



Design and Access Statement

New industrial and storage buildings

Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth

November 2024

Revision A: 08.07.2025

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01

Introduction

This statement sets out the design principles that have been applied to the proposed new buildings designed on the currently vacant parcel of land off Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth.

These form an application on behalf of Robin Blake of Ashe Group, who own the land within the proposal.

The statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and documents by Wayman Architects, Calcinotto Ltd, Smith Jenkins and the accompanying ancillary information submitted.

The following report looks to set out the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the proposed development.

02

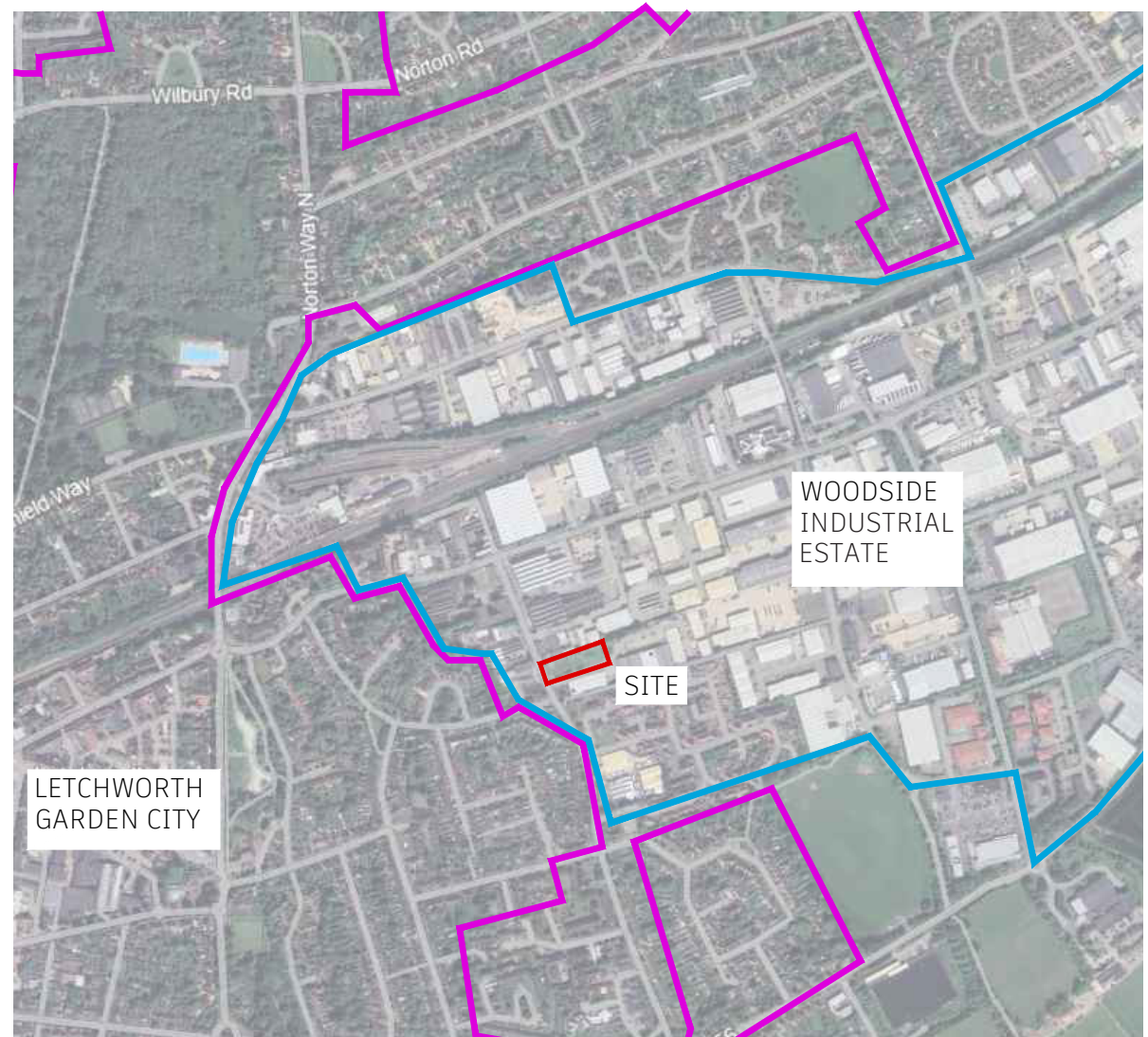
Site Context

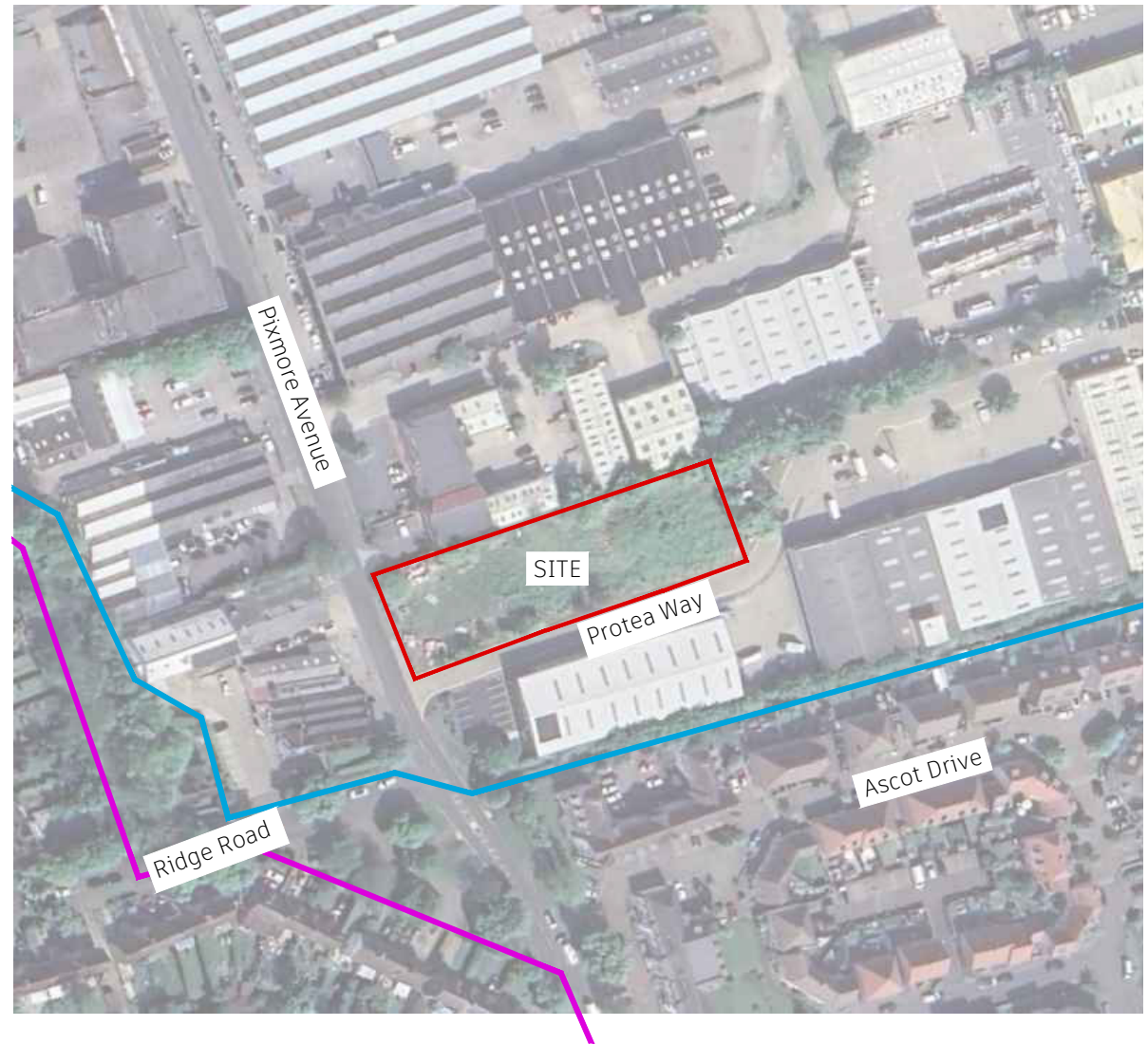
- 2.1 - Site Location
- 2.2 - Local Context
- 2.3 - Site history

The site is located within the Woodside Industrial Estate in Letchworth. It is close to the south west edge of the industrial estate, off Pixmore Avenue.

Situated close to the edge of the industrial and commercial zone, it is surrounded by other industrial commercial buildings.

The Letchworth Garden City conservation area runs close to the western edge of the industrial estate. The site does not border the conservation area.





2.2 - Site Context

The site is currently vacant without any buildings. Formerly, there was a large brick industrial building located on the site, refer to the site history section. This building was demolished more than 10 years ago.

Access to the site exists with a dropped kerb along the west boundary directly on to Pixmore Avenue.

Along the southern boundary the private access road of Protea Way is located. This roadway continues towards the east where a small car park area is located, close to the eastern boundary of the site. Protea Way connects Pixmore Avenue to numerous industrial commercial buildings with a variety of occupiers and uses.

To the north, the boundary runs along the side or rear of several older industrial buildings, including Arden Press House, which fronts on to Pixmore Avenue. Between these buildings there are yard areas accessing the units. There is an existing retaining wall along the northern boundary as the buildings to the north are set lower than the application site.

Within the existing site there is a spoil heap derived from previous demolition activities. It has been confirmed that this is formed of crushed hardcore type 6f2, which is suitable for use as oversite during construction. Therefore, it is our intention to retain this on site and use it for the construction process.



