

Proposed Retirement Living Apartments at Former Police Station, 133 Windmill St, Gravesend, DA12 1DB



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Churchill
Retirement Living 

planning*issues*
TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

0 INTRODUCTION

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Purpose

“The underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities. This includes people who use a place for various purposes(and).....also includes people at different stages of life and with different abilities – children, young people, adults, families and older people, both able-bodied and disabled.”

National Design Guide, P.3, Paragraph 8.

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Churchill Retirement Living to support the detailed planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of Former Police Station, 133 Windmill St, Gravesend, DA12 1DB. The site's location and proximity to local amenities in the centre of the town make the site ideal for a retirement living scheme. Our vision for the site is to provide Retirement Living homes; a development of 75 one and two bedroom apartments, together with associated communal facilities, vehicular access, parking and landscaping.

This statement concentrates solely on the rationale for the proposed design. The purpose of this document is to explain the context, character and identity of the site and its surroundings; factors that have influenced the design evolution; key of the development proposals and how they relate to design aspects of both national and local planning policy frameworks.

The vision is to create a high quality development that responds to the specific site conditions – physical context, surrounding character, constraints and opportunities – with a design which responds to the local vernacular, embraces sustainable design and delivers much needed specialised housing for local older people in a safe and enjoyable environment.

‘The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.’

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 126



1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Requirements of an Ageing Population

The fact that we are all living longer should be a cause for celebration, as more people are able to enjoy a long and fulfilling retirement. Current average life expectancy in the UK is 83 for women and 79 for men. In 1901 it was 49 and 45 respectively¹. The number of UK citizens expected to be 65 or over is projected to rise to 15 million by 2030².

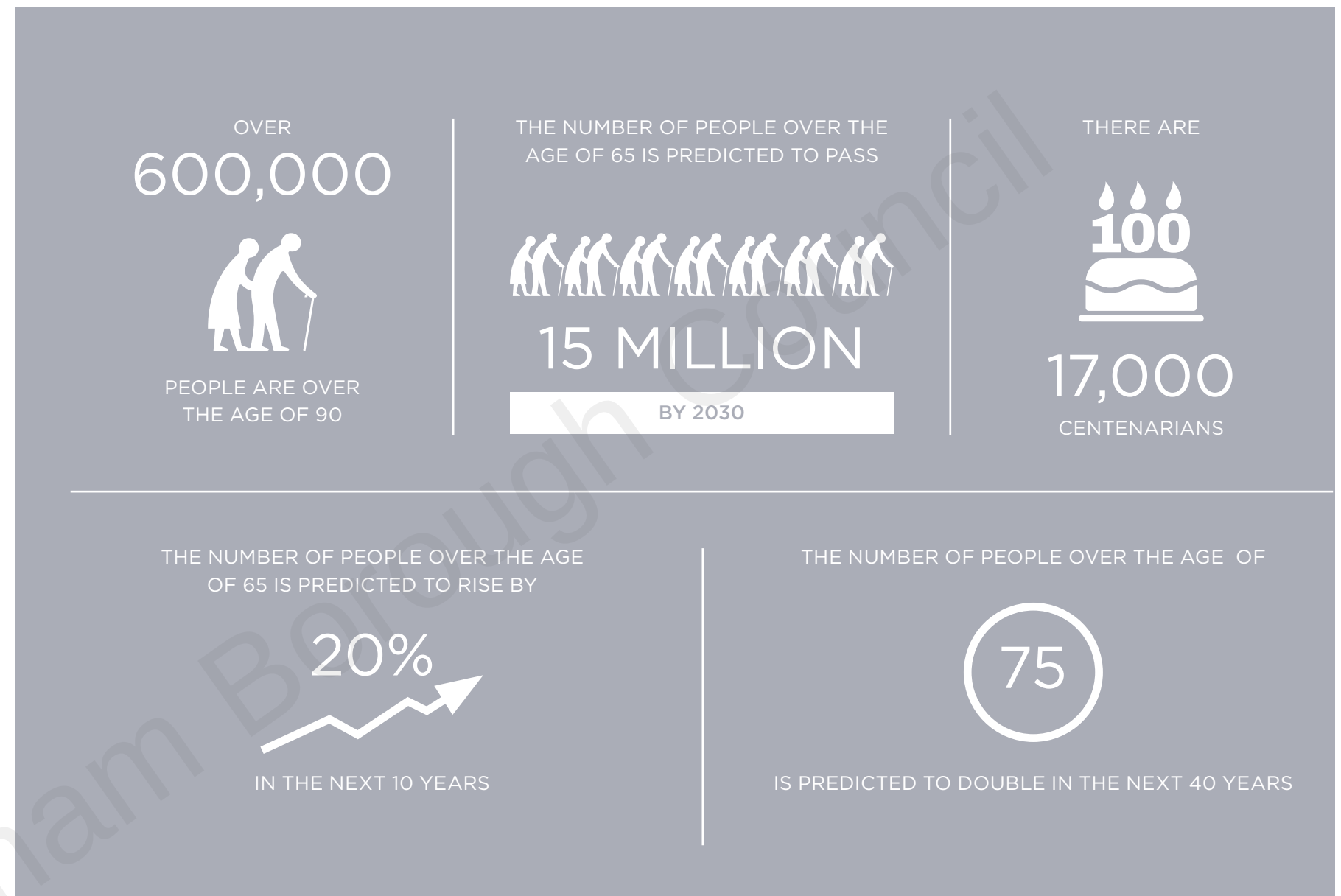
We would all wish to live well as we live longer. We want to remain active, useful members of a community and retain as much control over our lives as possible.

However the vast majority of our housing stock is not built with the needs of older people in mind. There are still far too few suitable new homes being delivered, and many older people are living in homes which are unable to meet their changing needs.

It is estimated that there will be a shortfall of 400,000 purpose-built homes for older people by 2035³.

With insufficient supply and choice most people remain in their existing unsuitable homes for too long, often struggling with maintenance, upkeep and loneliness. Building more specialist homes to meet their needs works better for them but also frees housing stock for younger people; building more retirement homes benefits all age groups.

For far too many people the decision to move home in later life is precipitated by a crisis in their existing home. This is the case despite strong evidence that those who are able to think pro-actively about the type of home that will meet their changing needs, and who move before they are too frail to play an active part in their new community, have better outcomes than those who move later.



¹ The King's Fund, 'Demography: Future Trends', part of the Time to Think Differently programme, 2018

² Age UK, Older People as Volunteers Evidence Review, 2011

³ Ian Copeman and Jeremy Porteus, Housing Our Ageing Population: Learning from councils meeting the needs of our Ageing Population Local Government Association, 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

1.3 Owner Occupied Retirement Living Typology

“Well-designed places include a variety of homes to meet the needs of older people, including retirement villages, care homes, extra-care housing, sheltered housing, independent living and age-restricted general market housing. They are integrated into new settlements with good access to public transport and local facilities.” National Design Guide Paragraph 117

‘Homes for Retirement Living’, means specially designed housing suitable for older people who want to maintain the independence and privacy that comes with having a home of their own but no longer want or need a family sized house.

This proposal is for age-restricted one and two bedroom apartments designed to help people remain independent, safe, secure and sociable for as long as possible. In planning terms these are C3 (Dwellings) developments and not care homes, nursing homes, extra-care or other needs based accommodation. Owner’s homes are their own and they can furnish and decorate as they wish.

Key differences to mainstream housing are:

- The provision of extensive communal areas where neighbours can socialise, host visitors and be part of a friendly, like-minded community. This is centred on the ‘Owner’s Lounge’ which is the heart of the community and where owners often organise social events. There is usually a coffee or tea bar associated with the Owner’s Lounge.
- The presence of a Lodge Manager to look out for people’s welfare, be a point of call if help is needed, make sure the communal areas are well maintained and to be a reassuring, friendly presence. Lodge Managers also create the community; organising events and trips.
- A limited number of entrances, usually one, that is close to the Lodge Manager. This keeps the community secure and allows passive surveillance of the entrance area.
- A lift to all floors with level access throughout
- Each apartment with its own front door giving privacy whenever desired.
- A guest room which can be booked by residents for visitors
- A digital ‘Careline’ support system in all apartments for emergency support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Communal grounds with well landscaped external space available to all.
- Communal upkeep and maintenance including the exterior of the building landscaping.
- Reduced reliance on cars due to sustainable locations close to amenities.
- Buggy store
- Communal areas amount to circa 25% of the internal area.



1 Homes for Retirement Living, *Healthier and Happier*, September 2019



1 INTRODUCTION

1.4 Benefits of Homes for Retirement Living

“Well-designed places include a variety of homes to meet the needs of older people, including retirement villages, care homes, extra-care housing, sheltered housing, independent living and age-restricted general market housing. They are integrated into new settlements with good access to public transport and local facilities.”

National Design Guide Paragraph 117

Older peoples housing produces a large number of significant Social, Economic and Environmental benefits.

Social

Retirement housing gives rise to many social benefits:

- Churchill Lodges offer significant opportunities to enable residents to be as independent as possible in a safe and warm environment.
- Retirement housing helps to reduce anxieties and worries experienced by many older people living in housing which does not best suit their needs by providing safety, security and reducing management and maintenance concerns.
- The Housing for Retirement Living Report (2019) shows that on a selection of wellbeing criteria such as happiness and life satisfaction, an average person aged 80 feels as good as someone 10 years younger after moving from mainstream housing into housing specifically designed for Retirement Living.

Economic

Retirement housing gives rise to many economic benefits:

- Each person living in a home for Retirement Living enjoys a reduced risk of health challenges, contributing fiscal savings to the NHS and social care services of approximately £3,500 per year (Homes for Retirement Living September 2019).
- With circa 75 units proposed, at a ratio of 1.3 people per apartment, there will be around 97 occupants. At a saving of £3,500 each per year, this equates to a saving of £339,500 per year in local NHS and social care costs, in comparison to mainstream housing. This is a significant economic benefit.
- A recent report entitled Silver Saviours for the High Street (February 2021) found that retirement properties create more local economic value and more local jobs than any other type of residential development. For an average 45 unit retirement scheme, the residents generate £550,000 of spending a year, £347,000 of which is spent on the high street, directly contributing to keeping local shops open.
- An average retirement scheme will support the following new jobs:
 - 59 construction jobs
 - 66 Supply chain jobs
 - 5 Direct jobs (new commercial/community uses) and
 - 11 supported jobs (by increased expenditure in local area)

Environmental

The proposal provides a number of key environmental benefits by:

- Making more efficient use of land thereby reducing the need to use limited land resources for housing.
- Providing housing in close proximity to services and shops which can be easily accessed on foot thereby reducing the need for travel by means which consume energy and create emissions.
- Providing shared facilities for a large number of residents in a single building which makes more efficient use of material and energy resources.
- The proposal includes renewable technology through the use of solar panels to assist in the reduction of CO2 emissions.
- All areas of the building will be lit using low energy lighting and where applicable utilise daylight and movement sensor controls.



