

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

in support of an application for outline planning area consent for

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

of

HTG TRADING SITE, CHURCH ROAD, OTLEY

for

OTLEY PROPERTIES SUFFOLK LTD.



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October 2013

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1 Introduction

This report should be read in conjunction with the following drawings which form the basis of an outline planning application to Suffolk Coastal District Council:

Architect's drawings no.

1343:06 Site Location Plan at 1:2500 scale

1343:07 Block Plan as Existing at 1:500 scale

1343:05b Block Plan as Proposed at 1:500 scale

This report should also be read in conjunction with a Planning Report by Planning Vocalism, Transport Report by Glanvilles and Tree and Ecological Reports.

The application is for redevelopment of the existing site currently occupied by HTG Trading in Church Road Otley to provide a suite of new B1 units and residential development.

Given the relatively large scale development for a village of the size of Otley, the proposals have been developed in close cooperation with the Planning Department of Suffolk Coastal DC, the local Parish Council and, not least, with local residents who were invited to a public meeting to discuss and comment upon the initial proposals. The draft proposals were refined in direct response to representation received leading to the submitted scheme.



2 Assessment

2.1 General Description of Site and Location

The following is an extract from the Otley Parish Council website which gives a very succinct and informative description of the village:

Otley lies in the county of Suffolk, around 8 miles to the north of Ipswich and a similar distance north west of Woodbridge. The major arterial routes of the A12 and A14 pass equidistant to the east and west respectively. Suffolk Coastal District Council is the local authority.

The village is surrounded by open countryside, the majority of which is devoted to agriculture. There is a well maintained and extensive footpath network.

The B1079 passes through Otley, firstly as Church Road and then Helmingham Road with Chapel Road running north-east from their junction in the village centre.

The parish is centred on the village, with Otley College included to the south. The western boundary lies primarily along the B1077 through Ashbocking, thereby bringing a small number of properties towards Ashbocking into the parish. The northern limit is defined along various field boundaries, whilst the eastern edge largely follows the Monewden Road.

The majority of the housing stock is distributed along the principal arteries and the associated side roads, and totals some 260 dwellings. Around 70% of the housing is detached, with about 75% of homes having three or more bedrooms. Small-scale developments exist at Spring Park and, more recently, Birds Mere and Pearl Close. Homes range in age from medieval to modern, with two areas of social housing in Newlands and Vine Road.

However, there is little affordable housing in the village for first time buyers and this is reflected in the demography of the village. The population is around 650 inhabitants with a bias towards a more mature age group, 68% of adults being 45 years of age or over.

Otley is fortunate to have an award winning Village Shop and Post Office; a doctors' surgery; the White Hart public house; a good Village Hall, Scout Hut and playing field; a bowls green; and a Primary School is Farlingaye High at Woodbridge. Local bus services connect directly with Ipswich, Woodbridge and Framlingham and villages along these routes. A mobile library, fresh fish and frozen food deliveries, milkman and a Fish and Chip van also serve the village.



The site which is the subject of this outline application is located on the western side of Otley Village which has evolved over the years in a ribbon-like fashion along two main roads; Church Road/Helmington Road which runs north-south and Chapel Road which runs north-easterly from the junction with Church Road toward Otley Green. The HTG Site which sits opposite this junction is somewhat of an incursion into the farmland and slightly at odds with the ribbon development of the Village.

There is a shared entrance to the site giving onto Church Road, providing access to the existing factory, the adjacent Anglian Timber site and the farm track.

2.2 Existing Buildings

There is one principal building on the site, a large single storey factory which occupies approximately 36% of the site area. In addition, there is a small domestic scale building toward the front of the site, providing administration facilities for the factory. With hardstandings, the total coverage is around 1.5ha.

The factory/depot is constructed from a variety of materials (eg corrugated metal and brickwork) with part pitched and part flat roofs. The administration block has rendered walls and a pitched roof with a flat roofed single storey addition to the frontage

The buildings are all of the 20th Century (early to mid) and none is distinguished in any way architecturally.



Views of Entrance as Existing



2.3 Wider Context

As can be seen from the two photographs opposite, traditional domestic buildings in the region use a palette of materials comprising: render (some pargeting), red brick, timber frame, clay tiles and pantiles, some slate, weatherboarding (both painted and stained) some stone and thatch. Windows tend to be painted timber casements and sashes. In the immediate vicinity of the site there are a few examples of that vernacular, but much of local residential development is of the 20th Century and of modest character.



