



PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT October 2023

PROPOSAL: REDEVELOPMENT AT NO. 268 HIGH STREET, DOVERCOURT CO12 3PD

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#### 1. Introduction

This Design Access and Planning Statement provides an overwiew of redevelopment proposals submitted in this planning application and should be read in conjuction with the following design information:

Majcher-Architect drawings no. P01 rev – Existing; P02 rev - Existing Site Photos; P05 Plans; P10 Elevations Sections; P11 Street Elevations; P12 Street Visuals; & Heritage Statement

Permission is sought for an upward extension to the existing building to create 1.5 stories and provide 4 no new flats, change of use on the first floor, redesign of building exterior and external amenity, construction of new refuse and cycle stores, retention and division of existing commercial space on the ground floor, creation of new residential entrance, and retention of 3 no. car parking spaces.

## 2. Site Description, Site Location & Context



Application site

The proposal site is located in the western part of the High Street characterized by the bland architecture of larger scale post-war architecture of larger scale post-war development buildings that in their collective appearance are considered to have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area due to their lack of fine graine and intricacy. This jarring juxtaposition is made worse by their place on relatively uphill ground, which gives them undue prominence as a raised backdrop in view from arguably the most characteristic part of Dovercourt Conservation Area at the Kingsway crossroads.



Application site viewed from the west



Application site viewed from the east (Dovercourt Conservation Area)

#### Dovercourt topographic map

Click on the map to display elevation.



This is a town centre location within the Settlement Development Boundary of Dovercourt.

Reference Extract about Dovercourt from Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019 by Urban Initiatives Studio Ltd:

Dovercourt is a small seaside town in Essex, situated on a narrow peninsula between the confluence of the River Stour and River Orwell and the North Sea. It is situated next to Harwich Town, the historic port town at the tip of the peninsula and is approximately 15 miles (30-minute drive) east of Colchester, the nearest large settlement. Adjacent to Dovercourt is Harwich International Port with regular ferries to Holland. To the north on the opposite side of the River Orwell lies the Port of Felixstowe, which is the largest container port in the UK. Dovercourt is the main service centre for the settlements of Harwich Town, Upper Dovercourt and Parkeston as well as outlying villages.

The application site is located at a prominent corner site to on the north side of Dovercourt High Street within the Dovercourt Town Centre area. Dovercourt High Street has a very interesting topography, it slopes down from west to east. The existing building on site is not listed and the application site is not within any Conservation Area. The (nearest) Dovercourt Conservation Area is approximately 90 metres away.

The buildings of historic and architectural interest in the application site area include a rather hidden Grade II Listed Mill House which is in close proximity to the application site; also nos. 9 & 252 High Street, 153 - 155 High Street, the Cabin Bakery, the TSB Bank Building, 42 - 46 Kingsway, and a few others.

The site also falls outside of a recognised flood-risk zone. It also has excellent access to nearby transport links and is within a comfortable walking distance to all local amenities including the rest of the High Street, the railway stations, the Seafront and Cliff Park.



Grade II Listed Mill House in the close proximity to the application site. The original setting of Mill House no longer exists.

The application site comprises an existing building to the west and an outdoor area at the road junction of Hill Road and the Dovercourt High Street. The site has remained vacant for a considerable number of years despite owners' attempts to attract various new uses and tenants.

The existing building on site was constructed around 1960/70. It consists of two storeys and abuts the neighbour 2 storey supermarket building to the west and north. It has been designed for commercial use and has been used as office space to date.

Building exterior is of a simple design. It features red brick elevations with white render elements including a horizontal band at the floor level between two storeys. Window design includes shopfront elements to the High Street corner and smaller windows to the rear and the first floor. The building has a flat roof and a sloped parapet along its front and rear.

The building is of a simple, modernist and fairly neutral design, very typical of its time.