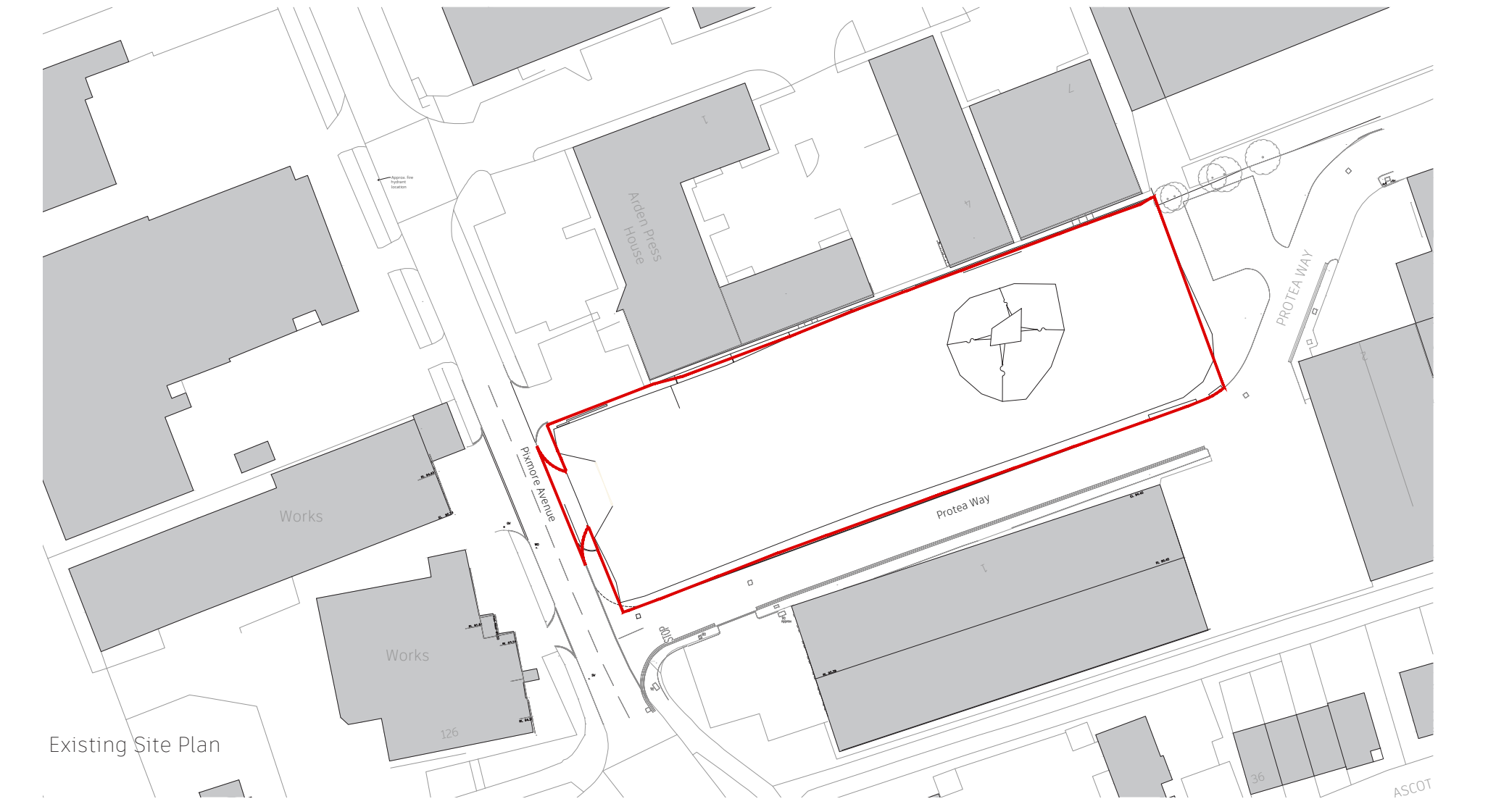
Site photo 01



Site photo 02



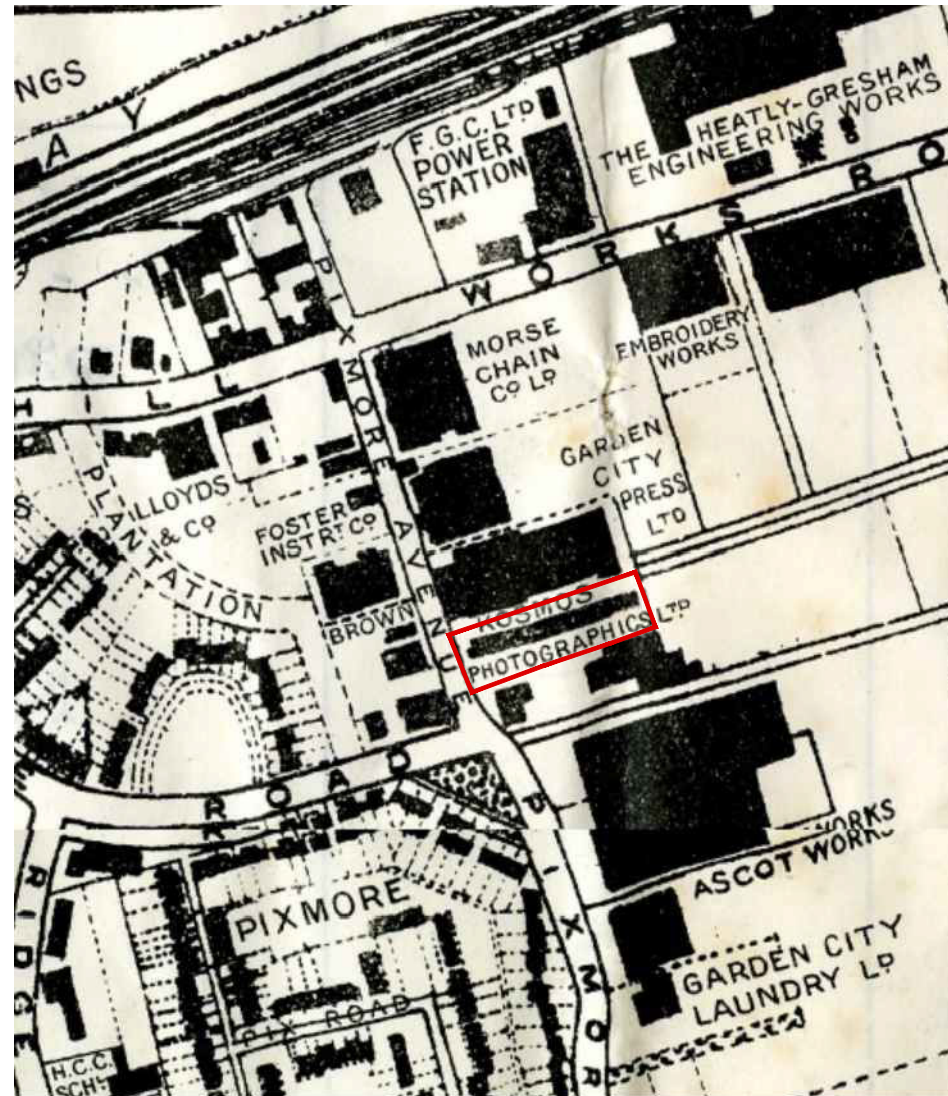
Site photo 03



2.3 - Site History

The adjacent historic map from 1933 illustrates that the site had a linear shaped building running from east to west.

