



PLANNING STATEMENT

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND ERECTION OF 7 NO. APARTMENTS PLUS ASSOCIATED UNDERGROUND PARKING

THE RED HOUSE, DEE BANKS, CHESTER, CH3 5UX

Date: December 2020

Pegasus Reference: GS/P20-1880/R001v5

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scope and Purpose

1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced on behalf of Sterling Property Co. Ltd in support of an application seeking the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new building to create 7 no. apartments plus associated underground parking at The Red House, Dee Banks, Chester.

1.2 The following documents have been submitted to support the Planning Statement:

- Full set of drawings (prepared by RADM Architects) comprising:
 - Location plan
 - Existing and proposed site plans
 - Existing topographical plan
 - Existing and proposed site elevations
 - Proposed elevations
 - Proposed floor plans
 - Existing and proposed figure ground
- Design and Access Statement (RADM Architects)
- Ecology Surveys (Rachel Hacking Ecology)
- Highways Technical Note (SCP)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Tree Solutions Ltd)
- Flood Risk Assessment (Weetwood)
- Heritage Report (Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy)

Report Structure

1.3 The remainder of this report includes the following sections:

- Section 2 introduces the site and surrounding area;
- Section 3 provides an overview of the planning history of the site;
- Section 4 describes the proposed development;
- Section 5 details the relevant national and local planning policy;
- Section 6 provides an assessment of the development proposal against the relevant local and national planning policy; and
- Section 7 provides a summary and conclusions.

2. SITE CONTEXT AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located along the banks of the River Dee, approximately 1.5km southeast of Chester city centre.
- 2.2 The site currently comprises a three storey detached building, built in the 1850s, which houses an Italian restaurant with one 3-bedroom apartment above. There are landscaped gardens to the rear of the property which lead down to the river, with private moorings and a private landing stage.
- 2.3 This site is said to occupy one of the most prestigious riverbank settings on the Dee, with far-reaching views across the Chester Meadows over to Snowdonia and the Welsh mountains.
- 2.4 The western boundary of the site is met by the River Dee, while the northern and southern boundaries are flanked by residential properties. The eastern boundary is met by the highway Dee Banks, beyond which are more residential properties and the Dee Banks School.
- 2.5 An aerial image of the site is provided in Figure 1, and the wider site context is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 1 – Aerial view of the site



Figure 2 – The wider site context

- 2.6 The site is located within the Dee Banks (Chester) Conservation Area, but the building is not listed.
- 2.7 The easternmost portion of the site, where the existing building is located, falls within Flood Zone 1, with the lowest risk of flooding. The remainder of the site closer to the river is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3; in Flood Zone 2 the flood risk is said to be moderate (between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding) and in Flood Zone 3a there is a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding. A tiny portion of the site in the west is located in Flood Zone 3b, which is the functional floodplain, as per the local authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (March 2016) detailed map 124. This information is shown in Figure 3.

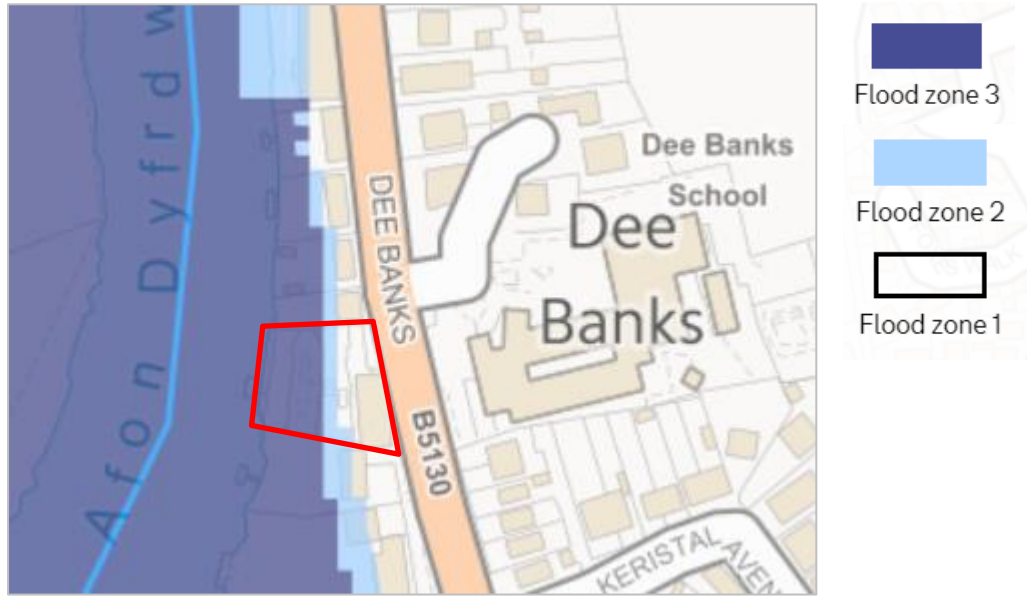


Figure 3 – Flood Zone map for the site

- 2.8 The site also abuts the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Dee Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is also within a Core Area for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Following a search of the local authority's online planning database, the following applications have been found that relate to this site.
- 3.2 16/02183/CAT - Fell 3 Hornbeam trees adj 10 Dee Banks - this proposal was to remove 3 no. Hornbeam trees on the northern boundary of the site. The notification was closed on 4th July 2016.
- 3.3 07/00170/FUL - Cladding of extractor chimney and retention of air conditioning units - retrospective application approved on 4th April 2007.
- 3.4 06/01180/ADV - Signage - application for illuminated signage to front and side elevations approved retrospectively on 23rd August 2006.
- 3.5 06/00995/FUL - Replacement of existing stairs and hardstanding in garden - balcony areas and metal staircase running from the building down to the river removed and replaced with timber staircase, decking and balcony areas - approved retrospectively on 17th August 2006.
- 3.6 06/00168/CAT - Fell ash and two other trees (T1-T3) and crown thin group of trees (T4) - no objections (27th March 2006).
- 3.7 05/00177/FUL - Refurbishment of public house - proposals involved removal of the rear conservatory and external steps and replacement with two storey glass structure with internal spiral staircase. Also proposed new external spiral staircase and new entrance to side of building. Application approved on 31st March 2005.
- 3.8 94/00561/FUL - Extension and alterations - application refused on 27th July 1994 due to resulting increase in on-street parking and inappropriate scheme given the prominence and position of the building in a Conservation Area.
- 3.9 6/17197 - Refurbishment of premises including internal and external alterations - approved 7th October 1987.
- 3.10 6/A14330 - Two single sided signs - 2 lantern - 1 single sided line - approved 31st July 1985.
- 3.11 6/A8273 - Erection of non illuminated wall sign - approved 21st October 1980.
- 3.12 6/4528 - Illuminated hoarding - approved 12th April 1978.
- 3.13 6/A4154 - Two double sided illuminated projecting food signs - refused on 7th November 1977 due to the impact on the amenity and appearance of the residential area.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new three/four storey building to form 7 no. apartments, plus underground parking and landscaping of the grounds. The apartments will comprise 1 no. two bedroom property, 4 no. three bedroom properties and 2 no. 4 bedroom properties.
- 4.2 The existing building is a large detached rendered building built in the 1850s, with a double height glazed extension to the rear and external staircase on the southern elevation which provides access to the 3-bedroom apartment on the first floor. There are several car parking spaces to the north of the building.
- 4.3 As the site is steeply sloping, the building appears two storeys from the front, along Dee Banks road, but is three storeys at the rear. Images of the site at present are provided in Figures 4 to 7.



Figure 4 – The building viewed from Dee Banks road (source: Google Maps)



Figure 5 – The building and landscaped gardens viewed from the river (source: Pegasus Group)



Figure 6 – Aerial view of the site and surrounding context (source: Chester 360)



Figure 7 – View from the existing building looking west

4.4 It is proposed to construct a new apartment building on the site, as per the site layout plan in Figure 8. The site will be accessed in the southeast corner from Dee Banks Road, with underground parking available via a car lift. All apartments will benefit from a private terrace, garden or balcony overlooking the river, with the remainder of the site landscaped to form communal grounds. The existing pontoon on the river will be retained.

