

Planning, Design & Access Statement
Proposed Development: Demolition of Existing Car Wash Garage and Erection of 4 - Storey Building Comprising 14 Flats
Site Address: 67-77 High Street, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9HJ

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the demolition of the existing car wash and tyre facility and the construction of a new three-storey residential building. The proposed scheme includes the creation of **14 self-contained flats**, comprising:

- 2 × 1-bedroom flats
- 6 × 2-bedroom flats
- 6 × 3-bedroom flats

1.2 The application site occupies a prominent position along **The High Street**, situated within a mixed-use area characterised by commercial and residential premises. The total site area is approximately **721 square metres**.

1.3 The site is currently utilised as a **hand car wash and tyre fitting centre**, with associated staff welfare facilities located on the ground floor of No. 67, and a self-contained flat at No. 67a above. The remainder of the site is mostly hardstanding to accommodate vehicle movement and parking associated with the existing use.

1.4 The site benefits from **excellent visibility and accessibility**, located on a well-used high street with access to local amenities, shops, public transport links, and pedestrian pathways to the front boundary. The redevelopment seeks to optimise land use in a sustainable manner and introduce high-quality housing into a well-connected and under-utilised site.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

The following planning history for 67–77 High Street Northfleet has been sourced from Gravesham Borough Council’s public planning records:

Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision & Date
2023/1136	Change of use from Class E (Office) to Sui Generis (Hot Food Takeaway)	Permitted – 02 June 2024

Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision & Date
2021/0609	Amendment to original 2019/0506 to extend second-floor dormer	Permitted – 02 July 2021
2019/0506	Change of use from Class C4 (4-bed HMO) to Sui Generis (7-bed HMO) with roof alterations and new second floor	Permitted – 04 July 2019
2017/1093	Erection of two-storey side extension with mansard roof and habitable roof space	Withdrawn – 11 February 2019
2014/0925	Variation of condition for hand car wash/tyre fitting bay to extend operating hours	Permitted – 11 November 2014
2014/0588	Construction of dropped kerb to create additional vehicular access	Permitted – 26 September 2014
2009/0534	Conversion of part ground & first floor into two 1-bed flats with shop/office at ground floor	Permitted – 24 August 2009
2007/1010	Temporary change of use from tyre sales to car sales	Permitted – 16 January 2008
2006/0597	Erection of part three, part four-storey building with 17 self-contained flats (4 bedsits, 7 × 2-bed, 6 × 1-bed) and 17 ground-level parking spaces	Refused – 12 October 2006
2005/0740	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a four-storey building comprising 15 flats (1–2 bed + bedsits), with 19 parking spaces and bin stores	Withdrawn – 02 November 2005
1986/1050	Construction of a building to form two self-contained flats	Permitted – 17 March 1987
1985/0530	Established use certificates for use as two self-contained flats	Refused – 26 March 1986
1984/0896	Conversion of premises to form two self-contained maisonettes	Refused – 17 December 1984

2.1 Analysis of Planning History

- **Repeated Permissions for Residential Use:** The pattern of approvals dating back to 1987 indicates longstanding acceptance of residential conversion and intensification in this location.
 - **Successful HMO Conversion (2019):** The implementation of application 2019/0506 demonstrates flexibility in achieving additional residential accommodation within the built form.
 - **Highway and Access Works Authorized (2014):** The dropped kerb (2014/0588) and extended hours condition (2014/0925) confirm the Council's willingness to moderate site activity and access along High Street.
 - **2006 Refusal Highlights Key Constraints:** The refusal of 2006/0597, based on scale, massing, dominance and lack of amenity space. This new design carefully addresses those concerns through proportionate scale, step-back of upper floors, thoughtfully landscaped outdoor areas, and ample private amenity provision, as detailed later in this Statement.
 - **Former Withdrawn Schemes (2005/0740 & 2017/1093):** While the context for these may have changed, their withdrawal indicates evolution in the Council's expectations regarding building form and intensity on site.
 - **Conclusions:** The cumulative planning record shows the Council's general support for a residential-led redevelopment of the site with appropriate scale, access improvements, and amenity space—provided that key elements such as massing, site orientation, parking provision, and heritage assets (such as the Factory Club) are positively addressed.
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3. Existing Site Context

3.1 Site Context & Frontage

- **Area:** c. 721 m²
- **Current use:** Hand-car-wash and tyre-fitting workshop with ancillary staff facilities at ground floor of No. 67; above is a small residential component (No. 67a)—hardstanding dominates the remainder of site.
- **Frontage:** Direct access to High Street footpath; urban frontage; high pedestrian movement.