Our schemes free up family housing by older people looking to downsize - a typical 41 unit retirement development generates approx 92 moves in the chain



A development that maximises the use of previously developed land reducing pressure on greenfield sites



£3,500 P/A

Our developments bring health and social care savings - each person living in a Home for Later Life saves the NHS & Social Services approx £3,500 per year



Economic and social benefits of older people using local shops, services and facilities. Our Owners shop locally, supporting businesses and communities



Due to its sustainable location, retirement living housing reduces the need to own a car. Owners often shop locally on foot or by public transport



Our developments allow for independent, secure living and provide companionship which helps to reduce isolation and loneliness

1 INTRODUCTION

1.5 The Applicant - Who are Churchill Retirement Living Ltd?

Churchill Retirement Living (CRL) is a privately-owned British Company, highly trusted and respected within the housing industry. CRL prides itself on building beautiful purpose-built one and two bedroom retirement apartments in desirable locations across the UK, for those looking for an active independent, safe and secure lifestyle. Our developments can be found in 23 counties throughout the UK.

The company has undertaken over 160 developments and sold over 5,000 units. Through a group company, Millstream Management Services Limited, CRL retain the operation, management, care and responsibility of every apartment of their completed developments.

“Our commitment to developing excellence and quality on every occasion rests in our continuing to provide the lifetime needs and communal services requirements of each of our 10,000+ resident home owners.”



CRL is an award winning business having recently won a number of prestigious industry and wider business awards including;

- **The WhatHouse Awards.** The only retirement housebuilder ever to have been awarded ‘Housebuilder of the Year’ and in 2019 were again named ‘Best Medium Housebuilder’
- **The HBF Customer Satisfaction Survey.** Churchill retain the top ‘5 star’ status having been recommended by more than 90% of our customers
- **The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For.** In 2019 Churchill achieved 2nd place in this prestigious business award and in 2020 we achieved 3rd place

Summarised below are some of CRL’s key statistics;

- **over 7,500 apartments under management**
- **Five regional offices around the country**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.6 Applicant Brief

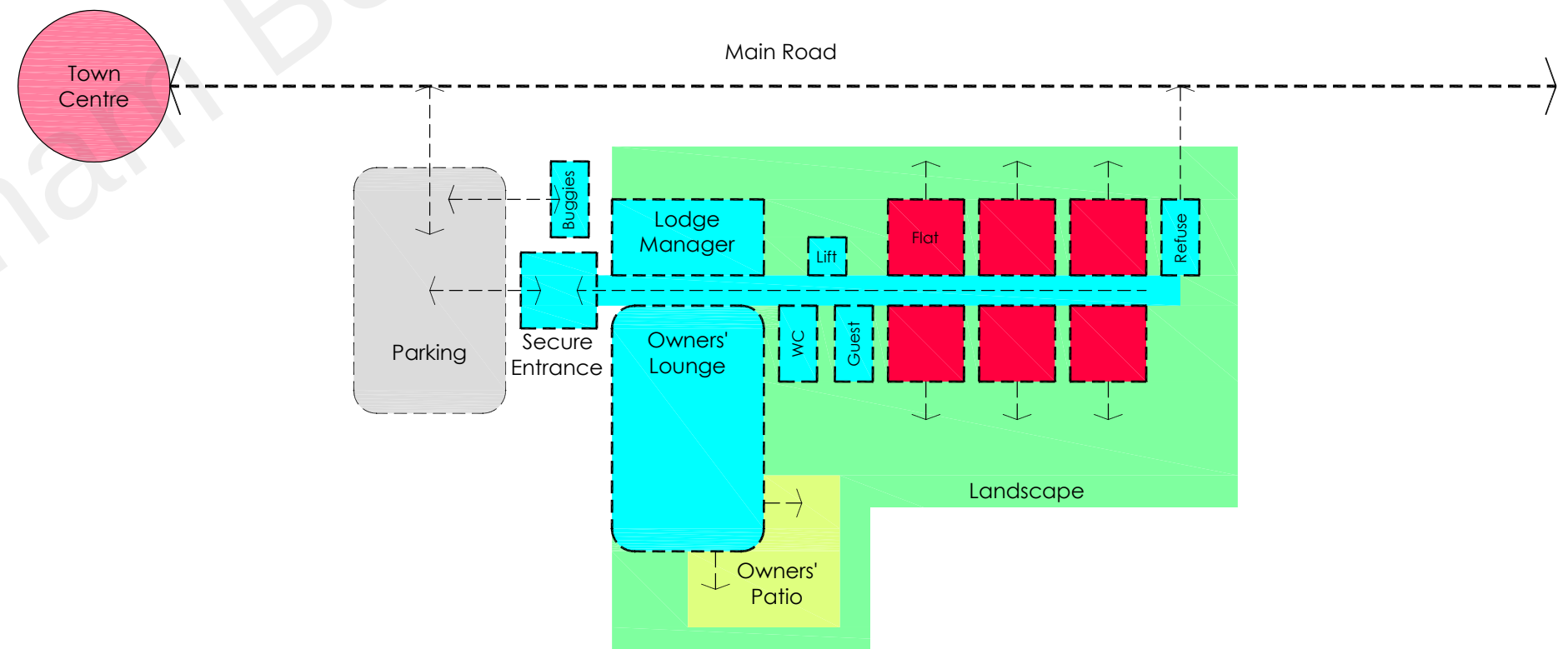
Site selection close to amenities and in an area with identified need is key in the first instance. In designing the development the subject of this planning application, Planning Issues have had a clear brief on the specific requirements of Churchill Retirement Living in order for the design to be successful.

Key client requirements for the architectural design are:

- A **single building**, allowing secure access to all communal facilities
- **Apartment numbers** - a minimum of 25 apartments so that the shared service charge for future owners remains affordable.
- Internal **level access** throughout
- Single **secure entrance** from the car park area to maintain passive security from the Lodge Manager over the parking area and ease of entrance for residents. There needs to be 'progressive privacy' from the public realm to one's apartment. A video link from the entrance intercom to owner's apartments allows owners to see who is requesting entry, responding to the particular need for safety and security for this demographic
- Concierge **reception** (staffed by a Lodge Manager with their own office)
- **Owners' Lounge** (communal), coffee bar
- Accessible toilet
- **Guest suite** (for use by friends and family)
- A central **lift** serving all floors

- Apartments, double **aspect** where possible but single aspect typically due to the requirement for double loaded corridors necessitated by the need to optimise the development potential of sites and to ensure efficiencies in design and build costs. Churchill's experience shows that there is a wide variety of preferences from customers in terms of aspect, with some preferring sunny aspects and others shaded positions, some busy streets and others more private locations. Therefore a range of choice of aspect for apartments is desirable
- Apartments with external doors to living spaces, with balconies where possible and external access at ground floor, typically providing a very '**active frontage**'
- Landscaped communal **gardens** where visual amenity and biodiversity are more important than usable area. Large flat areas for recreational use are not required

- **Waste** management store appropriately sized and located based on previous experience of operating these type of developments
- **Parking** with an appropriate ratio of 1 space per 3 apartments, based on extensive experience of operating these type of developments, research and appeal decisions, as well as how accessible the site specific location is. This is because the sustainable location and average age of purchasers at 79 years old means a lower average car ownership requirement than mainstream housing
- Provision for **mobility scooters** within a 'Buggy Store' at a ratio of 1 per 7 to 8 apartments
- Low maintenance, long lasting **materials** and detailing which respond to the local context



1 INTRODUCTION

1.7 Precedent Developments

RIVERWALK, TONBRIDGE, TN9 1DT

32 apartments

Located in the centre of the historic town of Tonbridge, Waterside Lodge is a 'sold out' development on the bank of the River Medway with views of the Medieval castle and the town centre. The design response was developed with the Council's Conservation Officer to use materials and detailing appropriate to its sensitive setting.



ARK LANE, DEAL, CT14 6PX

41 apartments

A few streets back from the seafront, Goodwin Lodge is a 'selling development' in the bustling seaside town of Deal which was recently listed in the Sunday Times Best Places to Live in the UK 2018. Planning was awarded at appeal where Churchill's planning and design team successfully defended the proposal and the council's initial refusal. The design is a contemporary approach to the traditional form of development found in the area.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.7 Precedent Developments

CHURCH ROAD, HAYWARDS HEATH, RH16 3NY

43 apartments

Situated one road back from the main High Street, Petlands Lodge is set in attractive landscaped gardens on a sloping site offering a 'split level' 3 and 4 storey building. The design concept was to create two attractive 'Villas' joined together by a structural glass link which comprises the main entrance atrium and communal library areas. Planning was granted at local level after working collaboratively with the Council.

SHIPBOURNE ROAD, TONBRIDGE, TN10 3DJ

31 apartments

St Giles Lodge was constructed on an abandoned and dilapidated dairy. Part of the site is located within a Conservation Area and is set within the context of the renowned "Tonbridge School". Planning was granted at local level due to the high quality design and materials used as well as the generous setting and landscaped gardens provided.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.7 Precedent Developments

LONG BRIDGE, FARNHAM, GU9 7GG



50 apartments

Hawthorne Lodge is set in the heart of the historic town of Farnham within the Conservation and adjacent to a number of listed buildings. The scheme responds to Farnham's Georgian architecture and uses traditional materials and detailing to create a landmark building which has won national design awards. The design was successfully defended at appeal by Churchills team of Architects and Town Planners. Construction was completed in approximately one year and the developments' 50 apartments were sold out within 12 months.



2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 The Site

Location

The site is located 0.2 miles to the south of the centre of Gravesend, a town in northwest Kent which is the administrative centre of the borough of Gravesham. The town is a Thames Gateway commuter town located 21 miles away from the capital where it is possible to reach London St Pancras in 24 minutes.

Local amenities

The proposed development site is approximately a 4 minute walk to the centre of Gravesend Town; a commercial and commuter area, providing a local shopping district which includes the St Georges shopping complex and regular farmers markets. Other amenities provided within the town include supermarkets, a community hospital and medical centre, local library and post office. Owing to its geographical situation and maritime history there are a collection of landmarks such as the Gravesend Town Pier and Royal Terrace Pier, Pocahontas Statue and Gravesend Clock tower.

Gravesend benefits from a well connected public transport network which provides access to the wider region predominantly via its connection to Central London by rail; the Gravesend Train station is also a 0.2 mile or 4 min walk from the proposed development site. In 2006 the first of the areas fast-track bus services opened which uses a combination of ordinary roads and bus tracks providing a regular service to Dartford, Bluewater Shopping centre, Greenhithe and Ebbsfleet International Railway station.

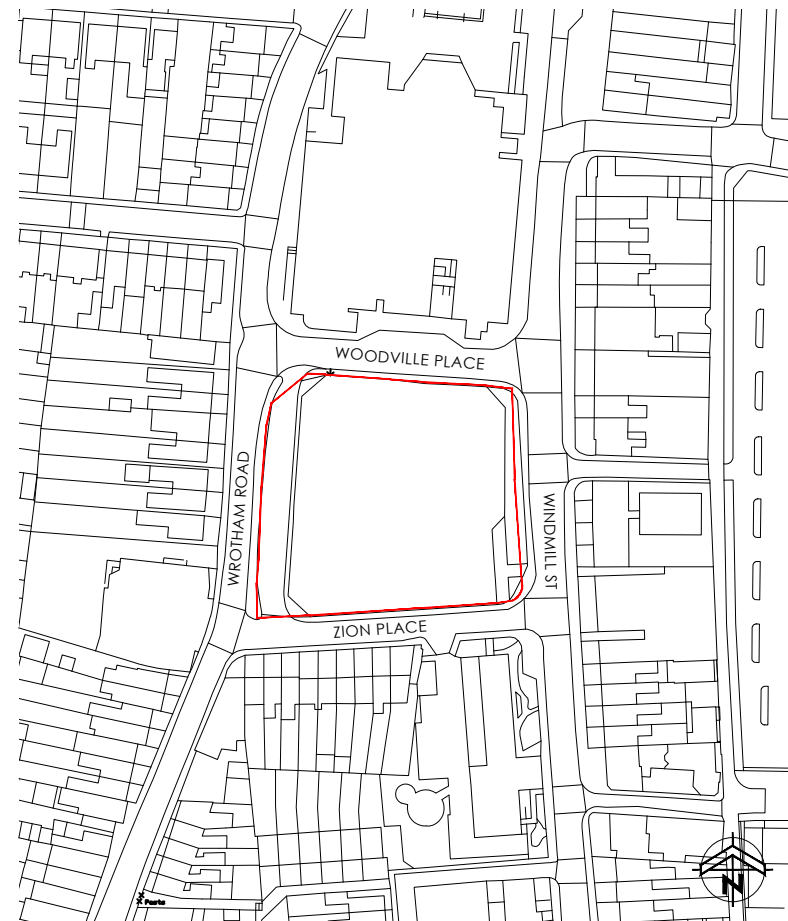
The site itself benefits from excellent pedestrian routes and infrastructure links - there are two bus stops immediately accessible on Windmill Street south of the site. From the site there is a relatively level and un-obstructed route into town. It is therefore considered that the proposed development presents an opportunity to promote sustainable travel to future site users and operate as a sustainable development.



