

**Design & Access Statement**

**Proposed Development**

**at**

**Disused Works**

**Dowker Street, Milnsbridge, Huddesfield**

**For**

**Invicta Developments Ltd**

1<sup>st</sup> February 2011  
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**Introduction**

Amendments to the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, now require most types of application for planning permission to be accompanied by a **Design and Access Statement**. This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Order. It conforms to the advice set out in Section 3 of DCLG Circular 01/2006; Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System, and has been prepared in accordance with the CABE Best Practice guide on the preparation of such statements.

The statement comprises five main elements;-  
A description of the **proposed development** and its location  
The **Site Appraisal** section examines the physical context.  
The design solution for the site has been based upon a full and thorough understanding of the site and the surrounding area.

The **Design Component** sets out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development. The resulting design principles that emerge from that appraisal process are considered under the headings of **Use, Amount, Layout, Scale, Landscaping, and Appearance**.

The **Access Component** explains the approach that has been adopted in relation to accessibility. It describes how relevant **development plan policies** have been taken into account. **Consultations** undertaken are outlined. It describes how prospective users will gain **access to the development** from the existing transport network and, why points of access have been chosen. It also considers **equality of access**; how everyone can get to and move through the proposed development on equal terms regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping.

The **Conclusions** section, by reference to a comprehensive check-list outlines how the proposed development conforms to good design principles

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**Site Appraisal**

The site is 0.5 ha. in area. It occupies street frontage to Dowker Street, George Street and Armitage Road. The proposed site area is shown on the location plan appended to this statement.

The site is identified as part of the Milnsbridge large local centre, a locality that is characterised by mixed uses, retail, commercial, industrial and residential in close proximity.

In the immediate area adjoining the site residential and retail uses predominate. The site is within the Milnsbridge Conservation Area.

The nature of the buildings which currently occupy the site are a diverse mix of traditional stone and brick construction with more modern industrial style brick structures. The latter are prominently located along the George Street frontage and Dowker Street frontage close to the setting of the impressive Milnsbridge House Grade II

The current site access, located midway along Dowker Street, is approximately the point at which a marked change in ground level occurs. From this point the land slopes up to the north across the site away from the more level low lying area along the valley floor close to George Street.

The street network around the site is subject to commercial as well as residential generated traffic. George Street for its length between Market Street and Dowker Street is confined to a single direction flow west to east. Beyond Dowker Street the street reverts to two way traffic. George Street functions as the vehicular access route to industrial and commercial premises located further to the East.

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**Site Appraisal (cont)**

Dowker Street is also subject to single way direction flow south to north between its junctions with George Street and Armitage Road. Armitage Road between its junction with Dowker Street and Market Street allows for single direction traffic east to west. The streets around the site therefore function as a local gyratory traffic network.

On-street car parking is allowed on the north side of the George Street carriageway adjoining the site and takes place on both sides of the carriageway along Dowker Street and Armitage Lane. There are footpaths on both sides of the carriageways discussed above heart of a large local centre and as a local movement distributor. South of the site the Market Street junction with Scar Lane is subject to traffic light control.

Necessary infrastructure services are available ,i.e. electricity, mains water, foul and surface water drainage systems and telephone.

The neighbourhood is urban in character with 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings present. Residential cottages in the area are primarily two storey with terrace forms located 'back of footpath', or, close to the footpath, characteristic. Stone and slate are the dominant materials used in construction.

Views out of and beyond the current site are limited by the surrounding development. View corridors exist along the streets around the site and looking south down Dowker Street and Market Street more distant landscape and townscape views are obtained. Views into the site from the wider surroundings are also curtailed.

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies**

The Development Plan is the 1999 Kirklees Unitary Development Plan, which contains the policies against which any redevelopment proposal on the site would be assessed.

A number of general and specific policies in the UDP may have relevance to the proposal for housing redevelopment.

The relevant general policies are:

G5 The design of buildings will have regard to the accessibility needs of all members of the community including the very young and infirm;

G6 The incidence of contamination or other environmental constraints are a consideration in dealing with development proposals. The findings of a geo-environmental assessment accompany this submission. The assessment concludes that though any contamination on site currently poses a low risk to identified receptors further ground investigation is recommended along with an asbestos survey.

