

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT of FORMER PUBLIC CAR PARK into 6 no. TOWNHOUSES

PRINCES MEWS, ROYSTON

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this Design and Access Statement (herein referred to as the Statement) is to explain the design and access principles of the proposal of the scheme and its suitability as a response to the site and its setting.
- 1.2 It describes the site and surrounding area and details the proposed development. The Statement also describes the design approach, and the architectural principles drawn upon to inform the use, amount, appearance, landscaping, layout, scale and a brief assessment of daylight. It should be read in conjunction with the detailed plans and drawings which support this application.
- 1.3 In addition to this brief Statement, the application is supported by a series of specialist reports (e.g. Heritage, Drainage, Arboricultural). Again, this report should be read in conjunction with these reports to provide more in-depth analysis.
- 1.4 In addition to this Statement, and specialist reports, the application will be supported by the following architectural drawings:
- 0205_03_001 – Site Location Plan and Block Site Plan
 - 0205_03_002 – Site Plan
 - 0205_03_002 – Landscaping Plan
 - 0205_03_030 – Ground Floor Plan (As Proposed)
 - 0205_03_031 – First Floor Plan (As Proposed)
 - 0205_03_032 – Second Floor Plan (As Proposed)
 - 0205_03_033 – Roof Plans (As Proposed)
 - 0205_03_040 - FRONT ELEVATIONS (As Proposed)
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 - 0205_03_053 - SIDE ELEVATIONS (COLOURED)
 - 0205_03_060 - 3D RENDERS (As Proposed)

2.0 THE SITE and SURROUNDING CONTEXT

LOCATION and EXISTING USE

- 2.1 The Application Site (herein referred to as the site) lies on the west side of Princes Mews, which itself is south of Baldock Street and approximately a 0.2 mile walk from High-Street, the town centre of Royston.
- 2.2 The site takes the form of the southern parcel of a surface public car park (no longer operational), with multiple access points of Princes Mews. It is all hard standing, aside from a few isolated areas of planting. The western and southern boundaries are formed by high-level retaining walls to the neighbouring properties.
- 2.3 The site falls within and is on the edge of the Royston Conservation Area (adopted on 27th March 2007).
- 2.4 The site located in a predominantly residential area of Royston, characterized by a mix of dwellings between 2 and four storeys , with Philips Court to the north and west, Carrington Court and Princes Court to the southeast, and established homes on Earls Hill Gardens to the south-west.
- 2.5 The site sits within an existing residential area and is surrounded by an established built form, as a result the site is considered suitable for residential development. It is well located to benefit from and be a benefit to the nearby town-centre facilities.

CHARACTER of the AREA

- 2.6 Royston is a town located within the North Hertfordshire district of Hertfordshire, lying approximately 18-miles north of Hertford and 12-miles southwest of Cambridge.
- 2.7 Royston's historic core has a fine-grained pattern of streets, courts and mews, predominantly domestic-scale brick buildings with a varied variety of roofscapes.
- 2.8 The town centre contains a many historic buildings, constructed largely of a creamy-yellow gault brick, with frequent uses of render. However, within the immediate context, building ages, sizes, forms and materials are mixed.
- 2.9 The character of the immediate area around the site is defined by a 2-3 ½ storey brick apartment block to the western boundary, and 2-storey brick and rendered dwellings to the south. Further to the southeast of Princes Mews there are number of more contemporary residential dwellings, ranging from larger 3-storey apartments blocks to terraces and semi-detached 2 and 2 ½ storey dwellings. There is a range of materials employed in addition to the creamy-yellow bricks, including red stock brick, slate and white / cream render.

