tel: 01622 221609
Email: planning.policy@kent.gov.uk



Gravesham Borough Council

Site



Gravesham Map



Site Photo

The site is located in Chalk, a former civil parish which adjoins to the South-East of Gravesend. It is located between Lower Higham Road and Osney Way, accessed by an existing drive from Lower Higham Road and a second drive from Osney Way and is occupied by semi-derelict garages and vacant land.

The site has good transport links, being only 2.5km from High-speed Railway links which connects Gravesend to Central London in 26 minutes. There is also the 190 Bus Route for local transport, which stops near the drive of the site, in both directions, at the "Post Office" stop which connects Gravesend to Chatham. The site is also located only 5.5km from International Train Departures from Ebbsfleet International, connecting to Brussels, Paris and many other European Cities.

Local amenities are excellent, Chalk Surgery GP and Chalk Parish Hall are adjacent to the site. A 10 minutes walk takes you to North Kent College, Westcourt Primary School, religious buildings and shops.

As such, the site is in a sustainable location for development. This was confirmed in the consent for 20201379 where the officer noted "The site is within a highly sustainable location and on a direct bus route and the site is close to existing bus stops and within easy walking distance of local shops although the location of local primary and secondary schools are a little more distant."

Site Location

The site currently comprises 14 lock-up garages on a backland site accessed from Lower Higham Road. It also incorporates a strip of grassland that was formerly part of the plot of The Brambles, Osney Way which is accessible from the alley running behind Osney Way.

The garages are not used by local residents and the leases have been brought to an end. The site has been the location for dumping, criminal damage, and other potential crimes – as can be seen on the Kent Police hotspot map.

Located next Chalk Parish Hall, the applicant proposes a scheme which will see the site cleaned up avoiding the danger of it falling into a derelict state, and providing new housing for the area. This has been supported by local residents as well as by a consented scheme for the site.

Site Area : 615 m²

Existing building area : 250m²



Site Location Plan



Site Location - Dumped Car, Graffiti & Weeds



Kent Police Hotspots Map

Site Aerial Views



View from South East



View from North East



View from North West



View from South West

Site Photographs : looking into the site

The site is currently occupied by 14 derelict garages on a site with a significant change in levels. The garages are in a state of disrepair, and do not justify occupying such a large infill site. The development offers an opportunity to provide quality accommodation on the site.



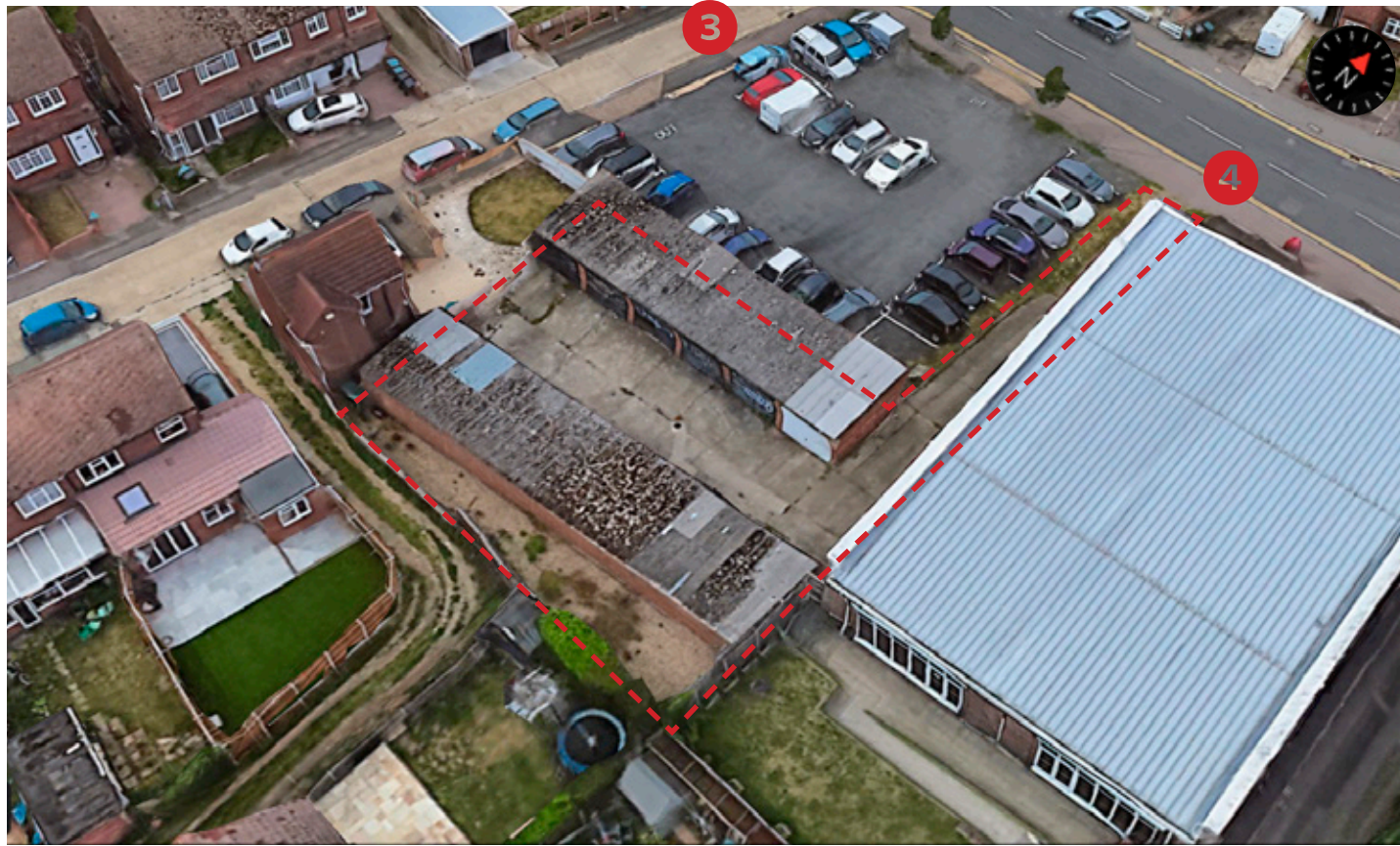
Aerial view of the site



View from garages access looking North towards the site



View from the Parish Hall Garden looking West towards the site



Aerial view of the site

Site Photographs : looking into the site

The site has been thoroughly surveyed with a topographic survey. There is a significant change in level between Lower Higham Street and the houses on Osney Way, equating to 2 metres between Lower Higham Street Road and the site.

Access to the site is between Chalk Parish Hall and the Council Car Park as seen in image 4



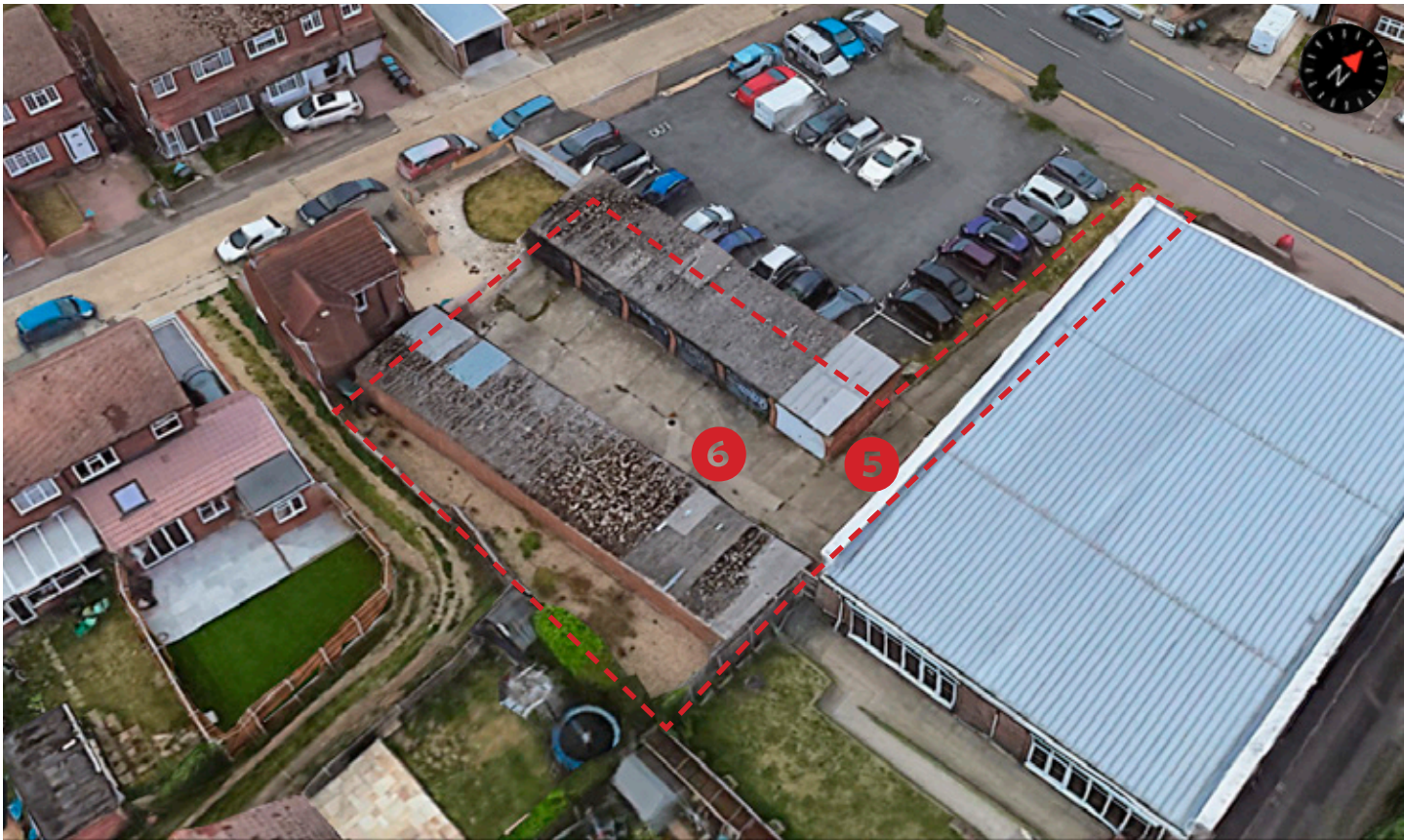
View from Osney Way, looking to the back of the garages



View from Lower Higham Road, viewing the driveway to the garages

Site Photographs : looking out of the site

The wide ramped access to the front of the site gives ample access to the garages, while the site benefits from limited overshadowing.



Aerial view of the site



View looking down the access road, along the side of the Parish Hall



View looking towards Osney Way and the side of The Brambles

Site Photographs : looking out of the site

Due to the level changes and the enclosed nature of the site, there is very little overlooking from neighbouring houses. At the same time, there are long views which any proposal could make use of in order to afford good quality amenity space.



