



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

6 February 2019

7.00 pm

Town Hall

Contact

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Publication date: 29 January 2019

Committee Membership

Councillor P Jeffree (Chair)

Councillor S Johnson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors N Bell, R Laird, M Mills, I Sharpe, R Smith, M Watkin and T Williams

Agenda

Part A – Open to the Public

1. **Apologies for absence/committee membership**
2. **Disclosure of interests**
3. **Minutes**

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 9 January 2019 to be submitted and signed.

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

The committee will take items in the following order:

1. All items where people wish to speak and have registered with Democratic Services.
2. Any remaining items the committee agrees can be determined without further debate.
3. Those applications which the committee wishes to discuss in detail.
4. **18/00935/FULM Gresham House 53 Clarendon Road (Pages 5 - 36)**

Demolition of the existing building and erection of a new office building with an ancillary ground floor cafe and basement parking
5. **18/01383/FULM Multi-storey car park, Thomas Sawyer Way (Pages 37 - 64)**

Redevelopment of the site to provide a new multi-storey car park with capacity for up to 1455 car parking spaces
6. **Planning Advisory Service Report (Pages 65 - 82)**

To discuss the findings of the Planning Advisory Service's review of DMC

Introduction

Please note that the officer report is a summary of the issues including representations made and consultation responses. Full details of the applications, plans submitted, supporting information and documents, representations made, consultation responses and correspondence can be found on the council's web based [Public Access system](#) using the application reference or address.

Specific policy considerations for each application are detailed within the individual reports. The background papers and policy framework listed below have been relied upon in the preparation of the reports in this agenda.

Background papers

- The current planning applications under consideration and correspondence related to that application.
- All relevant third party representations and consultation replies received.

Policy Framework

- The Statutory Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance, together with relevant Government legislation, Circulars, Advice, Orders, Directions and Guidance listed below:

Local Planning Documents

Local Development Documents provide the framework for making planning decisions. These can be found on the Council's [website](#) and include:

- the existing Local Plan which consists of the Core Strategy, saved policies in the Watford District Plan 2000 and Proposals Map); and
- Supplementary Planning Documents.

County Planning Documents

The Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan and Minerals Local Plan prepared by Hertfordshire County Council are material considerations alongside the Watford Local Plan. These documents can be found on the county council's [website](#).

National Planning Documents

Key legislation can be found using this [weblink](#), including:

- Growth and Infrastructure Act (2013)

- Housing and Planning Act (2016)
- Localism Act (2011) and subsequent amendments
- Planning Act (2008) and subsequent amendments
- Planning and Compulsory Planning Act (2004) and subsequent amendments
- Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and subsequent amendments
- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and subsequent amendments.

National guidance can be found on the government service and information [website](#), including:

- National Planning Policy Framework (revised July 2018) and supporting Technical Guidance
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (web based)
- Planning policy for traveller sites
- Relevant government circulars
- Relevant Ministerial Statements (which will be referred to in the individual reports as necessary)

Section 106 Planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. The CIL charge covers a wide range of infrastructure as set out in the Council's Regulation 123 list, including highways and transport improvements, education provision, youth facilities, childcare facilities, children's play space, adult care services, open space and sports facilities. CIL is chargeable on the relevant net additional floorspace created by the development. The charge is non-negotiable and is calculated at the time that planning permission is granted where relevant. Section 106 planning obligations can only be used to secure affordable housing provision and other site specific requirements, such as the removal of entitlement to parking permits in Controlled Parking Zones and the provision of fire hydrants.

Human Rights implications

The Local Planning Authority is justified in interfering with the applicant's human rights in order to alleviate any adverse effect on adjoining properties and their occupiers and on general public amenity. With regard to any infringement of third party human rights, these are not considered to be of such a nature and degree as to override the human rights of the applicant and therefore warrant refusal of planning permission.

Committee date	6 th February 2019
Application reference	18/00935/FULM
Site address	Gresham House 53 Clarendon Road
Proposal	Demolition of existing building and erection of new office building (Use Class B1(a)), with ancillary cafe at ground floor; basement parking and associated ground, drainage, landscaping, engineering and access works
Applicant	Seven Capital (DMS) Ltd
Agent	
Type of Application	Major planning application
Reason for committee item	Major planning application
Target decision date	Extension of time agreed 10 th February 2019
Statutory publicity	Not required
Case officer	Habib Neshat habib.neshat@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Central

1. Recommendation

Approve subject to the terms of s.106 agreement and conditions as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

2.1 The application site has an area of 0.36 hectare and is an irregular shape, measuring 56-62m long by 33-46m wide (it is narrower to the front). The site is currently occupied by a single office building which comprises a 4 storey element to the frontage and a central tower 9 storeys high behind the 4 storey building with a total floor space of 4,494m². The rear part of the site is occupied by a single decked car park. It is located on the western side of Clarendon Road to the south of the junction with St John's Road. It has an east-west orientation with a single frontage to Clarendon Road and backs on to residential properties in Monmouth Road to the west. To the north and south the site is adjoined by existing office buildings of 5 storeys in height.

2.2 The site is not within a conservation area and does not adjoin any locally or nationally listed buildings. It currently contains a low grade vacant office building. The existing building on the site is of no architectural merit or historic interest and the quality of the office accommodation is rather poor and outdated. Indeed, the current site could be said to significantly detract from what is one of the Borough's key employment areas and an important route between the station and town centre.

- 2.3 The site is located in the Town Centre Special Policy Area in the Core Strategy and within an allocated employment area (E7a) in the Watford District Plan 2000. There are parking restrictions, including a Residential Control Parking Zone along the roads within the vicinity of the site.

3 Summary of the proposal

- 3.1 The proposed development is seeking to demolish the existing office building and replace it with a mixed-use development; comprising 11,604 (GIA) m² of B1 office accommodation and 140m² coffee bar.
- 3.2 The proposed office use will be provided within a building which will have various heights, from 11 storeys to the front, stepping down to 6 at the rear.
- 3.3 The access to the office block and the coffee bar will be directly from Clarendon Road. The building on the ground floor will be set back allowing drop off and pick up space together with landscaping.
- 3.4 The proposal includes parking spaces which will be provided partly on the ground floor but the bulk of parking spaces will be accommodated within the basement. The proposal will also include cycle storage space at the ground floor level, plus refuse storage space.

Conclusion

- 3.5 The proposed building will be taller than the adjoining buildings. However, this will be appropriate in the context for this area subject to high quality design. The proposed design has emerged through a significant level of negotiation and revisions. The building will be highly articulated, incorporating set-backs, curves, corners and stepping in height. These features will allow the development to conform to building lines and to create a building with appropriate design. The strategy to adopt a step down to the rear will provide a more comfortable transition between the higher building to the front and the low residential buildings to the rear. The proposed design is therefore considered to enhance the business environment and the commercial ambience of Clarendon Road.
- 3.6 The site is located in the Town Centre SPA in the Core Strategy and within an allocated employment area (E7a) in the Watford District Plan 2000. These designations identify the Clarendon Road/Station Road employment area as the prime office area within the Borough and, as such, development proposals should aim to be for Class B1 office use.

- 3.7 The proposal will provide a significant uplift in office floor space and will provide office accommodation of high quality and design, thereby meeting the principle objectives of the policy which primarily seeks increased Grade A office floor space in Clarendon Road. The principle of such provision is welcome.
- 3.8 The proposed development has ensured that the amenities of the adjoining occupiers in terms of loss of light and privacy are reasonably protected.
- 3.9 With the introduction of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) the proposed development will not be subject to CIL payments. However, the applicant has offered financial contribution for monitoring of a travel plan and payment for improvement to the Clarendon Road public realm.
- 3.10 The proposed development will comply with the local and national policies and is considered acceptable.

4. Main relevant policies

Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application was determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

- 5.1 The site was originally developed as a single, detached dwelling house. It was the subject of a series of applications between 1954 and 1964 for change of use to offices. The existing office building was granted planning permission in 1965.
- 5.2 In 1991 two planning permissions were granted conditional planning permission for the erection of a 6 storey office building with associated car parking.
- 5.3 In March 1999 a further planning permission was granted for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a 5 storey office building with 152 car parking spaces.
- 5.4 On 22.11.2000 conditional planning permission was granted for the Demolition of existing office building (4850m²) and erection of a five storey office building (5,390m²) plus 152 car parking spaces
- 5.5 In December 2007 conditional planning permission (Ref; 07/01137/FULM) was granted for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new 6-

storey office building including basement car park. This permission was extended on in January 2011,

- 5.6 On 20th November 2014 planning application Ref; 14/01363/FULM was received for the demolition of existing building and redevelopment of the site with the erection of a building up to 10 storeys in height comprising 4,648m² office floorspace (Class B1(a)) and 44 residential flats. The scheme was presented to committee on 31st March 2015 for refusal. The application was deferred at the committee and was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant.
- 5.7 On 24th December 2015 a scheme was submitted for the demolition of the building and the erection of two separate blocks to accommodate offices to the front block and a multi façade residential building to the rear. However, the officers had significant concern with the design, layout and configuration of the scheme. In particular the residential block was entirely concealed from the view and provided a poor level of outlook, daylight and sunlight. The scheme was in need of significant amendments and hence it was abandoned.
- 5.8 Finally a scheme Ref;15/01787/FULM, was approved on in March 2017, for “Redevelopment of the site to provide a multi storey building comprising 6,247m² of B1 office accommodation, 140m² of coffee bar use and 59 dwelling units 35% of which will affordable and associated landscaping, amenity space, refuse storage and basement car park.

6.0 Appraisal

6.1 Main issues

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- (a) Principle of development
- (b) Design, scale and impact on visual amenity
- (c) Impacts on surrounding properties
- (d) Car parking, access and transportation, waste
- (e) Surface water drainage
- (f) Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

6.2 (a) Principle of development

- 6.2.1 The Proposal will provide over 11,604m² of office building. The site is located in the Town Centre SPA in the Core Strategy and within an allocated employment area (E7a) in the Watford District Plan 2000. These designations identify the Clarendon

Road/Station Road employment area as the prime office area within the Borough and, as such, development proposals should aim to be for Class B1 office use.

6.2.2 Policy EMP5 Clarendon Road, Station Road and Bridle Path Office Area

Development within the Clarendon Road, Station Road and Bridle Path office area should deliver additional modern, high quality B1a and B1b office floor space to meet the needs of existing businesses and growth sectors including knowledge intensive industry, service sector, finance, media and creative industries, and the public sector. Proposals should demonstrate that they will contribute to growth in employment in the medium and longer term to 2031.

6.2.3 The latest Economic Growth and Delivery Assessment (EGDA) prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2014) has identified a significantly greater predicted growth in employment at 13,290 new jobs, almost double the predicted 7,000 new jobs in the 2010 Employment Study. Some 11,630 of these are forecast to be in Class B1(a) and B1(b) office jobs. Much of the office accommodation is required to be provided within the business environment in proximity to Watford Junction (sustainable access) and the town centre core (other services).

6.2.4 It is important that this area remains the focus for new job creation and the opportunities for this are recognised and taken. Replacing redundant and outdated building stock (such as the building currently on the application site) that no longer meets the requirements of modern employers represents a prime opportunity to achieve this. Given the latest forecast figures for new jobs and employment floorspace, the Clarendon Road/Station Road employment area will remain the main focus for new office development and will need to accommodate significantly greater levels of floorspace than currently exist. Any development proposals in the employment area will therefore need to demonstrate clearly that they maximise every opportunity to meet the forecast demand for growth in employment floorspace in the medium and longer term to 2031.

6.2.5 The proposal will not only result in a significant increase over the existing office floor space it will also provide office accommodation of high quality and design, replacing an out dated office floor space thereby meeting the principle and the objectives of the policies identified above which primarily seek increased Grade A office floorspace.

6.2.6 The proposal will also provide a coffee bar/ delicatessen on the ground floor facing the open space access to the building. The coffee bar which has an element of alfresco will help to improve permeability of the site and contribute to public realm and the ambiance of the commercial environment.

6.2.7 The proposal in land use term is therefore welcome.

6.3 (b) Design, scale and impact on visual amenity

6.3.1 Given its height, one of the major issues to be considered here is the impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

6.3.2 Clarendon Road is characterised by large, multi-storey commercial buildings of varied age, design and materials. The site is adjoined by 5 storey buildings to the south and north. Other 5 storey buildings line the western side of Clarendon Road although taller buildings are also present, including the Holiday Inn at 9 storeys and Meridian House at 6 storeys. The more recent buildings in the road are either in brick or glass. There are some buildings which incorporate both materials.

6.3.3 The proposal to demolish the existing unsightly office building is welcome. But as the proposed development is taller than the existing property, due regard has to be paid to its height.

6.3.4 In recent years, Watford has seen a rise in the number of proposals for taller buildings in Clarendon Road, with a number receiving planning permission (including the application site with roughly the same height). Currently one site is being built which is 12 storeys height. Other taller buildings including a 20 storeys as well as a 15 storey building have also been approved. It is anticipated that there will be more pressure for taller buildings over the next plan period (2016 – 2036). This is primarily as a result of increased housing and employment pressure. This is not a unique situation in Watford. London and towns around London are facing a similar problem with rising demand. Equally, there is a growing appreciation that the intensification of land uses, particularly in physically constrained towns like Watford, can lead to more sustainable development patterns based on a more compact urban form in close proximity to large scale public transport infrastructure.

6.3.5 This development pattern will also aid the delivery of office space which is required to retain a viable economy both for Watford and the South East Region. Taller buildings, if properly conceived, can go some way in alleviating these pressures whilst reducing pressures on greenfield/urban expansion sites, which put a greater strain on service and infrastructure provision and therefore should be welcomed.

6.3.6 In response to this challenge the Council has now adopted a Supplementary Planning Document “Skyline” (March 2016) which highlights “Watford Approach to Taller buildings with respect to the treatment of tall buildings in the Borough”. The design guide provides a set of parameters which guide the applicant and the decision maker in understanding the complex range of issues a proposal for a taller

building would need to address before it could be realised. The aim of this guidance is to give further policy provision to Policy UD1 [Delivering High Quality Design] in the Core Strategy. These new policies set out the definition of taller buildings and the strategic and development management approach in terms of location and design. The guidance makes it clear that the majority of areas in Watford are unsuitable for taller buildings, and directs the taller buildings to some central locations which have notable regeneration, economic development opportunity, and high capacity public transport infrastructure. Clarendon Road is one of these identified areas.

6.3.7 There is also a separate study with respect to Clarendon Road which considers building of circa 35m in height could be acceptable in the location of the application site. Therefore, the principle of a taller building in this location is considered acceptable.

6.3.8 The height, configuration, layout and the design of the proposed building have been subject to significant negotiations. In respect of the present scheme, the applicants have been working to a brief requiring “the provision of legible and high performance building, responsive to its context; embraces landscape integration”. Overall, it is considered that the proposal adheres to this brief.

6.3.9 The scheme will provide an eleven storey office block fronting Clarendon Road (43m high at its maximum), stepping down from 11 storeys to 6. The building has been set centrally with the ground floor being set back from the edge of the pavement to provide a public realm and a landscaped access to offices. Part of the ground floor facing the public realm will be used as a coffee bar with an open air seating area to contribute the active atmosphere of the public realm and contribute to its permeability.

6.3.10 The design of the main office element fronting Clarendon Road comprises a curtain wall glazing system incorporating vertical fins, brick frame with a strong vertical emphasis.

6.3.11 The stepping at the rear has created large terraces which allow a better transition between the taller elements fronting Clarendon Road to the low scale residential buildings of Monmouth Street. The positioning of the building away from the boundaries has also created significant open space around the buildings. The terraces, balconies and the open spaces around the building have been particularly designed to embrace the notion of integrated landscaping to enhance the appearance of the building.

6.3.12 Within the general street scene, the building will appear prominent in views from the south or north due to the scale of the existing buildings and the lighter appearance of the building. In this case the prominence is beneficial given the quality of the design which highlights substantive investment in Watford. The existing building has a relatively low 4 storey element fronting Clarendon Road which appears very weak within the street scene and generally reads as a gap in the building line. The proposed building addresses this deficiency by providing a strong building frontage that completes the building line and positively addresses Clarendon Road. The proposed design approach for this building has opted for a mix of glazing and brick materials. This approach is considered to be more appropriate given the height of the proposed building to create a lighter appearance. As such, the building will enhance the street scene and will strengthen the character of Clarendon Road as the prime office location in the town.

6.3.13 The views from the rear will also be improved. Currently the existing, poorly designed, central tower when viewed from the west, undeniably creates a tower over the residential element to the rear in Monmouth Street. The proposed stepping of the building will eliminate the abrupt descent and will create a more comfortable transition between the larger scale office buildings of Clarendon Road and the domestic scale of properties in Monmouth Road. The opportunity for landscaping of the terraces will also soften the appearance of the building and is considered to be a further positive element in contrast the current rigid and monolithic appearance of the existing office building.

6.3.14 Although the proposed building is taller than both adjoining buildings, the incorporation of light materials, the stepping at top floor together with the set back from the sides, will help the building to sit comfortably alongside its neighbours.

6.3.15 The proposed development would bring significant benefit in terms of a more sustainable urban form based on good public transport accessibility and quality place making. It will not prejudice, intrude or obstruct strategic views within or across the Borough identified in the Skyline SPD. The proposed building is of a high quality design, making a positive contribution to the Borough's urban form and skyline, and supports urban growth and its prosperity in the widest sense. The proposed scheme therefore complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 64 and the local plan policies UD1.

6.4 (c) Impacts on surrounding properties

6.4.1 The properties adjoining the site to the north and south are both 5 storey office buildings. As such, considerations of outlook, privacy and natural light are not as critical or important generally as for residential properties. To the rear the

proposed building, the baseline environment is set by the 9 storey central tower of the existing building. Given the depth, distances from the boundary of the proposed scheme it is not, therefore, considered that the proposed building will have any additional adverse impacts on these adjoining office buildings or their continued use.

- 6.4.2 To the west, the site adjoins residential properties in Monmouth Road. The proposed scheme will come 9m closer to these houses in comparison with the existing building. The most affected residential buildings will be number 7a and 9 Monmouth Street.
- 6.4.3 The closest point of the proposed building to the boundary of number 9, will be 11m but the distance to habitable windows at an oblique angle will be 25m. The proposal will therefore comply with the Council's RDG. It should be noted that the tree coverage in the gardens of the neighbouring building will prevent direct overlooking on these gardens. With respect to number 7a, the proposed building will maintain a distance of 16m to its boundary which exceeds the Council's standard. There are windows at the flank elevation of this building which lie about 19m from the proposed building. But these windows are already overlooked from the raised deck of the car park. Therefore the proposed development will not give rise to any significant overlooking into adjoining residential buildings.
- 6.4.4 As part of the application, an assessment of sunlight and daylight to the properties in Monmouth Road was undertaken, in accordance with the guidelines of the Building Research Establishment. This demonstrates that the development as proposed would have no significant adverse impacts on the natural light to these properties.
- 6.4.5 Overall, the proposed building will have no unacceptable impacts on the residential properties in Monmouth Road.

6.5 **(d) Car parking, access and transportation, waste**

- 6.5.1 The site is in a highly accessible location with Watford Junction station and its associated bus interchange located just 360m to the north. This gives access to a wide range of rail and bus services. Further bus services are accessible on Clendon Road and within the town centre located 290m to the south, together with a full range of town centre shops, services and facilities. The site is also easily accessible by foot and cycle. In light of this high level of accessibility a reduced level of on-site car parking provision is proposed. The site is located within Car Parking Zone 2 where the parking provision for commercial uses should be between 25-50% of the maximum standard.