2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 Site History

CURRENT VACANT SITE 2016-2022

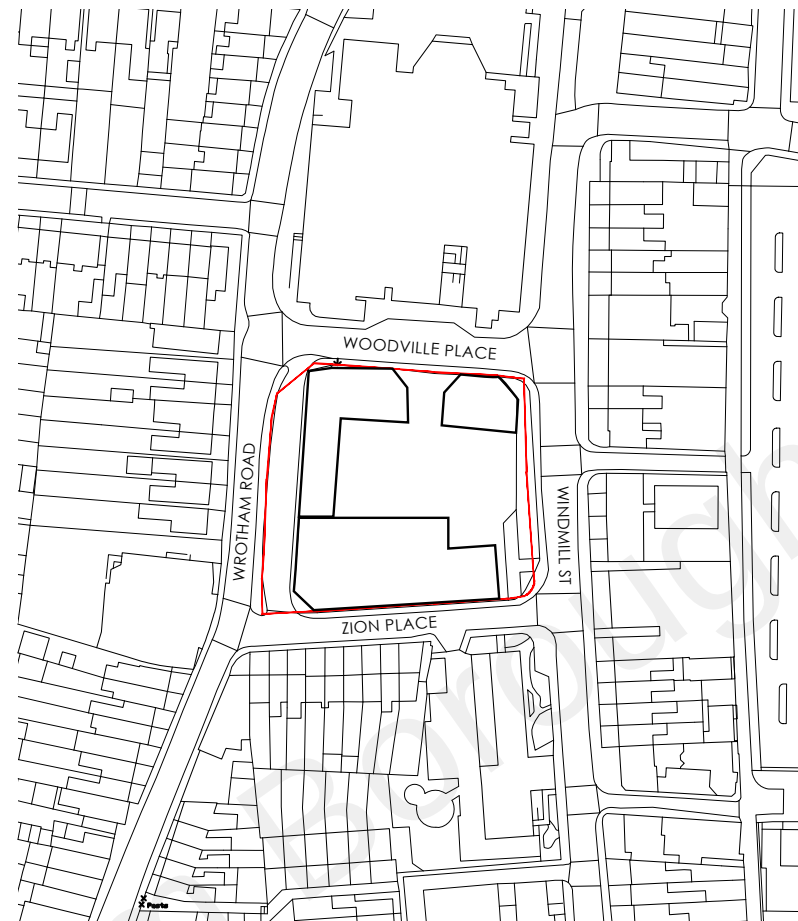


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Following demolition of the Police Station, except for the brick boundary wall, the site has been cleared since 2016. While there have been numerous planning applications made for a proposed development on the site in the last 12 years, no development has come forward. Until recently there was an application pending planning approval since 2016, which we understand was given a resolution to grant planning permission in 2018 subject to the s106 agreement being completed. This has been pending for 4 years, presumably because the permission is unviable.

GRAVESEND POLICE STATION 1975-2016

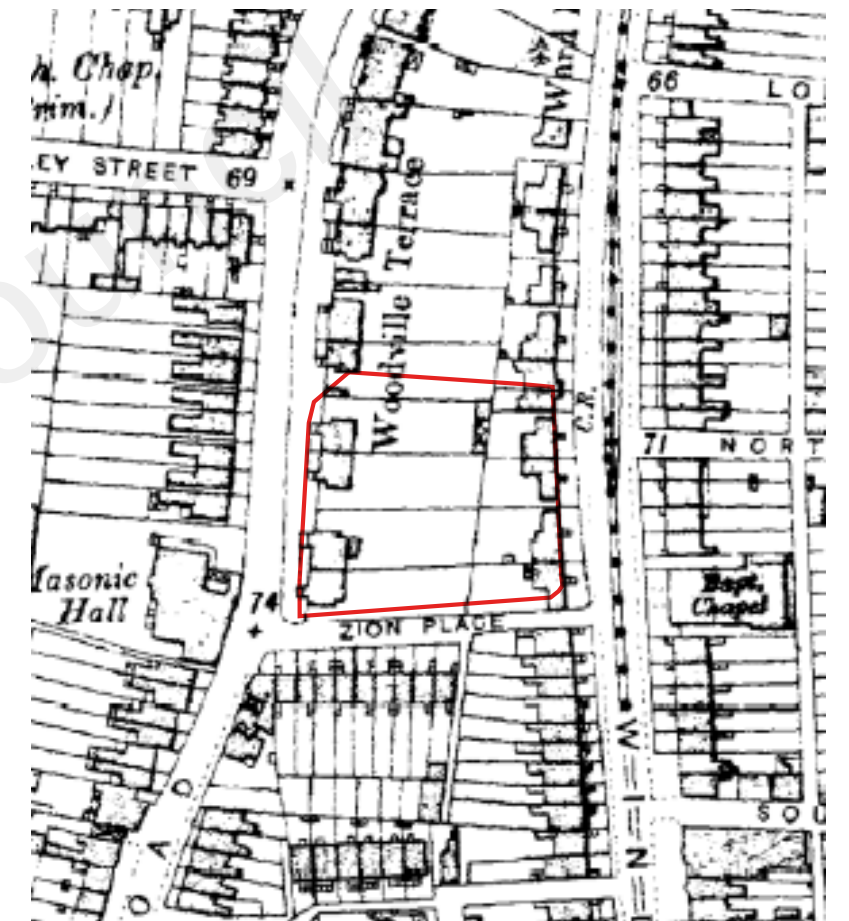


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The Gravesend Police station was opened in 1975 and is one of the three buildings that comprised the The Civic Character Area along with Cygnet House and the Civic Centre - erected in 1965 as the divisional headquarters of Kent County Council. The three buildings are each surrounded by hard-standing and car parks and were expressive of a particular architectural period in the mid-20th Century with a Brutalist idiom and extensive use of reinforced concrete. Cygnet House underwent refurbishment and conversion to residential use in 2014 with the Police station being demolished in 2016.

HISTORIC MAP 1919-1943



A group of four early 19th C. terraces fronting Windmill Street and another four fronting Wrotham Road once occupied the site until a large-scale clearance of houses in the mid-20th century commenced to provide a site for the Civic Centre, Woodville Halls, Cygnet House and the Gravesend Police Station. During the 19th C. Windmill St developed as one of the principal arterial routes into Gravesend and to the river from the old London to Rochester Road. The linear route connected directly to the High Street and became a principal thoroughfare between the Town Pier and Windmill Hill.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 Site History



Albert Terrace c.1960



Woodville Terraces c.1960



Civic Centre from the same view point as above c.2000



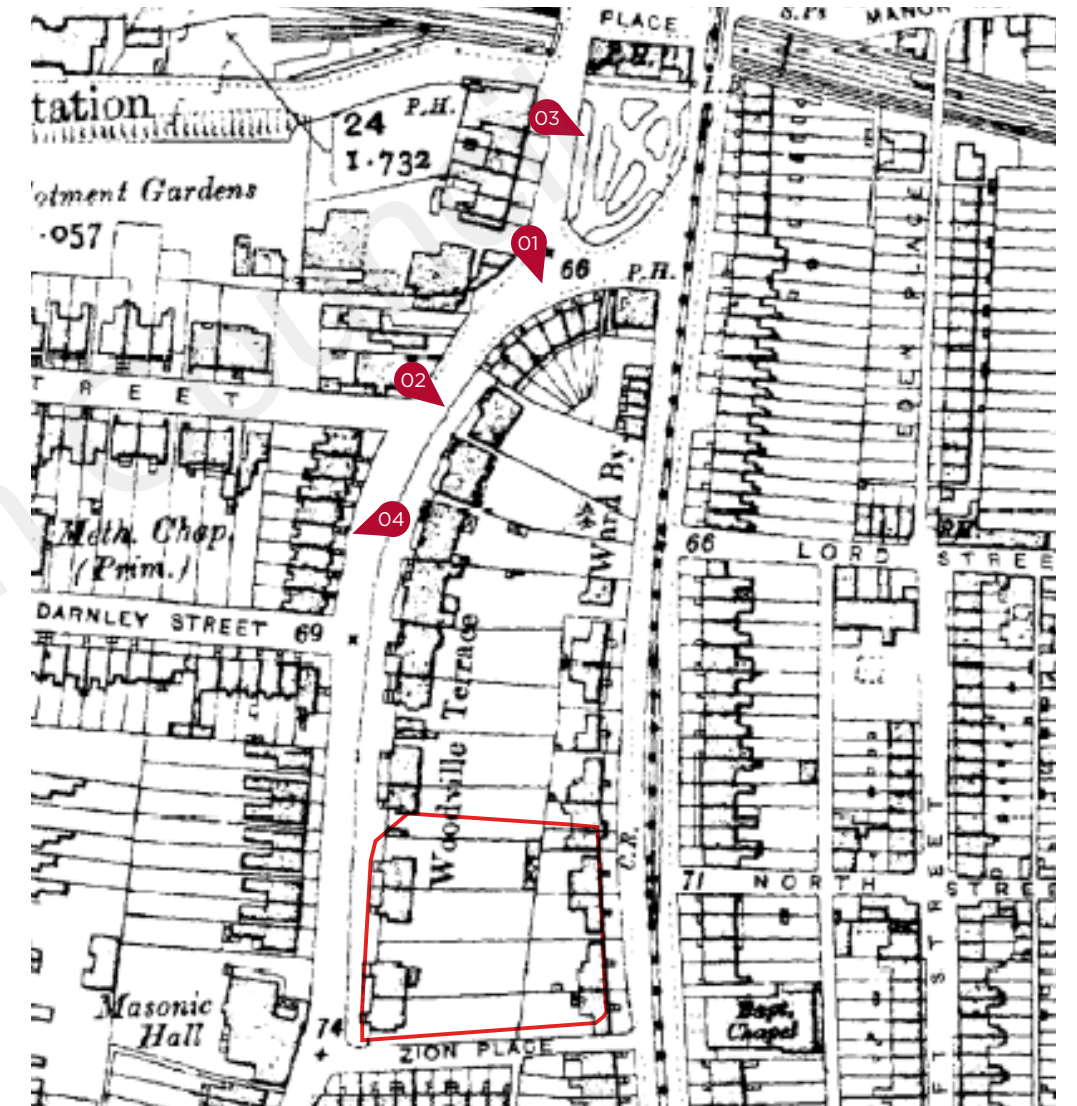
Civic Centre from the same viewpoint as above c.2000



Woodville Gardens c.1960



Wrotham Road c.2021



Historic OS map: 1892 - 1914

Historically within the site boundary were a series of 3-4 storey terraces that formed Woodville terraces (fig. 02). These were later demolished to make way for the construction of the Civic Centre. Opposite where these once were are original terraces of the same period along Wrotham road where it is possible to see the existing brick stock and architectural detailing (fig.04).