Aerial view of the site



View looking back toward the parish hall



View looking towards the houses on Pirrip Close

Site Neighbours

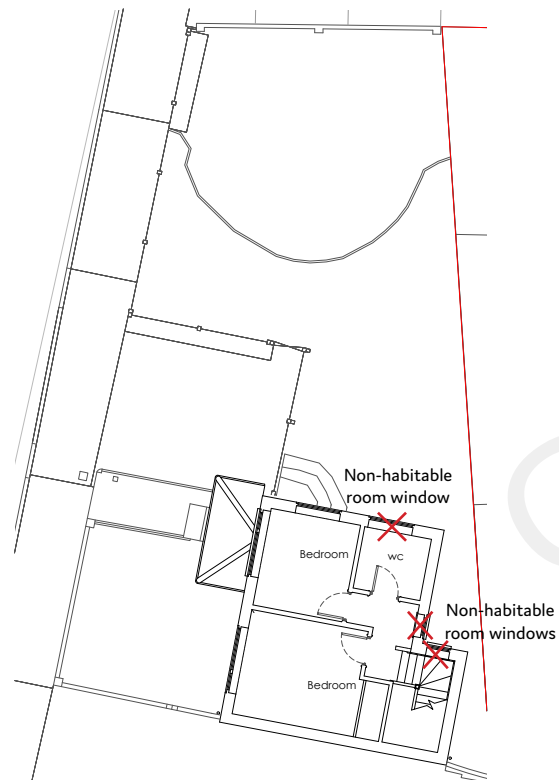
The site is neighboured by The Brambles, and this property has been carefully considered in the proposals.

The windows on the East side of the Brambles are predominantly to non-habitable rooms including the staircase and bathroom.

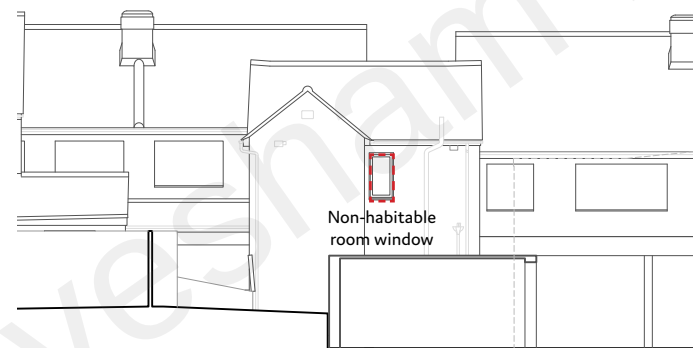
The next nearest properties are the Parish Hall, which has been carefully considered in the proposals, and 1 Osney Way, which again features predominantly non-habitable rooms on the side facing the proposal.



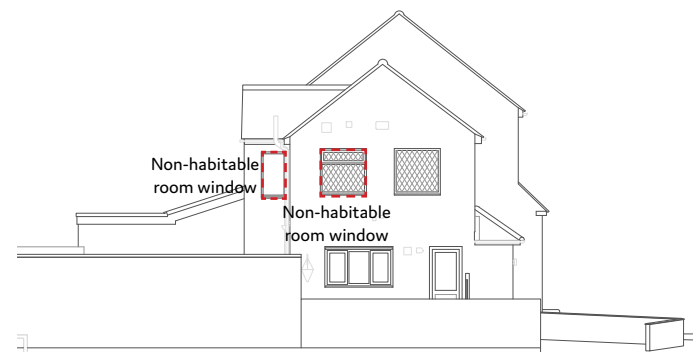
Existing Ground Floor Plan



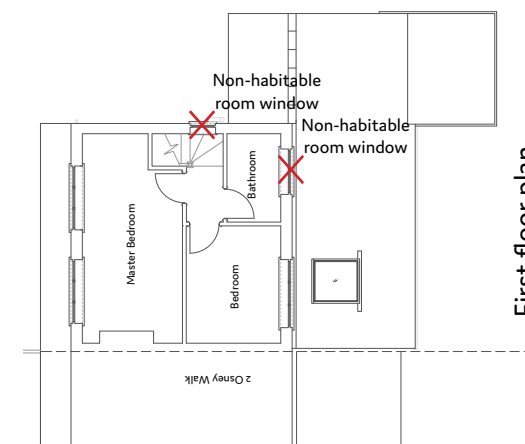
The Brambles First Floor Plan



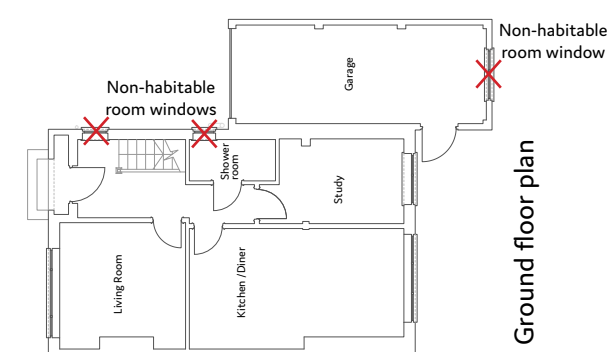
The Brambles East Elevation



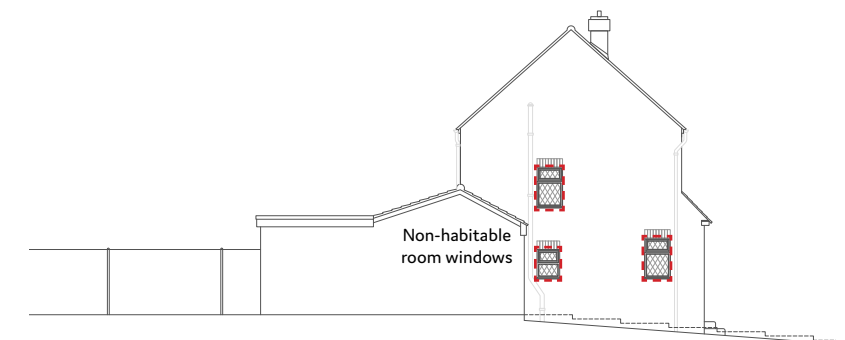
The Brambles North Elevation



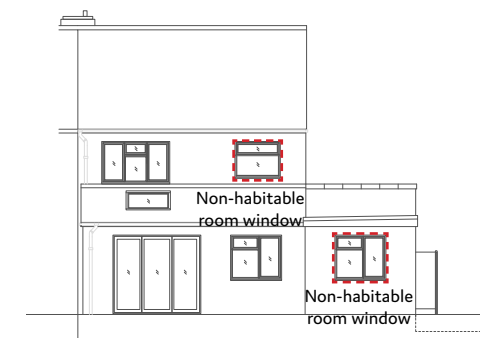
One Osney Way Plans



One Osney Way Elevations



Side Elevation



Rear elevation

Site Condition



Site photo of disused garages

The site is occupied by 14 garages. Following the consent of the previous scheme for this site, the tenancies of the garages have been brought to an end, and they are in the process of being demolished.

This was deemed to be appropriate because one garage is damaged beyond use and another blocked off by an abandoned car. Of the 14 garages, only 7 were rented. Of the seven tenants, none used the garages parking and all were used as “lock-up” storage. In addition all but one tenant were located a considerable distance from the site, with the furthest in London and Canterbury.

As such, the removal of these garages did not result in loss of parking to local residents, since the garages are neither used for parking or by local residents.

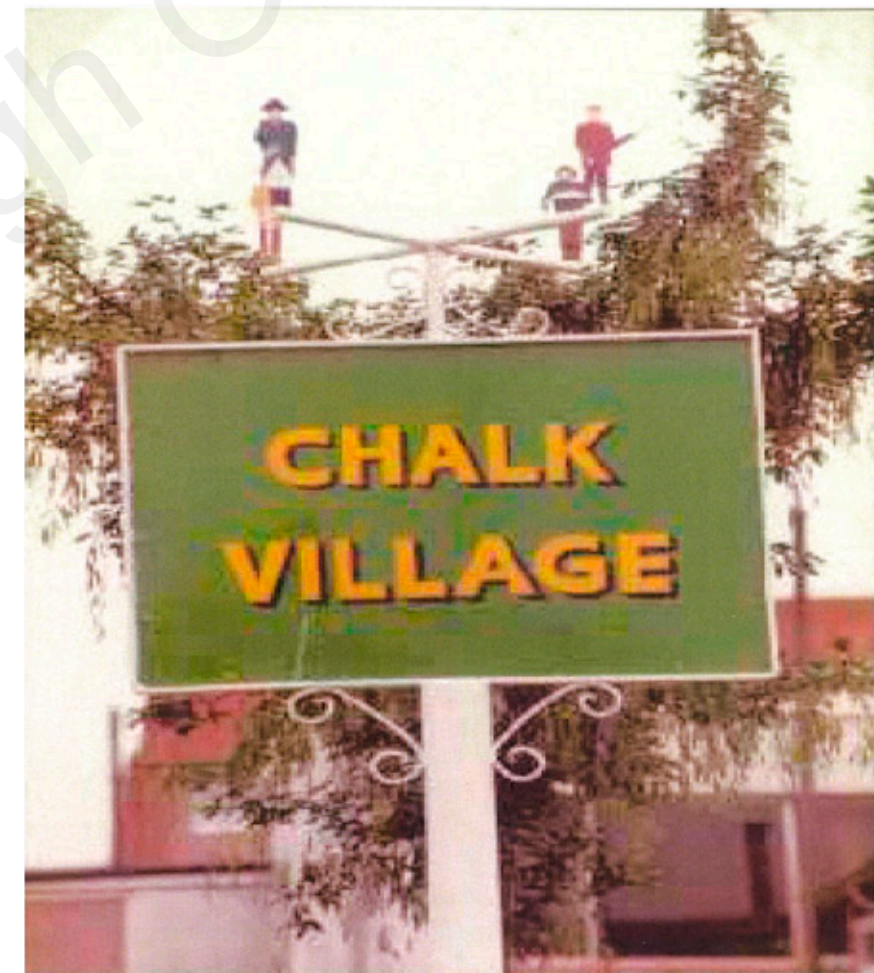
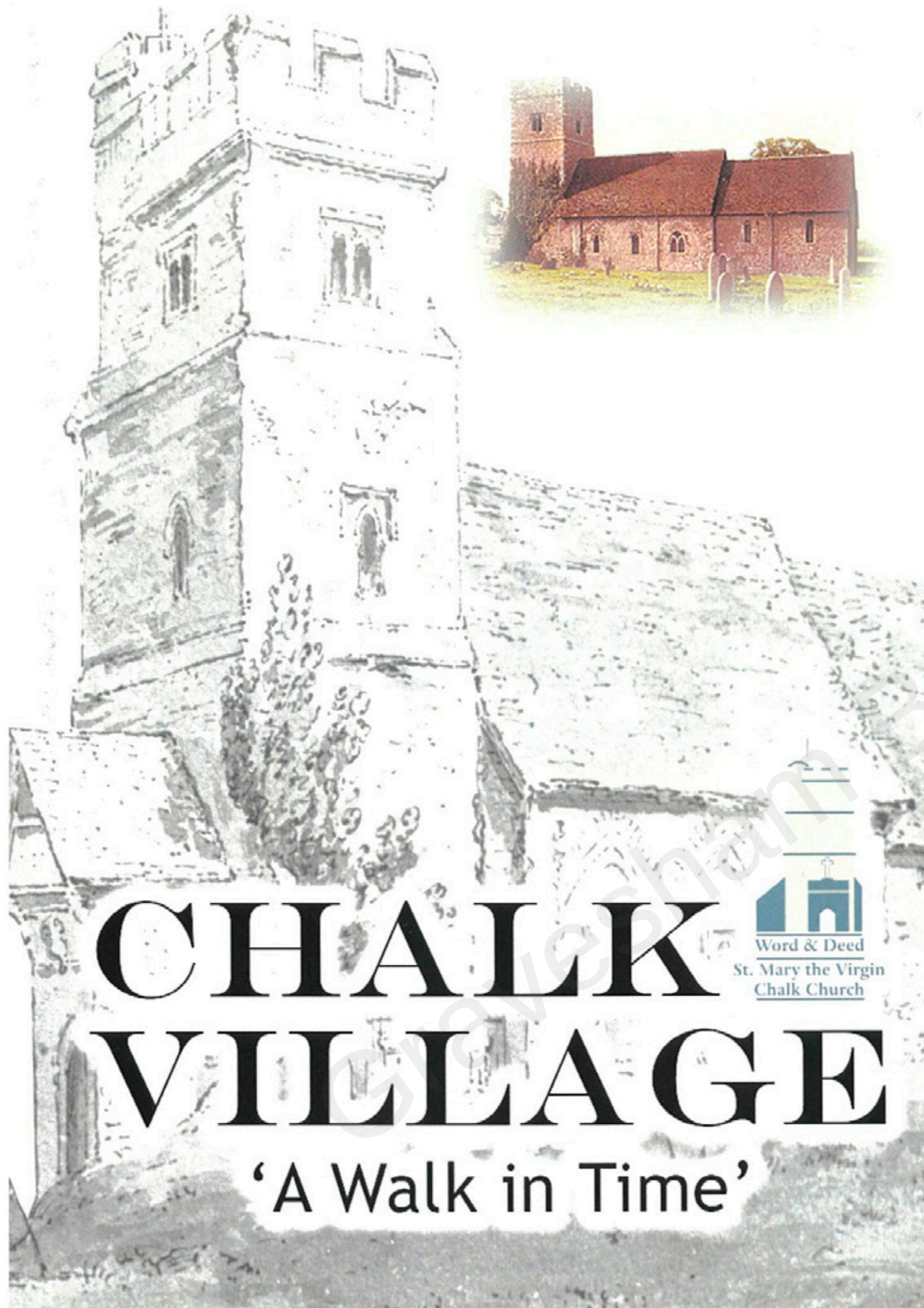
As can be seen on the adjacent diagram, a desk based contamination study has found no reason for the site to be considered contaminated. It was concluded in the report that *“Groundsure has not identified a potential contaminant-pathway-receptor relationship that may give rise to significant environmental liability.”*



