

Rear of 89 High Street, Billericay,
Basildon
Planning Statement

Klara 89 Limited
February 2024

tor
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by tor&co and is submitted on behalf of Klara 89 Limited (the ‘Applicant’) in respect of an application for full planning permission for the creation of 2 x semi-detached homes within the rear car park of 89 High Street, Billericay, CM12 9AT, Basildon (the ‘Site’).
- 1.2 The application is submitted to Basildon Borough Council (‘BBC’) and sets out the planning case in support of the proposals in the context of national, regional, and local planning policy guidance.
- 1.3 The description of the proposed development (‘the Proposed Development’) is set out below:

Proposed removal of surface car park to enable the erection of 2 x semi-detached houses alongside associated landscaping, parking, and refuse storage.

- 1.4 This application is submitted alongside a separate standalone full planning application within the curtilage of 89 High Street property for a proposed development comprising 7 x flats within the adjacent existing building that fronts High Street (the former Lloyd’s Bank building). Collectively, both applications will deliver comprehensive development of the vacant brownfield site.
- 1.5 The structure of this Planning Statement is as follows:
- **Section 2** details the background and context for the Site, including its planning history;
 - **Section 3** outlines the Proposed Development;
 - **Section 4** sets out the relevant planning policy framework for the Site;
 - **Section 5** evaluates the application proposal in the context of the planning policy framework and other material considerations; and
 - **Section 6** summarises our conclusions.

Supporting Information

- 1.6 This Statement should be read alongside the following documents which are also submitted to reflect the Proposed Development:

Document Title	Prepared by
Application Form, Covering Letter and Notices	tor&co
Existing and Proposed Drawings	T2S Architecture

Design & Access Statement	T2S Architecture
Planning Statement	tor&co
Heritage Statement	Orion
Daylight & Sunlight Report (within development)	Right of Light Consulting Ltd.
Daylight & Sunlight Report (neighbouring properties)	Right of Light Consulting Ltd.
Noise Impact Assessment	Venta Acoustics
Transport Assessment	TTP Consulting
Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report	EnviroSolution Ltd.
Archaeological Impact Assessment	tor&co

2.0 Site Context & Planning History

Existing Site

- 2.1 The Site relates to a surfaced car-parking area located to the rear of 89 High Street within Billericay Town Centre. It comprises a small tarmac car parking area comprising 11 x car parking spaces. Bounding the rear car park includes a group of mature Class B deciduous trees located along the western and northern boundaries of the Site. The Site is c. 318sqm in area.
- 2.2 The car park is ancillary to the existing building at 89 High Street to the east, which dates from the late 19th century. Formerly a branch of Lloyds Bank, the neighbouring building is now unoccupied. The front part of the building is two and a half storeys in height including a vacant loft space with a modern single storey brick extension to the rear. The building has a rectangular shape and a pitched clay tile roof with cross gables.
- 2.3 The Site is situated within Billericay Conservation Area and is located directly to the north of the Rose Lane (private road) and the Offices of North Thames Gas Board building at 91, 93 and 95 High Street which are Grade II Listed buildings. The neighbouring building 89 High Street is also noted as a Building of Townscape Value as per the Billericay Townscape Appraisal Map accompanying the Billericay Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- 2.4 The Site is directly adjoined to the north by a 2.5-storey house with access provided via Rose Lane, and to the north-east is a 3-storey mixed use building (Squire House) comprising ground floor retail and 20 x residential units. This Site also benefits from a recent allowed appeal for an additional 4th floor comprising 3 x additional units – noting this has yet to be implemented. To the west/north-west of the Site is a group of 2.5 storey residential homes which are also accessed via Rose Lane.
- 2.5 The majority of the nearby town centre buildings are predominantly 2-3 storeys in height and either entirely commercial or mixed use with GF commercial uses and residential uses above.
- 2.6 In terms of access, vehicular and pedestrian access is gained directly off Rose Lane, with this access being shared with the residential properties located at the end of the Lane.
- 2.7 The Site is conveniently located nearby to a range of facilities and services due to its town centre location which hosts shops, restaurants, public houses, health services and a library. Queen Elizabeth II Field and Mill Meadows are located approximately 5-10 minutes' walk away from the Site, providing easy access to public open space.
- 2.8 In terms of sustainable transport, Billericay Railway Station is located approximately a 7-minute walk away in the northern direction which serves Greater Anglia trains with direct access to London Liverpool Street and Southend Victoria. There is a bus stop opposite the Site which serve the 45, 256 and 625 bus routes to Ramsden Heath, Basildon, Chelmsford, and Southend.
- 2.9 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