A number of specific or topic related policies may have some relevance to the redevelopment of the site: -

Sets the presumption that land, such as the site, without specific designation (white land) on the UDP proposals map will be granted planning permission for development proposals subject to a number of criteria not being prejudiced.

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies (cont)**

In terms of the criteria the following comments are offered: the proposed development will not directly affect any proposal set out in the UDP

The scale of development, 36 units, represents a density in accordance with advice in paragraphs 47 to 50 of PPS3 Housing. The proposal will not therefore constitute overdevelopment.

The proposal is accessible on foot to transport services and facilities and will not encourage car dependent travel;

The development is projected to reduce total traffic flows along the highway network with benefit to highway safety and its operational efficiency;

Redevelopment of the site for housing purposes will improve the general amenity for existing residences around the proposal;

The design of the proposal has careful regard for the special visual amenity and character of the surroundings which are part of the Conservation Area;

There are no nature conservation or ecology designations attached to the site nor known wildlife interests that would be affected by the proposal;

General infrastructure requirements related to the proposal will be provided subject to the advice of the relevant providers.

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

BE1 — Identifies a number of outcomes that good quality development should aim to achieve and which are incorporated into or met by proposal.

BE2 — Sets out a number of site planning factors that the design of new development should take into account. The factors relevant to the context of the current application proposal are properly addressed.

PPS 5 has now superseded guidance in PPG15. Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building should pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting. The current setting to Milnsbridge House and other listed buildings along Dowker

Street includes a number of visually unsympathetic industrial buildings and structures. The proposal will result in a beneficial improvement the setting of these listed buildings by a facilitating the replacement by buildings which are more in keeping. The proposal also allows for the creation of amenity open space in the vicinity of Milnsbridge House allowing for a general improvement in the setting to this important building.

BE5 Development in Conservation Areas should be in-keeping with its surroundings and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. The proposal is sympathetically designed to reflect the special qualities of the surroundings in terms of form, land use, scale and materials. The development is therefore considered to help preserve the general character of the area. A more detailed explanation of the impacts on the Conservation Area arising from the proposal is set out in a separate statement accompanying the planning application submission.

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

BE1 1 New development should be constructed in natural stone similar in nature to that prevailing in the area. The materials used in construction of the development will be in keeping with the Conservation Area and in accordance with the Council's advice.

BE12 The design of new housing should ensure that privacy, open space and physical separation are acceptably catered for. Overall the distance values set out in policy BE12 (i) would be difficult to fully comply with in relation to the proposal. The existing built-form of the Conservation Area includes examples where such values cannot be met. To fully meet the distance criteria, say along George Street would suggest that any new development proposal would need to be set back some 10 metres behind the existing industrial built frontage. In terms of the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area such an outcome would be a significant change away from the characteristic built form of development in this area, and unjustifiable in the context of seeking to preserve or leave unchanged such character. In consideration of the special character factors relating to Conservation Area proposals it is requested that the Council exercise its discretion in relaxing this basic standard along the lines of the commentary set out in paragraph 4.27 of the explanation to Policy BE12.



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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

BE21 — Areas of open space within proposals should incorporate access for people with disabilities. The design of the proposal ensures that the access needs for all potential residents will be catered for.

BE22 — Development incorporating off-street car parking should provide for 2 disabled car parking spaces, above the minimum standard of 5% of provision.

BE23 — New development should incorporate crime prevention measures. Car parking and open spaces within the proposals will be overlooked by residences as will pedestrian circulation areas. Footpath access via George Street and Armitage Road can be provided with gated barriers.

EP1 — The impact of development on land, air and water quality; noise levels and visual intrusion will be material considerations. A residential development proposal is considered unlikely to pose a material threat to land quality and air and water quality through emissions. The noise levels associated with a residential proposal are unlikely to raise the ambient noise levels in the area by an unacceptable degree. In terms of visual intrusion factors the proposal is in massing, scale and character terms in keeping with its surroundings.

