

**Design and Access Statement
for: Office Conversion to 5 Flats
include extension to host
building**

At:

**Rear of 34b North Cray Road,
Bexley,
Kent,
DA5 3LZ**

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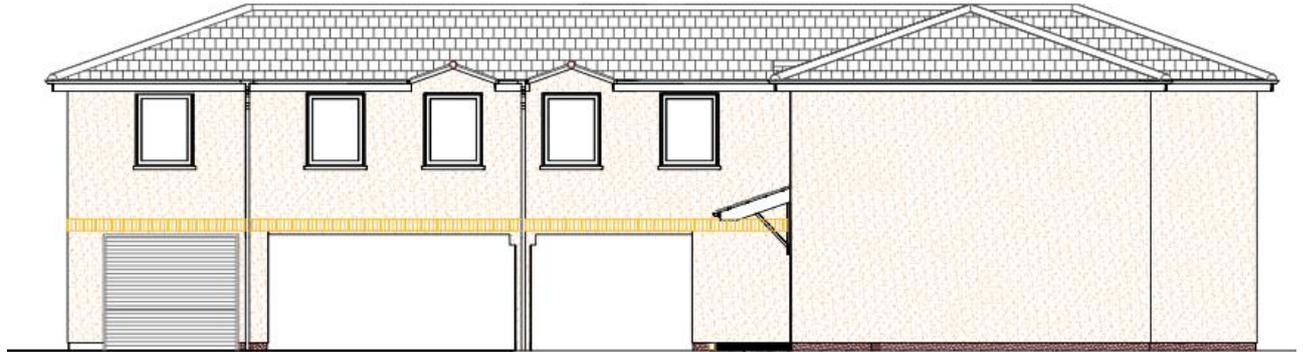
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Design and Access Statement

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Location: Rear of 34b North Cray Road, Bexley, Kent, DA5 3LZ



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1. Introduction

This statement explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development given the site context, while demonstrating that the site is adequately accessible for all. The statement also explains how the relevant National and Local Planning Policies and Guidance relate to the proposal. With this in mind, the following documents have been carefully consulted in the drafting of this application:

- The National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF(2019)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (2016)
- Bexley Core Strategy (2012)
- Approved Document E of the Building Regulations (2003)

The host site is located in the town of Old Bexley, within the Conservation Area, some 500 metres from Old Bexley train station. This application seeks full planning permission to enlarge an existing Office building to create five one bedroom flats. The development aims to fully respect the settlement of Old Bexley, the Conservation Area and the surrounding properties. To this end the application has been specifically designed to blend into the street scene, while having limited if any impact on the residential amenity of the immediate neighbouring properties.

Guidance for this application comes from the Local Bexley Core Strategy published in 2012. Further to this, the NPPF 2019. The core principle throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development Sustainable Development. This can be defined as '*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*' (NPPF para 7). The concept has three aims:

- Economic ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth
- Social ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations
- Environmental protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land

It is respectively considered and demonstrated within this statement and the plans themselves, that this proposal is deemed compliant with the relevant National and Local Policies and Guidance on such developments. Thus, the proposal has been submitted accordingly.

2. Regeneration and Housing within Bexley

Bexley has been the welcome recipient of a significant level of investment and economic growth in recent times that has resulted in the possibility of significant prolonged upwards growth in employment and housing demand in the area both in the present and for many years to come. Also, the area benefits from some fantastic road and rail routes into London, thus Bexley is a hugely popular and desirable place to live and work.

Adequate housing provision is needed to maintain a healthy and sustainable pattern of development within this positive economic climate both for present and future generations.

There are well established wider social and economic benefits to additional housing within a locality. An increase in peoples within town settlement boundaries provides extra footfall to local trades and services in the area, during and after construction. Indeed, focusing new developments in or close to existing settlements enables people to live more sustainable lives with less reliance on the car while also helping fulfil the National Housing figures target. New housing developments can also have a positive impact on the Environment, making good of sustainably located land against the alternative of undeveloped countryside or green belt land elsewhere.

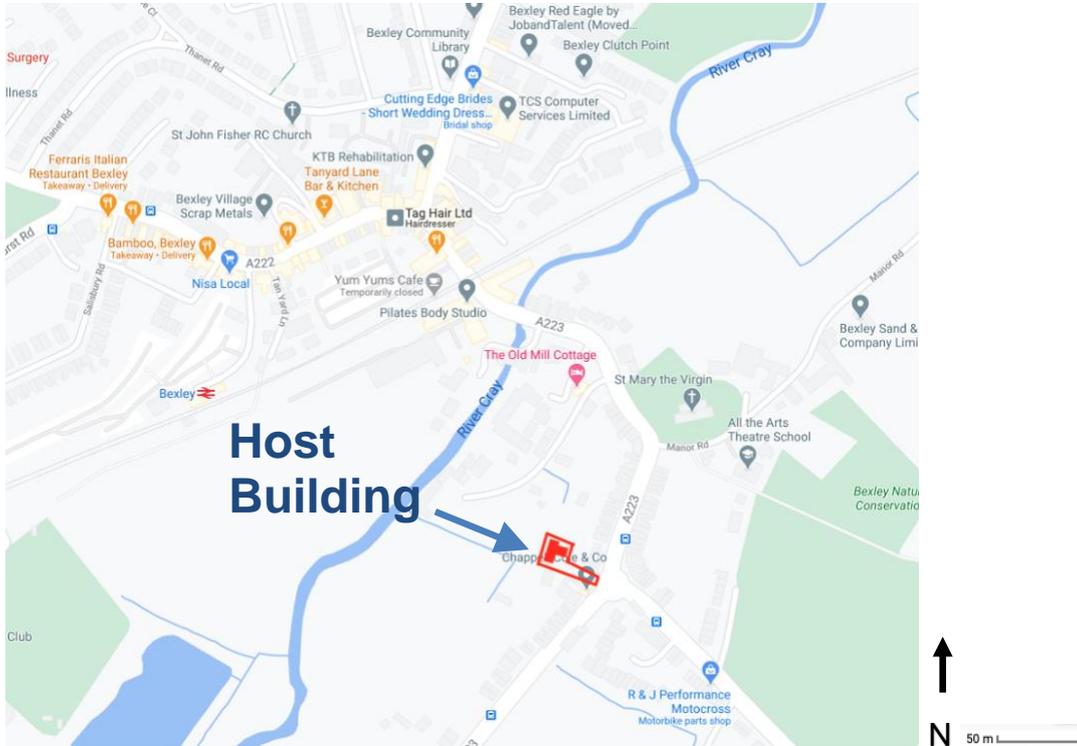
The National Planning Policy Framework is designed in part to ‘significantly boost the supply of homes’ (Para 59 NPPF 2020). Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify in their five year housing supply an appropriate buffer (depending on local circumstances) in addition to their housing requirement, to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planning supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

The latest housing land supply statements for Bexley state that they have a supply of 5.5 years with a five per cent buffer.

