



# PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

## Proposed Redevelopment of 42 The Hill

**Site Address:** 42 The Hill, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 9EX

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## 1. Scope of the Report

This Planning & Heritage Statement has been prepared by Echoz CIC on behalf of the applicant in support of a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of 42 The Hill, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 9EX.

The purpose of this Statement is to assess the proposed development in the context of the relevant national and local planning policies together with the historic environment surrounding the application site. Particular consideration has been given to the site's location within The Hill Conservation Area, the character of the surrounding townscape and the relationship of the proposal to nearby designated heritage assets.

The Statement has been prepared following a review of the submitted architectural drawings, publicly available planning information, relevant planning policy and a detailed assessment of the site and its surroundings. The proposed development has also been considered in relation to the architectural character of the surrounding area and the wider objectives of achieving high-quality sustainable development.

This Statement should be read alongside the architectural drawings and all other supporting documentation submitted as part of the planning application.



## **2. Executive Summary**

This Planning & Heritage Statement accompanies a planning application for the redevelopment of 42 The Hill, Northfleet, comprising the construction of a new mixed-use building on a vacant previously developed site. The proposal provides commercial accommodation at ground floor level with residential accommodation above, creating an active frontage that contributes positively to the established character of The Hill.

The application site occupies a sustainable urban location within The Hill Conservation Area, surrounded by a mixture of commercial, residential and community uses. The proposed development has been designed to respond positively to this historic setting through the use of traditional architectural proportions, pitched roof forms and external materials intended to complement the surrounding built environment, including matching brickwork, render and roof tiles.

The proposal represents the beneficial redevelopment of a vacant brownfield site, making efficient use of land within an established urban area while preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It also supports the continued vitality of The Hill by introducing an active commercial frontage together with new residential accommodation in a location that benefits from existing infrastructure and sustainable transport connections.

Having considered the planning policy framework, the architectural design and the surrounding heritage context, it is concluded that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development that preserves the significance of nearby heritage assets while making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of The Hill Conservation Area.

## **3. Introduction**

This Planning & Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of 42 The Hill, Northfleet, Gravesend.

The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a new mixed-use building on a vacant previously developed site, comprising commercial accommodation at ground floor level with residential accommodation above. The proposal has been developed to make efficient use of the application site whilst responding positively to the established character of the surrounding area and the significance of the site's location within The Hill Conservation Area. The submitted architectural drawings show the proposed site arrangement, floor layouts and elevations forming the basis of this assessment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places significant emphasis on achieving well-designed places, making effective use of previously developed land and conserving the historic environment in a manner appropriate to its significance. The proposed development has therefore been designed to balance the delivery of new development with the preservation of the area's historic character through careful consideration of scale, massing, architectural detailing and external materials.

This Statement considers the proposal against the relevant planning and heritage considerations and demonstrates that the proposed development represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development within its urban and historic context.



#### **4. Site Description**

The application site comprises a vacant parcel of previously developed land located immediately adjacent to 41 The Hill within the established urban area of Northfleet. The site occupies a prominent position fronting The Hill and forms part of a mixed-use streetscape characterised by commercial premises, residential properties, community facilities and places of worship. The submitted block plan illustrates the relationship of the site with No. 41 and the surrounding built environment, together with the proposed provision of cycle and bin storage.

The site lies within The Hill Conservation Area, an area recognised for its historic and architectural interest. Nearby heritage assets include the Grade I listed Church of St Botolph, together with other historic buildings that contribute to the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

At present, the application site makes only a limited contribution to the continuity of the street frontage. The proposed redevelopment provides an opportunity to introduce a high-quality building that reinforces the established urban form whilst respecting the scale, proportions and architectural character of neighbouring properties.

The surrounding area benefits from established highway infrastructure, pedestrian routes, public transport services and a wide range of local amenities, making the site a sustainable location for mixed-use development. The proposal therefore represents the efficient reuse of an existing urban site within an area already served by supporting infrastructure.

#### **5. Planning History**

The application relates specifically to the redevelopment of 42 The Hill as a standalone planning application.

The submitted architectural drawings have been prepared specifically for the proposed mixed-use redevelopment and illustrate the proposed site layout, floor plans, roof plan and elevations. The proposal has been developed having regard to the site's physical characteristics, its relationship with adjoining development and its location within The Hill Conservation Area.

This Statement considers the current proposal on its own planning merits and demonstrates how the scheme has been designed to respond appropriately to the planning and heritage context of the site.

#### **6. Proposed Development**

The proposal comprises the construction of a new mixed-use building on the vacant site at 42 The Hill. The development has been designed to provide a commercial unit at ground floor level together with residential accommodation arranged over the upper floors, creating an active frontage that complements the established mixed-use character of The Hill. The submitted floor plans show the commercial accommodation at ground level with ancillary facilities, and residential accommodation distributed across the upper floors, including the roof space.