- 6.5.2 The proposed development includes a provision for 166 spaces, of which 53 will be provided on the ground floor level and 113 within the basement. The proposal will also provide 106 cycle parking spaces. The waste associated with the development will be housed within the basement area.
- 6.5.3 The existing site has two vehicular access points from Clarendon Road, one at its southern end and one at its northern end. These give access to the lower and upper levels of the rear decked car park respectively. They also facilitate delivery and service vehicles entering and exiting the site in forward gear. The proposed development will retain the two access points to facilitate the servicing of the site. This is acceptable and accords with saved Policy T21 of the Watford District Plan 2000, which is set as maximum requirement.
- 6.5.4 Herts Highways originally objected to the scheme seeking improvement with respect to cycle parking provision. Herts Highway officer also requested tracking diagrams with respect to manoeuvring of the refuse vehicle on site. The cycle storage space has now been relocated from the basement area to the ground floor to avoid any conflict with car movement within the basement area. The swept path diagram have been provided and demonstrate that waste disposal vehicle will be able to turn within the site, obviating the need to reverse onto public road.
- 6.5.5 The applicant has provided a Travel Plan (TP) which is considered to be satisfactory as it includes a variety of appropriate measures to encourage sustainable transport modes with targets set for a reduction in single occupancy car use over the period of the plan.
- 6.5.6 Herts Highways have advised that the cost of administering and monitoring the objectives of the Travel Plan and engaging in any Travel Plan Review for the residential developments, consisting of a written agreement with the County Council setting out a scheme to encourage, regulate, and promote green travel measures for owners, occupiers, and visitors would be in the region of £6,000. This could be secured through s.106 agreement.
- 6.5.7 HCC as highway authority has reviewed the application submission and have no objections to the proposed development, subject to the conditions and terms of legal agreement. The trip generation rates were reviewed and are considered appropriate for the proposals. The collision data was reviewed and it was found that there were no clusters of collisions in the vicinity of the site that would likely be exacerbated by the proposed development. The applicant was provided a number of comments relating to the proposed access arrangements. The applicant has since provided amended drawings which address previous concerns raised and HCC

consider the amended drawings acceptable. The proposed access will be subject to detailed design review at the Section 278 or Section 184, whichever is most appropriate, agreement stage.

- 6.5.8 It should be noted that the council as part of its strategy to improve the local environment will soon be embarking major road improvement in Clarendon Road. The applicant has pledged to contribute £94,000 towards such improvement.
- 6.5.9 The Local Highway Authority has recommended that conditions be imposed requiring that the applicant submits a Construction Traffic Plan detailing provision for on-site parking for construction workers. Issues arising from construction works are not material planning considerations and are covered by other legislation. As such, it is not considered appropriate to impose planning conditions relating to these matters. Nevertheless, informative notes will be added to the decision notice to provide advice to the applicant with regard to wheel washing, contractors' parking and their responsibilities for ensuring that the highway remains unobstructed wherever possible.
- 6.5.10 The proposal therefore in terms of its impact upon highways conditions is acceptable and the proposal to make financial payment for the physical improvement to the public is welcome.

6.6 (e) Surface water drainage

- 6.6.1 A surface water drainage scheme has been submitted with the application. This is based upon on-site attenuation with controlled discharge via a flow control device to the main sewer. This is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions to secure final details.

6.7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106

- 6.7.1 The proposed scheme will not be liable for CIL charges. CIL is charged on the relevant net additional floorspace created by the development. The charge for offices and retail is £0m².
- 6.7.2 With the adoption of the Council's CIL charging schedule on 1st April 2015, section 106 planning obligations can only be used to secure affordable housing provision and other site specific requirements. In the case of the current planning application, the only planning obligations required to make the development acceptable are:

- i) The provision of fire hydrants to serve the development in accordance with Policy INF1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and saved Policy H10 of the Watford District Plan 2000 if this were to be required.
- ii) The cost of monitoring and administrating Travel Plan to the sum of £6000.
- iii) Financial contribution to the road improvement to the sum of £94000.

7 Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Consultee	Comment	Officer response
Thames Water	No objections.	Noted.
Hertfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)	The proposed surface water drainage scheme is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions.	Noted.
Hertfordshire Constabulary (Crime Prevention Design Service)	No objections.	Noted.
Hertfordshire County Council (Highways Authority)	Originally raised objection due to the lack of information regarding the following matters: i) Need for Stage 1 Safety Audit. ii) No forward visibility splay provided. iii) Swept path for refuse vehicle. iv) personal injury record and accident report missing v)not sufficient info on trip data generation Following amendment of the scheme, much of these have been satisfied	The conditions as requested by the highways are incorporated in to the decision. However, construction management conditions as requested has not been included as it will largely relate to highway issues which are much better enforced by other means. The applicant has made commitment to pay financial contribution to Environmental improvement. Bus shelters in Watford are

	and the scheme in terms of its impact upon highways subject to condition is acceptable additional contribution for new improved bus stop to be provided, plus conditions requesting construction management to be imposed	not funded by the Council as these are provided by a separate private company.
Waste and recycling	No objections to the proposed bin storage arrangement.	Noted.
Environment Agency	No objection	Noted

7.2 Representations received from interested parties

Letters were sent to 177 properties in the surrounding area. Responses have been received from one adjoining occupier and also from Town Centre Resident Association. The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Representations	Officer's response
The proposal will cause significant overlooking and loss of privacy	The proposal in terms of its privacy distance will generally comply with the council residential design guide. The issues has already been discussed in the body of the report
Over development of the site	This is in line with the council's current policy which facilitates taller buildings in Clarendon Road, subject to good design, to achieve the desired objective of delivering high quality office buildings
Impact on natural light to adjoining offices.	Whilst the proposal may give rise to some loss of light to the adjoining offices, this would be limited and would not merit a refusal of permission as the offices are not habitable rooms.

8. Recommendation

That, pursuant to a planning obligation under s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 having been completed to secure the following Heads of Terms, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed below:

Section 106 Heads of Terms

- i) The provision of fire hydrants to serve the development in accordance with Policy INF1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and saved Policy H10 of the Watford District Plan 2000 if this were to be required.
- ii) The cost of monitoring and administrating Travel Plan to the sum of £6000.
- iii) Financial contribution to the Clarendon Road public realm improvements to the sum of £94,000.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

3066-199 D, Location Plan
3066-201 Level -01G - Basement Level Plan
3066-202 Level 00 F - Proposed Landscape Plan A1 1:100 E F
3066-203 Level 00H - Ground Floor Plan
3066-204 Level 01H - First Floor Plan
3066-205 Level 02G - Second Floor Plan
3066-206 Level 03G- Third Floor Plan
3066-207 Level 04G - Fourth Floor Plan
3066-208 Level 05 - Fifth Floor Plan A1 1:100 G
3066-209 Level 06 - Sixth Floor Plan A1 1:100 H
3066-210 Level 07 - Seventh Floor Plan A1 1:100 G
3066-211 Level 08 - Eighth Floor Plan A1 1:100 G
3066-212 Level 09 - Ninth Floor Plan A1 1:100 G
3066-213 Roof Plan A1 1:100 F

3066-214 Level 00 - Ground Floor Plan Alt. A1 1:200

3066-215 Level 10 - Tenth Floor Plan A1 1:100 A

3066-220 Elevations A1 1:200 J

3066-221 Coloured Elevations Detail 01 A1 1:50

3066-230 Level 06 - Prop. Terrace Landscape A1 1:100 D

3066-231 Level 08 - Prop. Terrace Landscape A1 1:100 C

3066-232 Level 07 - Prop. Terrace Landscape A1 1:100 x

3066-240 Cycle and Refuse A1 1:50 B

3066-301 Strip Sections A1 1:20

3066-302 Proposed Section A-A and B-B A1 1:200 F

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning department.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No construction works above damp proof course shall commence until full details and samples of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building (including walls, roofs, windows, doors and balconies) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

4. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the Drainage Strategy and Sustainable Drainage Maintenance Plan carried out by CWA reference CWA/18/125 dated 19 July 2018 and the following mitigation measures:

1. Implementing appropriate SuDS measures to include porous surfacing.
2. Providing attenuation to ensure no increase in surface water run-off volumes for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + climate change event.
3. Discharge into Thames Water Sewer restricted to a maximum of 69.1 l/s for the 1:100 plus climate change event.

The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal and storage of surface water from the site and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

5. No development other than demolition and site clearance shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site based on the approved FRA and sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drainage strategy should demonstrate the surface water run-off generated up to and including 1 in 100 year + climate change critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site following the corresponding rainfall event. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

The scheme shall also include:

1. Details of how the scheme shall be maintained and managed after completion.
2. Details of the proposed drainage scheme providing a drainage plan showing the location of any proposed SuDS, pipe runs.
3. Detailed engineered drawings of the proposed SuDS features including their size, volume, depth and any inlet and outlet features including any connecting pipe runs.

The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal and storage of surface water from the site and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

6. No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

7. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development shall be carried out until the developer has submitted to, and obtained written approval from, the Local Planning Authority for a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination is to be dealt with. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the health of the future occupiers of the site and to prevent pollution of controlled waters (the site is within Source Protection Zone 2), in accordance with Policies SE24 and SE28 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

8. No part of the development shall be occupied until the refuse and recycling store to serve the development, as shown on the approved drawings, has been constructed and made available for use. This facility shall be retained as approved at all times.

Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities exist for residents of the proposed development, in accordance with Policies SE7 and T10 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

9. No part of the development shall be occupied until a detailed soft landscaping scheme for all the land within the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the depth of the planter boxes over the basement areas as well as those over the terraces. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the wider area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

10. No part of the development shall be occupied until a detailed hard landscaping scheme for all the land within the site, including details of all site boundary treatments and external lighting, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the wider area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

11. The office floor space shall not be occupied until a detailed Travel Plan, based upon the Hertfordshire County Council document 'Hertfordshire Green Travel Plan Guidance', has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning. The travel plan shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development offers a wide range of travel choices to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment, in accordance with Policy T3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

12. For the avoidance of doubt, no communications development permitted by Class B or Class C of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 shall be undertaken on the building.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the building in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

13. No plant or equipment shall be sited on the external elevations of the building unless details of the plant or equipment have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include size, appearance, siting and technical specifications relating to noise.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the amenities of the residential occupiers, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

14. No construction work above damp proof course shall commence until the details of boundary treatment and in particular privacy screens over the terraces has been submitted to and has been provided in writing by the local

planning authority. Thereafter the scheme shall be implemented in accordance to the approved scheme.

Reason; In order to protect the privacy of the adjoining occupiers in accordance with policy S22 of the District Plan 2000.

15. No part of the development shall have a distance of less than 11 metres to the boundary of no 9 Monmouth Street.

Reason; In order to protect the privacy of the adjoining occupiers in accordance with policy SE22 of the District Plan 2000.

16. Before first use of the development, signage shall be erected at both accesses to show the one-way entry and exit arrangement.

Reason: For highway safety propose.

17. No construction work above damp proof course shall take place until plans have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to illustrate the roads, footways, cycleways, foul and surface water drainage. All construction works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory development of the site and a satisfactory standard of highway design and construction in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

18. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed access /onsite car and cycle parking / servicing / loading, unloading / turning /waiting area shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

19. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, the detail of the Electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All EVCPs shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of each of the units and permanently maintained and retained.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

20. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, the development shall include provision for 20% of the car parking spaces to be designated for plug-in Electric Vehicles (EV) and served by EV ready charging points.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

21. Prior to first occupation of the development, a Car Parking Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. It shall include the information prescribed in the TA and the following:
- Details of car parking allocation and distribution;
 - Methods to minimise on-street car parking;
 - A scheme for the provision and parking of cycles; and,
 - Monitoring required of the Car Parking Management Plan to be submitted to and approved in writing in accordance with a timeframe to be agreed by the local planning authority.

The Car Parking Management Plan shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied or brought into use, in accordance with a timeframe agreed by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter retained for this purpose.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure sufficient available on-site car parking and the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

22. Prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted, a Servicing and Delivery Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Servicing and Delivery plan shall incorporate the servicing arrangements for the use and adequate provision for the storage of delivery vehicles within the site. The Servicing and Delivery Plan should also include details of refuse collection and waste management within the site.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining highway efficiency and safety.

Informatives

IN912 Hours of Construction

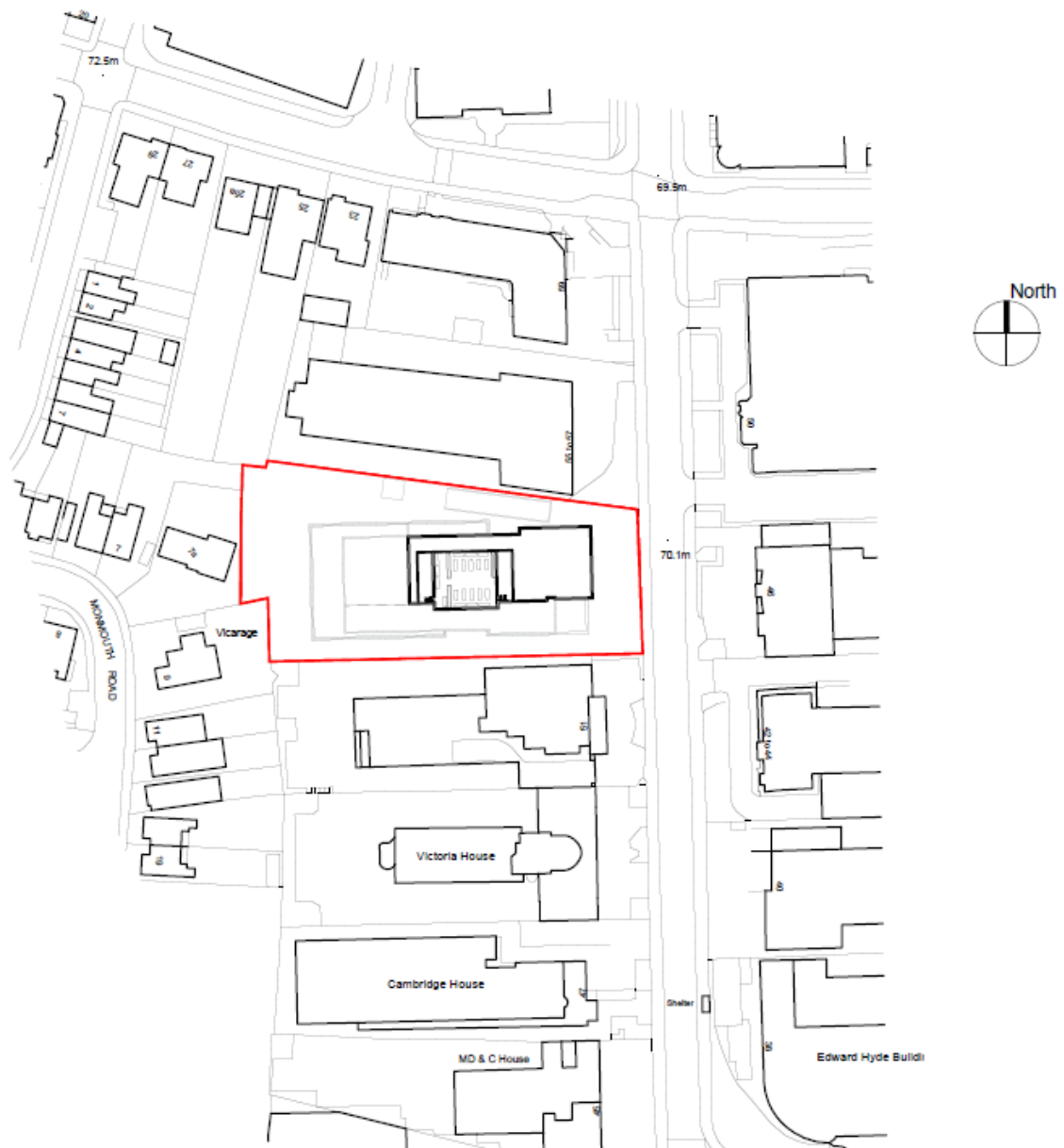
IN913 Community Infrastructure Levy Liability

IN914 Section 106 Agreement

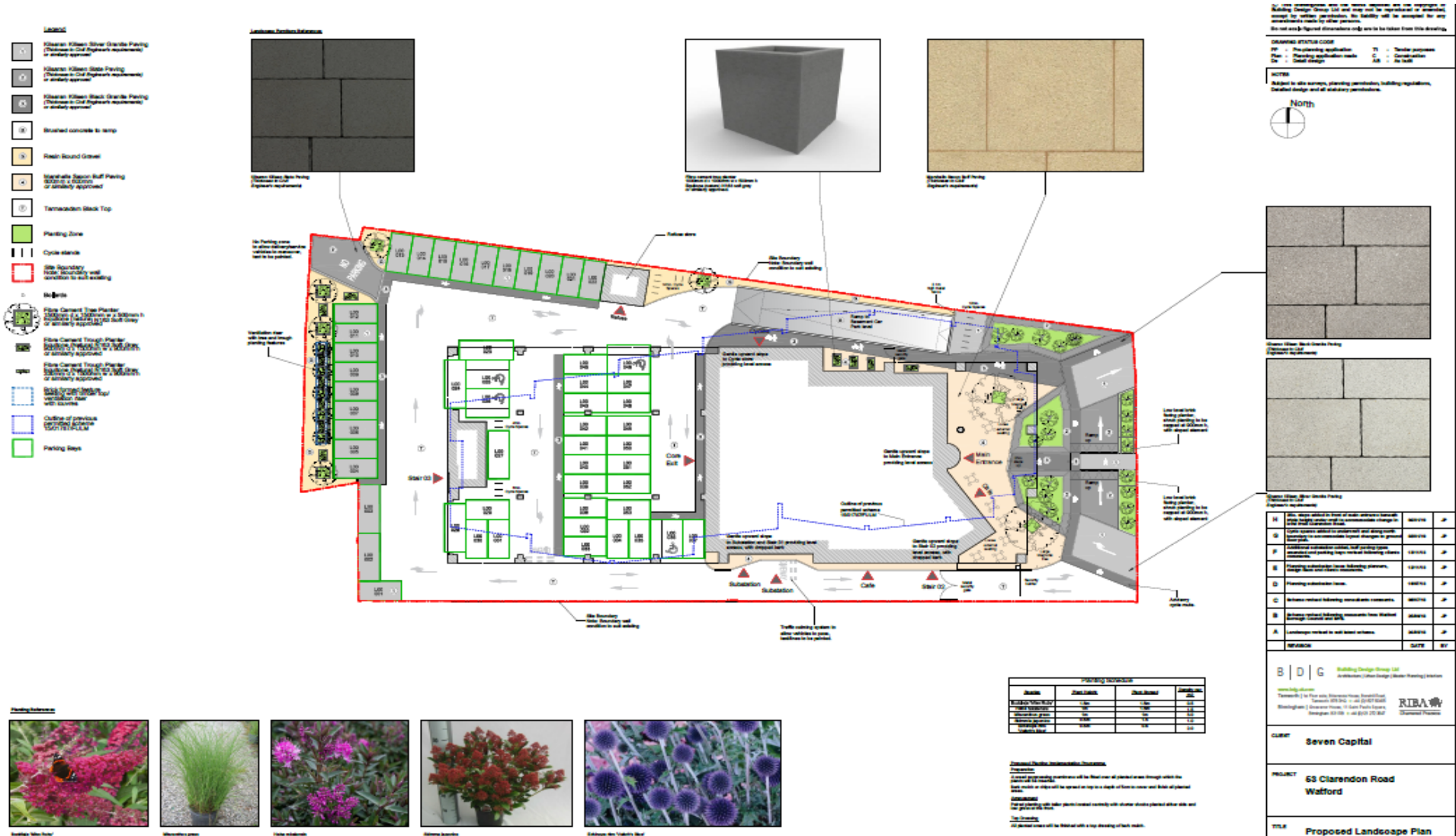
IN909 Street Naming and Numbering

IN907 Considered in positive and proactive manner

IN915 Highway Works – HCC agreement required



Proposed Landscape Plan



Species	Plant Code	Plant Name	Quantity
Red geraniums	100	100	100
Tall grass	100	100	100
Purple flowers	100	100	100
Red flowers	100	100	100
Purple thistles	100	100	100

Planting Schedule

Planting to be carried out in accordance with the schedule of planting set out below. The contractor shall be responsible for ensuring that the plants are delivered to the site in good condition and that they are planted in accordance with the schedule of planting. All plants shall be planted within 14 days of the start of the project.

GENERAL NOTES

1. The contractor shall be responsible for the preparation of the landscape plan and for the implementation of the plan. The contractor shall be responsible for the procurement of all materials and for the implementation of the plan.