EP11 — Proposals should incorporate landscaping measures which protect or enhance the ecology of the site. The proposal includes landscaping and planting measures as an integral part of the design. The ecological value of the site in its current condition with the full footprint of the land covered in buildings or hard surfaces is not considerable. The introduction of planting where none exists at present represents a benefit in ecological terms and visual amenity over the current situation.

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

T1 Priority is given to locating new development where it can be served by public transport, minimises the need to travel and need for expansion of the highway network. A transport assessment prepared in support of the application proposal identifies that the location of the site offers excellent opportunities for sustainable transport choices. It is located close to a bus corridor, Milnsbridge Town Centre, Milnsbridge Transport interchange and Huddersfield Town Centre. The proposal is projected to reduce the total traffic flows along the highway network negating the need for its expansion to support the redevelopment.

T10 — Seeks to prevent development that is detrimental to highway safety or the environment, and ensure that improvements to highway infrastructure take place where necessary to support development. The Transport Assessment finds that the proposal will remove undesirable heavy goods vehicle movements providing a significant benefit to highway safety and its operational efficiency without the need for new highway infrastructure.

T16 — Pedestrian routes should be provided as part of ne development. The proposal will not affect or require the diversion of existing public rights of way. New pedestrian links from within the proposal onto George Street and Armitage Road will improve access to the local centre, facilities and public transport.

T19 — Acceptable levels of off-street parking should be provided

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

B4 — Consideration of proposals involving land and premises used for business and industry. Redevelopment and a change of use on the site will result in the loss of industrial premises. In terms of the criteria set out in the policy a number of comments in clarification can be advanced.

The existing premises are unsuitable for the existing user who intends to transfer, modernise and consolidate business activity to other current premises at Lockwood. Marketing of the premises has taken place in respect of vacant floor space which remains unused, with little interest received.

At May 2007 the Council's Property Bulletin lists that elsewhere in Milnsbridge and Huddersfield there are 39 records of industrial premises on offer providing a range of sizes between 4000 and 50000 square feet of space. There is evidence therefore of general availability of industrial premises in the area.

The operations taking place in the premises will be relocated to other premises at Lockwood so there will be no net loss to the local economy from the changes proposed. In terms of jobs potential resulting from redevelopment there will be short term employment created during site clearance and construction phases.

The close proximity of housing around the site is an indicator that new homes on the land would fit in with the mixed use character of the area.

No significant potential conflicts are identified in relation to neighboring business uses from the proposed redevelopment

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

Low key business activity currently takes place in Milnsbridge House close to existing residential properties and it is not envisaged that potential future housing will be any closer to this activity than at present.

The loss of the onsite buildings will have an impact on the Conservation Area and on the setting of Listed Buildings. In relation to the former the current premises are unremarkable in character and appearance. The removal of the buildings and replacement by a sympathetically designed redevelopment in keeping with the character and appearance of the area will provide a benefit and enhancement. The impact of the proposal on these important factors is considered in more detail in the Conservation Area impact statement, which also accompanies the planning application submission. The current buildings also form part of and impact on the setting of Listed Buildings in views along George Street and Dowker Street. Significant potential benefits are identified in relation to the setting of the Listed Buildings from this suitably designed redevelopment scheme.

The removal of industrial activity will generally benefit the residential amenity of the area in terms of visual and the opportunity for the design of new buildings in keeping with the attractive elements of the townscape around the site. In contrast continued re-use of the premises within the scope of the Class B2 general industrial range in a possibly intensified manner, has the potential to increase impacts on the amenity of the area via traffic effects and disturbance.

Impacts on the highway network from a residential scheme are considered in the Traffic Assessment, which accompanies the planning application. The findings from the assessment indicate that the redevelopment is projected to reduce the total flows along the highway network and remove undesirable heavy goods vehicle movements to the benefit of highway safety and efficiency.