- 2.10 The adopted Policies Map shows the Site to be located within Billericay Town Centre and the Billericay Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.11 A desk-top search of BBC’s online database has been carried out to determine the relevant planning history for the Site, which shows no planning applications of relevance within the rear part of the 89 High Street site.
- 2.12 Several applications in close proximity to the Site are also considered of relevance to this application’s proposals. These are detailed in **Table 1** below:

Location	BBC reference	Description	Decision
Squire House 81 - 87 High Street Billericay Essex	22/00530/FULL	Front extension and facade upgrades to ground floor retail units plus partial change of use of rear parts of ground floor retail units (Class E) to provide 3 residential dwellings (2x1-bed and 1x2-bed)	Approved 28 October 2022
Squire House 81 - 87 High Street Billericay Essex	22/00350/FULL APP/V1505/W/22/3308132	Construct one additional storey to building to create 3no. additional residential dwellings (Use Class C3)	Allowed on appeal 28 Sept 2023

Table 1: Nearby Relevant Planning Permissions

Pre-Application Advice

- 2.13 Prior to submission, pre-application engagement was undertaken with BBC officers on 13th June 2023 with BBC, (ref. 23/00049/PREAPP). Formal written advice was issued by BBC on 11th July 2023.
- 2.14 The pre-application was taken forward by separate applicants but sought advice on bringing forward a comprehensive site-wide redevelopment similar in design and scale to this application.
- 2.15 Details of the pre-application scheme are provided within the Design & Access Statement prepared by T2S Architecture Ltd. The pre-application proposals comprised the development of the rear car park for 2 x semi-detached houses, plus the conversion and extension of the 1st floor of 89 High Street, together with the construction of an upward/rearward extension to the rear to create a total of 6 x residential units. The pre-application proposals included full retention of the existing ground floor and basement Class E commercial use.

2.16 A summary of the pre-application feedback is provided below:

- A mixed use residential led development was considered acceptable in principle. The proposed extension and alteration were considered sympathetic to the existing building. A mews style development extending back into the site close to the rear boundary, in a similar manner to other recent backland mews style developments elsewhere off the High Street with varying roof lines, is also likely to be considered acceptable in principle and would make effective use of previously developed land in a sustainable town centre location.
- High quality materials sympathetic to the conservation area should be used throughout, particularly horizontal weatherboarding and brick should be considered at lower levels. Sufficient articulation and separation should be provided between the extension and where this connects with the existing building.
- Site-wide vehicle parking should be provided at a 1:1 ratio, but reductions (no less than 75%) could be considered acceptable given town centre location. Standalone cycle and refuse storage should be provided at the rear of the commercial unit if viable.
- The proposed houses to the rear were considered to be not in keeping with other traditional buildings in the Conservation Area. A simpler less deep 2.5-storey weatherboarded building was suggested with a stepped back, defensive planting located between the frontage and Rose Lane.
- Overlooking/privacy impacts into neighbouring gardens should be minimised, along with daylight and sunlight testing being required.
- Private amenity space should be provided in line with the Essex Design Guide, though reductions may be considered given the constrained nature of the site and based on its location within an urban area.

2.17 The Proposed Development is specific to the rear car park of 89 High Street, which consistent with pre-application proposals seeks permission for the construction of 2 x 2.5 storey semi-detached homes within the rear part of the 89 High Street site.

2.18 In response to BBC officer pre-application advice, the proposed 2 x semi-detached houses have been amended to reduce the step back between the homes and Rose Lane and have incorporated white weather boarding, dark grey brick and slate roof tiles materiality in keeping with Billericay Conservation Area Management Plan guidance.

2.19 Given the Applicants also own the adjacent private surface car park to the rear of 91 High Street, there is now an opportunity to provide site-wide parking at a ratio of 1:1 when including the proposed 7 x unit flatted scheme the applicants are proposing as part of a separate standalone planning application for the 89 High Street building.