On the north end of where the Civic centre now sits were a collection of Regency / Victorian period terraces and the Queens Arms Public House (fig.01) that fronted Woodville gardens (fig.03), which was later demolished for the now hard-landscaped Community Square fronting the Civic Centre.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 Site History

A collection of photos of the Gravesend Police Station taken in 2011, two years following the building being fully vacated but pre demolition - courtesy of Gareth Thyer.



View looking north down Windmill Street



View looking east down Zion place



View looking north down Wrotham Road



View looking west down Zion place



Detail bay of concrete facade

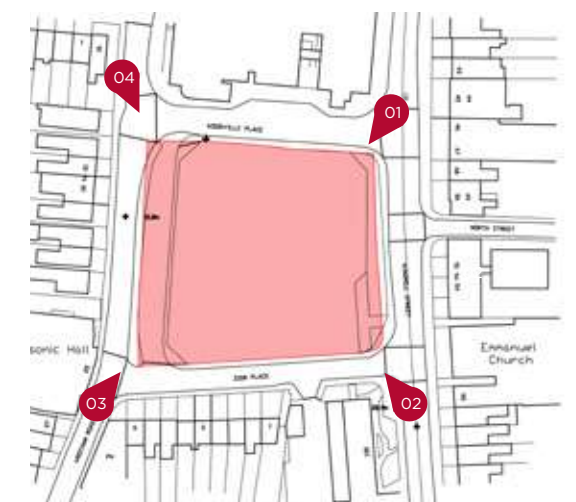


View from rear of Cygnet House looking North

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Site Context

- The site is bound on all sides by the remaining boundary wall from the previously demolished Gravesend Police Station.
- The site is rectilinear in shape and is 0.36Ha, measuring approx 57m north to south and 63m east to west. It is relatively flat with exception to the area of lower ground to the north where there was previously car parking at basement level approx 2.5m below the Police Station. There is a rise from north to the south of the site of approx 1.6m and east to west there is a relatively level gradient.
- A range of building types and scales can be found within the immediate context and surrounding area: Buildings to the north of the site are generally taller ranging up to five and six storeys. There is however a six storey residential building situated immediately south of the site.
- Buildings along the east/west axis are predominantly residential and between two and three storeys in height. Zion Place to the south is mainly comprised of residential houses two and a half storeys in height with raised ground floor levels.
- The five storey office block, Civic Centre and Woodville Hall Theatre to the north of the site share the same Brutalist aesthetic as the former police station and are of a similar massing and height of up to 6 storeys.
- With civic use to the north and residential use to the south, the site highlights the transition between residential and mixed use built form. Wrotham Road and Windmill Street terraced properties are a mix of housing, offices and commercial properties ranging between two and three storeys in height.
- The site fronts Windmill Street which features period properties predominantly and is within a Conservation Area - therefore careful consideration to the appearance of the proposed development needs to be taken.
- The predominant building material of the existing residential context is a mix of London stock / buff brick, darker stained buff brick, painted rendered facade, rusticated decorative render which contrasts the brutalist pre-cast concrete facade of the neighbouring civic centre building.
- The roof ridge line along the eastern side of Windmill Street is relatively continuous at 3-5 storeys but is broken at where minor roads intersect with hipped gables, and where the topography of the context creates breaks in the ridge and eaves line with fire walls and chimneys demarcating groups of terraces. Roof finishes are predominantly grey in hue with slate and grey/brown tile used.
- Common features include: Chimneys, sash style or Georgian proportion windows with glazing bars, brick headers and cills, decorative window surrounds, rusticated rendered ground floor banding, Juliet balconies and sporadic mansard roof dormer windows to provide accommodation in the roof.
- Frontage boundaries along Windmill Street and Wrotham Road to a lesser degree, are defined predominantly by short fore-gardens fronted by brick piers and black railings.



2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Context - Windmill Street Frontage



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:

- Terraced buildings;
- Predominantly in residential use with some commercial at ground floor nearer the Town Centre;
- All of the buildings are set back from the pavement line behind front gardens, many of which are enclosed by walls and cast iron railings.
- Many of these front gardens are attractively planted; the foliage of plants has a softening effect on the hard urban townscape.
- Building heights range from two to four storeys, and some buildings are additionally set above a raised basement.
- Yellow stock brick is the prevalent building material, rendered in part or in entirety (often defined as banded rustication at ground floor level).
- All properties orientate towards the site;
- Dormer windows within roof space;
- Urban character;
- Occasionally runs of terrace houses are broken by small groups of paired villas;
- Use of stock brick, with stucco render
- Multi-paned sliding sash windows;
- Parapet wall detail to eaves.
- Buildings are typically traditional and of a classical design dating from Georgian / Regency / Victorian era.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Context - Zion Place Frontage



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:

- Houses are of 2 - 2.5 storeys raised above a semi-basement,
- Cygnet House is a 6 storey office block converted to residential use.
- The short terrace of nine houses were built in identical form to one another, dating back to the late 1800s ;
- Mix of yellow brick and render;
- Most of the original roof coverings have been replaced with concrete roof tiles;
- The buildings are set back from the pavement line behind front garden areas, although many of the boundary walls and railings have been demolished and the gardens used for vehicle-parking;
- Windows are orientated towards the application site;
- Flat arch and segmented brick headers with Pre cast concrete cills;
- Render banding;
- Deep fascias with consistent eaves and ridge heights
- Brick wall to the former police station is an imposing and negative feature to the north side of the street;
- Predominantly UPVC Casement windows with UPVC rainwater goods;
- The Prince Albert Pub forms a 3-storey nodal building at the junction with Wrotham Road

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Context - Wrotham Road Frontage



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:

- Houses are of 2 - 2.5 storeys and semi-detached with small gaps between;
- Polychrome brickwork ;
- Detailing of double-height canted bays, including the Corinthian columns on the corners of the bays, has been painted white.
- The buildings are set back from the pavement line behind front garden areas, although many of the boundary walls and railings have been demolished and the gardens used for vehicle-parking.
- It is a very busy route, connecting to the inner ring-road, and traffic noise and fumes have a detrimental impact on the atmosphere of the street;
- Windows are orientated towards the site;
- Some of the slate roofs have been replaced with concrete tiles;
- The Masonic Hall has been present in this location on Wrotham Road since at least the early 1900s. A post-modern extension appears to have been added to the street frontage - possibly around the same time as the construction of the previous Police station on site as the period and appearance of the brick work matches that of the boundary wall.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Context - Woodville Place Frontage

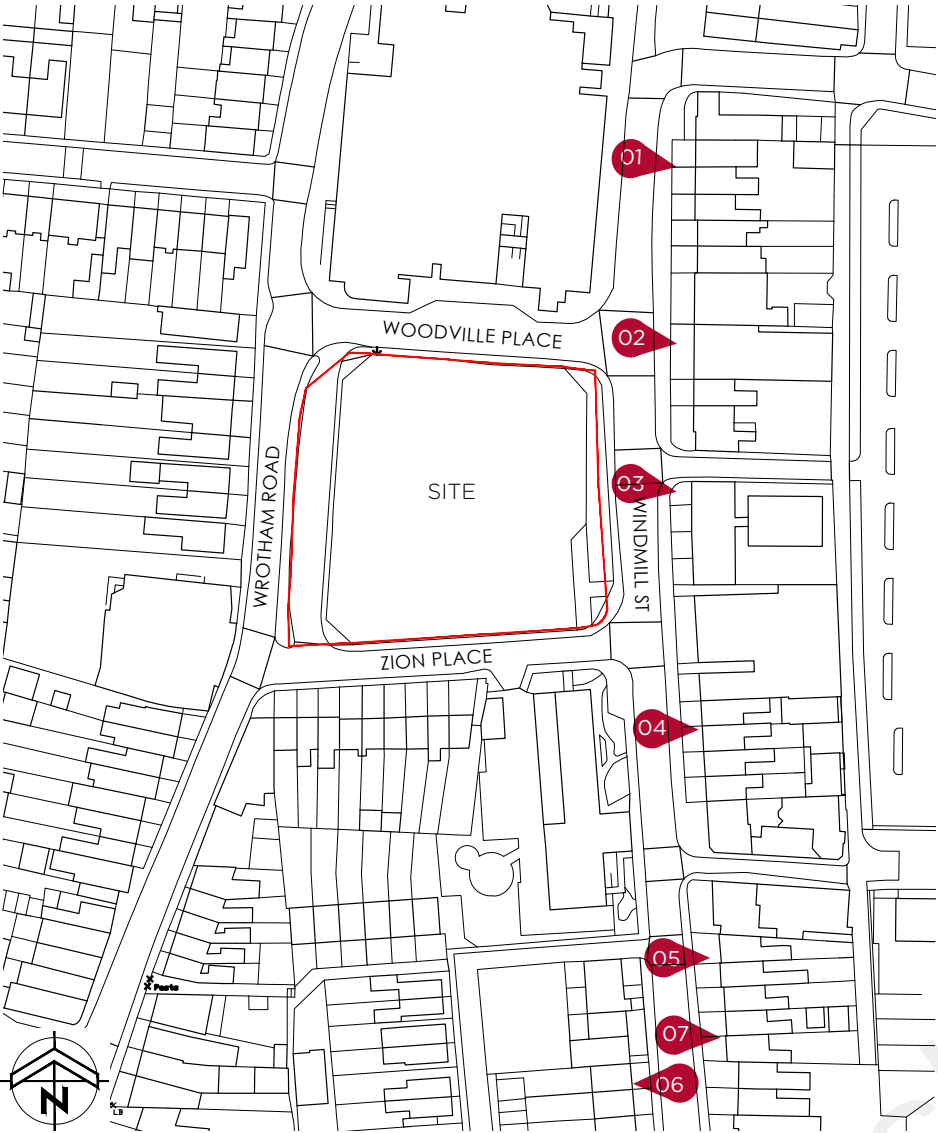


MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:

- Modern road constructed in first half of 20th Century
- The area does not contain any historic structures and is characterised by buildings from the second half of the 20th century.
- Brutalist idiom and use of reinforced concrete.
- The scale of the buildings dominate the surrounding historic built form and street pattern.
- Civic Centre has a hard-landscaped forecourt to the north (the police station site and Cygnet House are also surrounded by hard standing and car parks).
- Windows are orientated towards the site;
- Large, unbroken expanse of building;
- Built to the pavement edge;
- Rear service entrance of Civic Centre fronts Woodville Place; Building mass steps down in height from 6 storeys fronting Windmill St to 2-3-6 on Wrotham Road / Woodville terrace.