3.2 Setting & Nearby Heritage

Opposite the site stands the Grade II listed building known as The Factory Club (also once Blue Circle Club), constructed between 1875–78 by Parr & Strong for Thomas Bevan. This imposing civic building served historically as Northfleet’s cultural hub. It is currently vacant and in some disrepair.

Our proposals seek to ensure the new building is recessive, not outcompeting, nor visually overwhelming the listed building. Key measures include:

- A set-back of upper two storeys off the primary frontage line
- A more subtle massing and material palette, providing a respectful, context-responsive relationship across the High Street

Detailed heritage and setting analysis has been undertaken, with a Listed Building Impact Assessment (LBIA) demonstrating low-level heritage impact and a positive overall contribution to Long Street’s character.

4. The Proposed Development

4.1 Building Form & Storeys

The proposed development comprises a four-storey residential building, linearly aligned with the High Street frontage. The first two floors present a contextual parapet aligned with No. 67 and neighbours; the second and third floors are stepped back, maintaining a smaller visual envelope and reducing perceived height.

4.2 Residential Mix & Floor Areas

The scheme delivers a total of 14 flats across four residential types:

Flat No.	Size	Bed / Person	Area (m ²)
1	2 Bed	4 Person	78.51
2	2 Bed	4 Person	78.51
3	3 Bed	5 Person	91.38
4	3 Bed	5 Person	91.38
5	2 Bed	3 Person	62.25
6	1 Bed	1 Person	42.28
7	2 Bed	3 Person	62.25

Flat No. Size Bed / Person Area (m²)

8	3 Bed 5 Person	91.38
9	3 Bed 5 Person	91.38
10	2 Bed 3 Person	62.25
11	1 Bed 1 Person	42.28
12	2 Bed 3 Person	62.25
13	3 Bed 6 Person	147.86
14	3 Bed 6 Person	163.47

All layouts comply with Nationally Described Space Standards.

4.3 Parking, Bin & Cycle Storage

- Parking provision: 9 under-croft spaces (allocated to the 9 largest flats, i.e., Flats 1–5, 7, 8, 9, 13)
- Cycle storage: 1 secure space per flat (14 total) within dedicated ground-floor store
- Bin store: Enclosed ground-floor bin store accessed from the side/highway frontage

4.4 Private Amenity Space

- Ground floor: Flats 1 and 2 each enjoy a private garden/patio (21 m² and 17 m² respectively)
- Upper floors: Flats 3–12 have private balconies (as per full layout in Section 6); top-floor flats 13–14 each have balcony terraces (~14.3 m²)

5. Scale & Massing

5.1 Street Scene Context

High Street displays a varied built form with mixed heights, gabled rooflines, and modern infills. The proposed scheme:

- Retains a vertical emphasis, echoing traditional fenestration rhythm
- Sets back upper storeys, reducing perceived bulk and improving visual subordination

The scheme therefore complements the existing High Street grain, replacing a visually vacant and under-used site with a contextual, visually recessed building.

5.2 Listed Building Sensitivity

Responding directly to the reasons for refusal of 20060597, which cited “overly dominant” massing competing with the Grade II Factory Club building, the current proposal:

- Has a modulated massing, with upper levels stepped away from the listed façade
- Utilises lightweight materials for upper social spaces
- Is supported by a heritage impact assessment, concluding no harm to setting and visual harmony with the listed structure

5.3 Rear / Quarry Context

To the rear lies an old quarry, creating a natural buffer. While rear and side elevations present their own massing, visual assessment indicates no overbearing impact on residential neighbours or quarry edges. Sensitive architectural detailing ensures a visually coherent and respectful rear elevation.

6. Layout

6.1 Ground Floor

- Under-croft parking: 9 spaces entering/exiting in forward gear
- Main entrance: Centrally located, giving direct access to communal lobby/stair
- Flats 1–2: Both 2-bed flats, open-plan living/dining/kitchen layouts, two bedrooms, bathroom, private outdoor amenity (21 m² and 17 m² respectively)
- Cycle & bin stores easily accessible via the side of the proposed property.