However, due to a history of poor housing supply, the Local Authority is assessed against a 20 per cent buffer. This results in 4.9 years of supply ie below the minimum 5 year supply required. As such paragraph 11d of the NPPF is triggered and there is a presumption in favour of granting sustainable developments unless the application of NPPF policies gives a clear reason for refusing permission.

<https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1705832/councils-likely-lose-five-year-land-supply-light-housing-delivery-test-results>

3. Site Description



The host building, is located to the rear of 34b North Cray Road. It is located approximately 100 metres south of Old Bexley High Street and 500 metres from Bexley Train Station. The building is a two storey Office Building that was built in 2008. The building benefits from ground floor off street parking with Office space at first floor.



The Red Line of the application site covers the access to North Cray Road. The image to the left demonstrates the approximate site area.

Further images of the host building are shown below. The number indicates where the Photo was taken from.



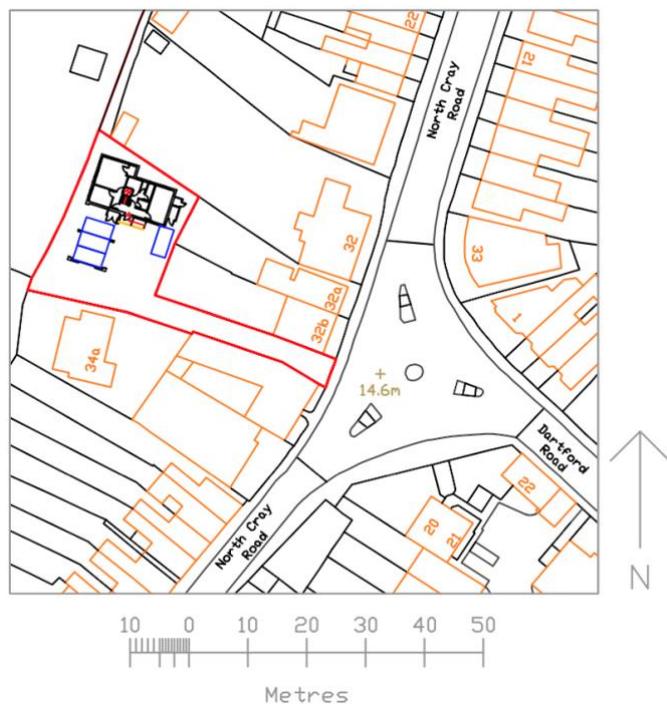
This image clearly shows the three parking spaces within the building footprint. These act much like a car port. As the drawings accompanying this application demonstrate. The first floor space is used as Office space.



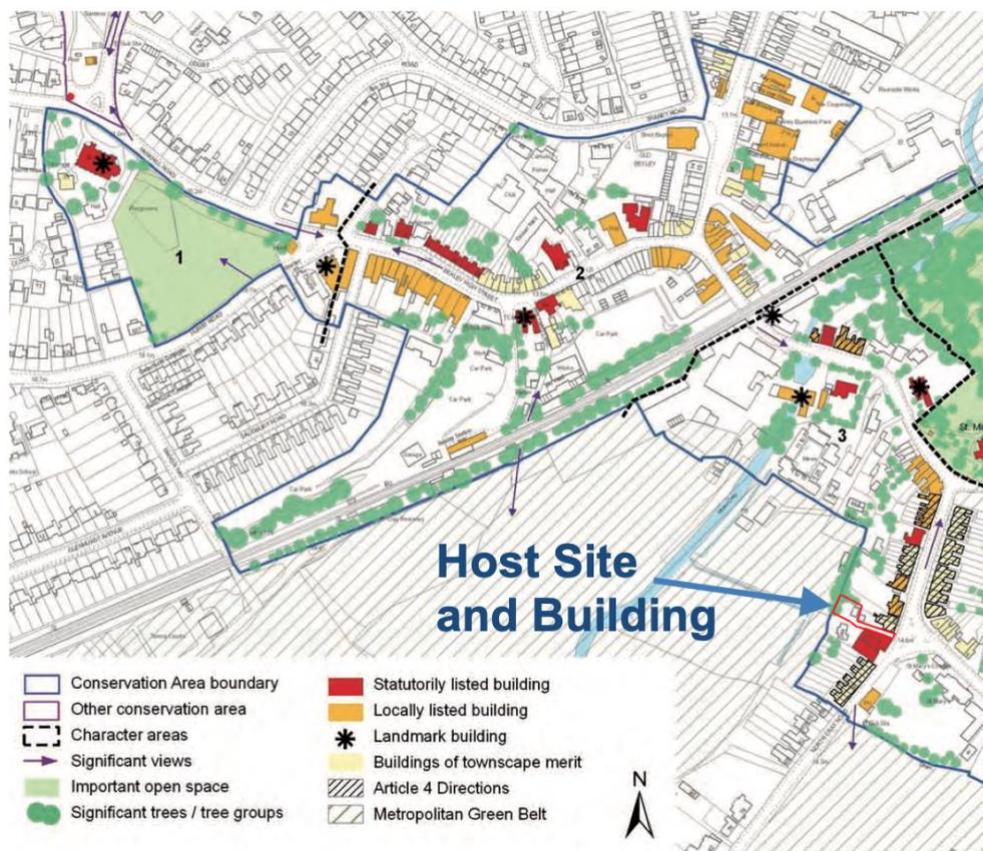
The roof line is low, there is also a noticeable overhanging eaves detail. The simple cream render with buff brick soldier courses at ground floor level make for a simple Mediterranean feel to the building.

According to the Planning History, the building was first approved in 2008 via application 08/13624/FUL. This involved the:

'Conversion and alterations of existing building (Heritage House) from offices to provide 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom apartments and erection of a detached two-storey office building to the rear of 32A and 32B with provision of parking.'



The host plot is located with the settlement boundary of Old Bexley and within Old Bexley Conservation Area. The property 34 North Cray Road, known as Heritage House, is a Grade II Listed Building. However, the host building is not Listed and neither do we believe the building is Curtilage Listed. To the rear of the host Office building is open private that is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. There are 3 private off street parking spaces associated with the existing Office building.



This part of North Cray Road is a busy road, how the traffic slows as cars enter the mini roundabout. The area consists of a mixture of residential family dwelling houses and buildings that have been converted into residential flats. Also, there are some industrial, commercial and Office buildings nearby. To the north of the host site, some 100 metres away is Old Bexley High Street.

There is limited off street parking nearby, most residential dwellings park off the road in front of their properties in dedicated spaces for those living in the area.

