

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

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



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DATE: JAN'26


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TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

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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 Living in partnership with Housing 21 to support a detailed planning application for the redevelopment of the Former Police Station, 133 Windmill Street, Gravesend, DA12 1DB. The proposal seeks to deliver 67 one-bedroom affordable retirement apartments with associated communal facilities, access, parking and landscaping, in a highly accessible town-centre location close to local amenities.

Churchill Living will be the principle designer / contractor and will build out the site for handover and management by Housing 21. Housing 21 is a charitable, not-for-profit housing provider and a leading national specialist in the delivery of safe, high-quality and affordable homes for older people.

The application proposes revisions to the implemented permission for 75 units (ref: 2022043) to reflect both Housing 21’s operational requirements and long-term management objectives. While changes are introduced to align the development with Housing 21’s housing standards and to improve buildability, deliverability and viability in current market conditions, the proposal remains consistent with the overall design principles and planning objectives previously approved.

The document sets out the site context, identifies key constraints and opportunities, and explains how these have informed the design approach. It also demonstrates how the proposals respond to national and local planning policy.

The overarching objective is to deliver a high-quality, sustainable development that respects local character and provides much-needed specialist accommodation for older people in a safe, accessible and attractive 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.

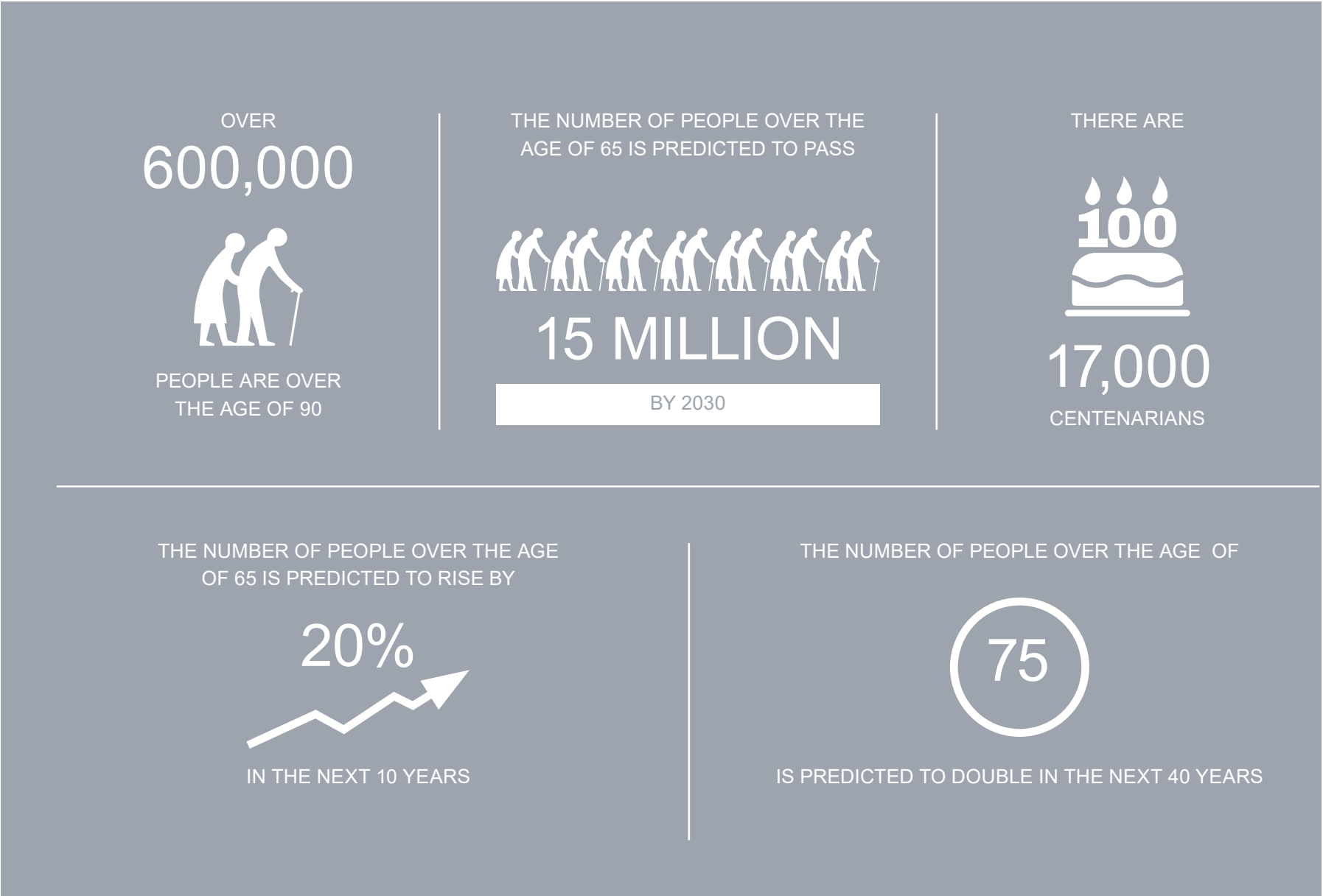
However the vast majority of our housing stock is not built with the needs of older people in mind. There are still far too few suitable new homes being delivered, and many older people are living in homes which are unable to meet their changing needs.

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.

Housing has a fundamental role to play in helping us live well for longer. Given that for most people mobility, sociability and income decrease in old age, it is not just about the home we occupy, but also about the place in which we live, who we live with and who we live close to. The right kind of housing can help people to stay healthy and support them to live independently for longer.



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 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

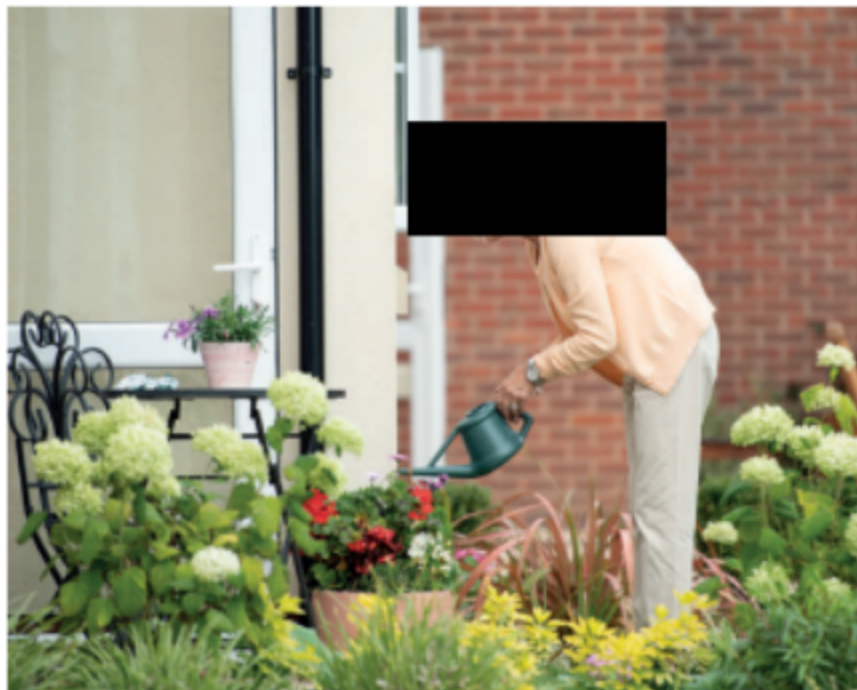
'Homes for Retirement Living', means specially designed housing suitable for older people who want to maintain independence and privacy but no longer want or need a family sized house.

This proposal is for age-restricted one 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.

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 'Resident's Lounge' which is the heart of the community and where residents often organise social events. There is usually a tea point associated with the Resident's Lounge.
- The presence of an on site Housing 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. Managers also create the community; organising events and trips.

- A limited number of entrances, usually one, that is close to the Housing Manager. This keeps the community secure and allows passive surveillance of the entrance area.
- Lift access to all floors with step free access throughout
- Each apartment with its own front door giving privacy whenever desired.
- An integrated 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:

- Retirement Developments 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 67 units proposed, at a ratio of 1.3 people per apartment, there will be around 87 occupants. At a saving of £3,500 each per year, this equates to a saving of £304,500 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 APPLICANTS - HOUSING 21 & CHURCHILL LIVING

WHO ARE HOUSING 21?

Housing 21 are a leading provider of safe, high quality and affordable properties for older people, empowering residents to live independently with on-site care or support. Housing 21 has more than 60 years of experience in designing and building properties for older people, offering a safe and secure environment with modern features and facilities.



WHO ARE CHURCHILL LIVING?

Churchill Living is a privately-owned British Company, highly trusted and respected within the housing industry. Churchill Living 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 170 developments and sold over 6,000 units. Through a group company, Churchill Estates Management, Churchill Living retain the operation, management, care and responsibility of every apartment of their completed developments. Housing has a fundamental role to play in helping us live well for longer. Given that for most people mobility, sociability and income decrease in old age, it is not just about the home we occupy, but also about the place in which we live, who we live with and who we live close to. The right kind of housing can help people to stay healthy and support them to live independently for longer.

“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+ residents.”

1 INTRODUCTION

1.6 APPLICANT BRIEF

Site selection close to amenities and in an area with identified need is key in the first instance. Planning Issues have had a clear brief on the specific requirements of Housing 21 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;
- 100% affordable one bedroom apartments.
- 4 storeys maximum to avoid build complications with progressive collapse and aspects of the Building Safety Act associated with developments above 11m.
- Increased plant provision to meet Housing 21 strategy for energy / building performance.
- Internal level access throughout;
- Single secure entrance from the car park area to maintain passive security from on site Housing Manager over the parking area and ease of entrance for residents. 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 Housing Manager with their own office);
- Communal Resident Lounge, including tea point;
- Accessible & secondary toilet;
- 2 x central lifts 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. There are 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 greater average age of residents 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.

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.

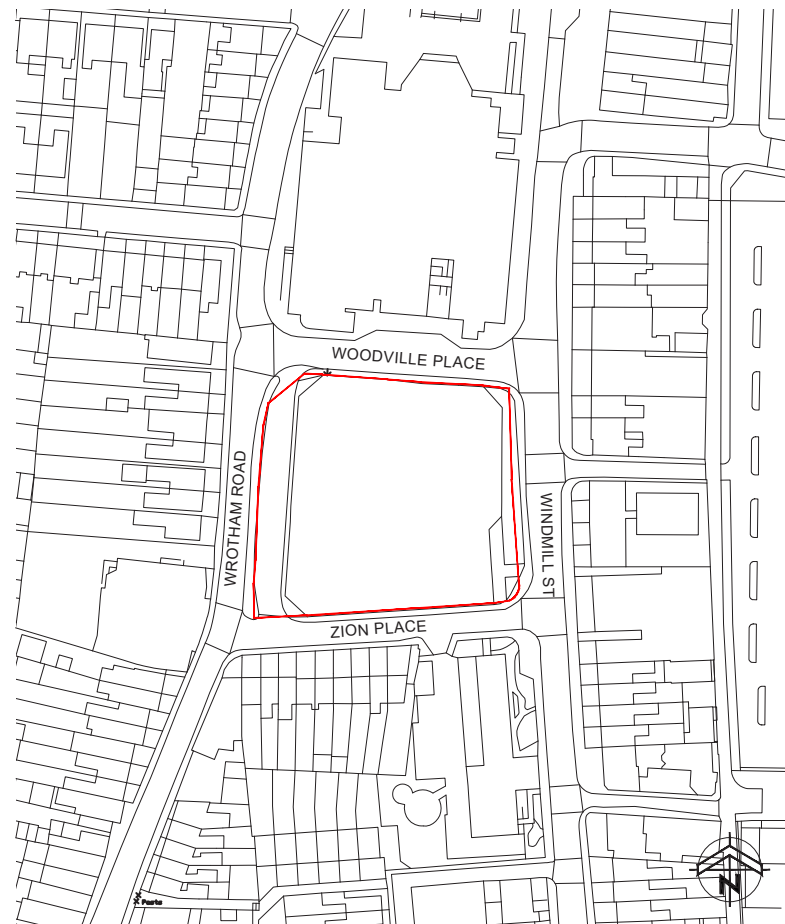
The site itself benefits from excellent pedestrian routes and infrastructure links - there are two bus stops immediately accessible on Windmill Street south of the site. From the site there is a relatively level and un-obstructed route into town. It is therefore considered that the proposed development 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

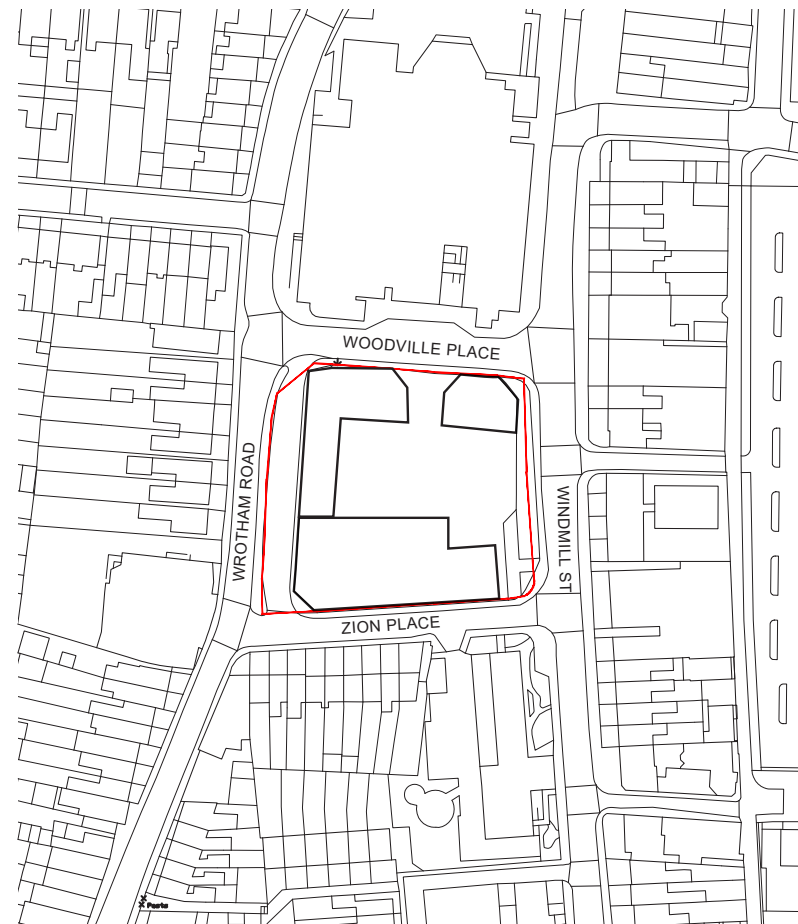


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Following demolition of the Police Station, except for the brick boundary wall, the site has been cleared since 2016. While there have been numerous planning applications made for a proposed development on the site in the last 15 years, no development has come forward. The latest application was submitted and granted approval in 2023 for a 75 unit Churchill Living development (retirement housing). Since the latest approval was approved, the brick boundary wall has been demolished and site cleared.