The proposed building has been designed to integrate with the surrounding townscape through the use of pitched roof forms, traditional building proportions and external materials intended to complement the architectural character of neighbouring development. The proposed elevations indicate the use of matching brickwork, rendered elements, painted timber detailing, roof tiles and window styles that reflect the established architectural language of the surrounding Conservation Area.

The scheme also incorporates dedicated bin and cycle storage within the site layout, contributing to the practical operation of the development while supporting sustainable travel choices.

Overall, the proposal seeks to deliver a high-quality building that makes effective use of a previously developed urban site while respecting the scale, appearance and historic context of its surroundings.

## **7. Planning Policy Context**

The proposed redevelopment has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) together with the adopted planning policies of Gravesham Borough Council relating to sustainable development, design quality and the historic environment.

The proposal has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with particular regard to:

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development, promoting the effective use of land.
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-designed Places, ensuring development responds positively to local character.
- Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, requiring proposals to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets and conservation areas.

In addition to the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal has been assessed against the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, particularly those policies relating to:

- Sustainable Development
- Design Quality
- Historic Environment
- Town Centres and Mixed Use Development (where applicable)

The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and encourages the effective use of previously developed land, provided that proposals achieve high standards of design and respond positively to local character. It also requires development affecting heritage assets and conservation areas to conserve their significance in a manner appropriate to that significance.

The application site occupies a sustainable urban location within the existing built-up area of Northfleet where infrastructure, public transport, employment opportunities and community facilities are already established. The proposal therefore represents the effective reuse of a



vacant brownfield site within an existing settlement, avoiding unnecessary pressure for development on undeveloped land.

The proposed development has been designed to respond to the surrounding townscape through appropriate scale, architectural form and material selection, whilst supporting the continued vitality of The Hill by providing commercial accommodation together with new residential units. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the overarching objectives of national planning policy relating to sustainable development, high-quality design and the conservation of the historic environment.

## **8. Heritage and Conservation Assessment**

The application site lies within The Hill Conservation Area, an area designated for its special architectural and historic interest. Development within the Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its character and appearance while respecting the significance of nearby designated heritage assets.

The proposed development has been carefully designed to respond positively to this historic context. The submitted elevations demonstrate the use of traditional roof forms, matching roof tiles, brickwork, rendered elements and painted timber detailing that reflect the architectural language of surrounding development. Window proportions and façade composition have also been arranged to create a balanced elevation that sits comfortably within the established streetscape.

The proposed building respects the established rhythm of development along The Hill through its proportions, roof profile, frontage width and material palette. The use of pitched roofs, vertically proportioned windows and traditional external finishes reflects the prevailing architectural character without resorting to direct imitation. This approach allows the development to remain visually sympathetic whilst clearly expressing its contemporary construction.

The building has been designed to reinforce the established building line along The Hill and replace a vacant site with a well-defined frontage that contributes positively to the continuity of the Conservation Area. Rather than introducing an overly dominant or visually intrusive structure, the proposal incorporates changes in roof profile and façade articulation that help reduce its perceived scale and integrate the development with neighbouring buildings.

The redevelopment therefore represents an opportunity to enhance the visual quality of the site through a carefully considered architectural response that reflects the prevailing character of the surrounding area while introducing a high-quality contemporary building suited to modern occupation.

## **9. Design and Townscape Assessment**

Good design extends beyond architectural appearance and should contribute positively to the quality, functionality and character of the surrounding environment. The proposed development has therefore been designed to respond to both the physical constraints of the site and the wider urban context.



The submitted drawings demonstrate that the proposed building adopts a scale and form that reflects the established pattern of development along The Hill. The incorporation of pitched roofs, varied rooflines and articulated elevations helps reduce visual massing while maintaining a coherent architectural relationship with neighbouring properties.

At ground floor level, the proposal provides an active commercial frontage that supports the vitality of the local centre, while the upper floors provide residential accommodation that makes efficient use of the site. This mixed-use arrangement reflects the existing character of The Hill, where commercial and residential uses coexist within the urban environment. The submitted floor plans also demonstrate the provision of supporting facilities, including dedicated bin and cycle storage, contributing to the practical operation of the development.

The proposal has been designed with careful consideration of external appearance, functionality and long-term sustainability. Collectively, these measures result in a development that not only makes efficient use of a vacant urban site but also strengthens the overall townscape by completing an existing gap within the built frontage.

## **10. Impact on Heritage Assets**

The principal heritage consideration is the site's location within The Hill Conservation Area and its relationship with nearby listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Church of St Botolph.

