

RH101
Design and Access Statement
Conversion of the Vixen
November 2016
Rev 00



Document Control

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Schedule of submitted documents

Reports

Number	Revision	Description	Date
RH101	Revision 00	Design and Access Statement	12.12.2016
		Planning Statement	November 2016
P2610.3.0		Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	06.04.2016
P2610.1.0		Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)	05.12.2016
P2610.2.0		Phase 1 Ground Contamination Desk Study	31.03.2016

Drawings

Number	Revision	Description
RH P001	01	Site Location Plan
RH P002	01	Existing Site Plan
RH P003	01	Existing Building
RH P004	03	Proposed Site Plan
RH P005	01	Proposed Floor Plans
RH P006	02	Proposed Elevations
RH P007	01	Site Sections
A360/C/DS/01	-	Drainage Strategy Plan 1 of 2
A360/C/DS/02	-	Drainage Strategy Plan 2 of 2
A360/C/TR/01	-	Vehicle Tracking Plan

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been written to accompany a Full Planning Application to convert and extend the existing Public House 'The Vixen', on Strasbourg Square, Haverhill into 18 flats and two retail (Class A1) /commercial (Class A2) or office units (Class B1).

This documents sets out details of the design approach taken to develop our proposals for the building and the car parking evolved through consultation with local residents and business owners and stakeholders at the borough and county councils.

Given the buildings current dilapidated state the site represents a key regeneration opportunity within Haverhill. These proposals respond to this opportunity for a contemporary development which responds to the scale and materiality of its context.

A detailed Planning Statement has been written in support of the proposals. This report should be read in conjunction with this statement and all other information accompanying this application.

The Vixen Public House

The Vixen is a former public house built as part of the Chalkstone Housing estate in the 1970's as part of Strasbourg Square, a communal part of the development providing local facilities to residents.

The pub ceased trading 7 years ago and has since been purchased for development as a funeral directors and has subsequently been sold again to Radford Homes (the applicant).

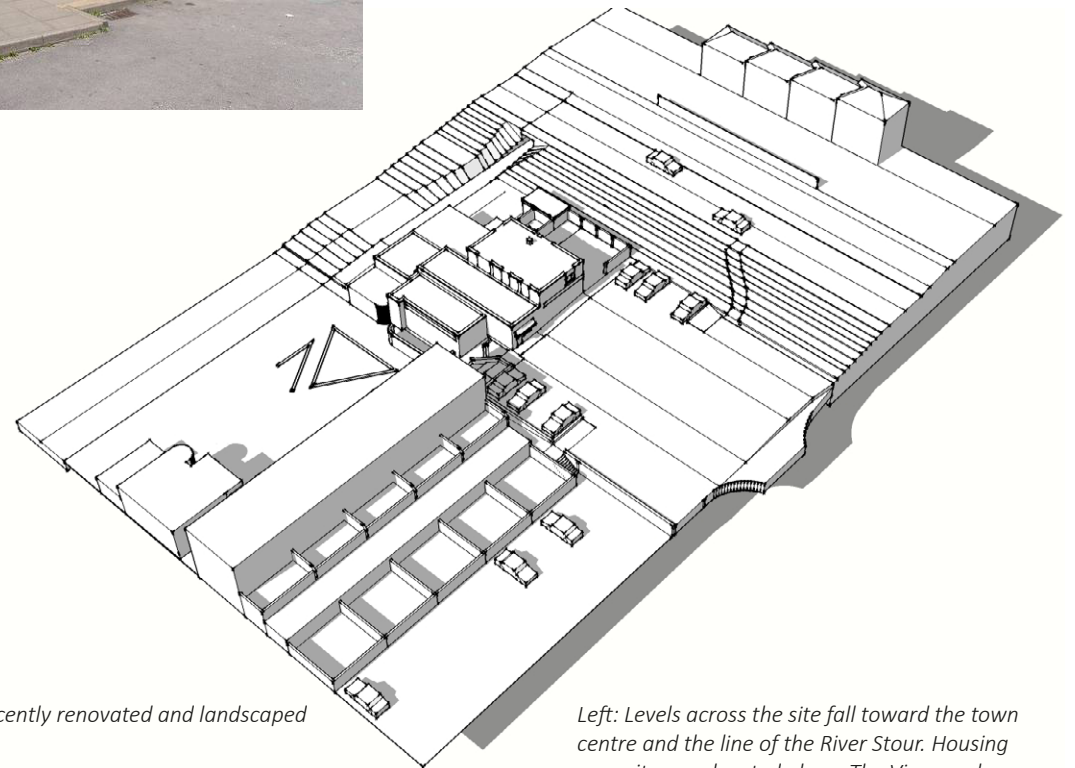
The site is located very centrally within Haverhill with bus stops on route to Cambridge within a 0.3 mile walk and supermarkets and the town centre both within a 0.3 mile walk.