GRAVESEND POLICE STATION 1975-2016

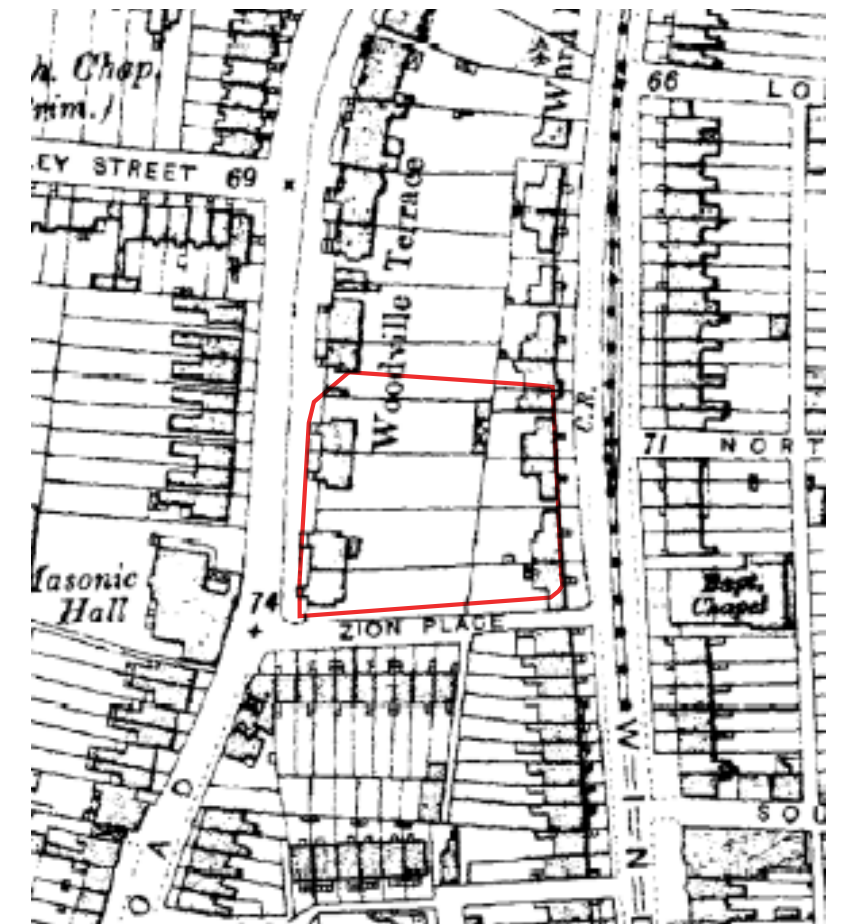


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The Gravesend Police station was opened in 1975 and was one of three buildings that comprised the The Civic Character Area, along with Cygnet House and the Civic Centre (1965). Hard-standing and car parking areas surround these dominant buildings, expressive of 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



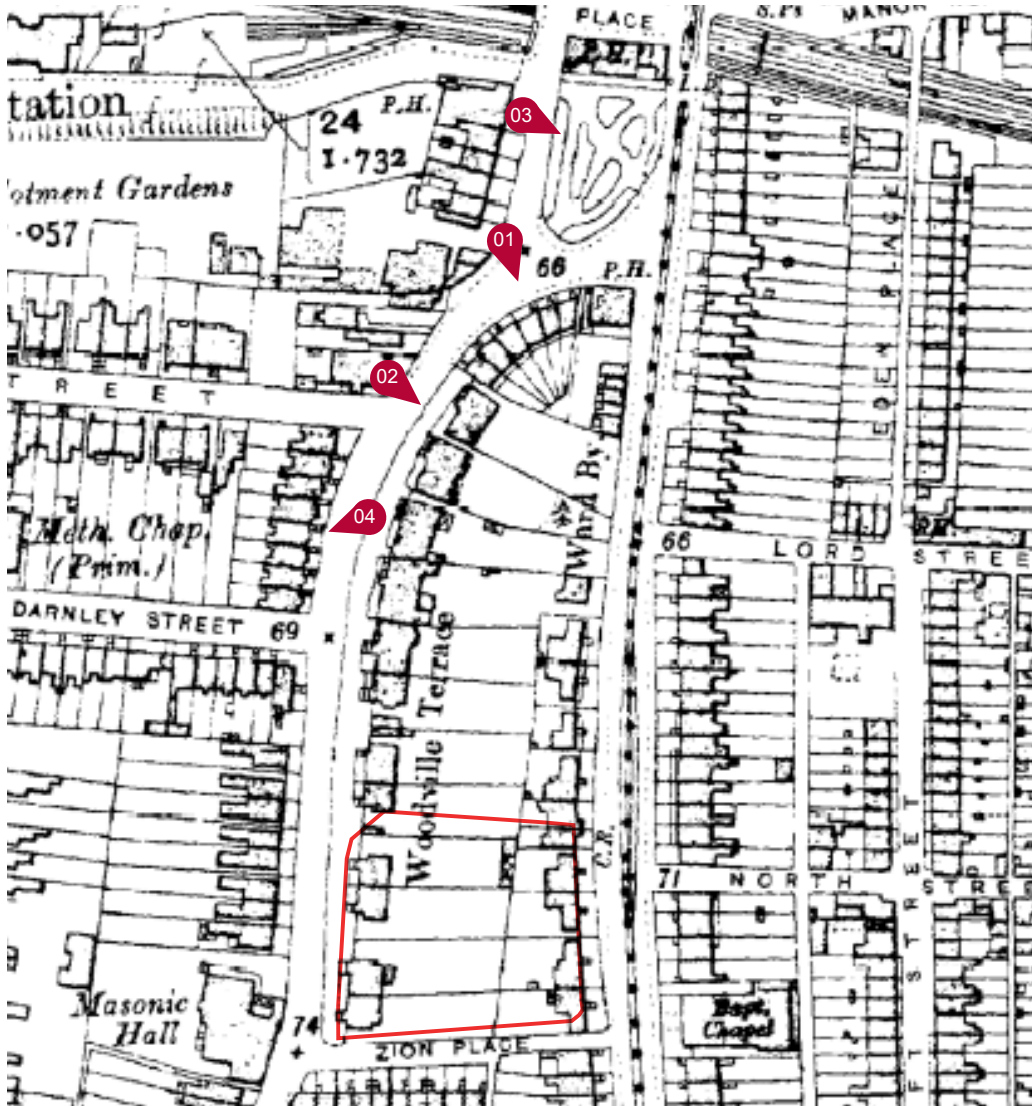
Woodville Terraces c.1960



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



Civic Centre from the same viewpoint as above c.2000



Historic OS map: 1892 - 1914



Woodville Gardens c.1960



Wrotham Road c.2021

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

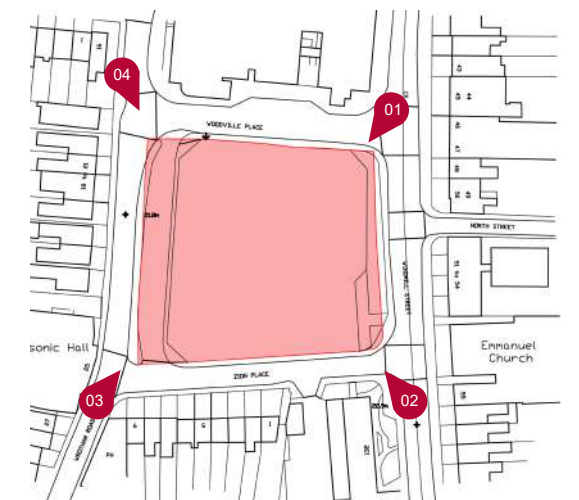


View from rear of Cygnet House looking North

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 SITE CONTEXT

- The brick boundary wall that once enclosed the site has been removed and the site has been cleared.
- The site is rectilinear in shape and is 0.36Ha, measuring approx 57m north to south and 63m east to west.
- The site is relatively flat however there is a rise from north to the south 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, with 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, broken with varied eave heights, feature gables, and stepped parapets with hipped roofs beyond.
- Topography aids 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 a range of shallow and steep roof pitches.
- 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 residential use with some commercial at ground floor nearer the Town Centre.
- Buildings tend to be set back from the pavement edge 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.
- Urban character.
- Terraced houses are occasionally broken by small groups of paired villas.
- Multi-paned sliding sash windows.
- Decorative eave detailing.
- 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.
- A terrace of nine houses (built in identical form) date 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 edge 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.
- Feature banding (render).
- Deep fascias with consistent eaves and ridge heights.
- 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

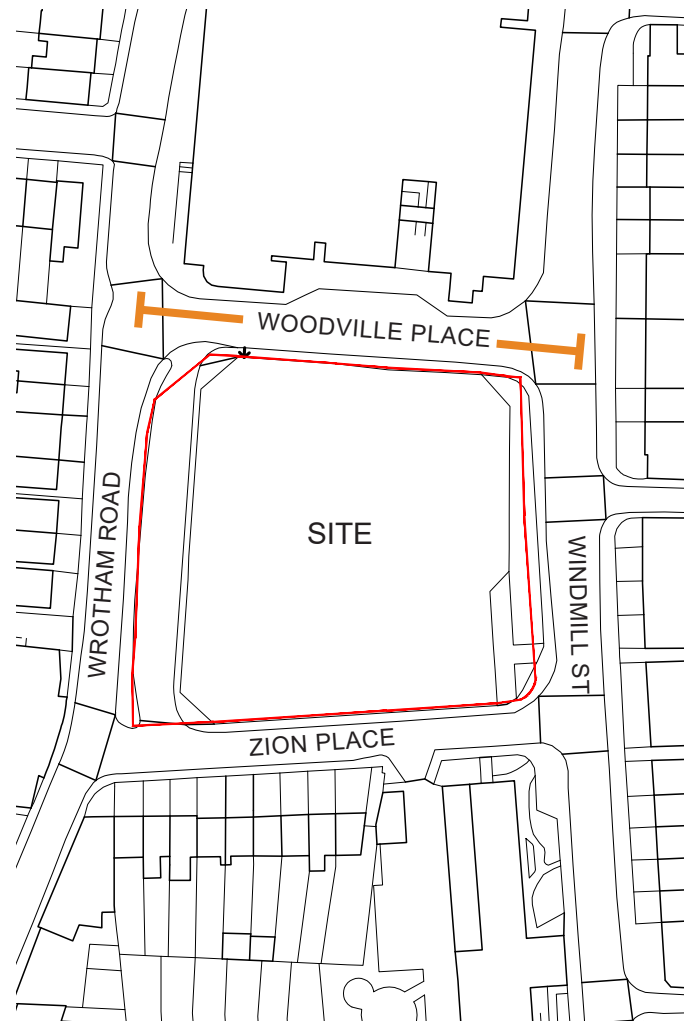


MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:

- Houses are of 2 - 2.5 storeys and semi-detached with minimal breaks between.
- Polychrome brickwork.
- Double-height canted bays with Corinthian columns to the corners have been painted white.
- Buildings are set back from the pavement edge 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 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 recently demolished boundary wall.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 CONTEXT - WOODVILLE PLACE FRONTAGE

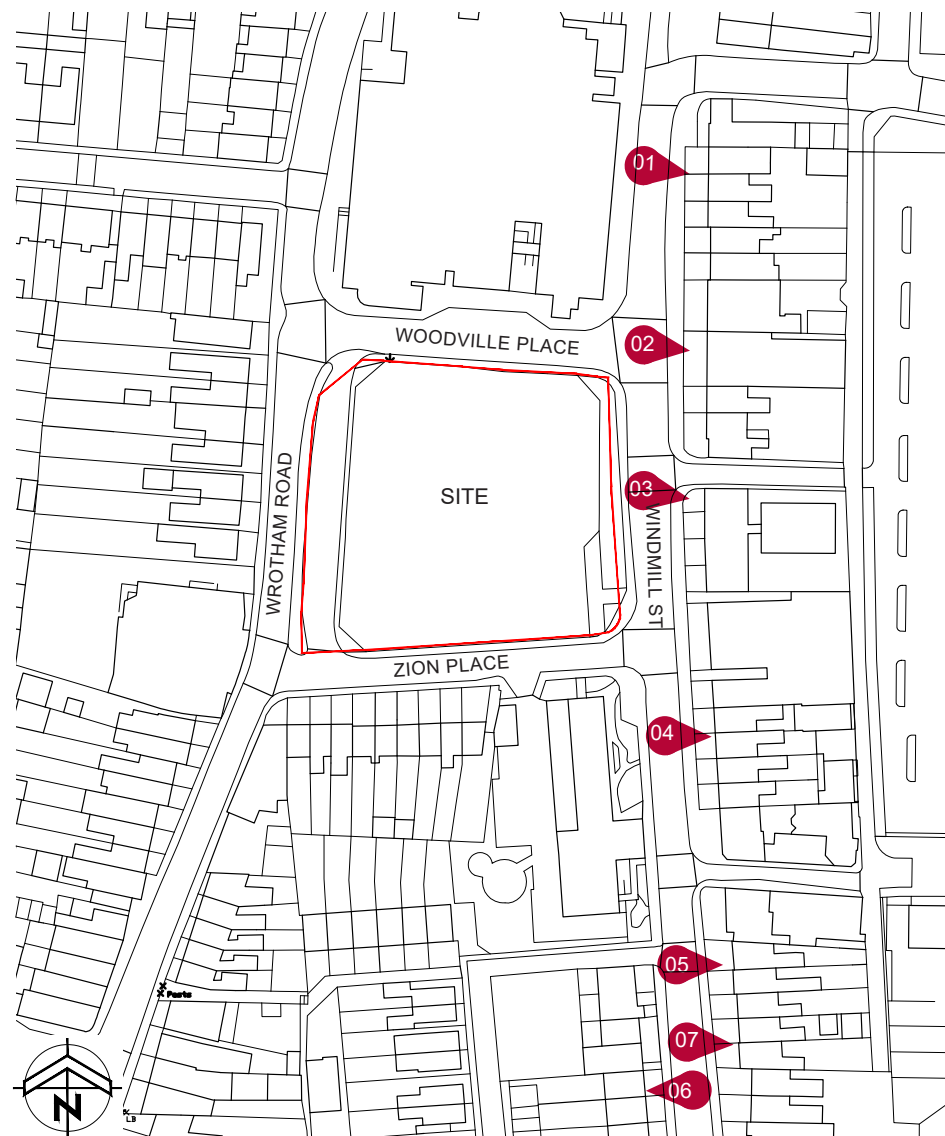


MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:

- 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.