It can be viewed as a part of bigger and fairly consistent group of buildings built in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century around the road junctions of Dovercourt High Street/Hill Road/ High Street Road, Mill Lane, Cliff Road.

The building has 3 points of access. Internally, the circulation is arranged about a single stair with half landings giving access to rooms within the building.

The existing building on site is located within a Primary Shopping Frontage from 2019. This designation applies to its south elevation only. Hill Road is not

included within the Primary Shopping Frontage zone. The site also was not included a Primary Shopping Frontage at all under a previous 2007 Local Plan.

The building is also within Town Centre Priority Area for Regeneration which benefits from a special focus of Tendering Council on investment in social, economic and physical infrastructure and initiatives to improve vitality, environmental quality, social inclusion, economic prospects, education, health, community safety, accessibility and green infrastructure within this area.

Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019 by Urban Initiatives Studio Ltd denotes the application site as site ref. P06a High Street West: Pocket space – high priority project (Details of the proposed concept design are included in further sections of this document).

The application site has been identified as 'critical for the regeneration of Dovercourt. If designed well, it may have 'a transformative impact, act as catalyst and bring major improvements to residents and visitors.... delivery should be pursued with urgency'.

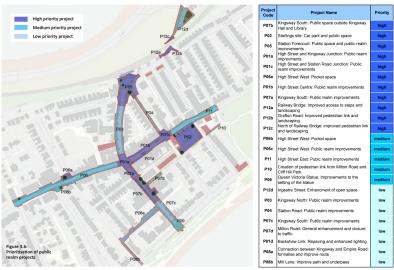
Relevant extracts of this report are enclosed :



Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019



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## 3. Planning History

Ref. No: 17/00191/COUNOT	Conversion of offices to 4 no. two bedroom flats	Prior Approval Not Req'd
Ref. No: 18/01118/FUL	Change of use to new funeral home and associated alterations.	Application Withdrawn
Ref. No: 18/01180/FUL	Change of use to A1 retail and minor external alterations.	Approval - Full
Ref. No: 19/00438/COUNOT	Proposed daycare nursery.	Deemed App Refused - Prior Apprv Req'd
Ref. No: 19/00887/FUL	Proposed change of use from A1 to D1 (Nursery), provide security entrance on external and internal doors, and include an outdoor area enclosed by a 6-foot acoustic fence with gate for emergency access.	Application Withdrawn

# 4. Pre- application Process & Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019

This planning application is a follow up to a pre- application reference no. 23/30096/PREAPP dated 15 June 2023. The Case Officer provided us with helpful advice and identified a number of design elements to be considered for a future planning application.

In result, this planning application has a revised brief and aims to address the points raised at the time. We list some relevant extracts from that preapplication enquiry below:

Page 3: The proposal for residential above the existing commercial uses is supported by Policy PP5, however any development must pay due regard to the character and appearance of the locality, not harm existing or future residential amenity, and preserve or enhance the conservation area setting.

## Page 3: Massing and Scale:

In this part of Dovercourt, the predominant building height is 3 no. storeys, with some singe storey and 2 storey buildings located to the west... However, as noted

below in the comments of the Council's Heritage advisors there would be no objection in principle to the construction of a 1-1.5 storey upward extension in this location. Moreover, the proposed massing adopts a very simplistic form replicating the 60/70's massing of the adjacent buildings, as such the minimal architectural detailing does little to break up the appearance or height of the building.

Page 5: As the proposal site is lower than the other buildings along High Street and Hill Road, there would be no objection in principle to the construction of a 1-1.5 storey upward extension providing that the new building is similar in scale, height and character to 262-266 High Street on the opposite corner. A similar extension would not be considered an incongruous addition to the street scape and the views from the Conservation Area, subject to the use of high-quality design and materials.

The pre-application report did not refer at all the Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019 by Urban Initiatives Studio Ltd which specifically identified the application site as one of the high priority projects within the Town Centre.