Contamination report by Groundsure

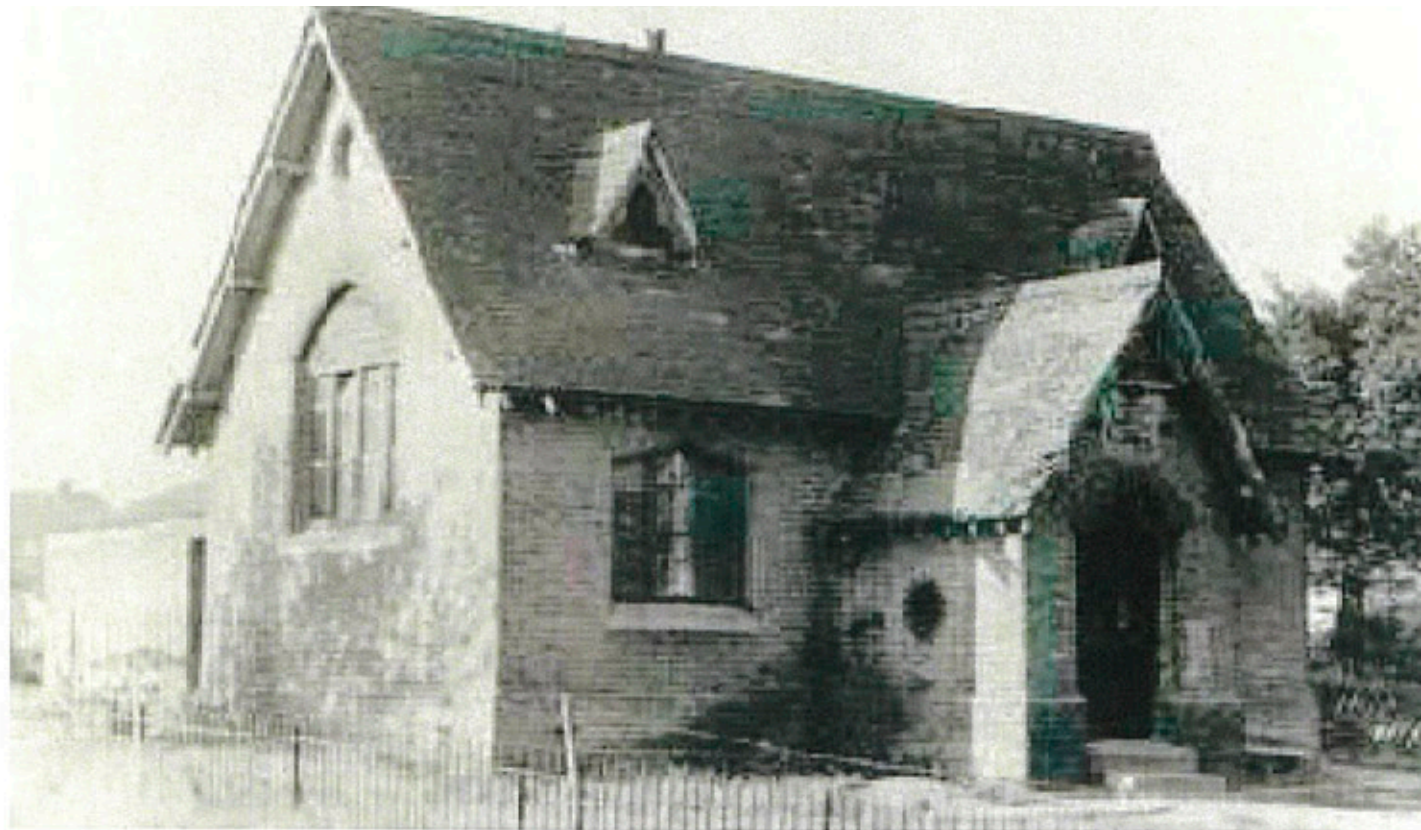
Site History

The site is located within the former Civil Parish of Chalk. The village has a long and eventful history, for example Charles Dickens regularly visited on holidays and his honeymoon. He wrote sections of his most famous novels here, and picked out people and buildings from the area to be included in these stories - most notably in Great Expectations. Although many historic buildings no longer exist, we are keen to echo them within the design and for the proposal to not only understand its geographical context, but also its historical context.

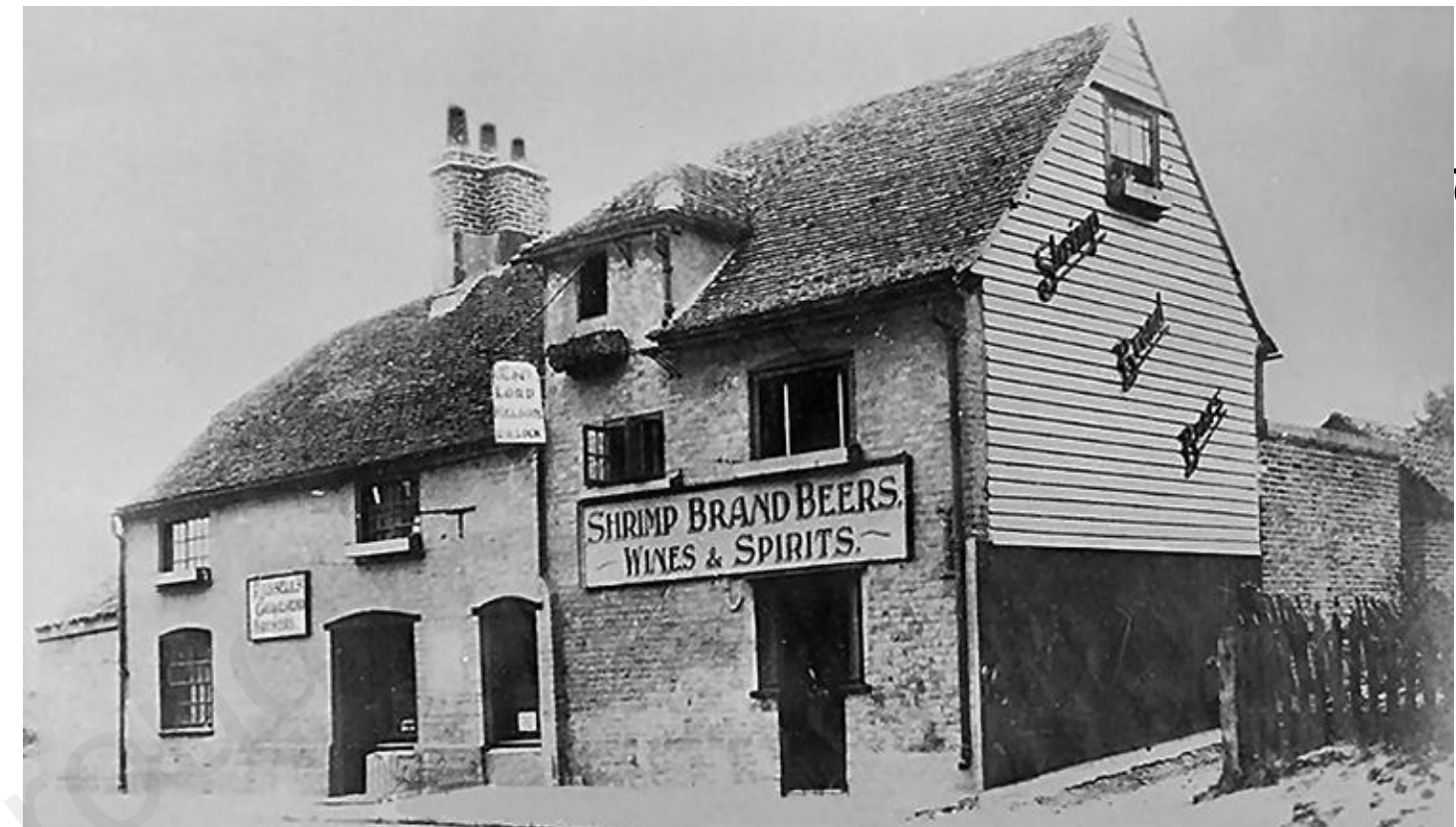


10) Chalk Village Sign, Parish Hall in 1980
The characters at the top from left to right:
Frederick the Great, King of Prussia; Louis Grewcock,
known as Peg Leg Leader; Aelfega (Saxon landowner);
William de Chalk, medieval resident.