34 North Cray Road (Grade II Listed Building)

32a and 32b North Cray Road

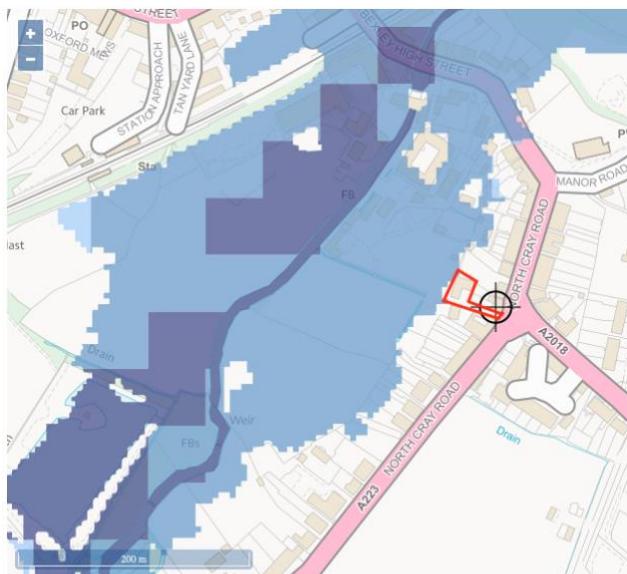
32 North Cray Road



Access to the host site

Not only being 500 metres from Bexley Train Station, that has regular trains to Charing Cross and St Pancras. The host site is also on three London Bus routes, numbers 492, 601 and B12. These bus routes service a number of local areas such as Dartford, Thamesmead, Belvedere and Erith.

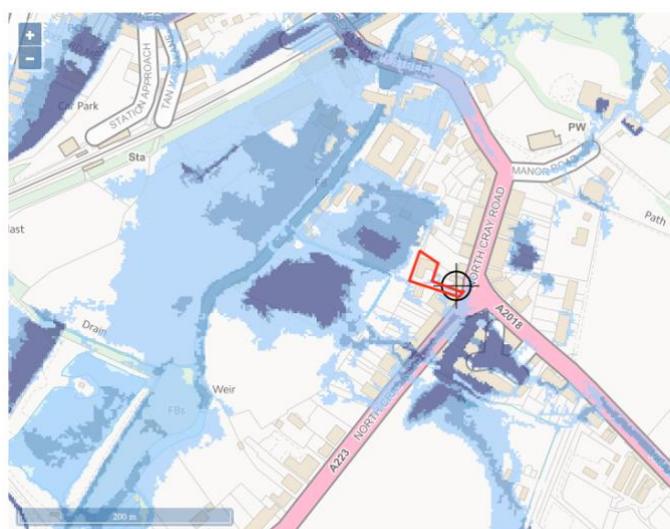
The land is predominately flat and 1.8-metre-high fence exists enclosing the rear garden space. The land is not located within flood zone 2 or 3 and is not affected by fluvial or surface water flooding.



Extent of flooding from rivers or the sea

● High ● Medium ● Low ● Very low ⊕ Location you selected

This image shows the extent of river flooding in the area. The lack of any blue indicates the area is not within Flood Zone 2 or 3.



Extent of flooding from surface water

● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very low ⊕ Location you selected

There is a small amount of surface water shown on this image from the Environment Agency in times of heavy rain. However, the host site is opposite a grassed area and is considered to drain slightly better than the surround areas. Such a pattern is typical of urban areas such as this.

Surface Water and River Flooding Maps from the Environment Agency

4. Planning History

- Ref. No: 12/00520/FUL

Proposal under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 regarding the conversion and alterations of existing building (Heritage House) from offices to provide 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom apartments and erection of a detached two-storey office building to the rear of 32A and 32B with provision of parking approved under reference 08/13624/FUL amended to allow the installation of three rooflights in proposed new office building.

Status: Application Permitted with Conditions

- Ref. No: 12/01967/FUL

Proposal under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 regarding the conversion and alterations of existing building (Heritage House) from offices to provide 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom apartments and erection of a detached two-storey office building to the rear of 32A and 32B with provision of parking approved under planning permission 08/13624/FUL to allow conversion to 2 x 4 bedroom apartments without the compliance of condition 17 which restricts the use of the basement as a habitable room.

Status: Application Permitted with Conditions

- Ref. No: 08/13624/FUL

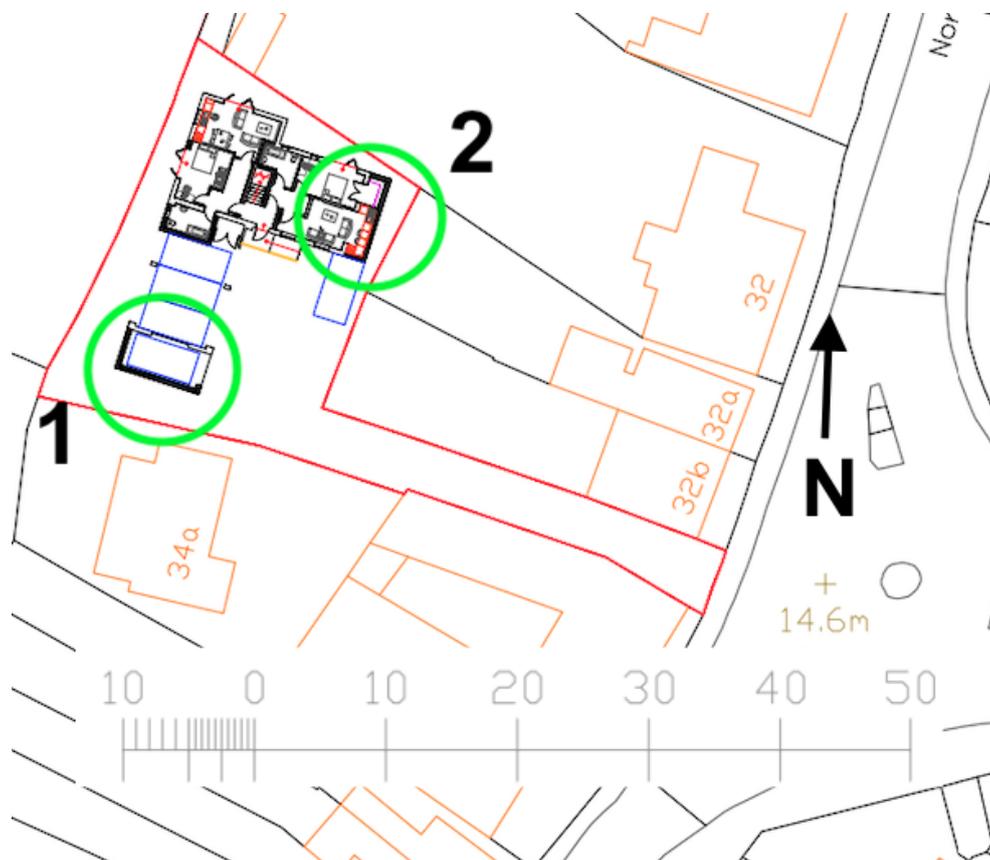
Conversion and alterations of existing building (Heritage House) from offices to provide 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom apartments and erection of a detached two-storey office building to the rear of 32A and 32B with provision of parking.