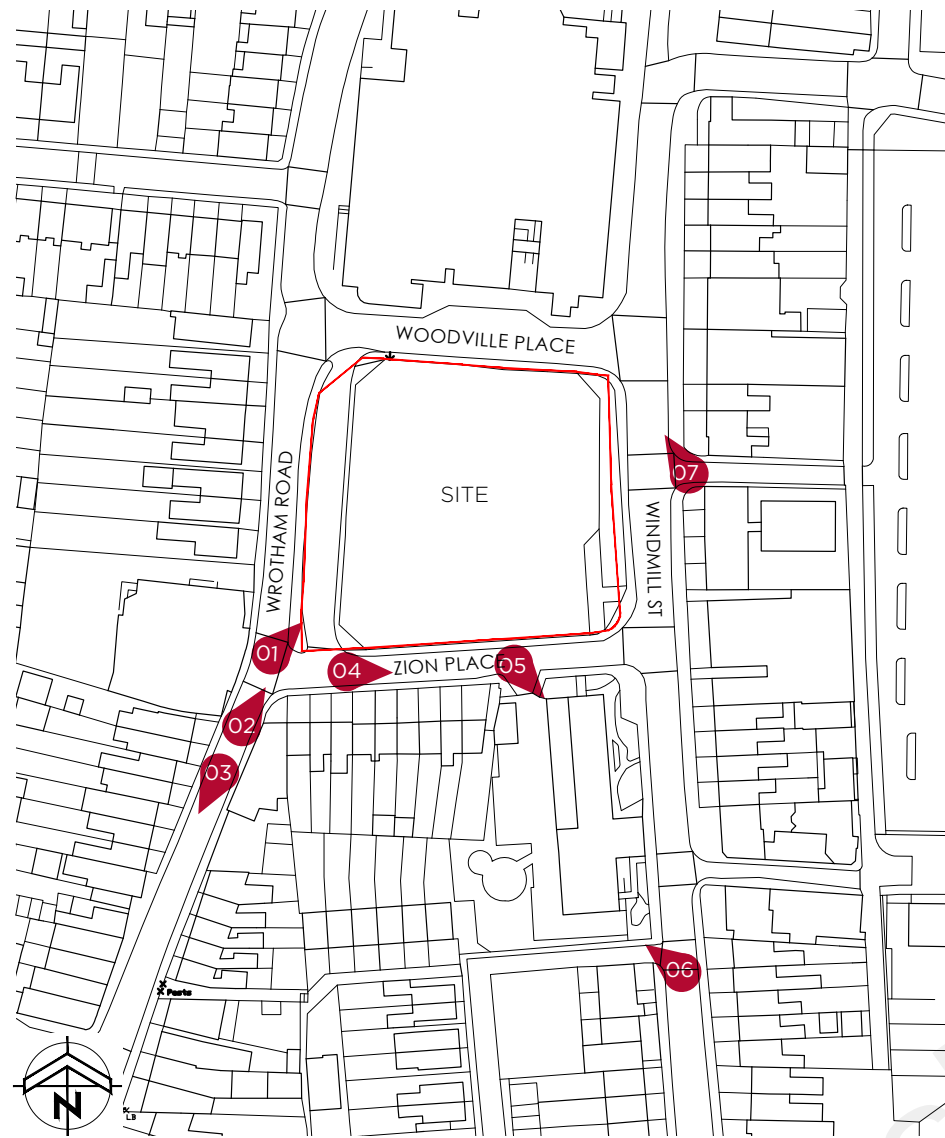
2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Immediate context photographs



2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Immediate context photographs



2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Immediate context photographs



Photo from within Site Boundary



Photo from within Site Boundary



Photo from within Site Boundary



Photo from within Site Boundary

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 Wider context photographs



2 ASSESSMENT

2.3 Movement

[Excerpt from Transport statement prepared by AWP]

Local Road Network

- The site is located within central Gravesham, bound by Woodville Place to the north, Windmill Street to the east, Zion Place to the south and Wrotham Road to the west.
- There is a comprehensive network of footways within the town, with routes available into Gravesham Town Centre, with formal pedestrian crossing facilities at numerous locations, including a signal controlled crossing immediately adjacent to the site.
- A 2003 vehicle count survey indicates that when operational the former police station typically generated approximately 100 trips across the local road network in the AM and PM peak periods, with ten arrivals and eight departures in the morning peak hour, and ten arrivals and 17 departures in the pm peak to/from the on-site parking facilities.
- A 2012 vehicle speed survey demonstrates that the 85%ile speeds on the northbound and southbound approaches Windmill Street to Woodville Place are well below the 30mph signed speed limit.
- A review of PIA data supplied by Kent County Council indicates that there are no patterns that suggest any deficiency in highway safety within the vicinity of the site. Woodville Place is part of the one-way system operating in the town centre. The street runs from Windmill Street to Wrotham Road and is subject to a 30mph speed limit. Along its length, Woodville Place is approximately 6.0m wide, and is provided with street lighting. There is a lay-by of approximately 25m length on the northern side of the carriageway, used for loading and unloading.
- Windmill Street is accessed from Stone Street or Clive Road (A226), each originating in Gravesend Town Centre to the north of the site. The street is at least 6.5m in width and is subject to a 30mph speed limit. Windmill Street

runs between King Street/ New Road in Gravesend town centre, to a large four-armed priority junction with Old Road (B261) in the south. Between the junction with Manor Road (approximately 180m north of the site) to where it meets King Street/ New Road, the street is a Pedestrian Zone and is closed to most vehicles.

- Zion Place is a two-way street connecting Windmill Street in the east with Wrotham Road (A227) in the west. The street is between 5.0 and 5.5m width and subject to a 30mph speed limit along its length. Each end of Zion Place forms the minor arm of a priority junction. The street is lit along its length. There are continuous double yellow lines on both the north and south sides of the carriageway.
- Along the western boundary of the site is a segregated lay-by, parallel with Wrotham Road, previously used by police vehicles and now used as a private parking area. The lay-by is one-way, accessed from the north from Woodville Place and terminates at a left-only turn as the minor arm of a priority junction with Zion Place to the south. The lay-by is not adopted highway and will be removed as part of the proposed redevelopment.

Pedestrian Network

- Residents of the development will be able to access a range of local facilities on foot within an approximate five, ten and 15-minute walk of the development. Table 4.2 sets out the measured walking distance to each amenity from the site.
- The Town Centre is within 400m of the site where there are a variety of retail and leisure opportunities including Gravesend library, St. George's Shopping Centre, Tesco Express, and various restaurants and cafes.
- With reference to GPJF Table 3.4 and Manual for Streets, Table 4.2 shows that all facilities within the town are within an acceptable walking distance and are consistent with a "Walkable Neighbourhood". The development site therefore

presents excellent opportunities for residents to travel to destinations in the local area for their everyday needs via active means.

Public Transport

- There are two sets of bus stops within 200m of the site, or less than five minutes' walk. There are frequent and regular bus services to Bluewater Shopping Centre, Ebbsfleet International Station, and Northfleet via the 483 service.
- The site is therefore considered to be extremely well located with respect to existing bus stops, which offer regular services to Dartford, Bluewater Shopping Centre, and other local settlements for shopping and leisure facilities.

Rail Services

- Gravesend Railway Station is approximately 500m from the site, along a route with pedestrian crossings across Wrotham Road and Rathmore Road, providing a continuous, safe route for walking to and from the station.
- High Speed 1 Train Services are available from Gravesend Railway Station to London St Pancras twice per hour, every day of the week. These services also stop at Ebbsfleet International Station. The journey time from Gravesend to St Pancras on the high speed trains is 24 minutes. Services are also available on slower trains to Charing Cross and London Bridge.
- The site is highly accessible to the existing town facilities with numerous shops, services and a post office, and recreation areas within an easy five- to ten- minute walk of the site.

In conclusion, it is considered that the site is in an extremely accessible central town centre location and that there would be excellent opportunities for journeys from the site to be made by sustainable modes of travel.

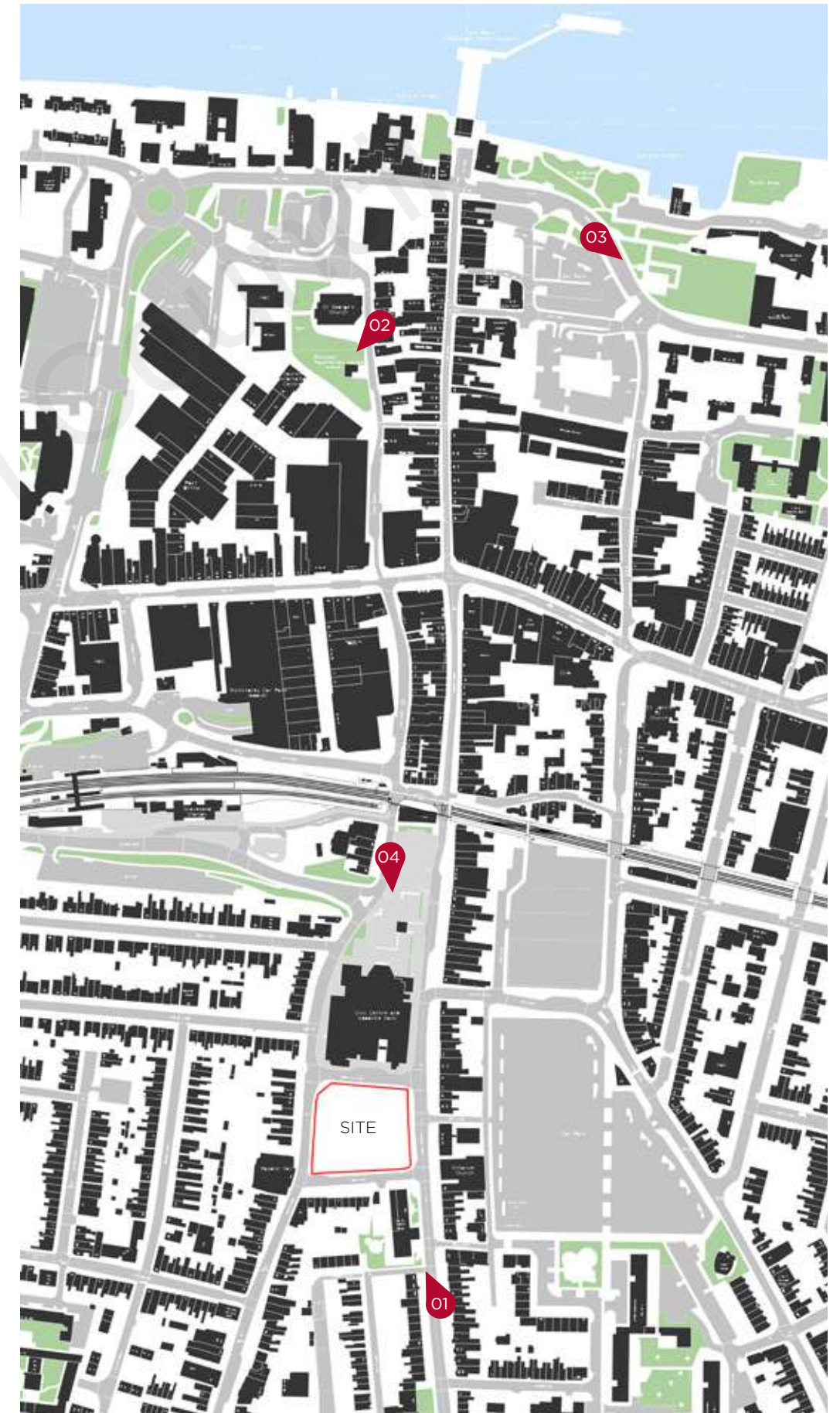
2 ASSESSMENT

2.4 Nature

The following images highlight the extent of private/public amenity and vegetation to the front of properties within the local context :



- From the distribution of green space diagram and site photos it is evident that the immediate context is characterised by large areas of hard standing, fore-gardens with limited planting (where once greening that provided relief to the urban grain have been replaced by parking forecourts) and some street scene trees which flank the eastern boundary of the site on Windmill Street and western boundary along Wrotham Road.
- The closest area of public space is the square to the front of the Civic centre to the north which is hard landscaped with the exception of newly planted trees and associated seating (fig. 04)
- It is necessary to move further north toward the town centre and coastline to find meaningful examples of green public space; the Statue of Pocohontas in the gardens surrounding St Georges Church on Princes St. (fig.02), and the small park along Crooked Lane (fig.03) are the only references accessible to the public to note along the Windmill Street axis.
- There is a lack of green amenity space in the immediate vicinity of the site, which is noted in the Upper Windmill Street Conservation area appraisal.