This Chalk village sign was paid for by house collections in Chalk in 1979 and has four historical figures from Chalk's past. Aelfega, a Saxon noble mentions Chalk in a will of 970 AD. William de Chalk is recorded in 1325 as owing a vast debt to a fishmonger - the figure has a large fish which it holds in its arms. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia 1740 - 1786, was commemorated in the public house name (later becoming The Lord Nelson) in 1777. Prussia was an ally of Britain against the French. Peg Leg Reader is the nickname of Louis Grewcock who lived at Reader's Cottage where he ran a small holding and a sweet shop-café until the 1950s.



Former Chalk Parish Hall, 1866-2004. The Parish Hall was formerly the Local School as can be seen on historical maps



The Lord Nelson, 1800-1950s, occupying the site of the current council car park. Chalk had three main Public Houses situated to take advantage of the London to Dover road which passed through the Parish.

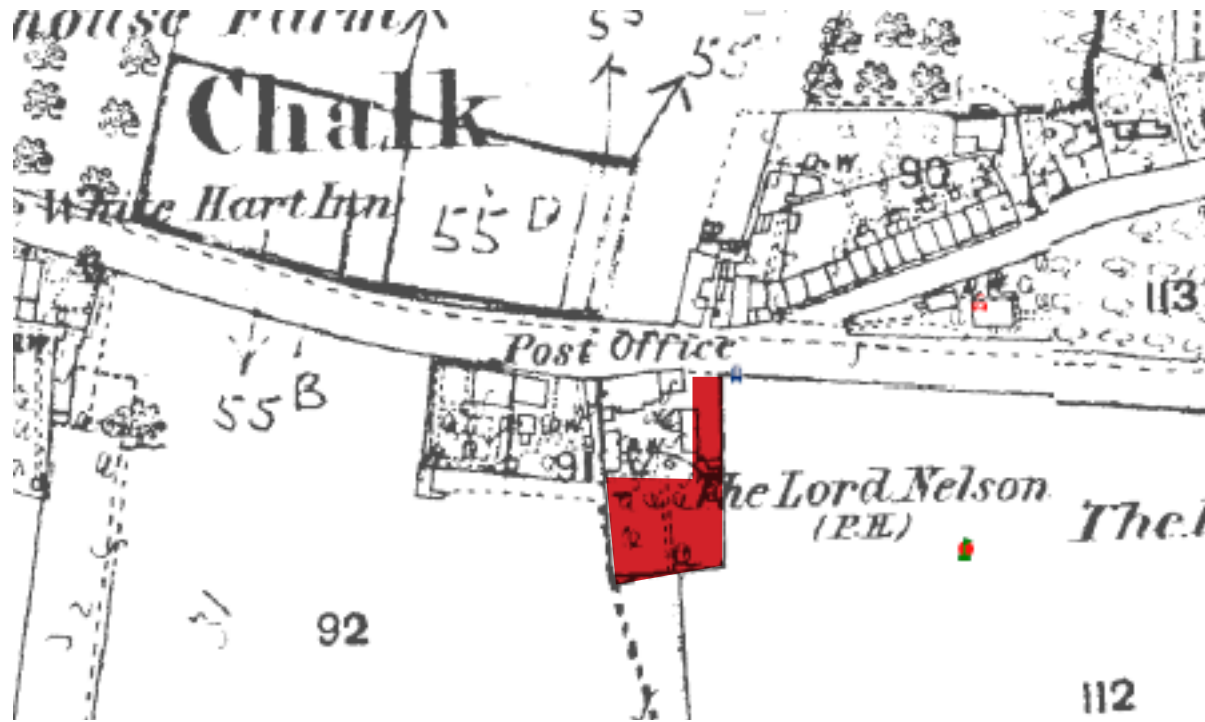


Current Chalk Parish Hall, 2005-Present

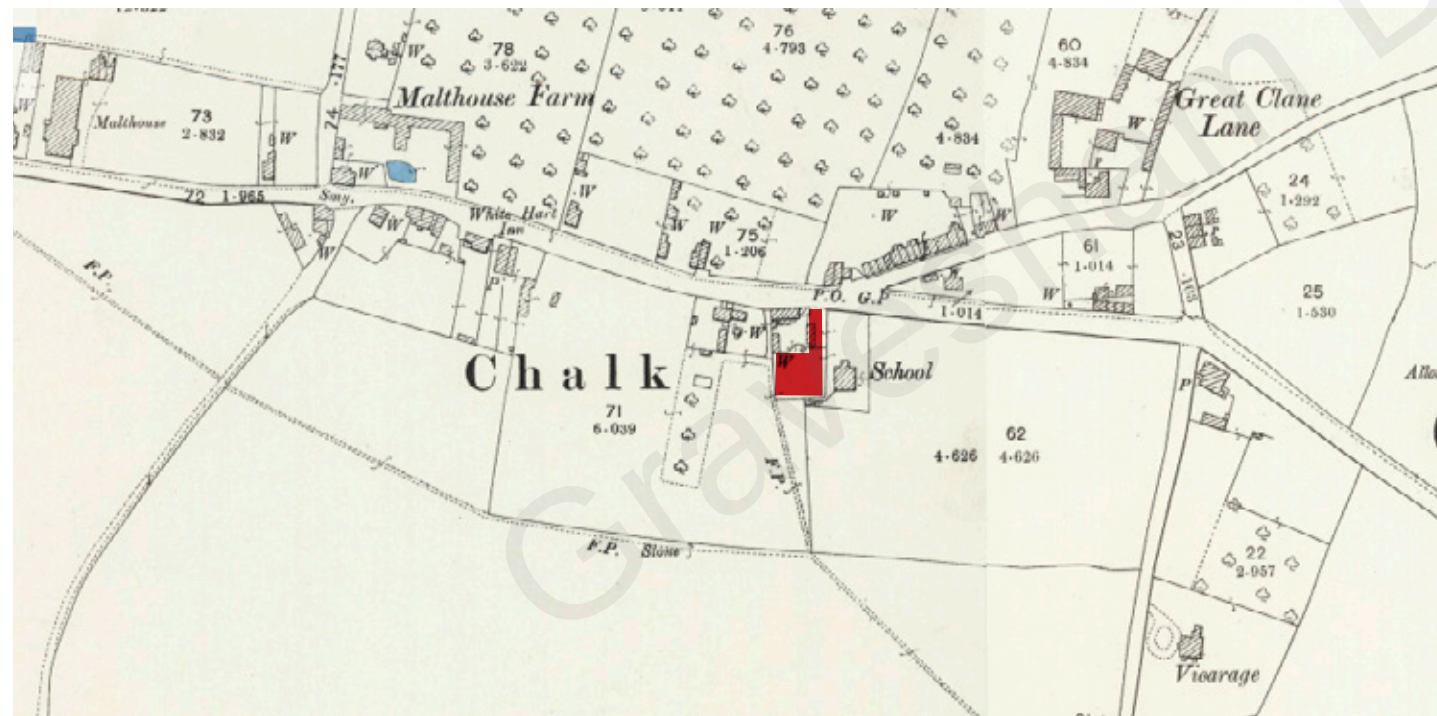


Council Car Park

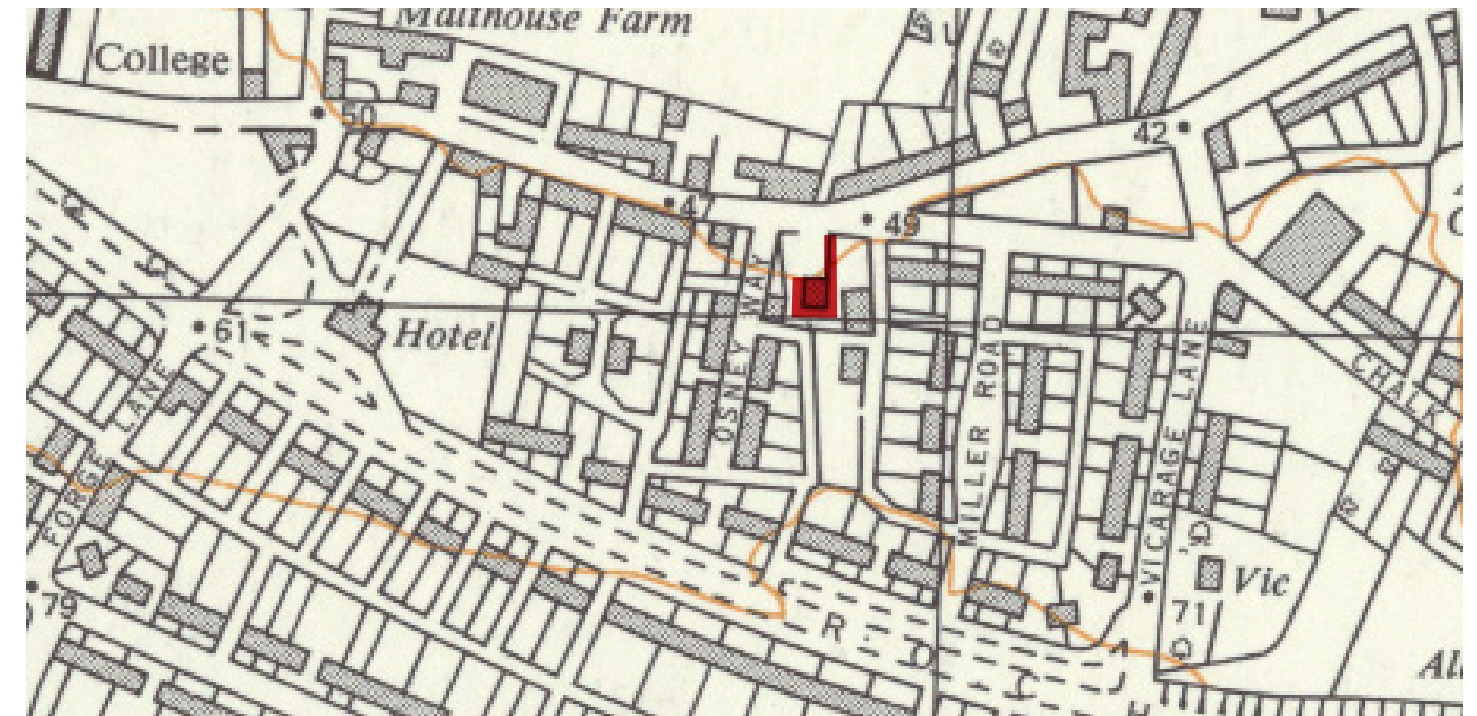
Site History



Map from 1864-1882 Ordnance Survey Map



Map from 1892-1914
Note the location of the Lord Nelson Pub



Map from 1949-1969
The surrounding area has morphed into a much more recognisable representation of the current village of Chalk