REVISIONS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE
1	Issue for tender	20/05/18
2	Issue for approval	20/05/18



NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE
H	Issue for approval	20/05/18
G	Issue for approval	20/05/18
F	Issue for approval	20/05/18
E	Issue for approval	20/05/18
D	Issue for approval	20/05/18
C	Issue for approval	20/05/18
B	Issue for approval	20/05/18
A	Issue for approval	20/05/18

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Architects/Urban Design/Interior Planning/Interior Design

Client: Seven Capital

Project: 53 Clarendon Road Walford

Title: Proposed Landscape Plan

Scale: 1:200 **Date:** May 18

Drawn: JJP **Checked:** BSH

Drawn No: 3066/202 **Status:** Plan **Revision:** H

Proposed - Landscape Plan
Scale - 1:200 @ A1

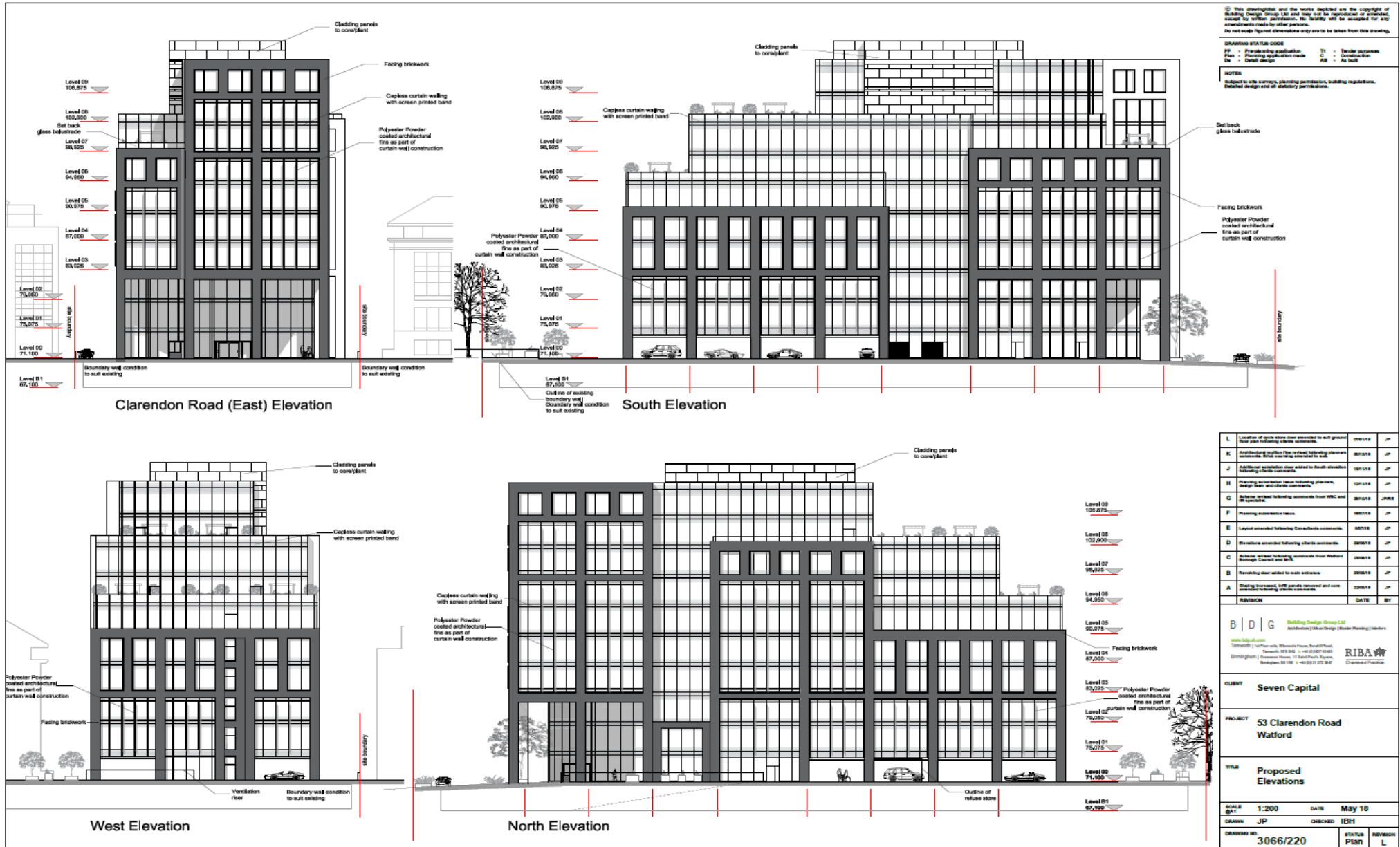


Ground Floor Plan

Page 28



Elevations



Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan – Level 06

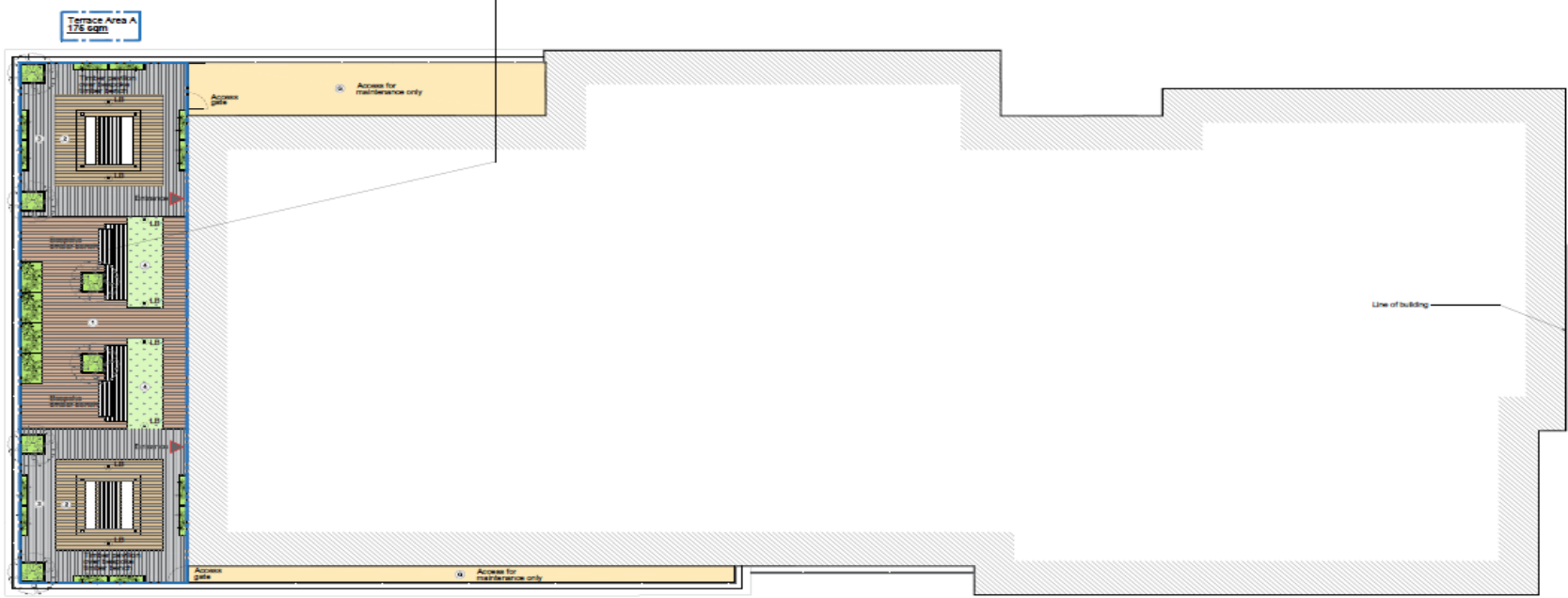


Photo Japanese maple tree approved use

Material sample: Recycled composite decking approved use

Material sample: Recycled composite decking approved use

Photo concrete planter



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DRAWING STATUS CODE

PP	Pre-Planning application	T1	Tender process
PA	Planning application made	AB	As built
DE	Detail Design		

NOTES
Subject to all surveys, planning permission, building regulations, detailed design and all statutory permissions.

- North
- Legend**
- Fibre Cement Tree Planter (Ecothane (reforms) N163 Soft Grey 600mm x 1500mm x 800mm H or similar approved)
Proposed tree AD120 Japanese Maple (height 10-12.5m) G10H - 10' Plant
 - Planting Zone
 - Fibre Cement Trough Planter (Ecothane (reforms) Soft Grey 1000mm x 1500mm x 800mm H or similar approved)
 - Fibre Cement Trough Planter (Ecothane (reforms) Soft Grey 1000mm x 1500mm x 800mm H or similar approved)
 - Recycled composite timber Decking (Saposhnik 34 or similar approved)
 - Recycled composite timber Decking (Saposhnik 33 or similar approved)
 - Recycled composite timber Decking (Saposhnik 32 or similar approved)
 - Saposhnik Mayfair (Saposhnik 32 or similar approved)
 - Lighting (Poltek (Winnal & Co) (LITTON 1.0) or similar approved)
 - Terrace Area A 176 sqm
 - Gravel

REVISION	DATE	BY	
D	Access gate into area following stone concrete	15/1/18	JP
C	Planting substitution area following planning	15/1/18	JP
B	Planting substitution area	14/1/18	JP
A	Layout amended following Consultation comments	06/1/18	JP

B | D | G Building Design Group Ltd
Architects | Urban Design | Master Planning | Landscape

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RIBA Chartered Practitioner

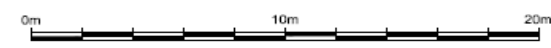
CLIENT Seven Capital

PROJECT 53 Clarendon Road
Watford

TITLE Level 06 - Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan

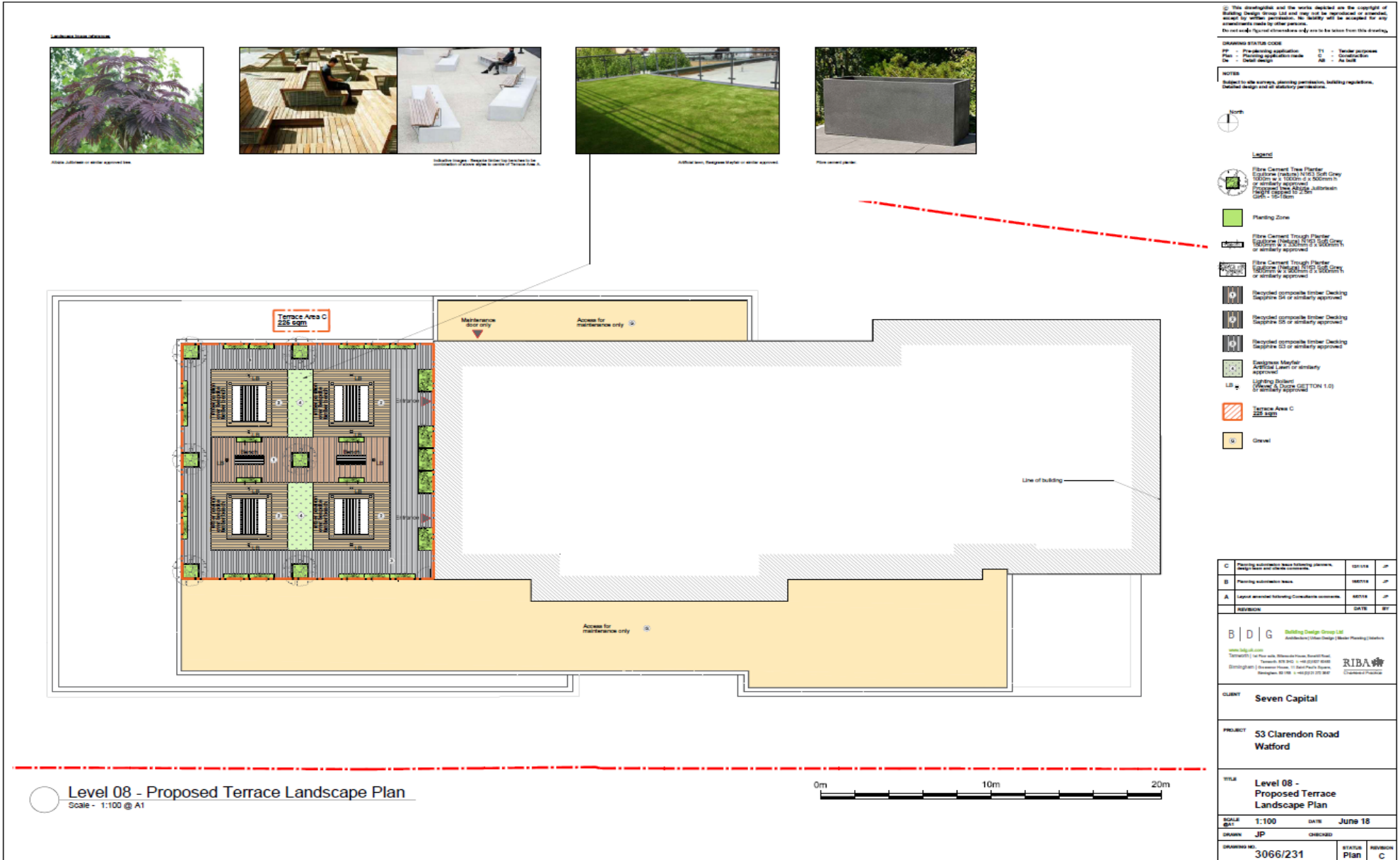
SCALE	1:100	DATE	June 18
DRAWN	JP	CHECKED	
DRAWING NO.	3066/230	STATUS	Plan
		REVISION	D

Level 06 - Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan
Scale - 1:100 @ A1



Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan – Level 08

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DRAWING STATUS CODE
 PP - Pre-planning application
 Plan - Planning application made
 DW - Detail design
 T1 - Tender purpose
 C - Construction
 AB - As built

NOTES
 Subject to site survey, planning permission, building regulations, detailed design and all statutory permissions.

Legend

- Planting Zone
- Fibre Cement Through Planter (Fibrecrete) 1000mm x 1000mm (or similar) approved
- Fibre Cement Through Planter (Fibrecrete) 1000mm x 1000mm (or similar) approved
- Recycled composite timber Decking (Deckplank) 50 or similar approved
- Recycled composite timber Decking (deckplank) 50 or similar approved
- Recycled composite timber Decking (deckplank) 50 or similar approved
- Eastgreen Mayfair Artificial turf or similar
- Lighting Bollard (Watt & Deuce GLL TON 1.0) or similar approved
- Terrace Area C 25.5 sqm
- Gravel

C	Planting submission area including planimetrics, details and materials schedule	18/01/18	JP
B	Planting submission area	18/01/18	JP
A	Landscape submission including Consultation documents	18/01/18	JP
REVISION		DATE	BY

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 Glasgow | 10th Floor, 111 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 7JL, UK

RIBA RIBA Chartered Practice

CLIENT
Seven Capital

PROJECT
53 Clarendon Road
Watford

TITLE
Level 08 - Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan

SCALE
1:100

DATE
June 18

DRAWN
JP

CHECKED

DRAWING NO.
3066/231

STATUS
Plan

REVISION
C

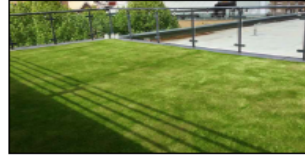
Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan – Level 07



Reference image of white Japanese maple



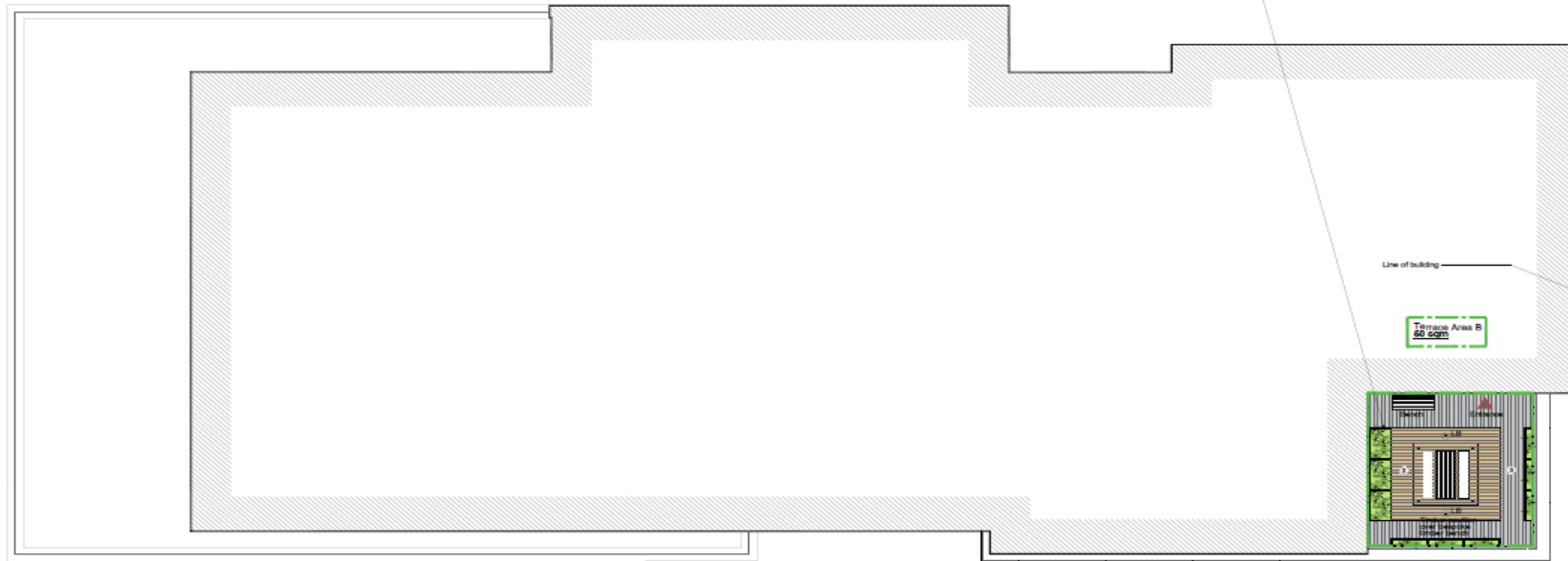
Reference images. Please refer to the furniture list for details of the furniture and the specific materials to be used.



Reference image. Please refer to the furniture list for details of the furniture and the specific materials to be used.



Reference image.



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DRAWING STATUS CODE

AP - Planning application IT - Tender processes
 PA - Planning application made C - Construction
 DA - Detail design AB - As built

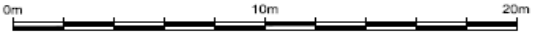
NOTES

subject to the survey, planning permission, building regulations, Detailed design and all statutory permissions.