Distribution of green space

2 ASSESSMENT

2.5 Built form - Context Analysis

- Gravesend is a medium-sized commuter town with high-speed rail services to central London and good connections by road to the M25. Owing to its geographical position on the Thames it retains strong links to its maritime and communications history and this is evident in the pattern of development, the period of buildings and typology of its townscape.
- There are three main arterial axes that link the suburbs of the town to the coastline and town centre, with Windmill Street where the site is located, being one of these. Historically this was a major thoroughfare for trade which connects to the High street before terminating at the Gravesend Pier.
- The site is located relatively close to the town centre and railway station on this main distributor road; development along this axes is a mix of typology and of a scale that varies from the 2-4 storey Regency/ Victorian style terrace to the more recent post-modern additions of the Civic Centre and Cygnet House both at 6 storeys that straddle the site to the north and south. The threshold between the pavement edge and the building line is typically defined by drives and fore-gardens bound by brick piers and railing.
- The pattern of development along secondary roads (which includes Wrotham Road and Zion Place) is typically more compact with a mix of smaller scale terrace and semi-detached housing ranging in height between 2 and 3 storeys. To the east there are two large areas of hardstanding which serve the town as open-air car parks which up until the late 1970s/ 80s was a neighbourhood of terraces along the now non-existent Peppercroft street.
- Other examples that break the Urban grain are the modern developments in the town centre, notably along the High street, and includes the Shopping Centre, Retail Parks and Hospital.



■ 1 Storey	■ 3 Storey	
■ 2 Storey	■ 4-5 Storey	■ 6 Storey



Figure / ground map



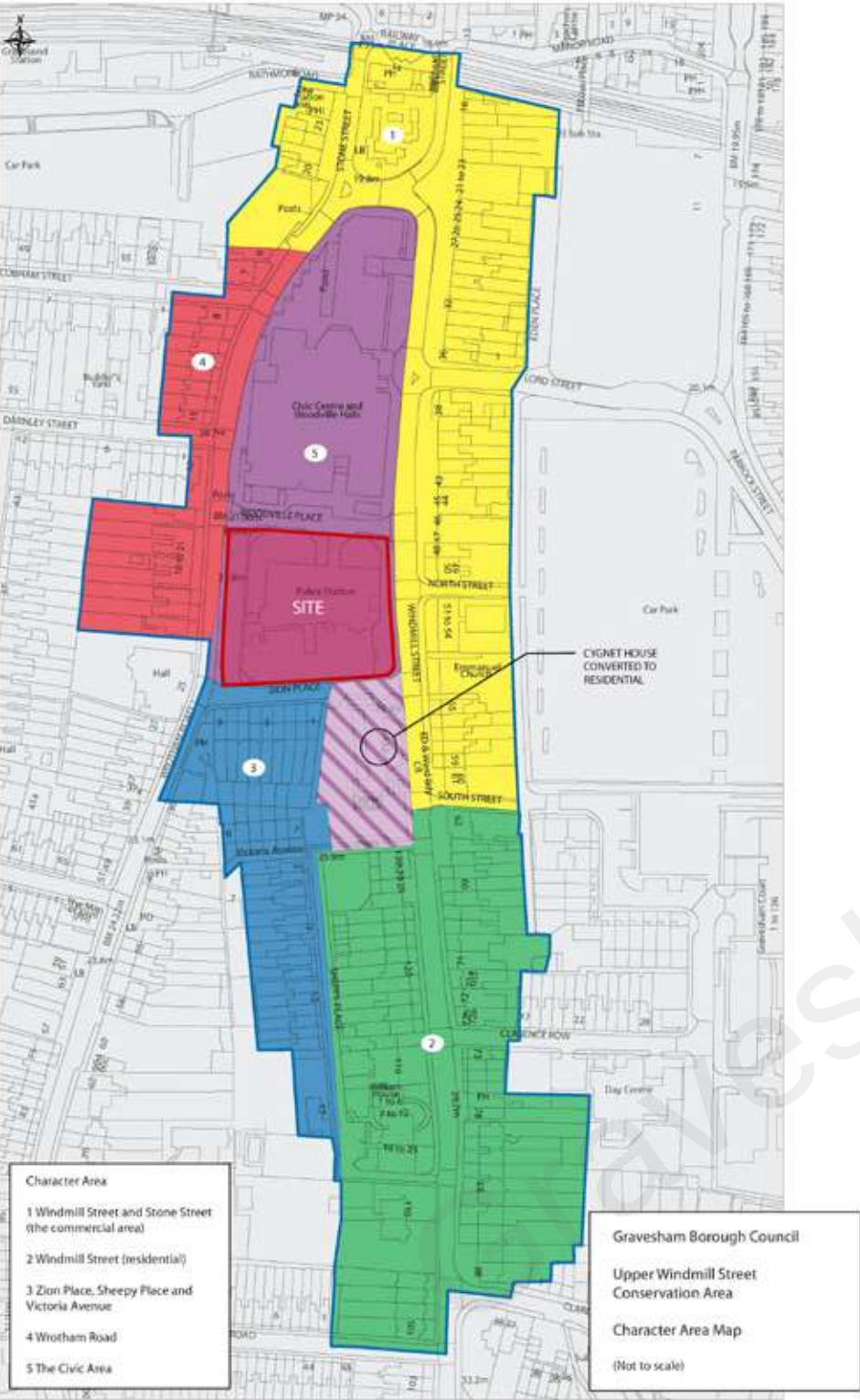
Building height map



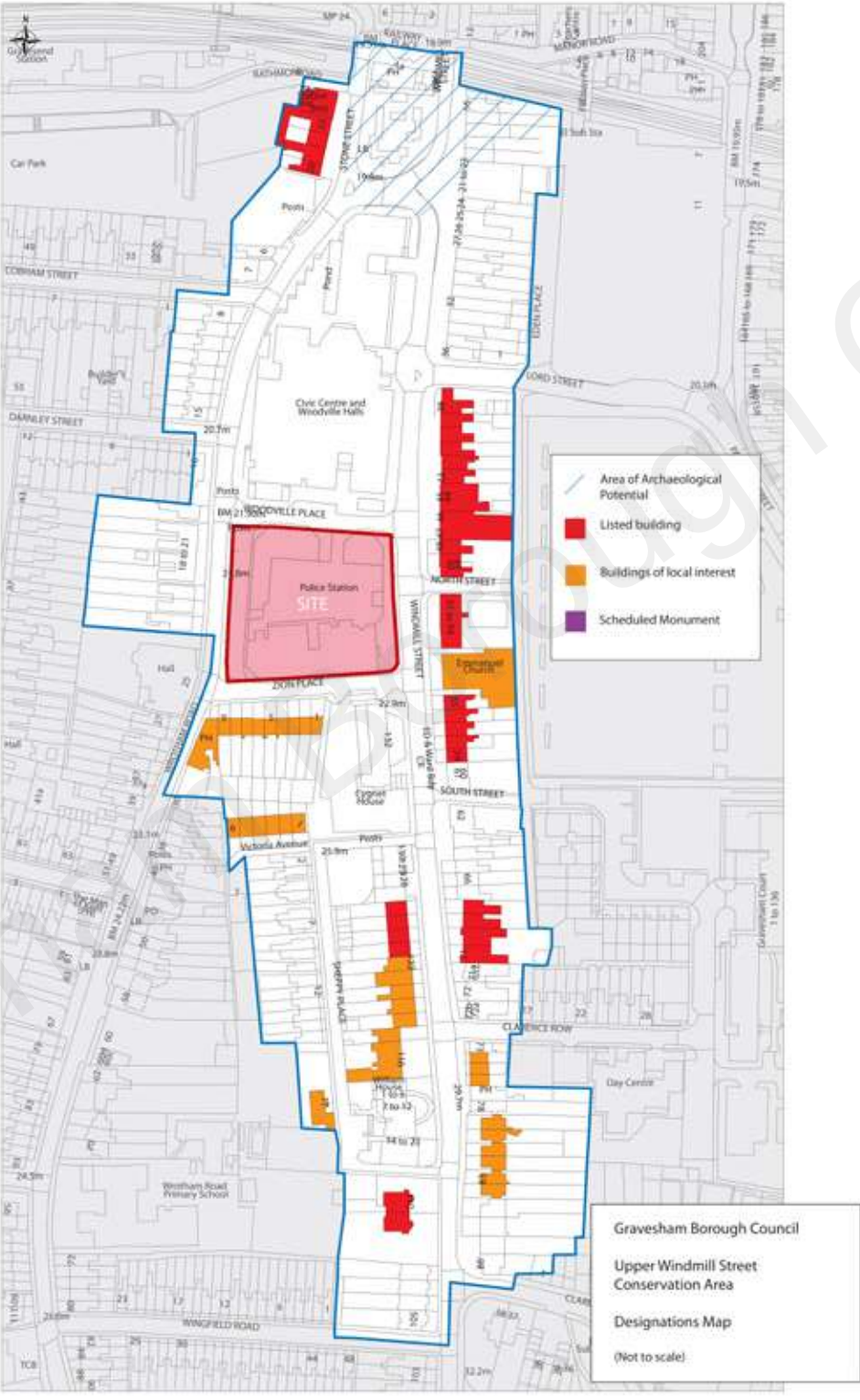
Examples large footprints in wider context to site