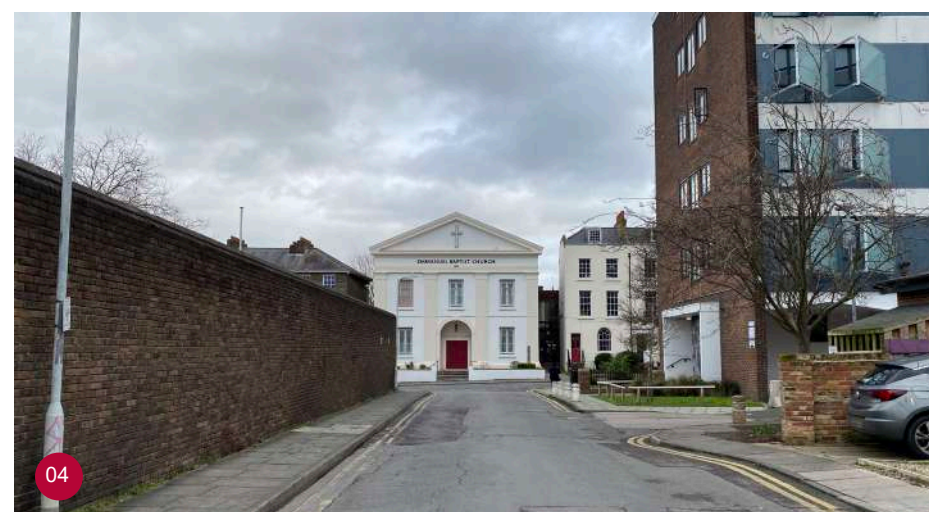
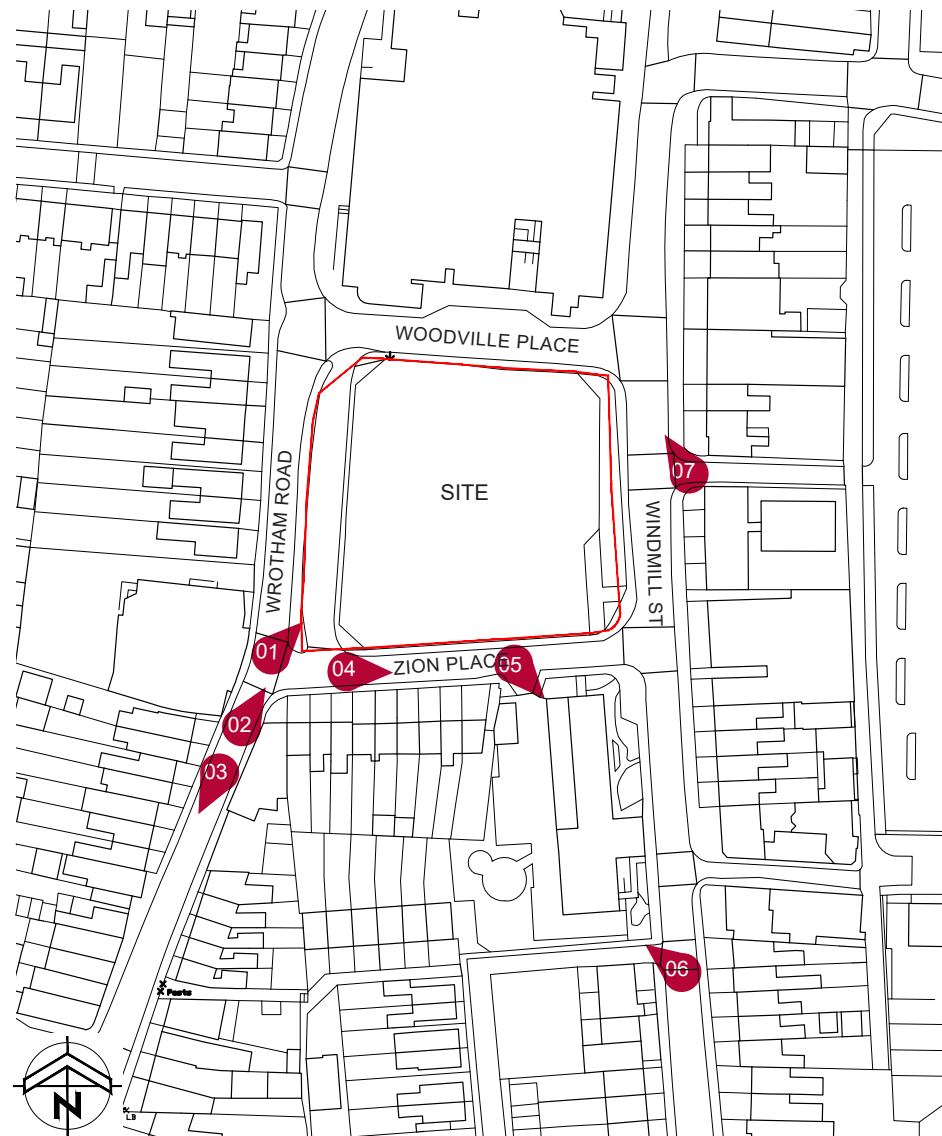
2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 IMMEDIATE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHS



2 ASSESSMENT

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2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 IMMEDIATE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo from within Site Boundary



Photo from within Site Boundary



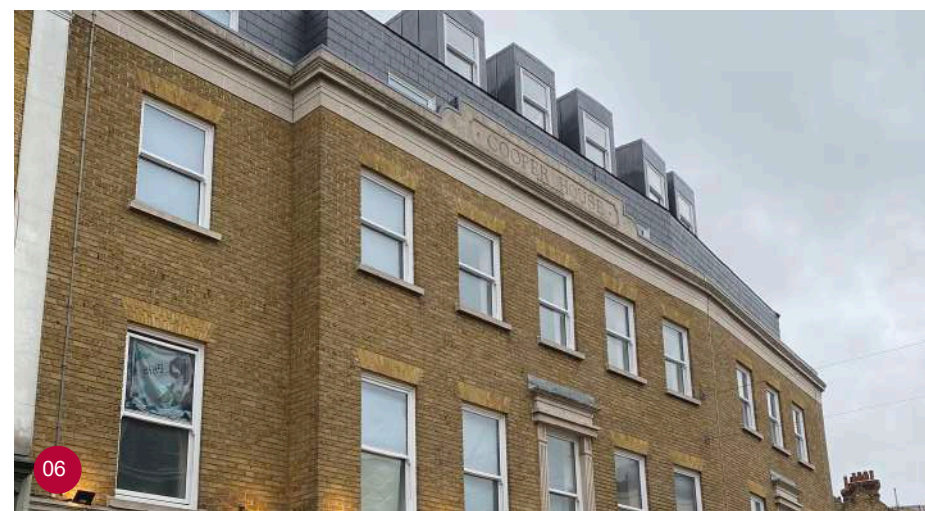
Photo from within Site Boundary



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 percentile 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.
- 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 cafés.
- With reference to GPJF Table 3.4 and Manual for Streets, 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.

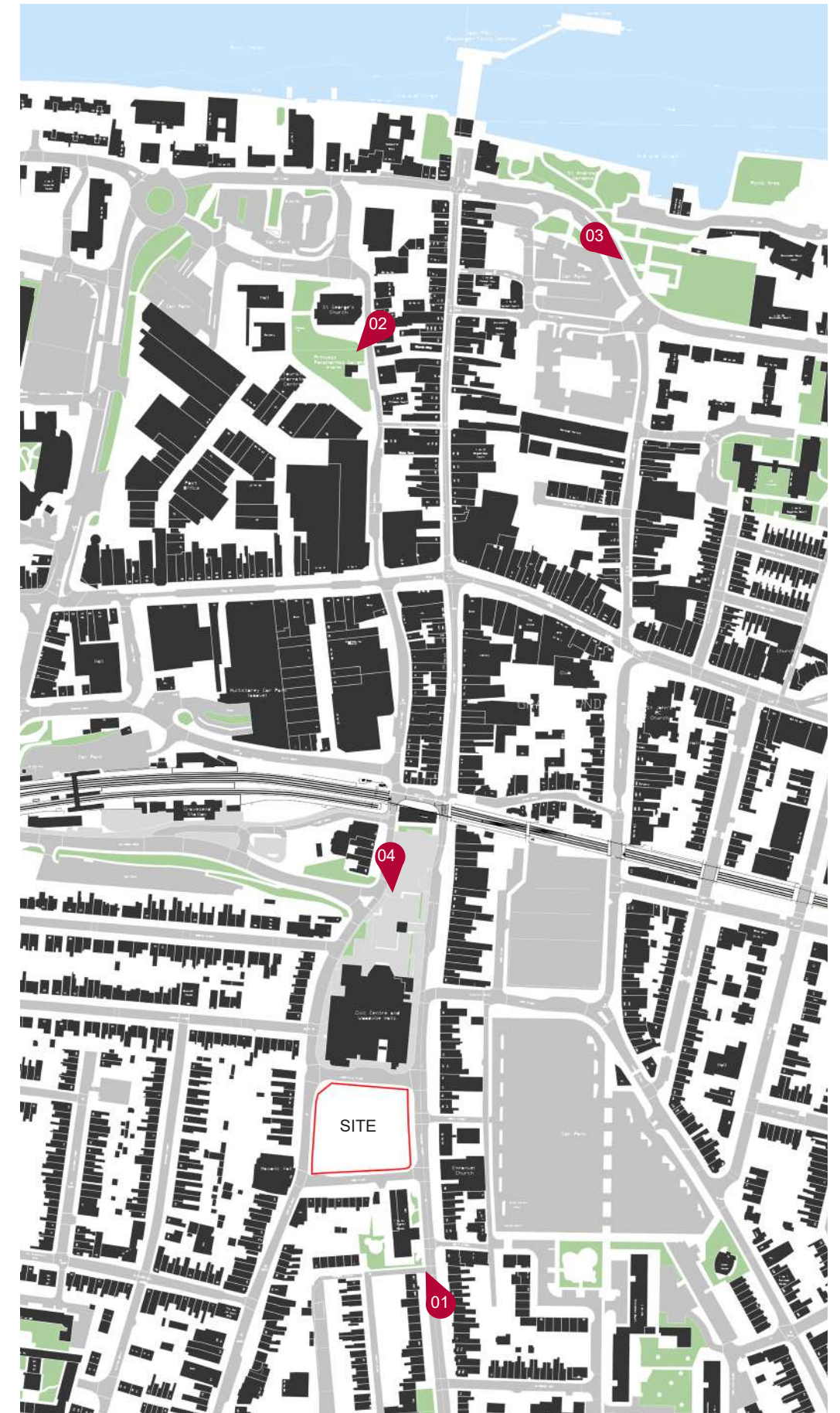
2 ASSESSMENT

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.



Figure / ground map



Building height map



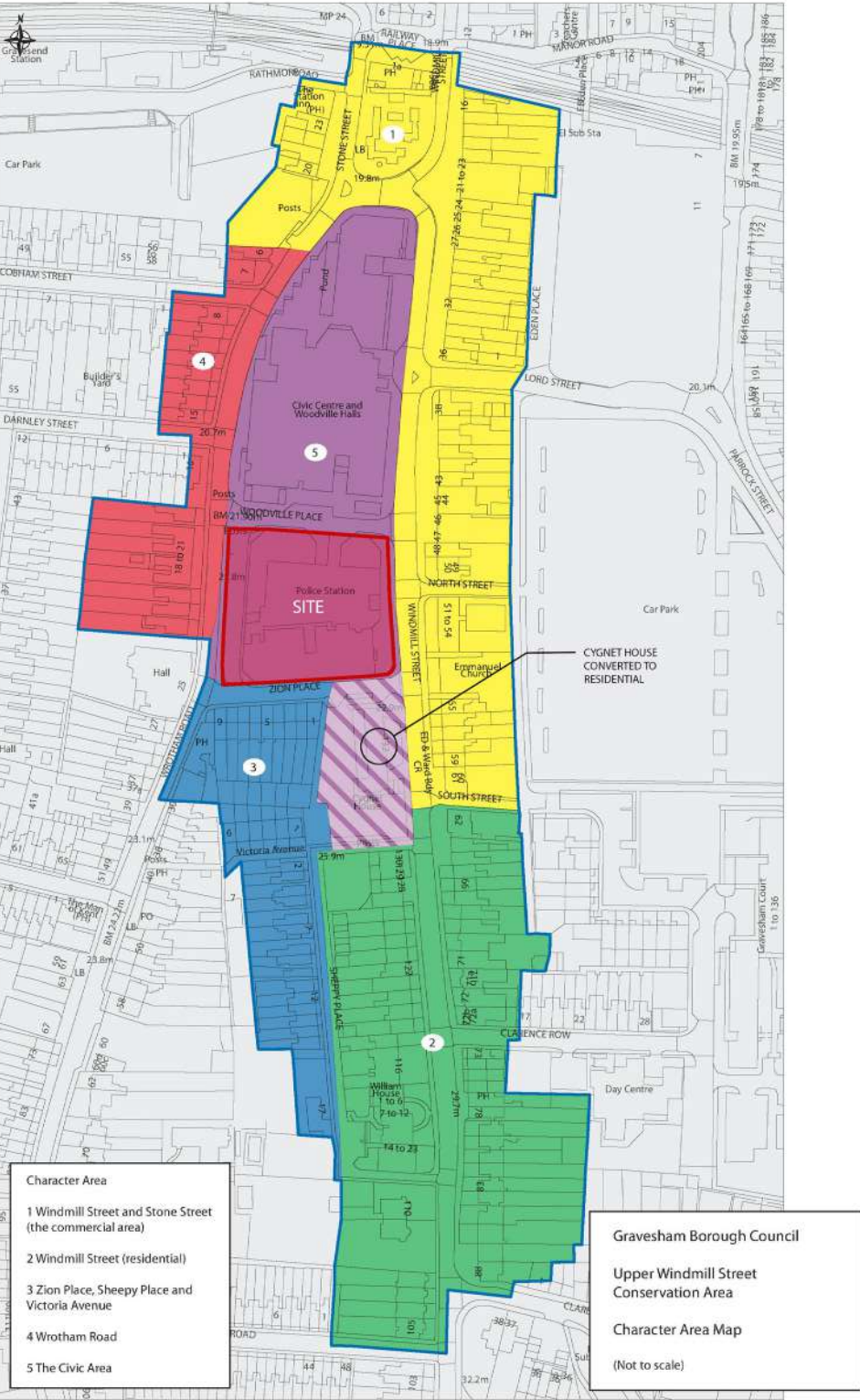
Examples large footprints in wider context to site



