Urban Structure and Grain photo sheet



Photo A



Photo B



Photo C



Photo D



Photo E



Photo F



Photo G



Photo H



Photo i

Urban Grain Diagram

The urban grain diagram opposite helps demonstrate that houses along the North West side of Mill Road run parallel to the Road and line the edge, providing enclosure and a strong building line.

In contrast, houses on the application site and directly to the south west are angled away from the road and are stepped to stay in line with the road side. This provides less enclosure but provides more green open space adjacent to the road.

The diagram helps to show that new development to the east of the site utilises the entire depth of the plot, rather than just the site frontage.

Even though the area is primarily residential in scale, there are a number of buildings with larger footprints within the local area. An example of this are the Industrial units based around Lumen Way to the east of the site

The application site presents an opportunity to maximise the full depth of the site and have a flatted development on it.

It is considered good practice to follow an existing and established building pattern, creating a sense of defined space along Mill Road



Urban Grain Diagram - NTS

Local Appearance and Material

Royston is an historic market town with a large variey of built form ranging from medieval at the towns core to newly built development, generally towards the edges of the town boundary.

Mill Road reflects this and also has a variety of built form providing an interesting and varied streetscape.

The newest development in the local area is 17a Mill Road, which has just been completed. The development comprises of four 2.5 storey houses located towards the rear of a deep plot of land providing effective backland development.

The houses are modern in appearance and built with a contemporary buff brick. Each house has a simple steep gabled roof with a grey blue slate roof. Windows are a modern dark grey and fascias and soffits are white upvc. The houses have a tradional appearance with contempory detailing (Photo A).

Although built in the 1980's, Oakley Court is one of the later developments along the road. At 3 storeys high, it is the tallest building on the road, and has the largest footprint of a single building. Oakley Court is built using a buff brick and an orange / red secondary brick for detailing. It has some dark timber boarding which helps break up the main facade and adds some interest to the building (Photo B). Although, overall it has a 'neutral' on the street scene.

This block of flats is built close to the pavement edge and follows a historic building line on this side of the road, as well as providing enclosure to the street.

Houses currently built on the site and further to the south west (No's 1-17 Mill Road) were built in the 1950's and hold no architecural value, infact it could be argued that they have a negative impact on the streets Architecture in terms of appearance.

No's 1-17 Mill Road are built with the same materials and should be considered part of a set. There are three 1 storey bungalows at the beginning of Mill Road and then beyond these are six 2 storey houses which include the four semi detached houses currently on the site.

The materials used include a brown brick, white upvc windows and a red / brown clay tile. There is little in the way of architectural features and the appearance appears quite bland (Photo C).

The quality of architecture improves once passed the site, heading north east. No's 10-20 Mill Road are a tradional row of terraced cottages built sometime before 1900. The cottages are double fronted and built with a gault brick, tradional casement windows and georgian cross bars, the roofs are simple and each has a distinctive over sized chimney (Photo D).

Across the road from No's 10-20 Mill Road and adjacent to the eastern edge of the application site lies No. 19 Mill Road. A 2 storey detached property, it is built from the same materials as the terrace of cottages opposite but is grander in scale and height. (Photo E)



Photo A



Photo B



Photo C



Photo D



Photo E

Finally, No. 21 Mill Road is 2 storeys in height and is the only listed building on the road and is distinctive due to its unique flint walls, stone detailing and over sized chimneys.

Any new development on the site has an opportunity to enhance this location along Mill Road. By taking note and respecting the different building styles that are characteristic in the area, there is an opportunity to provide a successful and distinctive flatted development on the site and to bridge the gap in quality between properties closer to Kneesworth Street and the more historic properties to the east of the site.

Wider context

The diagram opposite separates the town of Royston up into different land uses. The blue hue identifies what can be described as buildings with a residential scale, footprint and plot size. These tend to be detached, semi detached and terraced housing .