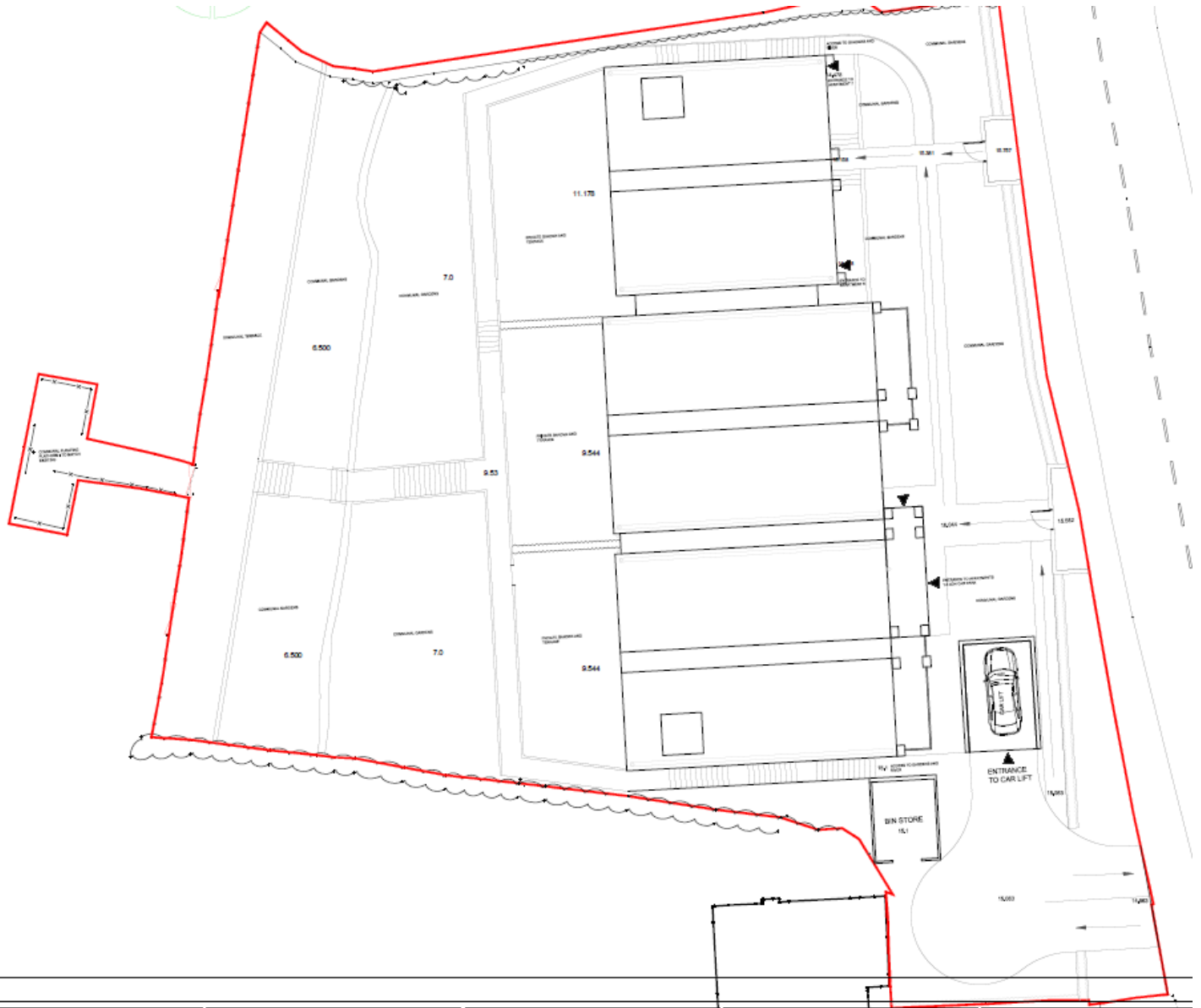


Figure 8 – Proposed site layout

4.5 The proposed elevations are shown in Figures 9 to 12. The new building will appear two storeys when viewed from Dee Banks Road and three to four storeys when viewed from the river. The external façades will feature a simple palette of materials including facing brick and brickwork detailing, with powder coated aluminium windows and doors and a slate roof.



Figure 9 – Proposed front elevation (facing Dee Banks Road)



Figure 10 – Proposed rear elevation (facing river)

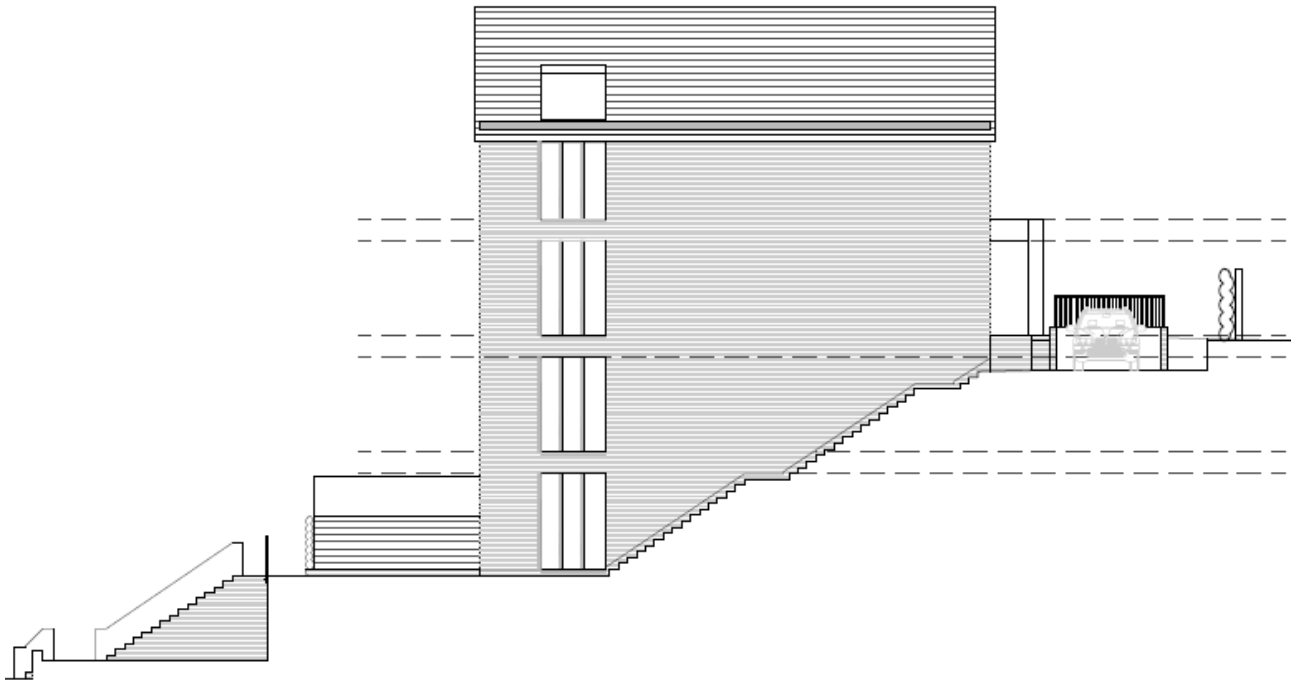


Figure 11 – Proposed side elevation (facing south)

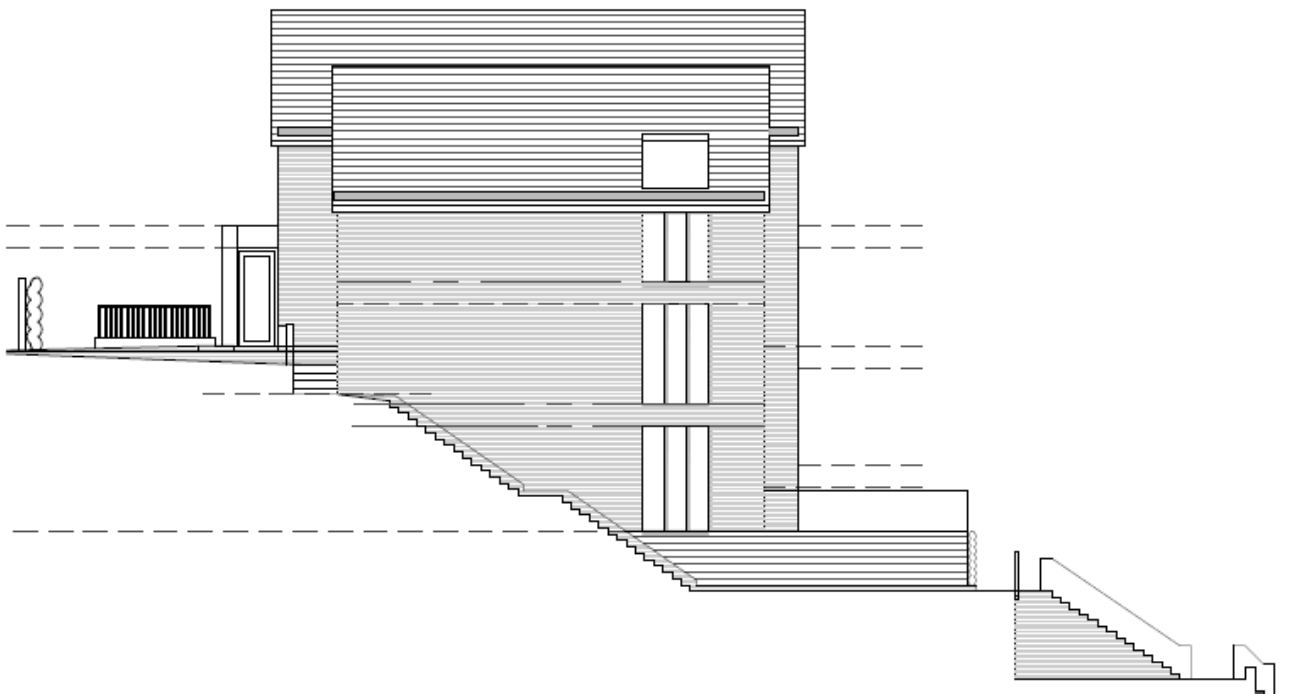


Figure 12 – Proposed side elevation (facing north)

4.6 The apartments will be accommodated over 4 floors, with 5 being duplex apartments split over two levels and 2 apartments being housed all on the same level. The proposed floor plans are provided in Figures 13 to 16 and Figure 17 shows how the apartments will be arranged within the building.

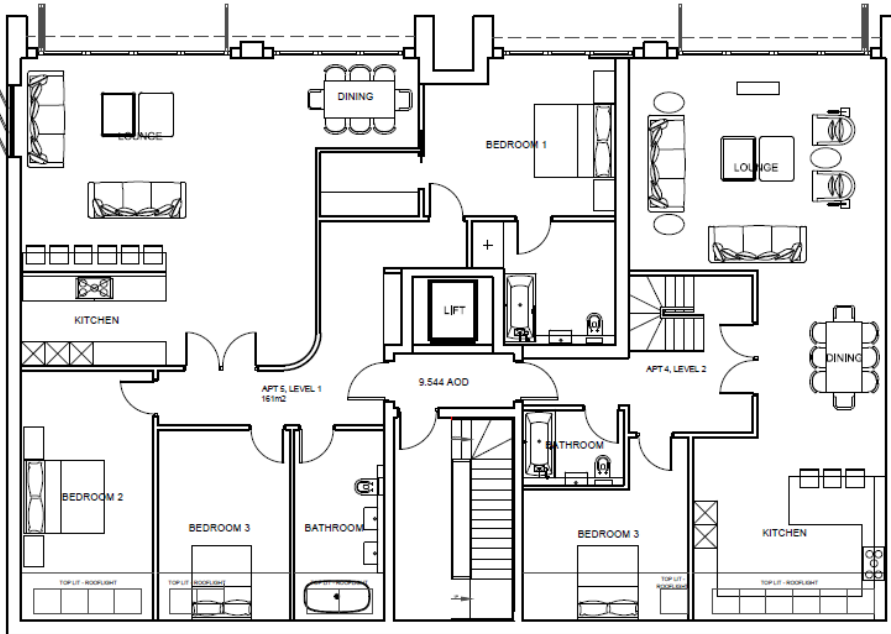


Figure 13 – Proposed floor plans (level -2)

