

Site South of High Street Ascot

Planning Addendum Report

LPA Ref: 22/01971

June 2024





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Executive Summary

1. London Square have been engaged in discussions with the Council as part of the ongoing application process. Recently the key area of discussion has been centred around the delivery of affordable housing and viability.
2. The applicants have however considered their approach to the scheme and prepared a series of revisions that enable the scheme to accommodate the delivery of 40% affordable housing in a more viable manner.
3. These revisions are confined to Block 2 and involve the following:
 - ▣ Internal reconfiguration to allow a change from offices to apartments;
 - ▣ This reduces the commercial floorspace to 960.8 sqm of flexible ground floor commercial space and increase the number of residential units to 132.
 - ▣ Changes to the elevations of Block 2 to incorporate more domestic style of fenestration and a mansard roof;
 - ▣ Changes to the parking layout for Block 2;
4. **There will be no change to the community space or other Blocks / Houses proposed.**
5. These revisions are minor and maintain the integrity of the proposed development, which is in accordance with the BLP, AL16 Site Allocation, Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF and will still deliver a significant number of major benefits for Ascot including:

Housing

Delivery of 132 new homes incorporating a balanced mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom apartments and houses to meet the current shortfall in housing delivery within the Borough.

Delivery of 40% affordable homes on site incorporating a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom apartments and houses to assist in meeting the significant and local need for affordable housing.

Creation of high quality homes set within a parkland and benefitting from private areas of amenity space and access to attractive semi private and communal areas of open space.

Economy

Delivery of 960.8 sqm of high quality and flexible commercial floorspace within the ground floor of the three northern buildings (Blocks 1, 2 and 3) to create an enhanced and vibrant mixed use centre for Ascot.

Opportunity for small independent businesses to take up space within the ground floor of Blocks 1 and 2.

Creation of jobs during the construction and operational phases of the development.

Significant contributions through CIL which can be used to support highway improvements, local community and social infrastructure and public services.

Community Parkland

Provision of 0.82ha of accessible community parkland including the provision of 2,070sqm public piazza, market square and natural play area.

New pedestrian and cycle routes into, within and out of the site to High Street / Station Hill and the existing housing and tennis club to the south.

Retention of existing trees and enhancement of root systems to ensure long term protection and enhancement.

Links to ecology through reinforcing green corridors within the community parkland.

Creation of natural habitats and improve biodiversity.

Social and Community

Delivery of a turnkey, flexible community space of 278.5sqm incorporating a main hall that can be used for a multitude of activities; meeting room and office space for organisations such as the Parish Council.

Community space that can link to outdoor public spaces and optimize the community use of these spaces for various events within the centre of Ascot.

Access to an attractive and fully managed community parkland including a public piazza, market square and natural play area, places to eat and socialize.

Enhanced pedestrian connections from the High Street into, through and out of the community parkland.

Sustainability

Site wide SuDS scheme to help address the needs of the proposed development and the issues relating to Climate Change.

Creation of energy efficient buildings.

Retention of trees to assist with climate change issues around carbon and solar gain.

Highways

Highway improvements in the local area including new pedestrian crossings along Station Hill to improve access to the station.

Improved parking provision along Station Hill.



Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1. This statement supports the minor revisions to the current planning application (Ref: 22/01971) and also provides a consolidated approach to the current status of other aspects of the planning application.
- 1.2. These matters are discussed in Section 4 under specific headings to ensure the revisions and stages of work are clear and concise.
- 1.3. The original planning application was submitted in July 2022 and since this time, there have been two main revisions to the proposals which both resulted in changes to the quantum of development and slightly different approaches to certain planning matters, including affordable housing and community use.
- 1.4. Since the last revisions to the scheme in June 2023, the applicants have been involved in detailed discussions with the Council, primarily on the matter of affordable housing, plus some technical details alongside this.
- 1.5. The applicants have now reached the position whereby they have resolved to take a commercial risk in order to move this forward to a positive and locally agreed conclusion. This has resulted in the agreement to provide 40% affordable housing. This is achieved via minor changes in the quantum and mix of development proposed. This is explored in detail in Sections 3 and 4.
- 1.6. The revisions are supported by the following key documents:
 - ▣ Revised Drawings prepared by DHA
 - ▣ Design Addendum prepared by DHA
 - ▣ Transport Addendum prepared by ADL Traffic and Transport
 - ▣ Addendum Sunlight and Daylight Assessment prepared by Herrington's Consulting
 - ▣ Addendum Sustainability and Energy Statement
 - ▣ Detailed schedule of drawings and documents relevant to the consideration of the planning application



Section 2

Proposed Revisions

- 2.1. The proposed revised description of development is as follows, with the key changes highlighted in bold:

*Redevelopment of existing site to provide **960.8sqm** flexible commercial floorspace and 278.5sqm flexible community floorspace (mix of uses within Use Classes E, F1 and F2) and **132 dwellings** with associated parking, access, open space, landscaping and other associated works. Provision of new public open space with associated hard and soft landscape works, new pedestrian and cycle paths and children's play area.*

- 2.2. The revisions have arisen as a result of the commercial decision to provide 40% affordable housing on site. As referenced above, this is subject to certain other changes in the scheme relating to the overall quantum and mix of development proposed.