HERITAGE

- 2.10 A Heritage Statement has been prepared by Squire Heritage Consulting to accompany this planning application. A summary of the key points within the report has been provided below:
- 2.10.1 The site lies within the Royston Conservation Area and is located close to several Grade II listed buildings along King Street, including the listed outbuilding to the rear of No. 47 King Street.
- 2.10.2 The application site occupies a historic backland position within the medieval urban block, historically associated with the rear service areas of the long burgage plots extending behind King Street and Baldock Street.
- 2.10.3 Although the site's historic location remains legible, its significance has been substantially diminished through twentieth-century redevelopment, and the existing surface car park makes only a limited positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 2.10.4 The proposals have been informed by a heritage-led design process, responding to the site's historic urban grain, backland character and relationship with the surrounding historic townscape. The layout, scale, massing, roof forms and material palette have been designed to reinforce the established character of Princes Mews whilst remaining subordinate to the historic King Street frontage.
- 2.10.5 The redevelopment would replace an underused area of hard standing with a well-designed residential scheme that reinstates enclosure, improves the appearance of the site and better reflects the historic pattern of development.
- 2.10.6 The proposals would preserve the significance and setting of nearby Grade II listed buildings, including their group value, principal public views and relationship with the surrounding historic townscape.
- 2.10.7 In addition, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the Royston Conservation Area, reinforcing the historic urban morphology without competing with the architectural prominence of the surrounding heritage assets.
- 2.10.8 The Squire Heritage Statement concludes that overall, the proposed development represents a well-considered, heritage-led redevelopment that preserves the significance of designated heritage assets and accords with the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national planning policy and the heritage policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

3.0 CONSTRAINTS and OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 As part of the initial design process, the constraints and opportunities have been assessed and are outlined below.
- **CONSTRAINT:** The site sits within the Royston Conservation Area, as a result the scheme will need to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of its context
 - **CONSTRAINT:** Proximity and relationship with Philips Court and neighbouring homes, including potential loss of amenity, daylight and outlook
 - **CONSTRAINT:** Existing brick walls and piers to be western and southern boundaries to be retained and protected

- **OPPORTUNITY:** Opportunity to reuse previously developed land, strengthen the sense of enclosure and reduce the visual dominance of open parking
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Improve the coherence of the immediate area, in-filling the current void to provide a of townhouse that better reflects the grain of the historic town
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Provide much needed, well-designed and attractive open market accommodation within the Town Centre, helping to meet the needs of the area
- **OPPORTUNITY:** The site is well-located, particularly given its proximity to existing services, infrastructure and transportation links
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Enhancing the biodiversity of the site, offering private landscaped rear gardens, communal garden area to the site and areas of planting to the street frontage
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Contribute to employment and diversity of development within the local area
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Positioning of blocks to ensure adequate separation distances to neighbouring properties

4.0 DESIGN

SUMMARY

- 4.1 The design of the proposed scheme has been driven by the context in which it sits, concentrating the built form in a linear pattern fronting onto Princes Mews, allowing for parking to the plot frontages and private amenity spaces to the rear.
- 4.2 The terrace is considered an appropriate form, responding directly to the site's historic urban grain, backland character and relationship with the wider historic Royston townscape.
- 4.3 The townhouse has been split into two terraces of three, breaking the appearance of an overly large terrace. Utilising the topography of the site, the plots step from south the north by approximately 900mm. Please refer to the level strategy produced by Mucklow & Harris, submitted in support of this application for detailed levels information.

SITE LAYOUT ANALYSIS

URBAN FORM and ENCLOSURE

- 4.4 The six townhouses establish a strong, continuous building line which runs parallel with Princes Mews. As noted above, the terrace is broken by a 1.2m central pathway between plots 3 and 4. Whilst this allows the elevation to read as two smaller groupings, aligned to the finer rhythm of the surround area, it also serves a practical purpose to provide read access to plots 2,3, and 4 facilitating bin storage in the rear gardens.
- 4.5 Front doors and kitchen windows face directly onto car parking spaces and Princes Mews, ensuring activity and natural surveillance. This is considered an improvement to the townscape over the current car park which can encourage anti-social behavior.

PLOT ARRANGEMENT and AMENITY

- 4.6 The six plots are arranged front to back from Princes Mews, with each town house benefitting from a directly accessible rear garden.
- 4.7 The table below outlines the length and plot size of each proposed dwelling:

Plot	Depth of Garden (m)	Area (m2)
1	7.1	52.0
2	6.9	33.2
3	7.1	29.8
4	7.2	36.8
5	7.2	35.5
6	7.3	32.3

- 4.8 In addition to the high-quality private rear gardens, the proposed development includes an additional 65m2 of private communal gardens to the site frontage for the exclusive use of the six plots.