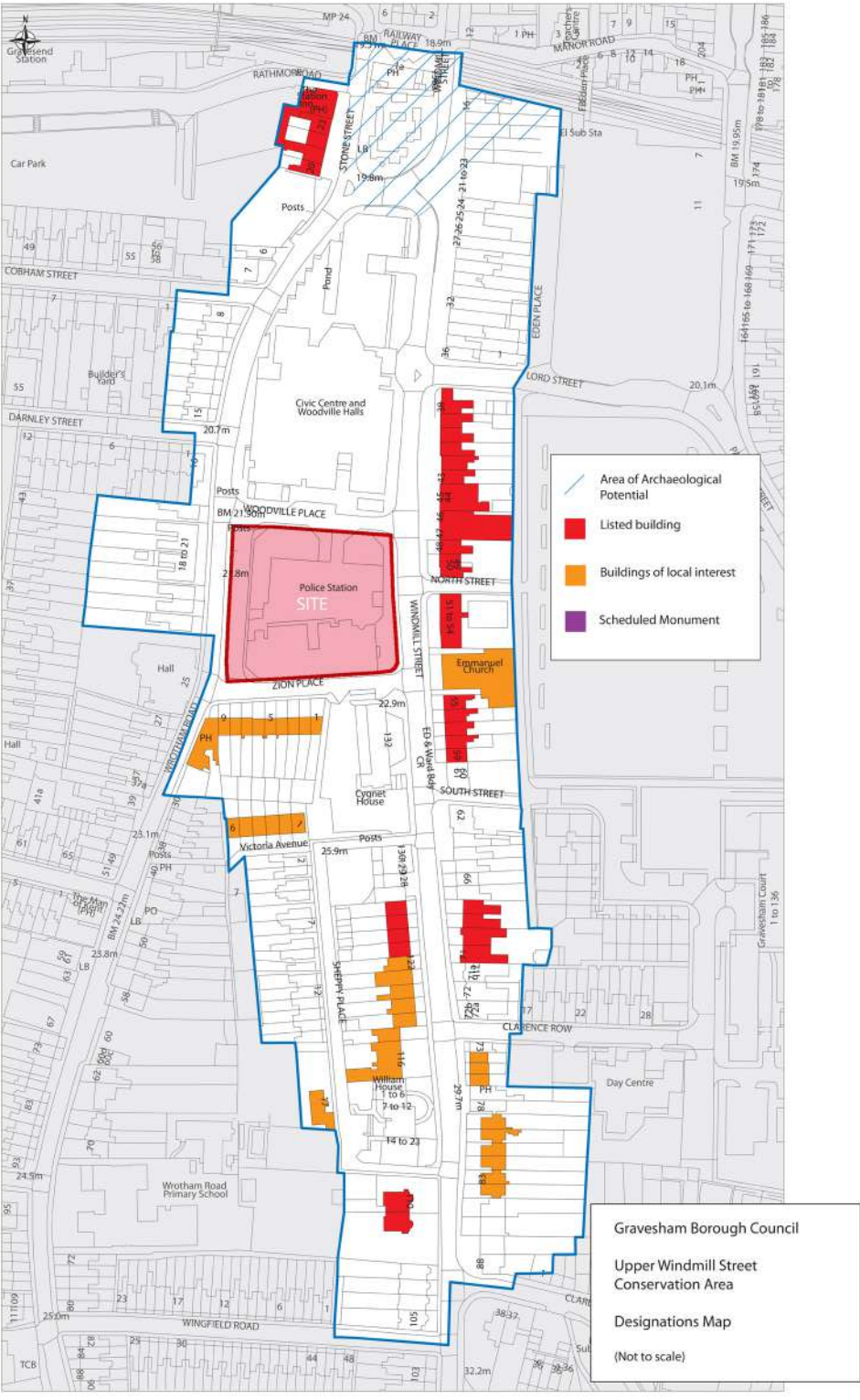
■ 1 Storey ■ 3 Storey
■ 2 Storey ■ 4-5 Storey ■ 6 Storey

2 ASSESSMENT

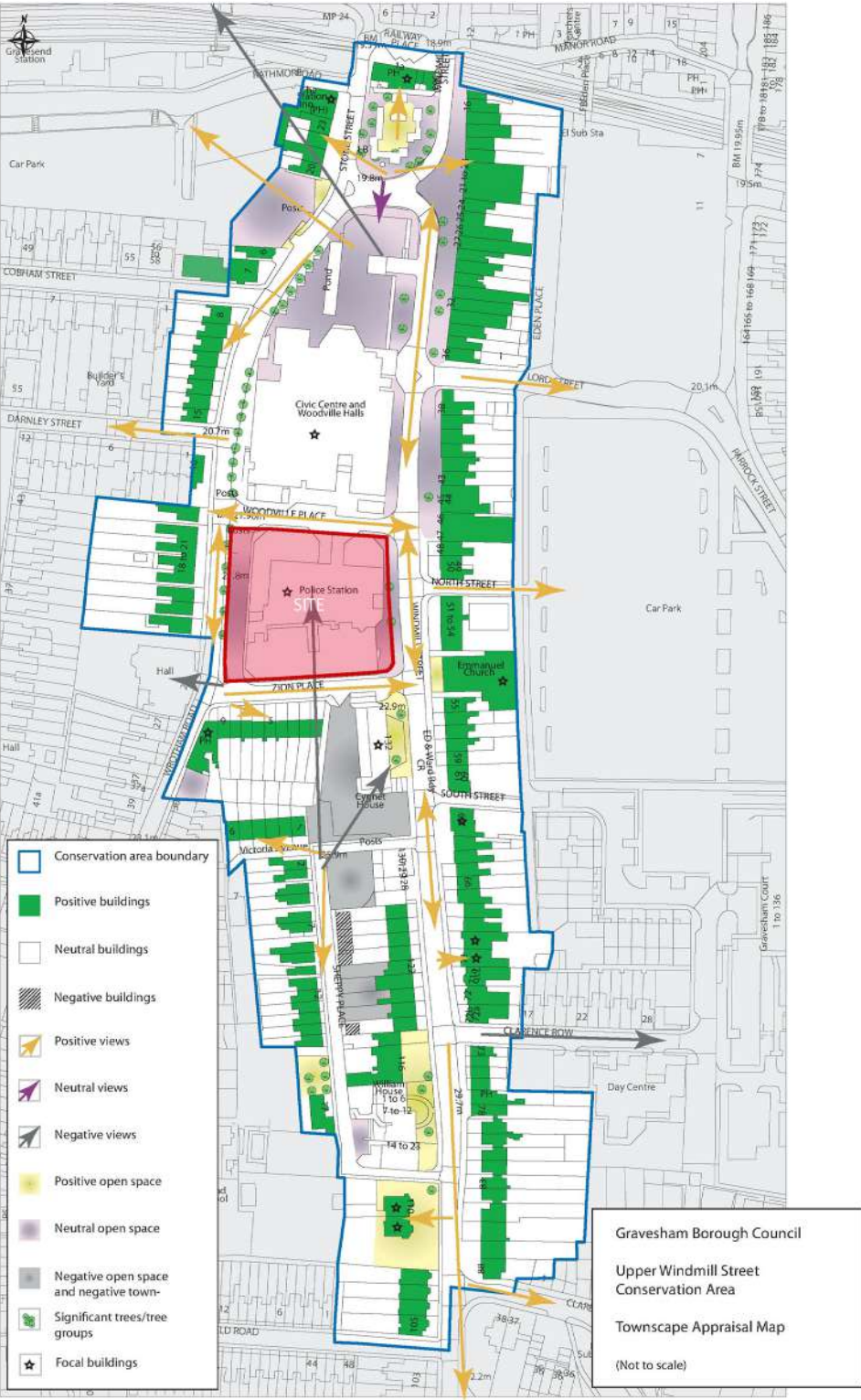
2.5 BUILT FORM



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 should be afforded to the Conservation area appraisal produced by Gravesend Borough Council, and an appropriate design response will be necessary to produce a contextual and sympathetic proposal that responds to the character areas and notable listed / unlisted buildings within these areas.

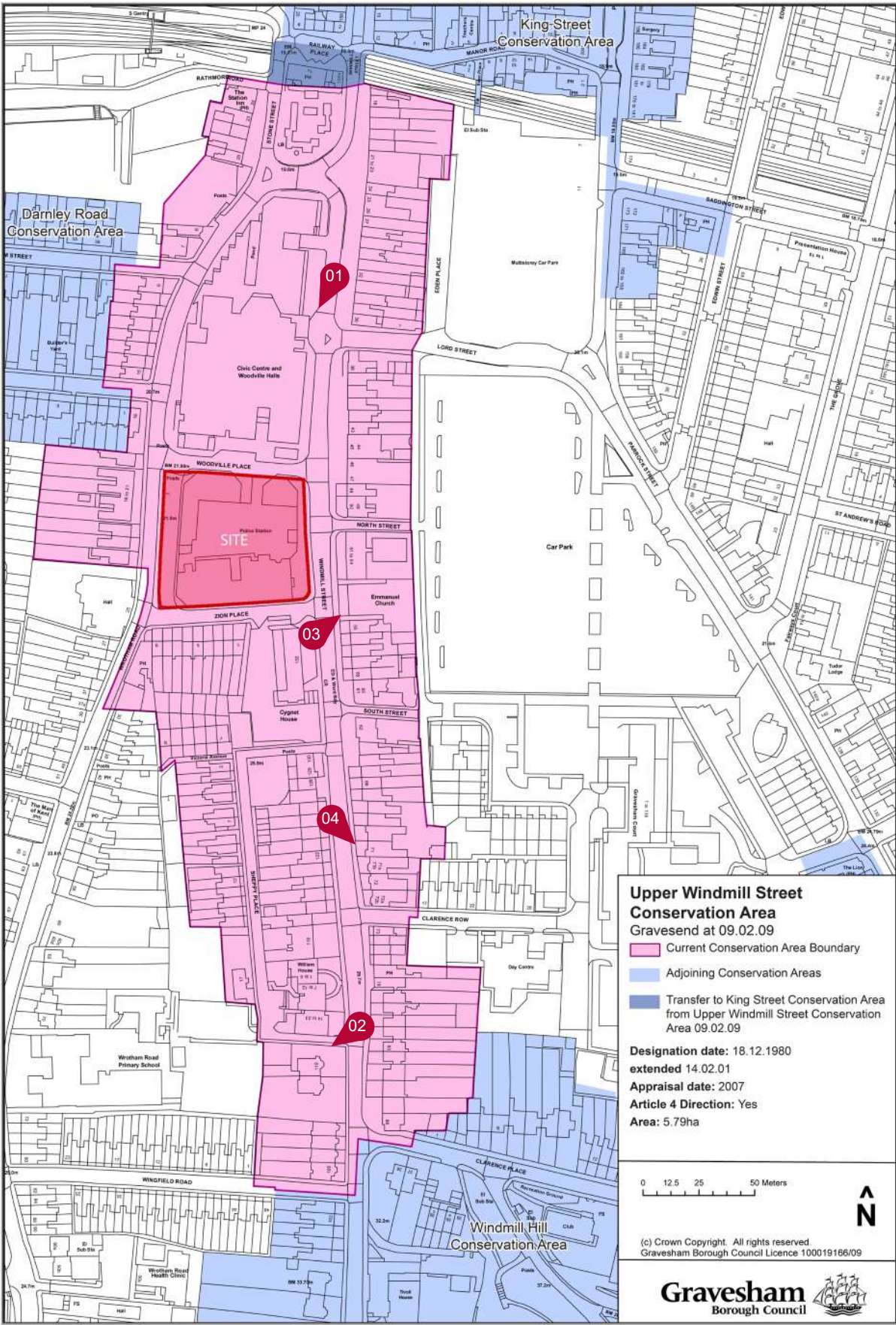
‘The scale of the Civic Centre, Gravesend Police Station and Cygnet House make them the principal landmarks within the Conservation Area. These three 20th century buildings are six storeys at their highest, dwarfing the surrounding 19th century development.

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:

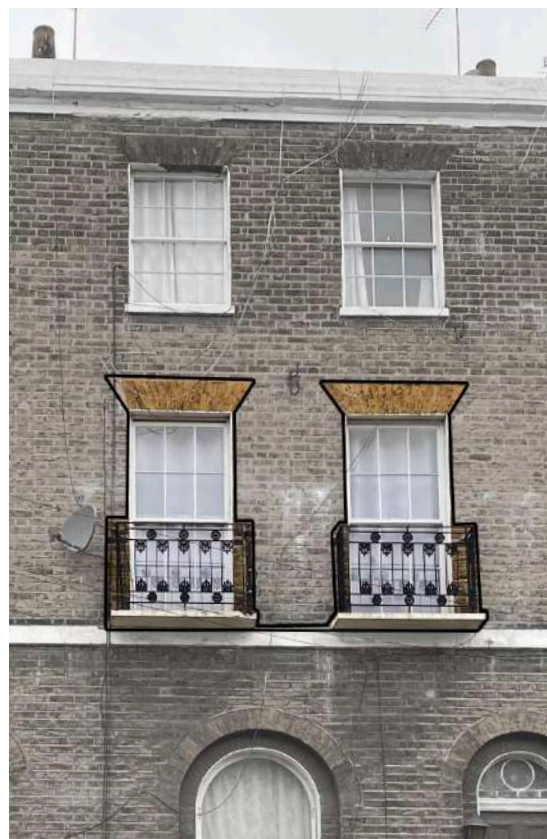
- Mix of London stock / Buff brick / Darker stained buff brick
- Painted / Rendered facade
- Rusticated decorative render
- Shallow hipped / pitched roofs in slate tile or similar
- Black or white gutter / drainpipe
- Dormer windows / accommodation in roof / Mansard detailing
- Georgian proportion / style windows with decorative surrounds
- Decorative banding & eave detailing
- Splayed brick headers in matching / contrasting brick stock
- Juliette balconies
- Black iron railings with brick piers bounding fore-gardens



Brown brick with white render at ground floor, Georgian period windows, contrasting brick headers, black railing boundary, shallow pitched roof with decorative eave detailing.



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



Georgian proportion windows with Juliette balcony and splayed window header.



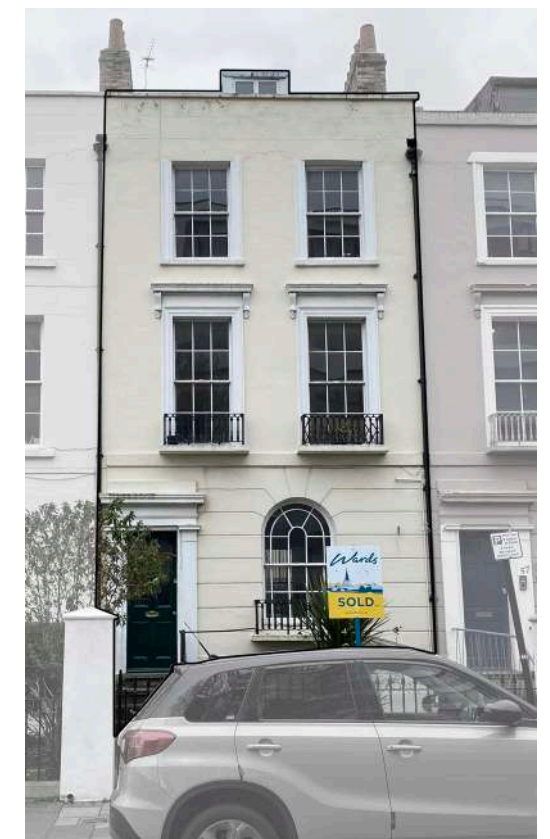
Decorative banding and mouldings to eaves, windows and doors / entrance.