- 2.3. The proposed revisions encompass the following key elements:

Scheme Element	Proposed Revisions																		
Quantum of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal of all office floorspace within Block 2 ▪ Slight reduction in ground floor retail floorspace within Block 2 ▪ Incorporation of fifteen apartments ▪ Overall commercial floorspace proposed – 960.8sqm flexible commercial floorspace at ground floor levels of Blocks 1 and 2 ▪ Community floorspace proposed – <u>no change</u> – 278.5sqm flexible community floorspace ▪ 132 dwellings with a revised mix as follows: <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1 bed</th> <th>2 bed</th> <th>3 bed</th> <th>4 bed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>apartments</td> <td>24</td> <td>68</td> <td>2</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>houses</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>8</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 					1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	apartments	24	68	2		houses			8	30
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houses			8	30															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A change to the parking provision resulting in an increased level of parking for the residential component of 135 spaces across the site, 5 car parking spaces for blue badge holders and staff associated with the commercial uses located adjacent to Block 2, 3 car club spaces and 2 spaces for the occupiers of the community space. 																		

Block 2 Exterior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes to the fenestration design of the main elevations. ▪ This involves amending the fenestration design at first and second floors to a more domestic pattern and design reflecting the fenestration design on Block 1 and 3. ▪ Working with the previous proposed heights, a mansard roof will be introduced at third floor level. ▪ No increases in building footprint or height are proposed. 																																				
Block 2 Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two floors of office space have been replaced with three floors of residential (achieved due to the high floor to ceiling heights of the office space). ▪ Internal reconfiguration to provide 39 apartments in Block 2 (15 of which are additional) ▪ Ground floor layout – Block 2 ▪ Revisions to the retail floorspace to provide a reconfiguration of car parking provision. ▪ Maintains number of retail units – also the flexibility to adapt these units into smaller / larger units should the operator wish to do so. ▪ Revisions to the layout of refuse and cycle stores to serve the commercial and residential units. 																																				
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quantum of affordable housing is increased to 40%. This includes the following mix and tenure split: <table border="1" data-bbox="715 1014 1465 1379" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">1 bed</th> <th style="width: 15%;">2 bed</th> <th style="width: 15%;">3 bed</th> <th style="width: 15%;">4 bed</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Tenure split</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social Rent</td> <td>11</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td>24 (45%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Affordable Rent</td> <td>6</td> <td>10</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>19 (36%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shared Ownership</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>10 (19%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td> <td>19</td> <td>28</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>%</td> <td>36%</td> <td>53%</td> <td>4%</td> <td>7%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further considerations in relation to affordable housing and planning policy are discussed further in Section 4 		1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Tenure split	Social Rent	11	10		3	24 (45%)	Affordable Rent	6	10	2	1	19 (36%)	Shared Ownership	2	8			10 (19%)	Totals	19	28	2	4		%	36%	53%	4%	7%	
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Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The parking provision across the site has altered slightly with the proposed changes from office space to residential space in Block 2. The following provides a breakdown of the revised provision across the site: <table border="1" data-bbox="715 1704 1465 2031" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;"></th> <th style="width: 50%;">Car Parking</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Cycle Parking</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Commercial</td> <td>5 spaces [including two disabled spaces]</td> <td>36 cycle parking spaces between Blocks 1 and 2; 24 cycle spaces to the west of the site between Block 1 and 2 for community use.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Car Parking	Cycle Parking	Commercial	5 spaces [including two disabled spaces]	36 cycle parking spaces between Blocks 1 and 2; 24 cycle spaces to the west of the site between Block 1 and 2 for community use.																														
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	Residential	135 including 52 allocated spaces for the houses; 22 unallocated spaces for the houses and 61 unallocated spaces for the apartments	222 spaces
	Car Club	3	-
	Community Centre	2	8 spaces at the north of the site and 4 long stay cycle lockers near Block 3 for the community use – plus the general community cycle spaces on site as set out above under the commercial tab.

2.4. *There are **no changes** proposed to the community space, the other proposed apartment blocks and houses which will remain as per the June 2023 layout.



Section 3

Planning Assessment & Material Considerations

- 3.1. This section provides a detailed assessment of the revised proposals in relation to the key planning policies that relate to the redevelopment of this site. It also provides a summary of the status of all key planning matters to date.
- 3.2. The planning statements prepared and submitted as part of the original submission and the revisions in December 2022 and June 2023 are still valid in terms of the detailed analysis of the site context, planning policy framework (although there is an overview of the way in which the revised NPPF affects the proposals), and consideration of the way the proposals meet the requirements of AL16 (updated and re-attached to this Statement).