SCALE, MASSING and ROOFSCAPE

- 4.9 The terrace is three storeys in functional terms, expressing itself as 2 ½ storey dwelling externally, with the master-bedroom contained within the roof space. This helps to reduce the overall massing of the scheme, which is considered appropriate to the street scene.
- 4.10 Regular dormers to each plot along with a chimney to each of the blocks to provide relief to the roofscape.
- 4.11 Splitting the plots into two distinct blocks avoids a monolithic block, which would create over dominance within the street scene.
- 4.12 The scale is considered appropriate for the town-centre context,

FRONT ELEVATION

- 4.13 As referenced within the Heritage Statement each house has been designed with a rhythm of consistent bays, with a defined and appropriate hierarchy. To the front elevation there is an entrance door with simple canopy over the paneled front entrance door and principal ground-floor window to the kitchen.

REAR ELEVATION

- 4.14 The rear elevation is simple with wide French doors with sidelights to the ground floor delivering a good connection to the garden and allowing natural daylight into the living room area.
- 4.15 First-floor windows and roof dormers follow the rhythm of the front elevations.

LAYOUT and PLOT CONFIGURATION

- 4.16.1 The layout to each plot is identical, simple in form with a centralised entrance door, good-sized kitchen and W.C. to the left and right of the entrance respectively (plots 1,2, 5 and 6 handed).
- 4.16.2 Stairs to the first floor are located directly off the entrance hallway.
- 4.16.3 To the rear is a large open plan living room and dining area with an under-stair store.
- 4.16.4 A double and single bedroom are located on the first floor, with a generously sized family bathroom. Stairs to the second floor are off the first-floor landing
- 4.16.5 The second floor comprises of a master-bedroom suite, with dressing are and en-suite shower room. Additional storage is also provided to the second-floor accommodation.

LAYOUT and PLOT CONFIGURATION

- 4.21 A simple, yet high-quality material palette has been employed, consisting of red facing brickwork, red plain clay roof tiles, uPVC sash effect windows and black uPVC rainwater goods (heritage profile)

5.0 ACCESS, MOVEMENT and INCLUSIVE DESIGN

VEHICULAR and PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

- 5.1 Access is taken directly off the existing Princes Mews carriageway, with parking to each proposed dwelling either directly in-front or to the side of its corresponding plot.

EXTERNAL LEVELS and LEVEL ACCESS

- 5.2 Level access is provided from each parking space to the front door of each corresponding dwelling along with adequate door clear widths and a W.C. at entrance level.
- 5.3 Across the full width of the plot frontage, Princes Mews falls (south to north) by approximately 1.4m.

- 5.4 Working with the topography, and as demonstrated by the level's strategy submitted in support of this application, 300mm steps have been added to each block, with a further 300mm between the blocks. This results in a difference of floor levels between Plots 1 and 6 of 900mm (with Plot 6 to the south being the highest).
- 5.5 To the rear, garden levels are set 150mm lower than the respective FFLs.

CAR PARKING

- 5.6 A transport statement, including tracking drawings has been produced by The Transportation Consultancy (TCC) on behalf of Kain Miller, and accompanies this application. In this report it is confirmed that the proposals are acceptable and car parking tracking can be completed as required.
- 5.7 Based within the adopted standards (NHDC Parking Standards (taken from NHDC Parking SPD, September 2011)), the 6 no. three-bedroom dwellings require a minimum of 12 allocated residential parking spaces. The proposed layout provides two spaces per dwelling and therefore meets the residential parking standard.
- 5.8 Part 4, Chapter 6 of Hertfordshire's Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Code sets out that minimum parking bay sizes for perpendicular spaces is 5.0m (l) x 2.5m (w). An extra 0.2m, taking the width to 2.7m is required if a space is obstructed on one side by a solid structure (e.g. fence or wall).
- 5.9 As one of Plot 6's parking bays is immediately adjacent to the southern brick boundary wall, the parking space measures 2.7m in width. In addition, the 2 no. parking spaces to Plot 1 also measure 2.7m in width in response to the new timber separating the balance of the former car park.
- 5.10 As noted within the TCC Statement, no dedicated visitor / unallocated parking is proposed within the development, with visitor demand assumed to be accommodated within nearby public parking areas. As concluded within the TTC report "given the small scale of the development, the expected infrequent and short-stay nature of visitor demand, and the availability of neighbouring parking areas, this arrangement is considered appropriate and would avoid an unnecessary increase in hard standing within the residential site."