2 ASSESSMENT

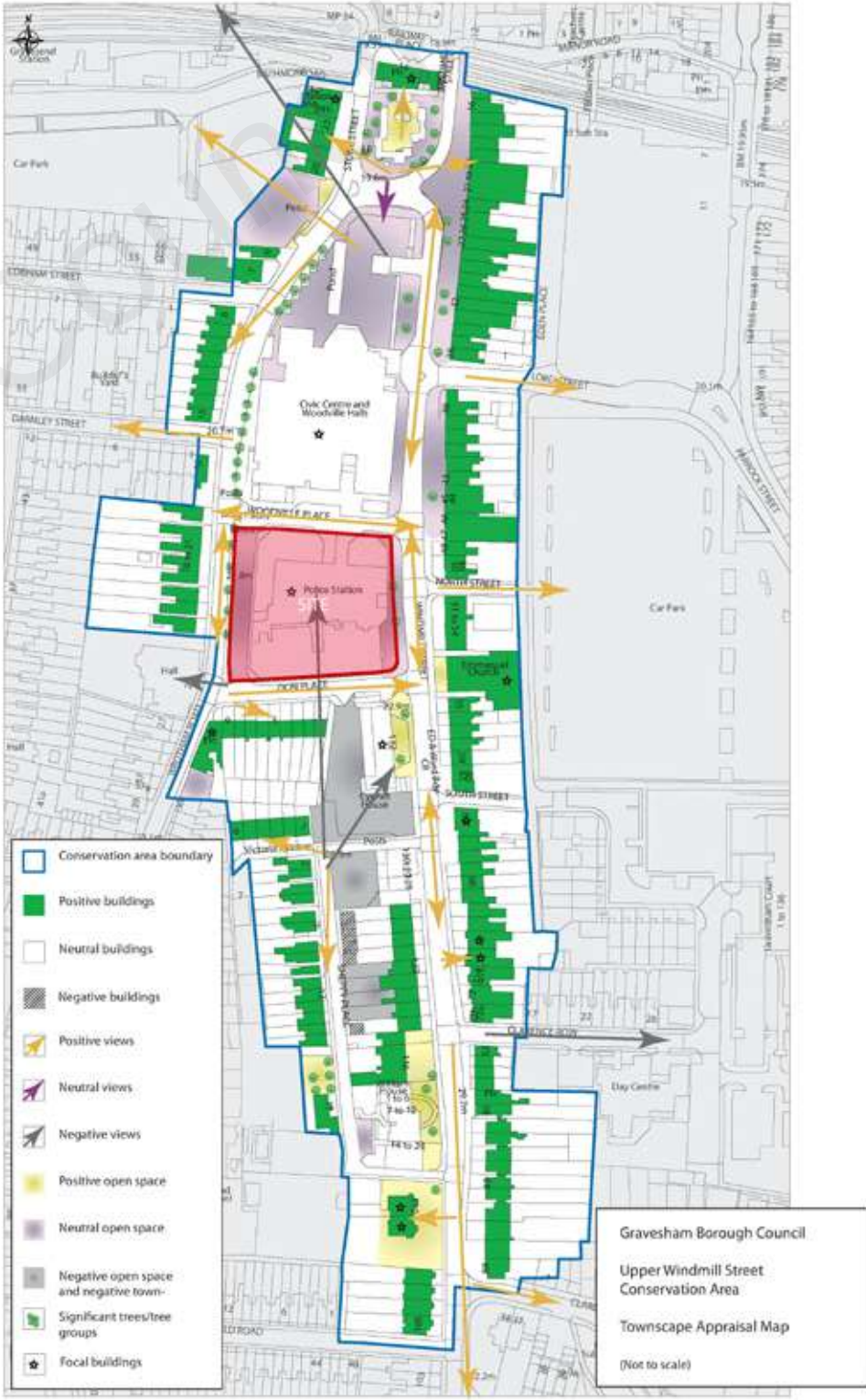
2.5 Built form



Character areas



Listed Buildings



Positive / Negative Impact

2 ASSESSMENT

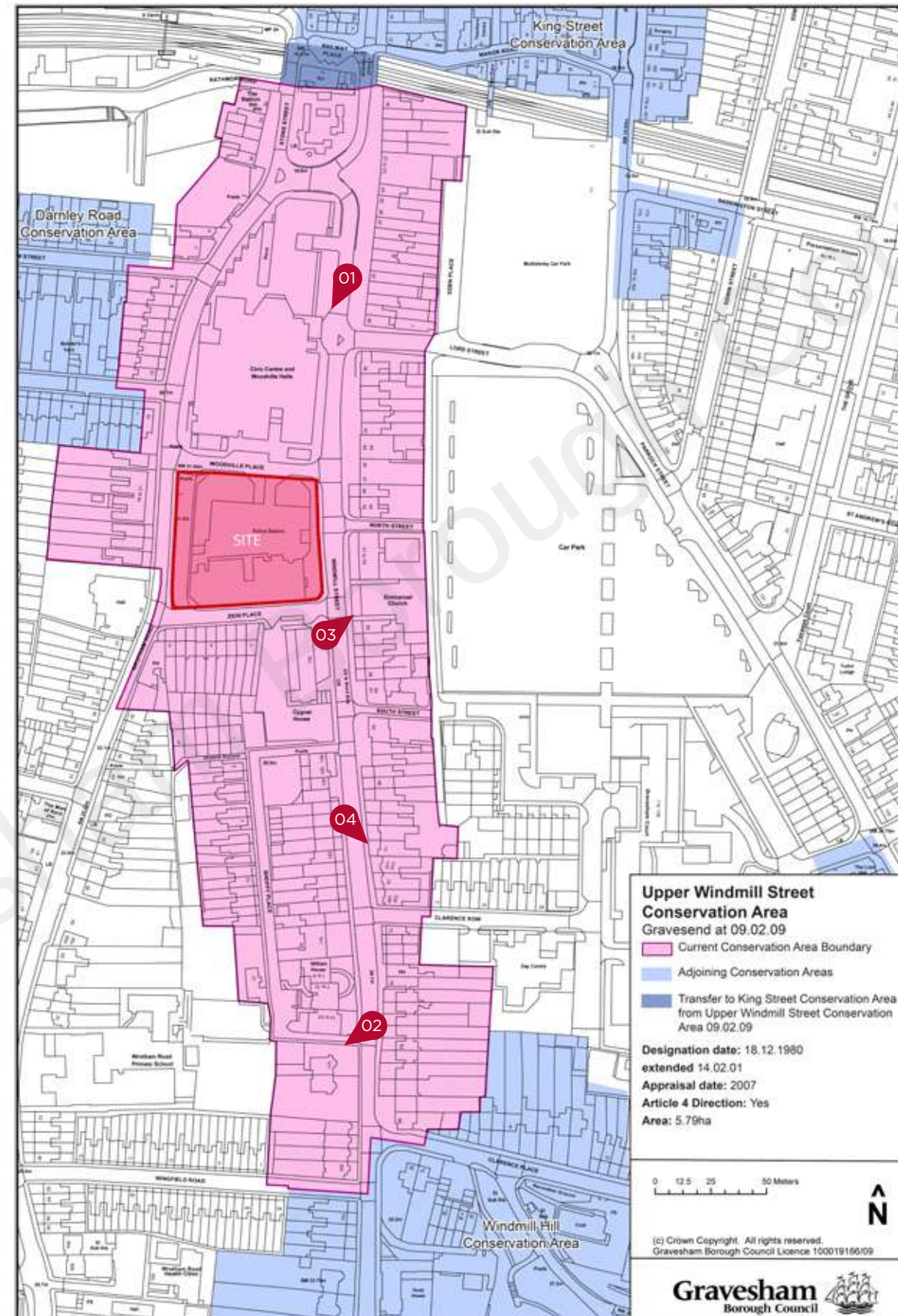
2.5 Built form

The proposed site sits within the Upper Windmill Street Conservation area which borders adjoining conservation areas to the southeast, west and north. Therefore particular attention and design response to the Conservation area appraisal produced by Gravesend Borough Council will be necessary to produce a contextual and sympathetic design which responds to the character areas and notable listed / unlisted buildings within these areas.

'The scale of the Civic Centre, Gravesend Police Station and Cygnet House make them the principal landmarks within the Conservation Area. These three 20th century buildings are six storeys at their highest, dwarfing the surrounding 19th century development.'

The Conservation Area is focused around the linear route of Windmill Street. The land rises as the street progresses south up towards Windmill Hill, giving extended views north and south along the street. Looking south up Windmill Street, Tivoli House, just outside this Conservation Area, is set high above the surrounding buildings, and provides a termination point to the view.'

*Upper Windmill Street
Conservation Area Appraisal, 2009*



The principal landmarks in the *Upper Windmill Street, Gravesend Conservation Area* are:

- The Civic Centre;
- Gravesend Police Station;
- Cygnet House;
- The Railway Tavern;
- Emmanuel Baptist Church;
- Milton Hall;
- Nos. 70-71 Windmill Street;
- Nos. 109-110 Windmill Street;
- No. 16 Wrotham Road.



Gravesend Civic Centre



109-110 Windmill Street



Emmanuel Baptist Church



70-71 Windmill Street

2 ASSESSMENT

2.6 Identity

The photos on this page are from the immediate site context along Windmill St and represent the typology and characteristics of local vernacular within the context of the site. Key building features and attributes of note are:

- Mix of London stock / Buff brick / Darker stained buff brick
- Painted rendered facade
- Rusticated decorative render
- Mansard or hipped/ pitched roof in slate tile or similar
- Black or white gutter / drainpipe
- Dormer windows
- Georgian proportion / style windows with decorative surrounds
- Decorative banding
- Splayed brick header in contrasting brick stock / colour
- Juliette balcony
- Black iron railing with brick piers bounding fore-gardens



Dark buff brick work with white rendered ground floor. Georgian period windows, contrasting brick headers and fore-garden with black railing boundary.



Five-storey terrace pair with contrasting buff brick. Decorative banding, splayed window headers, Juliette balcony and clear hierarchy of window proportions.



Georgian proportion windows with Juliette balcony and splayed window header.



Decorative banding and moulding to parapet, window and door openings.



Decorative banding and rusticated render to ground floor.



Splayed brick header in contrasting brick with dormer windows to slate mansard roof.



Rendered facade with rusticated ground floor section. Decorative moulding to window surrounds and Juliette balconies.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.6 Identity

Key attributes of note along the lesser influential elevations along Zion Place and Wrotham Road share many of the characteristics of Windmill Street and are as follows:

- Mix of London stock / Buff brick / Darker stained buff brick
- Painted rendered facade
- Hipped/ pitched roof in slate tile or similar
- Black or white gutter / drainpipe
- Georgian proportion / style windows with decorative surrounds
- Decorative banding
- Splayed / arched brick header in contrasting brick stock / colour
- Juliette balcony
- Black iron railing with brick piers bounding fore-gardens



Georgian proportion windows with Juliette balcony and splayed window header. Decorative render banding contrasting with brick.



Decorative banding and moulding to window and door openings.

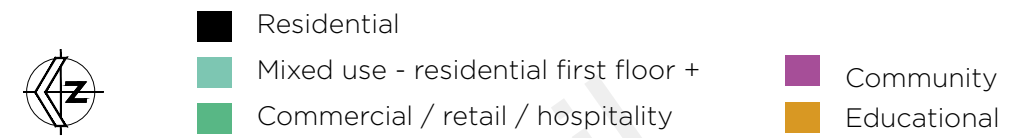


Pair of terraces characterised by contrasting buff / yellow brick stock with white rendered ground floor banding and solid front doors in traditional style.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.7 Uses

From this building uses map it is identified that there is a strong residential presence in the immediate area to the proposed site. With exception to the north where the Civic centre is located, there are residential buildings on all flanks of the site with split use properties along Windmill Street with office use at ground floor and residential accommodation above.



3 INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Churchill Retirement Living submitted a pre-application enquiry to Gravesham Borough Council on 23rd November 2021. A pre-application meeting was held on the 20th January 2022 with written advice issued on the 17th March 2022.

While Officer feedback has been carefully considered, Officers expressed a preference for the courtyard-led layout that characterised historic proposals on the site. Churchill Retirement Living however do not consider historic designs for the site to be either feasible or effective and this is supported by fact that these schemes have been brought forward after obtaining planning permission.

Representatives of Churchill Retirement Living attended a meeting with the two of the three ward Councillors for Pelham ward on 10th March. A Council officer attended and the purpose of the meeting was to give an overview of the proposals. Churchill will continue to keep Councillors updated as matters progress.

Representatives of Churchill Retirement Living attended a meeting with the Assistant Director of Strategic Regeneration on the 18th March 2022. The purpose of the meeting was similarly to provide an overview of the site and to facilitate a site visit. Again, further information and updates will be provided as the application progresses.