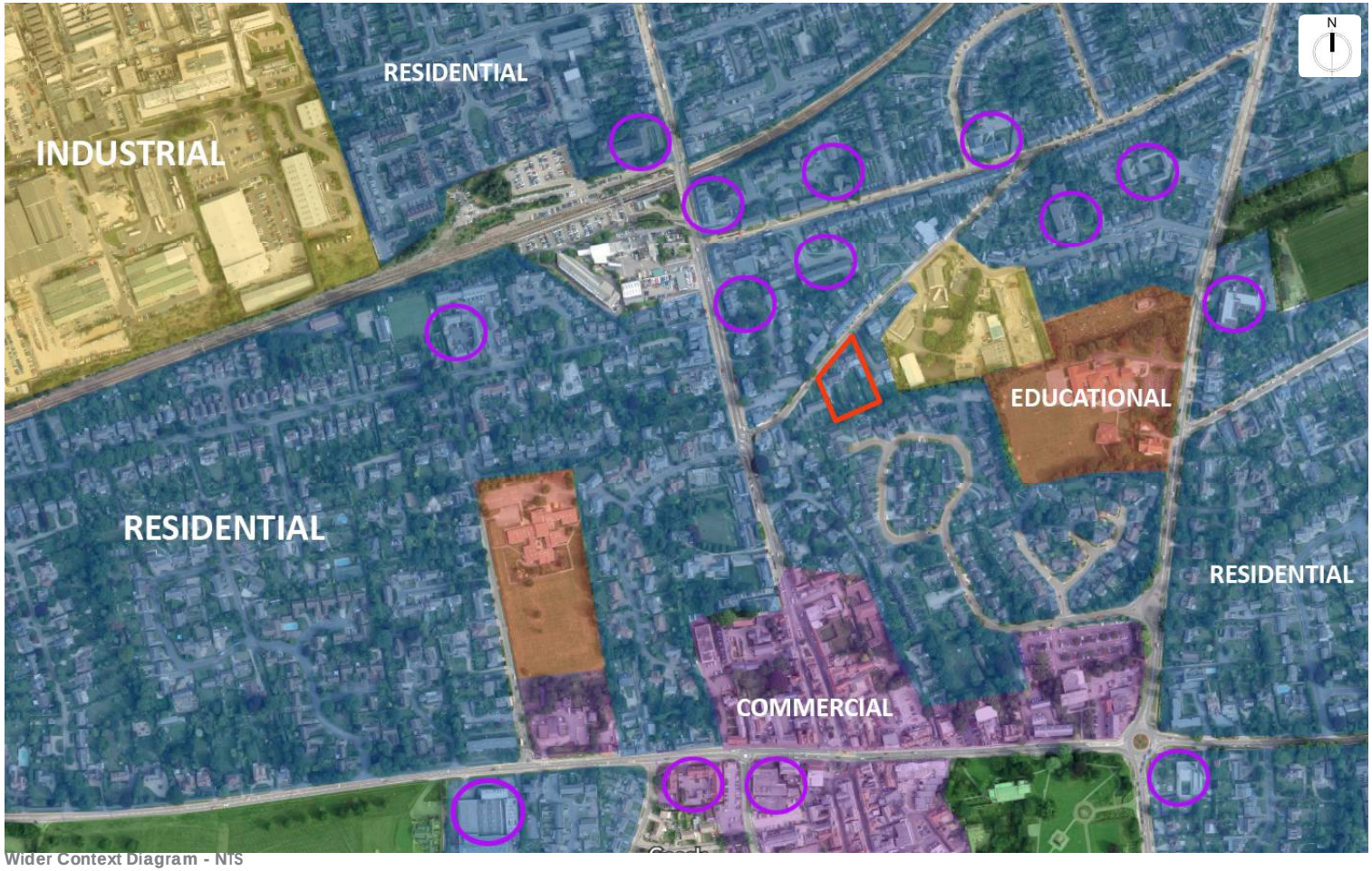
The development in the pink hue highlights the commercial centre, which primarily consists of historic buildings, often with large footprints and typically with commerical on the ground floor . The pink hue also highlights the larger Civic buildings running along Baldock and Melbourn Street. Historic and listed properties tend to be built within the commercial centre but also along Kneesworth Street as explained previously.

Royston is a historic market town and many of the buildings still reflect this. There are still many impressive (and listed) historic buildings amongst more modern development. Period properties tend to be concentrated around Kneesworth Street and the High Street at the centre of the town. The further away from the historic centre you travel, the more modern the buildings tend to be. This is quite usual for a traditional market town such as Royston. Mill Road perfectly captures the juxtaposion of old and new development making for a varied townscape.

Royston does have a rich industrial history and this is reflected in the large industrial area highlighted to the north west of the town in yellow. There is a smaller industrial estate to the east of the site as well.