2.20 Further information on the design is discussed within the Planning Considerations section of this statement.

3.0 The Proposed Development

3.1 As previously noted, the description of development is for:

Proposed removal of surface car park to enable the erection of 2 x semi-detached houses alongside associated landscaping, parking, and refuse storage.

3.2 In total, 248sqm GIA of new residential floorspace will be provided through 2 x semi-detached homes. The proposed housing type and size of the units are outlined in **Table 2**:

Unit	Type	Size (GIA m ²)
H.01	3 Bedroom 6 Person	124
H.02	3 Bedroom 6 Person	124

Table 2: Proposed Housing Type & Size

- 3.3 Both homes will exceed Nationally Described Space Standards and private gardens for each home are 47.5sqm for H.01 and 55sqm for H.02 in area.
- 3.4 Access to homes will be directly off Rose Lane for residents and vehicles. There will be car parking provision situated on each home's private driveways to the front. H.01 will have 1 x car parking space, and H.02 will have 2 x car parking spaces.
- 3.5 Secure cycle parking in will be provided for 2 x cycles per dwellings are provided within their rear gardens.
- 3.6 In terms of waste and recycling provision, the homes will have waste storage provision for 1 x 770L general waste bin, 1 x 770L recycling waste bin, 1 x orange box and 1 x internal caddy for each home.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and replaces the previous Framework that was published in September 2023.

- 4.3 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Para 11), which for decision making means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

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

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

- 4.4 The Framework is supported by National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), launched as an online resource on 6th March 2014, which seeks to provide further detail and guidance on the application of national policies contained within the Framework.

- 4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and associated National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)) are material considerations in decision-making.

The Development Plan

- 4.6 The development plan for BBC currently comprises the following documents:

- Basildon District Local Plan ‘Saved’ Policies (2007);
- Basildon District Local Plan Proposals Map (1998);
- Essex Minerals Local Plan (July 2014);
- Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (July 2017); and
- South East (Inshore) Marine Plan (June 2021).

- 4.7 Many policies within BBC’s adopted development plan are considered out-of-date and the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land

supply (FYHLS), therefore as per para 11 of the NPPF, the 'tilted balance' is engaged for decision making purposes.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

4.8 The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been identified as being relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Billericay Conservation Area Shop Front and Design Guide SPD (2015);
- Essex Design Guide (2018);
- Billericay Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2011); and
- Basildon Borough Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (2015).

Site Specific Policies and Designations

4.9 As per BBC's adopted Policies Map, the Site is currently subject to the following) site-specific policy designations:

- Billericay Town Centre; and
- Billericay Conservation Area.

Emerging Basildon Local Plan

4.10 BBC's adopted Local Plan (2007) is out-of-date and the Council was preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2014–2034. The Council's draft Local Plan was submitted for Examination in Public (EiP) in March 2019; however, was later withdrawn in March 2022.

4.11 BBC has reinitiated the process of updating their Local Plan and undertook consultation on their Regulation 18 'Issues and Options' strategy between June to September 2023. The Council's latest Local Development Scheme (November 2022) anticipates adoption of the new Local Plan in Q4 of 2027.

5.0 Planning Assessment

5.1 This section assesses the proposed development against the relevant national, strategic, and local planning policies. It assesses the following key planning considerations in turn:

- Principle of Residential Development;
- Residential Mix;
- Residential Quality;
- Design & Heritage Matters;
- Transport, Access, and Servicing; and
- Drainage, Arboricultural, Biodiversity & Landscaping.

Principle of Residential Development

- 5.2 NPPF Paragraph 60 supports the Government's objective of 'significantly boosting' the supply of homes by ensuring a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.
- 5.3 NPPF Paragraph 90 recognises that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites. Further, Local Authorities should promote the long-term vitality and viability of their town centres by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, whilst allowing a suitable mix of uses (including housing) which reflects their distinctive characters.
- 5.4 NPPF Paragraph 124 requires planning decisions to promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Part c) gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land, whereas Part d) specifically references the development of under-utilised land and buildings e.g. car parks.
- 5.5 The proposed development seeks to repurpose the underutilised car park to bring forward 2 x family sized semi-detached houses. The proposals will enable the much-needed delivery of additional housing within a sustainable town centre location ensuring the best and most optimal use of land is achieved in line with the aspirations of the NPPF.
- 5.6 The adopted local plan is out-of-date, which was adopted in 2007, is considered partially out-of-date, making the housing targets within this document redundant. More recently, the councils Five Year Land Supply Report (June 2023) notes that BBC have a minimum requirement of delivering 1,079 dwellings per year. The Report demonstrates that BBC can only demonstrate a 1.85-year housing land supply, and only achieved 46% of their housing targets in 2022 as per the Housing Delivery Test results. As such the presumption of

sustainable development (i.e. the ‘tilted balance’) would be engaged in line with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