Housing local to the site



The houses in the village are mainly 1-2 storeys and a mixture of detached and semi-detached.

Key views to the site include those from adjoining farmland and from the Parish Church to the south. Existing trees and shrubs effectively screen the factory depot.



2.4 Planning Context

The village is identified in planning terms as a Key Service Centre and suitable, in principle, for a modest amount of new development to support services and maintain rural vitality in accordance with recently adopted Strategic Policies SP19 Settlement Policy and SP27 Key and Local Service Centres (adopted on the 5th July 2013).

The existing site is established employment use (light industrial and warehousing/storage) and as such is protected by the District Council's recently adopted Development Management Policy DM10 as set out in the 'Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD' which was adopted on 5th July 2013.

Existing employment sites can only be redeveloped for alternative uses where the following circumstances apply:

- (a) the applicant has clearly demonstrated there is no current or long term demand for the retention of all or part of the site for employment use:
 - (i) within the same use class;
 - (ii) for a mix of employment uses; or
 - (iii) for a mix of employment uses with other non employment uses, excluding residential;
- or
- (b) there would be a substantial planning benefit in permitting alternative uses..

In this respect, local Chartered Surveyors (Fenn Wright) based in Suffolk have been instructed to provide market and occupier advice. Fenn Wright has already confirmed that there is simply no demand for such a large industrial site in a rural location which is situated so close to established residential properties. Even if an operator could be found, the presence on-site of such a large outdated and worn-out building would make any investment economically risky. It is also clearly the case that such a site could generate unsuitable industrial uses which could impact on the village and wider highway network. This current situation represents a rare opportunity to deliver a vibrant, suitable mix of uses set within an attractive landscaped environment whilst supporting local services and amenities.

The Local Planning Authority's emerging evidence base (prepared as part of the Local Development Framework) identified 50% of the Depot site could be redeveloped for residential development (Site Ref: 886). Indeed Otley Parish Council commented on the emerging evidence base, and in relation to the HTG site stated that the site is, 'the natural choice for redevelopment'.

A proposal to redevelop the site for a residential-led mix of uses, at a scale more appropriate to the surrounding area, would have significant visual and environmental benefits in terms of the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. These proposals will also deliver affordable housing for local people and could deliver other infrastructure improvements as part of a binding legal agreement.

2.5 Consultation

It should be noted that the proposals have been developed in close conjunction with the Local Planning Authority, Parish Council, and with local residents as part of formal community engagement. A statement of Community Consultation has been prepared by Planning Vocalism which accompanies the planning application under separate cover. Nevertheless, the following principal aspects have been addressed in the submitted design, in direct response to submitted comments:

- Omission of the house at the front of the site in favour of public open space.
- Parking bays at this point for the use of visitors to the shop opposite.
- Provision of a variety of house types to ensure a wide appeal to old and young alike, as well as family houses.
- Intensification of tree planting to the perimeter of the site to improve screening.
- Location of the proposed B1 units to the rear of the Church Road properties.
- Provision of a new Public Open space in the interior of the site with associated safe play area for children.
- Off street parking for all units.
- Predominantly, housing of no more than 2-storeys high.