The site and surrounding area has a long history of industrial use as can be seen by the varied mix of commercial buildings along Pixmore Avenue at this time.



Historic Map from 1933

The adjacent aerial image from 2003 illustrates that the original building had, at some point, been extended with an additional linear building. This is the last evidence that the site had a building on as all later images show the site cleared.



Historic Map from 2003

03

Planning Policy

The following planning policies have been highlighted as relevant to proposed design details illustrated within this report:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The updated NPPF (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means that unless material considerations indicate otherwise:

- “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - o the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - o any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

Section 6 sets out the ambition to build a strong, competitive economy, with Paragraph 85 stating planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Chapter 9 of the NPPF relates to promoting sustainable transportation and Paragraph 115 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Section 11 provides guidance on making effective use of land. Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land with Paragraph 125(c) stating that planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land. The NPPF defines 'previously developed land' as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

Section 12 of the NPPF further sets out how development should achieve well-designed places. Paragraph 135 sets out criteria that developments should meet including the assurance that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; developments are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character; and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

Chapter 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and outlines that development proposals will be required to maintain and protect biodiversity, and wherever possible result in a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 207 states that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to note any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2022

The Development Plan covering the application site comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2022 (NHLP).

Policy SP3 'Employment' states that "The Council will proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, support new and existing businesses and seek to build on the District's strengths, location and offer". Within this policy the Council set out a list of objectives, including the need to safeguard Employment Areas within the District's main settlements, as shown on the Policies Map, to enhance and protect their employment potential; permit an appropriate range of offices, research and development, light industrial or B class employment uses within these areas.

Policy SP6 'Sustainable transport' states that the Council will deliver accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable.

Policy SP9 'Design and Sustainability' recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

Policy SP12 'Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity' confirms that the Council will balance growth with protecting the natural environment.

Policy SP13 'Historic environment' states that the Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting.

Policy ETC1 'Appropriate uses in Employment Areas' confirms that within the safeguarded Employment Areas, planning permission will be granted for office, research and development, industrial processes, industrial and storage and distribution uses. In the case of Class B8, development must be easily accessible from the primary road network.

Policy T1 'Assessment of transport matters' confirms that planning permission will be granted provided that development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network. Major developments are expected to demonstrate (as far as is practicable) how i). the proposed scheme would be served by public transport; ii). safe, direct and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided; and iii). comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks will be secured.

Policy T2 'Parking' states that planning permission will be granted provided that parking for non-residential development is provided having regard to the standards for non-residential development set out in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy D1 'sustainable design' requires design to respond positively to the site's local context and be of a high-quality.

Policy D3 'Protecting Living Conditions' seeks to protect the amenity of neighbouring sensitive uses.

Policy NE8 'Sustainable Drainage Systems' requires new developments to utilise sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to reduce the risk of surface water flooding and to follow the SuDS hierarchy for drainage solutions.

Policy NE2 'Landscape' states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals provided they respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area; do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features.

Policy NE4 'Biodiversity and geological sites' requires all development to deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Policy HE1 'Designated heritage assets' states that development proposals affecting designated heritage assets, or their setting, will be granted permission where they enable the asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance, and incorporates an appropriate palette of materials to make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness where appropriate.

04

The Proposed Development

4.1 - Use & Amount

4.2 - Layout

4.3 - Scale

4.4 - Landscaping

4.5 - Appearance

4.1 - Use & Amount

The proposed use for the development within this document is for Industrial Commercial and Storage. These would be within the type B use class. The buildings would be a combination of:

- B2: General Industrial
- B8: Storage & Distribution

The proposed uses are in keeping with former uses and those of the local area.

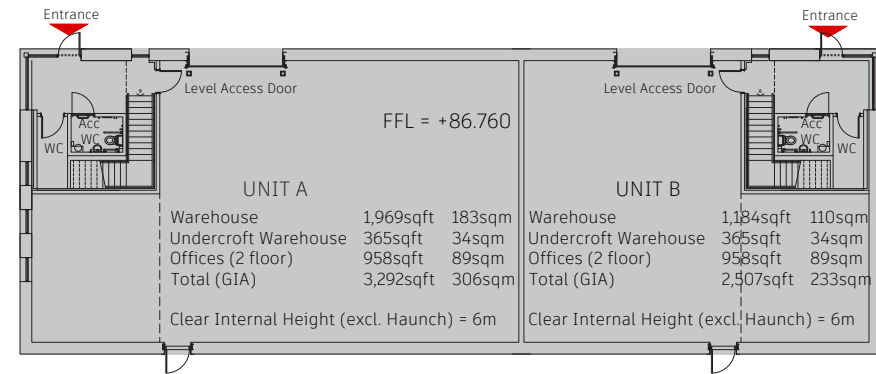
There are two buildings proposed, both with two units. Building 1 will house units A and B. Building 2 will house units C and D. Each building requires an external yard and parking area to enable activities for the proposed use.