- 5.7 At the local level, the proposed development is located within Billericay Town Centre where saved Policy BAS TC1 (District Wide Town Centre Policy) supports the principle of residential development subject to:
- i. “No significant loss of retail floorspace;*
 - ii. Car parking provided in accordance with the Council’s Car Parking Standards;*
 - iii. The local road network can accommodate any increases in road traffic;*
 - iv. Servicing can operate functionally;*
 - v. The design, form, scale and materials used are sympathetic to the area;*
 - vi. In the case of Billericay Town Centre, regard is given to the Conservation Area status of the town centre and the concentration of listed buildings; and*
 - vii. The development should not result in the loss of public open space or amenity area.”*
- 5.8 Policy BAS TC6 (Residential Development in Town Centres) also supports the principle of residential development as an acceptable form of development in town centres where it forms part of a mixed-use scheme.
- 5.9 The principle of residential development within Billericay Town Centre is supported by policy at all levels, noting many buildings within the town centre already support residential uses. Additionally, the Site is in an accessible location in relation to sustainable transport links, services, and facilities to serve the proposed residential use.
- 5.10 The provision of 2 x new homes would make a small, albeit important contribution to BBC’s annual housing delivery targets, particularly in the context that the Council cannot clearly demonstrate a 4YHLS and given the NPPF’s presumption of sustainable development is engaged. The proposals do not impact the existing commercial property at 89 High Street, and therefore no net loss of in retail floorspace is proposed, protecting the PSF in accordance with Policy BAS TC1(i).
- 5.11 In relation to parking, 3 x car parking spaces are proposed to the front of the dwellings. Although the car parking provision proposed is slightly lower than Essex Parking Standards guidance, there is additional parking capacity within the applicant’s adjacent surface car park (adjoining the public town centre public car park) which could allow for additional parking if required. Notwithstanding, given the town centre location and access to local services, the parking provision as proposed is considered acceptable. Traffic generation will be limited and will not present any impacts to local road capacity or safety.
- 5.12 In relation to servicing, this will remain as existing with delivery drivers being able to utilise commercial loading spaces along the High Street and waste collection utilising access via Rose Lane.

- 5.13 The design of the new semi-detached homes has been informed pre-application advice and by the Billericay Conservation Area Management Plan guidance and reflects a material palette similar to other new housing developments within the town centre. The submitted Heritage Statement, prepared by Orion, confirms that whilst the proposals represent a minor change within the setting of nearby listed assets, their setting and significance will be maintained, primarily given their principally experienced within the setting of the wider streetscape, which will not be impacted by the Proposed Development. The Heritage Statement concludes that the Proposed Development (and cumulatively alongside the proposed 7 x unit development at 89 High Street) would not generate any harm to the broader Conservation Area, nor any nearby locally or listed heritage assets.
- 5.14 There are no technical or environmental constraints making the Site unsuitable for housing. The principle of development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the NPPF, and applicable Development Plan policies and is therefore considered acceptable in planning terms.

Residential Mix

- 5.15 The NPPF requires LPAs to deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes and to plan for a mix of housing in terms of size, type, tenure, and range based on local demand (Para 60).
- 5.16 The Council’s saved Local Plan does not have any policies that prescribe unit mix requirements for new development.
- 5.17 The South Essex Housing Needs Assessment (SEHNA) (June 2022) is the most up-to-date evidence base document outlining housing needs in the area from 2020 – 2040. The need as portrayed in the SEHNA is outlined in **Table 3** below.