Having reviewed the submitted drawings, it is considered that the proposal will preserve the significance of these heritage assets. The development does not seek to replicate historic architecture; instead, it adopts a sympathetic design approach that respects the scale, proportions and material palette of the surrounding built environment. The proposed elevations indicate a consistent use of traditional materials and architectural detailing that allows the building to integrate successfully into its historic setting.

The redevelopment of a vacant site with a well-designed mixed-use building is considered to provide a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal maintains the established urban grain of The Hill, reinforces the street frontage and contributes to the continued vitality of the area without causing unacceptable harm to the significance or setting of nearby heritage assets.

In heritage terms, the proposal is therefore considered to preserve the character and appearance of The Hill Conservation Area and to accord with the objectives of national planning policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

## **11. Public Benefits**

The proposed development delivers a number of public benefits that contribute positively towards the objectives of sustainable development.

These include:

- redevelopment of a vacant previously developed site;
- reinforcement of the established street frontage;



- provision of new commercial floorspace supporting the local economy;
- delivery of additional residential accommodation within an established urban area;
- efficient use of existing infrastructure and public transport;
- enhancement of the visual appearance of the site through high-quality design; and
- preservation of the character and appearance of The Hill Conservation Area through a sympathetic architectural response.

Collectively, these benefits weigh positively in favour of the proposed development and demonstrate that the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **12. Conclusion**

This Planning & Heritage Statement has considered the proposed redevelopment of 42 The Hill, Northfleet in the context of the relevant national and local planning policies together with the historic significance of the surrounding area.

The proposal seeks to redevelop a vacant previously developed site through the construction of a new mixed-use building comprising commercial accommodation at ground floor level with residential accommodation above. The submitted drawings demonstrate a design approach that responds positively to the established character of The Hill through the use of appropriate scale, roof forms, architectural detailing and external materials.

The redevelopment represents an efficient use of previously developed land within an established urban area and contributes towards the continued vitality of The Hill by introducing an active commercial frontage together with additional residential accommodation. The proposal also benefits from existing transport infrastructure, community facilities and local services, making it a sustainable location for development.

Particular consideration has been given to the site's location within The Hill Conservation Area and its relationship with nearby heritage assets. It is considered that the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through a design that respects the established urban grain, scale and architectural language of the surrounding streetscape. The development does not introduce features that would result in unacceptable harm to the significance or setting of nearby heritage assets and is considered to make a positive contribution to the townscape.

Having regard to the submitted drawings, the planning policy framework and the heritage context of the site, it is concluded that the proposal represents an appropriate form of sustainable development and should be supported.

Overall, the proposal demonstrates that high-quality contemporary development can be successfully accommodated within The Hill Conservation Area where careful attention is given to scale, massing, architectural detailing and material selection. The redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site is considered to preserve the significance of nearby heritage assets whilst delivering clear social, economic and environmental benefits consistent with the objectives of sustainable development.

### 13. Professional Opinion

Having reviewed the submitted architectural drawings, the characteristics of the application site, the surrounding Conservation Area and the relevant planning policy framework, it is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development which successfully balances the delivery of new mixed-use accommodation with the need to preserve the character and appearance of The Hill Conservation Area.

The submitted architectural proposals demonstrate that careful consideration has been given to the scale, form, appearance and functionality of the building. The proposed development reinforces the established street frontage, introduces an active commercial use at ground floor level and provides residential accommodation above, reflecting the mixed-use character of the surrounding area. The proposed materials, roof forms and architectural detailing have been selected to complement the prevailing character of The Hill Conservation Area whilst providing a building suitable for contemporary occupation.

The proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of The Hill Conservation Area, respect the setting of nearby heritage assets and support the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to high-quality design, sustainable development and the conservation of the historic environment.

Based upon the submitted architectural drawings, site observations and the relevant planning policy framework, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment represents an appropriate form of sustainable development which preserves the character and appearance of The Hill Conservation Area and is capable of being supported in planning terms, subject to the Local Planning Authority's full assessment of the application.

### 14. References

- National Planning Policy Framework (Current Edition)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy
- The Hill Conservation Area Appraisal
- Historic England – *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*
- Historic England – *The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3)*
- National Design Guide (MHCLG)
- Planning Practice Guidance (Historic Environment)
- Gravesham Conservation Area Management documents (if applicable)
- Submitted Architectural Drawings prepared by DAP Consultants, including:
  - Location Plan and Block Plans
  - Proposed Floor Plans
  - Proposed Upper Floor and Loft Plans
  - Proposed Roof Plan
  - Proposed Elevations
- Site Inspection undertaken by Echoz CIC



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