The site is rectangular with an overall area of 2,588 sqm or 0.259 hectares.

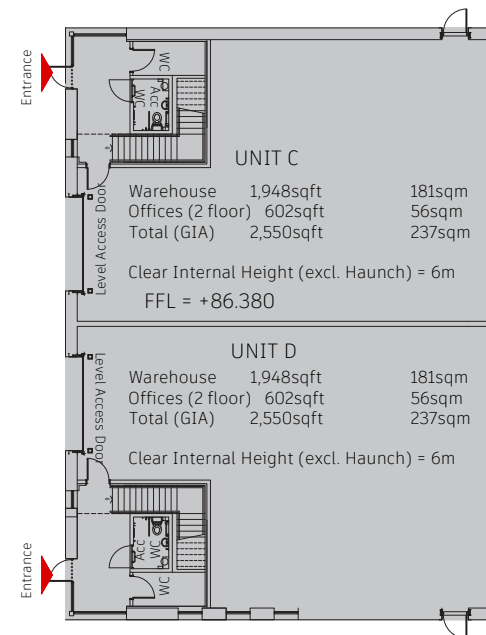
The two proposed buildings have a gross external footprint area as follows:

- Building 1	=	476 sqm
- Building 2	=	471 sqm
Total	=	947 sqm

The proposed building sizes occupy 36.5% of the site, allowing suitable car parking, yards and ancillary areas. The proposals are suitable for this plot and ensure the site is not overdeveloped and is consistent with the surrounding building plots and current guidelines.



UNIT A & B - GROUND FLOOR PLAN



UNIT C & D - GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Proposed Floor Plans

4.2 - Layout

The existing historic access from Pixmore Avenue on to the site is located in the south western most corner, as can be seen on site photo 03 above. Retaining this as the access in to the site is not feasible due to the close proximity to Protea Way. The proposed new access has been positioned central to the west boundary and in equal distance from the access points of Arden Press House and Protea Way.

Access is not possible from Protea Way as this is a private roadway, and not part of the highways network.

Building 2 is located at the eastern end of the site, with building two located along the southern boundary. The two buildings are separated by a service yard with integrated parking, for units C & D. Building 1 has a parking and access located along the front (north facing) elevation, with additional parking either side of the site entrance.

Access to Building 2 is via an internal roadway along the northern boundary.