Unit Type	HNA Desired Mix
1 Bedroom	14%
2 Bedroom	26%
3 Bedroom	40%
4+ Bedroom	20%

Table 3: Desired Housing Mix

- 5.18 The SEHNA states that the desired mix is used for guidance only and “*should not be prescribed as an explicit requirement for individual sites given the need to respond to changing market demands, local context and viability factors*”.
- 5.19 The Proposed Development comprises 2 x homes which are both 3 Bedroom 6 Person standards. There is limited capacity on site to provide a variety of

housing types and tenures due to the sites size and infill nature. The new family sized dwellings will contribute to the greatest housing need within the borough as highlighted within the SEHNA. It is considered that the types and size of the dwellings proposed is suitable for its location. Further, when considered cumulatively alongside the proposed 7 x unit flatted scheme within the adjacent 89 High Street building, the cumulative unit mix across the Site will deliver a good range of housing types in accordance with the SEHNA.

- 5.20 Given the sustainable town centre location, the proposed development will significantly benefit the vitality and viability of the Billericay Town Centre through additional footfall, local expenditure and nearby access to goods, services and transport connections. Further, the proposals will deliver much needed housing in an area where housing supply and delivery has been historically constrained. On balance, we consider the proposed unit mix acceptable in planning terms.

Residential Quality

- 5.21 Planning policy at all levels places great importance on the need for new homes that are of high-quality design and highlights the role that this can play in creating successful communities. The NPPF (para 135) is clear in its support for increasing housing supply should be delivered in tandem with quality.
- 5.22 There are no saved policies that specifically set out internal design standards within BBC. Notwithstanding, the Essex Design Guide provides broad design guidance and states that proposals must meet standards set out in the 'Technical housing standards –nationally described space standard' (NDSS).
- 5.23 The Proposed Development will create a high-quality environment for future residents of the Site. There are several key attributes that help to achieve this:
- Both homes will exceed NDSS minimum space standards and are dual aspect;
 - All habitable windows will have good-quality of outlook and significant separation distances between neighbouring habitable windows;
 - The homes focus around open-plan living areas, with all Living/kitchen/dining rooms in excess of 25sqm;
 - Acceptable standards in respect to internal daylight, sunlight and noise are met;
 - Both homes have a good level of privacy; and
 - Private amenity space in the form of large rear, grassed gardens are provided.
- 5.24 During pre-application discussions, officer's raised concerns that any new homes that faced onto the rear restaurant garden at 91 High Street may be adversely affected by noise associated with the food & beverage use. As such, Venta Acoustics have undertaken a Noise Impact Assessment to accompany the application to assess this impact. The report concludes that with appropriate internal and external mitigation, including proprietary thermal double-glazing and trickle vents, internal noise impact is anticipated to lie between the No

Observed Effect Level (NOEL) and Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL), as such no adverse impacts would be generated for future occupants.

Daylight & Sunlight

5.25 The Essex Design Guidance refers to the BRE “Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight” to calculate internal daylight levels. A Daylight and Sunlight Assessment (internal), has been prepared by Right of Light Consulting have undertaken internal lighting analysis on the proposed dwellings in accordance with this guidance. The results confirm that both dwellings have appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight in line with guidance.

5.26 Policy BAS BE12 refers to planning for new residential development, with part iv) of the policy requiring this to not cause material harm in terms of overshadowing or over-dominance. Right of Light Consulting have further analysed the neighbouring impact of the proposed extensions and built form on the neighbouring dwellings within Squire House in accordance with the BRE guidance. The results conclude:

- Neighbouring Assessment
 - All windows pass the Vertical Sky Component test.
 - All rooms pass the daylight distribution test.
 - None of the windows included in this assessment face within 90 degrees of due south. Therefore, none of the windows need to be tested for direct sunlight. It follows that the proposed development satisfies the BRE direct sunlight to windows requirements.
- Within Assessment
 - One room within falls short of the daylight provision targets during the summer. However, the BRE guide explains that providing the targets are met in the winter months, daylight all year round is likely to be adequate. In this case, this room falls only marginally short of its winter Daylight Factor target. This is therefore a very high level of compliance.
 - All rooms meet the daylight provision targets during the summer.
 - Both houses have at least one main window which faces within 90 degrees of due south. Both houses have a living room which receives a total of at least 1.5 hours of sunlight on 21 March in accordance with BRE exposure to sunlight requirements.
 - Neither of the private amenity spaces passes the BRE tests, but it is noted these are north facing and surrounded by mature vegetation. Notwithstanding, these will still provide good quality outdoor amenity space for future residents.