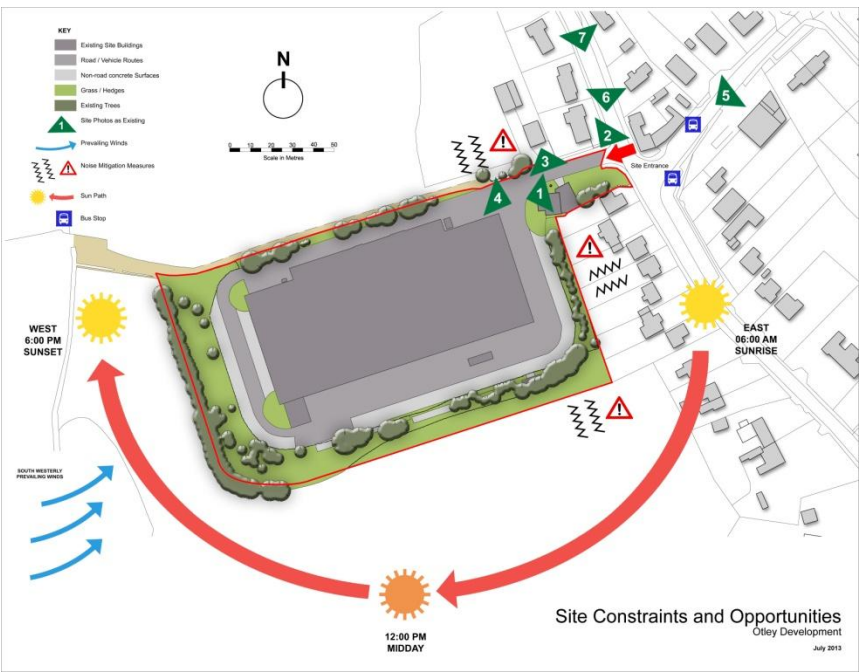
3 Design

3.1 Strategy

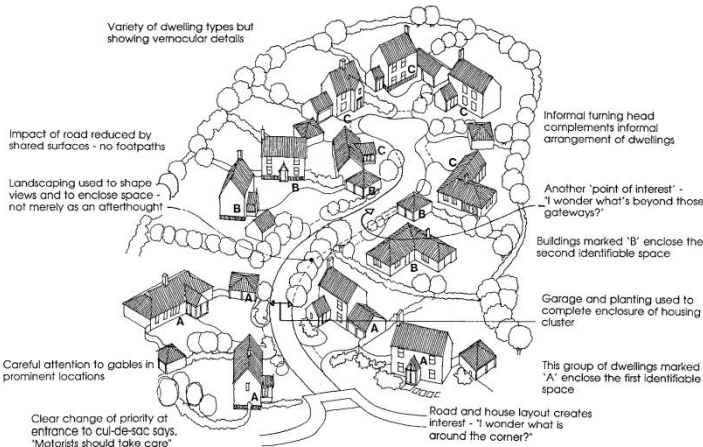
When considering the re-development of the application site, several important factors have been identified which have informed the design. These include;

- To provide an attractive, high quality residential development which has references to the local traditional vernacular of building.
- To create a variety of building sizes and forms.
- To ensure the layout creates a secure living environment.
- To retain some employment facility on the site by way of B1 units.
- To enhance the amount of green space and protect habitat for the bee orchid.
- To follow the design guidance set out in the Suffolk Design Guide

3.1.1 Site Constraints Plan showing how the local environment informs the development.



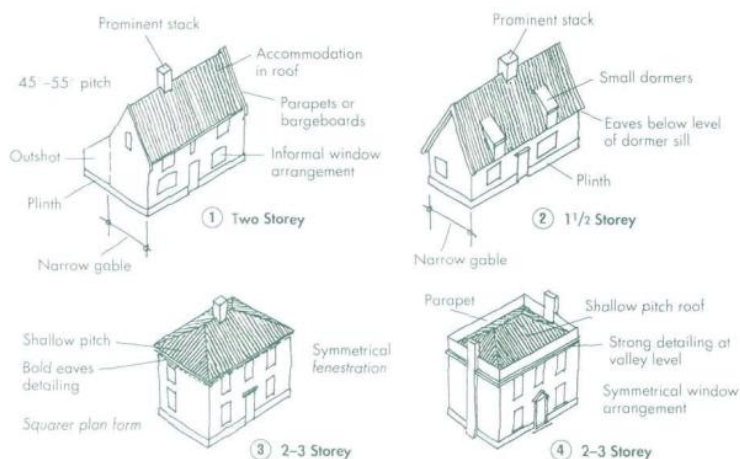
3.1.2 Extract from the Suffolk Design Guide on layout of developments



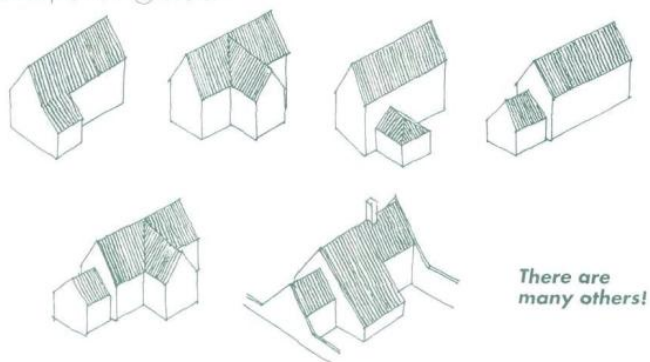
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3.1.3 Extract from the Suffolk Design guide for house forms

Typical Traditional Suffolk House Forms:-



Remember these typical Suffolk house forms when considering new designs. Numerous variations can be developed from them – for example those below are developed from ① above:-



Urban areas may require different forms based upon traditional Suffolk terrace forms.