- 5.11 A tree has been plotted between the parking bays of plots 1 and 2 to soften the predominantly hard-standing frontage. Additionally, soft planting areas have been incorporated into the frontage, further softening the appearance of the development.

ELECTRICAL VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

- 5.12 A wall mounted electric vehicle charging point (EVCP) is proposed to the front elevation of each dwelling. EVCP Charge Cable gulley channels (from Stormguard or similar approved) are proposed within the footpath and landscaped area to avoid trips and falls.
- 5.13 The indicative locations for each EVCP are shown on the drawing 0205_03_002 – Site Plan.

REFUSE COLLECTION

- 5.14 Refuse collection for the proposed development will be carried out via. a kerbside bin collection point located between the parking spaces for plots 1 and 2.
- 5.15 Within the rear gardens, each dwelling is provided with secure storage for 3 no. bins (1 no. 180l and 2 no. 240l)

6.0 LANDSCAPE DESIGN and BIODIVERSITY

- 6.1 The landscape proposal, also prepared by Kain Miller aims to create an attractive environment, with year-round interest to the street frontage (utilising the planted rain garden strips) to complement the proposed dwellings and offer well designed private gardens to the future residents.
- 6.2 A BNG metric has been completed by The BNG Guy and has been submitted in support of this application, and it is determined that on current plans the development can meet the required 10% gain on habitat units.

7.0 DRAINAGE STRATEGY

- 7.1 The site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1, which defines an area of land that has less than a 0.1% chance of flooding from rivers or the sea.

- 7.2 A detailed drainage strategy has been prepared by Mucklow & Harris (drawing no. 26041/101) with both the foul and surface water (subject to a S106 agreement with Anglian Water) connecting into the existing foul sewer. A new 150mm diameter combined sewer is proposed to run along Princes Mews to the point of connection in Baldock Street.
- 7.3 Several SUDS and volume control features have been designed into the site to reduce the flow into the proposed combined sewer to a maximum discharge rate of 1.0 l/s. The following features are proposed:
- Water butts connected to downpipes
 - ACO rainwater gardens
 - Permeable paving to driveways flowing into a cellular storage system
 - Flow control chamber

8.0 DAYLIGHT and SUNLIGHT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Although informal, a daylight and sunlight assessment has been considered aligned to the principles of BRE BR 209 (2022).
- 8.2 All of the proposed townhouses are dual aspect, with the front elevations broadly oriented to the south-west and the rear elevations and gardens facing north-east, providing afternoon / evening sun at the front and morning light to the rear of the properties.
- 8.3 Appropriate separation distances have been established to ensure that any significant daylight impacts are considered unlikely.
- 8.4 The proposed kitchens to the plot frontages will receive good daylight and afternoon sunlight, while to the rear of the properties, the living rooms will benefit from a wide expanse of glazing, diffused daylight, and morning sun.
- 8.5 Whilst the dining areas sit deeper within the plan and rely on borrowed light through the living rooms, daylight distribution is considered acceptable.
- 8.6 Bedrooms should generally receive adequate daylight, with south-west-facing rooms having stronger sunlight potential than the north-east-facing rooms. Plots 1 and 6 also benefit from additional windows to the side elevations (although not within the first-floor bedrooms directly),

9.0 SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 This Design and Access Statement accompanies a planning application submission for the development of 6 no. three-bedroom town houses with associated parking, drainage and landscaping to redevelop land at Baldock Street, Royston.
- 9.2 The proposals have been carefully considered and developed, with the design evolving through contextual analysis. Careful consideration has been given to the scale, appearance and materials to ensure they relate to the surrounding character and context.
- 9.3 The proposals provide sensitively designed, high-quality dwellings, that are appropriate to meet local need in order to contribute to the identified housing need in the local area. These are set around high quality private and communal amenity spaces, demonstrating the required biodiversity net gain and accessible and inclusive spaces for future residents.
- 9.4 This Design and Access Statement concludes that the proposals are fully acceptable in design and access terms and will contribute positively towards the character of the area through a thorough, thoughtful and considered proposal. The design and landscaping are proposed to the highest quality and suitability to the area for existing and future residents alike.