Left: The Vixen Public House



Left: Strasbourg Square, recently renovated and landscaped



Left: Levels across the site fall toward the town centre and the line of the River Stour. Housing opposite are elevated above The Vixen and Strasbourg Square.

Strasbourg Square

The local vernacular is made up of a range of flat roofed, early 1970's buildings built as part of the wider Chalkstone Housing estate.

Strasbourg Square has recently undergone significant redevelopment and landscaping to include an improved children's play area.

The square has recently been landscaped and with the children's play area to the west and large playing field with football goals and basket ball courts to the south provide valuable pieces of external amenity for residents of the near by dwellings, the wider estate and visitors to the area.

Predominant materials in the area are red clay blocks forming the shops, the dwellings and community centre. Painted bricks are used to form the vixen and rendered walls form the housing opposite to the north of Millfields Way.

The turret like forms of the community centre and the splayed entrance to the pub are an important architectural feature to the square and should be retained and emphasised within the proposed scheme.



Transport and Access

The site is centrally located within Haverhill and well served by shops, supermarkets (0.2 mile walk), the High Street and regular buses around the town and to Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds from the nearby Wrating Road and bus stop.

There are established pedestrian and cycle routes to supermarkets, the local leisure complex, the town centre and Haverhill bus stop (0.4 mile walk) to the south east and to schools and sports facilities to the north east.

Vehicular access to the car park will be via the existing access off of Ingham Road and Millfields Way. Both roads are not particularly busy, any additional traffic generated at these junctions will be minimal and have very little impact on them.

A visibility splay of 43m set 2.4m back from the carriage way as set out in the guidance provided by Ben Chester, a Development Management Engineer at Suffolk County Council. Please see the detailed site plan drawing RH001 P004 03 submitted as part of this application.

Refuse Collection and Fire Tender Access

A vehicle tracking exercise has been carried out and both refuse collection and fire tender vehicles can access the site. Refuse trucks are able to reverse up to the bin store from the car park and exit site in a forward gear. Please refer to drawing A360/C/TR/01 for details.



Above: Aerial view showing site and local context

Vehicular / delivery access to the pub has always been across the car park as indicated on the aerial view.

