ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD PLANNING COMMITTEE

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

5 October 2022

Item: 1

Application 22/00721/OUT

No.:

Location: Old Boundary House And New Boundary House London Road

Sunningdale Ascot

Proposal: Outline application for access, layout and scale only to be considered at

this stage with all other matters to be reserved for the construction of 28

apartments following demolition of the existing buildings.

Applicant: Mr Inchbald **Agent:** Miss Helen Lowe

Parish/Ward: Sunningdale Parish/Sunningdale And Cheapside

If you have a question about this report, please contact: Katherine Hale on or at

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application is for outline consent for the demolition of the two existing office buildings and for the erection of 28 apartments with associated access and parking. Matters to be considered are access, layout and scale. Appearance and landscaping would be considered at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 1.2 The proposal is considered to be unacceptable for a number of reasons including the principle of losing the existing office space without any marketing, a development that would be of a cramped appearance with all the built form pushed to the edges of the site with negligible space available for landscaping; due to the cramped form of development there would be minimal communal outdoor space for future occupants and minimal space for additional soft landscaping.
- 1.3 In addition to the above, the applicant has failed to provide any meaningful evidence that there is the likelihood of the necessary SANG Provision being secured with Bracknell Forest Borough Council to mitigate the harm arising to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
- 1.4 Whilst technical matters could be secured by way of appropriate conditions and there is weight to be given to the provision of both market and affordable houses, the loss of the existing office space would be contrary to the Government's holistic objectives for sustainable development and the extent and siting of the built form would result in a poorly designed and cramped for of development. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be refused for the reasons set out below.

It is recommended the Committee refuses planning permission for the following summarised reasons (the full reasons are identified in Section 15 of this report):

1. The application involves the loss of two office buildings that are currently used by local businesses. The buildings are evidently attractive to local businesses and their loss, without any marketing information or any other justification is unacceptable and would have a significant adverse impact on the local, and potentially wider economy. The proposal is

therefore contrary to the objectives of Policy ED3 of the Local Plan, Policies NP/E1 and NP/E2 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan, paragraph 81 of the NPPF.

- 2. The proposed development, by virtue of its U-shaped layout that results in the built form being sited extremely close to or largely on the boundaries of the site, coupled with the loss of mature boundary trees and limited space to implement a meaningful replacement landscaping scheme, would result in a poorly designed and cramped form of development that would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposed scheme is therefore contrary to Policies QP3 and NR3 of the Local Plan, Policies NP/DG2, NP/DG3 and NP/EN2 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan, paragraphs 126, 130 and 132 of the NPPF.
- 3. The proposed development, by virtue of its cramped poorly designed layout would fail to provide sufficient private and communal outdoor amenity space that would impact upon the amenities of future occupants contrary to the objectives of Policy NP/DG3 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan, paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF and Principals 8.5 and 8.6 of the Borough Wide Design Guide.
- 4. The proposal is likely to have a significant effect in combination with other plans and projects in the locality on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area [SPA] as designated under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations, and which is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI]. This would arise through increased visitor and recreational pressure on Chobham Common, as a constituent part of the SPA, causing disturbance to three species of protected, ground-nesting birds that are present at the site. In the absence of an assessment to show no likely significant effect, including sufficient mitigation measures to overcome any such impact on the SPA, and in the absence of financial provision towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project and the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) noted in the Council's Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area SPD or satisfactory alternative provision, the likely adverse impact on the integrity of this European nature conservation site has not been overcome. The proposal is thus in conflict with the guidance and advice in the National Planning Policy Framework and the RBWM Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area SPD and fails to comply with policy NR4 of the Borough Local Plan.

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION

 The Council's Constitution does not give the Head of Planning delegated powers to determine the application as it is for major development; such decisions can only be made by the Committee as the application is for major development.

3. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The site measures approximately 0.31ha and is located with the settlement of Sunningdale and within the designated Small Settlement Commercial Area.
- 3.2 The site comprises 2 two storey red brick detached buildings known as Old and New Boundary House. The frontage building known as New Boundary House is an attractive red brick building with a dual aspect frontage with pitched roof and gable features with timber detailing and pebble dash. The building is set back off the London Road frontage with a range of trees and landscaping to the front.

- 3.3 The building to the rear is known as Old Boundary House which, contrary to the name, is the more recent building and is a two storey building with the rear elevation comprising a 1.5 storey design with lower eaves.
- 3.4 The two buildings are set back from the site boundaries with the associated car parking to the north, east and south with an area of open space to the south.
- 3.5 The site's surrounding context comprises both residential and commercial development with a public car park to the west. The London Road car park lies to the west with the associated car park access wrapping round the site to the north and east and adjoining the A30 London Road that shares the access off London Road. Beyond to the north lies open agricultural land associated with Broomhall Farm.
- 3.6 Beyond to the east lies a mix of residential development that fronts London Road and comprises generally large detached dwellings and apartments blocks set well back from London Road itself thereby providing for a landscaped frontage that, in part, contributes to the established character of the area.
- 3.7 To the south and south west across from the site lies The Ambassador care home that comprises a three storey red brick and render building designed to reflect several of the surrounding buildings that are of an 'arts and craft' design. Commercial development beyond includes an estate agents and furniture shop which are within attractive buildings. Beyond lies the London Road/Chobham Road junction around which are located a range of everyday shops and services including restaurants, fast food establishments, home DIY shop and clothes shops. Beyond to the south west approximately 500 metres to the south west lies Sunningdale train station and additional shops and other services.

4. KEY CONSTRAINTS

- 4.1 The site lies within the built-up settlement of Sunningdale within the Small Settlement Commercial Area.
- 4.2 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and an area at low risk of surface water flooding. The site is not subject to any TPO's nor are there any designated or non-designated listed buildings or any other heritage asset in the surrounding area.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 The proposal is for erection of 28 residential units following the demolition of both Old and New Boundary House. The application is made in Outline form with the principle, means of access, layout and scale to be considered. Appearance and landscaping are to be reserved.