6.2 First Floor (Flats 3–7)

Accessed via communal stair:

- Flats 3–4: 3-bed/5-person, 91.38 m² each, with 14.1 m² private balcony, open-plan living dining and kitchen areas, three bedrooms (1 ensuite), one bathroom
- Flat 5: 2-bed/3-person, 62.25 m², 14.7 m² balcony, open-plan living dining and kitchen area, two bedrooms, one bathroom.
- Flat 6: 1-bed/1-person, 42.28 m², 5 m² balcony, Open planned living, dining and kitchen, one bathroom and a shower room.

- Flat 7: 2-bed/3-person, 62.25 m², 14.7 m² balcony, open-plan living dining and kitchen area, two bedrooms, one bathroom.

6.3 Second Floor (Flats 8–12)

- Flats 8–9: 3-bed/5-person, 91.38 m², 14.1 m² balconies, open-plan living dining and kitchen area, three bedrooms (1 ensuite), one bathroom
- Flat 10: 2-bed/3-person, 62.25 m², 14.7 m² balcony, open-plan living dining and kitchen area, two bedrooms, one bathroom.
- Flat 11: 1-bed/1-person, 42.28 m², 5 m² balcony, open planned living, dining and kitchen, one bathroom and a shower room.
- Flat 12: 2-bed/3-person, 62.25 m², 14.7 m² balcony, open-plan living dining and kitchen area, two bedrooms, one bathroom.

6.4 Third Floor (Flats 13–14)

- Flat 13: 3-bed/6-person, 147.86 m², 14.3 m² balcony, open-plan living/kitchen/dining, three ensuite bedrooms
- Flat 14: 3-bed/6-person, 163.47 m², 14.3 m² balcony, open-plan living/kitchen/dining, three ensuite bedrooms

Additional key notes:

- The existing building at No. 67/67a (office and HMO) is retained, with uses unchanged. No parking is allocated to these units—they currently operate without dedicated parking, and none is removed by the proposal.
- The layout achieves functional separation between the retained and new uses, with individual access arrangements.

7. Access & Parking

7.1 Public Transport Links

Rail

- Northfleet railway station is approximately 650 m (8-minute walk) north along High Street.
- Services run southbound to Gravesend, Dartford, London St Pancras International, and northbound to Higham, Strood, Rochester, integrating into the wider National Rail network.

Bus

- Regular bus routes on High Street (e.g. 308, 480), serving Gravesend, Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Darenth, and Bluewater.
- Nearest bus stop is ~30 m from site entrance, providing frequent (approx. every 15 mins) services throughout the day.

7.2 Car Parking

- Proposed 9 off-street parking spaces, allocated to the larger flats (1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,13).
- The site is car-light but not car-free; parking proportion is consistent with national and local policy for accessible urban locations.

7.3 Highway Access

- The under-croft design allows entry and exit in forward gear, mitigating safety and turning concerns.

7.4 Policy Compliance & Car Parking Flexibility

Local parking standards are met flexibly, in line with NPPF Paragraph 105, which supports tailored parking depending on:

- a) Accessibility of location
- b) Development type/mix
- c) Public transport availability
- d) Car-ownership levels
- e) Ultra-low emission vehicle (EV) charging needs

It is, therefore, clear that the national policy allows for flexibility in the application of parking standards where this is justified.

In this case, the application site is offering 9 spaces this urban environment.

It is also within easy reach of local buses, there is a bus-stop ~30 m from site entrance, which provides links to Gravesend, Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Darenth, and Bluewater. In addition, Northfleet, railway station is approximately 650 m (8-minute walk) north along High Street. Services run southbound to Gravesend, Dartford, London St Pancras International, and northbound to Higham, Strood, Rochester, integrating into the wider National Rail network

The site is, therefore, located in a highly sustainable and easily accessible location, with good access to local services and public transport, where the case is strong to relax the

application of the Council's normal parking standards.

Indeed, this is precisely the sort of location where the use of a private car is not necessary to access services and be able to travel around without the use of a private car. A wide range of services are available locally and others are easily accessible using the public transport options available to reach those only offered in larger towns.

Given the site's high accessibility, frequent public transport, and mixed tenure housing, a reduced parking provision is both justified and appropriate. An EV charging strategy is recommended at reserved parking spaces, aligning with national guidance.

7.5 Local Services & Sustainability

The site is well-served with amenities along High Street, including shops, salons, pubs, restaurants, banks, and proximity to Gravesend town centre and Eurostar / Ebbsfleet International, facilitating sustainable living without reliance on private cars. Buses and rail connect to Dartford, Bluewater, Rochester, reinforcing connectivity.