Principle of Development (include links with adjacent sites and collaboration)

- 3.3. The position remains that the proposals are considered to meet the requirements of BLP policy through adherence to the AL16 site allocation and the creation of a sustainable mixed use development within the centre of Ascot that respects the surrounding local character.
- 3.4. The proposals maintain the provision of appropriate commercial spaces and active frontages within the ground floor levels of the proposed buildings at Blocks 1, 2 and 3. This will assist in the enhancement of the vitality and vibrancy of Ascot centre.
- 3.5. The community space is also maintained in the proposals and will assist in creating a development that provides a 'heart' / 'centre' for Ascot benefitting the local community as well as the wider public.
- 3.6. The Council have also recently confirmed that they no longer benefit from a 5 year housing land supply. Given that the planning application was submitted before the 19th December 2023 when the NPPF was revised, paragraph 11d of the NPPF is relevant, which states that *"where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

- 3.7. In this case, there are no areas or assets of particular importance that affect this site and as such these policies within the NPPF are not of relevance nor would justify a reason for refusing the development proposed.

Commercial Use

- 3.8. The proposed revisions lead to the replacement of the office floorspace with fifteen apartments to assist in the delivery of 40% affordable houses on site.
- 3.9. These revisions maintain the provision of an appropriate level of commercial floorspace in respect of AL16. The proposals remain reflective of the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs within sustainable locations such as town centres, and the requirements of BLP QP1c which seeks to ensure that Ascot is rejuvenated through a combination of new developments proactive management of change and support for community led initiatives as a vibrant, multi-use green place that serves all parts of the Ascot community as well as being a retail focus for visitors to the Ascot racecourse.
- 3.10. Policy NP/E3 of the Ascot, Sunninghill, Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan also places an emphasis on the centres of Ascot, Sunningdale and Sunninghill being the principal location for retail.
- 3.11. The ground floor commercial spaces will be flexible and have the ability to be divided into smaller units / maintained as larger units depending on the operator. This will ensure the longevity of these units allowing for future market changes and the ability for independent operators to take up space within this part of Ascot to assist with the rejuvenation of Ascot.

Community Use

- 3.12. **No changes** are proposed to the community floorspace within Block 3.
- 3.13. This remains an important component of the proposals that is designed to be delivered as a turnkey space which is flexible to accommodate a multitude of users. Full details of this space are included in the documents submitted with the revisions in June 2023 at
- 3.14. No changes are proposed to the outdoor community spaces. These will maintain the provision of a mix of hard and softer, more natural landscaped areas to allow flexibility in their usage and also well designed connectivity links between the spaces and those beyond. The overall size of the outdoor spaces

is maintained and far exceed those required by the BLP and provide for the following:

- ▣ Community Parkland – 0.82ha
- ▣ Public Piazza - 789m²
- ▣ Pop up Market - 446m²
- ▣ Natural Play Area - 835m²

Residential Use

- 3.15. The Borough cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, with the current level of supply estimated at 4.72 years (based on the Councils Proof of Evidence for the Spencer's Farm Public Inquiry dated February 2024). As such, with the planning application being submitted prior to 19th December 2019, this means that paragraph 11(d) and a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.
- 3.16. The tilted balance is therefore considered to apply, particularly as there would be no adverse impacts of granting planning permission for the development proposed.
- 3.17. However, as the proposals are compliant with the Local Plan Policies, notably AL16, whilst relevant, it is not relied on here.
- 3.18. The residential component of the scheme addresses the requirements of the NPPF which states at paragraph 9 that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. Paragraph 90 of the NPPF also recognises the important role that housing can play within town centres in terms of enhancing the vitality of centres.
- 3.19. ASSNP Policy NP/H2 requires that development proposals for new dwellings will be expected to contribute to the aim of ensuring a balanced mix of housing in the Plan area. Policy NP/H2.1 further requires dwellings to be of a size and type that is in keeping with the size and type of dwellings in the surrounding area.
- 3.20. Policy HO2 requires that proposals should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to reflect the most up to date evidence which in this case is the Berkshire SHMA 2016.
- 3.21. The table below sets out the recommended mix of housing across the whole housing market taken from the 2016 SHMA in comparison to the proposed revised housing mix:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	35-40%	25-30%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15%	30%	35%	20%

- 3.22. It is acknowledged by the Council that the recommended mix within the SHMA is not a fixed target, but rather provides a starting point for the application of Policy HO2 in determining planning applications. There is also an emphasis on ensuring that developments make full and effective use of urban development opportunities, for example within town centre locations such as Ascot where such sites tend to be best suited to high density, flatted schemes where the majority of dwellings will be one or two bedroom flats.
- 3.23. The SHMA also recognises that the mix of housing delivered on individual sites should have regard to the overall need for housing but also the character of the site and its surroundings, the characteristics of the housing within the locality and the accessibility of the location to services and facilities. Importantly at page 269 it states that *“based on the evidence it is expected that the focus of new market housing provision will be on two and three bed properties. Continued demand for family housing can be expected from newly forming households. There may also be some demand for medium sized properties (2 and 3 beds) from older households downsizing and looking to release equity in existing homes, but still retain flexibility for friends and family to come and stay”*.
- 3.24. The benefits of providing smaller family housing such as two bedroom (4 person) dwellings (either in the form of a large apartment or a house) should therefore not be underestimated in the way this type of accommodation can directly address a local need.
- 3.25. The SHMA continues to consider that there may be scope on some of the sites that are subject to allocations to achieve a greater proportion of 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings.
- 3.26. The proposed development appropriately addresses the context and character of the site within this sustainable town centre location and need to create a broader variety of housing within the site itself. The proposed housing mix therefore deviates from that set out within the SHMA and responds to the character of this site where it is very much that of a town centre site with the High Street extending along the entirety of the sites northern edge and more open towards the south.
- 3.27. The smaller, one and two bedroom apartments are therefore predominantly located towards the northern part of the site, adjacent to the High Street where it would be expected to have more mixed use buildings accommodating smaller dwellings at upper levels. The two bedroom apartments do however incorporate a mix of larger 2 bedroom, 4 person apartments that exceed the

minimum space standards and would therefore provide larger accommodation suitable for a small family. This type of accommodation is well suited to a town centre and accessible location such as Ascot and form appropriate accommodation within a mixed use building.