6. **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

Reference	Description	Decision
21/01543/OUT	Outline application for access, layout	Withdrawn
	and scale only to be considered at	01/10/2021
	this stage with all other matters	
	reserved for the construction of 28	
	apartments following demolition of	
	the existing buildings	

7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7.1 The main relevant policies are:

Adopted Borough Local Plan

Issue	Policy
Spatial Strategy for the Borough	SP1
Climate Change	SP2
Sustainability and Placemaking	QP1
Green and Blue Infrastructure	QP2
Character and Design of New Development	QP3
Building Height and Tall Buildings	QP3a
River Thames Corridor	QP4
Housing Development Sites	HO1
Housing Mix and Type	HO2
Affordable Housing	НО3
Economic Development	ED1
Protected Employment Sites	ED2
Other Sites and Loss of Employment Floorspaces	ED3
Managing Flood Risk and Waterways	NR1
Nature Conservation and Biodiversity	NR2
Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	NR3
Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area	NR4
Sustainable Transport	IF2

Adopted Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan (2011 – 2026)

Issue	NP Policy
Retention of Employment Floorspace	NP/E1
Encouraging Micro and Small Business	NP/E2
Respecting the Townscape	NP/DG1
Density, Footprint, Separation, Scale & Bulk	NP/DG2
Good Quality Design	NP/DG3
Trees	NP/EN2
Mix of Housing Types	NP/H2
Parking and Access	NP/T1
Biodiversity	NP/EN4

8. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework Sections (NPPF) (2021)

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development

Section 4- Decision-making

Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 9- Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making effective use of land

Section 12- Achieving well-designed places

Section 14- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Documents

- RBWM Thames Basin Health's SPA
- Borough Wide Design Guide

Other Local Strategies or Publications

- RBWM Townscape Assessment
- RBWM Parking Strategy
 Affordable Housing Planning Guidance
 Interim Sustainability Position Statement
 Corporate Strategy
 Environment and Climate Strategy

9. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Comments from interested parties

37 occupiers were notified directly of the application, a site notice was displayed and the application was advertised in the Local Press.

17 responses have been received: all 17 of these responses are letters of objection to the development. These comments are summarised below:

- Impact on highway safety
- Question over social housing provision and potential lack of it

Refuse bin and recycling strategy

- Unnecessary for further housing in this area

Statutory consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered	
Local Flood Authority	Raises no objection to the proposal subject to condition(s) relating to a surface water drainage scheme.	Section 10 (viii)	
Highways	Raises no objection to the proposal subject to condition(s) relating to:	Section 10 (vii)	
	Parking layout Construction management plan Cycle provision		

	I	
Ecology	NB: Ecology have been reconsulted since amended information was submitted and updated comments are awaited.	Section 10 (ix)
	The below is a summary of the comments received 18 th March 2022.	
	Impacts on the SPA and SACs would need to be assessed through a site-specific shadow Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) and impacts on the SSSIs will need to be assessed through an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA).	
	Further surveys are needed with regards to bats and roosting potential within the identified trees/hedgerows	
	The applicant needs to clearly demonstrate, using a quantifiable measure obtained from a suitable biodiversity calculator, prior to the application being determined, that the current proposals could and would deliver a net gain for biodiversity.	
Housing	Of the 28 flats, 8 flats are proposed as affordable housing which is equates to 28.6%. However, 9 flats would be 32% and be policy-compliant with BLP Policy HO3 in terms of numbers. The previous application reference 21/01543/OUT proposed 13 flats as affordable housing (46%).	Section 10 (vi)
	The proposed floorplans show the split of 8 affordable and 2 market flats in Block A, summarised as follows by bedroom (B) and person (P) (this does not include 3 market "turret" flats at the right end with their own access core).	
	A policy-compliant scheme in terms of numbers would be 9 flats which would leave a single flat as market tenure. It would be more practical for the two access cores to be solely for affordable housing and hence would be more attractive to a Registered Provider.	
	Although the tenure split would be 50% rent/50% intermediate and not exactly as stated in BLP Policy HO3, this can justified by:	
	An additional affordable flat resulting in a total of 10 (36%);	
	The same tenure from the same access core. This is not only more practical but also allows maintenance and management charges to be separated for the different tenures which is a requirement of Registered Providers.	

All the floor areas exceed the minimum requirement for the size of flat stated in the Nationally Described Space Standards 2015:

1B1P should be at least 39m2, 42m2 is shown. 1B2P should be at least 50m2, 53m2 is shown. 2B3P should be at least 61m2, 72m2 is shown.

The mix of flats would provide a range of smaller accommodation for single households, couples and small families and would adequately address local housing needs.

If no Registered Provider is engaged at this stage, the Housing Enabling Officer has contact details for various RPs who can be approached in due course when the affordable housing number, type and tenure have been confirmed in light of the above comments.

The affordable homes should be secured by a Section 106 agreement to reflect the agreed number, type, tenure and location. There should also be provisions to secure a Registered Provider and appropriate delivery mechanisms for constructing, completing and transferring the affordable homes.

Others (e.g. Parish and Amenity Groups)

Group	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
Sunningdale Parish Council	This application follows a previous application (reference: 21/01543/OUT) which was withdrawn. This current application is almost identical to application 21/01543 and Sunningdale Parish Council comments on this latest application remain therefore largely the same.	Section 10
	However, in the intervening period the Borough has adopted its new Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (BLP). The curtilage comprising Old Boundary House and New Boundary House sits adjacent to the Broomhall Car Park Site, which is a strategic site identified for redevelopment under the BLP, reference AL33, as shown. Development AL33 completely wraps around the site under consideration here.	
	Details of the AL33 development are not yet known, there is a presumption that this development will go ahead during the plan period and will be a Mixed-Use scheme including approximately 30 residential units, retail, employment and public car parking.	
	This application for New Boundary house and Old Boundary house must therefore be considered not just against the character of the village and surrounding area as it is currently –	

but also against this significant pending AL33 development which will significantly increase the density of this part of Sunningdale on its own.