5.27 As demonstrated by the proposed drawings, the Proposed Development will deliver a high-quality of residential accommodation which on the whole meets

policy and design guidance expectations. The Proposed Development is therefore on balance considered acceptable in planning terms.

Design & Heritage Matters

- 5.28 The NPPF (Section 12) states that “*the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve*”.
- 5.29 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF emphasises that planning 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 (such as increased densities);*
 - 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.”*
- 5.30 Given the Site is located within the Billericay Conservation Area and is located within the setting of listed and non-listed heritage assets, Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF is applicable.
- 5.31 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, LPAs 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.
- 5.32 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that LPAs take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.33 Paragraph 205 states that where a development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, that local planning authorities should refuse permission, unless public benefits outweigh the harm. Paragraph 202 further

states that where less than substantial harm this must be weighed against the public benefits, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Paragraph 18a-020 of the NPPG outlines what is meant by public benefits:

“Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.”

- 5.34 Paragraph 209 states that LPAs must take a balanced judgement in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Although substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a- 018 of the NPPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. It states:

“Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the NPPF. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.”

- 5.35 Lastly, Paragraph 212 states that LPAs should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance and better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve the setting of the Conservation Area and make a positive contribution (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.
- 5.36 At a local level, the Billericay Townscape Appraisal Map accompanying the Billericay Conservation Area Character Appraisal, identifies the neighbouring building of 89 High Street as a Building of Townscape Value. The adjoining building to the south is identified as a Grade II Listed building (91-95 High Street), along with 72 and 74 High Street also being Grade II Listed.
- 5.37 The Billericay Conservation Area Management Plan (BCAMP) states that in respect of design guidance, BBC will not permit development in the Conservation Area which detracts from its character or appearance in terms of height, bulk, scale, form, detailing and material. In respect of building extensions, the Management Plan states that reference should be made to the local architectural tradition by way of materials and detailing and that this needs to be used in a logical context and be well executed to be successful. The Management Plan goes on to advise that whenever the opportunity arises, BBC will encourage and support schemes which improve the appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area.
- 5.38 Saved Policy BAS TC1 (District Wide Town Centre Policy) states that proposals within town centres will be assessed against several criteria including, the

design, form, scale and materials being sympathetic to the area, and in the case of Billericay Town Centre, regard is given to the Conservation Area status of the town centre and the concentration of listed buildings.

- 5.39 Saved Policy BAS BE12 (Development Control) states that permission will be refused if the proposed development causes material harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene, overlooking, noise disturbance or overshadowing/over-dominance.
- 5.40 The adjacent 89 High Street is largely considered a Building of Townscape Value due to its age and the prominence of its façade and cross gable within the street scape of High Street, with the building representative of the style of several buildings that were constructed during the late Victorian period within the town centre.
- 5.41 The 2 x semi-detached homes are proposed within the existing car park, which is currently considered to make a neutral contribution to the setting of heritage assets and is largely screened by a low brick wall from the adjacent public car park. Due to the proposed location of the houses directly behind the parent building, they are unlikely to be overly apparent in views from High Street and will have a similar ridge height to that of the neighbouring building and it's existing and proposed ridge heights. Furthermore, the design of the buildings and the palette of materials to be used, such as weatherboarding, brick and slate tiling, are responsive to the local vernacular. This also includes architectural detailing that acknowledge the parent building such as prominent gables, chimney stacks and pitched roofs.
- 5.42 As per the submitted Heritage Statement, an assessment of the potential effect of the Proposed Development on the significance and setting of the nearby listed assets, and the broader Conservation Area, has confirmed the proposals will not negatively impact or harm any heritage assets. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the NPPF and applicable Development Plan policies and are considered acceptable in planning and heritage terms.

Transport, Access, and Servicing

- 5.43 At all levels within planning policy there is a strong presumption in favour of reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car, and encouraging more sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.44 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF highlights that in assessing sites, LPAs should ensure appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location. Paragraph 115 further states that development should only be prevented or refused where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or if residual impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.45 At the local level, the Proposed Development is located within Billericay Town Centre where saved Policy BAS TC1 (District Wide Town Centre Policy) supports the principle of residential development subject to car parking provided in accordance with the Council's Car Parking Standards and servicing for the development can functionally operate.
- 5.46 The Essex Parking Standards Design and Good Practice Guidance (2009) outlines that 2-bedroom + homes should be provided with minimum 2 vehicle

spaces/dwelling, however the guidance recognises that a lower provision of vehicle parking may be appropriate in urban areas (including town centre locations) where there is good access to alternative forms of transport and existing car parking facilities, such as the Site.