- 3.28. The larger houses are located along the eastern boundary and towards the south of the site reflective of the more open and green character of the site. These houses include a higher proportion of 4 bedroom dwellings that is reflective of the Council's assumptions for sites such as this. The higher level of 4 bedroom housing also allows for the incorporation of an element of social rented and affordable rented accommodation within this dwelling type which directly addresses a local housing need.
- 3.29. All of the proposed dwellings (including the additional dwellings in block 2) will meet the nationally described space standards and will benefit from good internal levels of daylight as indicated within the sunlight and daylight addendum prepared by Herrington's accompanying this set of revisions. Views from the dwellings are also optimised with views across the parkland / across areas of external amenity space / across the High Street / Station Hill.
- 3.30. 30% of the apartments will be delivered as accessible and adaptable in accordance with Building Regulations M4(2) and 5% will meet the requirements of Buildings Regulations M4(3) in accordance with BLP Policy HO2.

Custom / Self Build

- 3.31. A separate statement has been prepared and submitted to the Council previously on this matter and remains applicable to the current proposals (as revised).

Affordable Housing

- 3.32. The Site Allocation AL16 requires that 40% affordable housing is provided as part of any scheme coming forward on the sites within the allocation area, however the Site is considered to be a brownfield site due to its existing use as an overflow car park. This is acknowledged and accepted within the initial independent report prepared by BPS. As such, the BLP Policy HO3 requirement of 30% affordable housing provision on brownfield sites is considered to be relevant. The previous viability appraisals and discussions flowing from these with the Council and BPS have worked on the basis of 30% affordable housing provision on the site.
- 3.33. However, the applicants have taken a decision at risk on this site to provide 40% affordable housing on site in recognition of the Council's firmly expressed view on the importance of affordable housing and the applicant's desire to resolve this application at the local level.
- 3.34. In order to deliver 40% affordable housing as part of the proposed development it has been necessary to revise the overall quantum of

development through the replacement of the office floorspace at first and second floor levels of Block 2 with fifteen apartments. As referenced earlier in this statement, this changes the quantum of development are as follows:

- ▣ 132 dwellings
- ▣ 960.8sqm commercial floorspace
- ▣ 278.5sqm of community floorspace (remains the same)

3.35. As these result in the provision of the full 40% provision of affordable housing that the Council are seeking for this site under AL16 site allocation, no viability appraisal is being provided to accompany the revisions.

3.36. The breakdown of tenure split and dwelling mix is defined in the table below:

Affordable Homes (40.2%)					
SOCIAL RENT <i>(45.3% of the affordable dwellings)</i>		AFFORDABLE RENT <i>(35.8% of the affordable dwellings)</i>		SHARED OWNERSHIP <i>(18.9% of the affordable dwellings)</i>	
1-bed apartment (2-person)	11	1-bed apartment (2-person)	6	1-bed apartment (2-person) ^g	2
2-bed apartment (3-person)	1	2-bed apartment (3-person)	1	2-bed apartment (3-person)	-
2-bed apartment (4-person)	9	2-bed apartment (4-person)	9	2-bed apartment (4-person) ^h	8
3-bed apartment (6-person)	-	3-bed apartment (6-person)	2	3-bed apartment (6-person)	-
3-bed house (6-person)	-	3-bed house (6-person)	-	3-bed house (6-person)	-
4-bed house (7-person)	-	4-bed house (7-person)	-	4-bed house (7-person)	-
4-bed house (8-person)	3	4-bed house (8-person)	1	4-bed house (8-person)	-
Total	24	Total	19	Total	10

^g M4(3)(2)(a) homes
^h incl. 2 M4(3)(2)(a) homes

3.37. This shows that the proposed affordable housing will meet the requirements of Policy HO3 in terms of tenure split which is suggested as 45% social rent, 35% affordable rent and 20% intermediate tenure. In terms of housing mix, the proposed affordable housing deviates from that set out within the BLP and derived from the SHMA in respect of the two and three bedroom dwellings.

3.38. Notwithstanding this deviation, it is important to emphasise the following:

- ▣ The site benefits from very different characteristics to other sites in Ascot and under the umbrella of the various site allocations AL16 and AL17 in particular. It incorporates an extensive High Street frontage (circa 100m) and another main frontage along Station Hill which is also an A road into Ascot town centre. The proposed buildings on this site therefore must respond to this town centre character and generally take the form of mixed use buildings with commercial at ground floor and residential above. This character tends to generate higher levels of smaller units which are better suited to this type of environment.
- ▣ The larger dwellings are then predominately designed as houses within the centre and south of the site where they are not facing onto a High Street and are set within a more natural parkland setting.