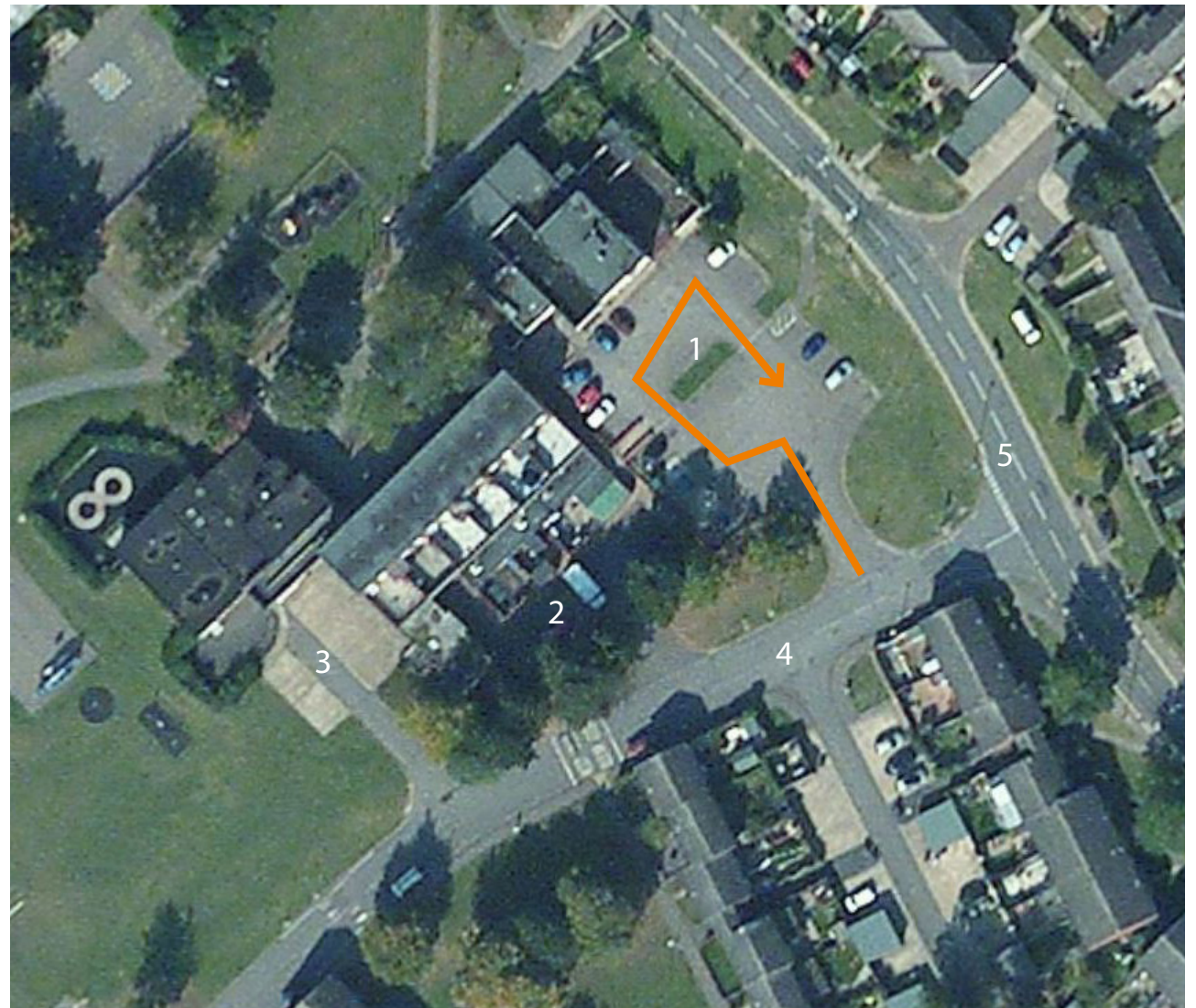
The existing car park adjacent to the pub (1) provides parking for 24 cars (based on current parking space standards). A more efficient arrangement could increase the number of spaces.

The existing shops with flats over have allocated delivery access and parking (2). The existing community centre has allocated parking to the south-east of the centre (3).

Each car park is accessed off of Ingham Road (4) and leads to Millfields Way (5).

Left:

- 1 The Vixen Public House
- 2 Strasbourg Square and adjacent shopping precinct, community centre and children's play area.
- 3 Public play area
- 4 Children's Play Equipment
- 5 Chalkstone Middle School site, now a new care home.
- 6 Tesco's Supermarket site.
- 7 Aldi's Supermarket.
- 8 Car Park
- 9 Chalkstone Housing Estate
- 10 Established pedestrian access through housing estate to Samuel Ward Academy, Haverhill Community Sports Association (0.5 mile walk) and Haverhill Rovers Football Club (0.3 mile walk).



Above: Aerial view of The Vixen the immediate context

Consultation

Throughout the development of proposals for The Vixen we have pro actively engaged with local residents, business owners, ward councillors and the local planning authority.

Pre App meeting and advice

We had a Pre Application meeting on the 24th of November 2015 with Penelope Mills, the allocated Planning Officer for the project and received very useful and supportive advice. Details of this meeting were formalised in an email which is appended to this report under Appendix A.

Key points to note from this consultation were that the development site lies within an existing local centre where policy HV8 of the Haverhill Vision and policy DM36 of the Joint Development and Management Policies document would apply. A change of use application for the pub will also be considered as a loss of a community facility as covered by policy DM41.

The scheme proposes a residential led scheme with two units available for retail, commercial or other form of appropriate community use. It is considered that the provision of additional spaces for these uses is unviable. Need or demand has not be demonstrated.

A vacant shop on the square provides 90m² of retail or offices space. The space has been available for rent around 18 months and is still being actively marketed by Hazells, a commercial letting agency. This further questions the viability of more retail type spaces.

The existing pub has been closed for 7 years and is clearly not a viable business and as such, this community facility is already lost.

As proposals include a majority of residential accommodation and loss of the public house as a community facility, Penelope advised that they do not meet the requirements of policies DM41, HV8 and DM36.

To address this a planning consultant, Strutt and Parker, have been appointed to prepare a comprehensive planning statement to set out the material planning reasons why such a departure from the policy requirement is acceptable. This statement forms a fundamental part of this planning application and has been submitted as a separate report.