The site ref. P06a High Street West: Pocket space – high priority project identified as 'critical for the regeneration of Dovercourt. If designed well, it may have 'a transformative impact, act as catalyst and bring major improvements to residents and visitors.... delivery should be pursued with urgency'.

Pages 12 and 72 shows the application site as included in the study area boundary. The site is annotated as having poor quality frontage and as one of the areas detracting from the character of the Town Centre. The proposed concept design includes a new public space at the south east corner of the site with a new feature tree, seating, lighting and new footway.

We have found this study extremely helpful during the works on this project. It provided us with a good analysis of Dovercourt and some helpful guidance about our application site. We note that the enclosed application proposal includes all the recommendations for our site noted in this report.



Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019



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## 5. The Development Proposal







## 5. The Development Proposal

The application proposal aims to contribute as a new built asset to the local High Street streetscape and mitigate the existing host building's modest contribution to the adverse impact of that particular street junction on the conservation area nearby.

The proposed design proposals include the following:

- An upward extension to the existing building to contain two new residential duplex units;
- A new residential entrance along Hill Road;
- A complete redesign of the outdoor space on site to include a new tree feature/pocket park, new residential entrance and associated landscaping, car parking, cycle and refuse stores;
- Change of use to the existing first floor commercial space into two new residential units:

- Retention and remodelling of the existing commercial use on the ground floor to accommodate a new residential entrance;
- Overall refurbishment of the existing building exterior;

The proposal has been carefully designed to create positive relationships with two roads (Hill Road and the High Street), the neighbouring sites, and local heritage sites and the Conservation Area.

- It relates to the geography and history of the place;
- It sits harmoniously in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it (including public footpaths);
- It respects important views. It respects the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- It utilized high quality materials and building methods;
- It creates new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of this setting;
- It relates well to the local setting and are of a suitable scale, mass and form.
- The development promotes active frontages addressing the two roads: Dovercourt High Street and Hill Road.

#### Layout

The proposed layouts allow for the following arrangement:

- Two separate commercial units on the ground floor;
- A new residential entrance on the ground floor;
- Two new 1-bedroom new residential units on the first floor in place of the existing office space;
- Two new 2-bedroom duplex residential units on the second and third floor 'loft' levels;

All proposed residential units have been designed to meet the quality requirements set out within the DCLG Technical Housing Space Standards. This is illustrated in the Schedule of Accommodation below:

	No of Bedrooms	No of People	Internal Area (m2)	External Private Area (m2)	Car Parking Spaces
Flat B	1	1	44	5	0
Flat C	1	1	41	5	0
Flat D	2	3	87	8.5	1
Flat E	2	3	84	6.5	1
Commercial Unit 1			51.4		1
Commercial Unit 2			50		

Cycle parking allocation – 2 cycle parking spaces per each flat and per each commercial unit

#### Access

Safe and level pedestrian points of access to the site are provided from both roads. A new residential access area is formed along Hill Road. Both commercial units have separate entrances.

#### **Scale and Massing**

In this part of Dovercourt, the predominant building height is 3 no. storeys, with some singe storey and 2 storey buildings located to the west. In addition, the Council's Heritage advisors who provided the pre-application advice noted that there would be no objection in principle to the construction of a 1-1.5 storey upward extension in this location.

The proposed massing adopts this recommendation, the building is therefore 3 and a half storeys high.

The design uses a fresh architectural approach for the new upper one and a half storeys to obscure the increased massing, introducing a more variegated arrangement of traditional and contemporary external materials dispersing the first floor bulk with new voids for corner terraces, and taking the opportunity to refer to the attractive semi-detached pairs along Hill Road with a

finger-grained frontage to Hill Road comprising two projecting feature gables around a new vertically-orientated central entrance element.

The building at this scale will not dominate in views along this section of the High Street as the land slopes down to the west and east.