- The revisions to the scheme have resulted from the need to provide 40% affordable housing and as such, a greater number of dwellings was required in order to deliver this. As such, these are positioned within Block 2 which is already apartments at upper levels and therefore lent itself to the provision of smaller units.

- 3.39. A higher proportion of two bedroom apartments would be larger, 4 person dwellings that are of a size and layout that could easily accommodate a small family. There is also provision for three, 4 bedroom houses for social rented tenure and one, 4 bedroom house for the affordable rented tenure which is a significant benefit of the scheme. These are attractive, large houses that will directly benefit a local family housing need and should be weighed in the balance with regards the mix of units proposed.
- 3.40. The proposed quantum and tenure will therefore fully address the Councils request and AL16 site allocation. It will also provide a mix that is entirely appropriate to the character of this particular site and directly address local need with a provision of a higher level of 4 bedroom family homes for both private and affordable tenures.

Design and Character

- 3.41. The design and architectural approach of the proposed development remains as per the submitted revisions in June 2023, with the exception of the fenestration design of Block 2.
- 3.42. The design, scale and massing of the proposed development has been through an extensive process of consideration both within the applicants team and with the Council. The scale and mass of the proposed buildings is appropriate for this sustainable, town centre site and allows for a transition in scale from north to south. The design approach is sensitive to the local area, demonstrated by the DAS and addendum's to the DAS submitted with the application and subsequent revisions. The materiality and detailing of the buildings sensitively reflects the surrounding character of built form and incorporates an elegant and contemporary group of buildings set within an attractive and green parkland setting.
- 3.43. The revisions to Block 2 are minimal and seek to address the internal land use change from offices to residential. The previous scheme for Block 2 incorporated large patterns of fenestration to address the need for higher floor to ceiling heights within the commercial spaces at first and second floor levels. With the replacement of this space to residential use, the floor to ceiling heights naturally need to be reduced and as such the fenestration has to be revised. The pattern and design approach to the elevations of Block 2 remains reflective of that within Block 1 and 3 so that there is an integrated approach to these buildings and also a relationship with the ground floor commercial frontage.
- 3.44. The addendum DAS considers this in greater detail.

- 3.45. A mansard roof is also proposed to accommodate some of the additional apartments that replace the office space. The mansard roof is however designed to reflect the approach to Blocks 1 and 2 and will create a subtle addition at roof level that does not exceed the height of the northern part of Block 2 from that shown in the previous submission in June 2023.
- 3.46. The Council have raised some queries regarding the design approach to the south elevation and a detailed response has been provided separately on this matter. However for completeness, this is reiterated below in that the design for this façade addresses the following:
- 3.47. The prominent view of the southern elevation of Block 2 when experienced as part of the key route leading from the railway station to the High Street.
- 3.48. The potential for the redevelopment of the Fire Station site and need to ensure that this is not prejudiced by the proposed development at the application site. This was discussed with RBWM at pre-application stage and was considered to be an important part of the master planning for this application site.
- 3.49. A revised Daylight and Sunlight assessment has been prepared by Herringtons which concludes that “In line with the assessment criteria prescribed by the BRE guidelines, it has been shown that for 98% of assessed rooms, the provision of natural daylight will meet or exceed the minimum required threshold set out in the BRE Guidelines. Consequently it can be concluded that these habitable spaces will be well lit and will have a reduced reliance on supplementary electric lighting. The report also concludes that at least one habitable room will receive direct sunlight for part of the day throughout the year. The revisions to Block 2 will therefore retain good internal daylight and sunlight levels in line with the BRE, Industry and local planning guidelines.
- 3.50. The Fire Station submitted representations as part of the Borough Local Plan for its redevelopment for residential purposes. As such an illustrative layout was prepared by DHA to demonstrate how the future relationships between the two layouts could be compatible and that the proposals for the London Square application site would facilitate the future development of the Fire Station site. This is shown below:



- 3.51. On this basis, the pre-application stage proposals did not incorporate any windows in the southern elevation of Block 2 as it was considered that windows here would in the future be impeded by the new fire station

development, and/or the fire station development would be required not to block these windows.

- 3.52. Subsequently RBWM sought revisions to the elevations of Block 2 to incorporate some additional detailing to address the visual prominence of the elevation in views from Station Hill.
- 3.53. The view of the proposed development seen from Station Hill, part of the route from the station to the High Street, was shown in perspective in order to acknowledge the viewpoint and to test the proposals for this vista. The interim proposal for this elevation shown below left represented just one stage of the evolving design proposals, as the extent of detailing and openings were explored and negotiated with Officers. The eventual final proposals are shown below right.



- 3.54. Some of the earlier stages of design evolution of this elevation are shown below – illustrating the original proposals which fully facilitated a new building to lie alongside the elevation, with upper-level detailing only to be visible above the fire station redevelopment (below left), interim options (below centre), and the final proposals (below right). The type and proportions of the detailing were at each stage conceived to mirror the architectural features of the front of the building. Officers specifically required windows to be provided, and we have proposed these windows as secondary openings to habitable rooms, or to bathrooms or kitchens, so as to avoid prejudicing any future fire station development.