Status: Granted with Conditions

5. The Proposal

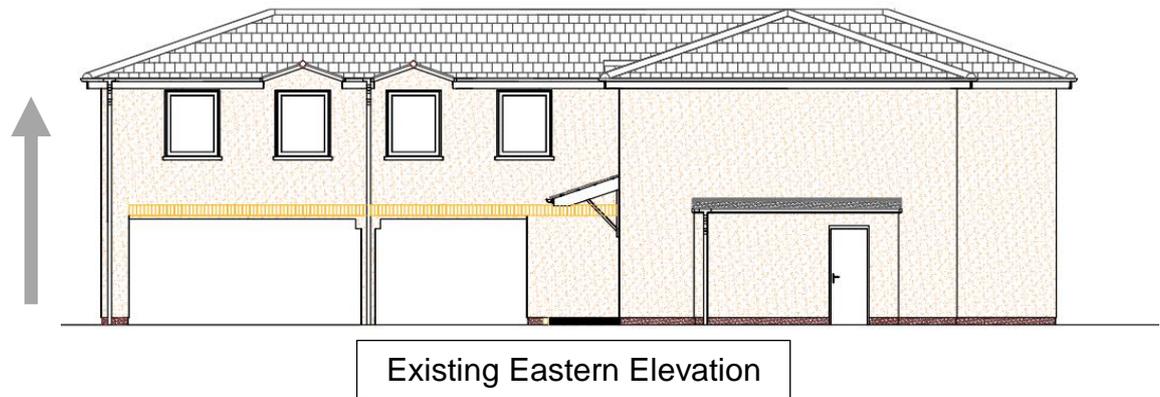
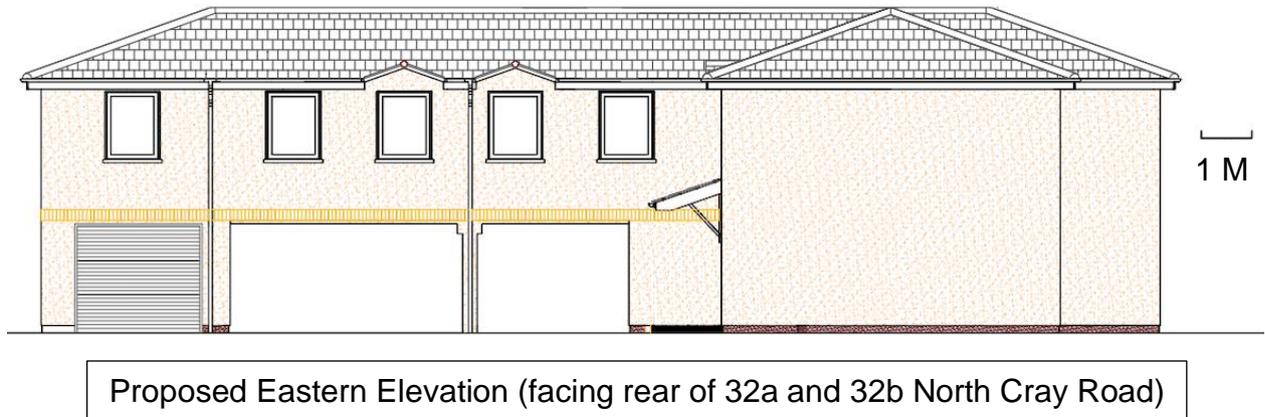
This application seeks full planning permission for the enlargement of the host building to create 5 self-contained flats with associated parking. The application indicates as shown on the Site Layout Plan, PSLP1:500S the retention of the majority of the host building with two extensions off the southern and eastern flank elevations. The proposed new building has been designed to a high standard to ensure the appearance is in keeping with the existing. The design exactly mirrors that of the existing property.

- Design



From an external perspective, there are essentially two changes to the host building. Firstly, an extension on the southern elevational and secondly, an extension off the eastern elevation. These are both detailed in the elevations below. There are also the amendments of the use of the fenestration on the building together with some additional openings. These are also documented in the following sections.

1. The first change to the host building is visible from the Eastern Elevation



As one can see from the above image a new parking space shall be created and space for a single flat above. The proposed extension measures approximately 4 metres in width. This ultimately allows for the possibility of 5 flats internally. Without these small extensions, the host building could only cater for 3 flats.

The height of the eaves, ridge and hipping angle shall stay exactly as exists at present. The design suggested a roller shutter garage door, unlike the car ports that exist at present. If required by the Local Planning Authority, there can be a car port in this location also.

The proposed new building shall be built out of materials that match the existing.

2 The second notable external change to the host building shall take place off the Western flank, this change is most noticeable from the southern elevation as demonstrated below.