As Royston has developed over time, the modern dense flatted development have been built on infill sites not developed on previously or they have replaced smaller buildings built within large plots of land. For example, Oakley Court (opposite the site) replaced a smaller builders yard in the early 1980's.

The magenta circles highlight a large number of modern flatted developments within the town, with plenty of them sitting comfortably next to smaller scale housing. The diagram identifies that there is a mix of different land uses within the town. It also shows that larger denser development can successfully sit next to smaller scale residential. Any building proposal built on the site, providing it respects the character of the area, would not be out of place in this location.



Wider Context Diagram - NTS





03

Constraints & Opportunities

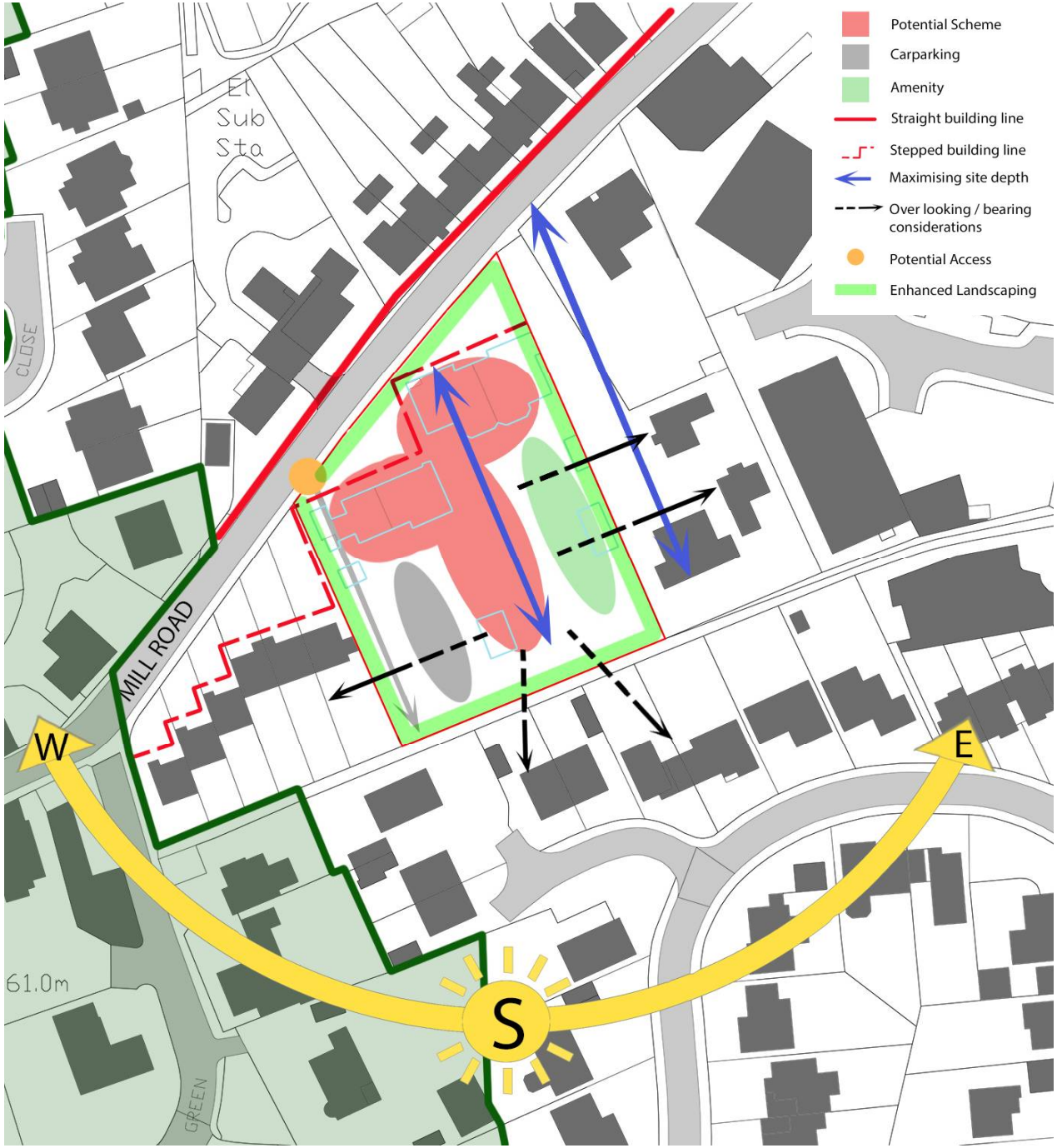
Opportunities
Constraints

Opportunities

- Site size allows for a flatted building which will be an efficient use of space on the site.
- Provision of a much needed retirement development of good quality in a sustainable location
- A successful scheme will enhance the townscape by reinforcing the character of the streetscape along Mill Road
- There is an opportunity to replace poor quality housing and provide a distinctive and notable building using locally distinctive materials and provide greater presence along the road.
- Appropriate to build a development of this scale on the site as the local and wider context demonstrates that there are examples of this.
- Examples of successful new development that utilises the depth of the site directly to the east.
- Appropriate to accommodate a residential development on the site as the local context is generally residential with a variety of built form, styles and details.
- A distinctive design which establishes a strong sense of place and responds to the local character will improve Mill Road
- Given the orientation of the site, there is an opportunity to provide sunlight to a large percentage of the apartments and the amenity space.
- The new scheme will enhance the setting to the front of the site with improved quality landscaping and high quality boundary treatment throughout
- Provide off street parking, with most hidden from the public realm with a new access location and acceptable vision splays
- Views towards the site from the eastern end of the Mill Road
- Proximity to the conservation area and listed buildings is both an opportunity and constraint

Constraints