- North
- Legend**
- Fibre Cement Tree Planter (reference) 11x13 Soft Grey 1000mm x 1000mm x 1000mm or similarly approved. Proposed tree: Japanese Whitebark Height: 10-15m
 - Planting Zone
 - Fibre Cement Trough Planter (reference) 11x13 Soft Grey, 1000mm x 1000mm x 1000mm or similarly approved.
 - Fibre Cement Trough Planter (reference) 11x13 Soft Grey, 1000mm x 1000mm x 1000mm or similarly approved.
 - Recycled composite timber Decking (reference) 54 or similarly approved
 - Recycled composite timber Decking (reference) 52 or similarly approved
 - Recycled composite timber Decking (reference) 52 or similarly approved
 - Landscape Mallet Artificial Lawn or similarly approved
 - Lighting (reference) (Wave & Curve GETTON 1.0) or similarly approved
 - Terrace Area B 50 sqm
 - Gravel

REVISION	DATE	BY
Building Design Group Ltd Architects Urban Design Master Planning Interiors www.bidg.co.uk Thornhill 1st Floor, Whitehall House, Rowell Road, Watford, Herts SG13 7JG +44 (0)1927 8599 Birmingham Newcastle London Leeds Manchester Glasgow Edinburgh +44 (0)11 275 3847		
CLIENT Seven Capital		
PROJECT 53 Clarendon Road Watford		
TITLE Level 07 - Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan		
SCALE 1:100	DATE June 18	
DRAWN JP	CHECKED	
DRAWING NO. 3066/232	STATUS Plan	REVISION -

Level 07 - Proposed Terrace Landscape Plan
 Scale - 1:100 @ A1



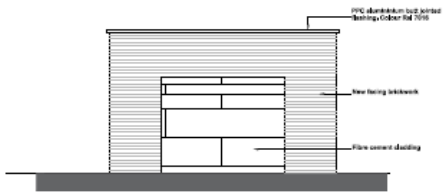
Cycle and Refuse



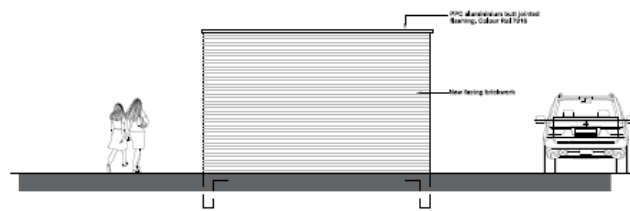
Proposed South Elevation



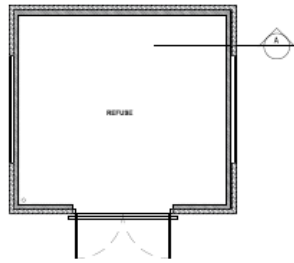
Proposed West Elevation



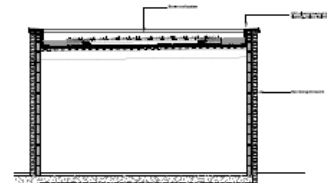
Proposed East Elevation



Proposed North Elevation

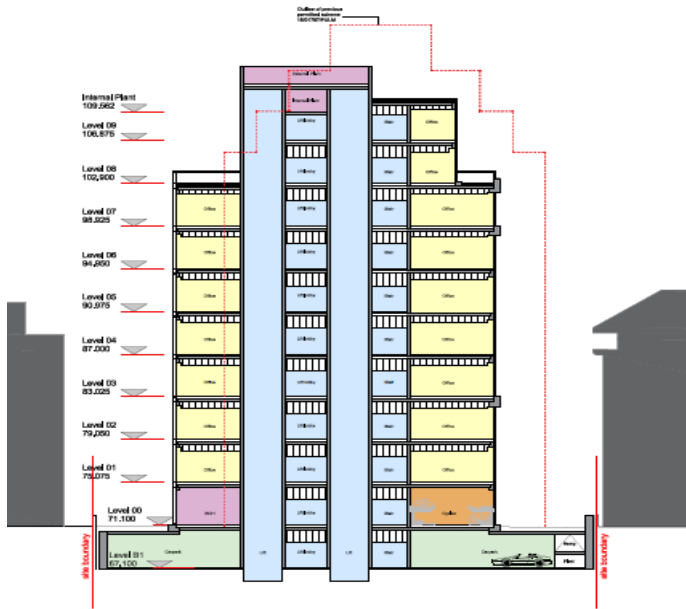


Proposed Floor Plan

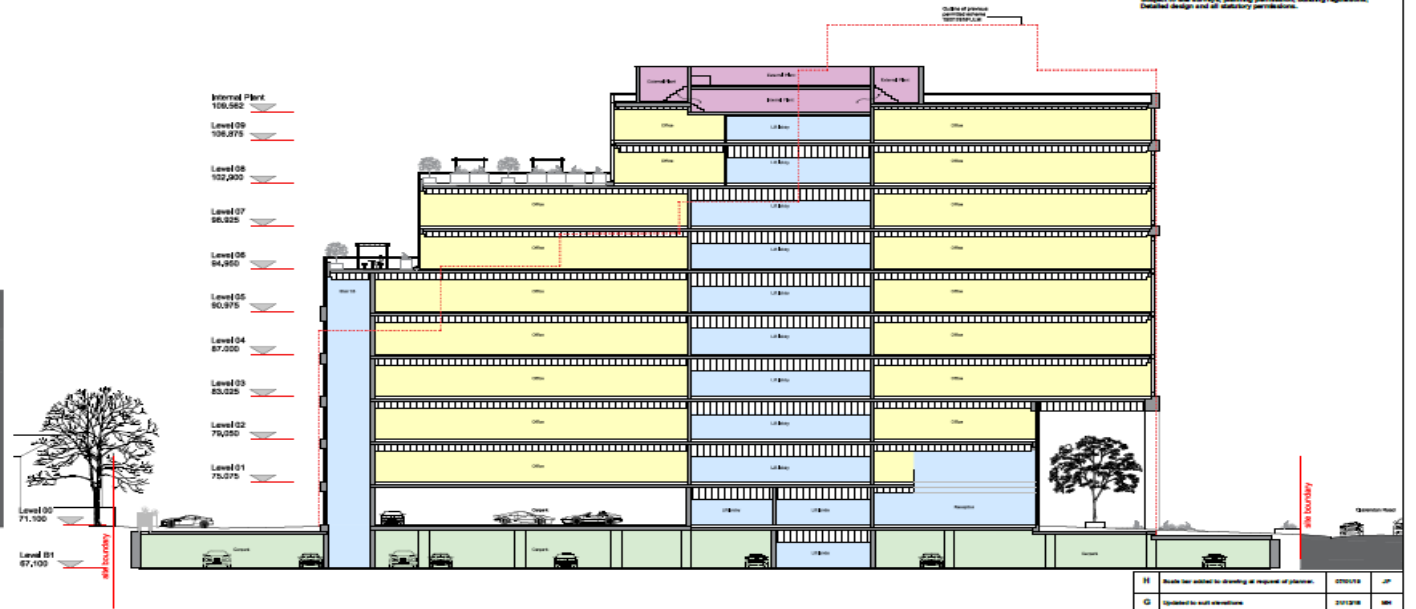


Proposed Section A-A
1:50

Planning Sections



1 Planning Section A-A
Scale - 1:200 @ A1



2 Planning Section B-B
Scale - 1:200 @ A1

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DRAWING STATUS CODE

PP - Pre-provisioning application T1 - Tender purposes
 P1 - Pre-provisioning application made C1 - Construction
 D1 - Detail design AB - As built

NOTES

Subject to all surveys, planning permission, building regulations, detailed design and all statutory requirements.

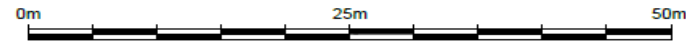
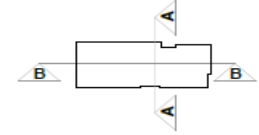
H	Issue for tender to drawing at request of planner.	07/03/18	JP
G	Updated to suit conditions	27/12/18	SH
F	Planning submission based following Planning, Design Team and Client's comments	06/11/18	SH
E	Planning submission issue	06/07/18	JP
D	Layout amended following Consultant's comments	06/07/18	JP
C	Reference updated to accommodate with Client's requirements	26/06/18	SH
B	Reference updated following comments from Watford Planning (Council and WLP)	26/06/18	SH
A	Additional section added	06/07/18	SH
REVISION		DATE	BY

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CLIENT	Seven Capital		
PROJECT	53 Clarendon Road Watford		
TITLE	Proposed Planning Sections		
SCALE	1:200	DATE	May 18
DRAWN	MH	CHECKED	IBH
DRAWING NO.	3066/302	STATUS	Plan
		REVISION	H



Site photo



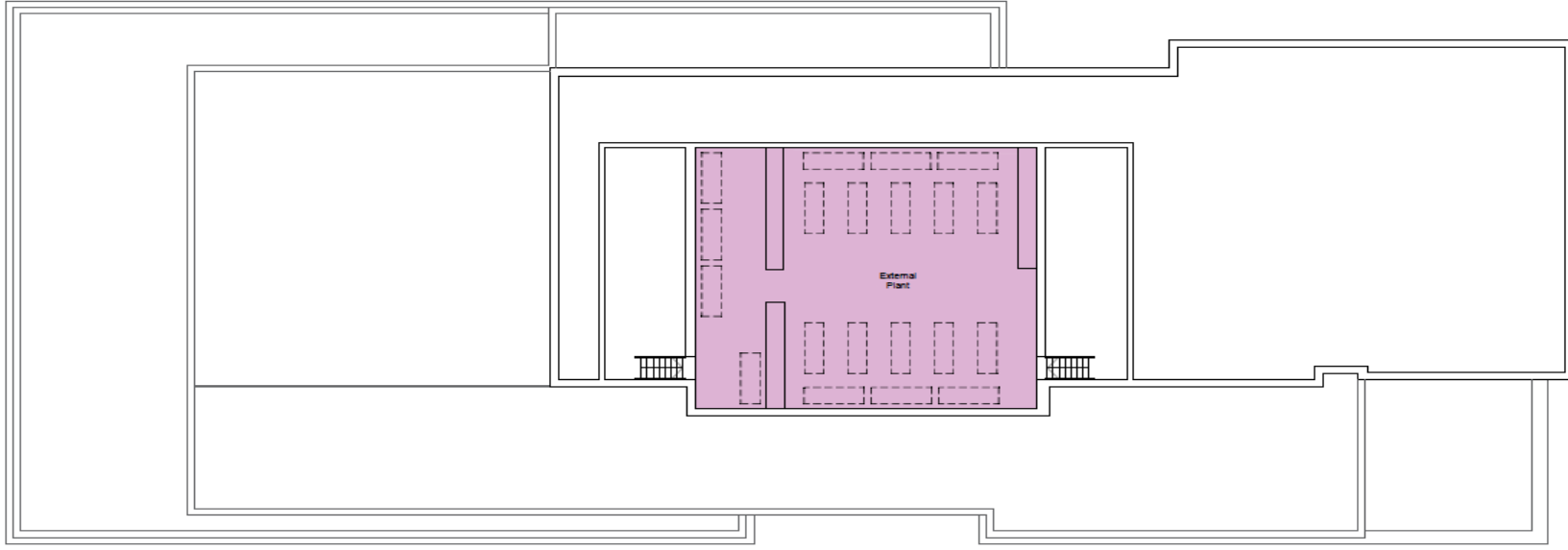
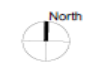
Roof Plan

Page 36

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DRAWING STATUS CODE
 PP - Pre-planning application T1 - Tender purpose
 PA - Planning application made C - Construction
 DA - Detail design AB - As built

NOTES
 Subject to site survey, planning permission, building regulations, detailed design and all statutory permissions.



F	Planning application issue following approval, design team and client comments.	12/11/18	JP
E	Planning application issue.	14/07/18	JP
D	Layout amended following Council comments.	02/07/18	JP
C	Scheme revised following client comments.	29/06/18	JP
B	Scheme revised following client comments from Watford Building Control via BDC.	29/06/18	JP
A	Cost and grading amended following client comments.	22/06/18	JP
ISSUED BY		DATE	BY

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 www.bdg.co.uk
 Telephone: 01924 461444, 01924 461445, 01924 461446
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CLIENT	Seven Capital
PROJECT	53 Clarendon Road Watford
TITLE	Level 10 Proposed Roof Plan

Committee date	6 th February 2019
Application reference	18/01383/FULM
Site address	MSCP, Thomas Sawyer Way, Watford
Proposal	Redevelopment of the site to provide a new multi-storey car park (MSCP) with capacity for up to 1455 car parking spaces with associated landscaping and access
Applicant	Watford Health Campus Partnership
Agent	Savills
Type of Application	Full planning permission: Major
Reason for committee item	Major Application
Target decision date	Extended by agreement to 11 th February 2019
Statutory publicity	Press advertisement and site notice with overall expiry of 30 November 2018.
Case officer	Alice Reade alice.reamde@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Vicarage

1. Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 This application site of 1.75 hectares is located to the north of Thomas Sawyer Way, to the east of the hospital and to the south of the Vicarage Road Stadium. It is accessed from a roundabout on Thomas Sawyer Way. The application site consists of land forming part of the former allotments.
- 2.2 Access to the site is to be via a road from the existing roundabout on Thomas Sawyer Way which is subject to planning approval ref. 18/01349/FUL.
- 2.3 The site and context include significant ground level changes with ground levels reducing from north to south making the site lower relative to the stadium and elevated relative to Thomas Sawyer Way and the south of the Riverwell zone.
- 2.4 The site is not within a conservation area and does not encompass any listed buildings. The site is within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.5 Further information is available in the appendices to the report and on our [website](#).

3 Summary of the proposal

- 3.1 The development is of a multi-story car park (MSCP) of 7 storeys to provide 1455 car parking spaces. The spaces predominantly for the staff and visitors of the hospital (1290 spaces) with other spaces allocated to the Football club (57 spaces) and planned adjacent hotel (98 spaces).

Use	Non Disabled Spaces	Disabled Spaces
Hospital	1218	72
Watford Football Club	57	3
Future Hotel Use	98	5
Total	1,453	

- 3.2 The building will extend to 108m depth, 50m width and 78.4m height. Vehicular access/egress is from ground level to the south. Circulation cores will be located on the north and west elevations.
- 3.3 **Conclusion**
The development will be the first phase of the regeneration of the northern zone of the Riverwell site pursuant to Special Policy Area SPA3. The development will provide a much needed new car park for the hospital which will allow for level and convenient access to the hospital for staff and visitors with improved safety and security. The MSCP will also facilitate the relocation of the extensive surface level parking in the area to allow for the further regeneration of the northern side of Thomas Sawyer Way.
- 3.4 The siting, layout, scale and design of the building will be suited to the site and context and has been comprehensively planned within the wider northern zone redevelopment. Specifically, the building will provide a well design frontage onto the planned public square to the west and will sit well adjacent to the planned hotel and residential developments.
- 3.5 Access arrangements include circulation cores on the west, north and south of the building, a ramp to the hospital, a ramp to the stadium and access to the planned public square. The development will significantly enhance pedestrian routes to the site and to surrounding uses. The access arrangements have been designed to function prior to and following planned development in the area and will serve as significantly improved access to any future hospital

development. The stadium access and walk way at the north of the site will remain.

- 3.6 The building would have a minimum distance of 25m to the residential flats on the south elevation of the stadium. The relationship of the development to these flats has been fully tested and as set out in a sunlight and daylight report, there would be no unreasonable harm to these dwellings.
- 3.7 Consultation with Environment Agency, Highways Authority and Natural England has concluded with no objection from these consultees. Additional information has been sent to the Lead Local Flood Authority to overcome their objection. Their final response is outstanding however it is expected should there be any matters outstanding, these can be secured by conditions which would be included in the update sheet.

4. Main relevant policies

Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application was determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

- 5.1 The parcel of land to which this application relates forms part of the wider Watford Riverwell site (formally known as Watford Heath Campus). This project within the Special Policy Area 3 (SPA3) has been under consideration for a number of years and has an extensive planning history. The most relevant aspects of this are set out below.
- 5.2 On 6th January 2015, an application for the new Health Campus masterplan was approved:
Ref. 14/00511/OUTM – Hybrid planning application for the development of a mixed-use health campus accessed from the approved access road comprising:
 - 1. Outline element for the construction of new hospital/healthcare accommodation, together with business, retail, office, food and drink, hotel, and leisure uses, and up to 681 new dwellings, safeguarding of land for the expansion of Laurance Haines primary school, new public spaces, play space and landscaping, associated car parking, access roads, footways and cycleways.

2. Detailed element (business area south) for the construction of three industrial business units together associated vehicle and cycle parking, site landscaping and the creation of a new wildlife area.
- 5.3 A separate outline planning application was also submitted in April 2014 for the Farm Terrace Allotments site, however this was held in abeyance and not determined. The allotments have since been formally deallocated.
- 5.4 The outline permission was not implemented and proposals for different parts of the area have proceeded as independent applications. Land to the south of Thomas Sawyer Way has the following history:
- 5.5 Trade City – Ref 15/01246/FULM Development of 12 industrial units was granted February 2016.
- 5.6 Woodlands- Ref. 17/00178/FULM – Development of 95 flats with associated landscaping, amenity space, access and parking on the land immediately to the northwest of the application site granted November 2017.
- 5.7 Mayfield - Ref. 17/01543/FULM - Development of 253 Bed Care home granted April 2018.
- 5.8 Waterside – Ref. 17/01511/FULM – Development to provide 408 residential dwellings. Determination to approve issued at committee however awaiting final S106 and grant of planning permission.
- 5.9 Planning permission to allow works to prepare the site for the Mayfield and Waterside developments, including soil remediation and obstruction removal, (Ref. 17/01162/FULM) was granted planning permission in January 2018.
- 5.10 This is the first phase of development on the area to the north side of Thomas Sawyer way. Directly relevant to this application is application ref 18/01349/FUL for the construction of a new access road from Thomas Sawyer Way and for enabling works including soil remediation, obstruction removal and retaining structures which was granted conditional planning permission in December 2018.
- 5.11 The development has been subject to pre-application discussions between the applicant and planning officers. Pre-application consultation, specific to the MSCP, has been undertaken with the local community by the applicant.
- 5.12 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact

Assessment) Regulations 2017 it was determined that an EIA was required for the development due to its potential cumulative environmental impacts. In scoping opinion reference 18/01325/SCO, the LPA agreed that two issues of Ground conditions and Water Resources/Flood Risk Assessment would be the factor to be 'scoped in' to the report.

6. Main considerations

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- (a) Principle of development
- (b) Access, parking and transportation
- (c) Scale and design
- (d) Impact on surrounding properties.
- (e) Flood Risk and Drainage
- (f) Other Environmental Impacts
- (g) Construction Management
- (h) Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

6.1 (a) Principle of development

The principle of the car park development is supported in pursuance of Special Policy Area SPA3. The development will provide a much needed new car park for the hospital which will allow for level and convenient access to the hospital for staff and visitors with improved safety and security. The MSCP will also facilitate the relocation of the extensive surface level parking in the area to allow for the further regeneration of the northern side of Thomas Sawyer Way. There are therefore significant planning and wider merits to the development.

6.2 The car park is sited on part of the former Farm Terrace Allotments. These have however been deallocated from allotment use to allow for the planned regeneration of this area.

6.3 (b) Access, parking and transportation

Vehicular access and egress is proposed on the south elevation of the building via a new access road from the roundabout with Thomas Sawyer Way. The road has conditional planning permission under an independent application 18/01349/FUL. The layout of the access and egress and relationships with existing roads is therefore acceptable.

6.4 The MSCP will predominantly replace the existing surface level parking associated with the hospital within a more efficient layout and of better quality and access. As such, the maximum parking standards of the Watford District Plan 2000 are not applicable to the development. It is also not expected that there would be any significant change to trip generation or

journey patterns by users.

- 6.5 There are however additional spaces within the MSCP allocated to the proposed future hotel development adjacent to the south of the MSCP. The transport assessment identifies that the additional hotel spaces would create an additional 15 trips in the AM peak and 11 trips in the PM peak. This is not considered to be of an adverse highway impact and is confirmed by the Highway Authority in their review of the development and transport assessment.
- 6.6 Pedestrian access to and within the site will be significantly improved as a result of the development. The car park will allow for step free and level access to the hospital via a pedestrian bridge at level 3 of the main circulation core. The building provides a main pedestrian entrance to its circulation core from the planned public square to the west. A new pedestrian bridge will also be provided from the northern circulation core to the stadium for use by the football club's allocated parking holders. The existing footway along the north of the site which allows access/egress to the south of the stadium will remain and will be enhanced as part of the wider project. A circulation core located on the south of the building will allow pedestrian access/egress to the planned hotel. The development will therefore significantly enhance pedestrian routes to the site and to surrounding uses.
- 6.7 (c) Scale and design
The layout and appearance of the MSCP is simple and primarily functional however it nonetheless includes good design principles and will be an appropriate building for its site and use.
- 6.8 Within the context of the hospital and stadium buildings and the planned surrounding development, the scale and height of the MSCP would be appropriate. It is on an elevated position however the stadium building would remain as the tallest and largest building in the context. Development is also proposed up to the south and east elevations of the building meaning that the building will be substantially concealed within the regeneration of the site. The scale and height is therefore wholly appropriate for the site and context.
- 6.9 Within in the planned wider development, the western elevation of the MSCP will front onto a public square planned within the development and adjacent to the hospital site. This elevation of the MSCP includes the circulation core as a prominent vertical projection of the building. This creates interest, articulation, legibility and natural surveillance on what will be the principle elevation of the building. Detailing at lower floors and above the vehicular entrance on the southern elevation aids wayfinding and adds variation to the

elevation.