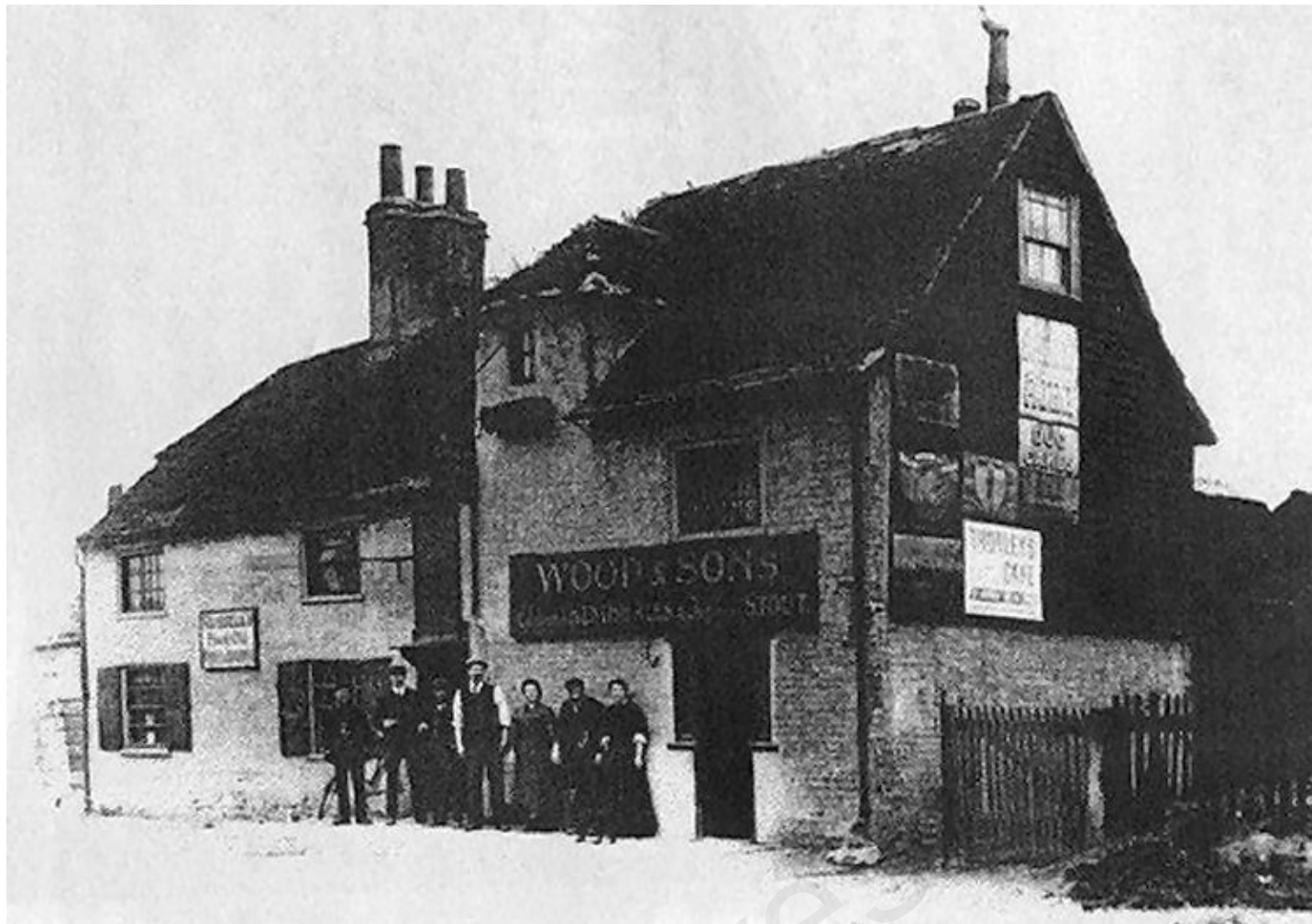
As can be seen from the below maps, the site has always existed as a discrete parcel of land. Originally, this was due to it being the stables for the Lord Nelson pub which was on the site of the council car park.

The pub was closed in 1923, and it was eventually demolished in 1950. However, the garage site retained a building of some sort - as can be seen in the 1949-1969 map - although its use is unclear. Finally, this building was presumably demolished, and the garages constructed in its place.

Site Name

As shown throughout this document the project respects the rich history of the site and uses this as a key design tool. This point is further signified in the project name "Goldsmith Mews". The proposal is named in honour of the first landlord of The Lord Nelson, called Sarah Goldsmith.

"A record from 1809 makes reference to the Lord Nelson Public House belonging to the Goldsmith family so it is possible that it had existed in the 18th century. The 1842 tithe map of the parish of Chalk shows the pub adjacent to the Site, with the Site occupying its garden. The entry into the tithe apportionment states that the land was owned still owned by the Goldsmith's and occupied by Sarah Goldsmith. The landholding comprised the public house, yard buildings and garden. By 1848 Sarah Goldsmith retired and sold the pub to John Newing."



Lord Nelson Public House

Licencees of the Lord Nelson

1808 to 1848 : Sarah GOLDSMITH (age 60 in 1841 Census)

1848 to 1851 : John NEWMAN (age 46 in 1851 Census)

1851 to 1857/58 : Sarah HONEY

1858 to 1861 William OSENTON (age 45 in 1861 Census)

1862 to 1874 : Thomas WHITE (age 57 in 1871 Census)

1874 to 1882 : Edward WILKINSON (age 33 in 1881 Census)

1882 to 1891 : James STONE (age 36 in 1891 Census)

1891 to 1903 : John James POVEY

1903 to 1913 : Thomas George BARDOE

1913 to 1922 : Ernest H LOCK

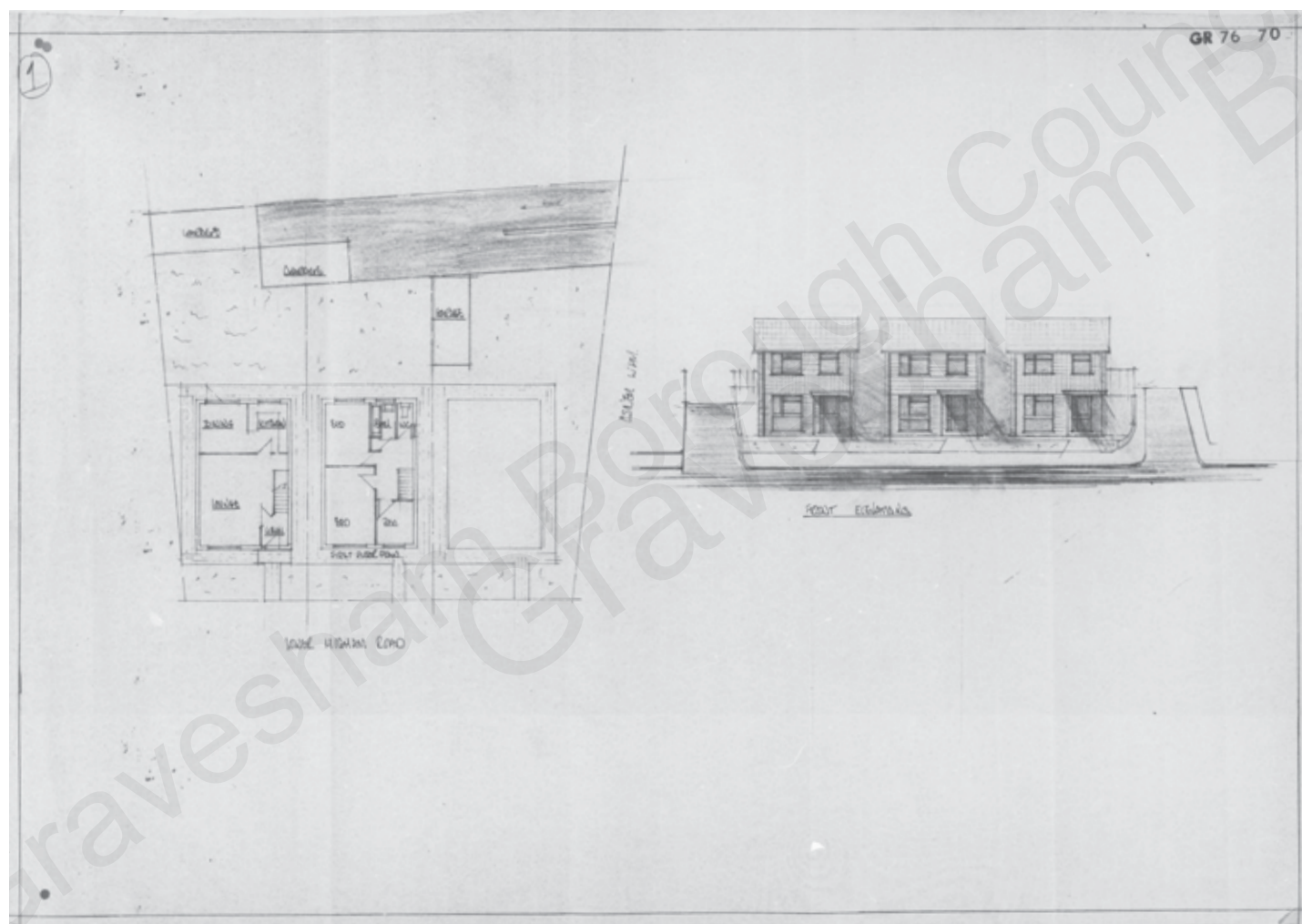
Planning History

The current council car park site was previously the subject of a planning application in 1976 under the reference 19760070. The application was for the construction of two three storey houses which were consented. This scale of development is therefore regarded as being appropriate for the area.