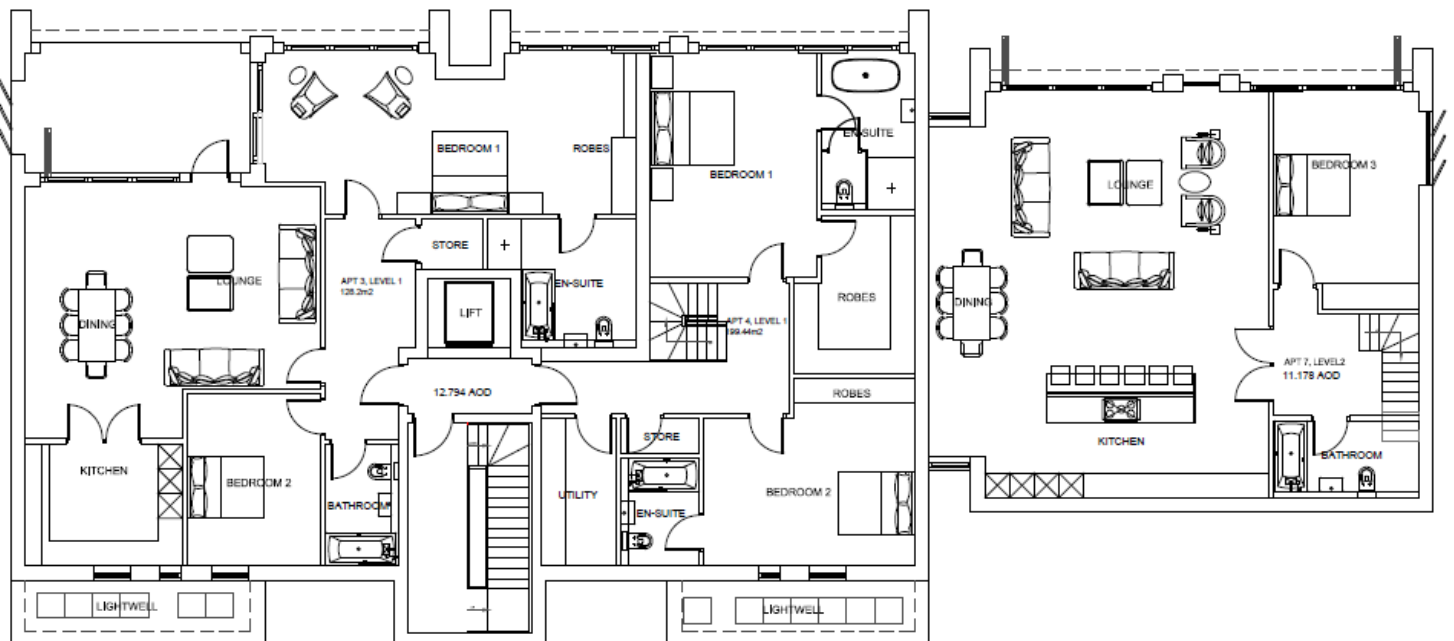


Figure 14 – Proposed floor plans (level -1)

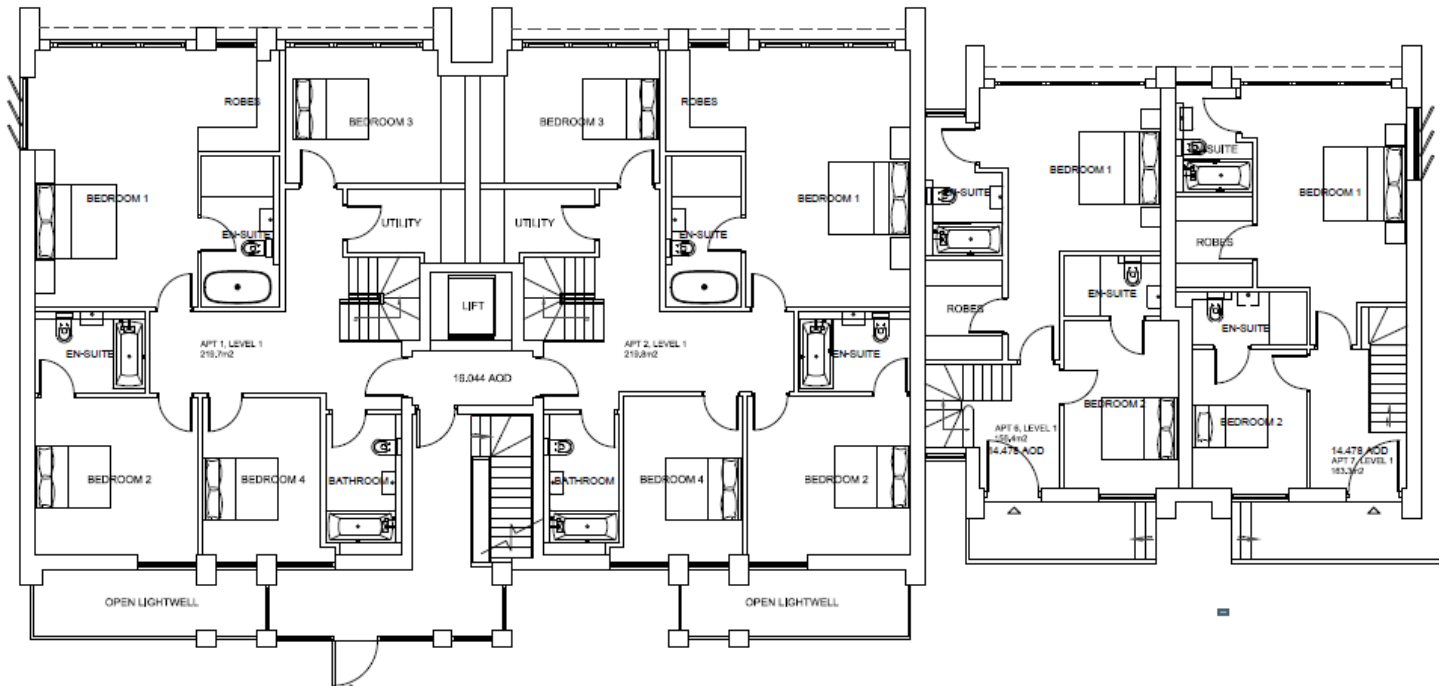


Figure 15 – Proposed floor plans (ground level)

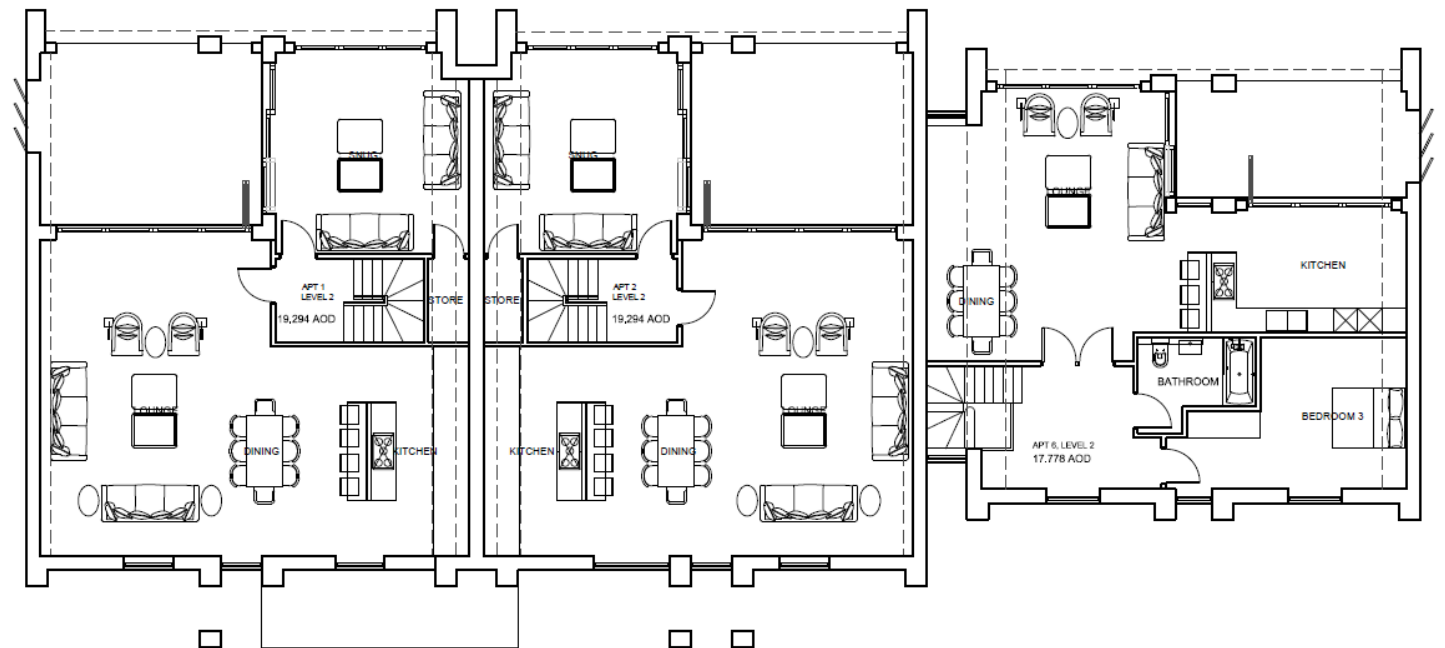


Figure 16 – Proposed floor plans (level +1)

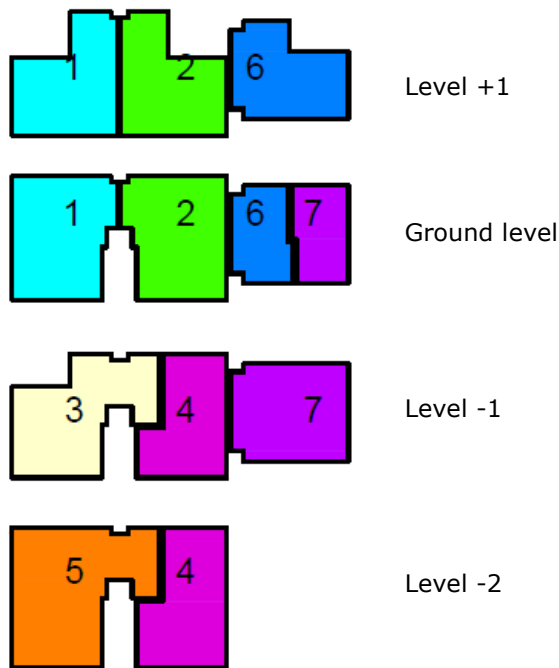


Figure 17 – Proposed arrangement of apartments

4.7 Figure 18 details the proposed underground parking arrangements, which will comprise 12 car parking spaces each with a vertical car stacker, therefore a total of 24 car parking spaces will be provided. The car park will be accessed from street level via a car lift, with pedestrian access provided via the internal lift and stairs. 7 no. covered cycle spaces will be provided at street level adjacent the bin store.