Semi-detached pairs along Hill Road

## **External Appearance & Materiality**

The proposal takes cues from the predominate features of Lower Dovercourt Conservation Area and its predominant building materials such as red brick, with gault brick, brown brick, plaster and stone detailing contributing to the architectural interest and character of the building stock.

Corner plots in Lower Dovercourt Conservation Area in particular are grandiose, with details including turrets, decorated gables, keystones, and brick detailing. As well as red brick, buildings are often painted or rendered and painted, typically in bright whites, creams or pastels characteristic of seaside towns.

Trees and Planting Historic images of the Conservation Area illustrate the contribution that trees once made to its character and appearance. The characteristically wide streets were once tree lined avenues, creating impressive streetscapes and breaking up the densely built-up character with welcome greenery. It is noted that the reintroduction of these trees would be beneficial to the character of the area.

The proposal remodels and significantly upgrades the existing exterior. All three visible elevations feature prominent gabled features. The front High Street elevation and the rear elevation are both asymmetric. The proposed feature gables aim to link the site with its immediate neighbour buildings to the north: the existing semi-detached pairs along Hill Road featuring attractive gabled frontages. Gabled front facades also feature heavily in other areas of Harwich Old Town and both Lower and Upper Dovercourt in general.

The side elevation along Hill Road is much bigger in width and arranged symmetrically. It features a new prominent residential entrance in the centre flanked by gabled features on either side.

The existing fenestration is replaced with new window openings and new inset balconies to suit the flat layouts.

A selection of modern exterior materials is proposed to upgrade the existing building and give it a much needed fresh and contemporary appearance. These include new brickwork, black standing seam cladding, hung red/dark brown tile and off-white render. All in keeping and complementary to building façade materials prevalent in local Conservation Areas.



Examples of 'Gabled features' in the area







- 1. Red brick to walls
- 2. Slate roof tile
- 3. Standing seam cladding to gables
- 4. Render finish to balconies
- 5. Hanging tile to walls
- 6. Dark grey frames to windows and doors.

In terms of views within the Conservation Area boundary only the host building's shorter High Street frontage is visible from the Kingsway crossroads and westward along High Street, so the proposed corner feature tree will play an important role in screening the updated host building from prominence, and the partial setting back of new upper floors will make them barely visible from the Conservation Area. The proposed tree and associated 'pocket park' features will greatly improve this part of the Conservation Area's setting and enhance the views of it along the High Street.

## Open Space/Amenity/ Landscaping/Biodiversity



The proposal also includes an overall consistent redesign of the entire outdoor area on site.

The following upgrades are proposed:

- A corner tree/'pocket park' feature comprising a raised planter with a
  new tree and low-level evergreen shrub planting. The raised planter to
  have an integrated, vandal-resistant seating. The area would also
  feature a discreet exterior lighting. The 'pocket park'/tree corner
  feature will provide a new public realm for everyone to use. It will also
  aid to screen the building when viewed from the east in particular.
- A new entrance area to the side of the building will include new landscaping for communal use and enjoyment.
- All proposed flats will also have private outside amenity areas: inset balconies and terraces.

In terms of the impact upon existing neighbour amenity, the development is unlikely to have any adverse impact.

#### Daylight

The internal layouts of all units have each primary habitable room (i.e. bedrooms, kitchens, living rooms) with windows providing a good degree of natural daylight.

#### Plant and Noise

The proposal will be designed to meet current Building Regulations standards and will aim to reduce noise transmission within the building and also aim to soundproof the proposed flats from outside traffic noise as required.

We can also confirm that the existing plant equipment on the adjacent former Somerfield Supermarket is old, historic and no longer working. We are also being advised by our acoustic consultant that the current resident of these premises Well worth-a Pund does not require this kind of plant/equipment.

#### **Residential Refuse Storage and Collection**

Refuse Storage and Collection are based on the guidance provided on Tendring District Council websites:

https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/recycling-rubbish/check/rubbish-recycling-collection-days

and

https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/what-goes-your-recycling-boxes

Car parking and refuse areas are located to the side along Hill Road.