Overdevelopment

This development of an additional 28 apartments is windfall development which represents considerable over development in this area, especially when viewed against the intended development of AL33.

The density is much greater than that of the surrounding area The current site is largely green space and has a feeling of openness

The built mass of this development would be substantial compared to the building density that currently exists.

This would be contrary to BLP/QP2 and BLP/QP3

Comparison with The Ambassadors opposite is not considered to be valid as this is a retirement housing complex. There are no street scene elevations shown and no side elevations or rear elevations to view. Yet, the proposal is for a 10.5 metre high, 3 storey high building on the front northeast boundary corner of the property.

The building architecture is described as an arts and crafts interpretation as shown to the right. The Parish Council believe the scale, bulk, and size of the front elevation would be out of character with the street scene.

Trees, woodlands and hedgerow

hTe percentage of built form versus green space on the plot can be seen in the outline plan to the right. Green spaces are almost non-existent. The application states that minimal tree works are envisaged and that no tree works are recommended at the present time. This new application now shows more trees, along the boundary with the car park access road behind, which are being retained, but it is difficult to see how many, if any, of the existing trees could remain as their RPAs will be severely impacted by the development.

There are existing laurel hedges and evergreen borders on the site which are shown to the right.

The application does not appear to have addressed the loss of amenity resulting from the removal of hedgerows, and substantial green areas, which would take place as a result of the development of these blocks which in some cases sit close to the boundary. This would be contrary to BLP/NR3.

Affordable housing

The applicant's statements about affordable housing states that 'a proportion of the dwellings will be affordable homes OR a financial contribution will be offered to provide off-site affordable housing secured through a Section 106 Legal Agreement in due course'. The Parish Council would certainly encourage the

inclusion of a substantial number of affordable housing units within the scheme and would strongly oppose these being replaced by a financial contribution to provide off-site affordable housing.

Traffic/Access

The intersection of the busy A30 London Road and Chobham Road is directly opposite the proposed development. Traffic exiting Chobham road and turning right on to the London Road often has to negotiate a difficult junction as traffic is commonly turning right across their path from the London Road into Chobham Road.

The intended development of Broomhall Car Park (AL33) includes 'Enhance vehicular access into the site from London Road'. It is difficult to see how this can be achieved when the proposed development for Old and New Boundary houses also needs to address issues of access. Adding a further complication of negotiating traffic entering and exiting this proposed new development will only exacerbate the problem.

Only 34 car parking spaces are being provided on a 1 space for 1 apartment basis plus an additional 6 spaces. All traffic must enter and leave the site via the existing single carriageway vehicular access point. Manoeuvring and trying to park in the central square courtyard as well as sharing this confined space with delivery trucks and service vehicles does not appear to be a workable proposition.

Also, there seems to be no provision for disabled parking, nor electric car charging facilities and therefore is not in line with BLP/NR5.

Open space

Policy BLP/IF4 states that residential development on nonallocated sites of ten dwellings or more should normally provide new open space and play facilities. This may be the reason for the inclusion of a raised communal deck over eight car parking spaces in the parking area, but its design and purpose is unclear - and it's visual impact to the development has not been shown.

SPAE

Objects to the proposal.

The application resubmitted is essentially the same as the previously withdrawn application, but with the main difference being reference to the Council not having a five-year housing land supply.

Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan is not out of date and should be considered relevant.

The layout as being contrived to squeeze so many units into such a small site. It clearly has been difficult to retain the existing trees on the boundaries and these appear to be being jeopardised. There can be expected to be sustained pressure

on many of the mature trees on the site because of overhanging, lack of light and shading issues. In view of the extensive root protection areas, the proposed development will inevitably result in damage to, or loss of, mature trees.

The scale of development (90dph) would introduce an intensification which would be out of character with the centre of Sunningdale. The permission for the Ambassador site (incidentally, less dense) was granted in June 2001 for 1- and 2-bedroom retirement flats (00/79281). As such the application cannot be compared with the Ambassador. Also, it was in a planning era long before either the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan or the NPPF.

To retain and encourage employment, planning policy makes clear: Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of an existing site where the current use provides jobs to a use where jobs will not be provided will only be permitted if the applicant demonstrates that all possible appropriate alternative job providing options have been considered and actively marketed on a realistic basis for a period of at least 12 months without any economically viable options resulting (NP/E1.1). We are not aware of any such marketing activity and so the proposal is contrary to NP/E1. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan includes Sunningdale Broomhall Centre (NP/SS5) which has been identified for a mixed development reflecting the local character and quality of the area and enhancing the way it functions (NP/SS5.4). The applicant's site is bounded on three sides by this site and on the remaining side by the A30 road. The two sites share access from the A30 which requires to be improved (NP/SS5.2). Further, there is insufficient unrestricted access to the site for deliveries and service vehicles due to the constrained circumstances of the site. This does not comply with NP/T1.1.

10. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 The key issues for consideration are:
 - i Principle of Development
 - ii Loss of Employment
 - iii Impact on Character and Appearance
 - iv Residential Amenity
 - v Trees
 - vi Provision of Market and Affordable Housing
 - vii Highway Safety and Parking
 - viii Floods and Drainage
 - ix Ecology and SANG
 - x Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development

- 10.2 The application site is located outside of the Green Belt within the built-up settlement area of Sunningdale where Policy SP1 of the Local Plan states that the villages excluded from the Green Belt will continue in their roles as local centres as well as providing limited opportunity to accommodate new development.
- 10.3 In this context, there is in principle support for the provision of housing on the site subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies, including the loss of employment floorspace, and other material considerations.