8. Amenity & Landscaping

8.1 Private Amenity

Each unit has private outdoor space, meeting or exceeding national space standards:

- Ground-floor gardens: Flats 1 (21 m²) & 2 (17 m²)
- Upper-storey balconies: Flats 3–12 (5–14.7 m²)
- Third-floor terraces: Flats 13–14 (14.3 m² each)

8.2 Communal & Public Amenity

Although no large communal space is proposed, the combination of private outdoor areas and public parks within close walking distance provide accessible open space.

Nearby Greenspaces (Gravesend Borough Council parks):

- King George V Playing Fields – ~800 m / 10-minute walk
- Alexandra Park – ~900 m / 11-minute walk
- Basin Recreation Ground – ~1.1 km / 14-minute walk

These provide informal recreation, play, and greenery for all future residents.

8.3 Landscaping Strategy

- Planting of Xeriscape-friendly species in front/side planters

- Low evergreen hedging/screening along garden boundaries
- Tree planting (1.5–2 m small canopy types) to soften building edges
- Secure bike store visible from entrance, with lighting
- Bin store designed to meet waste-collection ease

8.4 Waste & Recycling Requirements

Based on Gravesham Borough Council’s household waste standards:

- Refuse: 1 × 1100 L bin per 6 flats → total of 3 bins (1100 L each)
- Recycling: 1 × 1100 L bin per 6 flats → 3 bins (1100 L each)
- Food Waste: 1 × 140 L bin per 10 flats → 2 bins (total of 280 L capacity)
- Additionally, each flat will have an internal 5 L caddy for food waste separation

These requirements are met by the proposed ground-floor dedicated bin enclosure, sized to accommodate all necessary containers.

9. Technical & Policy Response

9.1 Addressing Historic Refusal (20060597)

The 2006 refused scheme cited design, scale, and lack of amenity:

- Design & scale: Proposed 3/4-storey building was deemed “overly dominant ... visually compete with Grade II Building opposite.”
- Amenity: No open space or play provision; poor living conditions.

This proposal addresses those issues by:

- Recessing upper levels, reducing visual dominance
- Introducing private outdoor spaces for every unit, aligned with national standards
- Providing full cycle parking, carparking, EV-readiness, modern layouts, and quality living environments
- Being supported by a heritage impact assessment, demonstrating compliance with policies TC1, TC2, H3, H2

9.2 Heritage & Listed Building Considerations

Our scheme is accompanied by a specialist heritage impact report, concluding:

- Visual separation, simplified form, and careful material planning ensure no harmful effects on The Factory Club's setting
- The building is visually recessive and does not compete with, nor overbear, the listed facade

9.3 Housing Need & Policy Support

Since 2006, the southeast housing shortage has intensified. Recent publications (e.g., Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government: "Housing supply and demand in South East England, July 2024") demonstrate increased pressure. This site delivers 14 high-quality homes, including family-sized accommodation, contributing to strategic housing goals.

9.4 Policy Compliance Overview

- NPPF (2021): supports efficient urban redevelopment; flexible parking; high-quality design; heritage conservation
- Gravesham Local Plan (Review): encourages housing renewal on High Street sites; supports sustainable transport; safeguards heritage assets
- Nationally Described Space Standards: all units fully compliant
- Parking Policy: justified reduced provision in location with strong transport links
- Bin & recycling standards: met or exceeded

10. Conclusion

This scheme delivers a high-quality residential-led redevelopment of 67–77 High Street Northfleet, replacing an under-utilised commercial site with:

- 14 well-designed flats (mix of 1–3 beds) meeting national standards
- Under-croft parking, cycle/ bin storage, EV provision
- Respectful scale that reinforces High Street character, in keeping with adjacent heritage fabric
- High accessibility by rail and bus, reducing dependency on private vehicles
- Private outdoor space supported by nearby public parks
- Robust justification for design, heritage, parking, and amenity from technical assessments

The result is a socially and environmentally sustainable development, fully aligned with local and national planning policy:

- Addresses previous refusal reasons from a similar scheme in 2006
- Provides much-needed housing in a high-demand region
- Safeguards the setting of the Grade II listed Factory Club
- Encourages active, sustainable modes of transport
- Enhances the street scene and revitalises a prominent site

We therefore respectfully request planning permission be granted for this scheme and remain ready to assist with any further information or amendments to support the determination of this application.