A new refuse enclosure is proposed for the new residential element on site. The enclosure will be within 30 m distance from every proposed dwelling on site and also close to the new main residential building entrance. Refuse collection will still take place from Hill Road.

5 proposed residential units will require total storage capacity of 1250l (50% of total storage capacity is allocated to recycling).

Tendring BC recommendations re waste containers (to be provided for both proposed flats):

- green recycling boxes for plastic bottles, tins and cans and red recycling boxes for paper and cardboard
- a small internal food caddy for use inside your home and a larger external food caddy to present for collection
- black bags for general waste

Containers: The kitchens will have integrated three compartment bins for recyclables, kitchen waste, refuse.

The waste from the proposed flats will be packed in watertight bags and boxes and moved to the communal residential refuse store on the ground floor level located outside the main building.

The refuse from the proposed flats will be collected on designated collection days. Please see Council's website for current details.

General Waste (black sacks): weekly collection on days as specified on Council's website;

Recycling: an alternate weekly collection;

Food Waste: weekly collection.

Refuse is to be presented in sealed refuse sacks with recycling presented in plastic boxes supplied by Tendring District Council.

Refuse collection vehicle will stop on Hill Road.

### **Commercial Refuse Storage and Collection**

Waste generated by both commercial units will be stored internally as per the existing arrangement.

It will be brought outside of the entrances on collection days.

#### Cycle, Buggy/Scooter Storage

Each flat and each commercial unit will be allocated with a secure storage locker for 2 cycles. 2 visitors cycle parking spaces are also provided. In addition, a store for buggies and a mobility scooter is also proposed. The storage is located in the outdoor residential entrance area. All storage will be secure and lockable, and well overlooked.

### **Car Parking**

The proposal utilizes the existing car parking provision on site. 3 car parking spaces are proposed each sized 5.5m x 2.9m. 2 spaces will be allocated to the residential element and 1 space to the existing commercial use on site. No further car parking is proposed as the site benefits from its town centre location and excellent links to public transport.

#### **Sustainable Construction & Design**

The proposed scheme is seeking to utilise more of the existing building structure. In this way, not only will this reduce construction costs and time-scales, but also make better use of existing resources and embodied energy within the building. An Energy Plan will be developed in accordance with the 'Be Lean, Be Clean and Be Green' philosophy in terms of energy conservation and use. That is: 1. 'Be Lean'-striking the right balance between reducing energy loss through the building fabric and gains produced by systems within the building; 2. 'Be Clean'-ensuring that energy is efficiently used by employing building systems that use energy efficiently; and 3. 'Be Green'- using appropriate renewable sources of energy. The use of electric charging points, green/brown roofs and PV panels to aid the sustainability of the development are all included. The new dwellings will achieve a water consumption rate of not more than 110 litres, per person, per day. All flats will be cross ventilated. The ground floor garden/amenity space will provide a new bio-diversity and wildlife pocket on site.

#### 6. Planning Context

The following planning policy guidance is relevant to this application proposal:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework July 2021; National Planning Practice Guidance Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033; North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan (adopted January 2021): SP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development; SP2 Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS); SP3 Spatial Strategy for North Essex; SP4 Meeting Housing Needs; SP7 Place Shaping Principles

Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Section 2 (adopted January 2022): SPL1 Managing Growth; SPL2 Settlement Development Boundaries; SPL3 Sustainable Design; HP5 Open Space, Sports & Recreation Facilities; PPL5 Water Conservation, Drainage and Sewerage; PPL8 Conservation Areas; PPL9 Listed Buildings; PPL10 Renewable Energy Generation; LP1 Housing Supply; LP2 Housing Choice; LP3 Housing Density and Standards; LP4 Housing Layout; PP2 Retail Hierarchy; PP5 Town Centre Uses; PP14 Priority Areas for Regeneration; CP1 Sustainable Transport and Accessibility; CP2 Improving the Transport Network; DI1 Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation.