Loss of Employment

- 10.4 The application site currently comprises two detached buildings that are both currently in use as offices. The two buildings provide for approximately 716square metres of office space which is currently being used by a range of businesses including IT companies, insurance brokers, a solicitors practice and accountants.
- 10.5 Local Plan Policy ED1, ED2 and ED3 all focus around employment and retaining sites for economic use and employment use, allowing for growth within existing sites and the creation of new additional sites within the district. Local Plan Policy ED3 specifically requires that where a change of use from an economic use to another use is proposed, development proposals must provide credible and robust evidence of an appropriate period of marketing for economic use and that proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to the local economy.
- 10.6 In addition, Policy NP/E1 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan states as follows:

"Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of an existing site where the current use provides jobs to a use where jobs will not be provided will only be permitted if the applicant demonstrates that all possible appropriate alternative job providing options have been considered and actively marketed on a realistic basis for a period of at least 12 months without any economically viable options resulting.

For the avoidance of doubt, the applicant shall be required to demonstrate that conversion for occupation by micro or small businesses is not an economically viable option."

- 10.7 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states, inter alia, that in seeking to achieve sustainable development the planning system has three roles, the first of which is an economic role which aims to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right place and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- 10.8 Paragraph 81 within Section 6 of the NPPF commands that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. While not specifically referring to the loss of such employment and business development it is nevertheless reasonable to conclude that significant weight must be given to the loss of such floorspace, particularly that which is currently in use and providing office space for a range of local businesses.
- 10.9 The application site is, as confirmed by the applicant, currently in use as an office and as such it is evident that the buildings are currently suitable for such a use where the above extant and emerging development seek to protect such uses unless there is

sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the current employment use is no longer viable. Such evidence comprises marketing information for at least 12 months and provided that such marketing has been undertaken at reasonable market rates.

- 10.10 The applicant has failed to provide any marketing information at all to demonstrate that the current use is no longer viable. The potential impact of the loss of this existing office space is further exacerbated by the Eastern Berkshire FEMA Economic Development Needs Assessment (2016) (2016 EDNA).
- 10.11 The 2016 EDNA refers to the Homes and Communities Agency Employment Density Guide that states every 12.5 square metres of office space will support 1 full time job. On this basis the 716 square metres of office space that would be lost would have the potential to support approximately 52 full time jobs.
- 10.12 Furthermore, the two office buildings are currently in use by at least five separate commercial businesses. The on-going use demonstrates that the two buildings are indeed suitable for and attractive to local businesses further highlighting the importance in seeking to retain such space to contribute towards the Borough's overall economy.
- 10.13 The 2016 EDNA conforms that the Brough has a requirement for approximately 50,500 square metres of additional office space. Such a need, in conjunction with the fact that several local businesses are indeed operating from the site further highlights the importance of such space to the local economy and the need to retain such space.
- 10.14 The loss of active office space without any marketing or other such information at all is wholly unacceptable and would have a detrimental impact on the local and wider economy and as such is contrary to Local Plan Policy ED3, Neighbourhood Plan Policy NP/E1 and Section 6 of the NPPF.

Impact on Character and Appearance

- 10.15 Section 12 of the NPPF clearly states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings is *fundamental* to what the planning and development process should achieve. Local Plan Policy QP3 is consistent with these overarching objectives of Section 12 of the NPPF and requires new development to be of a high quality design and have regard to a range of design based criteria.
- 10.16 Policy QP3's criteria sets out 16 criteria around design which all new development should follow/comply with. These include ensuring that new development should be compatible with the established street facade having regard to scale, building lines and the roofscape of a building and ensuring development includes protection of existing trees and comprehensive blue and green infrastructure being integrated into the proposal and high quality soft and hard landscaping.
- 10.17 Neighbourhood Plan Policies NP/DG1 and sub-Policy NP/DG1.4 ensure new development responds positively to the local townscape. The RBWM Townscape Assessment Report should be used as a base to inform development proposals with 1.4 stating "Development proposals in Townscape Assessment zones Victorian Villages must respect the form and character of the street and of the surrounding area."
- 10.18 The site is located within an area classed as Victorian Villages with the Townscape Assessment listing the Key Characteristics, inter alia, as rows of terraces and semi-

- detached properties that are typically 2 and 2.5 stories in height, a unit brought about by a consistent materials pallet, detailed building frontages, variation in rooflines that creates a stimulating streetscape.
- 10.19 Moreover, Policy NP/DG2 ensures new development is similar in density, footprint, separation, scale and bulk to neighbouring properties with NP.DG2.2 stating that development must respect building lines, front gardens, walls, railing and hedges.
- 10.20 Furthermore, Policy NP/DG3.1 requires all new development to demonstrate good quality design with regard to the use of green hedging and/or trees in keeping with the existing streetscape.
- 10.21 The application site comprises two detached buildings with a low brick wall and railings that defines the main London Road frontage together with well-established mature landscaping with the closest building, known as New Boundary House, being set back from London Road by approximately 12 metres. Such a set back has allowed the hedgerow, trees and other landscaping to flourish which dominates the site frontage that contributes to the overall character of London Road that, save for the more central areas that surrounds the London Road/Chobham Road junction, is made up of well established mature trees and other landscaping with buildings being set well back from London Road.
- 10.22 While submitted in outline form with appearance being reserved the application has sought permission for layout and scale and as such there are numerous urban design aspects that can be considered at this stage.
- 10.23 The scheme would comprise a roughly U shaped building that would comprise 2, 2.5 and 3 storey elements with singe storey elements. The London Road frontage would entail a 2.5 storey buildings with a 3 storey 'turret' located to the north east corner of the site. The London Road frontage would be sited close up to the road frontage with a minimal set back of between approximately 2 metres and would also entail the removal of all the front boundary landscaping. This frontage section of the building has been referred to as Block A with the remainder referred to as Block B. The Site Plan (Drawing No. 21-01-A-100-P3) however demonstrates that there will be one building with what would appear to be a small singe storey element located adjacent to the entrance archway. Appearance however is to be considered at the Reserved matters stage.
- 10.24 In addition to the London Road frontage the remaining sections of the building are also sited close up to the boundaries of the site with, at some points no set back from the site boundaries, to a minimal set back of only 2-3m.
- 10.25 The U Shaped design of the building with the frontages being set so close to the site boundaries will result in the built form dominating the site frontages with negligible space left to implement a landscaping strategy to off-set the complete removal of the existing landscaping that forms an integral part of the sites character.
- 10.26 Opposite the site is the Ambassador House care home that comprises a three storey building and as such there is no objection to the principle of such a 2.5/3 storey building at the application site. However, the proposal would result in a building with all of the built form located very close to the site boundaries without any room to implement a sufficient landscaping to replace the existing trees and hedgerow that would be removed.