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**Assessment of relevant planning policies(cont)**

H7 — Housing proposals should incorporate a mix of accommodation. The Council identify that the trend towards building larger detached dwellings has led to a shortage of smaller sized accommodation that would be suitable for first time buyers. The application proposal 3 bedroomed accommodation in varying sizes of dwellings in response to the need for a smaller housing needs

The following parts of the application relating to H10 and H18 are subject to the applicants negotiations with the local authority

H10 — Affordable housing may be sought as part of housing proposals where a demonstrable need exists. The Council acknowledge that low provision of smaller accommodation units in the proposal can help meet such needs.

H18 — On housing development sites larger than 0.4 ha. public open space will be required. The Council recognise that the provision of open space should be influenced by the size of the development, the type of dwelling proposed and specific site factors. Children's play space is less likely to be appropriate where development is primarily of one or two bedroom properties, such as the application proposal.

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The planted and landscaped areas included within the proposed layout can be a subject of a planning condition

As a replacement for the 1999 UDP the Council has begun preparation of the Local Development Framework. The 2006 consultation in connection with the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options indicated that there was significant support for the idea of development at Huddersfield from respondents to the consultation. This outcome would support the notion of the Milnsbridge area as a place where new housing should be located. Though the LDF is at an early stage in its preparation and can only be given limited weight it does indicate that the proposal is unlikely to offer significant conflict with the outline of the emerging development framework strategy.

The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy allocates additional housing growth to Kirklees a proposal endorsed in the EIP Panel Report. Similarly the draft RSS target to achieve 75% of new housing on previously developed land is supported as achievable by the Panel. The application proposal will accord with both the above broad objectives.

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**Involvement of community and other professionals**

The occupiers of the dwellings and premises adjacent to the site have been consulted directly about the idea of a residential development of the site and their views have influenced the development solution which has been chosen..

There was some level of support for the idea of a residential redevelopment expressed in comments and only one source of objection. Overall, respondents mentioned points of detail that new development should aim to incorporate. A common theme expressed is the need for new development to match the character of existing domestic buildings in terms of scale, materials and design. Particular concerns related to the use of roads by heavy goods vehicles, and the need to provide off-street parking as part of any redevelopment proposal. These and other issues have been addressed in the findings of a Transport Assessment undertaken to support the redevelopment proposal. The conclusions of the Assessment are that traffic conditions on the local network are not worsened as a result of redevelopment and benefits from the reduction of commercial traffic serving the existing site use, will occur. The retention and reuse of the existing Dowker Street site access as the sole vehicular access for the proposal was also put forward. The submitted proposal responds to such concerns.

Other development issues that were referenced the opposition to the provision of affordable housing as part of any scheme.

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**Evaluation of site opportunities and constraints**

The site is wholly developed and covered with buildings and hard-standings used in connection with B2 industry. The on-site buildings are the only notable physical features on the land and are of unremarkable visual value. There are no amenity features, trees or vegetation of note on the site.

The land slopes down from north to south with an overall fall of around 3 metres between Armitage Road and George Street. The site therefore has a south facing aspect.

The Dowker Street frontage is the location for the current operational site access though an access exists at the George Street frontage also. To limit impact on and disruption to the built form of the existing street frontages it is considered that the existing Dowker Street access provides the best potential for a new development access has identified that further detailed investigation of ground conditions and other factors would be appropriate prior to development taking place.



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**Design**

The layout of the development has been designed to ensure that the characteristic built form of domestic architecture in the conservation area is complemented. There is no significant level of opposition in principle to development raised by the adjacent residents.

The applicant has responded to the ideas about the form and scale of development in order to provide a scheme that is in keeping with the special location at the heart of the local centre.

The design solution needs to ensure that the development is compatible with the existing adjoining development to ensure that the adopted policies are met in terms of achieving a sustainable and neighborly development form, and the requirement that development must enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The domestic architecture of the locality around the site is dominated by traditional high density terraced cottages. Density of development that is reflective of PPS3 policy and a form of development acceptable in terms of the existing prevailing character of the area is feasible and deemed to be the correct design solution.

Linkages to the existing vehicular and pedestrian network in the Milnsbridge centre will be maintained. The redevelopment provides an opportunity to integrate the new proposal into the pedestrian network via new footway connections out of the site.