Decorative banding and rusticated render to ground floor.



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



Residential

Mixed use - residential first floor +

Commercial / retail / hospitality

Community

Educational



3 INVOLVEMENT

3.1. PRIOR ENGAGEMENT

This Design & Access statement details the development of the site in consideration of Churchill Living's approved application for 75 retirement units ref 20220432 (Approved 15/02/2023). The approval responded to engagement with the local authority and local community via Pre Application submission (including Planning Officer response & advice), Public Consultation, and design development throughout the application process (materials, detailing, access etc).

Since then the approved permission has been implemented with many of the precommencement conditions being discharged. The site has been cleared and the piles installed. Housing 21 have looked to acquire the site from Churchill Living and the proposal seeks changes to meet the operational requirements for H21 whilst maintaining the core principals developed through extensive engagement with the planning authority and local community as part of the approved application.



Perspective Views of Approved Application ref 20220432



3 INVOLVEMENT

3.2. POLICY

NPPF (2024)

The revised NPPF was updated on 12th December 2024 and sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 61 sets out the Government’s objective to significantly boost the supply of housing. Alongside the revised NPPF, the revised Standard Method has been published, which defines the local housing need for all local authorities in England and aggregates to a national total of 371,451 per annum. It is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area’s identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. This is a recognition of the level of need for new housing across the country against the recent dwindling trend of housing supply.

In June 2019 the PPG was updated to include a section on Housing for Older and Disabled People, recognising its importance. Paragraph 001 states:

“The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking” (emphasis added).

Paragraph 003 recognises that “the health and lifestyles of older people will differ greatly, as will their housing needs, which can range from accessible and adaptable general Needs housing to specialist housing with high levels of care and support”. Thus a range of provision needs to be planned for.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan comprises of the Gravesham Core Strategy (2014).

GRAVESHAM CORE STRATEGY (2014)

The Gravesham Core Strategy forms part of the statutory development plan for Gravesham Council. The relevant policies in relation to the redevelopment of the site for older persons’ housing are listed below:

- CS01: Sustainable Development
- CS02: Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS05: Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area
- CS11: Transport
- CS14: Housing Type & Density
- CS15: Housing Density
- CS16 Affordable Housing
- CS18: Climate Change
- CS19: Development & Design Principles
- CS20: Heritage & The Historic Environment

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The proposal will also give due consideration to the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

- Residential Layout Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Kent Design Guide

3 INVOLVEMENT

3.3 HOUSING NEED

A NATIONAL NEED

It has been widely acknowledged that the UK has a housing crisis. Not enough homes are being built to meet the needs of the population.

The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 12th December 2024 which was introduced with the accompanying written ministerial statement on the same day by the Minster of State for Housing and Planning. The written ministerial statement is important as it sets the context for the revisions made to the NPPF by the government. The written ministerial statement commences by identifying the ‘acute and entrenched housing crisis’ the government has inherited and its goals for increasing house building that has led to the changes made in the NPPF. The main focus of the government’s planning policy revisions is to accelerate the planning process so that 1.5 million homes can be built over the next five years.

National Planning Policy includes Planning Practice Guidance on ‘Housing for older and disabled people’ to assist Councils in preparing local planning policies for the delivery of housing to meets the needs of its older residents. This sets out that providing housing for older people is ‘critical’.

Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.

A LOCAL NEED

The 2021 Census shows for Gravesham, there has been an increase of 13.0% in people aged 65 years and over. In the 2021 census, the population of Gravesham that was aged 65 and over was 25.4%. This compares with the national average of 18%, showing a much higher proportion of older people in the district.

The ONS Population Projections data shows the 60 – 69 age group are set to see a rise of 11.2% in Gravesham between 2022 and 2032. Furthermore the Core Strategy fully notes that Gravesham has an ageing population and recognises in paragraph 2.4.3 that as a result of this, over the plan period there will be a need to provide dwellings suitable for an ageing population.

THE REDEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE

The site is located just outside the Gravesend town centre boundary and comprises the site of the former police offices. These functions have been reallocated to the other sites in the police estate and the land has been cleared save for the high, brick perimeter walls since 2016. The land and has a negative visual impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and the adjacent Listed Buildings.

The site is specifically referenced in the supporting text to Policy CS05: Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area. The site is a long-standing regeneration opportunity for the Authority and has an extensive planning history detailing proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site accordingly.

Despite the above, the site has been vacant for a prolonged period and the historic permissions have not been forthcoming for over a decade.

The revised NPPFs change in the calculation of a standard housing requirement has led to the Council not being able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and the ‘tilted balance’ of Paragraph 11(d) being engaged.

Planning permission for 75 retirement living apartments was granted in February 2023, this planning permission has been implemented, therefore a solely residential use on this site has been established and deemed acceptable. The proposed development accords with Local Development Plan policy and the principal of development is considered acceptable accordingly.

AREA	AGE GROUP	2018	2043
Gravesham	65-69	4,943	5,738
Gravesham	70-74	4,815	5,767
Gravesham	75-79	3,455	5,159
Gravesham	80-84	2,754	4,110
Gravesham	85-89	1,620	2,471
Gravesham	90+	863	1,559
Gravesham	All ages	106,385	111,743

4 EVALUATION

4.1 CONSTRAINTS

CONSTRAINTS DIAGRAM



- Outlook from surrounding buildings
- Principal Views towards the site
- 🔊 Noise / traffic pollution
- ⦿ Significant groups of trees
- Undesirable outlook from site
- Site Boundary

- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road

4 EVALUATION

4.2 OPPORTUNITIES

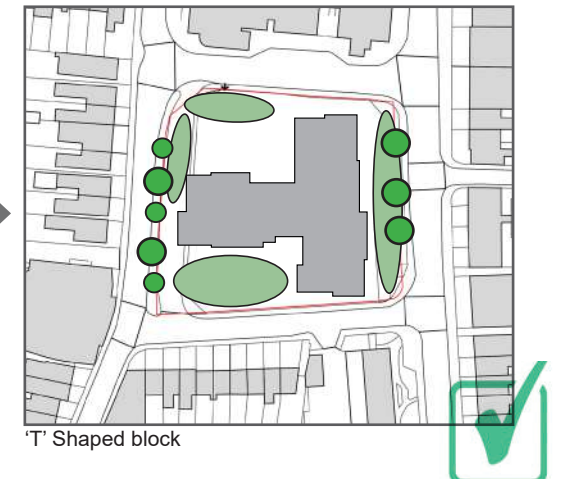
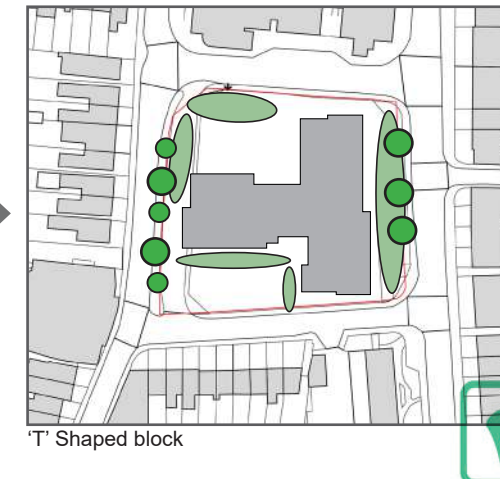
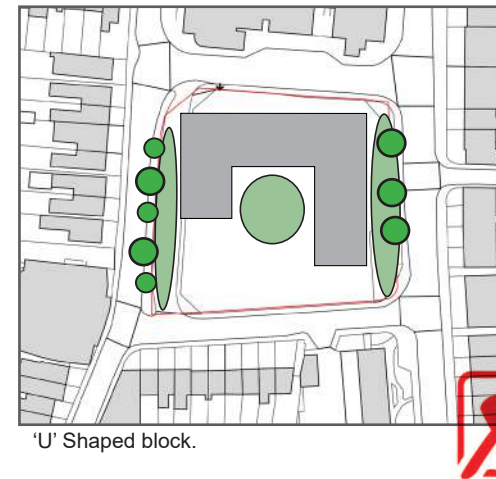
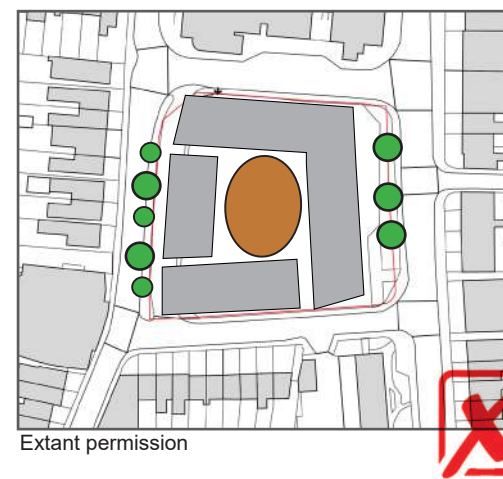
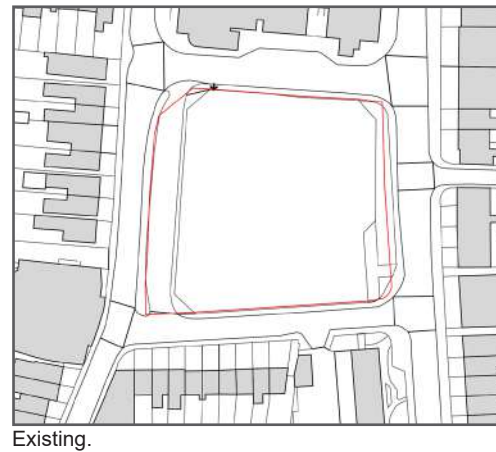


- Introduction of positive visual green space to heavily urbanised area
- Principle approach to site via foot from town centre
- Principle approaches to site via car
- Access to site
- Continuation of tree lined frontage to perimeter of site - Street enclosure
- Parking concealed behind perimeter landscape buffer
- Building line maintained
- Active frontages provided to all elevations
- Increased visual permeability into site following removal of 4.5m high boundary wall.
- Removal of unsightly lay-by parking (negative open space following demolition of police station)
- Heritage-lead development - new relationships formed with surrounding heritage assets

4 EVALUATION

4.3. DESIGN EVOLUTION & CONCEPT

BUILDING DISPOSITION



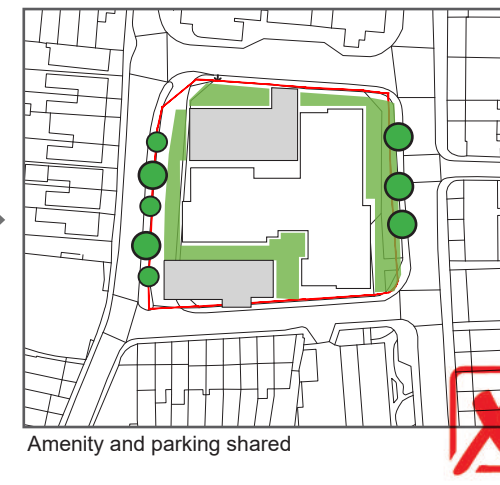
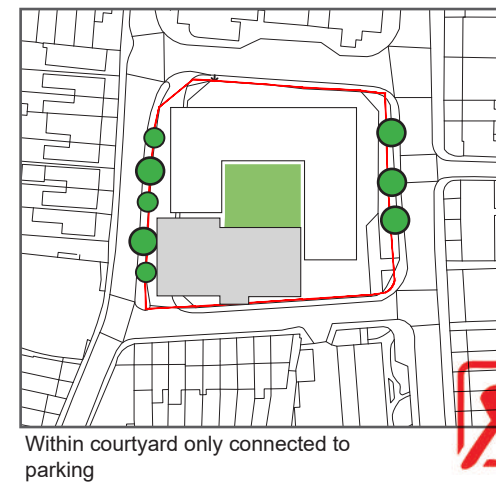
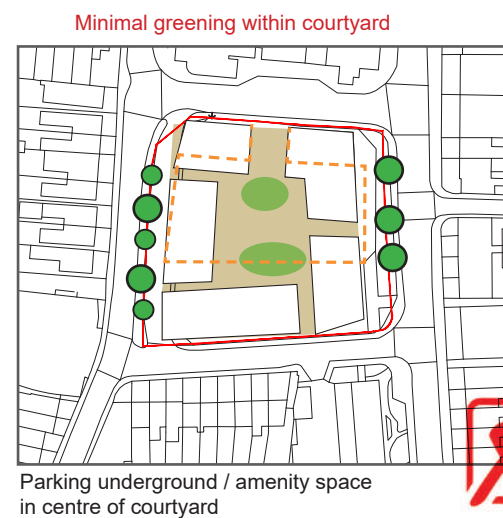
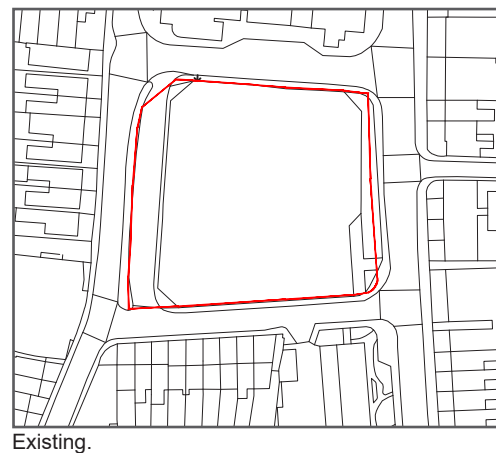
Courtyard arrangement creates low-quality amenity space with little opportunity for "greening". Parking provision fulfilled via a basement level which could be considered to be prohibitive to the viability of development.

No separation and little privacy between parking and residents amenity space.