- 10.27 The applicant has referred to the Ambassador House development where they claim the built form covers 43.1% of the site compared to 38.5% of that proposed. Ambassador House however is sited in a more central part of the site that has allowed a landscaping scheme to be implemented that now forms an integral part of that site's character that respects the wider character of London Road.
- 10.28 Whilst this may be the case, good design is much more than a mathematical assessment and requires an assessment against urban design considerations such as the presence of landscaping, building lines, building heights and the overall scale and appearance of a building.
- 10.29 The existing buildings are set back from the site boundaries and have more of a relationship with the residential properties north east. To the south west are several commercial buildings that are sited directly onto the public realm and are characteristic of more town centre locations which are 2 storey in scale thereby representing considerably less bulk that that proposed. The application site therefore represents a transition from the centre of Sunningdale to the lower density residential development along London Road.
- 10.30 It is this transitional nature of the application site that would allow for some reduction in the set back of any new buildings. However, as required by Policies QP3 and NR3 of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan Policy NP/DG3 any new development needs to retain and incorporate the existing trees and landscaping. The inability of the scheme to retain any soft landscaping or implement a sufficient landscaping scheme serves to demonstrate that the scheme represents a cramped and contrived form of development and as such represents a poor quality form of development.
- 10.31 As outlined above the scheme proposes a 2.5 storey building along the London Road frontage with a 3 storey 'turret' similar to Ambassador House. There is no objection to a building of this scale. However, the complete removal of the existing trees and landscaping and the siting of the built form so close to the site boundaries would result in a very cramped appearance that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
- 10.32 Sunningdale Parish Council have raised concern over the allocated site (AL33) off the London Road car park. This application site would, save for the access, have no impact on the deliverability of the allocated site for its intended mixed use.

Residential Amenity

- 10.33 Paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF ensures planning creates places that are safe, inclusive and accessible which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future residents. The need to ensure a high standard of amenity for both existing and future residents is set out in the Borough Wide Design Guide.
- 10.34 Paragraph 8.1 of the Borough Wide Design Guide SPD states that residential amenity in the form of light, privacy, outlook and provision of outdoor amenity space is a detailed but important design matter that has a very strong influence on the quality of people's living environments. Paragraph 8.2 states that new developments should provide future occupiers with high quality amenities and not undermine the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties, especially where these are residential properties.

10.35 Table 8.1 of the Borough Wide Design Guide SPD sets out the minimum separation distances for, inter alia, front to front, rear to rear and front/back to flank relationships for both 2 storey and above. Table 8.1 and the separation distances are referred to below where necessary.

Existing Residents

- 10.36 To the west of the application site is the London Road public car park with commercial development including an estate agents to the south west and south of the site around the London Road/Chobham Road junction. Such commercial uses would not be impacted upon by the proposed development in terms of daylight and sunlight, overlooking or other amenity impacts including noise and disturbance.
- 10.37 To the south east of the site opposite the site is the Ambassador House care home that would have a front to front relationship with the northern part of the proposed development. Both the application scheme and Ambassador House are over two stories in height. In such cases Table 8.1 of the Borough Wide Design Guide SPD states such separation distance should be a minimum of 15 metres.
- 10.38 Notwithstanding the oblique angle of view between Ambassador House and the flats proposed the separation distance between the two sets of units fronting London Road would be in excess of 20 metres. As such there would be no material impact on the occupants of Ambassador House as a result of the proposed development.
- 10.39 To the north east of the site are new residential properties on the former Lime Tree Villa site. The north east elevation of the application scheme would have a front to flank relationship with the former Lime Tree Villa houses. The submitted Storey Heights Plan confirms that this section of the development would be 3 stories in height and as such Table 8.1 would require a minimum separation distance of 15 metres.
- 10.40 The proposed north east elevation would be between approximately 9 and 12.5 metres from the side of the back garden of the Plot 1 of the former Lime Tree Villa dwelling. Furthermore, the north east elevation of the application proposal would result in a number of habitable room windows that would face the back garden area at both first and second floor level. Such an increase in the number and height of windows together with balconies has the potential to result in an adverse loss of privacy to the occupants of this dwelling even with the proposed retention of some of the existing trees within the red line site plan. It is the applicants intention to install privacy screens on some balconies whilst this would go some way to protecting existing occupiers it does not alleviate all concerns raised above. As such the proposal is contrary to the objectives of Policy NP/DG2 of the Neighbourhood Plan paragraph 130 of the NPPF and Policy QP3 of the Local Plan

Future Occupants

- 10.41 In addition to the above it is important to ensure new developments would provide future occupants with a high standards of amenity, both internally and externally.
- 10.42 Before considering the outdoor space proposed it is necessary to consider whether the proposed flats would meet the Nationally Described Space Standards. Officers can confirm that each of the residential units proposed will meet or exceed the space