- As shown in the site analysis diagram, the site is in close proximity to the towns conservation area. As a result the design of the proposal will need to respect the conservation area character.
- Any future development must be considered in terms of possible overlooking of neighbouring amenity uses.
- Mill Road is relatively narrow, the scheme must provide a safe vehicular exit/entrance to the site, taking into account viewing site lines.



04

Design & Development

Pre Application Planning Advice - November 2017
Pre Application Planning Meeting - November 2017
Pre Application Planning Meeting Response - January 2018
Public Consultation October 2017

Pre-Application Planning Advice- November 2017

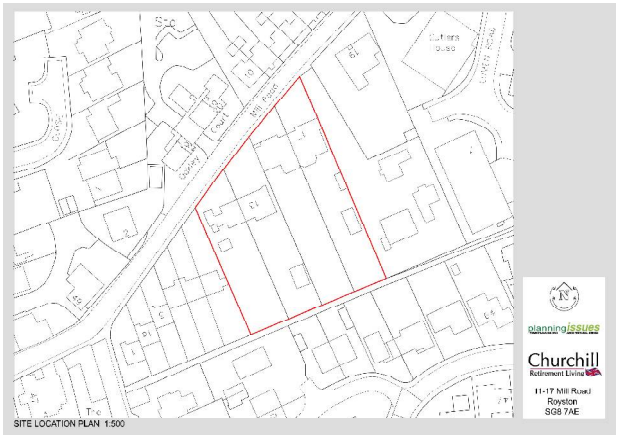
Once design concepts were established, an initial sketch design, 3D renders and analysis were sent to North herts District Council on 4th October 2017 for comment.

An indicative proposal for 37 units with 14 car parking spaces was proposed and the following drawings were included in the pre application pack.

CRL received a written Pre Application response from the council on 13th November and the following key design points were raised.

- The principle of retirement apartments is acceptable, as is 2-3 storey scheme;
- The frontage development should more staggered, to reflect the southern side of the street, and it should set back to reduce its bulk and massing;
- The council expressed concerns about the rear element, in terms of visual over-development'
- Concerns were raised in respect of quality of the amenity space (overshadowing in the afternoon/evening);
- The level of the amenity space falls short of the policy requirements;
- 'Security fencing' should be screened with soft landscaping;
- There should be 1 parking space per unit, plus a further visitor space per 8 units; The policy allows for a reduction, as has been demonstrated at Hitchin.
- At the southern boundary of the site, proposed back to back distances will need to be justified;
- The western boundary treatment will need to address concerns regarding the impact of access noise on neighbours;
- Concerns expressed regarding the loss of privacy to neighbours

A meeting was held at the North Hertfordshire District Council offices on 24th November to address some of the points made in the pre application response.













Pre-Application Meeting- November 2017

During the meeting, members of the CRL team were able to explain Retirement Living to the Planning Officer and the product that CRL builds.