- 6.10 All elevations of the building will be finished in staggered cladding. This is reasonable and suited for such a development to partially screen the car parking yet retain openness for ventilation. This treatment is seen successfully used to the car park of the Intu development.
- 6.11 The colour palette and layout of the cladding for the building has been carefully considered and proposes neutral tones which would sit comfortably within the planned context. Variations in tone and clad position have been used to create texture and interest on the building. The use of green at lower levels around the building creates wayfinding.
- 6.12 Two variations of the external finish have been proposed. One variation includes gaps on the cladding of the south and east elevations where the surrounding masterplan development will proceed. However should this surrounding development not proceed as expected, a condition requires the full cladding of the building to ensure that the long term elevational finish of the building is secured.
- 6.13 (d) Impact on surrounding properties.
The stadium building to the north of site includes residential flats from first floor level with flats served by its south elevation. The main car park building would have a minimum distance of 25m to the residential properties. This exceeds the minimum 22m guidance for new development and would allow for sufficient distance to protect the amenity of these flats.
- 6.14 The main building would not infringe a 25 degree line taken up from the lowest windows of the stadium flats however the core section on the north of the MSCP would infringe this line. The width and southerly orientation of the development also has potential to create impact to the flats which are sole aspect. A Sunlight and Daylight Assessment has therefore been carried out to further assess the potential impacts, in accordance with the BRE's 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice' (BRE 2011). The assessments relating to the Vertical Sky Component, No-Sky Line Contour and Average Daylight Factor all meet the minimum standards. All windows and rooms of the stadium flats remain fully compliant with the targets set within the BRE guidance. It is therefore not considered that the development would result in a significant or adverse loss of light to the flats.
- 6.15 The view from the properties will significantly change however this is not considered unreasonable or harmful in planning terms. Suitable light and outlook is retained.

- 6.16 The noise and air quality impacts of the development have been assessed as detailed in reports 'Air Quality Assessment' (October 2018) report prepared by Mayer Brown and 'Planning Noise Assessment' (October 2018) prepared by ion acoustics. These determine that the development would have a low or negligible impact on noise or air quality in the area. As such, it is considered that there would be no adverse noise or air quality impact to the adjacent residential occupiers.
- 6.17 The north elevation includes appropriate screening to all levels to ensure that car headlights would not shine directly onto the residential properties and light disturbance to occupiers will be minimised.
- 6.18 (e) Environmental Impacts
In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 it was determined that an Environmental Impact Assessment was required for the development due to its potential cumulative environmental impacts. The two main issues were identified as ground conditions and water resources/flood risk assessment.
- 6.19 The application is therefore accompanied by an Environmental Statement detailing the Environmental Impact Assessment which considers the development proposals cumulatively with the Riverwell development against key environmental considerations including, but not limited to flooding and drainage, ground conditions and contamination, transport, biodiversity, archaeology, air quality, and noise & vibration. In general the statement considers the key matters and concludes that, subject to mitigation, the proposals will not have unacceptable adverse impacts in relation to the relevant areas.
- 6.20 The documents have been reviewed by the relevant statutory consultees who agree that subject to appropriate conditions and mitigation, no harm will arise.
- 6.21 *Flood Risk and Drainage*
The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and a Drainage Strategy which addresses both the application site and the wider site, these documents and have been updated to address issues raised by consultees during the processing of the application. Having reviewed the revised documents the Environment Agency has raised no objection subject to conditions. A final response from the Lead Local Flood Authority has not been received however it is expected should there be any matters outstanding, these can be secured by conditions which would be included in the update sheet.

6.22 *Ground Conditions/ Contamination*

The application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Environmental Risk Assessment and Outline Remediation Strategy which addresses both the application site and the wider site, these documents have been updated to address issues raised by consultees during the processing of the application. Having reviewed the revised documents both the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority are satisfied that the proposals include appropriate consideration and mitigation for ground conditions and potential contamination. Subject to appropriate conditions the proposal is therefore acceptable in these respects.

6.23 *Sustainability*

The application is accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Report, which demonstrate additional measures which have been introduced to improve sustainability and improve energy efficiency.

6.24 The car park includes passive electric vehicle points to 20% of the spaces, allowing for installation of electric vehicle charging facilities. The lack of any active EV spaces is however of concern and is unlikely to meet current and expected EV use. A condition is therefore recommended to secure a better provision of active and passive EV spaces.

6.25 *Ecology and biodiversity*

The former allotment has been cleared and due to its limited habitat value, it is not considered that the development would pose any undue risk to protected landscape, flora or fauna. It is noted that there is no objection from Natural England. Herts Ecology were also consulted and have raised no objection.

6.26 *Air Quality*

The site is not within a declared Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) however AQMA 2 Vicarage Road/The Hornets is located approximately 700m northeast of the site. Assessment of air quality impacts has been undertaken and detailed in the 'Air Quality Assessment' (October 2018) report prepared by Mayer Brown. This finds that all traffic relative impacts are well within national objective levels and overall impacts are negligible.

6.27 *Noise*

The potential for increased traffic noise generation has been assessed in the 'Planning Noise Assessment' (October 2018) prepared by ion acoustics. This finds that noise of traffic and mechanical plant within the development are predicted to be of a low or negligible impact in relation to existing background

noise.

6.28 *Landscaping*

The proposals indicate the loss of one Cat B tree a Sycamore (T1), a Cat C group of varying species (G1) and part of Cat C (G2). These proposed losses are considered acceptable due to their low retention value. No significant soft landscaping is proposed within the application site however there is a small area of soft landscaping which will enhance the area. It is also noted that within the associated road development and wider Riverwell Zone, significant tree and landscaping benefits will be seen.

6.29 (g) Construction Management

Construction Management is not typically a direct planning matter and is generally under the control of other bodies and legislation, namely Environmental Health and Highway Authority. However, due to the position of the site at the existing hospital car park and immediately adjacent to the stadium, it is considered relevant and appropriate in planning terms for a Construction Management Plan (CMP) to be secured in this situation to prevent hazards and inconvenience to the public when accessing or at these adjacent premises.

6.30 A construction management plan was submitted with the application and amended December 2018 to include details of car park management and stadium safety measures as requested by consultees. Specific details were required in respect of the parking availability during the construction process to ensure that the temporary loss of hospital parking is minimised.

6.31 Further details have been requested by Highways in respect of the CMP of the enabling works application. Some points were found to be in duplication of other legislation and S38 Highway controls however some points are considered relevant to ensure onsite parking is well managed to minimise loss of hospital parking spaces during construction (points a. and d. of condition 4). Also, site cleaning measures (points b. and c. of condition 4) are deemed to be relevant to protect the safety of users of the accessway and footpaths of the hospital and stadium. These were however required for the enabling works application and are required for this application also.

6.32 Noise and air impact reports submitted identify that there would be potential impact of noise and increased dust during the construction process. These reports do however identify that this is not severe and is temporary. As such, this is to be reasonably expected for major development and does not warrant any planning control.

- 6.33 (h) Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
The council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. On and from this date, s.106 planning obligations can only be used to secure affordable housing provision and other site specific requirements.
- 6.34 The development lies within a designated Major Developed Area and therefore has been rated at £0 per sqm.
- 6.35 There are no off site mitigation measures required to support this development and a s106 is not required.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Name of Statutory Consultee / Other Organisation	Comment	Officer Response
HCC Lead Flood Authority	Initial objection in respect of surface water drainage on site. Further/amended information has been provided and re-consultation made to the LLFA.	Additional information has been provided to LLFA. It is expected that any outstanding matters could be resolved by condition. Awaiting final response to be provided in the update sheet.
HCC Highways	Initial objection in respect of detailed matters including swept path details. Further/amended information has been provided and re-consultation made to the highways officer who has confirmed no objection.	The construction management plan requested as a condition by HCC included some points that would be outside of WBC authority and/or duplication to Highways control. As such, only the reasonable and appropriate points have been included in the CMP condition.
Herts Ecology	No response received.	Noted that there was a response of no objection from Natural England.

Environment Agency	No objection subject to conditions.	Conditions added.
Thames Water	No objection.	Noted
Police Design advisor	No objection. The architects have been liaising with the Police design officer at pre-application stage and the development includes Crime prevention and security measures as detailed in the Design and Access Statement.	Noted
Natural England	No objection	Noted
HCC Safety Advisory Group	Concerns regarding emergency access/egress from the stadium on event days during construction.	Noted and details included in revised CMP.

7.2 Internal Consultees

Name of Internal Consultee	Comment	Officer Response
WBC Planning Policy	No response	No policy concerns foreseen as the provision of a MSCP is in accordance with the strategy for the Riverwell regeneration set out in SPA3.
WBC EH Contamination	No objection subject to conditions.	Conditions included.
WBC Arboricultural Officer	The indicated tree losses are acceptable.	Noted and agreed.
WBC Economic Development	No comment	The development will facilitate regeneration and economic development.
WBC Property team	As part of the project the property team liaise with the Hospital who have requested that disruption to existing car	Noted and included in amended CMP.

	parking spaces is minimised during construction.	
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7.3 Representations received from interested parties
Letters of consultation were sent to 206 properties. Two representations were received with one in objection and one general representation.

7.4 Comments are summarised in the following table:

Comment	Officer comments
General objection to the Riverwell development, lack of public transport and increased traffic generation.	This is noted however is not directly relevant. The car park will be largely replacing existing parking spaces elsewhere on the site so will not create any significant traffic generation.
Concern regarding dust, noise and disruption during construction.	Some dust and noise is to be reasonably expected during any construction. No specific planning measures are required or relevant for this.

8. Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed below:

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The following drawings are hereby approved:

TPE_000	00	Location Plan 1:1250
TPE_000	00	Location Plan 1:2500
TPP_001	00	Proposed Site Plan 1:500
TPP_001	00	Proposed Site Plan 1:1250
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30001	P1	Proposed MSCP Ground Level
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30002	P1	Proposed MSCP Level 01
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30003	P1	Proposed MSCP Level 02

6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30004	P1	Proposed MSCP Level 03
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30005	P1	Proposed MSCP Level 04
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30006	P1	Proposed MSCP Level 05
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30007	P1	Proposed MSCP Level 06
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30007	P1	Proposed MSCP Roof Level
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30541	P1	Proposed MSCP North Elevation
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30542	P1	Proposed MSCP East Elevation
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30543	P1	Proposed MSCP South Elevation
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30544	P1	Proposed MSCP West Elevation
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30601	P1	Proposed MSCP Section A
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30602	P1	Proposed MSCP Section B
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30603	P1	Proposed MSCP Section C
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30604	P1	Proposed MSCP Section D
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30605	P1	Proposed MSCP Section E
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-AX-30801	P1	North elevation Headlight Protection
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-92140	P01	Section 38 Works Drainage Layout
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-92141	P01	Section 38 Works Drainage Layout Sheet 1
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-92142	P01	Section 38 Works Drainage Layout Sheet 2
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-92110	P01	Drainage Details Sheet 1
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-92111	P01	Drainage Details Sheet 2
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-92112	P01	Drainage Details Sheet 3
11284-WAT-NR-XX-DR-C-04016	P01	Proposed Drainage Layout
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-PX-52701	Rev B	Revised proposed drainage sections
6570-STRIPE-WP-XX-DR-PX-52801	Rev E	Revised proposed drainage plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The development of the site shall be carried out in accordance with the details and recommendations contained within the following document, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- a) Design & Access Statement, MSCP and Access Road, prepared by POD Architects
- b) Planning Statement: Watford Riverwell Multi Storey Car Park October 2018 prepared by Savills
- c) Transport Statement, Watford Riverwell, Northern Masterplan, MSCP October 2018, prepared by Mayer Brown. (Report ref KPWatford.1. FINAL)
- d) Arboricultural Survey and Impact Assessment October 2018 (Report ref RT-MME-128664)
- e) Energy and Sustainability Report October 2018 Issue P1, prepared by elementa
- f) Planning noise report, , prepared by ion Acoustics. (Report ref Acoustic A1354 RO1)
- g) 'Outline Construction Management and Logistics Plan Rev 003 dated 17.12.2018
- h) Environmental Statement Non Technical Summary October 2018 prepared by Savills
- i) Preliminary Environmental Risk Assessment (Report ref. WIE11284-102-R.3.2.2.PERA);
- j) Geo-Environmental Quantitative Risk Assessment (Report ref. WIE11284-102-R.7.3.2.GQRA);
- k) Outline Remediation Strategy – Multi-storey Car Park Construction Works (Report ref. WIE11284-102-R-6-3-1-RS_CW).
- l) Flooding and Drainage Strategy: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Sept 2018 (Ref WIE11284-104-R-4-3-1-FRA) and Response to LLFA Queries (Ref 6570-STRIFE-XX-XX-XX-RP-ZX-52001 REV P1.)

Should the details contained within one of the aforementioned documents differ from the requirements of another condition on this planning permission, the details set out in the other condition shall take precedence.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning to ensure the planning impacts of the development are in accordance with the details which have been assessed.

4. No development shall commence until an amended Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan shall be based upon the 'Outline

Construction Management and Logistics Plan Rev 003 dated 17.12.2018 and shall include details of:

- a) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking);
- b) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- c) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
- d) Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities.

The amended Construction Traffic Management Plan should include the following missing information:

The proposed number of car parking spaces for construction staff should be outlined and the location of the parking shown on a plan.

Reason: The site occupies land adjacent to the Stadium and Hospital. This condition is therefore required to ensure the development does not create adverse harm to the safety and convenience of the public and staff at the hospital and stadium during the time that the development is being constructed. This condition will also ensure that sufficient parking is available for the hospital during the construction process.

5. No development approved by this planning permission shall commence until a remediation strategy to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site in respect of the development hereby permitted, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This strategy will include the following components:

1. An amended verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the submitted 'Outline Remediation Strategy – Multi-Storey Car Park Construction Works Watford Riverwell Northern Masterplan - Multi-storey Car Park dated October 2018 (ref: WIE11284-102-R-6-3-1RS_CW)' are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the written consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: As requested by the EA. The proposed development site presents a high risk of contamination that could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is adjacent to a source protection zone 1. This condition will ensure that the development does not contribute to, or is not put at unacceptable risk from/adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Prior to any part of the permitted development being occupied, a verification report demonstrating the completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met.

Reason: As requested by the EA. To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to human health or the water environment by demonstrating that the requirements of the approved verification plan have been met and that remediation of the site is complete. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a monitoring and maintenance plan in respect of contamination, including a timetable of monitoring and submission of reports to the local planning authority, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Reports as specified in the approved plan, including details of any necessary contingency action arising from the monitoring, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

Reason: As requested by the EA. To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to human health or the water environment by managing any ongoing contamination issues and completing all necessary long-term remediation measures. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: As requested by the EA. No investigation can completely characterise a site. This condition ensures that the development does not contribute to, is not put at unacceptable risk from, or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted other than with the written consent of the local planning authority. Any proposals for such systems must be supported by an assessment of the risks to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: As requested by the EA. To ensure that the development does not contribute to, is not put at unacceptable risk from, or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Piling, deep foundations and other intrusive groundworks using penetrative methods shall not be carried out other than with the written consent of the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: As requested by the EA. To ensure that the proposed piling, deep foundations and other intrusive groundworks does not harm groundwater resources in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Position Statement N. Groundwater Resources of the 'The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection'.

11. A scheme for managing any borehole installed for the investigation of soils, groundwater or geotechnical purposes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall provide details of how redundant boreholes are to be decommissioned and how any boreholes that need to be retained, post-development, for monitoring purposes will be secured, protected and inspected. The scheme as approved shall be implemented prior to the occupation of any part of the permitted development.

Reason: As requested by the EA. To ensure that redundant boreholes are safe and secure, and do not cause groundwater pollution or loss of water supplies in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy

Framework and Position Statement N Groundwater resources of 'The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection'.

12. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to the first use or occupation of the development, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced together with any necessary monitoring and maintenance programme and copies of any waste transfer notes relating to exported and imported soils shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved monitoring and maintenance programme shall be implemented. The above must be undertaken in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

Reason: As requested by WBC contamination advisor, to ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

13. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination: In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: As requested by WBC contamination advisor, to ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

14. Prior to the commencement of the use of any part of the development, a scheme detailing the electric vehicle parking provision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include active and passive EV provision to be installed in the car park. The

provision as approved by this condition shall be installed and made available for use prior to the use of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development provides appropriate electric vehicle parking provision.

15. Should the masterplan development adjacent to the development not be commenced within 5 years from the commencement of the use of the car park, all gaps in the car park façade shall be infilled with cladding and external facing material to match the building, as detailed in section 5.8 of the Design and Access Statement, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the long term visual appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