- 3.55. If the constraint of the future development of the Fire Station was removed, a fully fenestrated, detailed elevation would be provided, to be very similar to the main Station Hill elevation. The proposed elevation however seeks to balance all the key considerations for this building in a sensitive and appropriate manner which ensures it does not prejudice the future

redevelopment of the fire station site whilst creating an elevation with interest both in terms of fenestration and materiality.

- 3.56. It also provides windows that provide additional light to the habitable rooms for the flats within Block 2 through the use of sensitively located and sized secondary windows – although it should be noted that the main sources of daylight and outlook for these rooms will be from east and west-facing windows which will facilitate good living standards within these flats. Internal daylight levels for these flats is considered to be acceptable with 98% of habitable rooms within Block 2 meeting the BRE standards and outlook from these flats will also be acceptable across the parkland and Station Hill and as such these units and habitable rooms are not reliant solely on these secondary windows.
- 3.57. Underpinning the design approach to the site is also the importance of creating a rich landscape and areas of amenity space within which new built form can be accommodated to create an attractive environment to live, work and play. The approach to the landscape has not been revised and maintains this strong, integrated approach to the provision of a community parkland and more private amenity space for future occupants in line with the requirements of the ASSNP and the BLP.

Trees

- 3.58. The arboricultural addendum provided in June 2023 remains relevant as the proposed layout has not changed since this time. The addendum concluded that the proposed development is considered to be sustainable and appropriate from an arboricultural perspective subject to ongoing arboricultural input and adoption of safeguards for protecting retained trees during construction.
- 3.59. At the request of the Council, a further site walkover and tree inspection was carried out on the site in March 2024 due to the time lapse since the original surveys were carried out.
- 3.60. No significant changes have occurred on the site although the Tree Survey and Tree protection Plan has been updated to take on board minor changes to existing trees including downgrading of tree T6 (Plum) to a category U as a result of co-dominant failure at 2.5m and downgrading of tree T115 (sycamore) to category U as this is not in a state of terminal decline.

Climate Change and Sustainability

- 3.61. SRE have prepared an addendum to support the revisions to Block 2, which accompanies this submission. The addendum should be read in conjunction with the updated Energy and Sustainability Statement dated June 2023.
- 3.62. This report and the addendum emphasise that the proposed development will prioritise the use of sustainable materials to reduce environmental impacts of construction, together with measures through construction and operation of

the site to reduce pollution, minimise waste and encourage recycling and passive design measures, the use of photovoltaic panels and the use of energy efficient, low carbon and renewable technologies and water efficiency measures.

3.63. The proposed development will aim to achieve net zero carbon where feasible, with a minimum 12% of the total energy demand met by on-site renewables. In this regard, the proposed development has been able to achieve a 70.18% improvement in CO₂e emissions with various low and zero carbon technologies including:

- ▣ Enhanced building fabric and accredited construction detailing
- ▣ Low emissivity (Low-E) Triple glazing and suitable G-values
- ▣ Passive and active design measures
- ▣ 100% low energy lighting
- ▣ Balanced mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR)
- ▣ Additional mechanical purge ventilation within certain occupied rooms to comply with Part O1
- ▣ Low-temperature flow, Appendix Q rated, Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs)
- ▣ Proposed 198.72kWp solar photovoltaic (PV) system site wide.

3.64. This demonstrates that the development will exceed 2021 Building Regulations Part L and will align with the requirements of planning policy in creating a sustainable development.

3.65. Further details showing the number and position of the photovoltaic panels (PV's) that would deliver the level of output required to serve the development as per the SRE report are shown on the accompanying drawing 111903-LSQ-PV01. Drawing ref 11903-LSQ-PV02 provides further detail and shows the size of the PV panels including their heights in relation to the relevant buildings across the site. This drawing demonstrates that the visibility of the panels above the parapet line of the pavilion buildings will be minimal and only experienced in long views towards the site. The PV's for the houses will take a similar form to the proposed roof tiles within the roof slopes of each house and as such will not be prominent features within the site.

3.66. Any long views where the PV's have the potential to be visible will also be experienced alongside the semi mature and mature canopies of existing and new trees planted within the site as well as other buildings in and around the High Street.

3.67. The extent of projection above the parapet lines of the proposed buildings will be extremely minimal and therefore will not add significant additional bulk and massing to these buildings or negatively affect the overall quality of design and appearance of the buildings.