- 5.47 Further, the Essex Parking Standards (2009) require minimum 1 x secure covered long-stay cycle parking space is required per dwelling. Short-stay cycle parking should be provided as minimum 1 x short-stay space per 8 residential units.
- 5.48 The Proposed Development is located in a highly sustainable location nearby public transport services and within a town centre location which promotes pedestrian access to daily goods and services. Thus, the Site is suitably located and designed to maximise the potential for sustainable travel and minimise impacts on the local transport networks.
- 5.49 Footways are provided on either side of High Street, connecting the Site to the wider pedestrian routes that service public transport facilities and local amenities. A signal-controlled crossing is located 60m north of the Site, whilst another is located approximately 80m south of the Site. Pedestrian access to the Site is from Rose Lane with parking located within the curtilage of the dwellings along Rose Lane.
- 5.50 The Site is also in a highly accessible location for public transport services, being located within 500m from Billericay Rail Station. Additionally, there is a bus stop opposite the Site which serve the 45, 256 and 625 bus routes to Ramsden Heath, Basildon, Chelmsford, and Southend.
- 5.51 In terms of impact on the highway network, TPP Consulting Ltd have undertaken a review of the TRICS database to understand the expected trip generation that the cumulative trip generation from the proposed 2 x dwellings plus neighbouring 7 x unit flatted scheme would generate 15 two-way vehicle movements over the morning period (7-10am) and 21 vehicle movements in the evening period (4-7pm) when taking into consideration the resident population journey to work data for the local area. Furthermore, the rear car parking area associated with the bank will no longer be taking place. As such, the accompanying transport statement concludes that the proposed development will not result in an unacceptable impact on the operation of the local highway and transportation network.
- 5.52 Based on the creation of 2 x residential units on Site there will be 3 x car parking spaces provided in the front private driveways . Adhering to the Essex Parking Standards, a total of 4 x car parking spaces would be required. However, given the sustainable town centre location a minor reduction in car parking requirements is considered acceptable (as was previously concluded by BBC Highways Officers as part of the recently approved Squire House, 87 High Street PD application (ref. no. 21/01863/PACU), and full application (ref. no. 22/00530/FULL).
- 5.53 In terms of impact on the highway network, TTP Consulting Ltd have undertaken a review of the TRICS database to understand the expected trip generation that the proposed site-wide 9 x dwellings could generate. It is likely 15 two-way vehicle movements over the morning peak period (7-10am) and 21 two-way trips in the evening peak period (4-7pm) when taking into consideration the resident population journey to work data for the local area. As such, the

accompanying Transport Statement concludes that cumulatively, this Proposed Development and the adjacent 2 x housing scheme within the rear car park will not result in an unacceptable impact on the operation of the local highway and transportation network.

- 5.54 Regarding cycle parking, the Essex Parking Standards outline that 1 x secure covered long-stay cycle parking space is required per dwelling, resulting in a requirement for 2 x spaces in total. Cycle parking will be provided exceeding these standards, with cycle storage for 2 x cycles per dwelling located within the rear gardens of homes. As such, the proposals are compliant with saved Policy BAS T5.
- 5.55 The homes will be provided with 1 x 770L general waste bin; 1 x 770L recycling waste bin; 1 x orange box and 1 x internal caddy each.
- 5.56 As set out above, it is considered that the proposed quantum of car parking strikes the right balance between parking demand and ensuring no impacts to road networks and highway safety all whilst encouraging future residents to travel sustainably and is therefore in accordance with policy at all levels.
- 5.57 Overall, the proposed vehicle, cycle and waste store requirements have been provided in accordance with relevant guidance and are therefore considered acceptable in planning and highways terms.