Informatives

IN907 Consideration of proposal in a positive and proactive manner

IN910 Building Regulations

IN911 Party Wall Act

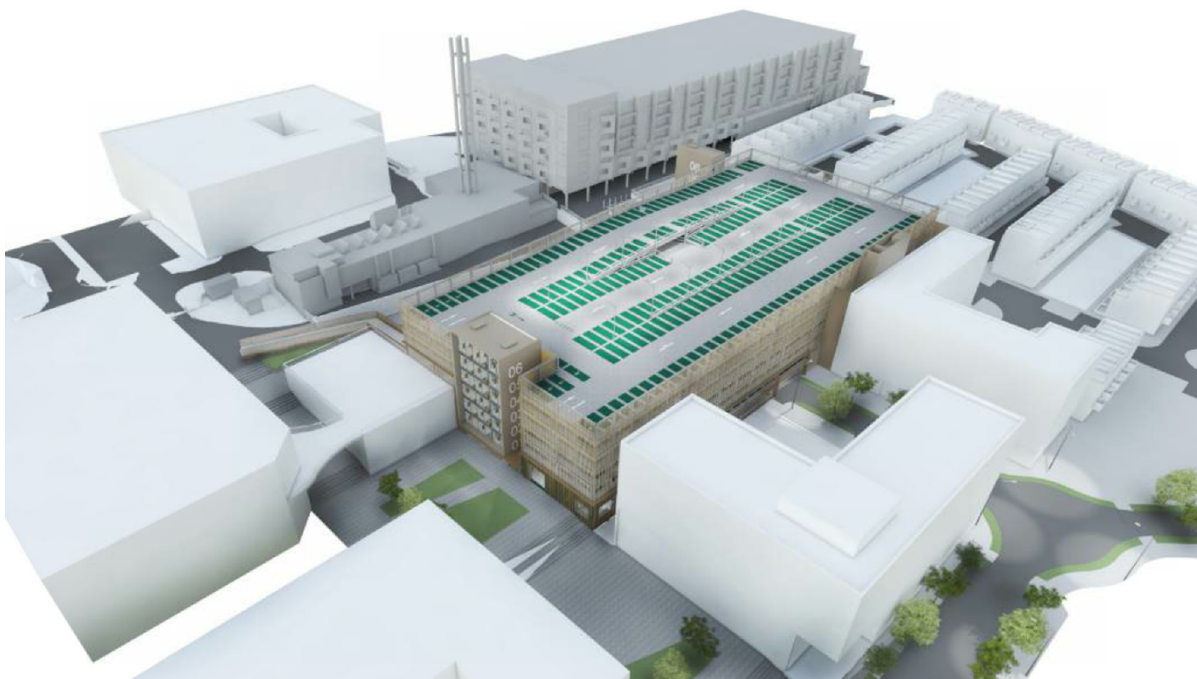
IN912 Hours of Construction

IN915 Highway Works – HCC agreement required

Approach from Public Square to the west



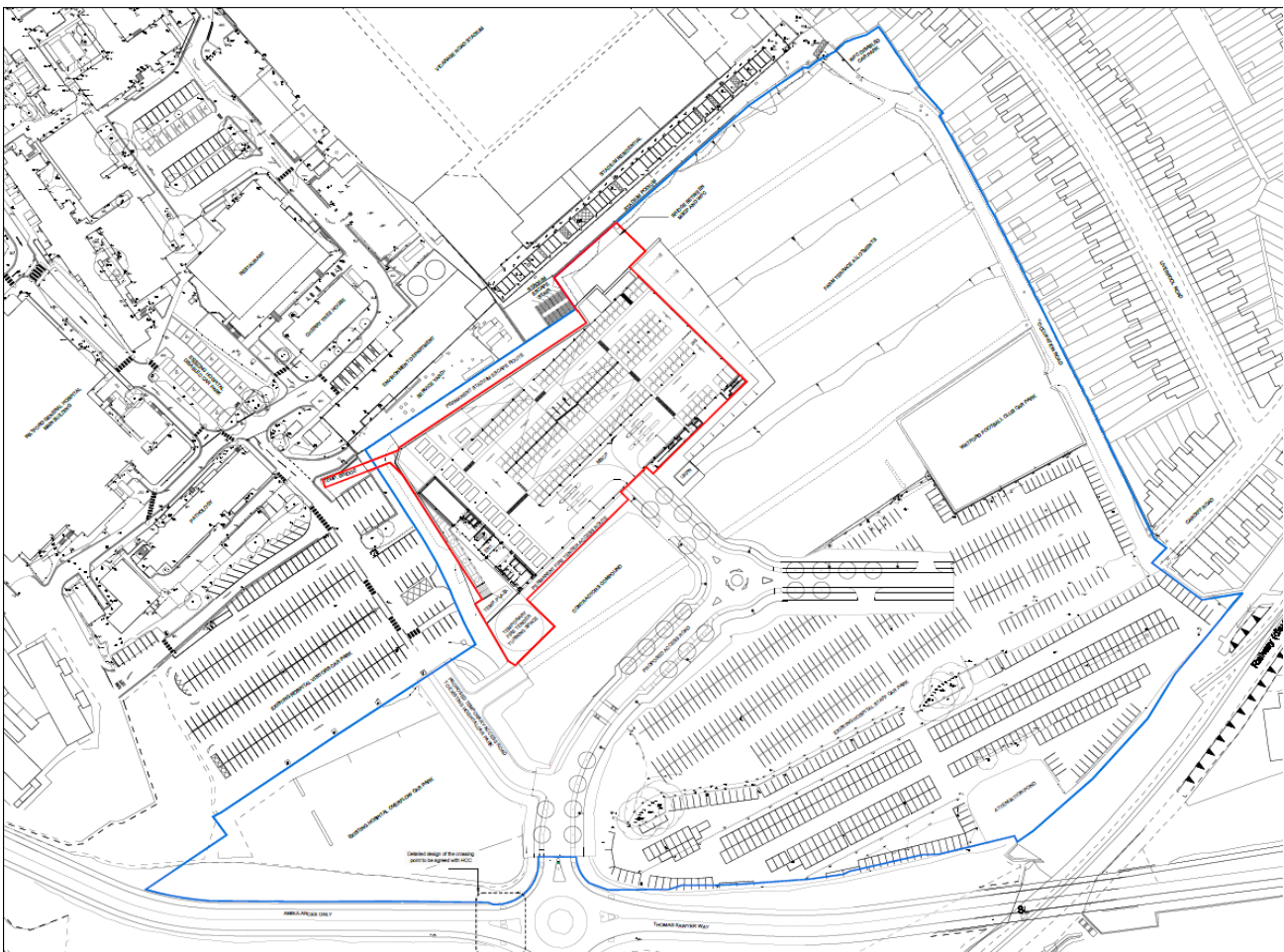
Aerial from South West



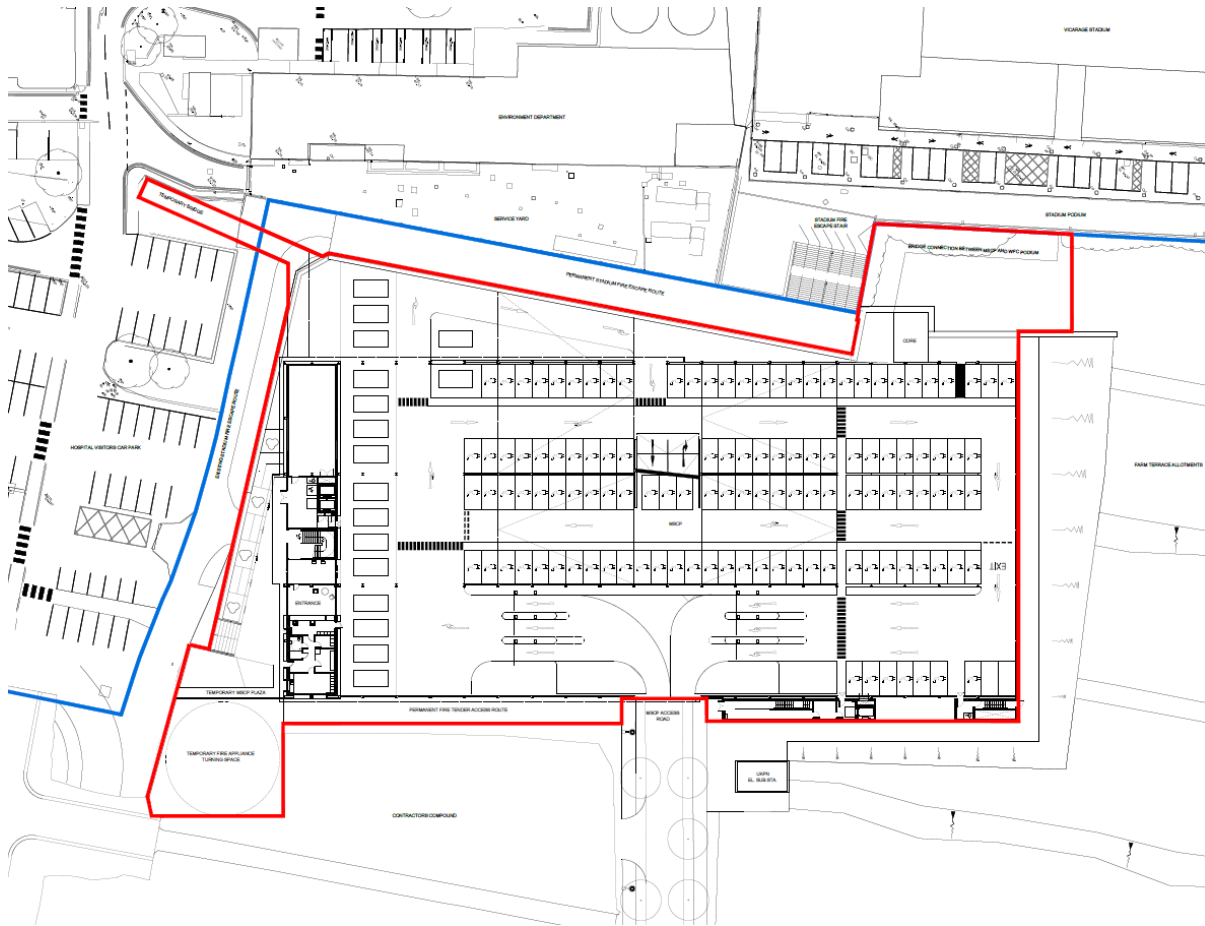
Aerial from South



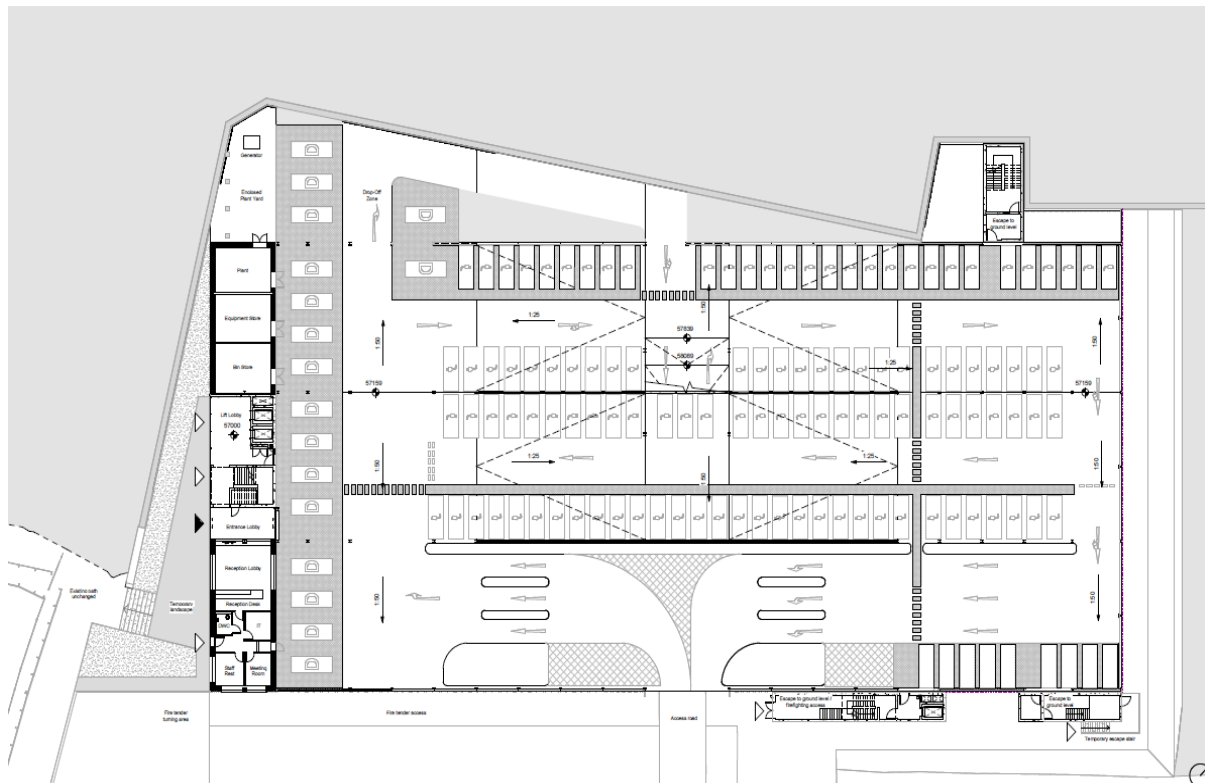
Proposed Site Plan 1 to 1250



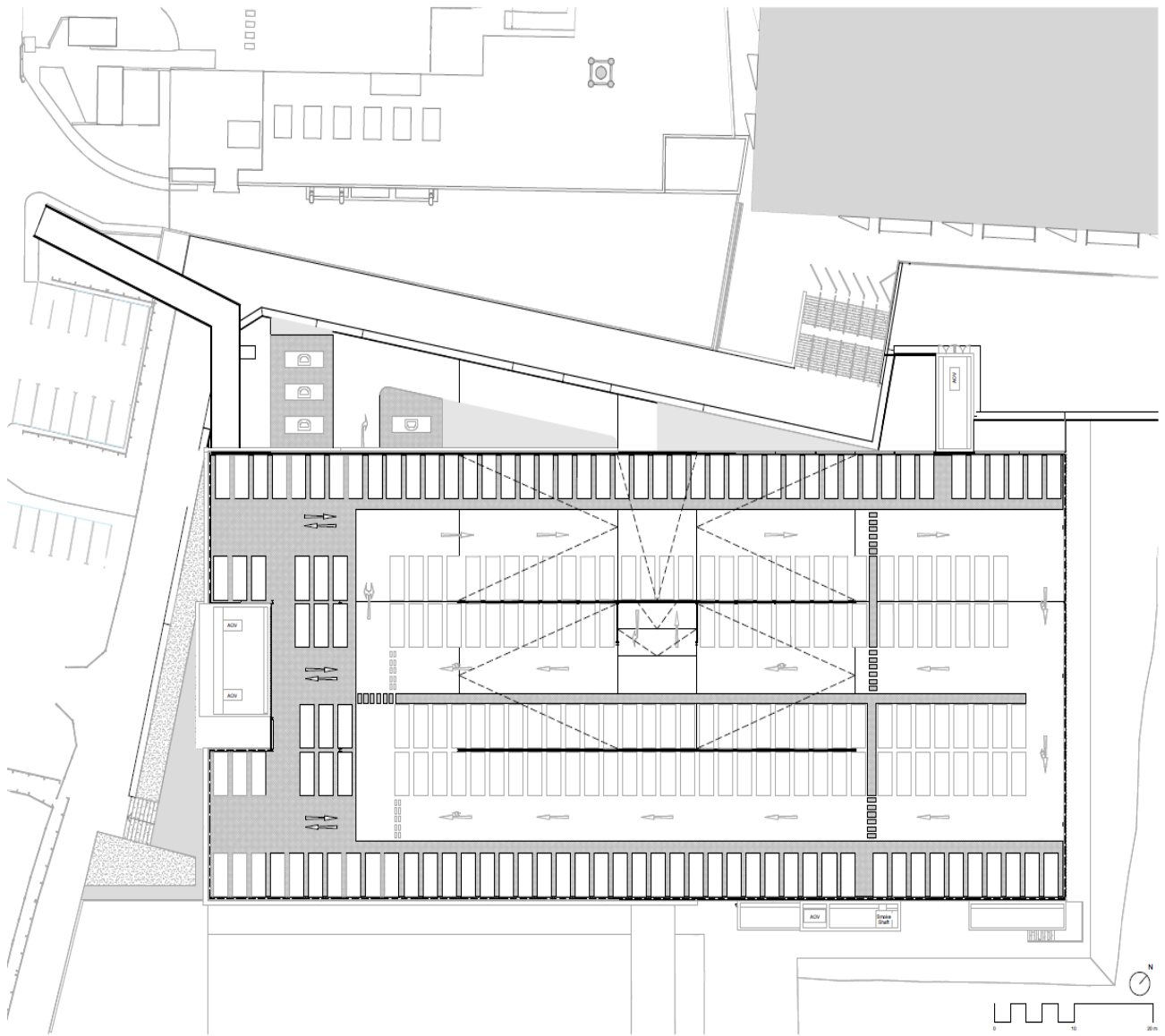
Proposed Site Plan 1 to 500



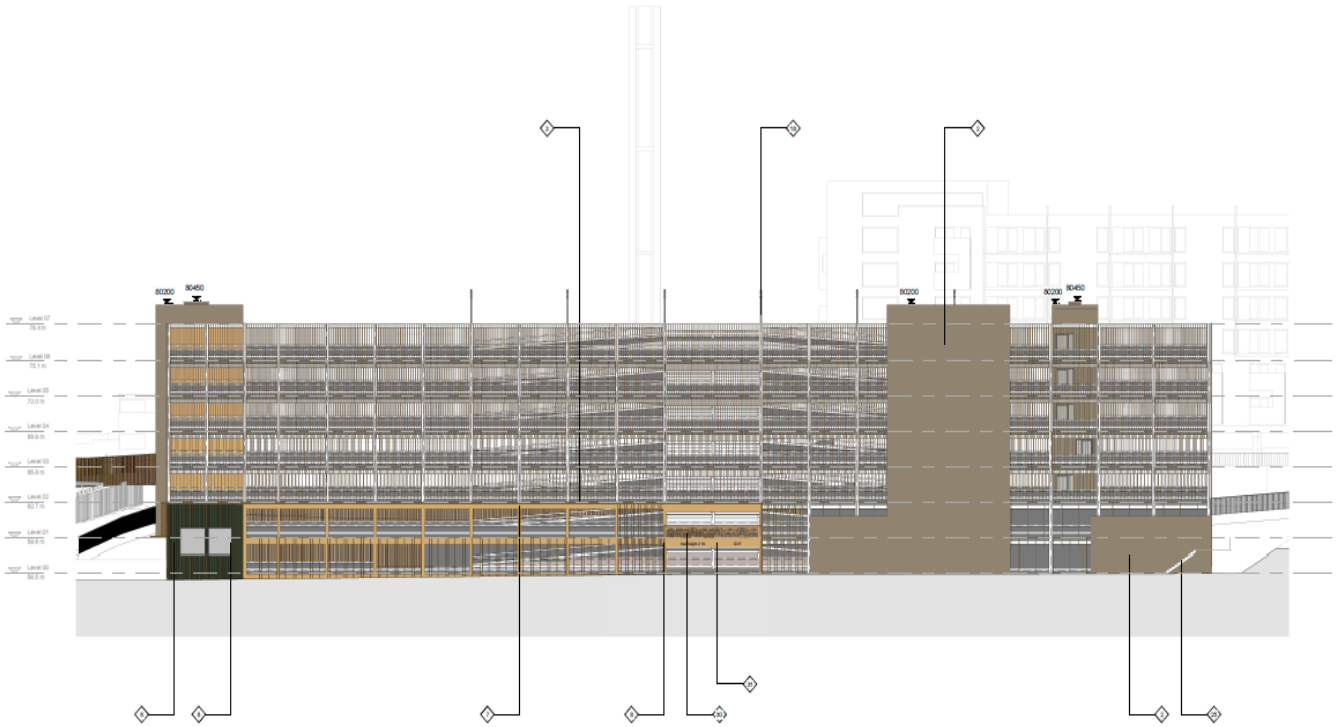
Ground Floor Plan



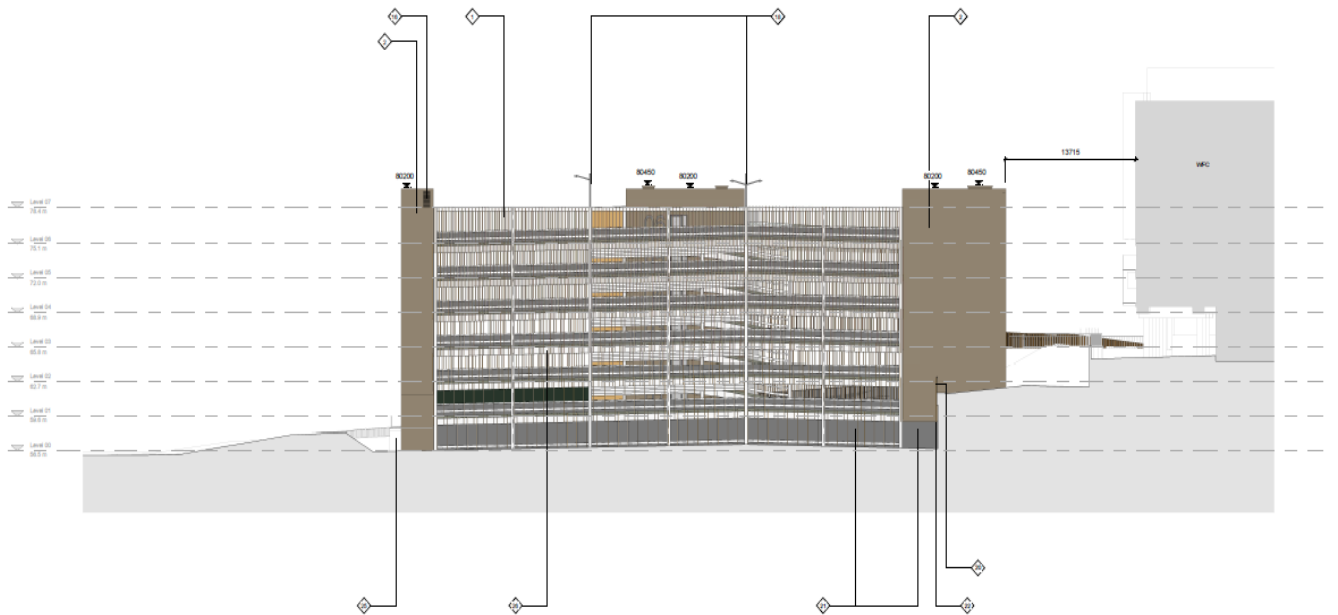
Roof Level Plan



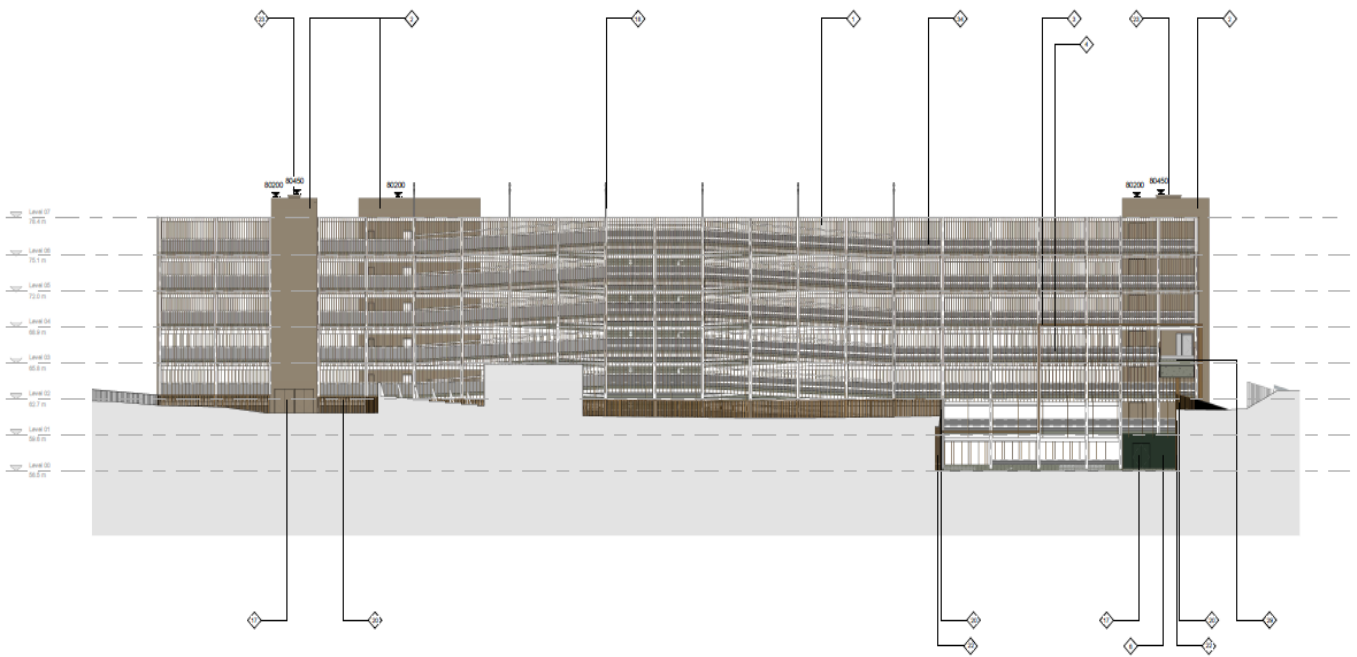
South Elevation



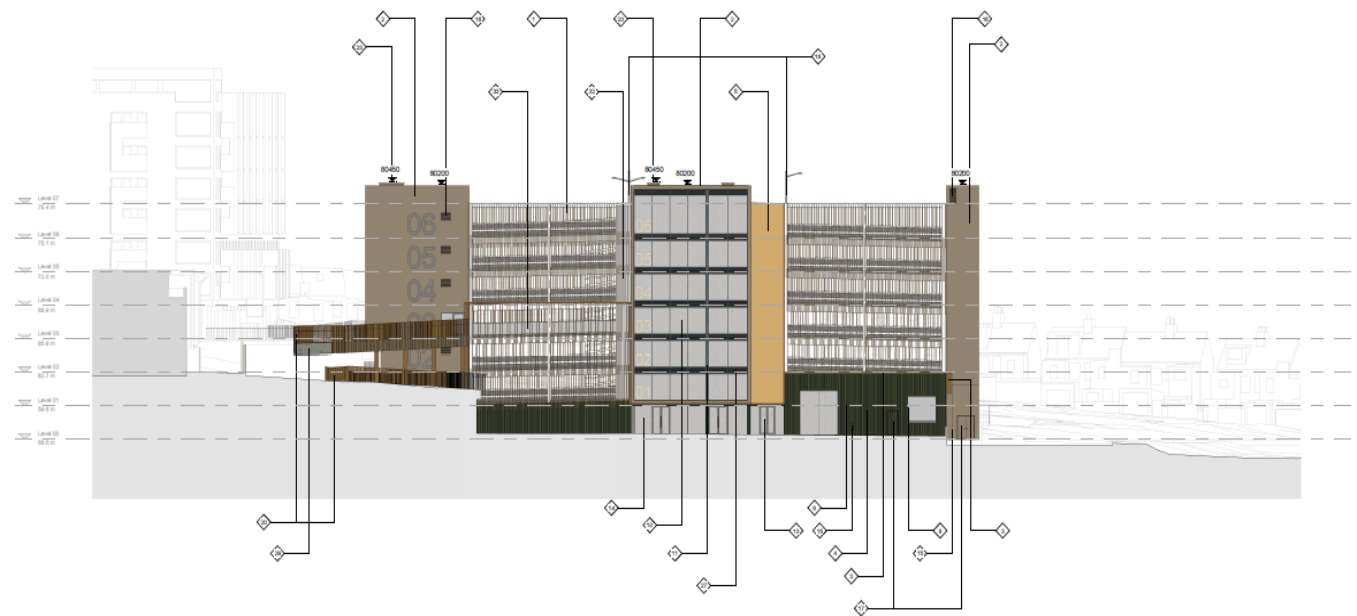
East Elevation



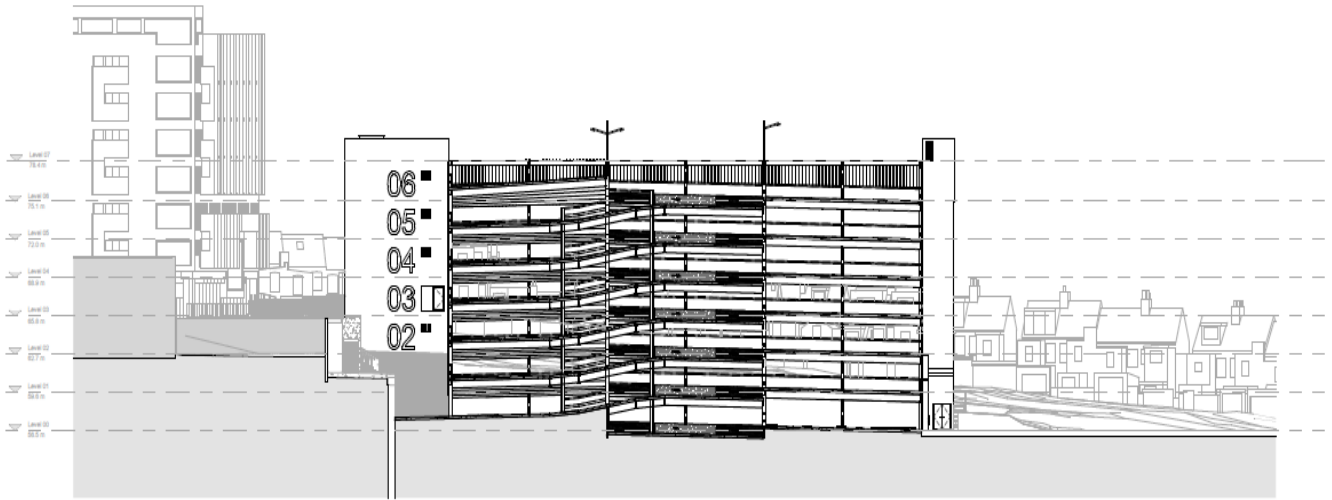
North Elevation



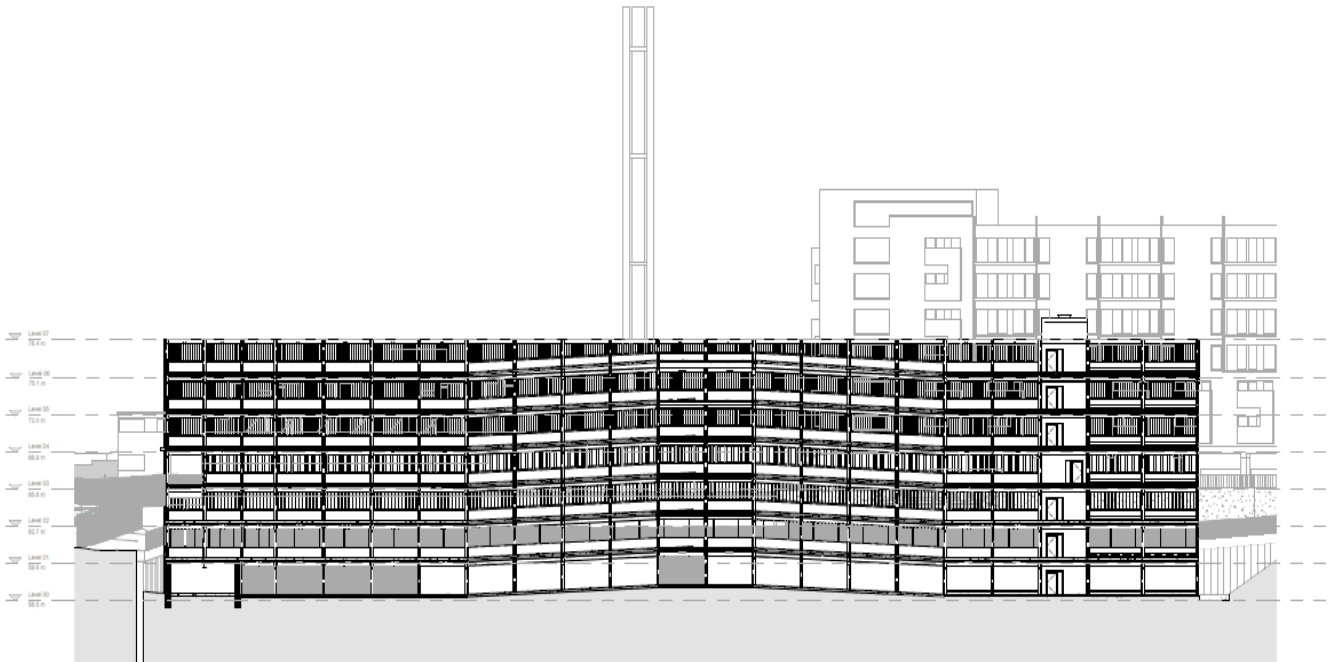
West Elevation



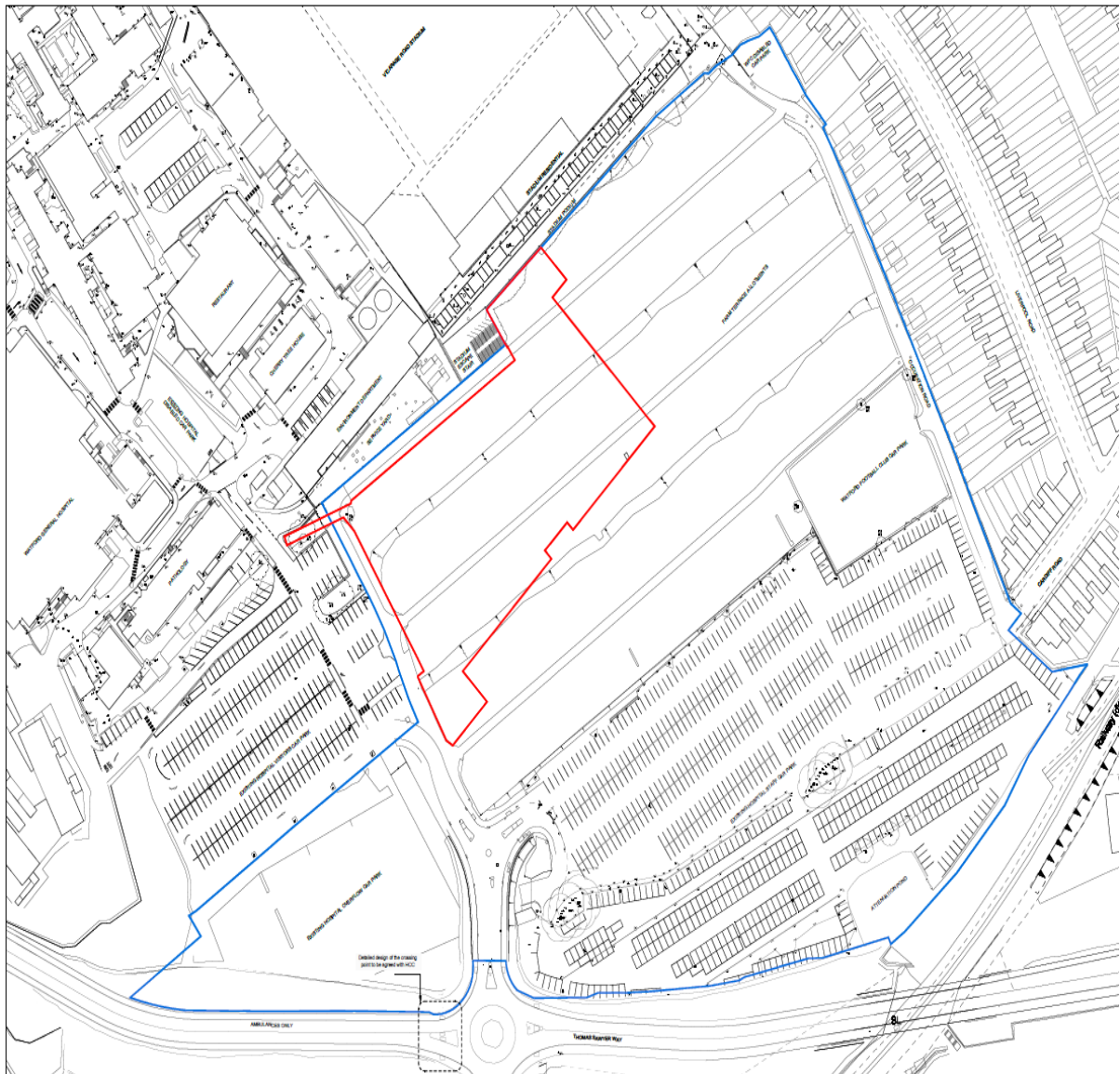
Section B



Section D



Site Location Plan



Part A

Report to: Development Management Committee

Date of meeting: 6 February 2019

Report author: Head of Development Management

Title: Report and Recommendations in relation to PAS Review of Development Management Committee

1. Summary

1.1 The Council invited the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to undertake an independent review of its planning committee process and provide advice in relation to any potential areas of improvement or best practice. This followed a successful LGA review of the Council in 2017. It was felt that a follow on in specific areas would be worthwhile, particularly as Watford was facing considerable development pressures and it would be useful for an independent view on how the service was shaping up to deal with the development applications and pressures associated with these. The review was not done on the basis that the service or the way the council conducted its business was failing, but more on the basis of whether there were things that should be looked at.

1.2 As part of the review, PAS spoke to a number of key stakeholders including members of the committee from both groups, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development, external parties who attend committee and various council officers. They also observed a sitting of the Development Management Committee (DMC) on 6 September 2018.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to share the findings of this work with DMC, facilitate discussion on them and provide some initial recommendations from the Head of Development Management. There are matters which will require wider consideration outside the committee and, as such, this report is not intended to provide a comprehensive response or action plan on all the issues.

2. Recommendations

a) Members are asked to agree the officer recommendations as follows:

1. That the committee supports the proposal to encourage greater public use of the ground floor of the Council Chamber during DMC meetings.
- b) Members are asked to provide their views on how they might wish officers to proceed in relation to:
 1. The introduction of measures as set out in 3.1 of this report.
 2. The introduction of a limited call in procedure as set out in 4.5 – 4.7 of this report.
- c) Members are asked to note the PAS report and the comments of the Head of Development Management in relation to other matters.

Further information:

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01923 278044

3. Detailed report

- 3.1 A copy of the final PAS report is attached at Appendix 1. In addition to this report, PAS provided separate guidance on practical measures which could be taken to avoid any perception of block voting (as raised on page 6 of their report). The suggestions were:
- a) Seat the committee members in alphabetical order rather than in party groups.
 - b) Provide name plates for all attending the committee in order that members cannot hide behind anonymity.
 - c) Stop any group meetings immediately before the committee, as it reduces the opportunity to exert pressure in the background.
 - d) Continue with member development emphasising the point that they are individually representing the council in applying local and national planning policy.
- 3.2 It should be noted that PAS have suggested that option a) (alphabetical seating arrangements) has been used elsewhere and worked well. Anecdotally they have suggested that elsewhere it has also appeared to have the effect of empowering some of the less confident members and providing them with confidence to make their own decisions.

- 3.3 Whilst there are a number of recommendations, these are based on the views and experience of the two individuals conducting the review (a former officer operating as Head of Development Management/Planning and a senior elected member working within a district council/county council environment). The report does not identify any significant issues but more of suggestions to be considered. However, I would guide members to consider the Watford context and whether the suggestions will add any significant value to decision making and assisting with some procedures.

4. Considerations

Committee Composition

- 4.1 a) Number of Portfolio Holders sitting on Development Management Committee.

PAS noted that there are a relatively high number of Portfolio Holders on DMC. They questioned whether a lower proportion of Portfolio Holders might have benefits, but did not express a definitive view. The notional concerns are acknowledged, however, officers have not perceived any lack of nuanced decision making in relation to local matters. This is perhaps a matter that may be a problem in larger geographical boroughs, but Watford is relatively small and the majority of members have a good level of familiarity with the wider and local issues. It is also noted that the presence of Portfolio Holders on the committee does help to ensure that strategic issues and wider council objectives are addressed in the debate and this is of particular value in ensuring planning matters are properly considered. This is particularly important in a fast changing legislative framework as there have been considerable planning changes in the past 5 years with more to come in the immediate and foreseeable future.