- 3.68. As referenced previously both within SRE's report and the December letter, the air source heat pumps will be positioned within the rear gardens of each house. There are also service risers incorporated as integral elements of the mixed use buildings which will be able to accommodate the required plant to serve the apartments.
- 3.69. Further details on the LZT's can be secured through the use of suitably worded conditions to ensure compliance with the Council's policy and guidance in achieving net zero for the development.
- 3.70. As such, the proposed development will meet the requirements set out in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan and have regard to the Council's Position Statement on Sustainability which sets out the Council's action plan for sustainable development.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 3.71. A detailed Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was prepared to support the planning application and also updated in December 2022 along with a Breeding Birds Survey. A tree inspection was carried out in March 2023 followed by further bat surveys August and July 2023 and an additional ecological site visit on 8th September 2023. The same surveyors carried out all of the survey work on the site and observed no significant changes to the habitats of the site other than those consistent with normal changes in seasons.
- 3.72. As such, a detailed letter (dated 6th March 2024) confirming this position was provided to the Council for completeness.
- 3.73. The BNG legislation came into force in February 2024 and whilst the requirements of this legislation are only applicable to those applications submitted after BNG took effect on 12 February 2024, it is understood that the Council are still seeking 10% BNG as part of this application.
- 3.74. Correspondence has been provided to the Council to clarify the position with BNG, however for ease this is reiterated here. Achieving 10% net gain on this site is not achievable due to the removal of some of the existing trees on the site, to which, high baseline habitat values are attached.
- 3.75. That said, the applicant and consultant team have worked extremely hard to ensure that every potential opportunity to achieve an enhancement in biodiversity net gain as part of the development is achieved. As such, the scheme will achieve 6.75% net gain onsite through the following measures:
- ▣ Retention and important enhancement of the condition of existing trees – this is a **significant** benefit given the condition of many existing trees within the site. The arboricultural impact assessment prepared by Aspect Arboriculture discusses this in detail and comments that *“vehicular and pedestrian movements generated by car boot events and race day parking have caused substantial areas of soil compaction and erosion across the site. The physiological effect of this is visible*

within the tree stock, whereby extension growth appears short and crowns partially stunted.” The enhancements proposed will therefore enhance the growing conditions across the site by improving soil environment and tree vitality and health.

- ▣ Planting new trees – 95 new trees are proposed to be planted across the site within areas of public space including the creation of a new orchard as well as new planting within the residential areas of the site. This is a well-planned scheme of mitigation planting taking on board the need to ensure the right species of trees in the right locations across the site.
- ▣ Retention of hedgerows and the creation of new native species hedgerows which have significant ecological and environmental benefits.
- ▣ Retention of existing grassland and replanting large areas of native wildflower and grassland seed mix.
- ▣ Incorporation of green roofs to the covered areas within the gardens serving the mews houses within the development.

3.76. The applicant also agrees to contribute towards securing habitat credits which would ensure the proposed development meets the 10% BNG enhancement sought by the Council. The delivery of this will be secured within the s106 agreement.

SANG

3.77. As has been discussed previously, the applicants have committed (subject to planning) to the provision of a financial contribution towards SANG at Moss End Farm, Warfield. This SANG benefits from planning permission and is considered appropriate, as confirmed by Bracknell Forest Council to mitigate the modest increases in recreational pressures on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA from the proposed development (as revised with increased dwelling numbers of 132).

3.78. Subject to the discussion on planning obligations within any legal agreement to secure BNG and SANG, it is considered that the proposed development will be in accordance with the NPPF, BLP NR2 and AL16 Site Allocation proforma.

Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage

3.79. The proposed revisions do not affect the approach to drainage as defined within the updated FRA prepared by Barnard and Associates Ltd in June 2023 and the overall technical approach remains as per that agreed and accepted by the LLFA on 12th May 2023.

Parking and Highways

3.80. BLP Policy IF2 states that development should be designed to improved pedestrian and cyclist access and be designed to improve accessibility by public transport. BLP Policy QP1c emphasises the fact that Ascot benefits from

good transport links, but its road network suffers from congestion and the pedestrian and cycle routes are poor including those to the railway station.

3.81. In addition, BLP AL16 requires that new development will “provide improvements to the quality of the public realm, specifically the High Street environment for pedestrians and cyclists, including provision of parking for all users of the High Street”

3.82. Taking the matter of parking first, the proposed development (as revised) results in some changes to the provision of parking across the site. This is discussed in detail within the addendum Transport Note which supplements and should be read in conjunction with the Transport Statement dated June 2023.

3.83. The proposed level of parking is as follows in Table 3:

	Car Parking	Cycle Parking
Commercial	5 [including 2 disabled spaces]	36 cycle spaces including visitor cycle spaces and 24 spaces between Blocks 1 and 2
Community	2	8 spaces at the north of the site and 4 long stay cycle lockers adjacent to Block 3 for users and staff of the community centre
Residential	135 including 52 allocated spaces for the houses; 22 unallocated spaces for the houses and 61 unallocated spaces for the apartments	222 cycle spaces
Car Club	3 spaces [equivalent to 60 spaces]	-
Off site	30 spaces on Station Hill – increase of 14 spaces	-

3.84. The impacts on the local highway network is considered in detail within the Transport Statement prepared in June 2023 and the recent addendum to reflect the proposed revisions to Block 2. This states that there would be no severe residual impact and the impact would be further reduced with the change in quantum of development.

3.85. The ratio of parking across the site has been revised and is an improvement on previous submissions and accommodates the anticipated car parking demand for a highly accessible site such as this. The cycle parking provision exceeds the requirements of planning policy and is evenly distributed across the site for use by residents, staff and visitors.