Proposed Southern Elevation



Existing Southern Elevation

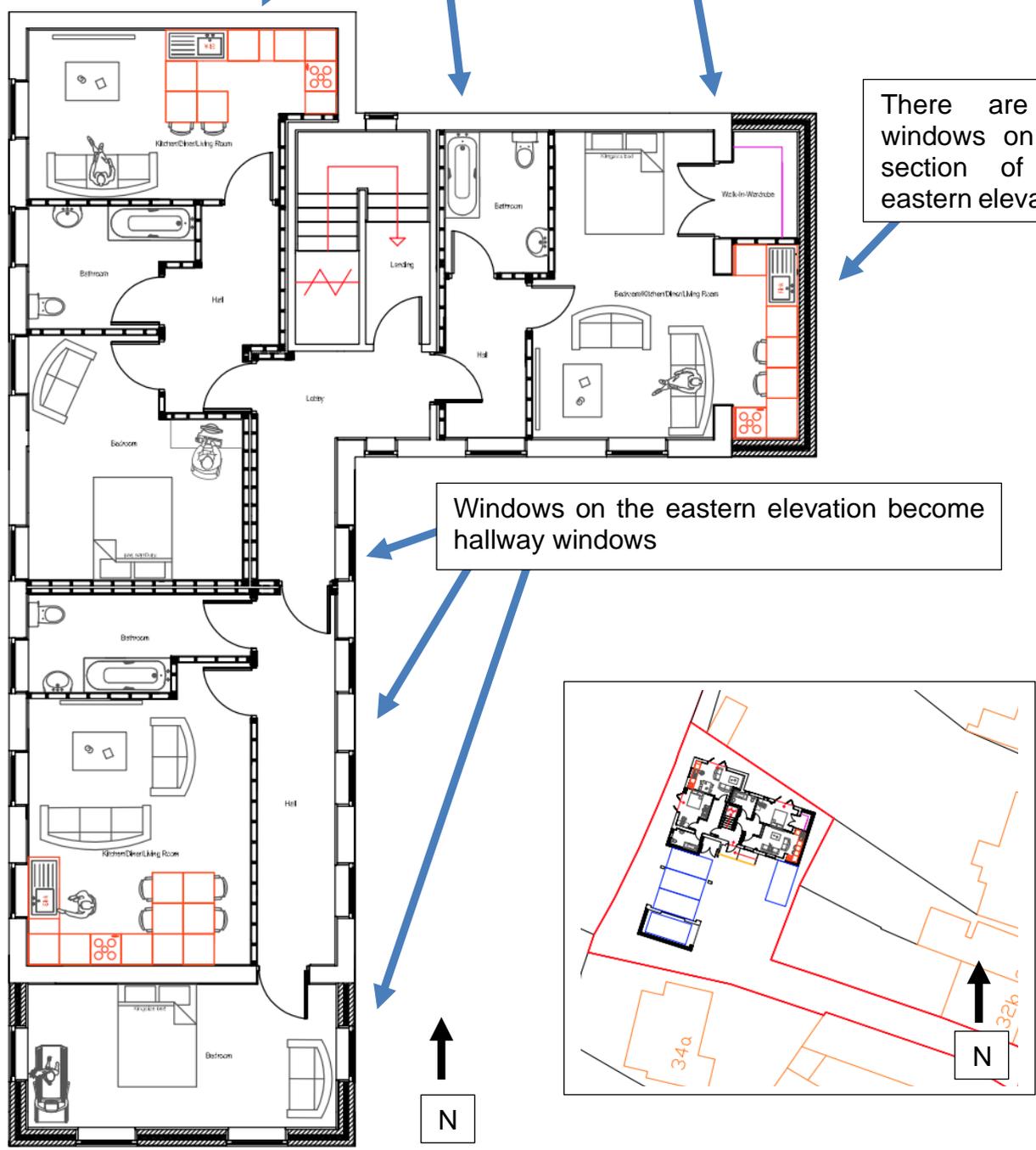
This second extension to the host building comes off the eastern flank and is visible from the southern elevation. The width of the proposed extension measures approximately 2 metres. Again, the angle of the hipped roof remains the same as exists at present. Likewise, the materials remain identical. This extension to the host building is all within the Red Line ownership area, furthermore there are no additional ground or first floor side facing windows facing the rear of 34a and 34b North Cray Road. The finished elevation is shown in the first example above, ie the 'Proposed eastern elevation'.

With regards to the change of use of the building and the creation of new uses for the rooms. A key concern has been residential amenity when designing the proposal. The main overlooking concerns in a development such as this come from the first floor as at ground floor the neighbouring close boarded fencing maintains privacy. Therefore, looking at the proposed first floor.

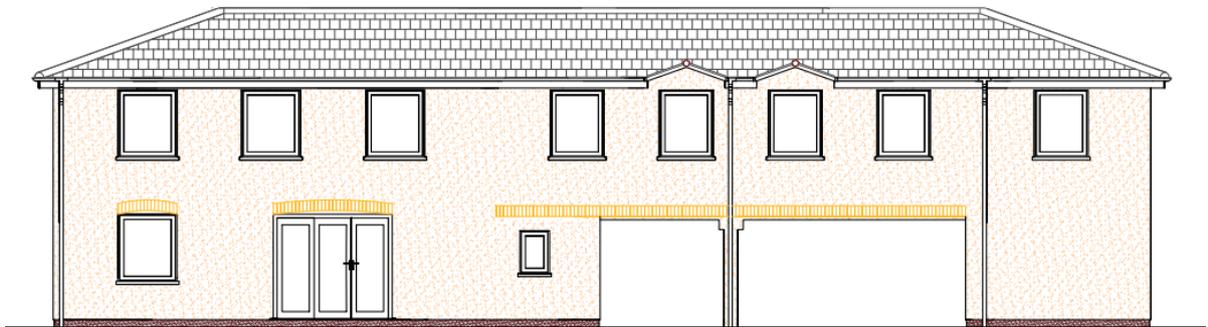
The first floor layout. The main point to note is that there are no new windows proposed on the northern elevation.

There are no windows on this section of the eastern elevation.

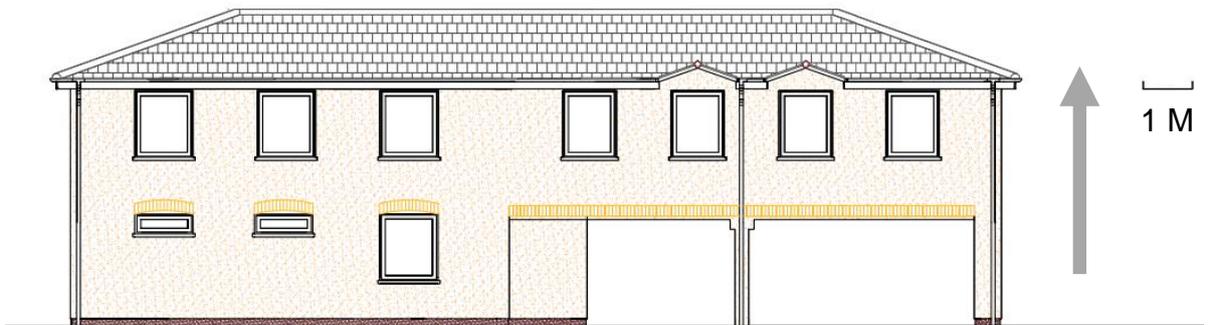
Windows on the eastern elevation become hallway windows



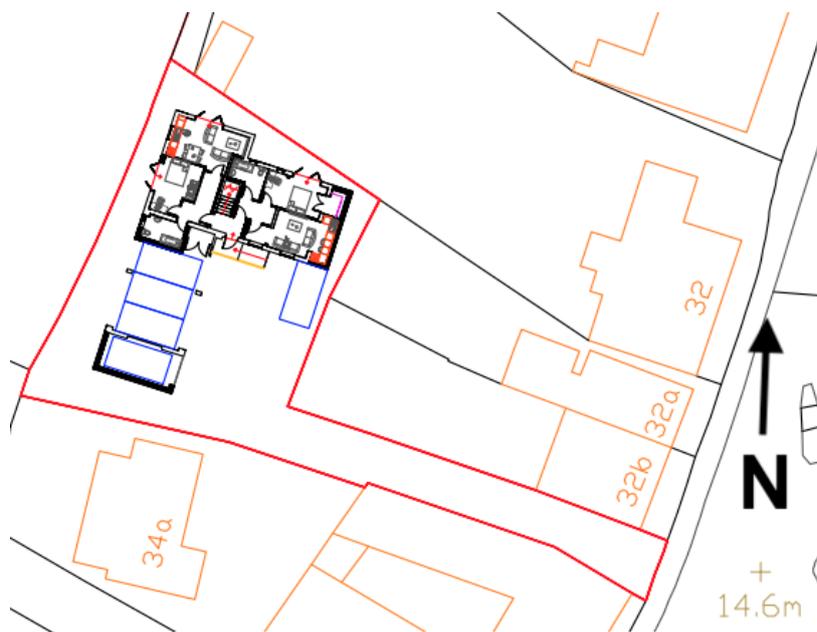
The western elevation looks over a private grazing land.