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking Standards Design and Good Practice Guide (2009); Essex Design Guide (2005); Dovercourt Conservation Area Appraisal;

Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019 by Urban Initiatives Studio Ltd.

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Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) requires developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture. We believe that the scheme as proposed will meet these criteria.

Policies SPL1 and SPL 2; SP4 Meeting Housing Needs: The site is located in a town centre location within the Settlement Development Boundary (SDB) of

Dovercourt, which is a Strategic Urban Settlement at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy. Under this policy there is a general presumption in favour of new development.

PP2 Retail Hierarchy and Policy PP14/\_Priority Area for Regeneration: The south elevation of the existing building on site is also located within a Primary Shopping Frontage and Town Centre Priority Area for Regeneration, as identified on the Proposals Map under Policy PP14. The western side of the site along Hill Road is not included within Priority Area for Regeneration. This proposal retains commercial use on the ground floor level.

Policy PP5 (Town Centre Uses) states that 'within the 'Primary Shopping Area', the use of ground floor shop units will be restricted to uses within Use Class E (commercial, business and service uses). Applications for residential development will be supported on upper floors. This proposal is for residential use on the upper floors.

Policy SP4/ Meeting Housing Needs; LP1 Housing Supply; LP2 Housing Choice; LP3 Housing Density and Standards; LP4 Housing Layout; Policies SP3, SPL3/Sustainable Design; SP7/ Place Shaping Principles; PPL8 Conservation Areas; Dovercourt Conservation Area Appraisal; Essex Design Guide (2005); Paragraph 197c of the NPPF/ Contribution to local character and distinctiveness: This development will make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment. The design quality, good arrangement of all the site servicing areas, a new residential frontage, the overall massing and the proposed relationship of the suite with the surrounding will make a significant positive contribution to this prominent location of the Dovercourt Town Centre area. The proposal promotes active frontages addressing the two roads and a corner which is being released for to use as a new public realm space for everyone to use. An upgraded corner site like this will also complement the Dovercourt Conservation Area down the road. The proposal will make a positive, as set out in Paragraph 197c of the NPPF. for our full assessment of this area, please refer to the Heritage Statement enclosed with this application.

PPL9 Listed Buildings: This proposal does not affect any listed buildings in its immediate vicinity in our view. For further analysis to support this, please refer to the Heritage Statement enclosed with this application.

Policy PPL10/Renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures; PPL5/Water Conservation: This proposal follows the guidance of this policy.

Paragraph 130 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021); Policies SPL3 and LP4, HP5 /Outdoor Spaces, Communal and Private Amenity, Landscaping: All proposed residential units will benefit from well sized and designed private amenity and communal amenity spaces.

Policy CP1/Sustainable Transport and Accessibility; Policy CP2/Improving the Transport Network: The application proposal retains the existing parking, but it also adds to it by providing EV charging points and secure cycle storage to all proposed dwellings. The site's central location provides easy access to all sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy SP2/Legal Obligations RAMS: The development is for residential units on a site within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar site and Special Protection Area. Mitigation measures must therefore be secured prior to occupation. The Applicant agrees to enter into a unilateral undertaking required to secure this legal obligation.

Policy DI1/ Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation: The Applicant agrees to enter into a unilateral undertaking required to secure all legal obligations in relation to local infrastructure upgrades.

Tendring District Council Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited Final Report April 2019 by Urban Initiatives Studio Ltd. The enclosed application proposal follows the recommendations of this report in relation to the application site. For details, please refer to section 4.0 of this Statement.

#### 7. Conclusion

The proposal will provide an up to date, robust and diversified mixed use residential and commercial offer in harmony with its surroundings.

We therefore respectfully request Tendering District Council support this planning application.

Ends