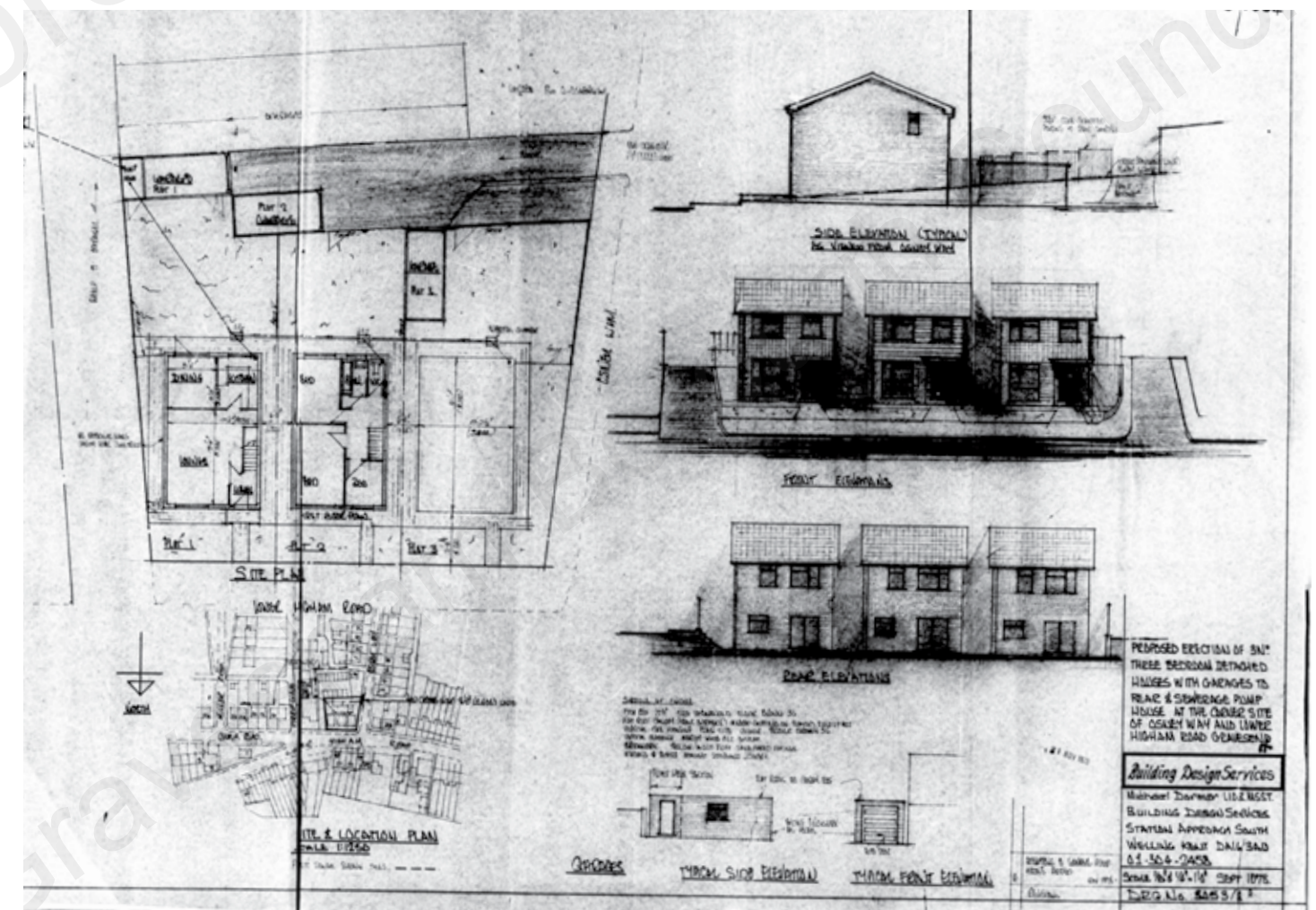
Despite this application having lapsed long ago, its principle shows that new residential development in the area could be acceptable. At the same time, we understand that the potential of this development is tied into the legal agreement for the re-development of the Parish Hall in 2005, and the use of the adjacent car park. As such, our proposals take the permission as a key piece of context, and the proposals ensure that they do not prejudice development on the car park site. This approach was agreed as positive by Design South East in the pre- application.



Site Plan



Consented proposal for two houses



Consented proposal for two houses

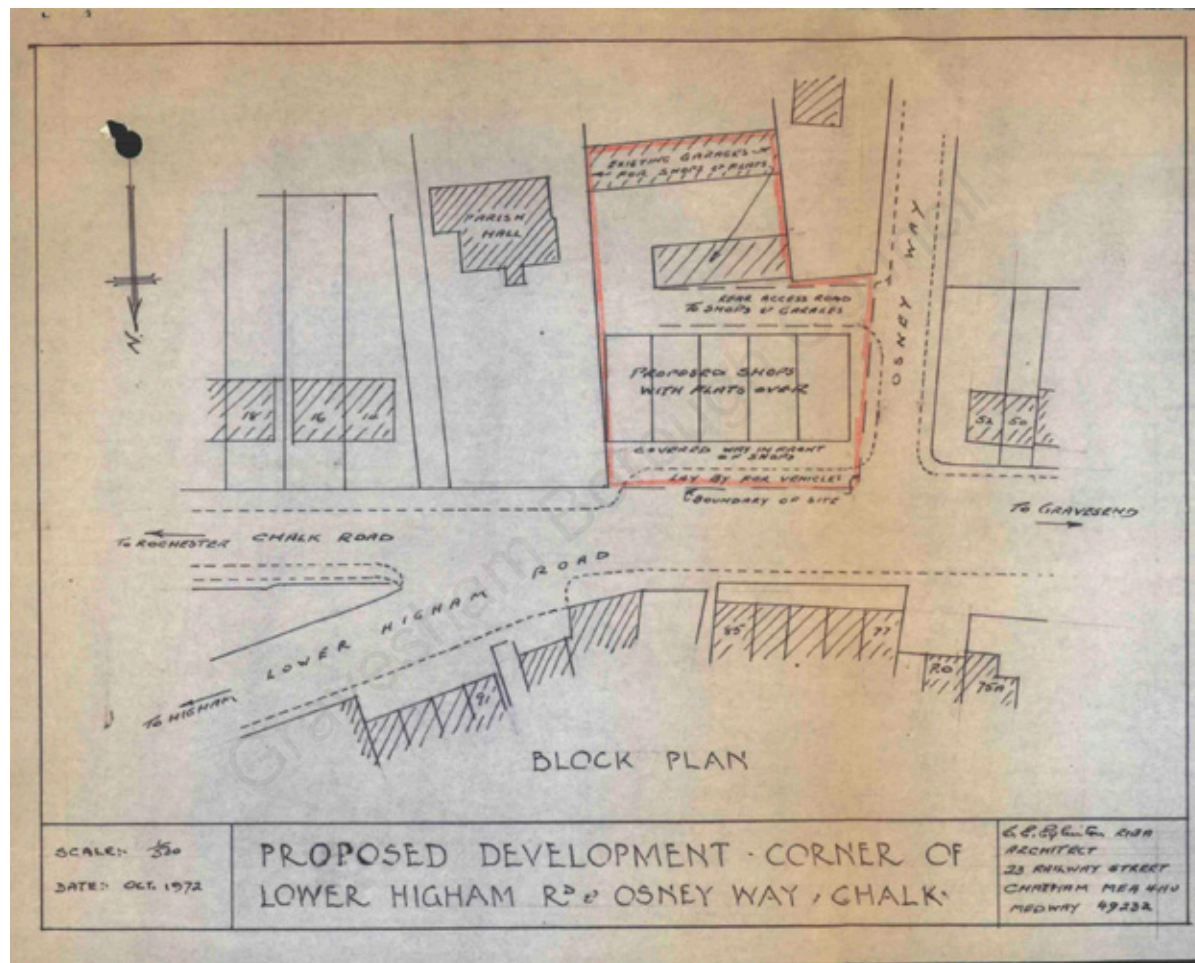
Planning History

The consented 1976 scheme followed a number of rejected schemes that looked to more substantially develop the site.

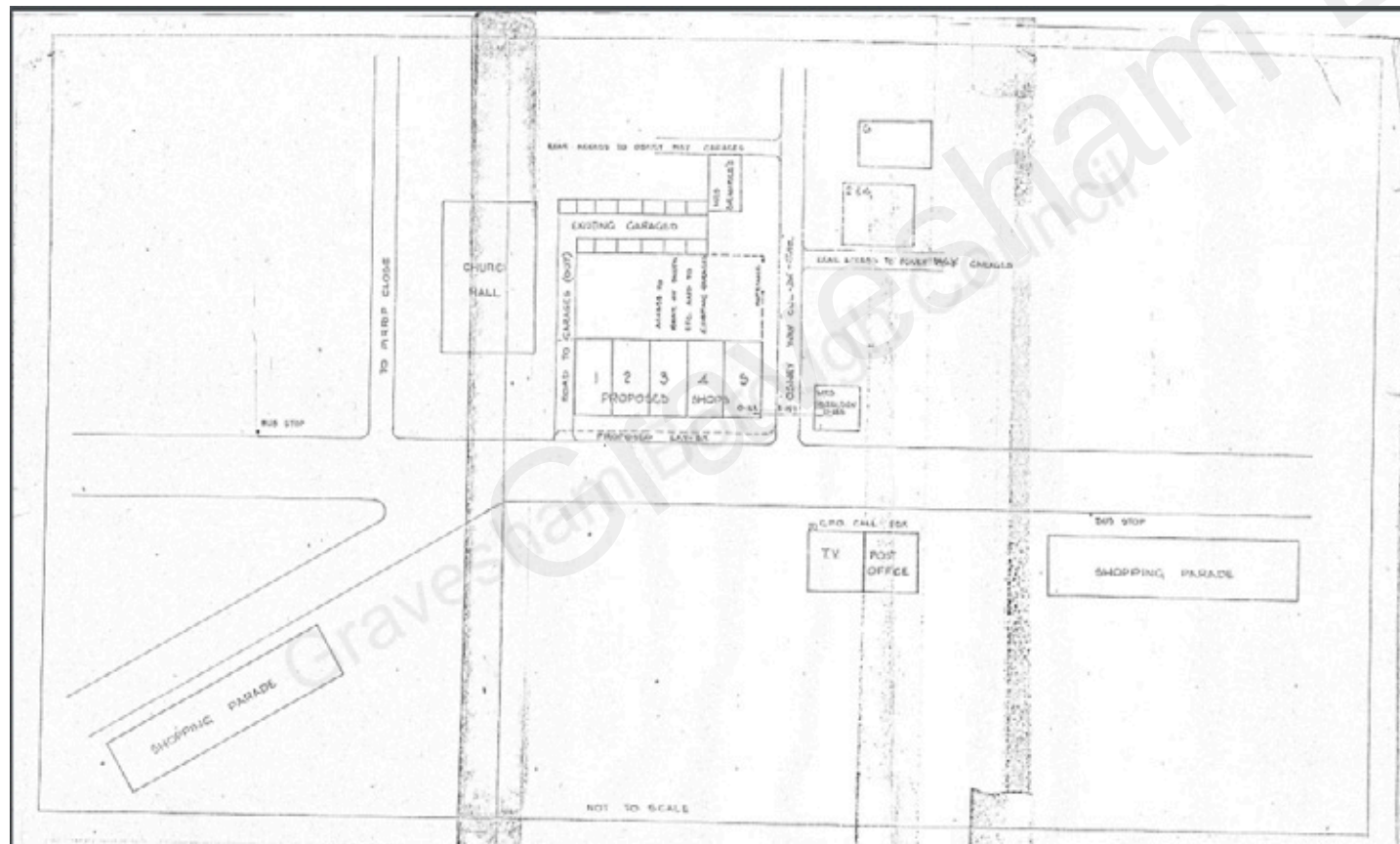
TH/2/72/310: "Permission Refused - 21 December 1972 - Proposed development of Lower Higham Rd, Osney Way, Chalk. The erection of a three storey block of 5 shops with 10 flats over".

Our proposals are less dense than these schemes. As such, we understand that we must propose a reasonable density, and that based on other planning precedents from this site, the principle of redevelopment to provide additional housing should be acceptable.