Proposed Western Elevation



Existing Western Elevation



Overall, the proposed design is considered sympathetic to the character of the area. The considered fenestration and roof design help provide a level of subservience to the neighbouring properties. Ultimately, it is considered the visual impact of the additional built form would be minimal within the street scene.

- Scale

North Cray Road, is an established residential street in Bexley. The properties surrounding the host site are only two storey terraced dwellings in short blocks with ample private amenity space to the rear and in most cases off-road parking space to the front. The proposed extension to the original building would have very little impact on the existing street scene. As mentioned and described above, **identical eaves and ridge height has been achieved together with hip roof designs.**

The internal floor sizes all acceptably meet the prescribed standards as suggested by the Local Authority and the National Minimum Space Standards.

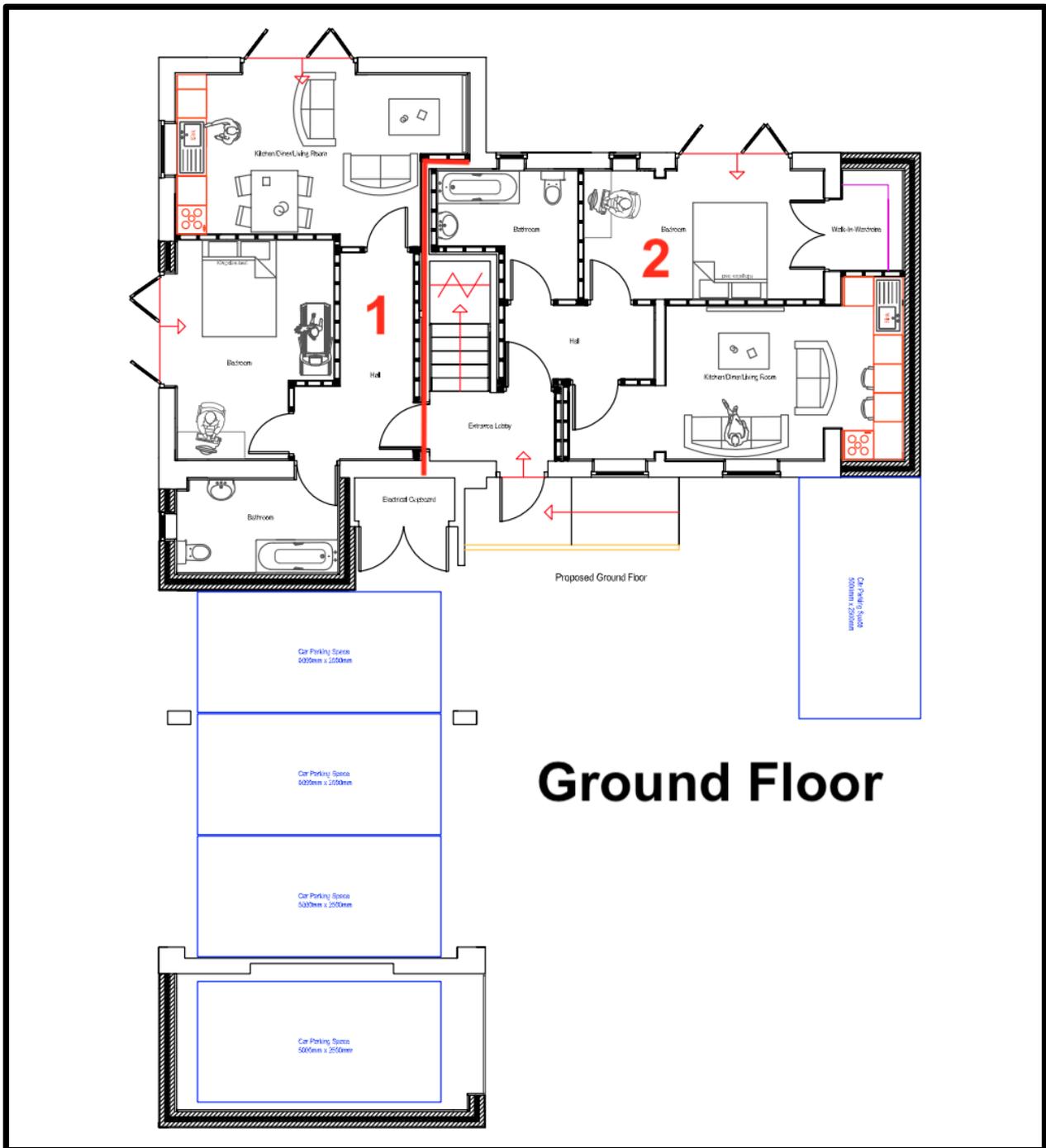
Table 1 - Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²)