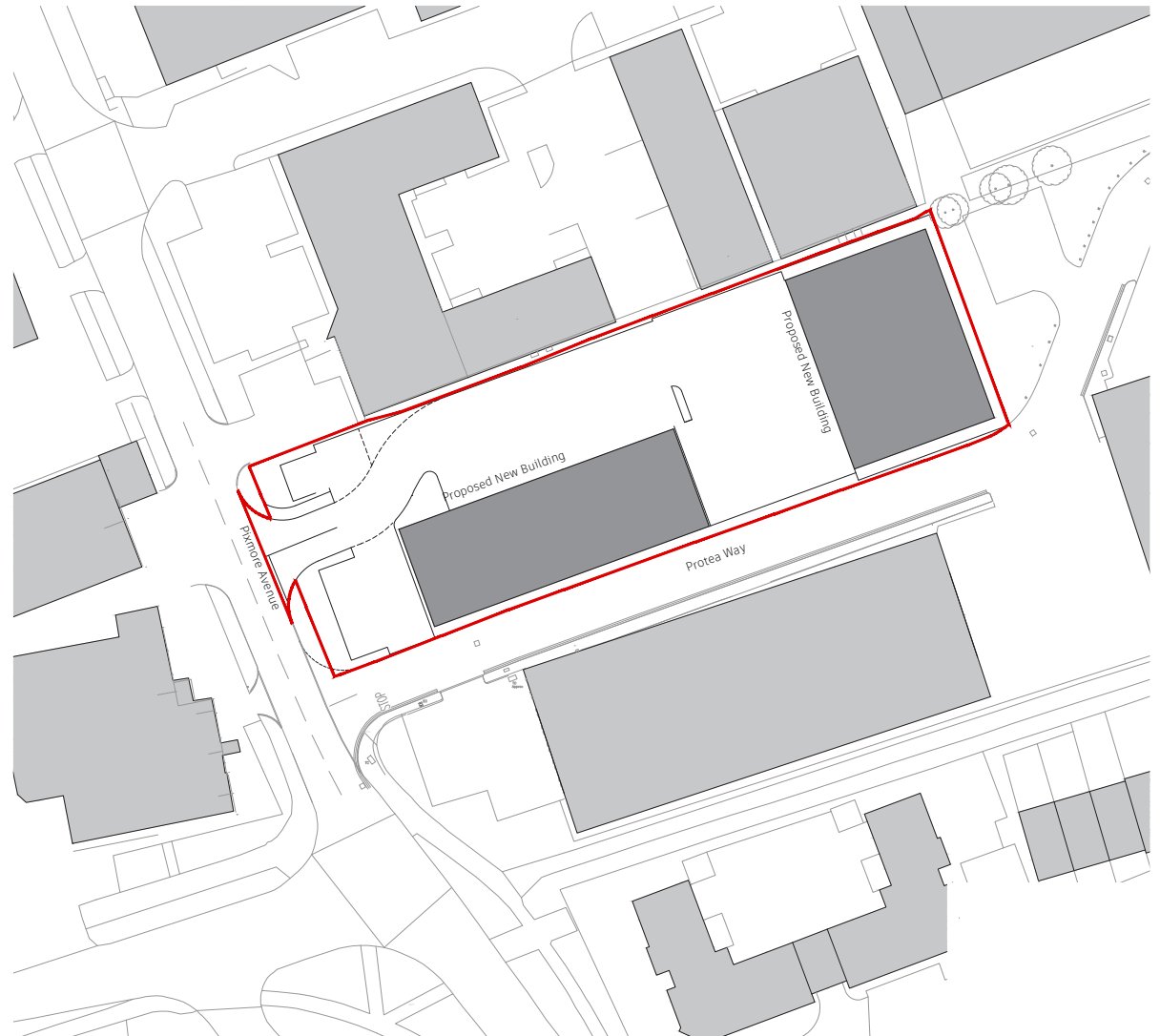


Proposed Site Plan

The layout has been proposed to make the best use of the site whilst being considerate to the surrounding buildings, users and occupiers. This is achieved through the following:

- Building 1 has been set back from Pixmore Avenue. This ensures the building line along Pixmore Avenue is maintained.
- Building 1 is located along the southern boundary protecting the amenity of Arden Press House and enabling on site access to Building 2.
- Car parking, new access and landscaping to the western part of the site maintains the general theme of openness along Pixmore Avenue.
- Building 2 is located to ensure there is adequate parking and manoeuvrability to the front.
- Dedicated parking provides safe access for users and occupiers, with clear access routes defined within the site.

Proposed Block Plan

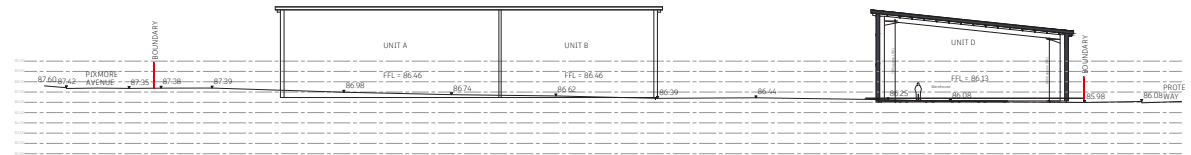
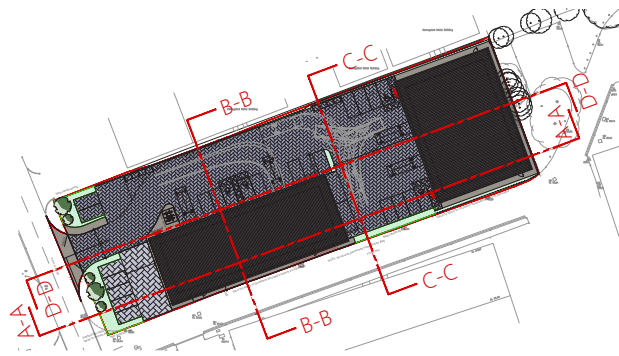


4.3 - Scale

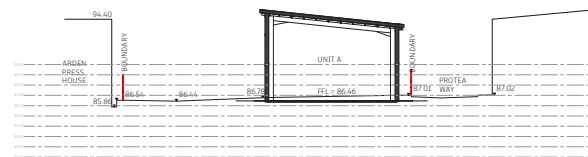
The proposed minimum clear internal heights within the two buildings is proposed as 6m. This ensures that, with the mono-pitch roof design, the overall heights are comparable to those of the neighbouring buildings. This ensures a harmonious skyline along Pixmore Avenue.

As can be seen in the above proposed block plan, the building sizes are similar to the mix of commercial buildings within this area of the Woodside Industrial Estate. The building sizes are appropriate for the site.

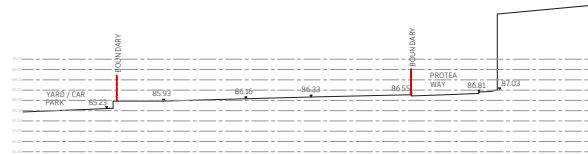
In addition, these buildings have been designed to provide suitable unit sizes capable of meeting the needs of a variety of potential users. Office provision differs between Units A & B to Units C & D to give a varied range of options for occupiers. Each unit has a dedicated pedestrian access for staff and visitors, with level access doors providing larger access to the warehouse element.