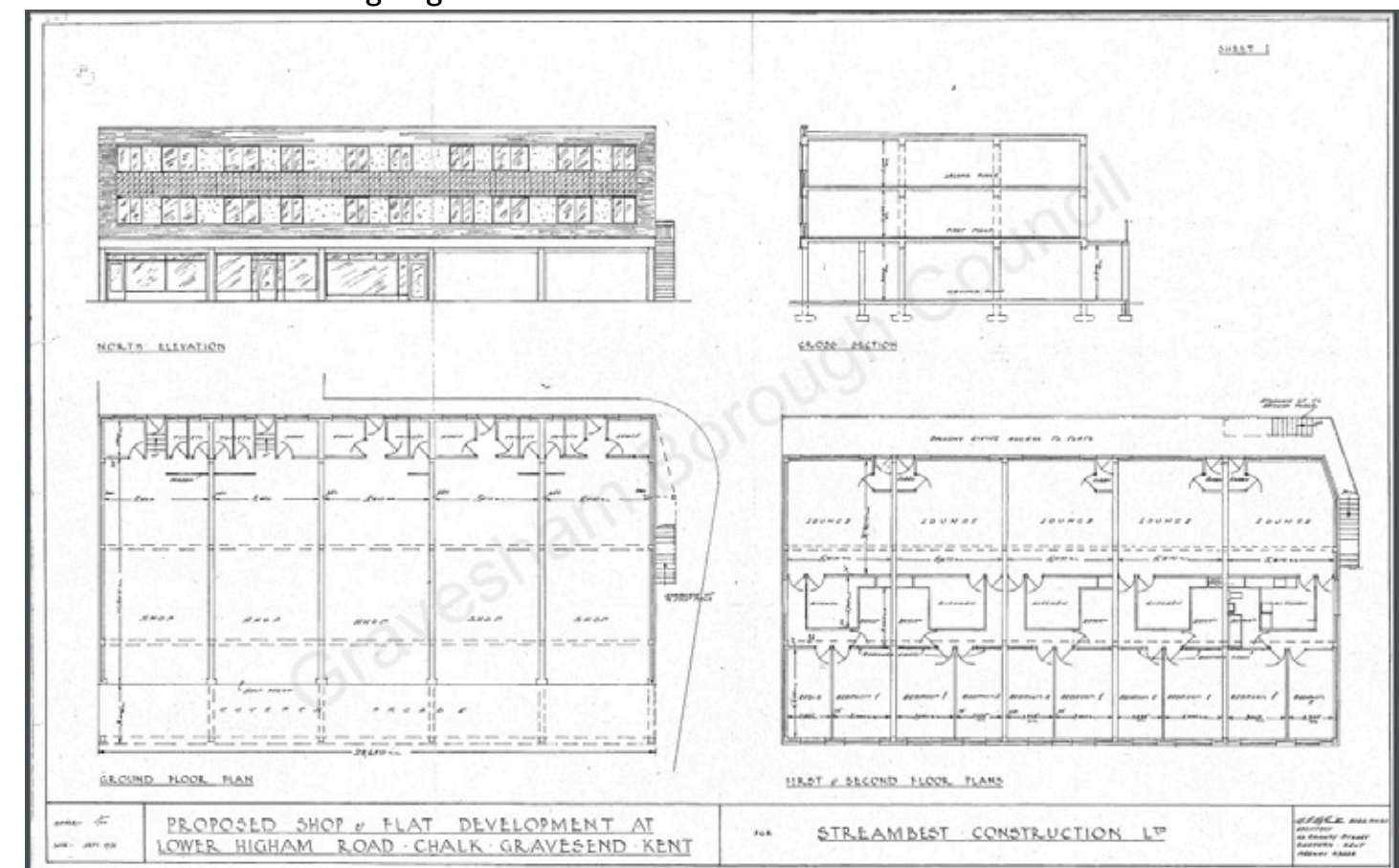
It is also worth noting that the NPPF has significantly changed since the refused application was made in 1997, particularly in terms of supporting development on small sites. Secondly, local policies have also changed in the intervening 24 years, for example the Design Advice leaflet 1 being published in 1998 and the Local Plan currently undergoing review.