PRE APPLICATION SITE PLAN scale 1:500

3 INVOLVEMENT

3.2. Pre application - Indicative Elevations



INDICATIVE STREET ELEVATION scale 1:200

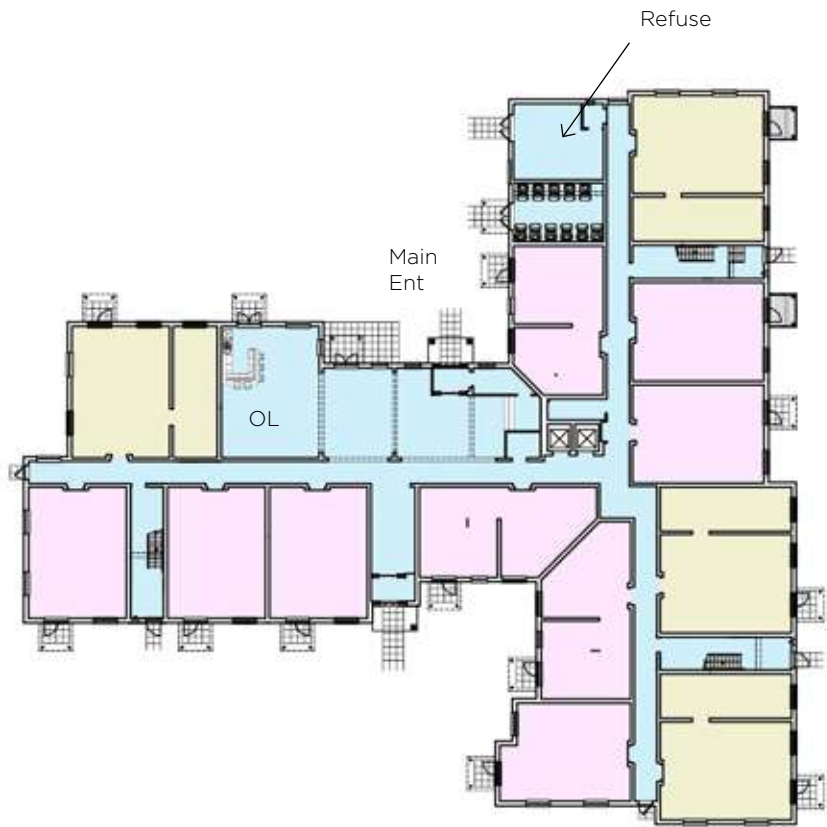


INDICATIVE EAST ELEVATION scale 1:200



3 INVOLVEMENT

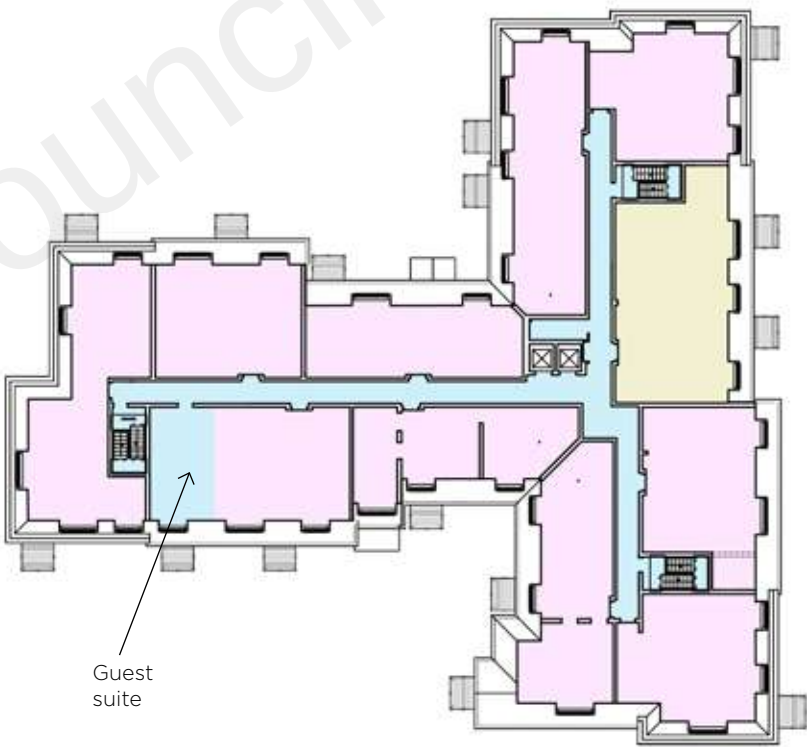
3.2. Pre application - Floor Plans



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST - THIRD FLOOR



FOURTH FLOOR PLAN



-  One bed apartment
-  Two bed apartment
-  Communals / Circulation
-  Owners lounge

3 INVOLVEMENT

3.2. Pre application - Site distances



INDICATIVE SITE DISTANCES PLAN scale 1:500

3 INVOLVEMENT

3.3. Community engagement

An online public consultation was held online for one week from the 14th of March 2022. Consultation boards were live at <https://consultwithyou.co.uk/churchill/Gravesend>, with the option to call or email for a hard copy of the plans.

Letters were issued on 10th March 2022 to 479 addresses adjacent to, and within close proximity to the site in Pelham ward. Additionally, a 4-page A4 leaflet was hand delivered to local residential properties and businesses surrounding the site on 10th March. The leaflet provided additional information regarding the proposals, highlighting the benefits the scheme would provide for the local area. Details of the public consultation were also provided on the leaflet, inviting the residents to provide their comments on the proposals via the dedicated project website.

The letter provided an overview of the proposals and invited residents to submit their comments on the proposals via the project website. In addition to this, an article was written about the proposals and published on the Gravesend Messenger on the 14th March 2022.

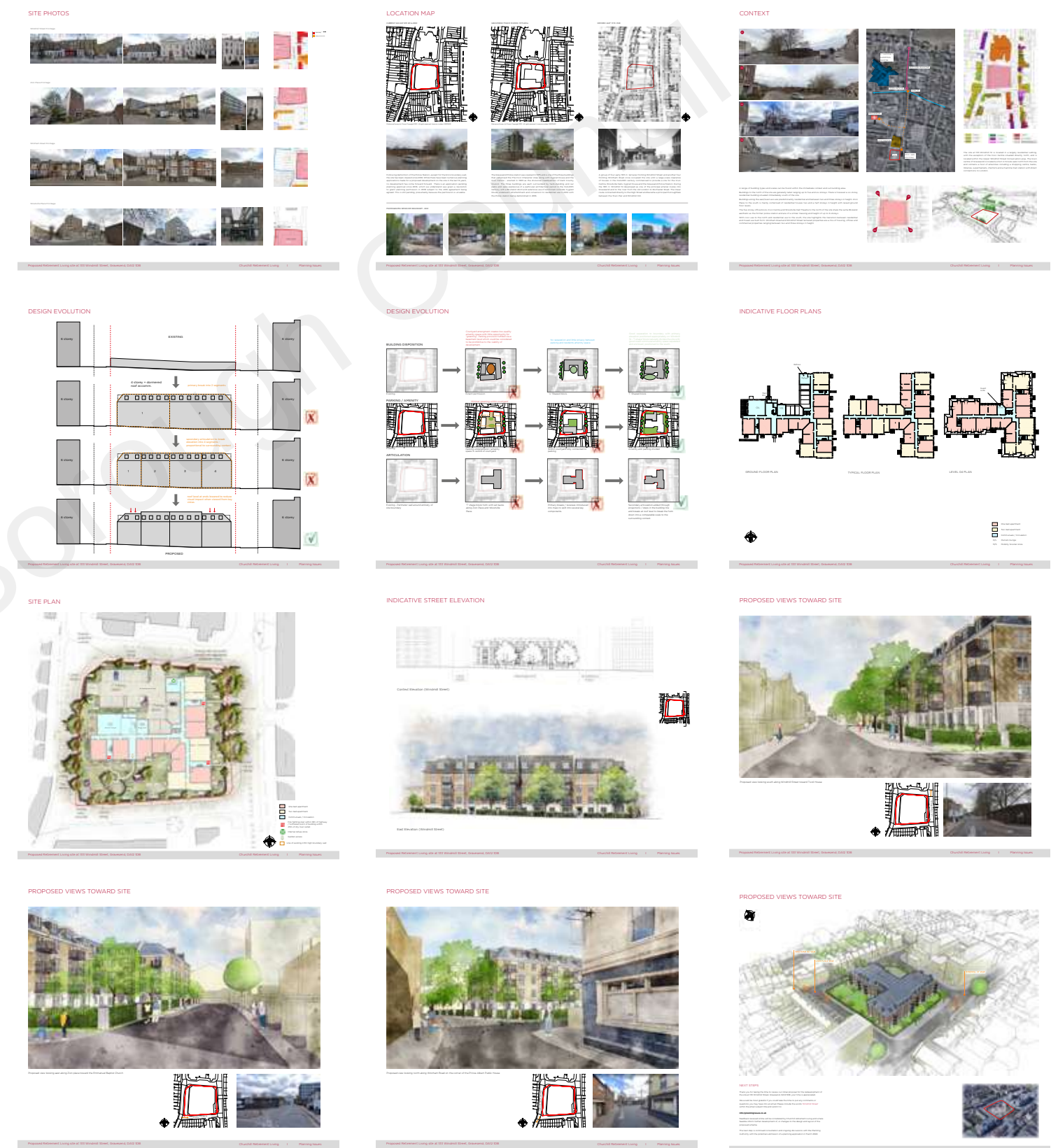
The article detailed information about the proposals and also contained the project website link and publicised the consultation to residents located within the wider area. The website included a virtual reality public exhibition with 21 downloadable exhibition boards with an interactive slider displaying the plans for the site, plus a form which could be used to provide feedback through a series of multiple choice and free-form questions. Between the 14th March and the 21st March the project website received 98 views by 54 users; from this we received a total of 3 responses.

A summary of the responses are:

- 66% of respondents support the proposed design.
- 100% of respondents were inclined to be supportive of the principle of redeveloping the site for retirement housing.

Overall, the feedback showed that many of the respondents recognised the important benefits the proposed scheme could provide in terms of health and social care provision locally, plus the significant increased expenditure at local businesses via the retirement living resident demographic.

Public Consultation board excerpt



3 INVOLVEMENT

3.3. Pre application [Public Consultation boards]

Site plan

Following a pre-application meeting with case officers, preliminary comments were made regarding the layout of the site plan in relation to the proportion of amenity space and car parking. In the pre-application site plan submitted, the car parking was positioned to straddle the building on both the north and south side of the site with the amenity space shared around these areas. Following this meeting, CRL followed advice to provide a more meaningful and segregated amenity space, with the car parking provision to be positioned solely at the north of the site with undercroft bays so as to maximise areas for landscaping and green screening. The south of the site is therefore designated entirely as private amenity garden area for residents, taking advantage of the sunniest aspect and most-peaceful pocket of this “island” site along the relatively quiet and non-congested Zion Place.

Further development to the elevations was also undertaken between the pre-application submission and public consultation boards to work greater embellishment and detail into the facade; therefore indicating the intent to be receptive to case officer advice and to design a building highly contextual and responsive to its position within the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area street-scene.



3 INVOLVEMENT

3.3. Pre application [Public Consultation boards]

Indicative Elevations



INDICATIVE STREET ELEVATION scale 1:200



INDICATIVE EAST ELEVATION scale 1:200