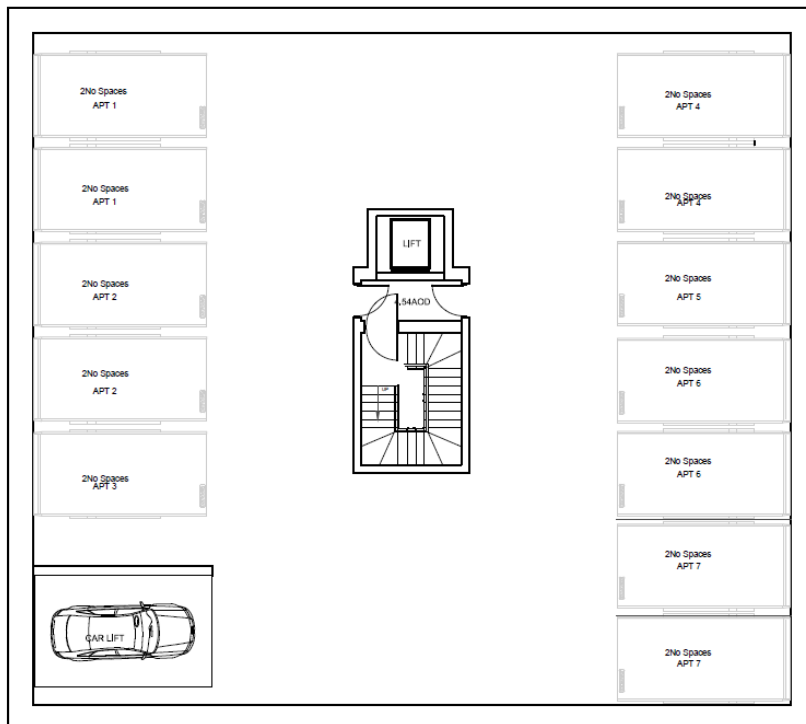


Figure 18 – Proposed underground car park layout

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- 4.8 The apartments will comprise 1 no. two bedroom property, 4 no. three bedroom properties and 2 no. 4 bedroom properties. Each will feature open plan kitchen/dining/living spaces with views over the river and access onto a private terrace/garden or balcony. The larger apartments will also feature a snug with river views and a second en-suite bedroom.
- 4.9 Apartments 1-5 will be accessed via a communal entrance on the eastern elevation, with access to the car park also taken from here. In this southern part of the building, a lift will provide access to each apartment between the ground floor and level -2. Apartments 6 and 7, housed in the smaller northern part of the building, will each have their own private access in the eastern elevation at ground floor level.
- 4.10 The properties will have floor areas as follows:
- Apartment 1 – 219.7m²
 - Apartment 2 – 219.8m²
 - Apartment 3 – 128.2m²
 - Apartment 4 – 199.44m²
 - Apartment 5 – 161.0m²
 - Apartment 6 – 156.4m²
 - Apartment 7 – 163.3m²

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

5.1 This section sets out the relevant planning policy from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One and Part Two), and other material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework

5.2 The NPPF, updated in February 2019, outlines the Government's core objectives for the planning system.

5.3 Within the NPPF there is an overarching principle of sustainable development, outlined in paragraph 8. This outlines three interdependent objectives for achieving sustainable development, these being economic, social and environmental, which are to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

5.4 Paragraph 10 goes on to say, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

5.5 Paragraph 11 outlines that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

5.6 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission are to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing (paragraph 47).

5.7 Paragraph 59 highlights the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, and states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where needed, to meet the varied housing needs of the population.

5.8 Paragraph 80 emphasises the importance of supporting economic growth and productivity, ensuring that places are able to build on their strengths, counter any weaknesses and address any future challenges.

5.9 Planning decisions should also aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles (paragraph 91).

5.10 Another key objective in pursuance of sustainable development is promoting the use of sustainable transport modes. Development should be focused on locations which are or can be made

sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes (paragraph 103).

- 5.11 Paragraph 117 asserts that decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. As much use as possible should be made of previously developed or 'brownfield' land.
- 5.12 Paragraph 124 emphasises the importance of good design, stating that "the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".
- 5.13 Furthermore, as stated in paragraph 127, planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 5.14 The planning system should also support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change (paragraph 148). Paragraph 155 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

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- 5.15 Paragraph 163 states that development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of the site-specific flood risk assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable), it can be demonstrated that, among other things:
- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
 - b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
 - c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.
- 5.16 Furthermore, planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services; and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity (paragraph 170).
- 5.17 Paragraph 184 states that historic assets should be conserved “in a manner appropriate to their significance”. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (paragraph 189).
- 5.18 In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 192).
- 5.19 Paragraph 201 confirms that not all elements of a Conservation Area necessarily contribute to its significance, and paragraph 200 asserts that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One)

- 5.20 The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) forms part of the adopted Local Development Plan for the area and provides the overall vision, strategic objectives, spatial strategy and strategic policies for the area. It was adopted in January 2015.
- 5.21 The relevant policies from this Plan in relation to the proposal are detailed in this section.
- 5.22 STRAT 1 - Sustainable Development - The Local Plan seeks to enable development that meets the economic, social and environmental objectives of the borough in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. New housing should be located with good accessibility to existing or proposed local shops, community facilities and primary schools and with good connections to public transport.
- 5.23 STRAT 2 – Strategic Development - This policy states that the council will promote strong, prosperous and sustainable communities by delivering ambitious development targets whilst protecting the high-quality environment that contributes to the attractiveness and success of Cheshire West and Chester as a place to live and work. Over the plan period, 22,000 new dwellings will be delivered in line with the settlement hierarchy, which places Chester as the preferred location for the majority of new development.
- 5.24 STRAT 3 – Chester - Chester is the key economic driver for the borough and will deliver at least 5,200 new dwellings.
- 5.25 STRAT 10 – Transport and Accessibility - In order to minimise the need for travel, proposals for new development should be located so as they are accessible to local services and facilities by a range of transport modes.

New development will be required to demonstrate that:

- Additional traffic can be accommodated safely and satisfactorily within the existing, or proposed, highway network
 - Appropriate provision is made for access to public transport and other alternative means of transport to the car
 - Measures have been incorporated to improve physical accessibility and remove barriers to mobility, especially for disabled and older people. The safety of all road users should be taken into account in the design and layout of new developments.
- 5.26 SOC 3 – Housing Mix and Type - In order to support mixed, balanced and sustainable communities, the Council will seek to provide a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes of both market and affordable housing.

- 5.27 ENV 1 – Flood Risk and Water Management - New development should be directed towards areas at the lowest risk of flooding, and the exception test applied where necessary, with a Flood Risk Assessment provided to demonstrate the proposal will not increase flood risk. New development will be required to include or contribute to flood mitigation, compensation and/or protection measures, where necessary, to manage flood risk associated with or caused by the development. The drainage of new development shall be designed to reduce surface water run-off rates to include the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) unless it can be demonstrated that it is not technically feasible or viable.
- 5.28 ENV 2 – Landscape - The Local Plan will protect and, wherever possible, enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness. Development should: take full account of the characteristics of the development site, its relationship with its surroundings and where appropriate views into, over and out of the site; and recognise, retain and incorporate features of landscape quality into the design.
- 5.29 ENV 3 – Green Infrastructure - The Local Plan will support the creation, enhancement, protection and management of a network of high quality multi-functional Green Infrastructure.
- 5.30 ENV 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity - This policy states that development should not result in any net loss of natural assets and should seek to provide net gains.
- 5.31 ENV 5 – Historic Environment - Development should safeguard or enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged significance. The degree of protection afforded to a heritage asset will reflect its position within the hierarchy of designations. Development will be required to respect and respond positively to designated heritage assets and their settings, avoiding loss or harm to their significance. Development in Chester should ensure the city's unique archaeological and historic character is protected or enhanced.
- 5.32 ENV 6 – High Quality Design and Sustainable Construction - This policy sets out several objectives which development should strive to achieve, including the following of relevance to this proposal: respect local character and achieve a sense of place through appropriate layout and design; be sympathetic to heritage, environmental and landscape assets; make the best use of high quality materials; and mitigate and adapt to the predicted effects of climate change.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two)

- 5.33 Part Two of the Local Plan provides more detailed policies and land allocations which support the strategic objectives and policies set out in Part One. It was adopted in July 2019. The relevant policies are outlined below.

5.34 CH 1 – Chester Settlement Area – Of particular relevance to this site, development within or adjacent to areas of strategic open space should be appropriate in scale and type with sensitive boundary treatment so not to harm the nature, quality or scale of these spaces, or impede public enjoyment of them. The special qualities and characteristics of the following strategic open spaces which contribute to the setting and character of Chester, should be protected:

A. The Meadows Corridor to the south of Chester and the River Dee Corridor

5.35 CH 5 – Chester Conservation Areas - In line with policies STRAT 3 and ENV 5, development within Chester's conservation areas must meet the requirements of policy DM 46. Development proposals will be supported where:

1. It can be demonstrated that they have been sensitively designed, to have regard to their location and considering the location of ventilation equipment and plant; fire escapes and service areas;
2. It can be demonstrated that Chester's key views, landmarks, gateways and historic skyline will not be adversely affected in line with policy CH 6;
3. They show careful attention to spaces between buildings, scale, height, mass and architectural detail, respecting the building lines, building hierarchy and urban grain;
4. They use high quality and durable materials appropriate to the building and its setting;
5. The proposal, adopts visually appropriate and discreet security fixtures and fittings to minimise their visual impact;
6. They will not result in the loss of any historic routes.