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**Design ;Use**

The proposed scheme has been discussed with the Local Planning Authority. The proximity of existing housing around the site provides a degree of confidence that a residential use of the site can be considered appropriate in principle as a viable redevelopment option to stimulate the continued regeneration efforts around the Milnsbridge district centre. A draft scheme has been sent to and received very positive comments by the local planning department.

The mix of 2 apartments and 34 and small terraced houses is born out of the need for affordable family homes. The houses are mainly three bedroom which again will apply to the occupation by families.

**Design; Amount**

The contextual assessment above establishes that the character of the existing development is densely urban creating a pattern of high density domestic architecture. The established character supports the opportunity for a higher density of development in accordance with PPS3 advice.

**Design ;Layout**

Private open space is available within the individual rear private garden areas of the proposed cottage and town house units. The flatted units are not provided with private space though landscaped open areas are provided. It is envisaged that no garden areas will be provided at the front of buildings to George Street, Dowker Street and Armitage Road. This arrangement will be in general conformity with the pattern of public and private spaces established by the development form of the locality and will ensure an appropriate and consistent street scene.

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**Design ; Layout (cont)**

The areas of landscaped open space will enhance the amenity of the residents of the development providing green areas where none exist at present and the creation of potential bio-diversity in a densely developed urban environment.

The layout of the proposal conforms to established principles of housing layout with clearly understood and defined areas of private and communal realm. Dwellings facing onto traditional adopted streets with street lighting providing an arrangement whereby there is supervision of the public areas. Within the site communal areas can be supervised by overlooking from residences and private areas will be suitably screened and fenced in accordance with principles to design out crime.

Private garden areas will be secure and private and of a size typical of the surrounding urban form. A range of family leisure and play activities can be suitably accommodated.

**Design ; Scale**

The building block units are to be of a 'footprint' and height consistent with the existing domestic architecture in the neighbourhood. They are designed and finished in materials consistent with the established special character of the Conservation Area and locality.

The proposed dwellings include traditional scale and design accommodation with cottages, townhouses and apartments, providing a range of sizes to meet different household and family needs. The accommodation will meet current Building Act requirements with entrance front or rear doorways and bathrooms that are specifically designed to meet the needs of disabled persons and those confined to a wheelchair.

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**Design ; Landscaping**

Soft landscaping is to be provided within the communal and public open space realm where public views are obtained. Commentary in the Milnsbridge Conservation Area statement identifies that there is limited tree coverage in the centre of Milnsbridge and throughout the wider setting of the neighbourhood. Tree planting with urban tolerant species has been proposed as part of the layout though details of the species of trees and shrubs will be subject to later approval and it is anticipated that a planning condition will be imposed in this respect. The tree planting within the open space areas will be designed to ensure that the land remains predominantly open with low level shrubs or trees having canopies at such a level that footpaths are open to view and users are clearly open to view for security and crime prevention reasons.

**Design ; Appearance**

The design of the buildings reflects the character of the domestic architecture in the area, borrowing themes such as terraces, buildings stepping down slopes, materials and notably fenestration treatments and detailing, though used in a modern way. The spatial and visual relationship in relation to existing adjoining and adjacent buildings has been the primary consideration in the design process.

Materials used in construction will aim to meet the requirements set out in Policy BE1 1. Ground surface treatments will utilise a combination of cobbles, block paviers, reconstructed stone and tarmac. Where boundary walls are used they are in stone. The measures outlined above will ensure that the redevelopment is in keeping with and compatible with the established character of the Conservation Area. Accordingly the scheme has been designed in order to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and enhance the setting of Milnsbridge House.

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**Design ; Access**

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The layout has been designed to utilise the existing main vehicular access point from Dowker Street with the aim of minimising disruption in the street scene.

A transport assessment has been prepared relating to the redevelopment of the site and forms part of the technical appraisal to support the scheme submission.

The short internal access layout and its alignment will ensure that vehicle speeds are at a low and appropriate level. The layout will ensure good inter-visibility between pedestrians and vehicles within the site and when joining the highways network

The access requirements to individual dwelling will ensure that the development is accessible to all. The proposed footway links onto George Street and the occupier controlled footway to Armitage Road will create opportunities for more direct links to the local centre, to the advantage of the proposed development. This close proximity and convenient pedestrian accessibility to the centre and public transport services offers excellent sustainable transport opportunities.