SITE SECTION A-A



SITE SECTION B-B



SITE SECTION C-C



SITE SECTION D-D

Proposed Site Sections



VIEW FROM PIXMORE AVENUE

Proposed Street Scene

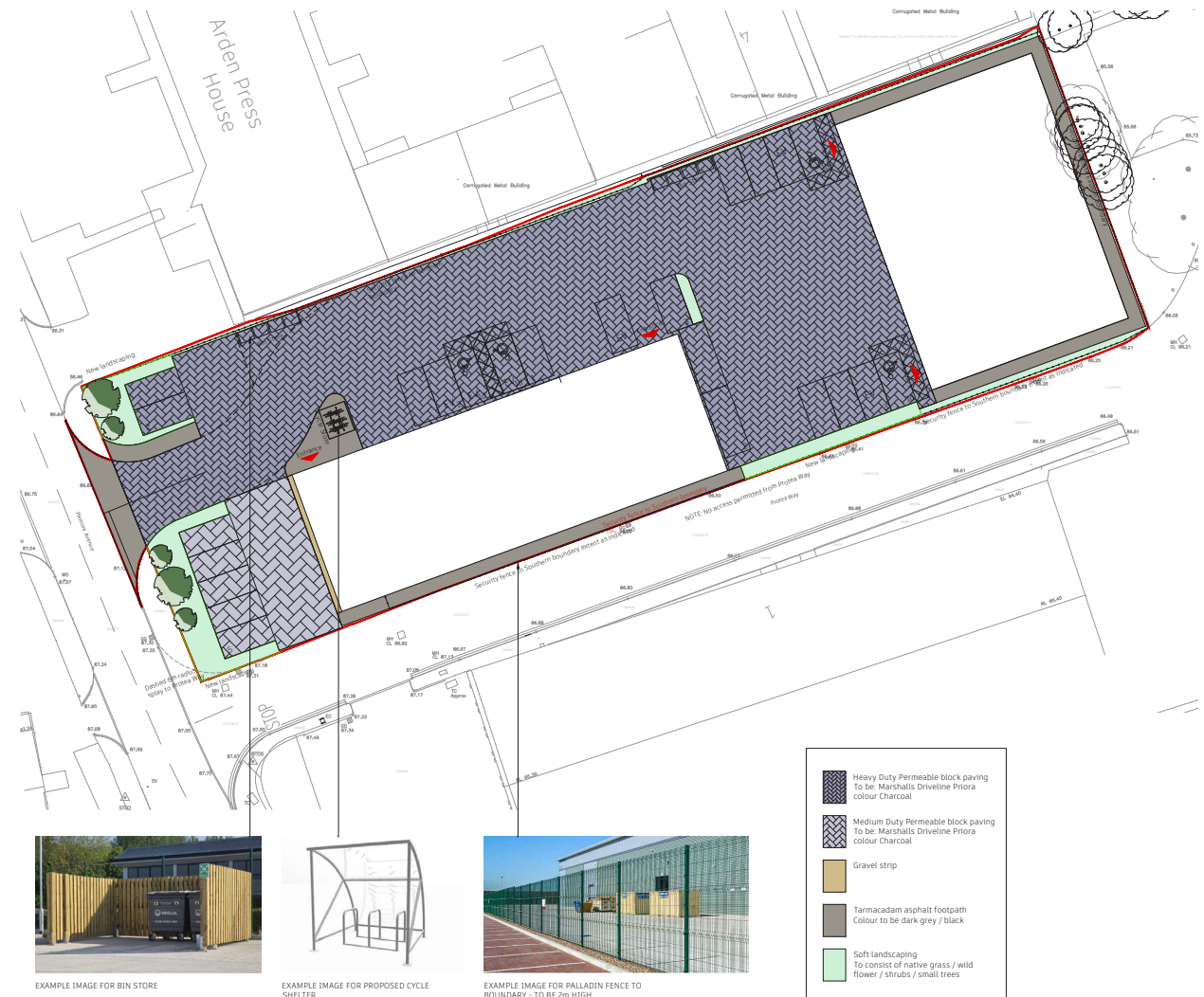
4.4 - Landscaping

The proposed landscaping for the site relates to the proposed use.

Roadways, yard areas and parking areas are to be surfaced with heavy duty paving blocks - in charcoal colour. These will be of a permeable type to assist with the land drainage, as illustrated within the designs by Calcinotto.

There is some opportunity for small areas of soft landscaping as indicated. This is predominant to the front of the site to provide a soft and open aesthetic along Pixmore Avenue.

Footpaths will be finished with asphalt to ensure they meet requirements for access and egress from the buildings.



Proposed Landscape Plan

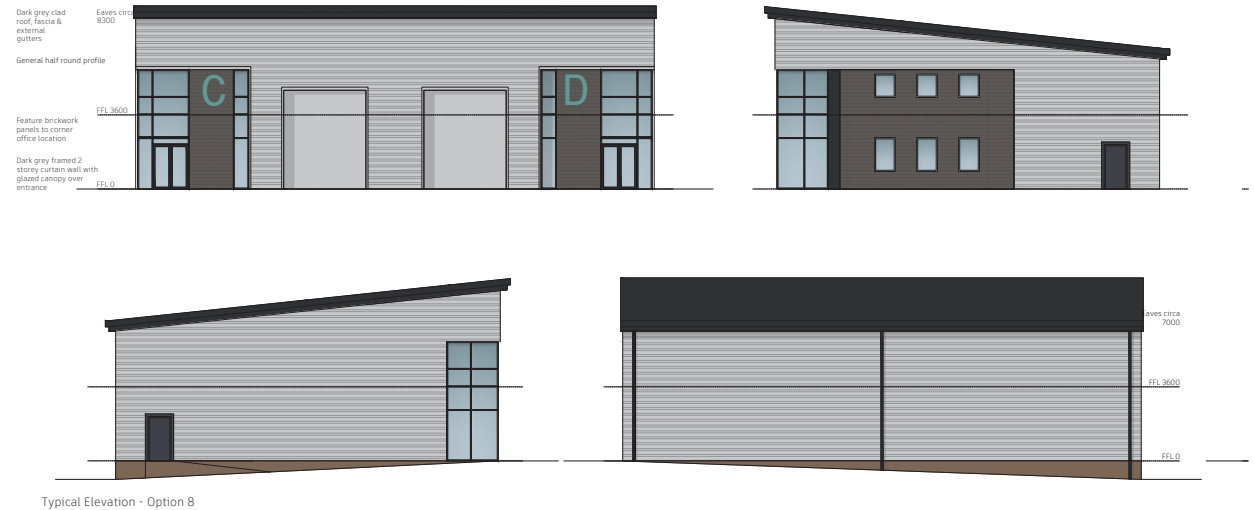
4.5 - Appearance

The elevational treatment for the units varies throughout the site, utilising a complimentary palette of materials with variations depending on orientation.