5.36 Proposals within the Chester river or canal conservation areas will be required to demonstrate that the development will make a positive contribution to the visual appearance and character of the area and preserve or enhance the setting of the waterway corridor. Development should create a positive connection to the waterside, promoting 'active' frontages and enhancing weak frontages.

5.37 DM 1 – Development of Previously Developed Land - In identified settlements, the development of previously developed land will be supported in line with Local Plan policy STRAT 1 where it does not conflict with other relevant development plan policies. Development proposals must be of an appropriate mix of uses and density whilst fully respecting the existing character and layout of the surrounding area to maximise the use of land.

5.38 DM 2 – Impact on Residential Amenity - Development will only be supported where it does not result in a significant adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the occupiers of existing properties or future occupiers of the proposed development, including outlook, privacy, light, noise and odour. In respect of light, regard will be had to loss of sunlight and daylight, and to the impact

of artificial light. Residential development must include an appropriate quantity and quality of outdoor private amenity space, having regard to the type and size of the proposed development.

- 5.39 DM 3 – Design, Character and Visual Amenity - In line with policy ENV 6, development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design that respects the character and protects the visual amenity of the local area. Design solutions will be supported that, among other things:
1. Are designed to respect the scale, character and appearance of any existing building within the site and contribute positively to the character of the area;
 2. Respect and where appropriate enhance the prevailing layout, urban grain, landscape, density and mix of uses, scale and height, massing, appearance and materials;
 4. Are sympathetic to the characteristics of the development site, its relationship with its surroundings and where appropriate views into, over and out of the site;
 5. Respect and where possible enhance local distinctiveness through the use of building layout, design, materials, architectural detailing, public realm and boundary treatment.
- 5.40 DM 4 – Sustainable Construction - All development proposals will be expected to achieve the highest levels of energy and water efficiency that is practical and viable, and to maximise opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features where feasible.
- 5.41 DM 19 – Proposals for Residential Development - Proposals for residential development within identified settlements, on sites that have not been allocated/designated for a particular use, will be supported in line with the relevant development plan policies.
- 5.42 DM 20 – Mix and Type of New Housing Development - Proposals for residential development must take account of the housing needs of the local area to ensure a range of house types, tenures and sizes are provided across the borough. The Council will work with the developer to agree a suitable housing mix taking full account of the characteristics of the site and viability considerations.
- 5.43 DM 38 – Waterways and Mooring Facilities - Development proposals adjacent to waterways in defined settlements will be supported where they provide positive regeneration benefits. Development proposals affecting the borough’s waterways must:
1. maintain an active frontage and positive connection with the waterway;
 2. include environmental improvements and make a positive contribution to the visual appearance of the corridor;
 3. incorporate high standards of design, materials, external appearance, layout and landscaping, that respects local landscape character and historic assets and is an appropriate scale for its location;
 4. safeguard the structural and operational integrity of the waterways;

5. support public access to and recreational use of waterways, as defined in Local Plan (Part Two) policy DM 37 or in neighbourhood plans;
6. retain and enhance existing natural features and make a positive contribution to the borough's ecological network;
7. avoid any adverse effects on internationally designated sites of ecological importance.

5.44 DM 40 – Development and Flood Risk - This policy echoes the guidelines in policy ENV 1, and states that development proposals for sites that are at risk will only be supported where the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment shows that:

3. the effects of climate change have been taken into account;
4. there is no loss in floodplain storage resulting from the development;
5. the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere;
6. there is no adverse effect on the operational functions of any existing flood defence infrastructure;
7. proposed resistance / resilience measures designed to deal with current and future risks are appropriate;
8. where applicable, appropriate Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) techniques have been considered and are to be incorporated into the design of the site, in line with policy DM 41; and
9. the development will be safe and pass the exceptions test, if applicable.

5.45 DM 44 – Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment - development will be supported where there is no net loss of natural assets and, wherever possible, it delivers net gains within the borough. Development likely to have an impact on protected sites, protected/priority species, priority habitats or geological sites must be accompanied by an Ecological Assessment. Development that makes a positive contribution towards the borough's ecological network will be supported. In 'core areas', in which this site is located, proposals should increase the size, quality or quantity of priority habitat.

5.46 DM 46 – Development in Conservation Areas - Development proposals should take into consideration: topography, landscape setting and natural features; existing townscapes, local landmarks, views and skylines; the architecture of surrounding buildings; the quality and nature of materials; the established layout and spatial character of building plots, the existing alignments and widths of historic routes and street hierarchy; the contribution that open areas make to the special character and appearance of the conservation area; the scale, height, bulk and massing of adjacent townscape; architectural, historical and archaeological features and their settings; the need to retain historic boundary and surface treatments; the local dominant building materials, the building typology that best reflects the special character and appearance of the area and features

and detailing; and minimising and mitigating the loss of hedgerows, trees and other landscape features.

- 5.47 Development proposals which will not be supported include the following: demolition of non-listed buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of conservation areas, other than in exceptional circumstances; the erection of buildings and structures which are unsympathetic in design, scale, mass and use of materials; alterations and extensions which are unsympathetic in design, scale, mass and use of materials; the erection or extension of buildings and structures which will obstruct important views within, or views in or out of conservation areas.

Cheshire West and Chester Design for Residential Development SPD (2007)

- 5.48 This SPD sets out key design principles that should be incorporated into new residential design across the borough. The key principles include:
- Key Principle 1: Local Distinctiveness - The Council will require high standards of design and materials. Schemes must respond to local circumstances rather than seeking to impose a standardised design.
 - Key Principle 3: Building Envelopes - The scale, massing and spacing of individual buildings should respond to the site's surroundings.
 - Key Principle 4: Housing Mix - A mix of housing sizes, types, tenures and affordability should be incorporated.
 - Key Principle 6: Residential Amenity - Developments shall provide high standards of amenity for residents and must not have a significantly detrimental effect on the amenities of people living nearby.
 - Key Principle 10: Parking - Car parking provision should be secure, accessible, well-landscaped, and integrated into the overall layout of developments. All new residential development should incorporate secure cycle storage.
 - Key Principle 12: Flood Risk and Water - Every opportunity should be taken to minimise flood risk in new developments, including the incorporation of SuDS.
 - Key Principle 14: Biodiversity - To maintain, enhance, restore or add to local biodiversity and geodiversity conservation interests.
 - Apartment Blocks – Internal circulation spaces should have generous height and width, and external windows. Balconies should be integrated as part of the overall façade and positioned to maximise privacy, outlook and solar gain. Each new apartment should have a minimum of 30m² of private outdoor amenity space, provided either as a balcony and/or communal garden.

Cheshire West and Chester Parking Standards SPD (2017)

- 5.49 This SPD establishes minimum parking standards for new houses and flats – for 2-bedroom properties the minimum number of car spaces required is 2 spaces, and for 4-bedroom properties it is 3 spaces. Each flat should also have at least one secure cycle space. These guidelines are a minimum unless it can be demonstrated that fewer spaces is acceptable. Provision should also be made of one electric vehicle charging point per flat.
- 5.50 However, the SPD also asserts that when assessing parking provision, the range of transport modes by which the site can be accessed will be considered, and also acknowledges that car ownership is often lower for flats than houses. The minimum standards also include allowances for visitor parking.
- 5.51 Paragraph 5.3 states that “all planning applications will be considered on their own individual merits and the appropriate final number of car parking spaces agreed through consultation between the applicant and the Council. When considering changes of use the Council will take historic/existing parking and traffic arrangements into account”.

6. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act confirms planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 In this instance, the adopted development plan is the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Parts One and Two, adopted in 2015 and 2019, respectively.
- 6.3 This section assesses the main issues associated with the proposed development against national and local planning policy and material considerations.
- 6.4 The main issues to be addressed are:
- Principle of development;
 - Sustainability;
 - Design;
 - Impact on the historic environment;
 - Impact on residential amenity;
 - Flood risk;
 - Ecology;
 - Trees; and
 - Access and Highways.

Principle of development

- 6.5 The site currently comprises a restaurant/drinking establishment and residential uses, therefore the principle of residential development on the site has already been established as acceptable. There is existing residential development immediately to the north and south of the site and the wider area is predominantly residential.
- 6.6 The proposal involves the reuse of the site for residential purposes. The reuse of previously developed land is advocated in paragraph 117 of the NPPF as it helps to ensure that land is used efficiently and reduces the amount of greenfield land required to meet development needs, in line with sustainable development principles. Furthermore, the creation of apartments on the site as opposed to houses presents an opportunity to make the most efficient use of the land available.
- 6.7 The site is also located within the defined settlement boundary of Chester, which is the preferred location for new development as confirmed by policy STRAT 2. Throughout the Local Plan period, the majority of new development should be located in Chester, including at least 5,200 new

dwellings (STRAT 3), as this is a highly sustainable location with many services, amenities, employment opportunities and transport options.

- 6.8 According to the Cheshire West and Chester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2013, which informed the Local Plan, of the households planning to move within five years, Chester was the first choice destination. The SHMA also identified that future development should seek to meet the demand for 2-4 bedroom properties, which this development will provide.
- 6.9 Policies SOC 3 and DM 20 and Key Principle 4 of the SPD require that development delivers a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes; this development will create 7 high quality apartments of various sizes in a premium location, which will contribute towards meeting the housing targets set out in policies STRAT 2 and STRAT 3 and the Government's overall target of boosting housing supply set out in paragraph 59 of the NPPF. Policy DM 19 confirms that proposals for residential development within identified settlements on sites that are not designated for a particular use will be supported if they accord with other relevant policies.
- 6.10 As the development is located on the banks of the River Dee, it is important that the proposal respects this setting and that the connection between the site and the river is maintained. To achieve this, the layout on site will remain much the same, with the communal gardens providing access from the apartments right down to the riverbank, and the existing pontoon retained, to ensure an active frontage along the river in accordance with policy DM 38.
- 6.11 Furthermore, the development will improve the appearance of the site when viewed from the river, as the new buildings will be more in keeping with the size and positioning of the surrounding properties. Currently, the existing building is positioned in the far east of the site, with the main three storey restaurant building in the southeast and a single storey addition to the north of this. This is compared to the surrounding properties, which are positioned closer to the river and more centrally within their plots, making The Red House the anomaly in the building line. The development will improve the uniformity of the building line along this stretch of the river, as demonstrated in Figure 18, in accordance with policy DM 38 which states that developments adjacent to waterways must "make a positive contribution to the visual appearance of the corridor".