As well as the scale, bulk and massing of the design, the principle of Development, amenity space and access and parking were also discussed. We finished the meeting with Affordable Housing and other contributions.

CRL felt that the meeting was generally positive. Since the Pre Application drawings were recieved by the council, the scheme had progressed towards a planning application and the two parties were able to have an informative discussion around the table.

Some of the points raised in the pre application response were either resolved at the meeting or had already been resolved within the drawings tabled (some of which are shown on the right).





Site Plan and Street Elevation tabled at the Pre Application meeting in November

Pre-Application Meeting Response- January 2018

In order to address one of the primary concerns raised at the meeting, the front 'wing' of the scheme was redesigned and stepped where it fronts Mill Road. (SIte Plan opposite)

The proposed scheme mirrors the pattern of the existing houses on the south eastern side of the road The stepping of the building also provided more space and good quality amenity along the site frontage.

Due to the step in the frontage, the parking layout had to be revisited and a small parking area has been added to the front to the scheme, off Mill Road.

Another point raised in the meeting was the Council's concerns about the potential of over development of the proposed rear leg. In particular, to the existing housing to the south of the site. Diagram A, on the next page shows a ' 25 degree line Skylight indicator'



The pre application response was to step the building at the front of the site

This indicator governs new development directly facing existing windows. If a new building or extension breaches a perpendicular line at an angle of 25 degrees above the horizontal taken from a point 2 metres above ground level on an existing house, it is likely that windows in the existing house will be overshadowed.

The diagram helps to show that the proposed scheme is a sufficient distance away from the existing houses to the rear that it would not affect their visual amenity and nor will it over shadow the property. Other proposed distances to boundaries of neighbouring properties to the east and west were discussed at the meeting and generally agreed with.

The Planning Officer also requested that CRL might consider moving the access road and parking to the eastern side of the site.

It was explained at the meeting that CRL had looked in to this scenario and if the front leg of the proposed building was pulled over towards the south west to allow space for the access road on the eastern side, the front leg would then affect the light and amenity of No's 5-9 Mill Road. The proposed building would be built directly infront of these Neighbouring properties and would provide overbearing issues. For this reason, it was considered having the access road and parking on the western side of the site the correct design approach in this case.