- standards set by MHCLG. On this basis future residents would have a good quality amenity with regard to internal space.
- 10.43 In addition to internal space the Borough Wide Design Guide sets a requirement for flatted developments to have both private and communal space.
- 10.44 With regard to the need for ground floor flats to have a private terrace, these should be, in terms of size, at least 3 metres in depth and as wide as the unit they serve. Whilst terraces/gardens have been provided for all ground floor flats not all of those terraces/gardens would be at least 3 metres in depth and as wide as the flat they would serve whilst two of the terraces would directly abut parking spaces further limiting the overall quality and usability of such spaces. None of the ground floor units on Block A would have a private terrace space.
- 10.45 With regard to the first floor units, second floor units and third floor units of Block B these would only have access to a small balcony. The units at both first and second floor of Block A would also all have access to a balcony however similarly to those of Block B, these are all small in size. The Borough Wide Design Guide is clear that all flats should have some private space and as such the scheme fails to accord with paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF and Policy QP3 of the Local Plan.
- 10.46 In addition to each flat being required to have private outdoor space Principal 8.6 of the Borough Wide Design Guide states that a minimum of 10 square metres of communal outdoor space per flat must be provided.
- 10.47 In addition to the need for such a space, Principal 8.6 sets out that amenity space should be connected to the building, screened from public view, free of vehicles, actively overlooked and dominated by planting and allows for sustainable tree planting.
- 10.48 The scheme proposes 28 residential flats and as such there should be a minimum of 280square metres of outdoor communal space. The application proposes the U-shaped building with car parking to the rear within a courtyard area. The only green space comprises negligible areas located between the outside edges of the buildings. The applicant has provided a site plan which highlights the extent of green space.
- 10.49 It is evident from the image that the scheme would fail to provide any meaningful outdoor communal space and that the green space provided would be dominated by the London Road, London Road car park access and not screened from public view and irregularly shaped. As such the scheme is contrary to the aims of paragraph 130 of the NPPF and Principal's 8.5 and 8.6 of the Borough Wide Design Guide.

Trees

- 10.50 The Character and Appearance section above has referred to the contribution the existing trees and hedgerow make to the character and context of the surrounding area.
- 10.51 The Borough Townscape Assessment highlights the importance of and desire to conserve distinctive trees and hedgerows. Such aims echo the objectives of Policies QP3 and NR3 of the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3.
- 10.52 In addition to the policies referred to above the importance of trees is further highlighted by paragraph 131 of the NPPF which states "Trees make an important contribution

to the character and quality of urban environments and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees into developments. The importance of trees to the built environment is from both a character aspect as well as an ecological aspect.

- 10.53 As a result of the proposal a total of 31 trees (28 of these are considered to be of moderate quality) would be removed. This would result in a significant reduction visually within the street scene and a significant reduction of arboricultural value on the site. In addition, the limited room for landscaping and planting would ensure trees would be in close proximity to flank walls and as such would not survive on site in the long term. Such issues would result in a significant impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounds contrary to Policies NR3 and QP3 of the Local Plan and Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3 of the neighbourhood Plan
- 10.54 Without any justification as to why such mature trees cannot be successful retained and without the ability to implement a landscaping scheme to offset such wholesale removal of existing trees the scheme is, in arboriculture terms, unacceptable. The scheme is therefore contrary to Policy QP3 and NR3 of the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG.

Provision of Market and Affordable Housing

- 10.55 The application site is located within the built up settlement area of Sunningdale and would provide a total of 28 market and affordable flats on a brownfield site. As set out above in Section 9(i) of this report the principle of such a proposal, in terms of housing provision, is entirely acceptable. Additional reference is made to the Borough's Housing Land Supply below.
- 10.56 Local Plan Policy HO2, Neighbourhood Plan Policy NP/H2 seek to ensure that development provides for a mix of dwelling types. The application proposal would provide for the following mix of houses:

House Size	No. of Units
1 Bedroom	11
2 Bedroom	5
3 Bedroom	12

- 10.57 The scheme would therefore provide for a mix of residential units that would provide suitable accommodation for both younger individuals and couples along with families and as such would accord with those relevant policies that seek to achieve a mix of residential units.
- 10.58 With regard to the provision of affordable housing, Policy HO3 of the Local Plan ensures that all new residential development on sites of more than 1,000square metres or where a net increase of 10 or more dwellings is proposed there should be a provision of affordable housing and that such provision is made as part of the development itself.
- 10.59 The proposal will secure 8 affordable units on site as follows:

4x 1BF - social rent (left core, ground and first floor)

1x 2BF - affordable rent (left core, second floor)

2x 1BF, 1x 2BF - shared ownership (middle core, first and second floor)

10.60 In addition to the on site provision of affordable units, the applicant has agreed to pay a commuted sum equivalent to 0.4 units which would be secured by way of S106

Agreement. The Housing Officer has accepted these proposals and raises no objection.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 10.61 The Highways Authority have reviewed the application and have made the following comments:
- 10.62 It is noted the site was the subject of a similar development proposals which was later withdrawn by the developer (21/01543/OUTLINE).
- 10.63 The site benefits from an access onto the A30 London Road via an access road which also serves London Road Car Park. It is noted that no changes are proposed to the existing access arrangement. However, the development does propose introducing a pedestrian path from the mid-point of the site onto the public footway.

Parking Provision

- 10.64 Pursuant to the Borough's Parking Strategy (2004), the development is considered to be within an accessible location. That said, the existing bus services whilst regular is not frequent to encourage the prospective occupants to adopt this sustainable mode of travel. Notwithstanding the above, the 34 car parking spaces provided complies with the Borough's parking strategy.
- 10.65 The developer is advised that 20% of the total car parking provision should be active electric vehicle charging points (EVC), with a similar ratio for passive EVC points. Furthermore, disabled parking should represent 5% of the overall parking provision (2 spaces).

Cycle Provision

10.66 The development attracts a minimum demand for 28 enclosed, secure and accessible car parking spaces. The submitted layout plan shows two separate cycle parking facilities. Having examined the plan, it is recommended that the developer submits a dimensioned plan of both cycle storage facilities, and this should be secured by a planning condition.

Refuse/Servicing Arrangement

10.67 A refuse store is positioned close to the site's gated entrance. The sites internal road network provides sufficient room to allow a panel van or similar delivery vehicle to enter, turn and leave in a forward manner. However, confirmed is required with regards to the arrangement for collecting the refuse and recycling bins. The Highway Authority will not support developments where the bins are left on the highway to migrate onto the access road or left on the public footway/amenity areas. This information can be obtained by way of planning condition.