Technical Matters

Archaeology

- 5.58 The Site is situated within the Billericay Conservation Area and lies within an area of urban archaeological potential identified within the Billericay Historic Town Management Zones. The Local Plan doesn't reference any specific policy relating to non-designated assets or archaeology. NPPF paragraph 200 requires Applicant's to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 5.59 Tor&co have undertaken an Archaeological Impact Assessment to accompany this application. The assessment found that the site has historically been subject to several intrusive ground works during previous development, notably in the late 19th century and in 1955. Additionally, the Site is a car park covered in hardstanding. Any below ground remains are likely to have been destroyed by the ground reduction associated with the car park construction. As such, the assessment concludes that overall, there is a negligible to low potential for archaeological remains to be present within the site and no further investigations should be required.

Contamination

- 5.60 In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 189, developers are required to ensure '*a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.*' Enviroolutions Ltd have undertaken a Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) to ensure the site is suitable for the Proposed Development.
- 5.61 The PESA indicates that the site is classified as a moderate risk for contamination, posing potential risks to human health and buildings during

redevelopment. Historic off-site land uses in the area, such as a fire engine station, electric sub-station, garage, joinery works, and builder's yard, contribute to this classification. It is recommended that a Phase 2 intrusive ground investigation is conducted prior to any redevelopment on site. This can be secured via a planning condition.

Biodiversity, Trees & Landscaping

- 5.62 NPPF Paragraph 136 acknowledges that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environment, and existing trees on sites should be retained where possible. Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology have undertaken an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) to assess the developments impact on the trees that line the west and northern boundary of the Site.
- 5.63 The initial results confirm that the 8 x trees that line the northern and western boundary are Category B 'Moderate Quality and Value' trees.
- 5.64 The AIA notes the Roof Protection Areas of these trees overlap with the proposed 2 x semi-detached houses footprint, but subject to appropriate mitigation, likely by requiring piled or cantilevered foundations within the affected areas would be suitable mitigation to ensure the long-term protection and health of the trees.
- 5.65 To enable construction, some minor crown spread reductions would be required on the trees ranging from 1 to 2m reductions. This would be undertaken by a qualified arborist and subject to a separate standalone tree works permit in due course.
- 5.66 The AIA also notes that given the existing trees are constrained by the impermeable surface car park, it's removal and incorporation of rear gardens/permeable paving, will lead to health benefits to this tree group, thereby creating an overall betterment compared to the current situation.
- 5.67 The existing site as a car park is all impermeable hardstanding, as such the biodiversity on site is limited. The proposed development incorporates a range of soft and hard landscaping features to contribute towards net gain and also assist with drainage. These include permeable paving in replace of the existing impermeable hardstanding and grassed rear gardens. Water butts will also be installed to assist with surface water drainage. A high-level landscape plan is shown within the proposed site plan.
- 5.68 Further, the AIA suggests that any excess tree limbs that are removed during crown spread reduction should be left on site to form deadwood log piles at the base of the trees to promote localised biodiversity improvements to both insects and the trees.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement summarises details of the Proposed Development and assesses it against applicable national and local planning policies. It sets out the key planning issues and material considerations and concludes that the proposals are in accordance with the objectives of national and local planning policies to deliver sustainable development.
- 6.2 This application has been submitted alongside a separate standalone application within the same site curtilage for the extension and change of use of the neighbouring building, which collectively will bring forward comprehensive redevelopment of this vacant and underutilised brownfield site.
- 6.3 The principle of residential development within the town centre is supported by policy at all levels, and the Site is within a highly sustainable location within proximity to an abundance of shops and services to support this use. The provision of 2 x homes will contribute towards BBC housing targets and is a significant public benefit given the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and the Council not meeting its Housing Delivery Targets over the past 3 years. Furthermore, the proposal will provide much needed family sized dwellings to support local demand and need.
- 6.4 The Proposed Development has evolved following pre-application advice from BBC and will be completed to a high-quality which complements the surrounding conservation area character. The accompanying Heritage Statement further confirms the Proposed Development will not negatively impact either or harm the neighbouring Building of Townscape Value, any nearby heritage assets, nor the Billericay Conservation Area on the whole and is acceptable in design and heritage terms.
- 6.5 Both homes will be of a high residential quality, exceeding NDSS requirements and by providing good layout that benefit from positive outlook, aspect and natural light with large rear gardens. Furthermore, a policy compliant level of car and cycle parking, and refuse storage is provided.
- 6.6 Along with the package of information submitted in support of this application it has been demonstrated that the Proposed Development is acceptable in development management terms and raise no policy conflicts. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and BCC's Development Plan and therefore should be approved without delay.