- 3.86. The proposed development and associated revisions are not considered to have any residual impact on the surrounding highway network or highway safety and accords with the requirements of the BLP and the NPPF.
- 3.87. The addendum DAS and Landscape Masterplan show the extensive new cycle and pedestrian routes to be created through the site which will provide sustainable links from the High Street frontage and Ascot centre through the site to the south, other developments including Ascot Wood and the Tennis Club as well as the future sites adjacent to the east. These routes will also provide access through the site to Station Hill and the railway station further south creating a new network of sustainable routes within Ascot.
- 3.88. Drawings have also been prepared to provide greater clarity on the pedestrian and cycle connections and routes through the site to show the way in which the proposed development will enable existing residents and workers to gain access to Ascot High Street, adjacent sites with planning permission for future development and the railway station.
- 3.89. The Council requested that consideration be given to the relocation of the access link between the application site and the adjacent site which forms part of the AL16 allocation. This link currently flows naturally from existing access routes through the site towards the Ascot Tennis Club and provides an attractive pedestrian and cycle access between the sites. Detailed drawings are provided to demonstrate this and CGI's are to follow. It also allows for emergency vehicle access should the need arise.
- 3.90. To expand on the justification for the position of this access link, it is important to emphasise the following key points:
- ▣ The configuration of sites within the AL16 allocation and the need to ensure an integrated approach to connectivity whilst working with the existing roads within the London Square application site formed an important part of the masterplan for the site.
 - ▣ This vision also formed part of early discussions with RBWM highways to ensure an appropriate and well-designed access point could be achieved for pedestrians and cyclists as well as emergency vehicles. As such, the access point was positioned to the south east of the application site linking with the existing access road leading to the Ascot Wood Tennis Club which makes for a natural and attractive route through to the adjacent Cala site.
 - ▣ The access point is positioned to allow free flowing pedestrian and cycle connections between the future developments, particularly allowing future residents within the southern part of the adjacent Cala site to gain easy non-vehicular access through to Station Hill and the High Street. It would also create a well-positioned pedestrian and cycle route through the sites to Station Hill, the railway station and the northern mixed use centre of the London Square application site for future residents of the Shorts Site under AL17 which is positioned south of the Cala site.

□ The creation of the access point between the application site and the Cala site provides a natural route that will connect easily with that proposed between Shorts and the Cala sites.

- 3.91. The suggestion to relocate this access link further north above Block 5 has been considered by the applicants and the architects to see if it can be achieved but this exercise has shown that this would not be the right place for a connection between the sites for a number of reasons and would provide a more convoluted access / connection from the Shorts Site that would not meet with the vision for an integrated approach to the connectivity between these sites.
- 3.92. The re-location of this access point would also have adverse impacts on the proposed development.
- 3.93. It is therefore considered that the current position of the access point is in the right place not just for the London Square application site but also to ensure an integrated approach to connectivity between the AL16 and AL17 sites.



Section 4

Planning Balance and Summary

- 4.1. The proposals comprise the following revised description of development:

Redevelopment of existing site to provide 960.8sqm flexible commercial floorspace and 278.5sqm flexible community floorspace (mix of uses within Use Classes E, F1 and F2) and 132 dwellings with associated parking, access, open space, landscaping and other associated works. Provision of new public open space with associated hard and soft landscape works, new pedestrian and cycle paths and children's play area.

- 4.2. The proposed revisions are isolated to Block 2 and the replacement of the office floorspace at first and second floor levels with fifteen apartments, allow for the provision of 40% affordable housing on the site.
- 4.3. The majority of the changes relate to the internal configuration of Block 2 and the revised layout ensures that the quality of accommodation for each apartment is maintained including good access to natural daylight and outlook. The elevation changes are necessary to reflect the change from commercial approach to fenestration design to one of a more domestic feel.
- 4.4. The revised proposals maintain the position of creating a high quality and sustainable, landscape led scheme with the introduction of mixed use buildings and homes set within accessible and open parkland for use by the local community for a multitude of activities and spaces including public piazza, market, outdoor seating for cafes and restaurants and other cultural type uses and an extensive green park.
- 4.5. The Council no longer have a five year housing land supply and as such there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as the application was submitted prior to 19th December 2023. The proposed development would meet this presumption through the creation of a holistic, residential led mixed use development set within an extensive area of community parkland within the centre of Ascot. It also meets a local housing need through the provision of 40% affordable housing including an element of four bedroom houses.
- 4.6. The design and layout of the proposed buildings respond to the local context and the need to reflect the local character of the area and surrounding townscape.

- 4.7. Enhanced pedestrian connections are maintained through the proposed development and beyond into the wider areas around Ascot High Street, Station Hill and Ascot Wood. They have also been designed to ensure that suitable pedestrian and cycle connections can be made with adjacent Sites forming part of the wider AL16 and AL17 site allocations and that the development of these will not be prejudiced by these proposals. Consideration has been given to previous stakeholder consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan as well as direct discussion with adjacent landowners to ensure that the aspirations for Ascot are carried forward in these proposals.
- 4.8. The proposed development will deliver substantial planning benefits and will adhere to the requirements of the NP, BLP and the NPPF. The planning benefits are defined within the Executive Summary section of this statement and should be treated as material considerations.

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