10.68 <u>Traffic Generation</u>

In order to understand the impacts associated with the development, the transport consultant has interrogated the TRICS database and compared the predicted trip generated by both the existing and proposed uses. To summarise, the results suggest the residential development is predicted to attract an additional 6 and 7 vehicular trips during the AM and PM peak periods, respectively.

10.69 In highway terms, this increase is not considered significant nor is it likely to lead to an adverse impact on highway safety, having regard to paragraph 11 of the Framework.

Summary

10.70 In highway terms, officers are satisfied the development is unlikely to lead to an adverse impact on the surrounding highway network.

Floods and Drainage

10.71 The Lead local Flood Authority (LLFA) have been consulted and whilst initially further clarification and information was required, this has since been obtained. As a result, the LLFA raise no objection to the proposal subject to a condition relating to a surface water drainage scheme. The application is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy NR1 and the NPPF.

Ecology and SANG

- 10.72 The Council's Ecologist previously raised a number of issues/concerns an requested further information be submitted, this has been provided by the applicant. At the time of writing the committee report Officers have not yet received a further consultation response from the Ecologist, this is hoped to be provided to Committee Members by late papers. As it currently stands there is a holding objection from the Ecologist and therefore the proposal currently fails to comply with policy NR2 of the local Plan.
- 10.73 As noted above, the site falls within the 400m 5km Zone of Influence of the Thames basin Heaths SPA. In such areas the Council's Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area SPD (Part 1) sets a two-fold approach to mitigating the potential impacts of development that, alone or in combination, could have a significant impact on the integrity of the SPA.
- 10.74 The two-fold approach comprises the provision of Suitable Natural Alternative Greenspace (SANG) and financial contributions towards strategic access management and monitoring (SAMM).
- 10.75 There is no capacity at the Allen's Field SANG, one of the Council's Strategic SNAG for a development of this size. The applicant was been advised to liaise with Bracknell Forest Council in order to secure the necessary SANG provision to mitigate against the potential impacts to the SPA. As of the time of his committee report the applicant has not yet informed the Council that alternative arrangements/provisions have been made.
- 10.76 As no such SANG provision has been secured, and with the impacts associated with the proposal set out above, the proposal is contrary to the aims of Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, Policy NR3 of the Local Plan and Section 15 of the NPPF.

Other Considerations

10.78 Policy QP3 ensures new developments are resilient to climate change and incorporate design and construction measures that minimise energy demand and water use, maximise energy efficiency and minimise waste.

10.79 While very limited information has been provided on such aspects of the scheme these could, should Officer's have considered the scheme largely acceptable in planning terms, have been agreed during the course of the application and secured by way of an appropriate condition(s).

11. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

11.1 The development is CIL liable.

12. PLANNING BALANCE

- 12.1 This application seeks outline permission for the erection of 28 residential units with the principle, means of access, layout and scale to be considered. Appearance and landscaping are to be considered at the reserved matters stage.
- 12.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act (2004) states that "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise" and as such the starting point for the determination of this application is the Borough Local Plan 2013 2033 and the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011 2026 (Made February 2014) and the NPPF (2021).
- 12.3 The application proposes the demolition of the two buildings that are currently in use as offices by a number of local within the built up settlement of Sunningdale. As stated above, without any marketing information, or other such justification as to why the existing office space is no longer viable the scheme is contrary to the aims of Policy ED3 of the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan Policies NP/E1 and paragraph 81 of the NPPF.
- 12.4 The scheme would entail the complete removal of all boundary trees and the erection of a 2, 2,5 and 3 storey U shaped building. While reference has been made to two blocks (Block A and Block B) that are divided by the access arch way the Site Plan appears to show that they would nevertheless be a single structure. The U shaped layout of the built form will be sited very close up to the site boundaries. The remaining, very limited space would need to be shared between landscaping and providing for private and communal space.
- 12.5 Such issues combine to demonstrate the scheme would represent a cramped and contrived design. Officers have however no objection to the principle of a 2.5 or 3 storey building however the siting of such a building so close to the boundaries would result in a cramped poorly designed form of development without any meaningful space to implement a landscaping scheme. e importance of design is set out through the Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, and the NPPF and National Design Guide The scheme is therefore contrary to Policies QP3 of the Local Plan and Policies NP/DG2, NP/DG3 and NP/EN2 of the Neighbourhood Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 12.6 Principle 8.1 of the Design Guide SPD stating that developments which would have significant impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties will be resisted. The proposal would result in some 8 windows on the first and second floors, together with

balconies which would be between 9 and 12 metres from the back garden of properties on the former Lime Tree Villa property having a substantial increase in the amount of overlooking and loss of privacy when in their back gardens.

- 12.7 Neighbourhood Plan Policy NP.DG3.2 ensures dwellings are provided with sufficient garden or amenity space with Principles 8.5 and 8.6 of the Borough Wide Design Guide SPD ensure all flatted developments have both private and communal outdoor amenity space. While the scheme would provide some of the units with a terrace or balcony these appear small compared to the Design Guide criteria. Moreover, no private communal space is provided. The applicant claims the outdoor green space is for such amenity space. However, this is extremely limited, poorly laid out and irregularly shaped and would be dominated by the car park and the London Road car park access nor would it be screened from public view. The proposal fails to accord with Policy DG3.2 and the Design Guide and paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF.
- 12.8 Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan ensures harm is not caused to the Thames Basin Heath SPA through the provision of adequate measures which are set out in the Borough's Thames Basin Heaths SPA SPD. The applicant has confirmed they are in discussion with Bracknell Forest regarding securing the necessary SANG provision. Without the necessary SANG provision in place the scheme is contrary to Policy NRM6 and the Thames Basin Heaths SPD.
- 12.9 The proposal would provide for 8 affordable units together with a commuted sum payment equivalent to 0.4 units so as to ensure that the proposal provides the full 30% affordable as required under Local Plan Policy HO3. Whilst the provision of affordable homes is a benefit of the scheme, this benefit is afforded limited weight given that the Council can currently demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. This limited benefit of the scheme is not considered to be significant enough to outweigh the harms identified above.
- 12.10 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states inter alia that when considering the application there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council currently as an up to date adopted Local Plan having being adopted earlier this year (2022), paragraph 12 of the NPPF states that the overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making, where an application conflicts with an up to date development plan including any neighbourhood plans) permission should not usually be granted. The applicant contends within their planning statement that the weight to be afforded to the Neighbourhood Plan should be greatly reduced as paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged. However, given the Council have an up to date Local Plan, paragraph 11d and therefore 14 are not engaged and do not apply.
- 12.11 The Council currently benefits from a 5 year housing land supply and an up to date local plan. As such while there are benefits associated with the proposal in terms of Affordable Housing and additional housing stock, these are relatively limited in both quantity and weight, and therefore would not outweigh the identified harms such that planning permission should be forthcoming for this proposal.