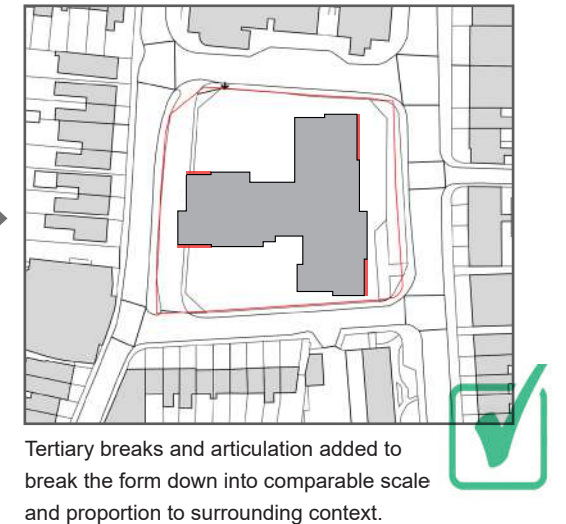
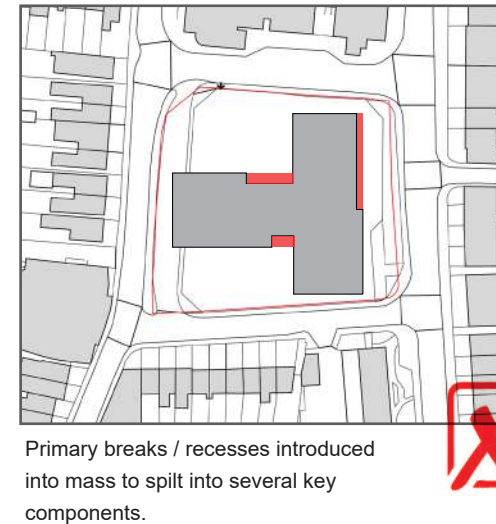
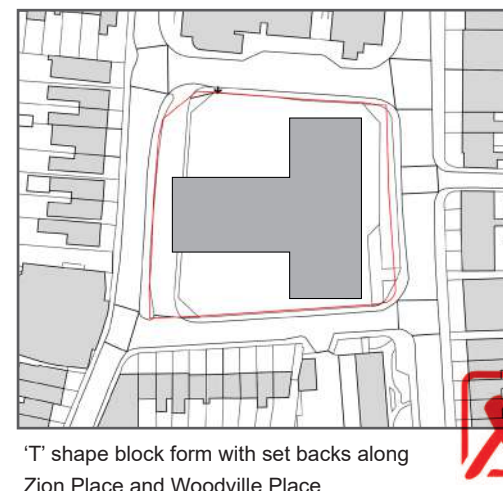
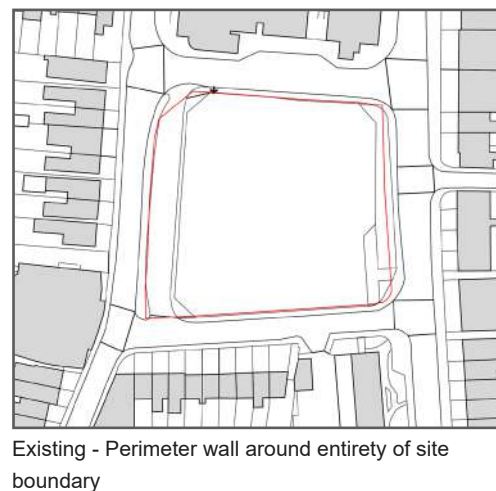
Parking and amenity space shared on both sides of the building resulting in no real meaningful designated amenity space.

Good separation to boundary with primary elevation positioned appropriately on Windmill St - 'T-shape' block naturally divides the site with good sized communal amenity space separated and enclosed, positioned to the south.

PARKING / AMENITY



ARTICULATION



4 EVALUATION

4.4. PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The site is specifically referenced in the supporting text to Policy CS05: Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area. The site is a long-standing regeneration opportunity for the Authority and has an extensive planning history (five applications from 2008 - 2023) detailing proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site accordingly.

- Inefficient vertical circulation with multiple lifts and stair cores to serve development
- Requires a substantial and costly underground basement car park to serve the development
- Courtyard area designed for circulation and predominantly comprises hard landscaping with little meaningful amenity for the benefit of residents.
- There is a limited market for the large commercial units on the ground floor and bringing them forward on a speculative basis is not a credible proposition.

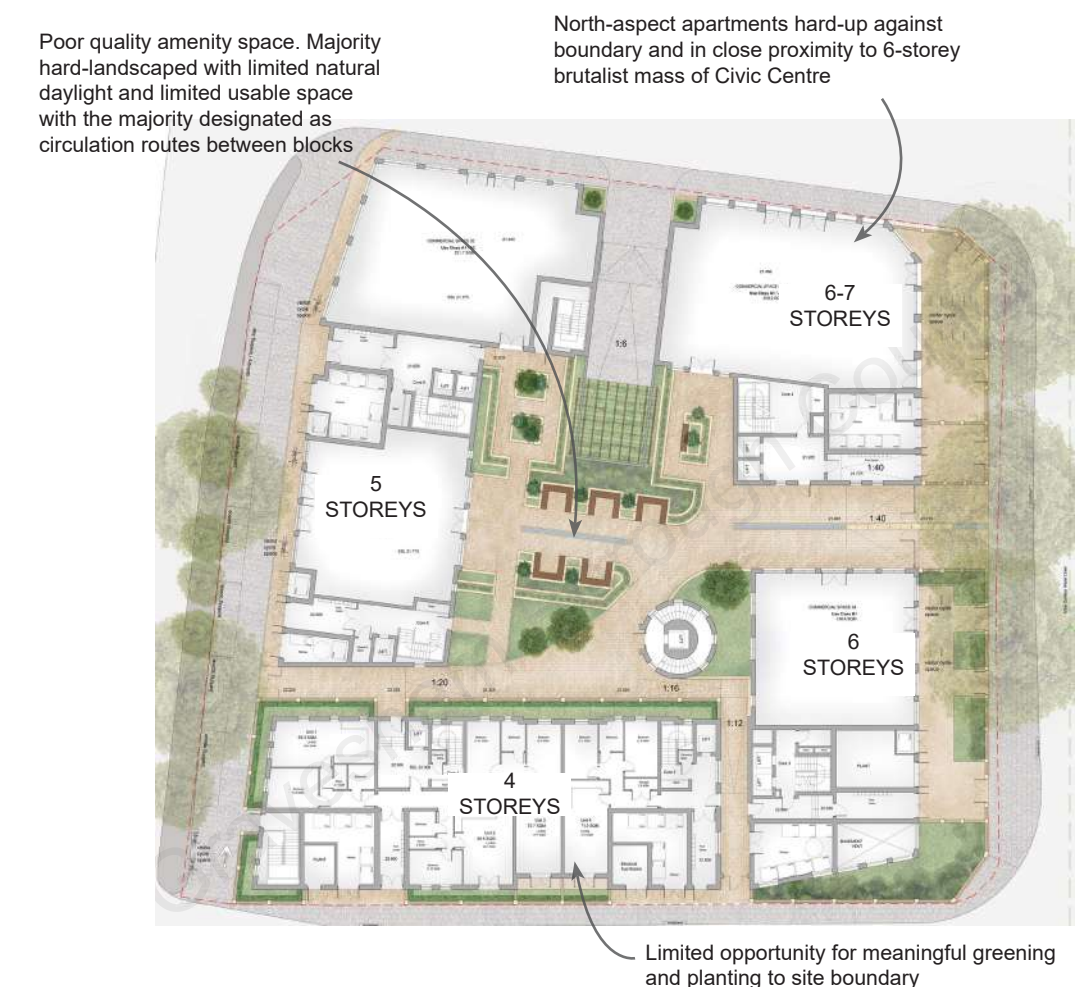
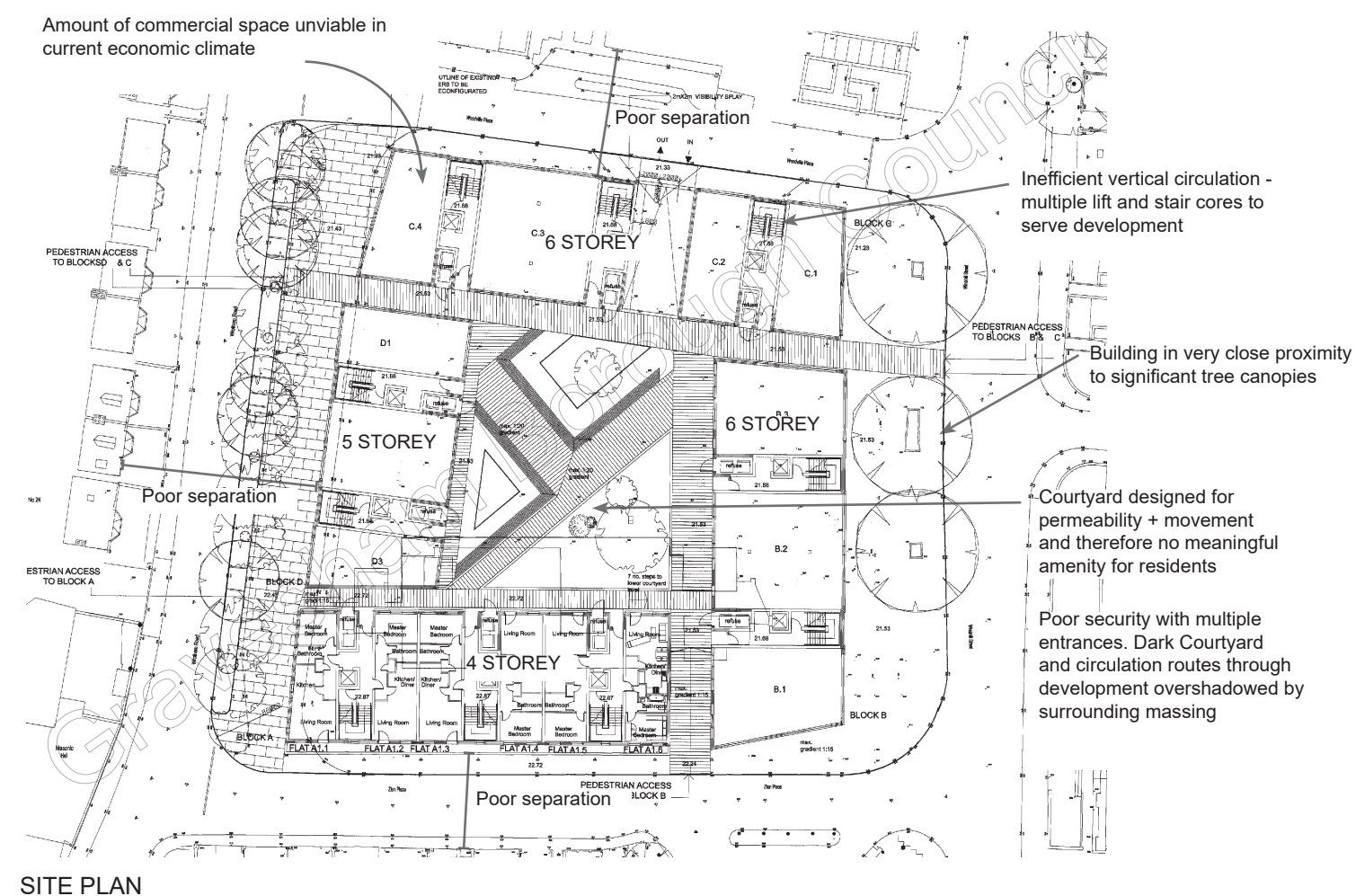
APPLICATION REF 20120590 :

Consent for the demolition of the police station and erection of four buildings, four-six storeys in height to provide a total of 86 self contained flats.

- Proposed buildings abut pavements and result in poor separation to adjacent properties on Wrotham Road, Zion Place and Woodville Place and is detrimental to their amenity.
- Tall buildings proposed on Woodville Place adjacent the Civic Centre resulting in canyoning effect.
- Poor security arising from multiple entrances and dark underpasses

APPLICATION REF 20161205 :

Mixed use development will provide approximately 816sqm of commercial space at ground floor, 99no. residential flats.



4 EVALUATION

- Elevational treatment offers a comparatively limited palette of materials in comparison to the regency terraces on Windmill Street.
- Limited number of set-backs, with bulk and massing broken up principally through the use of materials
- App. Ref. 20120590 (86 units) provides a uniform 5 storey building on Windmill Street, with a recessed 6th storey.
- App. Ref 21061205 (99-unit scheme) also provides part 5 / part 6 storey elevation onto Windmill Street, with an additional recessed storey.

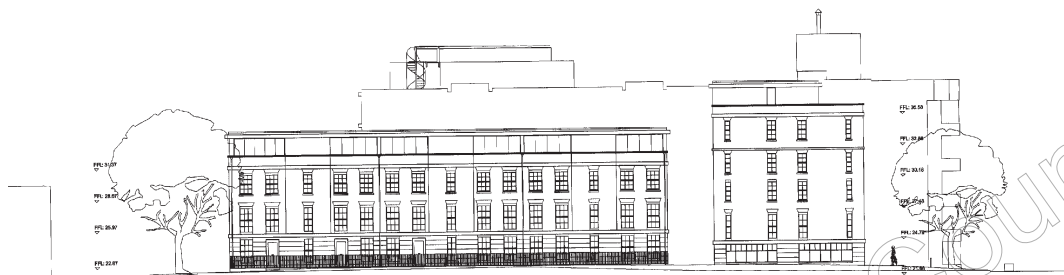
APPLICATION REF 20120590 :



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

- Part 6/7-storey building on the corner of Woodville Place and Windmill Street, where street is relatively narrow (20 metres in places) raising concerns over impact on amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Outlook of 'penthouse' properties on Woodville Place overlooking the Civic Centre of limited appeal and unlikely to commend the values of nearby waterfront properties.
- Building heights, massing and elevational treatment are not in keeping with period properties.

APPLICATION REF 20161205 :



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

4 EVALUATION

APPROVED APPLICATION REF 20220432 :

On Wednesday 15th February 2023 planning was granted to Churchill Living for the demolition of existing structures on site and the erection of 75 Retirement Living apartments for older people (comprising 48 no. 1-bed and 27 no. 2-beds) including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping.



SITE PLAN



EAST ELEVATION

5 DESIGN

5.1. DESIGN PRECEDENTS FROM WIDER CONTEXT

In conjunction with the context analysis undertaken in section 2.6 which has identified key thematic elements and architectural devices common in Gravesend within the local vernacular, it has also been prudent to evaluate examples of both original Regency architecture and modern architecture designed and constructed in a Regency style. To enable this study a series of photographs have been collated from example dwellings located mainly in areas around London such as Regents Park, Marylebone, Bloomsbury where there is a rich palette of Regency-style Architecture.

One observation relevant to the proposed scheme is the way in which a series of terraces are individually characterised by contrasting brick stock / tone, colour of rusticated render and window / door surrounds and mouldings, whilst simultaneously reading as one development with common elements such as front door style and ridge line / eave height.

Another approach is using a consistent brick stock or rendered appearance and relying solely on the pattern and distribution of windows, doors and drainpipes to enable the visual separation so as each individual terrace can be identified.

These approaches are also evident to varying degrees within the Upper Windmill St area and the wider town centre, and it is therefore concluded that a combination of both approaches should be considered for the proposed development.



5 DESIGN

5.3. LAYOUT

PROPOSED CHANGES SINCE THE CONSENTED SCHEME

- Building footprint: The footprint has been reduced to facilitate a 100% one-bed apartment layout, working within the constraints of the existing piling and structural grid.
- Residents' lounge location: The Owners' Lounge has been repositioned to improve connectivity with the south-facing gardens, enhancing outlook, accessibility, and resident amenity.
- Car parking provision: Parking has been reduced from 25 to 22 spaces, while maintaining the same parking ratio relative to the number of residential units as approved under the implemented consent.
- Dry riser access: The dry riser outlet serving Stair 3 has been relocated to Zion Place rather than Wrotham Road, ensuring compliance with the 18-metre distance requirement from the site boundary.
- Single storey plant to north end of building adjacent Woodville Place.