A skilled designer will not be constrained by developing new designs based upon traditional Suffolk forms – they can be developed into exciting new forms to satisfy the most demanding site.

The less formal versions of the house types indicated here have been adopted for the proposed development. It is considered these simple, cottage-style forms are the most appropriate for this particular rural site.

In general, garages are separate from the houses, being either attached or detached, but not integral. This approach is as recommended in the Guide.

3.1.4 External materials should reflect the local vernacular

It is considered important that the palette of materials for the new development should be traditional, reflecting the local character. It is proposed, therefore, that the new domestic buildings should use a combination of render, red brick and weatherboarding for wall finishes; red/orange clay tiles and pantiles and perhaps some thatch for roofs; painted timber windows (mainly casements) and doors. With the different scale demanded by the B1 units, a barn-like aesthetic would be appropriate for this setting, suggesting stained weatherboarding for the walls and tiling for the roofs.

3.1.5 Details

Although this is an outline planning application, it is considered important for details such as window reveals, cills, eaves, verges are controlled to ensure a satisfactory development overall. For example, regular maintenance such as painting eaves and verges should be designed out wherever possible, which can be achieved by careful detailing in masonry.

3 Design

3.2 The Proposed Development

3.2.1. Overview

As can be seen from the Site Constraints plan, there are a number of constraints on the form of development, but not all necessarily conflicting with one another nor create significant difficulties for the design. For example, the location of the main entrance at the north-east corner and good aspects/prospects on the south and west boundaries combine to permit a very comfortable layout for the road and residential buildings. Also, a good, existing tree screen lends a maturity to the soft landscape, which would also help quickly to establish an attractive screening for the development in its rural landscape setting.

3.2.2. Brief

The simple brief is for the redevelopment of the site to provide:

A set of B1 units to retain employment on the site to replace the existing factory. The units need to be capable of subdivision or linking to create flexibility in use for potential occupants. Upon advice from local agents, the accommodation is to comprise five 2-storey units, each being 90m² in footprint; ie 180m² total per unit.

Residential redevelopment of the remainder of the site with a variety of dwelling types and sizes. Each unit to have its own private garden space.

Affordable housing provision as required by the LPA.

Off-street parking for all dwellings – numbers of spaces according to house size. And subject to negotiation with the Local Planning Authority.

Improvements to the public realm, including provision of Public Open Space.

Provision of a safe habitat for the Bee Orchid found on the site at the s.w. corner of the factory. In accordance with specialist advice from PeakEcology.

3.3 Process

Given that the redevelopment of this site is of a large size in comparison with the size of the village itself, it was important to involve the Local Planning Authority and the Local Community in developing the design. This process is detailed in the report submitted by Planning Vocalism. This process has been invaluable in the design development of the proposals.

3.4 Design Response

In relation to the strategy, brief and taking into account local contributions from the LPA and community, the design responds as follows:

3.4.1. To provide an attractive, high quality residential development which has references to the local traditional vernacular of building.

The design of the site layout started from the perspective of what would be an appropriate development for the site rather than from a preconceived idea of numbers of units which could be squeezed in. This approach was essential to ensure a satisfactory development which would not be out of scale or character with the setting.

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This aerial plan view of the site indicates the modest scale of the proposed development and how it reflects the natural grain of development in Otley. Each housing plot has good private space and orientated to minimise overlooking. The new housing will follow local traditions in terms of form and materials, as mentioned previously.

3.4.2. To create a variety of building sizes and forms

In response to local demand, and in accordance with good design practice, the proposals suggest a variety of house types; detached, semi and terraced. There are 35 houses in all, with a mix of 2 to 4 bedrooms and one 5-bedroomed, sleeping from 3 to 7. Please refer to the schedule in the Appendix.