Refused Shop and flat development Block Plan



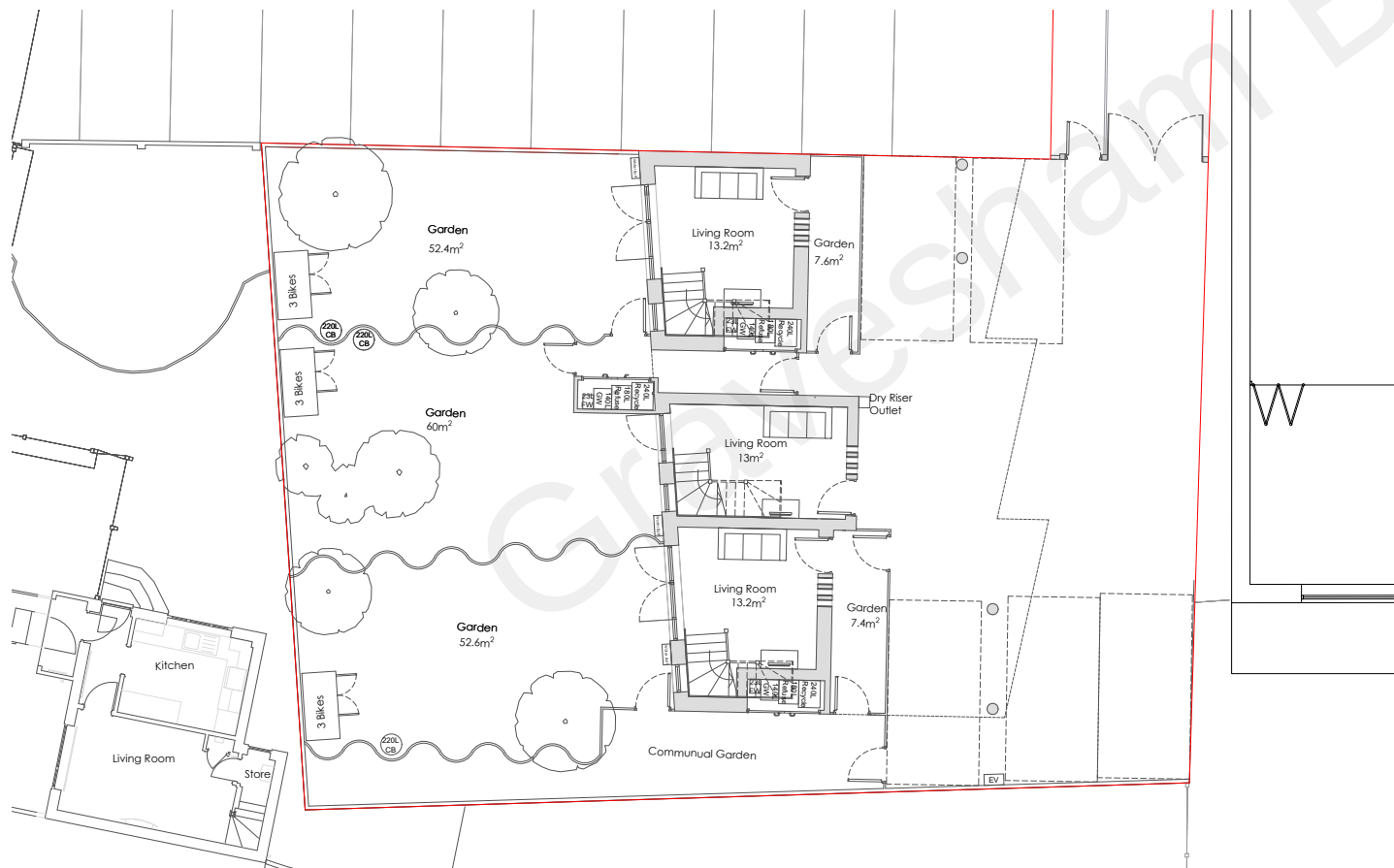
Shop and flat development Plan



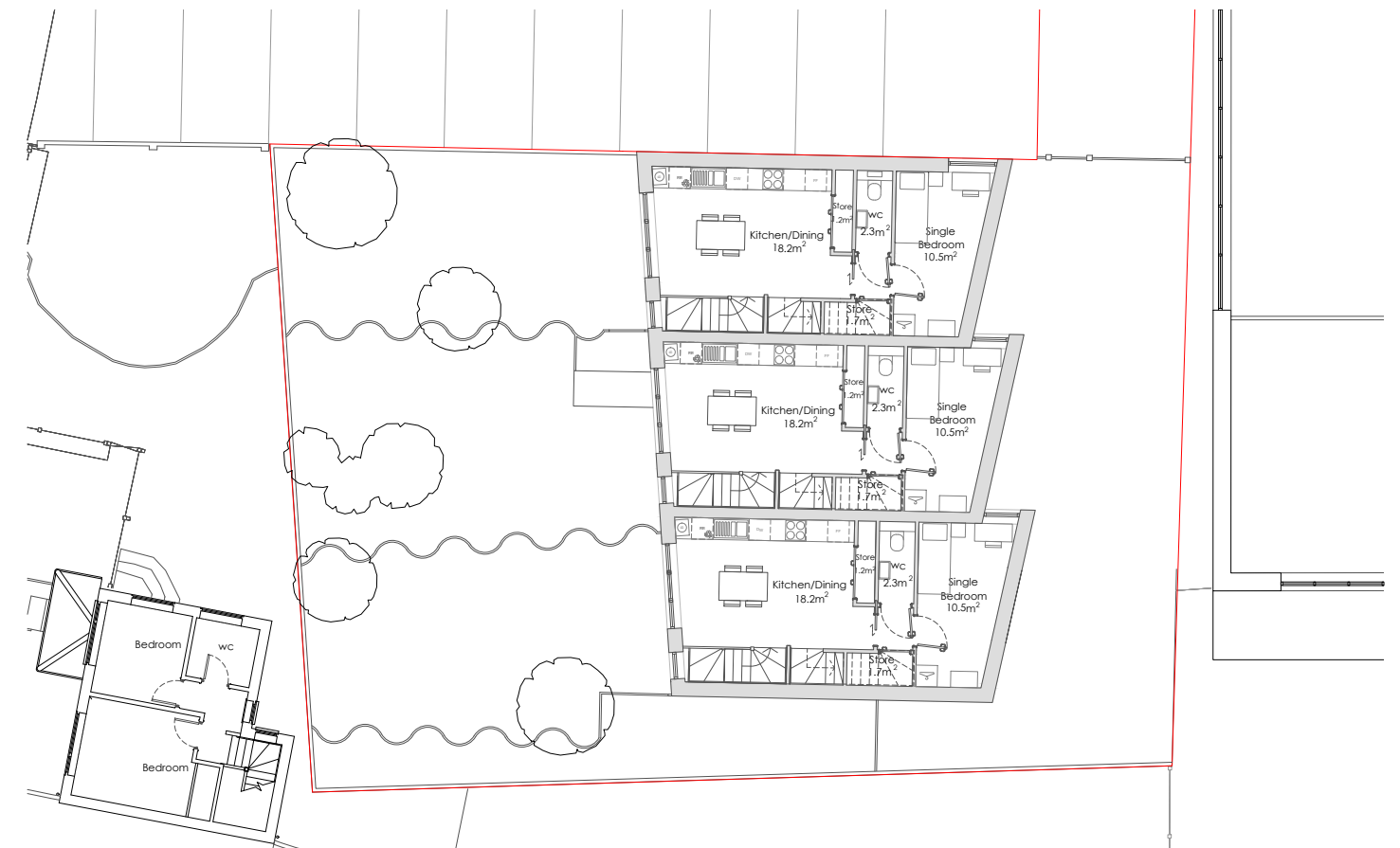
Shop and flat development drawings



CGI of the consented scheme



Consented Ground Floor Plan



Consented First Floor Plan

Planning History

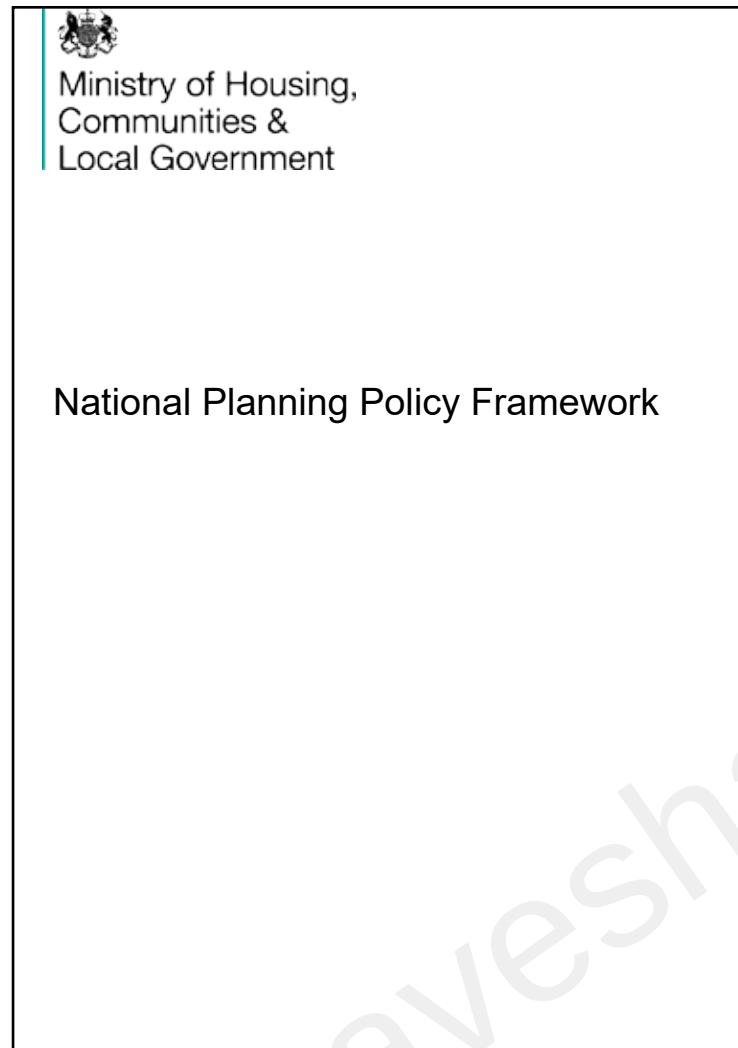
In 2021 planning permission was granted for the construction of three new family homes on the site. This was following a thorough and collaborative design process with the LPA through pre-application, design review panel, and finally full application.

The consented scheme represents a high quality addition to the area, and it was published in the architectural press - notably by Building Design.

The current proposal builds on this consent, but notably on a larger site including a disused strip of grassland that was formerly part of the plot of The Brambles. This enlarged site creates more space for the current proposal.

Gravesham Borough Council

Planning Principle : National



Released in 2021 the NPPF, under paragraph 60, outlines the "objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes". Policy 11 "Making Effective Use of Land" goes further than this, and under Paragraph 125, states that planning applications should make "optimal use" of available land.

Paragraph 60 states "To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed"

Paragraph 69 c) requires local planning authorities to support the development of windfall sites - such as the one for this application.

Paragraph 119 states that " Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions."

Paragraph 120 d) requires decisions to " promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively"

Paragraph 38 states that "local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way ... and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."

The proposal will supply new homes, in a sustainable location. This is a windfall site, and it is currently being under used, which makes it an appropriate location for new housing, which is needed in the area. As such, we believe that the delivery of housing on this site is supported by the NPPF.

Planning Principle : Local

The site is near a designated Local Centre (starred) as per the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and near to a number of Key Sites (in pink) and Opportunity Areas (in red) as can be seen opposite. As such, we believe this location is acceptable for residential redevelopment, as per the local plan the majority of the surrounding area is residential. Other applications in the area confirm that conversion from car parking to residential is acceptable based on historic and contemporary precedent as shown previously.

Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) makes a commitment to meeting the Borough's objectively assessed need for 6,170 new dwellings over the plan period and outlines where new development will take place.

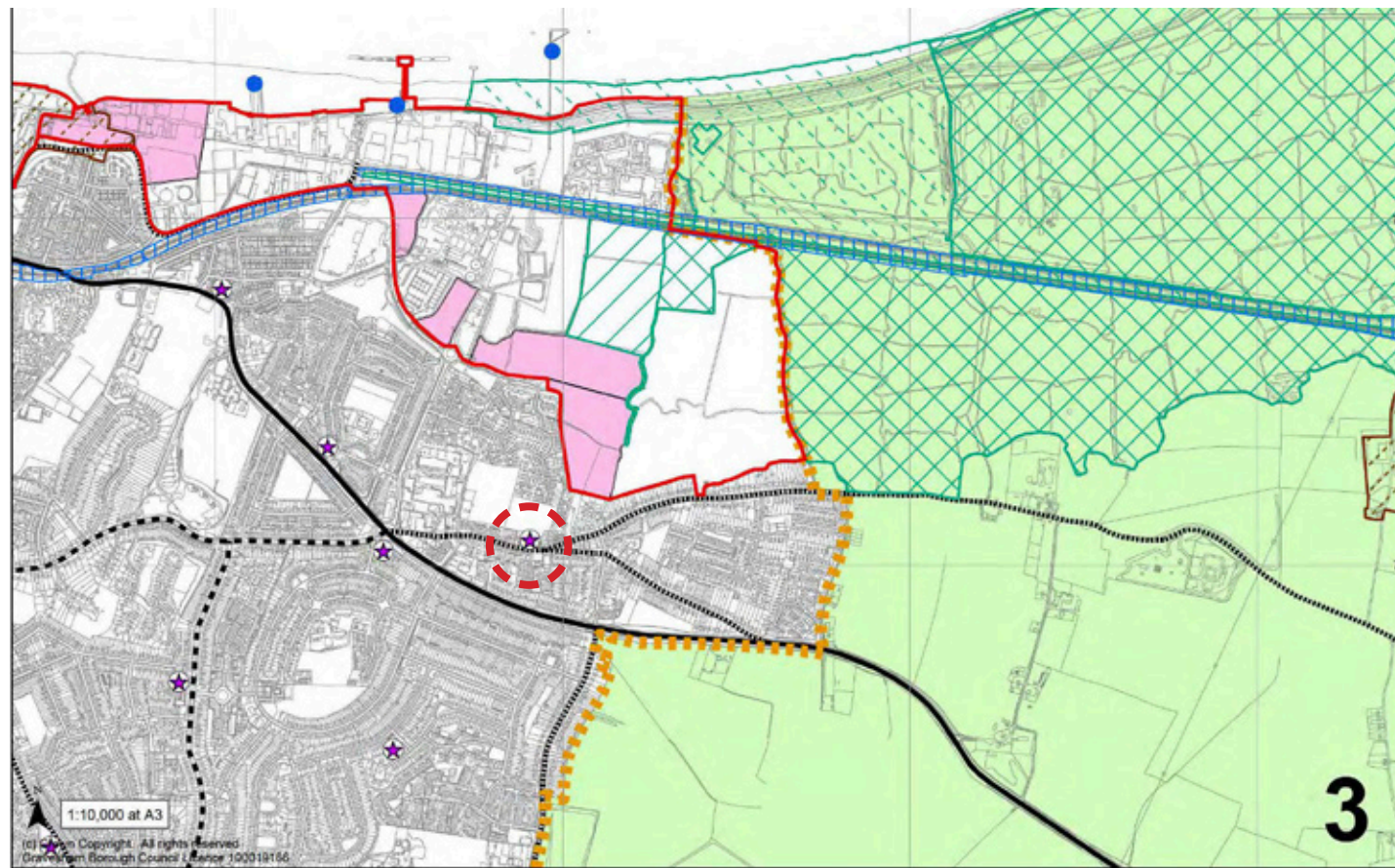
The strategy priorities development in the urban area by promoting regeneration by:

- The redevelopment and recycling of under used, derelict and previously developed land;
- Revitalising Gravesend Town Centre as a focal centre for small scale office development; and
- Bringing forward a range of suitable sites for residential and employment development.

This supports the redevelopment of this site.

At the same time, the site is just outside of the boundary of the local centre of Lower Higham Road (as can be seen opposite), which means that there is not the risk of valuable local commercial uses being lost and replaced with housing.

The principle of residential development was confirmed as being acceptable in the pre-application report which stated "As such, we believe that the delivery of housing on this site meets Local Policy." and in the consent for application 20201379 where the officer noted "Nevertheless, the principle of the development for housing is accepted, it is a sustainable development and there are no fundamental policy reasons to reject the scheme per se."



Local Plan Policy Map



Local Centre Map

Planning Principle : Amount

The NPPF states that under Paragraph 69. "Small and Medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area... local planning authorities should:

c)support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions - giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes."

Further than this Paragraph 125 states "Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible ... These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate.

c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight..."

Finally Paragraph 61 and 62 set out that housing need should be addressed at national and local level, and that housing need should not just be of one type, and that many specific types of housing are needed - particularly family housing which this scheme provides.

The site currently accommodates no units, and the proposal is for 1 unit, an uplift which satisfies the policies listed above. The unit mix is based on policy, which seeks to provide family housing throughout the borough. The Local Plan Core Strategy notes in clause 2.5.1 a particular need for 2 and 3 bed houses. As such the proposed units meet policy needs.

The site area is 615m² (0.0615 hectares). Policy recommends a minimum of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph), and the proposal delivers 65 dph. This is a reduction from the pre-application scheme to an acceptable level of density.

Area Schedule		Key	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
Unit		1	2	3
3 Bed 4 Person	National Space Standard	3 Bed 4 Person	3 Bed 4 Person	3 Bed 4 Person
Area	90m ²	96.8m ²	99.9m ²	97.9m ²

4		Unit
2 Bed 4 Person	National Space Standard	2 Bed 4 Person
101.7m ²	80m ²	Area