MAINTAINED ASPECTS OF THE CONSENTED SCHEME

- Overall form: The development remains arranged as a T-shaped building, with the principal frontage to Windmill Street and a perpendicular rear wing positioned centrally within the site.
- Site zoning: Car parking continues to be located to the north, with residents' amenity gardens retained to the south to maximise the benefit of the south-facing aspect.
- Access strategy: Vehicular and pedestrian access is maintained from Woodville Place, with a segregated arrangement aligned with the existing crossing point and providing direct routes to town-centre amenities.
- Entrance arrangement: The main entrance remains accessed from the parking area and mobility scooter store via a shared surface within a landscaped perimeter
- Boundary relationships: The building continues to be set back from site boundaries, with landscaped buffers around the perimeter to maintain separation distances and mitigate overlooking.
- Street alignment: The building line along Windmill Street is retained, preserving the established development pattern and allowing for landscaped forecourt space.
- Internal organisation: Apartments remain arranged off a central corridor with centrally located lifts adjacent to the main entrance and communal areas, minimising travel distances for residents.
- Aspect and surveillance: Habitable rooms continue to be distributed across all elevations, with end and corner apartments providing active frontages and natural surveillance to dual aspects.
- Rear wing positioning: The east-west oriented rear element remains centrally positioned within the site to maintain appropriate separation from neighbouring properties, particularly along Zion Place.



5 DESIGN

5.4. SCALE & MASSING

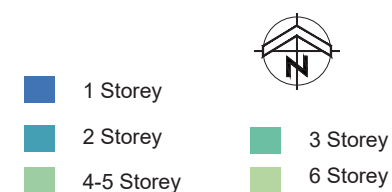


Section A-A

PROPOSED CHANGES SINCE THE CONSENTED SCHEME

The built form is proposed to be four storeys throughout, with a consistent ridge line and decorative eave (dentile), articulated through various set backs, projections and well proportioned variation of materials. The 4 storey massing allows for the development to sit comfortably between, and not compete with, the 6-storey buildings north and south of which are both mentioned as local landmarks within the Upper Windmill St conservation area appraisal. The reduction in scale relative to the approved application (ref 20220432) also removes the need for progressive collapse construction, improving the build cost efficiency.

The layout of the proposed will provide 67 dwellings which equates to 186 dph over a 0.36 hectare site; this is in excess of the 40 dph target for town centre locations set out in Gravesham Policy CS:15 and does not compromise area character; the majority of the surrounding buildings other than the two landmarks are 3-5 storey masses so therefore this scale is still considered appropriate.



Building height map

5 DESIGN

5.4. SCALE & MASSING

MAINTAINED ASPECTS OF THE CONSENTED SCHEME

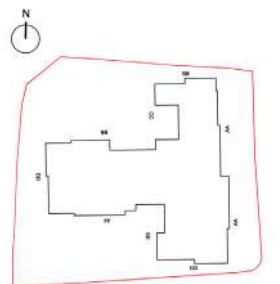
- The parameters by which the bulk, scale and mass of the proposed have been set out in 'Section 2 - Assessment' of this report.
- The principal frontage of the development along the east elevation has been sympathetically split into four main components, and subsequently into proportional bays through arrangement of windows and minor breaks reinforced by drainpipes, to be of a comparable proportion and width to the two-bay character of other dwellings along Windmill Street.
- Further articulation is proposed through the use of contrasting materials to further assist with reducing the appearance of overall mass. It is this variation which helps to assimilate and continue the varied pattern within the local context and aligns closely to the architecture of historic residential development in the immediate vicinity.
- Projections in the building line have been formed to help break up the elevation, with a covered portico clearly marking the main entrance and reception.
- There is a mix of hipped roofs, gable ends, and a few examples of mansard roofs distributed throughout the immediate context. This proposal utilises a hipped roof to reduce scale, and proposes dentile detailing to the eaves which is characteristic of the surrounding area.
- Hierarchy through window sizing has also sought to mirror that of the context with larger openings on the lower storeys and smaller windows on the higher storeys.
- Juliette balconies have been located on elevations where appropriate - on Windmill Street the local context has informed the placement and approach, with Juliette's placed on the first and second storey apartments only.
- On the west and north elevations that front the car park and entrance to the development, Juliette balconies and full balconies have been proposed to all upper levels where appropriate.
- Where separation distances permit, full balconies are proposed to take full advantage of the landscaped gardens and any south-facing aspects.



ELEVATION EAST (AA)



ELEVATION NORTH (BB)



5 DESIGN

- Overlooking concerns are mitigated by extensive planting and proposed perimeter trees.
- The rear leg of the development orientates towards the proposed car park to the north, and residential dwellings to the south along Zion Place. The proposal is set back approximately 33.6 metres from existing dwellings to the south (see site distances plan pg. 46).
- Due to the unique nature of this “island” site being bound by roads on all sides, it has been critical to ensure active frontages are present on all elevations. Careful consideration has been taken when planning the internal layout to avoid areas of blank flank facade, maximising window placement where possible. Particular care was taken to the treatment of the north and south ends of the principal east elevation along Windmill street with steps in the footprint introduced to maintain the two-bay proportion; as these ends are highly visible from the primary vistas on the approach to site from the north and south along Windmill Street.



ELEVATION WEST (CC)



ELEVATION WEST (DD)



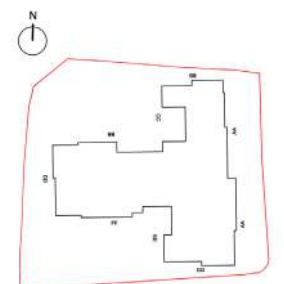
ELEVATION WEST (EE)



ELEVATION SOUTH (FF)



ELEVATION SOUTH (GG)



5 DESIGN

5.4. SCALE & MASSING



SITE DISTANCES PLAN

5 DESIGN

5.5. APPEARANCE

MAINTAINED ASPECTS OF THE CONSENTED SCHEME

The elevational treatment with a varying material palette on the primary frontage on the East elevation is representative of the approach taken on all elevations of the development.

- Materials are simple yet well considered, responding to the material palette of the surrounding context. The variation of materials helps to develop a hierarchy both horizontally and vertically along the row of terraces.
- The frontage has been specifically designed to respond to the character and features of the area (see section 2.6 Assessment - Identity). Each elevation has been developed to conform to the identity section of the 10 characteristics of a well designed place as set out in the National Design Guide.

- The palette of materials and detailing is deliberately limited to ensure a well balanced consistency across the elevations. Proposed materials have taken reference from the local vernacular as well as a limited example of modern buildings within Gravesend which make reference to the Regency / Victorian style.
- Carefully planned steps in the building footprint provide the articulation needed to break the overall mass, echoed with a contrasting and contextually appropriate material - differing tones of brick stock and areas of rendered facade. Continuity has been incorporated within this contrasting palette through the proportion of windows, decorative banding and mouldings and rusticated render to the majority of the facade at ground floor.
- Grey slate is the most common roof covering in the surrounding area and most contextually-appropriate material for a dominant location. Hipped projections help to break the overall mass, while the subtle inclusion of feature dentiles to eaves above brick façades aids variation at roof level while enhancing the established elevational hierarchy.



PROPOSED CHANGES SINCE THE CONSENTED SCHEME

Tried and tested materials will be used on the proposed development to ensure the highest standards and quality are maintained. Where possible, bricks will be selected from local factories and the dark grey slate-appearance roof-tile and multi-tonal weathered buff brick stock currently proposed, is representative of the predominant colour palette in the immediate context. Materials on this application have been amended to reflect post planning discussions with the LPA. This includes natural slate roofs, flush UPVC casements, Smeed Dean Stocks, cream coloured true renders which are better resistant to environmental pollutants.



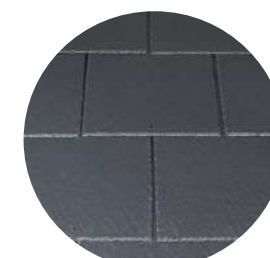
Brickwork Type 01
Michelmersh Danehill Yellow
or similar



Brickwork Type 02
Wienerbeger Smeed Dean London
Stock or similar



K- Rend Render
Cream or similar



Roof - Natural Slate
(colour - blue / black)



Exterior Dentile
400mm Eaves (min) / white



Stonecoat Buildlite
Window surround / cills / decorative
banding in white or similar

5 DESIGN

5.6. LANDSCAPE

‘Well-designed developments include site-specific enhancements to achieve biodiversity net gains at neighbourhood, street and household level.’

National Design Guide, Para 98

Retirement Living developments are located within or very close to town and local centres. Where due to the size of the site it is not always possible to provide extensive external amenity space. Minimal amenity space is a feature of many town or city centre developments, and it should also be borne in mind that conventional housing is unlikely to have the communal facilities inside the building which are a feature of Retirement Living housing. The extent of amenity space provision on site derives from the need to provide adequate and attractive external space for residents but also to provide a building with an appropriate townscape response.

There is no specific government guidance as to the appropriate level of amenity space to be provided within a Retirement Living development. Notwithstanding this, Local Planning Authority design policies should be aimed at promoting designs and layouts which make efficient and effective use of land, including encouraging innovative approaches to help deliver high quality outcomes, rather than applying strict space area standards.

Access to amenity space is a matter to consider when assessing the overall design quality of a proposed development. Churchill Living & Housing 21 are well experienced in providing for the recreational needs of the elderly owners within its developments.

Churchill Living employs a qualified Landscape Architect to design every development and prides itself on the quality of its landscaped treatment.

The most important amenity space for the older owners is not in fact found to be outside the building but is the Communal Residents’

Lounge. In developments where there are large garden areas, the residents tend to use the area immediately outside their patio door if they live on the ground floor or outside the Residents’ Lounge. Even on hot summer days, when people might be expected to sit out enjoying the sun, one finds the occupants rarely taking advantage of an extended communal garden. Active use of external amenity space tends to be relatively limited and mainly involves sitting out for those few owners who occasionally choose to do so.

The proposed design includes sufficient space around the building for residents to sit outside at ground floor level. Should residents seek other space for sitting out, they are likely to make use of the patio areas adjacent to the Residents’ Lounge, and this is the location which the residents of upper floors are most likely to utilise. There is, of course, nothing to prevent residents of upper floors making use of any area of amenity space, all areas of garden being in communal control.

As residents of Retirement Living apartments tend to spend relatively more time in their homes than traditional houses, it is appropriate that wherever possible, lively and interesting views should be available from the principal habitable rooms. Residents prefer an apartment to enjoy an interesting view rather than to set aside large open areas for active recreation and it is those apartments with views that often sell first. The most favoured apartments are often those on the busiest road frontages or those facing the main entrance and car parking area serving the development. It is the experience of Churchill Living & Housing 21 that, to a great extent, this is the way that amenity space in Retirement Living developments is utilised – that is, in a passive manner, with the landscaped area providing some degree of privacy but at the same time allowing substantial opportunity to view daily life in the surrounding area. It is therefore of primary importance when designing schemes that amenity space provides residents with attractive views. The quality of amenity space provided is an important factor for residents when considering whether to purchase an apartment.

Neither the quantity nor quality of amenity space provided is a matter which residents have concerns about. There is no evidence that

prospective residents are dissuaded from buying an apartment for this reason, and when residents are asked if there is a need for more amenity space, the most common response is no.

‘Well-designed buildings are carefully integrated with their surrounding external space. All private and shared external spaces including parking are high quality, convenient and function well. Amenity spaces have a reasonable degree of privacy.’

National Design Guide, para 129

5 DESIGN

5.6. LANDSCAPE

The Application is accompanied by a full landscaping strategy prepared by James Blake Associates.

DESIGN PARAMETERS

The site was formerly a police station which has recently been demolished. It is proposed to be redeveloped into retirement living apartments.

The access into the development is to be retained and enhanced. The main entrance to the building is from the parking courtyard to the north with a pedestrian path coming into the site from Woodville place.

The Residents' Lounge and associated patio is on the south elevation of the proposed building where an outdoor seating area with garden furniture will be provided.

Constraints including views looking in from neighbouring buildings and screening views looking out from the development have been considered. Visual mitigation has been included along the majority of site boundary using a native evergreen hedge, a selection of native and ornamental boundary street trees to further extend the visual mitigation.

Overall, the proposed landscape design is at a domestic scale, creating homely spaces which allow for small social gatherings and quieter contemplative resting places. Elements of herbaceous planting will be proposed throughout the scheme for seasonal interest.

Please refer to the full Detailed Landscape Strategy provided as part of the application submission for further details.

Proposed Site Plan & Indicative Landscape Strategy



5 DESIGN

5.6. LANDSCAPE

Past examples



5 DESIGN

5.7. ACCESS

The site has been carefully selected by Churchill Living & Housing 21 to meet the needs of its targeted demographic and is sited in an area with a wide selection of amenities only a short walking distance away along a route which is predominantly a level gradient. The development will be accessed via the existing access to the north of the site. The proposed access is from the existing vehicular access on Woodville Place. This would serve a car park of 22 parking spaces. The access onto Woodville Place would take the form of a simple priority junction, with vehicles exiting onto Woodville Place only able to turn left onto the one-way system.

The existing access is approximately 4.3m in width, which is sufficient to allow two passenger vehicles to pass according to Figure 7.1 of Manual for Streets. Replicating the existing vehicle crossover arrangement is also considered to be an appropriate arrangement given the low volumes of vehicle movement expected at the access.

The visibility splays from the site access have been assessed in relation to design advice set out in Manual for Streets (MfS), the 2008 Kent Design Guide Review Interim Guidance Note 'Visibility', and with reference to the 2012 K&M Speed survey. The 85th percentile speed recorded on the north/westbound approach to Woodville Place from Windmill Street was 16mph. For 16mph vehicle speeds, MfS advises a 2.4x18m visibility splay. Vehicle visibility is only required to the east owing to the one-way system and has been shown to be achievable for the site layout. The 1.2m railing surrounding the site will be aligned such that it does not impinge on vehicular or pedestrian visibility splays.

The footway along the southern side of Woodville Place will lead into the development via a new segregated pedestrian connection along the western side of the access into site. This footway will be of 1.50m width. There are to be two gated accesses on Windmill Street and one on Wrotham Road reserved for fire and emergency access and egress only. The lay-by on Wrotham Road is to be closed. Therefore there will be continuous footway coverage around the perimeter of the site.