3.4.3. To ensure the layout creates a secure living environment

The layout proposed, ensures excellent natural surveillance of the public areas simply by setting out the houses in clusters. Each cluster is entered via a narrowing of the access road, lending a hierarchy of privacy to these spaces which almost become semi-private. Houses themselves will have secure, fenced, rear gardens.

The arrangement also affords security for the proposed new Play Area which is overlooked from a number of properties.

3.4.4. To retain some employment facility on the site by way of B1 units.

It is considered essential to retain an element of employment on the site in the spirit of the established use of the site and to respect the objectives of Local Planning policies which seek to retain employment opportunities throughout the district. The employment provision will be provided by a group of five B1 units as described previously. In order to set these buildings into a rural landscape, the design suggested is that with a Barn aesthetic – see later images. This enables the overall roof height to be kept to a minimum, setting the upper floor partly within the roof structure. Three locations for these units were offered at the pre-application stage and the local residents clearly opted for that shown on the submitted plans, ie to the rear of the Church Road properties, the logic being they will not be occupied 24 hours a day so the impact on those existing properties would be limited. Nonetheless, it is important that these B1 units are screened from both new and existing properties for noise and visual intrusion, so it is anticipated the existing trees (where sound and appropriate) will be retained, interplanted where necessary on the eastern and southern boundaries and a new tree screen formed on the west side.

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3.4.5. To enhance the amount of green space and protect habitat for the bee orchid.

A key requirement of the scheme is to provide additional green space. The existing site development offers little green area except for the perimeter planting, with much of the site being covered with building or hard landscape. It can be seen from the proposed plans that a significant improvement in green areas has been achieved. This not only affords improved opportunities for wildlife, but also improves the permeability of the site, thereby relieving the existing surface water drainage system.

Additional Public Open Space has also been include in the scheme. That at the site entrance could provide a simple village green for gatherings (eg Christmas Carol Concerts), and that in the centre of the site given over to a safe Play Area for children.

Unexpectedly, in spite of its industrial use, the site does offer a very interesting feature – a bee orchid, growing adjacent to the south-west corner of the factory. It is intended that its micro-climate be maintained by leaving a low section of the existing wall, with any modifications deemed necessary for stability and appearance. This will then form part of the public space.

3.4.6. To follow the design guidance set out in the Suffolk Design Guide

As can be seen from the foregoing and the various plans and sketches, the proposals follow the advice set out in the Suffolk Design Guide in terms of site layout, individual design, materials, etc.



House 1 at north-west corner, showing general approach to design of new housing, with traditional scale, composition and detail

3 Design

There follows a few computer generated images taken from an accurate model of the scheme, to demonstrate the general scale and massing of the proposed development:

View from entrance into site



View toward main "street" looking south



Pair of semis in cul-de-sac



B1 units

3 Design



Terrace near B1 units



View across Public Open Space toward "refuge" for Bee Orchid, to show simple massing and relationship of spaces.

Sundry details which could be employed



Window reveals

Low maintenance eaves



Simple Porch



Plain tiling, render and boarding



3 Design

3.4. Landscaping

The general principles for the Landscaping are that:

- All significant trees on the site will be retained and interplanted/underplanted to create a good tree screen.
- New tree screens will be provided to separate land uses and ensure the development has minimal impact in the landscape.
- New public trees will be planted for impact within the development.
- Any inappropriate species of trees will be removed and replaced with more appropriate native species which could include: Field Maple, Hazel, Holly, Silver Birch, Oak, Beech, Hawthorn, Wild Cherry, Blackthorn, Hornbeam, Acacia, Whitebeam, Malus sp. and Laurel. These could be underplanted with Dogwood, Buddleia and the like with a view to creating new wildlife habitat in this part of the Village.
- It is envisaged the hard landscape will be an attractive blend of block paving, grit-finished tarmac and stone paving – see below for illustrations. Private forecourts can be in natural gravel but with hard paved areas for wheelchair access.



Grit finished tarmac for a softer appearance

Block paving



Stone paving



4 Access

4.1 Pedestrian Access and Public Realm Improvements

Pedestrian access to the site will be via the main entrance where a footway is proposed to link with a road crossing. This will ensure a safe crossing to the local shop, schools and village facilities.