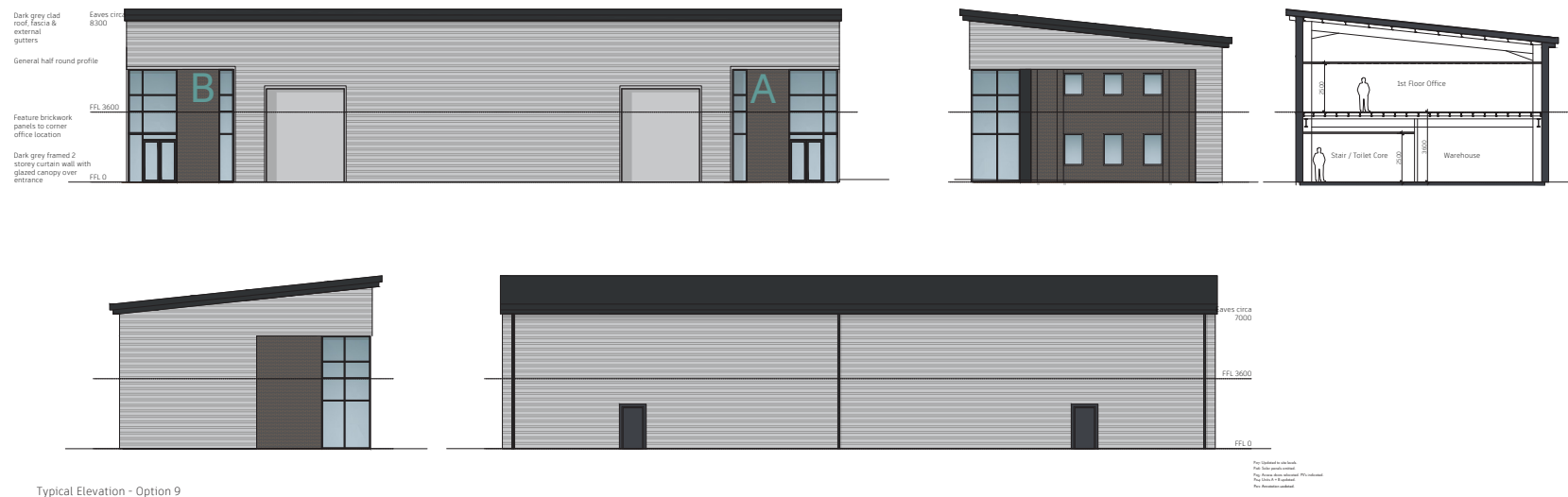
The proposals combine a mix of traditional materials alongside typical contemporary industrial finishes to provide modestly attractive buildings.

The building compliment their setting which has a wide variety of forms and materials. The surrounding built forms include traditional red brick and contemporary steel cladding, both used in this design.

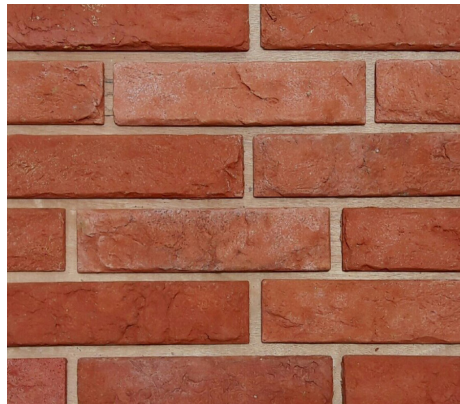
Each unit has a focal entrance framed in full height glazing and brickwork. This provides a clear indication of the public entrance. Wrap around glazing and brickwork emphasises this, which is extended on the west facing elevation of Building 1 and south facing elevation of Building 2. This additional detail provides interest to the street facing elevations strengthening the appearance of the units. The remainder of the elevations are finished with half round profiled steel cladding, in a landscape orientation.



Proposed Elevations: Unit C & D



Proposed Elevations: Unit A & B



Proposed Material Palette

05

Access

Wayman Architects are committed to providing designs that are accessible and inclusive to all. The following Guidelines will be adhered to during the detailed design:

Section 1 - Access to Buildings other than Dwellings:

Level approach from the boundary of the site and car parking (page 19 of AD M), achieved in line with the guidance in Approved Document M. There is Accessible parking, directly accessible to the main entrance.

Windows to have restricted opening of 100mm during normal use. Outward opening entrance doors to be protected by guarding.

Section 2 - Access into Buildings Other Than Dwellings:

Accessible entrances (page 28 of AD M), achieved in line with the guidance in Approved Document M. Doors to accessible entrances (page 28 of AD M) achieved in line with the guidance in Approved Document M.

Section 3 - Horizontal and Vertical Circulation in Buildings Other Than Dwellings:

Internal doors (page 34 of AD M) achieved in line with the guidance in Approved Document M. Corridors and passageways (page 36 of AD M) achieved in line with the guidance in Approved Document M.

This development on Pixmore Avenue will provide new commercial facilities accessible to all. The flexible approach to the buildings design, with considerate layout and an ability to function in numerous ways, ensures this building will meet the varied uses required.

06

Conclusion

We believe this proposed development has been designed considerably and appropriately for the site and setting.