- 4.2 Having regard to the above, I do not share the concerns of the PAS report, however it is recognised that there are benefits in enabling the wider membership of each group to gain experience in planning. Ultimately the decisions around appointments are to be taken by the members and potentially it is something for members to consider at Annual Council and is not considered to be a pressing issue at the present time.

- 4.3 b) Size of Development Management Committee.

To mitigate the relatively high number of Portfolio Holders sitting on DMC, it is suggested that the size of the committee be increased to 11. This comment is

noted, however officers do not share the view expressed by PAS. An increase in the size of the committee would have little, if any, impact on the quality of debate or decisions, but would significantly increase the administrative burden associated with committee decisions which would not represent a prudent use of council resources. Accordingly it is recommended that the size of the committee is maintained as at present.

Scheme of delegation

- 4.4 The PAS report notes that small scale applications appear on the agenda, perhaps unnecessarily, but this is triggered by the current delegation procedures, which require all major applications and those applications which attract 4 or more objections and are recommended for approval to be determined by the committee. It recommends monitoring this point in case increased development pressures lead to increased agenda sizes.
- 4.5 The report also notes that there is no 'call in' procedure and recognises that little appetite for change was observed.
- 4.6 Currently the arrangements do not cause undue administrative burden in terms of the number of applications referred to the committee. It is also noted that the 'call in' procedures operated by many other councils are often open to abuse and used inappropriately. They generally serve to increase the administrative burdens of reaching a decision and increase delay and uncertainty without doing anything to genuinely improve the quality of decision making, causing frustration to both local people and applicants, where non planning issues raised by the emotion of the development proposal are conflated with material planning considerations.
- 4.7 It is, however, noted that the current arrangements are somewhat 'one sided' enabling a proposal to be 'referred' to committee by objectors who have concerns about the proposal, but with no similar provisions relating to developments which have wider support within the community. The Head of Development Management does have the ability to elect to send such cases to committee, but this is not formalised.
- 4.8 Officers would welcome the views of the committee on whether a protocol should be provided which might allow a 'call in' to be instigated by agreement between the Head of Development Management and the Chair/Vice Chair in limited circumstances.

Format and process of the meetings

4.9 a) Length of Officer Presentations

The PAS report expressed the view that officer presentations should be shorter, in effect simply serving to introduce the application rather than summarising issues. While this may reduce the length of meetings, officers are mindful that the meetings are held in public and that the proceedings should be coherent for the general public as well as members. Officers consider that members should be aware of the main issues and provide their professional advice rather than merely rely on providing basic facts and details within the report. For this reason it is not proposed to change the process substantially, however, officers will endeavour to keep presentations concise and would welcome feedback from members on any cases where they feel the presentation has been too lengthy. Members will note that reports have been written in a more concise and streamline way to reduce the amount of text to focus on the key points. It is felt that a presentation draws all of these things together, including providing an update on any changes and amendments that need to be considered following the publication of the report. It is also useful for the public and applicants attending the committee to see that the application has been given due attention and consideration.

4.10 b) Length of member debates

The report observes that there is potential for debates to be extended. This comment is noted, however there is a balance between ensuring adequate and fair debate and reaching decisions in a timely fashion. Members are asked to note the comment, however, it is ultimately a decision for the committee and Chair as to how long a particular matter should be discussed depending on the complexity of the application and issues that arise.

4.11 c) Suggestion that ward councillors should be invited to speak first

The suggestion is noted, however, officers do not perceive any particular issues with the current speaking order or see any merit in changing the current arrangements.

4.12 d) Chair should take a less prominent role

The suggestion is noted, however, the Chair is a committee member of the committee with voting rights and is entitled to take part in the discussion and express views.

4.13 e) Voting procedures

The report suggests that voting procedures are not clear, although it should be noted that they follow the protocol used for all council committees. Officers note this point and acknowledge that other councils have more formalised procedures requiring motions to be put forward and seconded. Overall, it is not considered that any formal change of procedure is required, however, it is important that the Chair is clear about what members are being asked to vote on at the end of deliberations.