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards

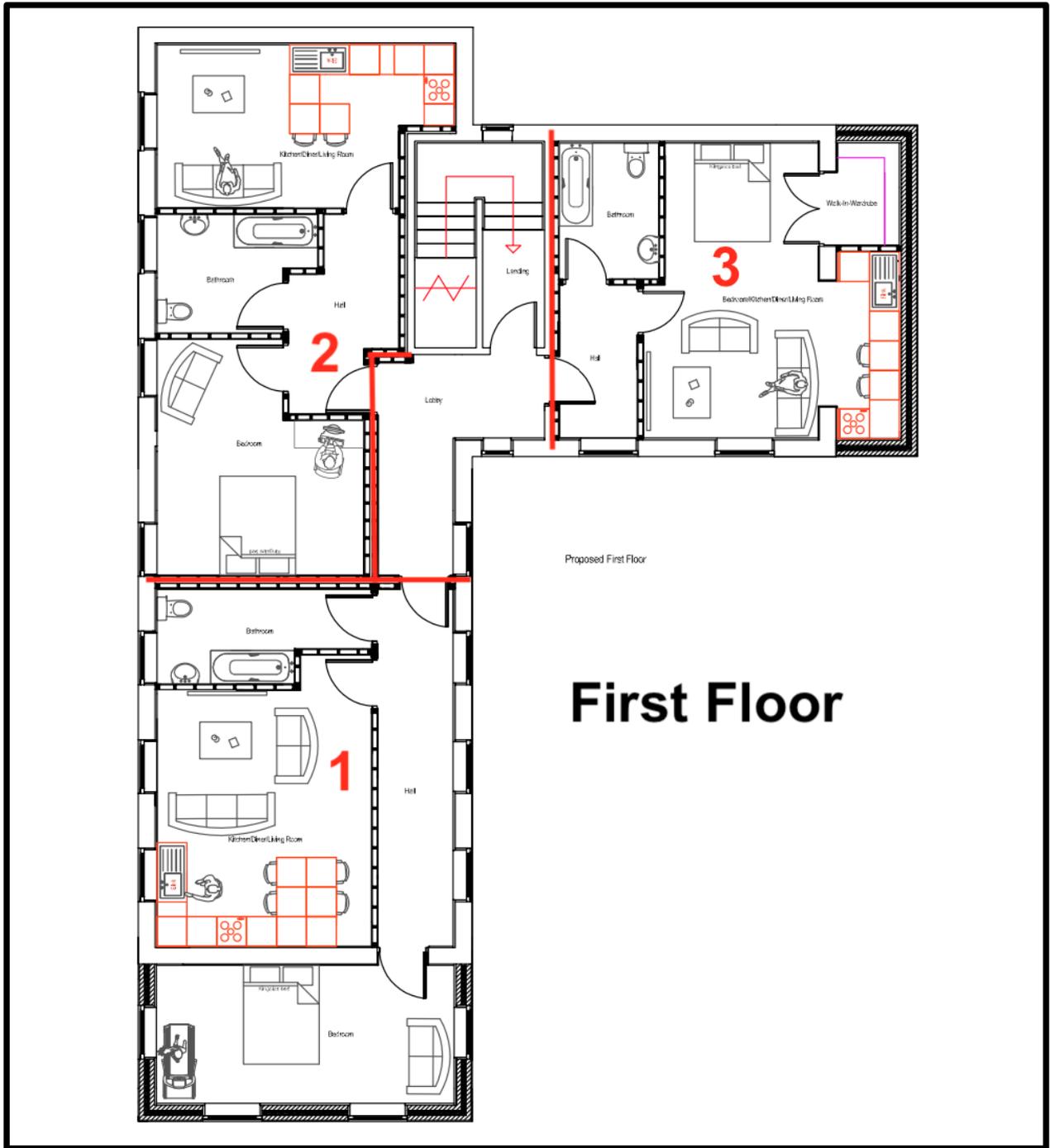
The total internal floor space at ground floor and first floor flats is as follows:

Flat	Total Size	Bedroom Size
Ground Floor 1	50.53	13.08
Ground Floor 2	50.06	16.95 inc Walk in Wardrobe



Ground Floor

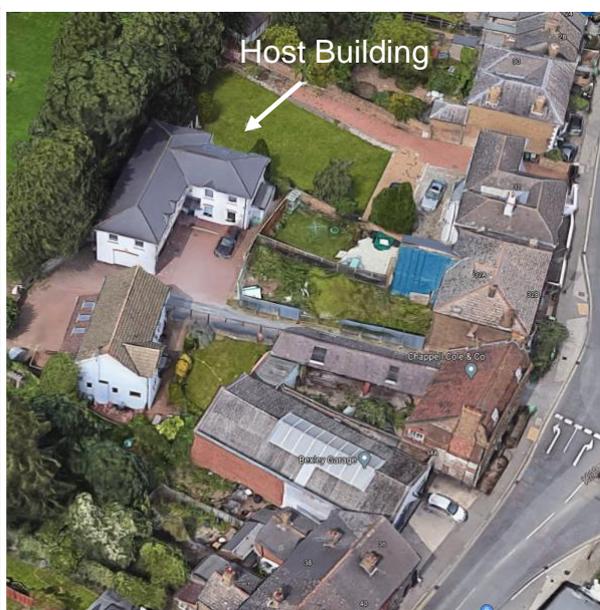
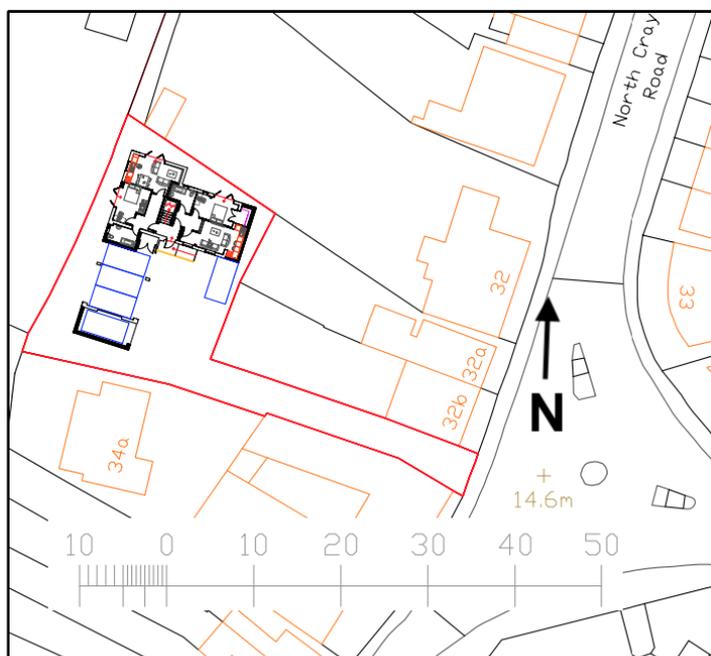
Flat	Total Size	Bedroom Size
First Floor 1	62.12	16.96
First Floor 2	51.05	17.14
First Floor 3	41.03	11.98 Bedsit 11.98 headroom part



In terms of parking, this is covered in more detail in the access section below. However, there is space to the front and below the property to enable the parking of five vehicles. Thus, enabling future residents to park on site and avoid unnecessary on street parking. Overall, the scale, height, massing, bulk and design of the development will be in-keeping with the existing street scene and respects the current domestic scale and form of the area as a whole.

- Amenity

The design of the dwelling has been arranged to avoid any concerns relating to overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or over dominance on any of the neighbouring properties. Both the ground floor and first floor flats have been carefully designed to provide quality useable internal space while mimising the loss of amenity to the neighbouring properties. As highlighted within the Design section above the position of the windows especially with regards to the first floor, has mitigated against any significant overlooking. Also the distance from the host building to the rear of 32a and 32a North Cray Road as demonstrated below helps retain a respectable level of privacy for local residents.





As demonstrated in the design section the northern elevation of the host building has no additional first floor windows, to protect the neighbours amenity in the garden space.

Furthermore, the southern elevation faces effectively the front of neighbouring 34a affording only very oblique views of the rear garden space.

Again, residential amenity is protected.

The host building benefits from a small amount of outdoor amenity space. This is utilised to good effect through the sectioning off of the available space. Each flat is given some outdoor space. After all, some space per flat is better than none whatsoever. The space given over to each flat is indicated in the site plan below.



It is considered there to be enough external space for residents to store a bike for example or hang washing out ect. This can be secured by Planning Condition. Access could be gained through the garage space for the upper floor flats.

- **Materials**

The architectural context around the site varies between, buff brick, red brick, brown / black / white UPVC windows and doors and grey/red roof tiles.

The host build will match the materials used on the existing building as closely as possible.