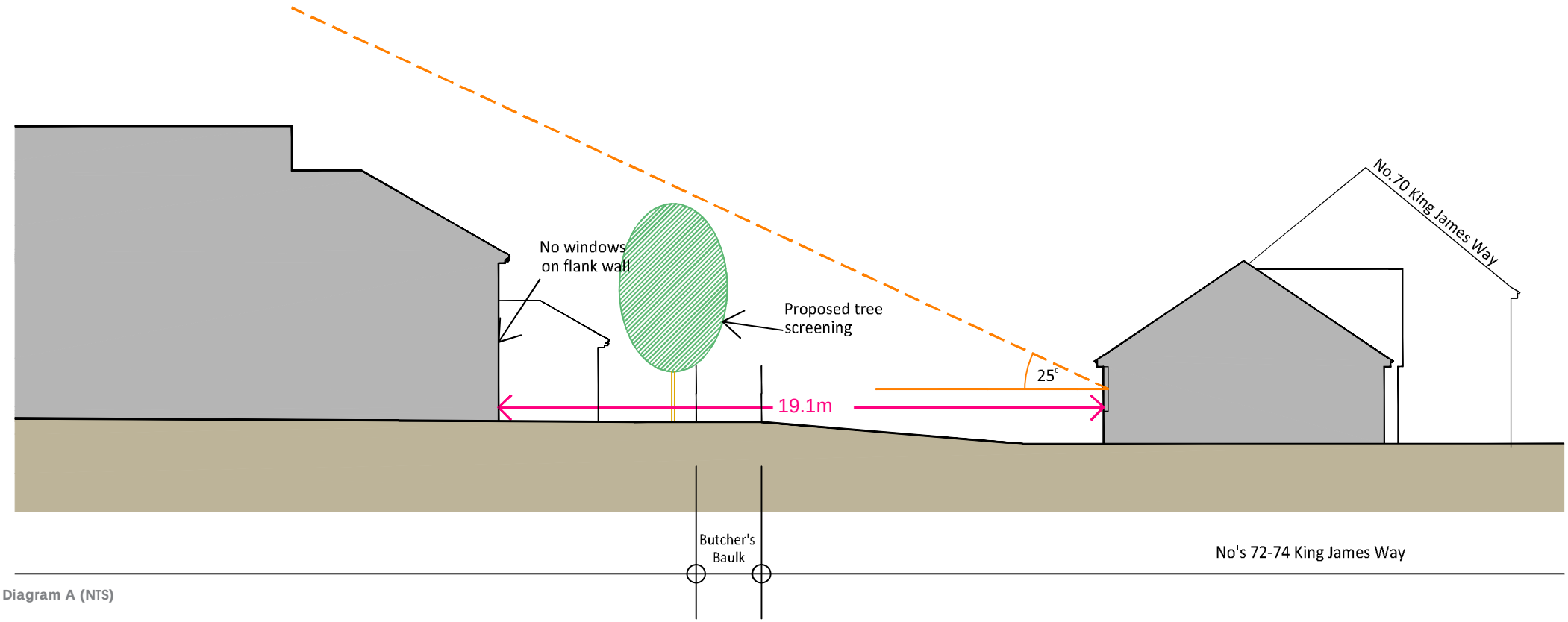


Diagram A (NTS)

Public Consultation October 2017

On 23rd October 2017 a leaflet providing details of the proposals and where to view the drawings was sent to approximately 573 residents and 40 businesses in the vicinity of the proposal site.

The leaflet invited the residents to visit Churchill Retirement Living's website where they would be able to view and comment on the proposals. It also provided a response form, which could be returned to a freepost address and contact details in case of any queries.

The public consultation drawings were made available to view on Churchill Retirement Living's website and remained available to view and comment on up to the submission of this planning application. It was also possible to submit comments on the proposals via the website.

Churchill Retirement Living gives careful consideration to all comments and feedback received regarding its proposals as part of the consultation process.

6 written responses were received. Of these, 3 were objecting and 3 were undecided. The following comments/concerns were raised:

- Inappropriate size and scale (2 respondents);
- Insufficient car parking (2);
- Would like to see a more positive drawing (1);
- Why demolish good family houses? (1);
- Should be council run & affordable (1);
- The street is narrow and effectively single lane (1);
- The scheme is too high and will cut out daylight (1);
- Additional traffic on an already busy road (1);
- Traffic calming & pedestrian crossing needed (1).



Public Consultation - SIte Plan



Public Consultation - Elevation Sheet 1

05

Design Proposal

Land Use
Quantum of Development
Enclosure & Layout
Proposed Building Layout
Proposed Site Layout
Legibility
Scale, Height and Mass
Materials
Access Diagram
Access
Sustainability
Security
Building for Life

Design: Land Use

The site, which covers approximately 0.31 ha, comprises of four semi-detached properties on the south-east side of Mill Road, Royston. A meeting and further correspondence have been held with North Herts District Council and it was agreed that the principle of residential use was acceptable.

Design: Quantum of Development

The proposed development comprises a total of 41 Category II sheltered apartments for the elderly (29 one bedroom and 12 two bedroom apartments). A communal lounge, guest suite, refuse room and lodge manager's office is provided within the proposed building. There are 20 car spaces and an area for the storage and charging of mobility scooters.

Design: Enclosure & Layout

The application proposal addresses the constraints and opportunities identified in this document and takes into account discussions with North Herts District Council.

The layout of the site has been determined by both an irregular shaped site and the opportunity to mirror the existing pattern of Mill Road by stepping the building frontage. As a result of this, a stepped 'T' Shaped building is proposed. The proposed building relates well to the site edges by providing good distances from building to boundaries. The proposed building layout efficiently uses space on the site without appearing over developed.

Good urban planning suggests that car parking is placed away from the most prominent frontage. The proposal allows for this by providing a main car parking area in the south west part of the site, within the internal angle of the scheme. The car parking will be well landscaped with shrub planting. To provide more car parking spaces, there is also a small parking area provided at the front off the scheme

In summary, the proposed layout achieves the following:

- Provides a distinctive and notable building, providing greater presence to the road

- Provides a high quality development with well balanced elevations, that respect the existing surrounding context and established building materials.

- Takes into account the opportunities and constraints identified in the initial assessment of the site, local and wider context.

- The proposal efficiently uses space on the site.

- It will enhance it's setting on Mill Road and the rear boundaries through high quality landscaping and boundary treatment.

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Planning Application - Proposed Site Plan