Figure 18 – The development will bring uniformity to the building line along the river

Sustainability

- 6.12 In line with the sustainable development principles outlined in the NPPF, the proposed development will bring economic, social and environmental benefits.

Economic

- 6.13 The development will provide several economic benefits. During the construction phase it will boost the economy through job creation on site and the purchasing of materials and services, which supports local businesses and indirectly supports further jobs. The new occupants will also contribute to the local economy through their employment and spending, and the Council will benefit from increased Council Tax revenue as well as New Homes Bonus.
- 6.14 As this will be a luxury development aimed at the higher end of the market, it is likely that the occupants will be wealthy and therefore likely to spend more in the local economy, maximising the economic benefits. The development is therefore in accordance with paragraph 80 of the NPPF which emphasises the importance of facilitating economic growth.

Social

- 6.15 Planning policy makes clear that new housing should be located in close proximity, wherever possible, to services, amenities and transport links to ensure that strong, vibrant and healthy communities are created and communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing is supported.
- 6.16 The proposed development site is sustainably located within the settlement boundary of Chester, which is the main economic and social hub for the borough, offering a wide range of amenities, services, employment opportunities and transport links.
- 6.17 The site is located within a well-established and desirable residential area, approximately a 1 mile walk from Chester city centre and all it has to offer. Table 1 shows the proximity of the site to a variety of amenities and services, such as shops, schools, community meeting places and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The majority of these are found within the surrounding suburban area, with an even greater variety available close by in the city centre.

Table 1 – Proximity of the site to services and amenities

Amenity/Service	Distance (miles)	Walk (mins)	Cycle (mins)	Drive (mins)
Bus stop (at site boundary)	0	0	-	-
St Luke's church	0.3	7	2	1
Chester Sailing & Canoe Club	0.3	5	1	1
Sandy Lane Park	0.4	7	2	1
Huntington Village Hall	0.5	11	4	2
Kids Planet Nursery	0.6	13	4	4
Bishop's Blue Coat High School	0.6	13	4	4
Play Area	0.6	11	4	4
Boughton Heath Academy Primary School	0.7	13	4	3
Caldy Nature Park	0.7	13	4	2
Heath Lane Medical Centre	0.7	15	4	3
Jubilee Park	0.8	16	5	2
Cherry Grove Primary School	0.8	16	5	3
Scout hut	0.8	17	5	2
Rake and Pikel pub	0.8	16	4	2

Huntington Community Primary School	0.9	18	5	2
Cricket Club	1.0	20	6	4
Sainsbury's	1.1	22	6	4
Aldi	1.2	21	7	3
Boughton Heath Park and Ride	1.3	27	9	5
Chester Train Station	1.6	29	11	5

- 6.18 The array of amenities and services on offer close to the site highlights the sustainability of the location for residential development. Access to these helps to foster community cohesion and wellbeing, by providing people with the opportunity to meet and socialise, which is a key aspect of the social objective of sustainable development. There are a range of such opportunities close to the site, such as the various parks, churches, village hall, sailing and canoe club and Scouts. It will be easy and practical for new residents to use these and therefore the development is in accordance policy STRAT 1 which states that "new housing should be located with good accessibility to existing or proposed local shops, community facilities and primary schools". Locating new residential development close to amenities also means that there are more residents to support such amenities, in line with paragraph 127 of the NPPF.
- 6.19 The abundance of accessible public open space in the local area also means that there are plenty of opportunities for outdoor recreation and exercise. This is in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 91 and 127 which require development to "enable and support healthy lifestyles" and "promote health and wellbeing", which is another key aspect of social sustainability. Furthermore, the scheme will include private terraces or balconies for each apartment and extensive communal gardens fronting the river, in line with policy DM 2 and the Residential Development SPD requirements for apartment blocks which stipulate appropriate private outdoor amenity space must be provided.
- 6.20 The development will be made secure through gated access to pedestrian and vehicular entrances and installation of entrance doors and windows that comply with Secured by Design standards. Individual alarms will also be installed in each apartment. These measures will help to create a safe environment where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience, as required by paragraph 127 of the NPPF.
- 6.21 The scheme has also been designed in accordance with Lifetime Homes, to ensure it is accessible to all in line with the requirements of NPPF paragraphs 91 and 127. This includes lift access to the car park and all entrance floors, ramped access to the main building entrance, level living spaces, and all apartments offering at least one entrance-level bedroom and bathroom. This ensures compliance with policy STRAT 10 which requires that measures be incorporated into new development to remove barriers to mobility.

Environmental

- 6.22 New residents will easily be able to access the amenities and services listed via a short walk or cycle ride, or via a short drive if required. The ability to access the majority of day-to-day amenities and services via active travel modes is a key principle of sustainable development as this will assist with reducing travel by private vehicle and thus aid the transition to a low carbon economy in line with the sustainable development objectives set out in the NPPF.
- 6.23 The locating of development close to public transport services is also strongly advocated by planning policy, including policy STRAT 10. There is a bus stop located a two-minute walk to the north of the site, on Dee Banks, which offers services to Chester, Boughton and Mold. There are further bus stops in the neighbouring suburb of Huntington, a six-minute walk to the south, which offer services to Chester, Farndon and Wrexham. In nearby Boughton Heath services are also available to Ellesmere Port, Upton and Guilden Sutton.
- 6.24 Instead of driving into the city centre, if walking is not possible, the Boughton Heath Park and Ride is located only a 5-minute drive from the site, where people can leave their car and take a bus into the city centre. Such options help to reduce traffic and thus associated air pollution in the city centre, as well as reducing the amount of parking space required.
- 6.25 For travel further afield, Chester train station is a half hour walk or 10-minute cycle from the site, where services can be caught to Liverpool, north Wales, Manchester Airport, Leeds, Birmingham, Cardiff and London via Crewe.
- 6.26 It is evident that a genuine choice of transport modes are available within close proximity to the site, in accordance with paragraph 103 of the NPPF. Both public transport and active travel modes are realistic and practical options for residents of the apartments, therefore the development is compliant with the environmental objective of sustainable development which aims to use natural resources more prudently, minimise pollution and transition to a low carbon economy.
- 6.27 The buildings themselves will also have environmentally sustainable credentials. For example, each apartment will benefit from curtain wall glazing on the western elevation, meaning the apartments will be naturally heated by passive solar gain, reducing the demand on any installed heating system. Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) will also be installed to ventilate enclosed spaces. This system recovers heat that is lost and pre-heats incoming fresh air. Low energy lighting will be utilised throughout the development and electric vehicle charging points will be installed. These measures will assist the transition to a low carbon economy in accordance with policies ENV 6 and DM 4 which promote the incorporation of sustainable design features to achieve energy efficiency in new developments, and the SPD requirement for apartment blocks to maximise solar gain.

Design

- 6.28 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that “the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve” and confirms how good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 6.29 The proposed scheme has been designed to be appropriate to its riverside and Conservation Area context in terms of its appearance, scale, height, site layout and architectural features. The proposed scheme responds positively to its context and will enhance the visual amenity of the local area and riverbank.
- 6.30 A sketch of the proposed design in context is provided in Figure 19.

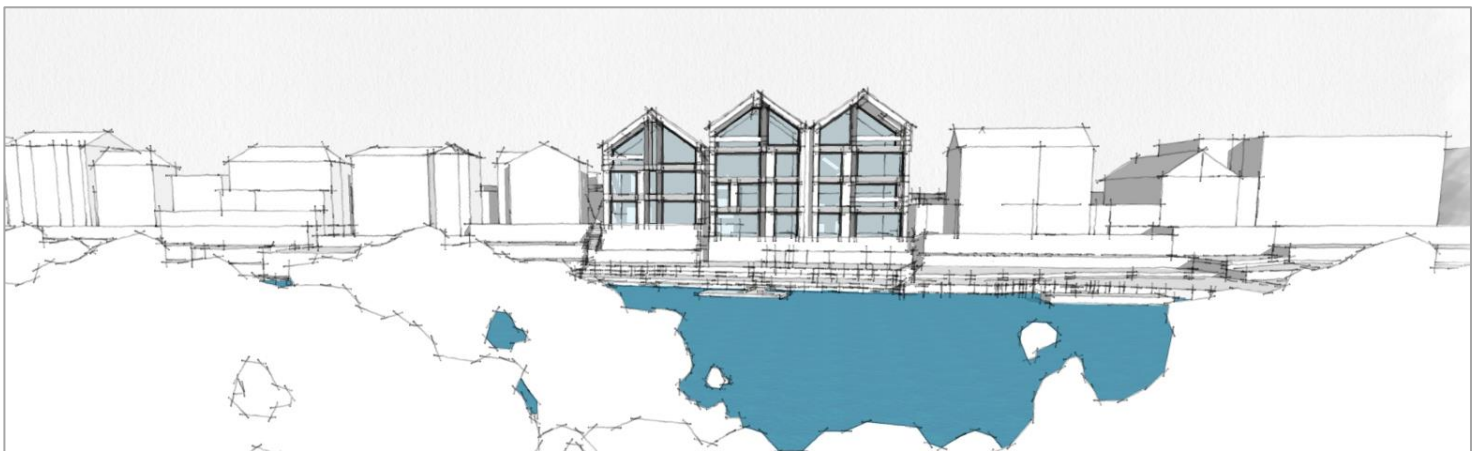


Figure 19 – Sketch of proposed design in context

- 6.31 Several design features taken from surrounding properties have inspired the proposed design. For example, the western elevation of the new buildings will feature full height glazing plus balconies and terraces, to maximise views from the site and enjoyment of the riverside location. The balconies will be integrated into the overall façade and positioned to maximise outlook, privacy and solar gain in line with the SPD requirements for apartment blocks.
- 6.32 Neighbouring dwellings along the riverfront also incorporate such features, with extensive glazing and decking areas, as shown in Figures 20 and 21. The proposal is therefore compliant with policies ENV 6 and DM 3, and NPPF paragraph 127, which require development to be sympathetic to its surroundings while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.