The site is relatively flat making disabled access to all parts straightforward to achieve. All roads, paths and areas of hard-landscaping are to be in either solid or bound materials to ensure that they are accessible to wheelchair users which will include sufficient space within forecourts of houses to gain access from car to house.

As has been mentioned previously, the site will offer public realm space where none exists at present.

4.2 Vehicular Access

The principal site access has formed part of detailed assessment by Glanville Consultants Ltd as part of a Transport Assessment which accompanies the planning application under separate cover.

Those technical assessments demonstrate that the main vehicular access onto Church Road is perfectly adequate to serve the proposed development and no physical changes are required.

Within the site, access must also be retained for the adjoining premises, Anglian Timber, and to the farm.

In addition, a new farm access must be provided to the southern boundary, the most sensible location for this being from the B1 compound. This will be for farm vehicles only.

As a matter of principle, parking for the houses will be off-road, with adequate parking facilities being provided within plots or adjacent to terraces, in order to keep the road free. Wherever possible along the main “street”, garages serving those street properties have been set behind, in courts, to avoid unnecessary vehicle movements in and out of properties, rendering the road safer for pedestrians.

Access to the B1 units is to be off the initial shared roadway, to get these vehicles off the main housing development as quickly as possible. A gate could be fitted to enclose this area and prevent unlawful access out of working hours. Adequate parking and space for turning large vehicles will be provided within this compound, to ensure the highway is safe.

The road design will enable emergency and refuse vehicle access.

Adequate areas will be provided for bin storage and recycling to all houses and the B1 units.

It is envisaged that space within the houses/garages and in the B1 compound will be provided for cycle storage.

A significant added benefit to the locality will be the provision of layby parking at the site entrance, which will provide facility for shoppers visiting the local store, who currently have very limited options for parking. This will substantially improve safety around this junction.

4.3 Inclusive Design

External steps where necessary will be designed to be in accordance with the requirements of Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.

Manifestation through glazing bars or applied strips will be provided in accordance with Approved Documents M and N to critical areas of glazing to safeguard users of the buildings.

Each new dwelling will incorporate a WC provision to its entrance storey, in accordance with the requirements of Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.

The new houses will be designed to meet the requirements of the Lifetime Homes Guidelines to permit ease of conversion for an ageing population.

6 Summary

In summary, the scheme has been thoroughly thought through and revised to take into account the views of local residents and the Local Planning Authority, resulting in what we consider to be a much improved scheme and one which is worthy of this important site.

We consider there is considerable public benefit deriving from this latest scheme, both in the general appearance of this corner of Otley and in the improved amenity afforded to the general public.

We consider these revised proposals to be appropriate to the site and that outline planning consent should be granted.

7 Appendix

Indicative Schedule of proposed house types and sizes

OTLEY HOUSE TYPES						
No	house size m ²	type	bedrooms	bedspaces		
1	144	DET	4	6		
2	116	DET	3	4		
3	130	DET	4	5		
4	116	DET	3	4		
5	144	DET	4	6		
6	130	DET	4	5		
7	140	DET	4	6		
8	110	DET	3	4		
9	140	DET	4	6		
10	130	DET	4	5		
11	120	DET	3	5		
12	120	DET	3	5		
13	132	DET	4	5		
14	132	DET	4	5		
15	96	TER	2	3		
16	96	TER	2	3		
17	96	TER	2	3		
18	160	DET	5	7		
19	100	SEMI	3	4		
20	100	SEMI	3	4		
21	100	DET	3	4		
22	124	DET	3	5		
23	100	DET	3	4		
24	110	DET	3	4		
25	100	DET	3	4		
26	120	DET	3	5		
27	140	SEMI	4	6		
28	140	SEMI	4	6		
29	112	SEMI	3	4		
30	112	SEMI	3	4		
31	122	SEMI	3	5		
32	122	SEMI	3	5		
33	90	TER	2	3		
34	90	TER	2	3		
35	90	TER	2	3		
Totals	4124		112	160		

7 Appendix

Aerial views taken from a Computer Generated Model of the scheme to illustrate the overall massing, composition and scale of the proposals

Aerial View from the south



Aerial View from the west



Aerial View from the north