4.14 f) Consideration of a deferral and overturn procedure

The report proposes the introduction of a deferral and overturn procedure. This suggestion is noted, however, officers do not consider such a procedure to be either necessary or positive. Applications are not reported to the DMC unless there is adequate information upon which to make a decision and the Local Planning Authority is required to take timely decisions on the applications before it without delay.

4.15 The committee has the ability to defer applications under existing rules, however, the power should only be used in exceptional circumstances. It is considered that to normalise this process through the drafting of a procedure note would only serve to encourage poor practice.

4.16 It is acknowledged that there have been a small number of instances whereby a motion has been put forward to overturn the officer recommendation and there has been difficulty in articulating reasons for refusal. However, there are better mechanisms to address this without causing unnecessary delay and this is considered below.

4.17 g) Better articulation of motions for refusal

It is noted that on occasion this has caused issues on a small number of cases and officers recommend the following measure to mitigate against this:

- i) Firstly, officers would encourage members to discuss any concerns about a proposal with them in advance of the meeting. It is perfectly acceptable for members to discuss matters with officers without any concerns about pre-determination. The better informed officers are about potential concerns, the better they will be able to assist on the night.
- ii) Secondly, in the event of a member overturn, it is considered acceptable for members to provide a broad outline of the reasons for refusal at the meeting with a motion that the full and final wording of

the reasons be agreed by officers in consultation with the Chair outside the meeting.

4.18 h) Site visits

The report recommends early site visits for the largest and most complex applications. These comments are noted, however, the majority of the committee members are very familiar with the borough and it is not considered that any changes to the current arrangements are required. In many authorities with a large geographical area some members will not be familiar with the area. Members at Watford usually approach an officer/chair of the committee if they feel a site visit is necessary which is usually agreed to. Where they do take place, these occur before the committee which is good practice avoiding delay to the decision making.

Customer experience

- 4.19 It is accepted that the layout of the Council Chamber offers poor visibility and engagement for members of the public not participating in the meeting. It is proposed that in future members of the public should be seated in the downstairs area of the Council Chamber on the understanding that the gallery will continue to be used where a large number of people attend. In order to accommodate this, some changes to the seating arrangements for the committee and speakers will be required. The longer term position will need further consideration.

Speaking time

- 4.20 Having reviewed the contents of the PAS report, officers have undertaken a review of practice at other authorities and considered past experience of how parties (members of the public, applicants and ward councillors) utilise the existing time.
- 4.21 The practice for councils varies considerably but in many cases councils allow a 3 minute period for parties to address the committee.
- 4.22 However, overall, my recommendation would be that this does not appear to be causing any particular issue at Watford and many speakers do not utilise the full time allocation. Therefore, the time remains as at present but be reviewed in the event that the number of agenda items increase in future. No change is recommended

Pre-meetings

- 4.23 The pre-meetings are considered unusual but beneficial to the committee assuming they are used for clarification of the facts only and not for discussion of the merits of an application. It is an opportunity to clarify any updates and amendments that have been made since the publication of the report. These comments are noted but no further action or changes are considered necessary.

Block voting

- 4.24 In relation to this matter I am confident that the committee understands the need to take decisions based on planning matters only and exercises this duty with due care. However, it is clear that the work undertaken by PAS has, at the very least, identified a perception that block voting may happen and even the perception that voting may not be on planning grounds could represent a risk to the reputation of the council. Accordingly, I would invite the members of the committee to discuss this matter and consider whether any of the measures set out in Section 3 of this report should be implemented.

Protocol for code of conduct for members on Development Management Committee

- 4.25 The report suggests the need to introduce a specific code of conduct for DMC. This suggestion is noted, however, the council already circulates best practice to members and provides annual training on relevant matters. It is not considered that it is necessary to adopt a specific code of conduct for members of the DMC.

Involvement of ward members in pre-application discussions, including MARF

- 4.26 The suggestion of wider involvement for ward members in pre-application discussions is noted. MARF was introduced for major applications a few years ago and, has by and large, been successful in giving developers a steer about proposals before an application is formally submitted so that it is broadly in line with policy while leaving the finer detail and decision to the planning committee. Many local authorities do not have such a scheme but it has been recognised again, that it is good practice for some member involvement in pre-application discussions involving major or complex developments. Wider involvement of members could be explored but it would be difficult to administer, particular on cross ward developments and would require adequate safeguards to be put in place to protect members which may 'compromise' them speaking at development management committee.

A matter that the review has not taking into consideration is that officers always encourage developers to undertake community engagement including involvement of local ward members which is found to beneficial. Again considered as best practice, many developers do undertake this in some form or other as they see the benefits. In addition it is felt that members at Watford do seek advice and comments from officers which has benefits that sometimes lead to amendments and enhancements to a scheme. No change is recommended.

Appendices

PAS Peer Review of Development Management Committee, Watford Borough Council, September 2018

Introduction

1. With a desire to learn and share best practice on decision-making processes, Watford BC requested the Planning Advisory Service
 - provide a light touch review of the Council's Development Management (DM) Committee, and
 - advise whether it is operating effectively.
2. The review has been carried out by Cllr Theresa Higgins of Colchester Borough Council, until recently chair of the Planning Committee, and formerly a member of Essex County Council and Martin Vink, a consultant on behalf of PAS but formerly Development Manager at Ashford Borough Council
3. In delivering the review we identified its scope as set out in Appendix 1.
4. In order to review the DM Committee processes in line with the scope, and make recommendations based on an assessment of evidence, we have taken account of the following sources of information:-
 - a) Publicly available material from Watford BC (constitution, Committee reports etc.)
 - b) National best practice guidance
 - c) Reviewers' own experience
 - d) Observations through attendance at the Development Management Committee meeting of the 5 September 2018
 - e) 1:1 interviews with Councillors, Council staff, and public stakeholders

General comments relating to Development Management Committees

5. DM/Planning committees pose a combination of challenges which need to be reconciled in a manner which is effective, fair, and consistent. The role of Councillors on the Committee presents a challenge to the individual. It is often considered to be a quasi-judicial role, but has been described as

“A formal administrative process involving the application of national and local policies, reference to legislation and case law as well as rules of procedure, rights of appeal and an expectation that people will act reasonably and fairly.”

Local Government Association/Planning Advisory Service: Probity in Planning for Councillors and Officers 2013.
6. In this role Councillors are expressly being asked to place to one side any party political interests, and their role as the representatives of a particular ward, and assess, debate, and then determine often controversial planning proposals in the wider public interest of the whole Council area, and in line with national and local planning policy. They must do so in a way which demonstrates they have understood their role and have approached the decision point open to considering and weighing the merits of all the material issues.
7. Planning, legal, and democratic support officers of the Council all have clear roles to play in supporting their Councillors in ensuring the DM Committee is efficient, effective, and upholds the highest standards of decision making. Training, guidance material, report writing, presentations and advice at Committee all need to be effective and regularly reviewed in the light of a changing environment.
8. All councils need to be satisfied that the operation of its DM Committee is delivering value for money. The Council needs to be satisfied that there is a good match between the significance of the

decision to be made on each of the applications which form the agenda for each meeting, and the substantial time and resource costs associated with a planning application being determined by Committee.

Background

9. Watford Borough Council covers a small area (8 sq m) on the northern edge of London inside the ring of the M25. Links to the main road and rail networks are good . Development pressures are strong with major developments taking place in the town centre eg INTU and at regeneration sites such as Riverwell/Waterside.
10. The Borough has an adopted Core Strategy Part 1 (2013), saved policies from 2003 and a number of Supplementary Planning Documents including a Character Area Study, Residential Design Guide, an approach to Tall Buildings and Commuted Sums for Affordable Housing. The publication of Part 2 of the Local Plan was interrupted by the reassessment of housing need and a revised version is due to be published for consultation this month. The Council is also working with 5 districts and Hertfordshire County Council to deliver a strategic plan for this wider area.
11. The principal issues facing the Council are:
 - the lack of a 5 year housing land supply
 - the delivery of large numbers of new housing during the life of the Local Plan. The assessed need for new homes has increased from 280 pa in the Core Strategy to 580 (2016) to nearly 700-800 (subject to review under the new methodology). Because of the Borough's small area, most of which is built up and the constraints of Green Belt, delivery of these housing numbers will require a paradigm shift in the nature of the design of new housing incorporating higher densities and tall buildings.
 - providing affordable housing and viability of schemes
 - promoting economic development, and
 - providing the infrastructure to support the current and expected population increase.

Application Performance April 2017 - March 2018

	Total	Determined in agreed time	Not Determined in agreed time	% in agreed time	Watford BC Target
Majors	23	20	3	87%	90%
Minors	211	198	13	94%	92%
Others	536	509	27	95%	92%

Application Performance April 2018 - June 2018

	Total	Determined within agreed time	Not Determined within agreed time	% within agreed time	Watford BC Target
Majors	5	5	0	100%	90%
Minors	44	34	10	77%	92%
Others	140	116	24	83%	92%

12. The speed of handling major planning applications is very good but speeds for the remaining applications has dipped in recent months. The proportion of majors being approved is slightly low at 75%. The quality of decisions (% overturned at appeal - 24 months to the end of June 2017) was 5.6% well inside the Government target of 10%.
13. The proportion of all applications approved is below the average for authorities in England.
14. There are 9 out of 36 Councillors who sit on the DM Committee. The Committee's terms of reference, speaking and voting procedures are set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 4 (2)). Members are bound by the Council's general code of conduct (Constitution Part 5(1)), which incorporates the 7 Standards of Public Life identified in the Localism Act 2011:
- **Selflessness** - public interest
 - **Integrity** - not open to inappropriate influence/private gain
 - **Honesty** - truthful; declaration of interests and gifts
 - **Objectivity** - use best evidence; impartial; non-discriminatory
 - **Accountability** - open to scrutiny
 - **Openness** - open and transparent decisions in public
 - **Leadership** - uphold and exhibit standards and behaviours
15. There is no specific Protocol or Code of Conduct for Members when handling planning matters (see comments and recommendations and link to Colchester's code below)

Assessment

16. Our overall impression is that there are many areas of good performance and practice in relation to the DM Committee at Watford. We heard the Committee described as "a high performer". We set out below our comments and conclusions against the scope of the review set out in appendix 1.

Purpose

- *Is it clear that members of the Committee fully understand their role?*
 - We found:
 - A Committee which grasps the issues and understands the town and its residents.
 - A realistic approach to new development recognising the demands being placed on the Borough.
 - Customers reported a recent "sea change" in the approach of the Council with clearer positive messages around development in Watford.
 - The size of the Committee is acceptable but, given our comments on the number of cabinet members on the Committee it might benefit from being increased to 11. We understand there are members waiting to be on the Committee. . Good use of a regular Chair's Briefing to highlight issues and programme future meetings.
- *Do the delegated agreement and process for 'call ins' serve to support the Committee members and officers in making best use of their time to look at the 'right' applications?*
 - The size of the Committee agendas over the previous year has been reasonable
 - The Committee does not have a "call in" procedure for Ward Members. Our discussions found no appetite for change.

- Small scale applications appear on the agenda perhaps unnecessarily but this is triggered by the current delegation procedures. These require all major applications and those applications which attract 4 or more objections to be determined by the Committee. As development pressures build this might extend the size of agendas. This should be monitored going forward and options for maintaining suitable sized agendas explored, perhaps utilising member calling instead.
- *Do members understand the process, and is the information they receive relevant and concise?*
 - Officer presentations at Committee can be too long.
 - We were told that debates can also be overlong, although we did not see that.
 - Presentations at the members information gathering pre-meet duplicate those in the main Committee. Are they necessary?
 - Whilst Part 2 of the Local Plan is not currently available the Council is actively working towards its delivery. Other supplementary planning guidance is in place to inform decision making and assist applicants in making applications.

Format and Process

- *How are applications debated and voted on?*
 - There is a mature debate. Debate at Committee kept to the appropriate planning issues and decisions appropriately reflected this debate.
 - Councillors and officers adopt a pragmatic approach to working within the constraint of not having a 5 year housing land supply.
 - The Committee have a clear awareness of the strategic vision for the Council and how the planning process can facilitate much of its delivery.
 - Should the Ward Member(s) be invited to speak first on any application after the speakers to give a local perspective?
 - The Committee was well chaired, although the Chair would be advised to take a less prominent role in debates.
 - Voting procedures at the Committee are not clear. All applications at the meeting we attended and the majority looking at previous minutes, are proposed by the Chair. We do not see this as his role and is not good practice. Whilst only a motion is required for a vote to be taken (ie no seconder is required) we observed that in several cases votes were taken without a clear motion from the floor. This can easily be rectified by the Chair asking those who speak whether they are proposing a motion or not. There is a potential for debates to be extended and the ability of the Chair to focus on a motion from the floor could curtail this.
 - The Committee has no procedure for deferral of decisions which are contrary to officer recommendations when a decision could make the Council vulnerable at appeal and awards of costs. We discussed the [“Deferral and Recommendation Overturn” Procedures at Colchester Borough Council](#) as a useful tool.
 - Motions for refusal are not always clearly put or sufficiently well defined to enable officers to formulate effective reasons for the minutes and decision notices.
- *Does the standard, clarity and layout of Committee reports support the Committee process?*
 - The new report format is concise and well structured, concentrating on the essential issues.

- *Does the presentation of Committee reports by Planning Officers support the Committee process?*
 - Although unusual the pre Committee information meeting is welcomed by the Committee and considered beneficial. It is well understood that such a meeting can only be for clarification of the facts of a case and cannot under any circumstances include any discussion on the merits of an application.
 - Officer presentations at Committee can be too long. They should assume the report has been read and not feel it necessary to repeat the arguments for and against the recommendation.
- *What is the process for Councillor site visits, how are views recorded and reported back to Committee?*
 - Site visits are carried out in accordance with the councils procedure rules and are fact finding visits only. There is no debate at these visits and members find them helpful. Some members would want to have more visits but with the size of the Borough and the high levels of local knowledge this is not thought necessary at the moment. Consideration should be given however to early site visits for the largest and most complex applications.
- *Does the Committee chamber layout support the Committee process?*
 - See Customer Experience below.
- *How effective are the arrangements for training Committee members?*
 - see Quality and improvement section below

Customer Experience

- *How is public engagement managed at the Committee?*
 - Speakers at the Committee appreciated the welcome and clear guidance provided.
 - Customers told us, and we saw, the welcoming and inclusive style of the Chair of the Committee
 - Customers reported a well run, professional and effective Committee. It is perceived as being open and transparent.
 - Committee agendas are available well in advance and easily accessible for customers via the mod.gov app.
 - Improving use of IT to deliver the Committee has been beneficial.
 - Paper copies of agendas are provided at the Committee meetings but only in the main body of the Chamber.
 - Financial viability information on planning applications is available for public scrutiny
- *How could public understanding of the role, and limitations of the planning Committee be improved?*
 - The AV screen in the Council Chamber is difficult for officers to use but we are told that changes are in hand but being delayed by listed building issues. A solution might be to have moveable screens on stands visible from various parts of the chamber.
 - The layout of the Council Chamber is restrictive and intimidating for those taking part in proceedings.
 - The customer experience at the Committee meeting is very poor.

- Customers are directed to a rear entrance which is poorly signposted from the main entrance to the chamber.
- The gallery - referred to as “The Strangers Gallery” - has poor visibility of proceedings, much of the Committee cannot be seen.
- No member of staff is in the gallery to assist the public
- No agendas are available in the gallery
- No information available of how the Committee will operate or on emergency evacuation procedures is available.
- Improvements to communications to members and customers by providing tailored individual updates on key moments in the life of an application could be made eg submission, Committee date, date and nature of the decision and any appeal. All of these could be generated via the current software systems in the planning department and would support the Watford 2020 agenda.
- Should proceedings be broadcast?
- *How should public representations be managed during the Committee?*
 - The public welcomed the opportunity to address the Committee and currently have 5 minutes to make their comments. This is longer than many councils and 3 minutes may be more effective.

Roles and Responsibilities

- *Is the role of Councillors on the Committee, and more widely, understood in relation to the handling of planning applications and ensuring probity?*
 - Members were clearly aware of their role but there is a general perception by all participants in the Committee process that there is frequent block voting by political groups. We also observed it. Such a perception significantly undermines the reputation of the Committee and does not accord with codes of practice for Councillors where, when making decisions on planning applications they should
 - act “reasonably”, as defined within planning law
 - act honestly, fairly and openly
 - approach each application on its own merits and with an open mind
 - carefully weigh up all the relevant material planning considerations
 - ensure that the reasons for any decision are clearly stated and based upon relevant material planning considerations
 - There was also anecdotal evidence of members of the Committee acting in a partisan way in relation to their ward and not making decisions on a borough wide basis. This causes consistency issues.
 - There is no specific Planning Code of Practice for Members and we believe that the Council would benefit from more tailored advice and procedures. An example is provided in the link to Colchester’s above.
 - There is recognition of the importance of pre application involvement but a nervousness amongst members to be seen to pre-determine applications. Members should be assured that

they can fulfil this role and still be able to contribute to the debate and voting at Committee. Again a Planning Code of Practice would bring clarity and advice.

- Officers should encourage and facilitate the involvement of Ward Members in pre application discussions to ensure early discussion of local views and issues. Their involvement should not be prevented on grounds of commercial confidentiality. Ward members should be trusted to maintain confidentiality.
- Officers should seek greater opportunities for effective and meaningful member and community involvement in pre-application discussions particularly around major developments.
- The introduction of the Major Application Review Forum (MARF) is seen as a very positive and helpful innovation in pre application engagement. There is, from our limited discussions, public and political support for representation at these fora by a relevant ward member to clarify the local dimension and key issues.
- *Is the role of the Portfolio Members at Committee understood by all concerned?*
 - Almost half of the Committee (4 out of 9) are members of the Council's Cabinet. Whilst this brings a sharp focus on strategic issues and delivery to the Committee, we question whether a lower proportion would provide a more nuanced view incorporating the local perspective.
- *Is the support from officers at the Committee consistent and of high quality?*
 - There is a good dialogue between officers and members conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
 - Officers provide flexible advice and clearly explain relevance of national and local policy and where local policy is out of date.

Quality and Improvement

- *How effective are the arrangements for training Committee members?*
 - Annual training on planning matters is provided and all members of the Committee and substitutes are required to be trained. Additional training on specific topics is also provided on a frequent basis. A list of trained members is available.
 - Training could be extended to viewing the results of decisions on the ground and evaluating what went well and what didn't. Further training opportunities should include design especially in relation to higher density housing and the implications of the new NPPF
- *What monitoring and review arrangements are in place for the Committee to assess its performance?*
 - Reports to the DM Committee on the performance of the Planning Department and on the results of appeals are sporadic. These should be presented on a regular/quarterly frequency. Reporting on appeals should explain the reasons for refusal and the Inspectors decision which would provide a very good way of examining issues and good training.

Conclusions

17. We found a Committee with dedicated and effective members and officers which is well run and making defensible decisions. In the sections above we have identified areas of good practice and made suggestions where improvements would be beneficial identified areas where improvements could be made

We hope the insights provided are helpful, and that you are able to take forward many of the suggestions and we wish you well for the future.

Cllr Theresa Higgins and Martin Vink

September 2018

Appendix 1 - SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The review has considered the following five aspects of the way the Planning Committee functions:-

Purpose

- Is it clear that members of the Committee fully understand their role?
 - Do the delegated agreement and process for 'call ins' serve to support the Committee members and officers in making best use of their time to look at the 'right' applications?
 - Do members understand the process, and is the information they receive relevant and concise?
-

Format and Process

- How are applications debated and voted on?
 - Does the standard, clarity and layout of Committee reports support the Committee process?
 - Does the presentation of Committee reports by Planning Officers support the Committee process?
 - What is the process for Councillor site visits, how are views recorded and reported back to Committee?
 - Does the Committee chamber layout support the Committee process?
 - How effective are the arrangements for training Committee members?
-

Customer Experience

- How is public engagement managed at the Committee?
 - How could public understanding of the role, and limitations of the planning Committee be improved?
 - How should public representations be managed during the Committee?
-

Roles and Responsibilities

- Is the role of Councillors on the Committee, and more widely, understood in relation to the handling of planning applications and ensuring probity?
 - Is the role of the Portfolio Holders at Committee understood by all concerned?
 - Is the support from officers at the Committee consistent and of high quality?
-

Quality and Improvement

- How effective are the arrangements for training Committee members?
- What monitoring and review arrangements are in place for the Committee to assess its performance?