13 CONCLUSION

13.1 The proposal therefore fails to accord with relevant development plan policies and national planning guidance. In light of this, planning permission should be refused.

14. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A Site location plan and site layout
- Appendix B plan and elevation drawings

15. REASONS RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL IF PERMISSION IS NOT GRANTED

- The application involves the loss of two office buildings that are currently used by local businesses. The buildings are evidently attractive to local businesses and their loss, without any marketing information or any other justification is unacceptable and would have a significant adverse impact on the local, and potentially wider economy. The proposal is therefore contrary to the objectives of Policy ED3 of the Local Plan, Policies NP/E1 and NP/E2 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan, paragraph 81 of the NPPF.
- The proposed development, by virtue of its U-shaped layout that results in the built form being sited extremely close to or largely on the boundaries of the site, coupled with the loss of mature boundary trees and limited space to implement a meaningful replacement landscaping scheme, would result in a poorly designed and cramped form of development that would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposed scheme is therefore contrary to Policies QP3 and NR3 of the Local Plan, Policies NP/DG2, NP/DG3 and NP/EN2 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan, paragraphs 126, 130 and 132 of the NPPF.
- The proposed development, by virtue of its cramped poorly designed layout would fail to provide sufficient private and communal outdoor amenity space that would impact upon the amenities of future occupants contrary to the objectives of Policy NP/DG3 of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan, paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF and Principals 8.5 and 8.6 of the Borough Wide Design Guide.
- 4 The proposal is likely to have a significant effect in combination with other plans and projects in the locality on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area [SPA] as designated under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations, and which is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI]. This would arise through increased visitor and recreational pressure on Chobham Common, as a constituent part of the SPA, causing disturbance to three species of protected, ground-nesting birds that are present at the site. In the absence of an assessment to show no likely significant effect, including sufficient mitigation measures to overcome any such impact on the SPA, and in the absence of financial provision towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project and the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) noted in the Council's Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area SPD or satisfactory alternative provision, the likely adverse impact on the integrity of this European nature conservation site has not been overcome. The proposal is thus in conflict with the guidance and advice in the National Planning Policy Framework and the RBWM Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area SPD and fails to comply with policy NR4 of the Borough Local Plan.

22/00721/OUT - Old Boundary House And New Boundary House, London Road, Sunningdale

Appendix A - Site location plan and site layout

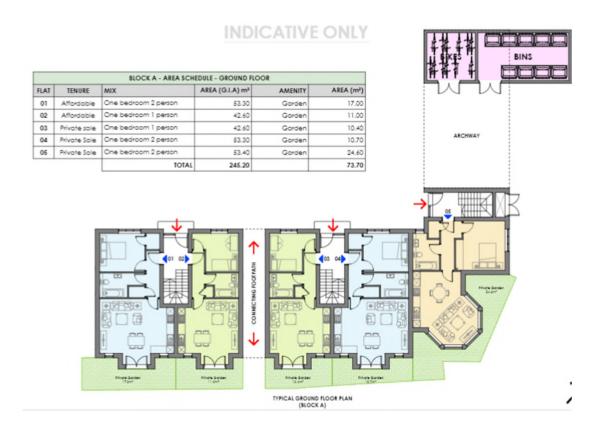


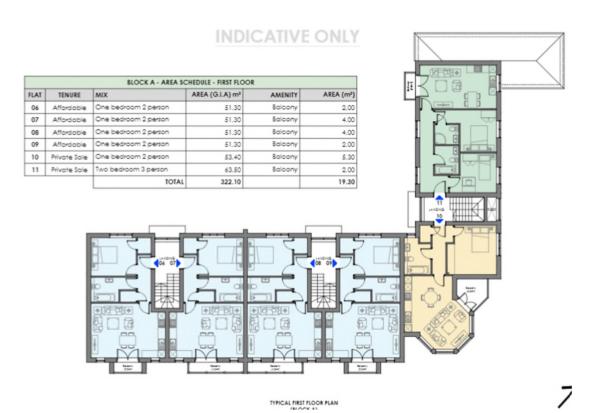


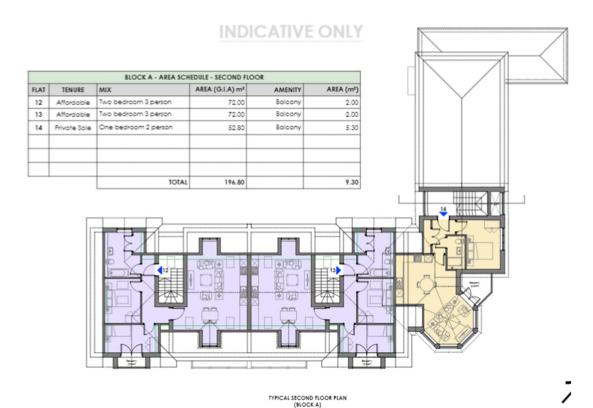


Appendix B – plan and elevation drawings

Block A







INDICATIVE ONLY



Block B