The additional dwellings proposed will not justify the need for any specific public transport infrastructure in view of the proximity to existing public transport networks. However, the additional residents may result in more use of the existing available services. Improved pedestrian linkages from the site and the design of the vehicular access allow some flexibility of vehicle use and are suitable overall for use by a range of transport modes.

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**Design ; Access (cont)**

Adopted Policy T10 requires that development is acceptable in terms of highway safety, and Policy T1 assigns priority to locations served by public transport where the need to travel is minimised, as is expansion of the highway network. Policy T19 requires that acceptable levels of off-street parking should be provided. For the reasons explained above and the findings set out in the Transport Assessment it is considered that the development has been designed to fully reflect the relevant policy criteria.

The access arrangements have been designed to reflect the Transport Assessment findings, which in part are derived from contact and sources of information provided by the Council and transport providers. The development form is based on a recognition of the important movement linkages in the areas.

The important need to make provision for emergency access into the site is provided for. Each new dwelling will be accessible from an adopted highway or the internal site access arrangements, which will ensure access for emergency vehicles and services.

The design of the development will ensure that the accessibility needs of disable persons are provided for.

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**Conclusions**

The form of development follows the strong emphasis of domestic buildings close to or back of footpath along road frontages, which is a characteristic of the area. A central area of semi-detached buildings within the body of the site provides an interesting deviation from the terraced appearance of the rest of the site .

The current Dowker Street entry point is re-utilised giving access to communal parking zones within the development. To supplement access pedestrian footways are proposed linking from within the site to George Street and Armitage Road. The pedestrian routes can be secured to ensure that unfettered entry is prevented to aid security, but would provide residents with convenient links to Market Street. Open areas and parking will be overlooked from within the development.

A feature which has influenced the form of the scheme is Milnsbridge House an imposing listed building. An aim of the proposal is to improve the setting of this important building by the removal of modern industrial buildings which are out of keeping with the traditional character and appearance of the historic area.

The housing proposal is based around 2 and 3 storey units to mirror the scale of the existing site buildings and surrounding property. The use of such forms takes account of the topography of the site and seeks to maximise the site capacity respecting the special character of the neighbourhood. The number of dwellings proposed, 36, is compatible with the general advice in PPS3 to seek greater intensity of development in places such as district and local centres. A balance has been drawn between the often competing aims of preserving and enhancing the special character and appearance of the area and providing a policy compliant housing environment

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**Conclusions (cont)**

In arriving at the balance put forward in the application submission the current car parking standards and required open space provision set out in the Council's policies is not fully met on the site. In the former case the close proximity of the development to public transport services and convenient pedestrian accessibility to the local centre, offers a justification for a lesser provision. In support of this idea the Council acknowledge in paragraph 8.45 of the Unitary Development Plan that lower levels of provision will be appropriate where the proposed use can still operate effectively, or the developer wishes to provide less spaces, provided that there will be no significant adverse consequences for road safety or traffic management,

Open space is provided in the form of planted landscaped areas. The 34 dwellings included within the proposal have dedicated private rear garden amenity space.

The design of the buildings reflects the character of the domestic architecture in the area around the site, borrowing themes such as terraces, buildings stepping down slopes, and notably fenestration treatments and building detailing, though used in a modern way. The spatial and visual relationship of the proposal to existing adjoining and adjacent buildings has been the primary consideration in the design process.

Materials used in construction will aim to meet the requirements set out in UDP Policy BE11 or the Local Planning Authority's preference. Ground surface treatments will utilise a combination of cobbles, block paviors, reconstructed stone and tarmac. Boundary walls will be in stone. Tree species and low level planting are suggested as part of the proposal but can be changed to meet the recommendations of the Local Planning Authority.



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**Flood Risk Assessment**

A very small area in the south west corner of the site is in Flood Plain Zone 2 Hatched blue on site layout in appendix. This area is shown as amenity area to plot 1.