Figure 20 – Proposed design has been inspired by nearby developments – this scheme is located to the north of the application site (source: RADM)



Figure 21 – Existing riverfront building to the north of the site with floor-to-ceiling glazing and balconies (source: RADM)

- 6.33 A simple palette of materials is proposed for the new building – the majority of the façades will feature brick with brickwork detailing, as this is one of the predominant materials of the surrounding vernacular, found throughout the city and wider Cheshire area, with curtain wall glazing to the river-facing elevation, broken by sections of cladding and recessed balconies. An extruded external frame to the river elevation will provide an encompassing form to the building which is broken by two steps in the building, which will feature brick and curtain wall glazing respectively, and broken at the ridge through a modern approach to a split pediment.
- 6.34 Framed glazing panels are proposed at all levels, creating another step back between the front face of the building and the glazed sliding doors and windows. This will bring a level of depth to the

building and present a detail which can be found in nearby buildings where windows and doors have stone surrounds. The roof will be finished in slate, with powder coated aluminium windows and doors ensuring a sleek, contemporary finish is achieved.

- 6.35 The majority of the properties fronting this stretch of the river are built into their sloping sites, appearing 1-2 storeys from the road but 3-4 storeys when viewed from the river. The new development will continue this theme, being 2 storeys when viewed from the road and 3/4 storeys when viewed from the river. The new building will be of a modest scale and height so as not to be overbearing or dominant of surrounding properties.
- 6.36 To further ensure the new development is of an appropriate scale, the building has been designed in two distinct sections to reduce its mass and ensure it does not appear as one large block, connected via a glazed link. The section to the south will appear 4 storeys from the river, while the section to the north will appear 3 storeys, to ensure the building respects the neighbouring properties on either side of the site. This ensures that the development will sit well in its context whilst maximising use of a sloping site, in accordance with paragraph 117 of the NPPF which seeks to make the most efficient use of urban land.
- 6.37 The new building will be 2 storeys when viewed from the road, with the three gable ends facing the highway. This is in keeping with the neighbouring dwellings, which are a mixture of 1 and 2 storeys when viewed from the road and also often have road-fronting gables and will ensure the new building sits well in the setting compared to the existing building, which dominates the street scene due to being a single mass positioned close to the highway (see Figure 22).



Figure 22 – The existing building dominates the street scene (source: Google Maps)

- 6.38 Ensuring that the new building is an appropriate scale and height will ensure that views over, into and out of the site are maintained. At present, views out over the river to the Meadows Corridor and beyond are enjoyed from within the site and from the properties on the other side of Dee Banks road, which benefit from an elevated position. These views will remain unimpeded for existing and new residents of the area as the new building will not be significantly taller than the current restaurant building. The north-eastern area of the site, which is currently occupied by car parking and the single storey element of the existing building, will house the lower section of the apartment building. Although this will be taller than what is there currently, there are no residential properties with a view over this part of the site - opposite is the Dee Banks School car park - and the view is currently partially obscured by a hedge (see Figure 23).

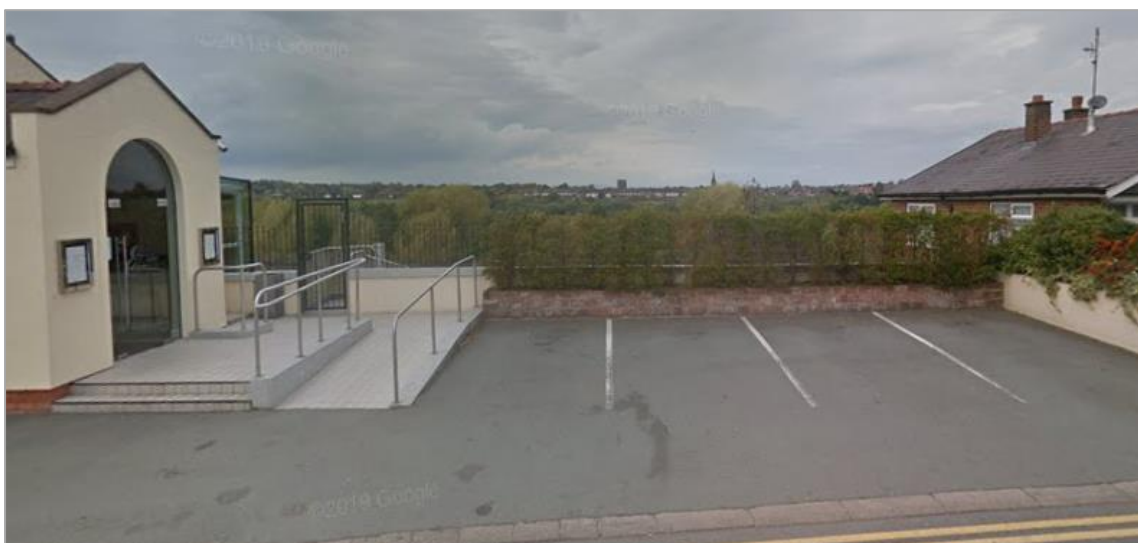


Figure 23 – Partial view over the site for passers-by will be lost (source: Google Maps)

- 6.39 Views into the site from the river and the Chester Meadows on the far side, which is designated Strategic Open Space, will be maintained in accordance with policy requirements, as the new building will occupy a similar position within the site to the surrounding properties, with the area of landscaped gardens being retained that run from the building down to the river.
- 6.40 All of these measures to ensure that the development is an appropriate scale for its context and that views are maintained over, into and out of the site ensure that the proposal is compliant with policies CH 5, DM 3 and DM 46 and Key Principle 3 of the SPD, which require developments to respect the characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
- 6.41 The new development will also improve the streetscene on Dee Banks, which is predominantly residential, as currently the site fronts the road with car parking spaces. Underground parking will be provided on-site so that off-road parking does not dominate the site and reduces the amount of hardstanding required - extensive gardens are characteristic of this area therefore the road frontage of the site will be landscaped as communal gardens. Overall, this will enhance the visual

amenity of the area in accordance with policy DM 3 and ensure that parking is integrated into the overall layout in accordance with Key Principle 10 of the SPD.

- 6.42 The new buildings will be more sympathetic to their Conservation Area context, where appearance of ventilation equipment and plant, fire escapes and service areas is important as stated in policy CH 5. At present, the restaurant building has an unsightly black external staircase on the southern elevation and ventilation equipment and large bins on show from the road, which are detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. The new development will incorporate such features in a subtle manner, with a dedicated screened bin store provided to ensure a high standard of visual amenity is maintained.

Impact on the Historic Environment

- 6.43 The application site is located within the Dee Banks Conservation Area, however the building to be demolished is not listed.
- 6.44 The proposed scheme has been designed to be sympathetic to the Conservation Area setting and in keeping with the surrounding vernacular and built form as required by policies CH 5 and DM 46. The design, scale and choice of finishing materials reflects the architectural styles of the area and will provide an enhancement to the Conservation Area setting in line with NPPF paragraph 200.
- 6.45 The development will not result in harm to any heritage assets in accordance with policy ENV 5 and NPPF paragraphs 184 and 192.
- 6.46 The impact of the development in relation to heritage considerations is discussed in further detail in the Heritage Assessment produced by Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy, which accompanies this submission.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.47 As the site is located within a predominantly residential area, the proposed apartments present an appropriate use for the site that is complementary to the surrounding land uses.
- 6.48 The new building has been designed to maximise views out over the river and beyond, with extensive glazing and balconies located on the western elevations to draw the focus in this direction towards the view and away from neighbouring properties. The northern and southern elevations will feature minimal amounts of glazing; these windows will be secondary to provide ventilation and articulation to the elevations and will feature vertical louvres fixed at 45 degrees to only allow views towards the river and not towards adjacent properties. Glazing in the front elevation will look out onto Dee Banks Road and will not overlook any surrounding properties. In combination these

design features will ensure that the privacy and amenity of all residents is protected, in accordance with policy DM2 and Key Principle 6 of the SPD.

- 6.49 The proposed residential development will also be better suited to its residential context than the existing restaurant use, with the amenity of neighbouring residents improved by the development in terms of noise, lighting and odour. Disturbance from any of these aspects is far more likely to arise from the existing restaurant, especially its outdoor seating areas, than from a residential use. The communal gardens will be screened from neighbouring properties using a combination of 1.8-metre-high fencing and hedgerow. Therefore, residential amenity will be protected, and likely improved, in line with policy DM2 and Key Principle 6 of the SPD.
- 6.50 In addition, the residential amenity and people's enjoyment of the area will be improved through the development as sufficient car parking will be provided on-site for each apartment. At present, the restaurant has limited on-site car parking which can result in patrons parking along Dee Banks road, which can negatively impact road safety and the appearance of the area.

Flood Risk

- 6.51 A Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment has been prepared by Weetwood and accompanies this submission.
- 6.52 The existing general layout on site will be maintained, with the built development located in the east of the site in Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is lowest.
- 6.53 The report confirms that the proposed buildings will be located outside the 1 in 1,000 plus climate change (20%) AEP flood extent, therefore application of the sequential test and exception test is not deemed to be necessary. Although the River Dee is located adjacent the western boundary of the site, based on the calculated flood levels and the topographical survey data, no flooding of the proposed building areas or access and egress is expected during any of the modelled flood events. Some flooding in the western extent of the developable area may occur parts of the proposed garden terrace areas.
- 6.54 The proposed development therefore accords with policies ENV 1 and DM 40, Key Principle 12 of the SPD, and paragraphs 155 and 163 of the NPPF, which stipulate that development should be directed towards areas at lowest risk of flooding.
- 6.55 Most of the external areas will be landscaped to provide communal gardens for the residents, utilising soft landscaping which will minimise flood risk on the site and elsewhere by providing permeable surfaces to assist with drainage and vegetation to intercept and percolate rainwater. This is in line with policy DM 40 and NPPF paragraph 155 which stipulate that development must not increase flood risk elsewhere and that sustainable drainage should be utilised where possible.