PARKING PROVISION

The vehicular access and car parking layout proposed will accommodate the day to day vehicular needs of the occupants. The sustainable location will encourage a reduction in vehicle ownership. 22no. unallocated parking spaces have been provided. The parking area is split into two areas. The area to the west of the main entrance to the building will have 19 parking spaces, and a width for maneuvering of 6.0m. The area to the east of the main entrance will have 3 under-croft parking spaces and a minimum width for maneuvering of 6.9m. This is comparable to the consented scheme.

Retirement accommodation of the type to be delivered is not directly reflected in the Kent County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Residential Parking (2008). Instead in relation to retirement accommodation the SPG states that 'specialist providers have tended to develop their own evidence base for such accommodation'.

Therefore, the proposed parking provision has been defined by operational requirements supported by evidence from parking surveys undertaken at other similar Churchill Living developments. The proposed parking provision at 0.33 spaces per unit is based on existing CL sites where parking surveys undertaken have established that the average demand for on-site parking is 0.27 spaces per unit, with an existing average provision of 0.32 spaces per residential unit.

Parking for the site is therefore considered to be in accordance with the Kent SPG and Design Guide: 'Step 2 – Generating the layout', which states that parking provision should reflect the building type, nature of the users, and availability of alternative transport facilities.

All parking spaces are 2.5m x 5.0m in a perpendicular arrangement to comply with the standards for new developments as outlined in Manual for Streets. Gradients across the car park have been designed not to exceed 1 in 20 given the age and ability of the intended demographic. A secure internal store is provided for 11no. mobility scooters and is located in close proximity to the main entrance.

BUILDING ACCESS

The proposal is accessible and easy to move around. The building itself has internal layouts, specifications and construction details that will allow a safe and convenient use by owners and visitors and will fully meet the requirements of Part M of the current Building Regulations. Communal access includes:

- Step free access to the apartments, communal spaces and parking and garden areas;
- Step free access to communal WC on ground floor;
- Lift access to all floors - 1 x 8 person with a minimum 800 wide door opening and a lift car that is 1100 wide by 1400 long plus 1 x 13 person lift with a minimum 800 wide door opening and a lift car that is 1100 wide by 2100 long, thus providing suitable space for most access needs;
- All communal corridors are a min of 1.5m wide to make them easily traversable by a wheelchair user.

'In well-designed places, people should not need to rely on the car for everyday journeys including getting to workplaces, shops, schools and other facilities, open spaces or the natural environment.'

5 DESIGN

5.8. Home & Buildings

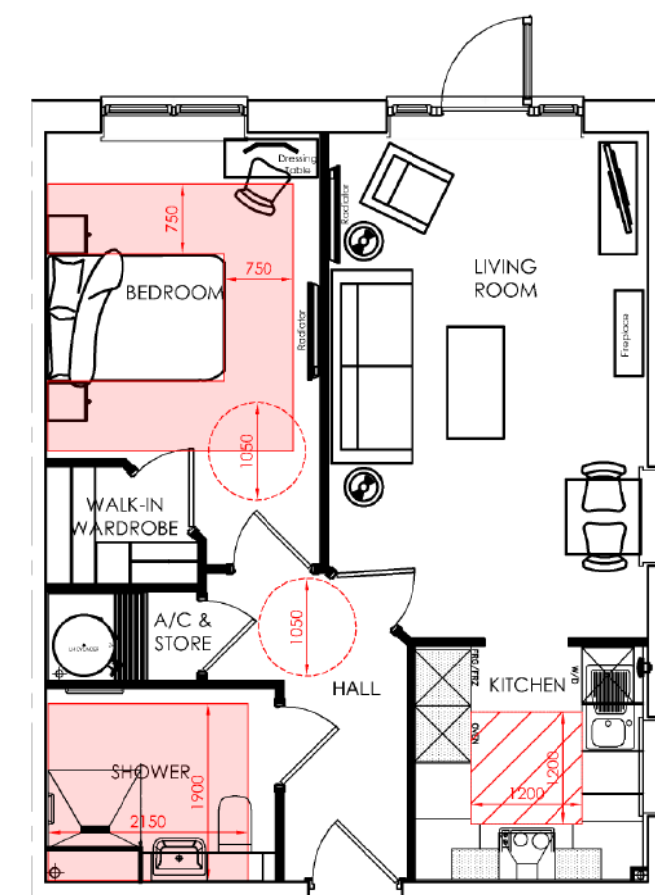
“Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them.”

National Design Guide, Para 120

TYPICAL APARTMENTS

Apartments have been designed to meet the ‘Technical Housing Standards - Nationally described space standards’ and the space requirements of part ‘M4(2) - Accessible and adaptable dwellings’ of the building regulations. This provides features that accommodate a wide range of people, including older and disabled people. The internal apartment layouts have been designed to meet residents’ specific needs. The design team continually receives feedback from residents and managers at existing developments; thus allowing for periodic review as required. The use of tried and tested standardised apartment designs ensures the needs of owners are met.

- Entrance door is at least 850mm clear width;
- Entrance Hallway with sufficient turning space;
- All hallways are a minimum of 900mm wide and any localised obstruction, such as a radiator, is located where possible to not occur opposite a doorway or at a change of direction;
- All internal doors to habitable rooms have a minimum clear opening of 775mm;
- The master bedroom allows 750mm around the bed;
- All switches, sockets and other controls are set at easily accessible heights and light switches are illuminated;
- Window handles at an accessible height between 450mm and 1200mm above floor level. All windows have safety restrictors;
- Storage space that is easily accessible;
- All habitable spaces have been designed to have good size windows ensuring a good amount of natural light;
- WCs and showers are designed to be easily accessible and with emergency call points to each space. All have easy turn mixer taps. Shower trays are low level for easy access;
- Waist height oven within the kitchen;
- Slip resistant flooring in kitchen and bathroom;
- Energy efficient, low carbon, economical heating.



Typical One Bed Apartment

Apartment designs include:

5 DESIGN

5.8. Home & Buildings

‘Well-designed places include a clear attention to detail. This considers how buildings operate in practice and how people access and use them on a day-to-day basis, both now and in future.’

National Design Guide, Para 124

Fire

A fire tender is able to get within 45m of all the proposed apartments and cottages in accordance with Manual for Streets requirements. Dry Riser inlets located within 18m of boundary and as such Fire tender does not need to enter site.

Vehicle tracking drawings have been undertaken to demonstrate this manoeuvre and the relevant drawing is attached in the Transport Statement.

Refuse

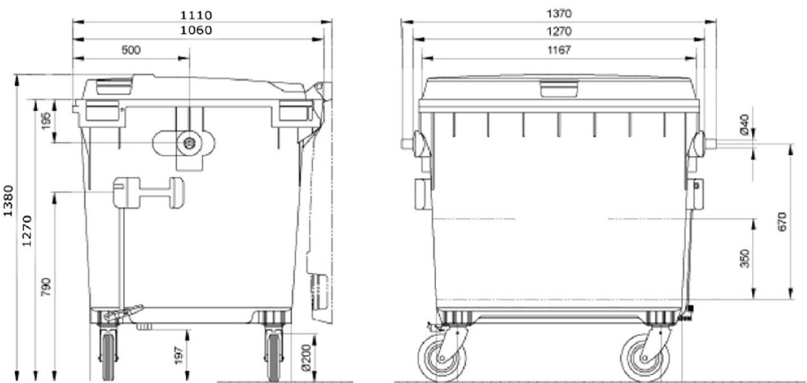
Refuse collection for the development is proposed to be collected from road-side, with the appropriately sized vehicle able to access refuse from Woodville road.

The proposed building, like all Churchill Living & Housing 21 developments, will have a communal refuse store. This is accessed both externally and via the communal corridor, and positioned to facilitate bin carrying distances of 10m for eurobins, in accordance with Manual for Streets guidelines.

Within the refuse store, small bags of household waste and recycling material from each individual flat can be decanted into larger shared wheeled bins, clearly designated for specific storage. The Lodge Manager will be responsible for monitoring the refuse area and overseeing collection.

It is worth noting that in general retirement housing schemes occupancy rates are typically 50% lower than open market housing (i.e. a one bed will generally be occupied by 1 person compared with up to 2 in open market and a two bed will only ever be occupied by a maximum of 2 people compared to 4 in open market housing).

A detailed understanding has been developed of the typical waste requirements attributed to CL & H21 schemes, based on research carried out from operational developments across country.



5 DESIGN

5.8. Home & Buildings

Safety and Security

‘Good design promotes quality of life for the occupants and users of buildings. This includes function – buildings should be easy to use. It also includes comfort, safety, security, amenity, privacy, accessibility and adaptability.’

National Design Guide Paragraph 124

Safety and Security is paramount for the occupant demographic. People are usually living alone and are often vulnerable. The presence of a Lodge Manager provides reassurance and support as well as monitoring visitors and residents.

Development Security

Developments are secured at the boundary with the use of fencing and railings as well as defensible landscaping making clear the public realm beyond and private space that is part of the apartments.

Adequate external security lighting will be provided to illuminate the external doors, car park, driveway and paths and will be controlled by time switches or photo electric cells as appropriate.

Windows from apartments are located on all sides of the proposed development and these will provide passive surveillance from the occupants, many of whom are home for the majority of the day.

The main access into the lodge is kept to a single point where possible and this is usually from the car park. The access door is adjacent to the Lodge Manager’s office and the reception allowing passive monitoring of the entrance.

Apartment Security

All apartments will have a careline support system. This is connected to 24-hour support so, in the event of an emergency, residents have direct contact with either the Lodge Manager or a member of a call-centre team 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The system provides video door entry with a standard TV, allowing owners to view any visitors on the apartment TV before choosing to let them into the main entrance. An intruder alarm is fitted protecting the front door of the apartments, while ground floor apartments have additional sensors fitted, giving that extra level of security and peace of mind.

Doors and Windows

All windows and doors will comply with Part Q and the Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

The main doors are power assisted sliding opening. Access will normally be from a keypad, or opened from within the building.

All ground floor apartments, and any others that might be easily accessible by external means will be fitted with PIR sensors connected to a master intruder alarm panel. Patio and French doors are provided with an external handle, but, to prevent residents from using these as main doors to the apartments, no external means of locking is provided.

Flat entrance doors will be of a solid construction to an enhanced security standard and comply with a 30-minute fire rating. Doors will have intruder alarm contacts, and can be fitted with a security device for visual checking prior to opening.

Safety

In addition to the 24 hour careline system, and the Lodge Manager’s presence, fire and smoke detectors are fitted in communal areas and within all apartments for residents safety.



5 DESIGN

5.9. Resources & Lifespan

Sustainability

“A compact and walkable neighbourhood with a mix of uses and facilities reduces demand for energy and supports health and well-being. It uses land efficiently so helps adaptation by increasing the ability for CO2 absorption, sustaining natural ecosystems, minimising flood risk and the potential impact of flooding, and reducing overheating and air pollution.”

National Design Guide, Para 136

In terms of planning, addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. It recognises that planning plays a key role in minimising vulnerability, providing resilience and managing the risks associated with climate change.

In addition to the benefits identified in section 1.5, an effective approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from new development is the use of efficient designs and insulation products to achieve high levels of thermal efficiency – the ‘fabric first’ approach. New homes and

buildings that benefit from the latest heating systems, very high levels of thermal insulation of walls, floors, ceilings, windows and doors can achieve a substantial reduction of CO2 emissions.

The focus of the design will limit the energy consumption and CO2 emissions through optimising the building performance together with energy efficiency measures following the steps of the energy hierarchy, as set out below. It will meet the requirements of Part L1A and 2A of UK Building Regulations by:

- Using less energy / demand reduction;
- Supplying energy efficiently; and,
- Using renewable energy.

The scheme has been designed to exceed Building Regulation Part L 2013 requirements with respect to the thermal properties of building fabric. The efficiency of the building fabric is the second consideration in the Energy Hierarchy. Materials will be specified to target an A or A+ rating under the Green Guide to Specification, where possible.

The building itself has sized windows to provide good daylight and natural ventilation whilst minimising overheating from excessive glazing.

Finally appropriate building services design, efficiencies and controls and the incorporation of renewable and low carbon technologies are proposed. These include:

- Solar photovoltaic systems (PV’s) will be installed on the roof. Electricity produced by solar cells is clean and silent and solar energy is the most appropriate locally available renewable resource;

- Energy efficient appliances, fixtures and fittings will be installed to reduce the life cycle energy impact of the building;
- Thermostatic heating controls;
- All areas of the building internally and externally will be lit using low energy lighting and where appropriate will utilise appropriate daylight and movement sensor controls;
- Efficient electric heaters ;

Other sustainable characteristics proposed are:

- All apartments are fitted with water flow restrictors, aerated taps and dual flush WCs to reduce potable water usage;
- On-site communal recycling facilities are provided;
- Sustainable means of travel are promoted, including a mobility scooter store with electric charging points, cycle store & reduced level of car parking provision compared with open market housing;
- ‘Home Shopping’ scheme, which allows residents to order their food shopping collectively and have it delivered, reduces the carbon footprint of the residents by combining deliveries and cutting down on individual shopping trips.



Reduction of carbon footprint



Thermally efficient flats



Reduction of water wastage



PV’s



Reduction of energy use



Recycling



Mobility scooters parking



Home shopping scheme



Photo-voltaic driven garden lights

5 DESIGN

5.9. Resources & Lifespan

“Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change by being energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions to meet net zero by 2050.”

National Design Guide Paragraph 135

Well Managed and Maintained

Unlike the case with mainstream house builders,Housing 21 maintains an interest in the long term success of projects through after build maintenance. Ensuring developments are fit for purpose and built for longevity is therefore in the applicant’s interest. Both buildings and landscape are designed from the outset to minimise future maintenance requirements and continue to look good and work well in the long term. As and when maintenance is required this is promptly carried out by the management company.

Materials

Materials are selected for their value and appropriateness. By value we mean a balance between their longevity, periods of maintenance, initial cost and aesthetic qualities. Typically construction is traditional load bearing cavity wall with concrete slabs which have proven to be tried and tested robust forms of construction. Bricks are usually selected to be appropriate for the local area. Windows are typically uPVC because of their low maintenance and high Green Guide rating.

At the end of their life most developments materials will be able to be reused or recycled.

5.10 Biodiversity

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Tyler Grange and incorporates a Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal.

The site is entirely covered by hardstanding and vegetation is limited to sparse ephemeral plant species that have populated the site following demolition. The habitats on site are of negligible importance with the adjacent trees of local ecological importance. The site does not contain any habitats that could support protected species. No protected species are considered likely to be within the site or likely to be affected by the development. The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory sites for nature conservation; however a number of such sites are present within the local area. Due to the scale of the development and distances from the site, it is considered that there is no potential for adverse effects to any of the identified designated sites during the construction or operational phase of the proposed development.

A preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) of the adjacent trees did not identify any preliminary roosting features, or any opportunities for foraging or commuting by bats. No further surveys for any other protected or notable species are recommended. With the implementation of suitable enhancement measures, the proposed development would be in conformity with relevant planning policy and legislation. The strategy could be controlled by appropriately worded planning controls.