- Painted Render and Buff brick for details ie over windows.
- Black Roof tiles
- White Upvc Windows
- White Door Upvc / Aluminium to match existing
- Black UPVC Gutters and Downpipes

Where possible locally sourced materials, labour and sustainable construction methods shall be used and employed.

- **Access**

The proposal includes an ample off-street car parking provision for the intended occupiers of the dwelling, with sufficient space to accommodate any visiting vehicles. There is room to create 5 off street parking spaces at the proposed new building. A flat porous surface shall be provided within the courtyard area. The proposed development will not cause a substantial intensification of the current access and road network. Additionally, it is possible no new access would need to be provided for the proposed building. The wheelie bins can be stored to the side of the property and will be easily accessible for the occupants.

Overall, it is considered the site can provide ample off road parking pre and post construction. There shall be limited impact on the neighbouring properties during the construction phase as materials can be safely stored on site. While also, there are limited amounts of demolition/ground works required making the site ready for development. This in turn shall make the construction traffic more limited during the build phase. This aspect can be strictly controlled with agreement from the Local Planning Authority through a Construction Management Plan, via a planning condition.

There is a good public transport links nearby with Buses to Erith, Dartford and Belvidere and the immediate area is well served by footpaths. Medical services are available locally as are primary and secondary schools. The area benefits from excellent transport communications being only a short distance away from the A2 that travelling eastwards links into the M25.

6. Policy Position

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”) was originally adopted in March 2012 and subsequently revised in 2018 and 2019. This document replaced all previous National Policy Documents, including all Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes, as well as selected Circulars.

The Framework is an overarching document which established a new national planning policy agenda focused specifically upon the delivery of sustainable development. It must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbouring plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Paragraph 8 of the Framework specifically sets out the basis for the achievement of sustainable development in planning terms and defines three key objectives in the planning system:

- An economic objective
- A social objective
- An environmental objective

The Framework sets out the following points for consideration when assessing whether development is sustainable:

- Making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages
- Moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature
- Replacing poor design with better design
- Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure
- Widening the choice of high quality homes

Furthermore, with regards to sustainable development, Framework Paragraph 10 states:

“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and it is clear that the creation of new homes has an important role to play. Residential development is recognised as being a major contributor to driving economic growth, with the planning system helping to deliver the new homes that will move the country forwards.

- *Housing Supply*

At Paragraph 59 the Framework states that to significantly boost the supply of homes it is important that sufficient land can come forward where it is needed and that permission is developed without unnecessary delay. To determine the minimum number of homes, Paragraph 60 states that strategic policies should be informed by a local housing assessment conducted using the standard method unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.

- *Sustainable Transport*

Paragraph 108 of the Framework requires that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, that safe and suitable access can be achieved, and that any significant impacts on the transport network can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

- *Requiring Good Design*

Chapter 12 of the Framework focuses on achieving high quality buildings and places, highlighting that good design is a key component of sustainable development. Paragraph 127 sets out the various elements that comprise good design including functionality, attractiveness, character, sense of place, development mix and places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Paragraph 130 allows councils to refuse development of poor design that fails to take opportunities to improve the character, quality and functionality of an area. Conversely, where design accords with clear expectations in plan policies, such design should not be used as a reason for to object.

Locally, the following Policies are relevant:

London Plan (2016)

- 3.3 Increasing housing supply
- 3.4 Optimising housing potential
- 3.5 Quality and design of housing developments
- 3.8 Housing choice
- 5.1 Climate change mitigation
- 5.2 Minimising carbon dioxide emissions
- 5.3 Sustainable design and construction
- 5.13 Sustainable Drainage
- 5.15 Water use and supplies
- 6.9 Cycling
- 6.13 Parking
- 7.3 Designing out crime
- 7.4 Local character
- 7.5 Public Realm
- 7.6 Architecture
- 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology

- 7.14 Improving air quality
- 7.15 Reducing and managing noise, improving and enhancing the acoustic environment and promoting appropriate soundscapes
- 8.3 Community infrastructure levy

Core Strategy (2012)

- CS01 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- CS08 - Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change
- CS10 - Housing Need
- CS14 - Town centre vitality and viability
- CS15 - Achieving an integrated and sustainable transport system
- CS16 - Reducing the need to travel and the impact of travel
- CS19 - Heritage and Archaeology

Unitary Development Plan (2004) (saved policies)

- ENV39 – Quality of the Built Environment
- H1 – Housing Supply
- H3 – Housing Character
- H6 – Amenity space
- H7 – Privacy, outlook and setting of buildings
- H8 – Infill, backland and similar development
- H13 – Large residential developments
- T6 – Transport Network
- T14 – Cycling
- T16 – Safety and Convenience of Travel
- T17 – Parking Standards

- Of key importance

Impact on neighbouring amenity

UDP Policy H8 and ENV39 state development should not prejudice the environment of the occupiers of adjacent property in term of privacy, outlook and light. Policy 7.6- Architecture of the London plan (2016) states that buildings and structures should not causing unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding residential buildings in terms of privacy and overshadowing.

Impact on character and appearance of the area

Policies ENV39 and H8 of the UDP (2004) requires the Council to ensure that all new developments are of a high standard of design that is compatible with the character of the surrounding area and would not be prejudicial to neighbour amenities. Policy ENV39 specifically lists the following elements that need to be given careful consideration - scale, massing, height, layout, elevational treatment, materials and

intensity of development. Policy H9 states that “there is no adverse effect on the character of the area, including cumulative effects.”

Other Material Considerations

- Technical housing standards nationally described space standards (2015) – This application exceeds on in each case.

7. Summary

The current proposal is considered in accordance with the Local Plan by providing new residential developments within a settlement boundary, also to a scale required in the Borough. The proposal is design led, having been specifically tailored to mitigate against a loss of residential amenity, while being sensitive to the local area. The car parking spaces are as required by the Local Authority and the proposed dwellings will meet the Lifetime Homes standard as required regarding size and space.

The site is current vacant and the necessary infrastructure (drainage, gas, electrics, ect) exist on site. Development is this location would be considered compatible within the existing context of the area. Works could commence immediately.

With regard to scale, the massing and height of the buildings would be both subservient and in harmony with the surrounding buildings and site context generally. This is further enhanced by suitably used of building materials. The new development would make a positive contribution to local character. The internal and external amenity space proposed is appropriate for 5 single flats dwelling.

In relation to residential amenity the design has mitigated against any significant impact on the neighbours and the balance achieved is good, any impact would be minimal if at all.

Overall, the development would contribute positively to the economic, social and environmental strands of sustainable development, an essential objective for all development as indicated within the NPPF. The development would help positively exceed the housing targets in the Borough that are currently below the minimum 5 year supply level required by central government. Therefore, the presumption in favour of what is a 'sustainable development' should be applied in determination of the application.

End of Statement.