6.56 The report concludes that the proposed development may be completed in accordance with the requirements of planning policy subject to the following:

- Finished floor levels to be set at a minimum of 7.97m AOD
- Finished floor levels to be set 0.15m above adjacent ground levels
- The basement should be appropriately tanked
- The threshold level of access points to the basement should be set no lower than 7.97m AOD
- The threshold level of ventilation intake should be set no lower than 7.97m AOD
- The detailed drainage design to be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development

6.57 Further conclusions are as follows:

- Construction of the proposed garden terrace areas may displace 81.1m³ of floodwater during a 1 in 100 plus climate change (25%) AEP event, which is proposed to be compensated for in the communal garden area in the west of the site by lowering a 196m² area of land by approximately 0.41m.
- Dry access and egress is expected to be available via Dee Banks heading north.
- Surface water runoff from the developed site can be sustainably managed in accordance with planning policy.

Ecology

6.58 In July 2020, three ecological surveys were carried out at the site. These were an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, a daytime bat survey, and a water vole and otter survey at the riverbank.

6.59 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey concludes that most of the site is of limited ecological value. The site features large areas of amenity grassland and bare ground which have little or no value to wildlife. The shrubs and trees are also of limited value as they are small, isolated and located around the peripheries of the site. There are also no nationally or locally rare plant species present. Great Crested Newts are unlikely to be present due to lack of suitable breeding habitats in the area.

6.60 The building on site, which is to be demolished, offers negligible bat roost suitability. The survey found there to be no potential bat entry points and no evidence of bat activity or occupancy was found internally or externally. All the trees on site were also found to be of negligible bat roost suitability. The hedgerow on site offers suitable foraging and commuting habitat, and this is to be retained. The river corridor however offers better bat foraging opportunities, so the report recommends this remains unlit to protect the foraging habitat.

6.61 No evidence of badger activity was found on the site.

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- 6.62 The hedgerow and shrubs/scrub on site does offer suitable nesting bird habitat. The hedgerow will remain unaffected by the proposed development, and the loss of shrubs/scrub will be compensated for by installing bird nesting boxes on the site. Impacts on nesting birds can also be minimised by carrying out any works to the habitat outside the bird nesting season, or first undertaking a nesting bird survey.
- 6.63 No evidence of water voles was found along the riverbank at the site, or in adjacent habitats, as it lacks vegetation and the bank is steep and man-made therefore offering little or no burrowing opportunities. The riverbank at the site is considered sub-optimal water vole habitat. Otters are also not considered to be a constraint on development at the site. The riverbank at the site had no evidence of otter activity and is not considered suitable otter habitat due to the bank being man-made and the adjacent habitats comprising amenity grassland. The opposite bank away from the site is a more favourable otter habitat, however no signs of otter presence was found.
- 6.64 The site lies on the banks of the River Dee SSSI which is also designated as part of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC. No development is proposed within at least 10 metres of the banks of the river and therefore, there is expected to be no direct negative impact on the protected site from the development. The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, where residential development is not listed within the criteria as being a potential risk. It is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is implemented during site clearance and construction. Other recommendations include, where possible or required, a suitable Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) and suitable habitat buffer zones incorporated within the landscaping.
- 6.65 Rhododendron and Cotoneaster are present at the site; it is recommended that these continue to be managed on site to prevent spread into the wild, or that they are removed prior to any clearance works.
- 6.66 To enhance the biodiversity value of the site, the following recommendations are made:
- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
 - Tree and shrub planting – where practical, native tree and shrub species should be planted.
 - Bird and/or bat boxes could be erected onto the new building and/or retained trees.
 - Landscape buffer zone designed along the banks of the River Dee to enhance the wildlife corridor of the river and protect the river. This could include wildflower grassland and suitable tree planting.
- 6.67 Overall, at present the site is of limited ecological value with no evidence of any protected species found. The building to be demolished does not offer any suitable bat roosting opportunities and the bat foraging habitat along the river can be retained by avoiding artificial lighting. The man-made riverbank at the site does not offer any suitable habitat for water voles and otters, however no
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development will occur within 10 metres of the bank to protect the adjacent SSSI and SAC. The most valuable habitat on site (hedgerow) is to be retained and those of some value (shrubs/scrub) can be compensated for by installing bird and bat boxes. The biodiversity value of the site can be further enhanced through appropriate planting and creating a landscape buffer zone along the riverbank. Therefore, there will be no net loss of natural assets and the proposed development will facilitate a net gain for biodiversity, in accordance with policies ENV 3, ENV 4, DM 44, Key Principle 14 of the SPD and paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

Trees

- 6.68 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared by Tree Solutions Ltd as part of this application.
- 6.69 The report confirms that no trees within or adjacent the site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Furthermore, it is concluded that there are no significant trees on the site, with all categorised as grade 'C', therefore no trees should form a material consideration during the determination of the application.
- 6.70 In order to accommodate the proposed development, it will be necessary to remove tree numbers 1 and group 2. Tree 1 is a small purple plum that has been topped in the past resulting in an irregular crown form and pruning wounds to the main stem. This is not a visually significant tree and affords only low, transient value to the Conservation Area; as such, its removal will have no adverse impact to the landscape character and setting. Group 2 are small Cordylines of no amenity value due to their low height and crown diameter. The best quality trees and shrubs are Group 1 (see Figure 24), which can be easily moved to a new location within the available new gardens.



Figure 24 – Formal Photinia (Group 1) to be relocated if possible

- 6.71 The report confirms there are no valid arboricultural grounds for refusal.
- 6.72 As no trees of significance are to be lost as a result of the development, and those of the highest quality are able to be incorporated into the new scheme, the proposal accords with NPPF paragraph 170 and policies ENV 3, ENV 4 and DM 44, which all require preservation of natural assets, and enhancement where possible.

Highways and Access

- 6.73 A Highways Technical Note has been produced by transport consultancy SCP and accompanies this submission.
- 6.74 The report explains that the proposed access arrangements can achieve satisfactory visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in both directions from the access point onto Dee Banks, in accordance with Manual for Streets guidelines for speeds of 30mph.
- 6.75 Furthermore, the development will bring improvements to highway safety through provision of a turning/waiting area at the entrance to the car park, which will allow two vehicles to wait whilst a third uses the car lift to access to underground car park. Current parking arrangements on the site mean that vehicles often have to reverse directly onto Dee Banks, which is detrimental to highway safety. Two pedestrian access points will also be provided to the site, separate to the vehicular access point to ensure the safety of pedestrians.
- 6.76 The report also analyses the traffic generation arising from the existing and proposed uses. The analysis finds that the proposed residential use will produce an estimated 3 two-way trips during the morning peak hour and 4 two-way trips during the afternoon peak hour; this equates to a vehicle movement every 15-20 minutes during peak hours on average, which would have a negligible impact on the local highway network. Compared to the existing restaurant use, this represents an increase of 3 two-way trips in the morning peak hour, but a reduction of 19 two-way trips in the evening peak hour. Overall, the proposed development is predicted to reduce the daily number of two-way trips by 255.
- 6.77 Overall, the scheme will have a negligible impact on the local highway network and will improve highway safety in the area, in accordance with policy STRAT 10.
- 6.78 The underground car park will provide 24 no. car parking spaces, which will be more than adequate to accommodate the parking needs of 7 apartments in this sustainable location close to public transport links. Based on the Council's adopted parking standards, this development only requires 15 no. car parking spaces, therefore the proposal exceeds this and is in accordance with the Parking Standards SPD. The development also complies with Key Principle 10 of the Design for Residential Development SPD, as secure cycle storage will be provided, further encouraging active and sustainable travel. Electric vehicle charging points will also be installed in the car park.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been produced on behalf of Sterling Property Co. Ltd in support of a full planning application proposing the demolition of the existing building and the erection a new building to create 7 no. apartments plus associated underground parking at The Red House, Dee Banks, Chester.
- 7.2 The apartments will comprise 1 no. two bedroom property, 4 no. three bedroom properties and 2 no. 4 bedroom properties, each with private terrace or balcony and access to the landscaped communal grounds. 24 car parking spaces will be provided at the development, plus cycle storage and electric vehicle charging points.
- 7.3 The proposal involves the re-use of a previously developed site within an established residential area to deliver a high-quality housing development at one of the most prestigious sites on this stretch of the River Dee. Seven new homes will be delivered towards the Local Plan housing target in a highly desirable and sustainable location close to a variety of amenities and services.
- 7.4 The new building has been designed to be in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of appearance, height, scale and finishes, to ensure the development enhances the Conservation Area setting. The building will be in keeping with the height and style of nearby properties and will feature extensive glazing and recessed balconies, like other properties along the river, to maximise views and passive solar gain. Brick façades, brickwork detailing and the slate roof will ensure the building is in keeping without the materials palette of the area.
- 7.5 The existing landscaped gardens and the boat mooring will be improved to ensure the connection between the site and the river is maintained. The new development will not harm the residential amenity of the area as it has been designed to focus views out over the river and away from neighbouring properties to minimise overlooking. A residential use will be more appropriate to the setting than the current restaurant as there will be less chance of disturbance from noise, light and odour.
- 7.6 The proposed scheme has been designed to be sympathetic to the Conservation Area setting and in keeping with the surrounding vernacular and built form. The design, scale and choice of finishing materials reflects the architectural styles of the area and will provide an enhancement to the Conservation Area and the riverbank setting.
- 7.7 Built development will be accommodated in the area at the lowest risk of flooding, with flood risk elsewhere on the site able to be mitigated and compensated for. The development will also improve highway safety in the area.
- 7.8 The site is of low ecological value and offers habitats of negligible suitability to wildlife. The most valuable habitats will be retained and those to be lost that are of some value will be compensated for using bird and bat boxes, appropriate planting and creation of a landscape buffer zone along

the river, to achieve net gains for biodiversity. The highest quality trees will be retained and incorporated into the new scheme.

- 7.9 Overall, the proposal will bring environmental, social and economic benefits, and can therefore be considered a sustainable development. The proposal is in accordance with national, local and neighbourhood level policy, and should therefore be approved without delay in line with paragraphs 11 and 47 of the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.