Penelope also raised concerns regarding massing and car parking. Overall the massing has been reduced, particularly the aspects fronting the car park and highway which were noted as the key concerns. Parking has been considered in detail and proposals to extend and reconfigure the existing car park provide an additional 28 spaces which meets the parking requirement for the new accommodation in accordance with Suffolk County Councils Parking Standards.

Other matters raised such as affordable housing, public open space, contributions etc are addressed within this report.

Meeting with Ward Councillor and Business Owner

Following the Pre App meeting we made some amendments to suit the comments received and met with Ward Councillor John Burns and the owner of 'Chippys' fish and chip shop on Strasbourg Square, Glenn Edwards.

Both were supportive of our ideas to renovate and extend the pub to form a scheme or predominately residential accommodation. Glenn's business has been established on the square since it was built and having seen business's come and go to the square, he questioned the viability of the two retail units proposed. Particularly given that the On Track centre had sat unoccupied for a considerable time.

Glenn's only concern was with respect to parking, how it would be allocated and the impact that overspill into the customer car park might effect business's on the square.

We presented the initial proposals set out on page 21, these propose reconfiguring of the existing car park and a small extension into the grass verge adjacent to Millfields Way to create 42 spaces in total, 12 spaces are indicated for the flats (a reduction on parking requirements would be required). This would provide 30 spaces for public use. If one space per unit plus 2 visitor spaces were provided (as included within the application proposals) 22 spaces would be available for public use, 2 short of the current car park provision.

Glenn's concerns were that the lack of additional parking would result in extra parking generated by the occupants of the flats would impact on customer parking.

Revised proposals

In order to address these concerns we have explored extending the car park further into the grass verge adjacent to Millfields Way. This would require the purchase of 385m² of the grass verge off of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

To discuss this proposal and the area of verge required to facilitate it we have been in contact with Will Brown, Jonathan Miles, Sara Noonan and Sally Leeks at St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Sam Pye at Suffolk County Council Highways to try to establish ownership of the grass verge and the proposed work to the existing car park itself, legal rights or way over it etc. We made initial contact with Will Brown on the 11th of December 2015, followed by correspondence with Sally Leeks on the 8th of February 2016, followed by numerous calls to enquire after a response. The matter was passed to Michael Linsdell, the Service Manager at St Edmundsbury Borough Council and we received a positive email on the 5th of July (see Appendix B).

Subsequently we met with Mr Linsdell on site on the 17th of August 2016 and again, our proposals were received positively. Mr Linsdell recognised that the pub was in desperate need of renovation and agreed that subject to agreement for the land purchase, extending the car park into the grass verge was a feasible solution.

We submitted a detailed cost plan on the 5th of October, 2016, demonstrating a break down of the construction cost, profit and overheads and offered a percentage of the profit as a financial contribution for the purchase of

385m² of grass verge as requested by Mr Linsdell. Since submission of the offer we have repeated requested feedback in order to try and reach a mutually agreeable sum for the land and try to move the legalities of the purchase (subject to receipt of planning consent) forward but we have been unable to reach Mr Linsdell.

Newspaper articles

There have been various publications within the Haverhill Weekly News regarding the plans for the Vixen when it was advertised for sale by Britannia Business Sales in May 2010. A neighbour and treasurer of the Chalkstone Tenants and Residents Association (CATRA) Ernie Goody commented that he would be happy to see the pub converted to flats.

In September 2014 an article publicized that the pub had been purchased by funeral directors R Gwinnel and Sons to convert the pub into a funeral directors. The proposals for a funeral directors were heavily objected by local residents. Councillor Brown quoted that the pub could be the perfect site for new housing to save homes being squeezed into overdeveloped spaces.

In an article on Haverhill-UK.com dated 12th of December 2014 Cllr Maureen Byrne said the 'eyesore' of a building which used to be the Vixen would be detrimental to the scheme to relandscape the square and asked if the council could do anything about it.

Details of these publications are included within the Planning Statement.

Public Consultation

To engage with the wider community around the Chalkstone Estate we invited over 120 residents to attend a Public Consultation to view our detailed proposals for the Vixen and discuss any concerns raised.

We agreed with Planning Officer, Penelope Mills our intentions for the consultation to ensure we met the validation requirements of a planning application.

A week in advance of the consultation we delivered 120 letters to houses within a predetermined vicinity of Strasbourg Square (see Appendix F for a map indicating the defined area). We also placed posters advertising the consultation in the local fish and chip shop, the Community Centre and the Care Home on Millfields Way, Cleves Place.

14 people attended the consultation on Thursday the 12th of November 2016, including Cllr John Burns and Cllr Tony Brown. People were asked to complete a comments sheet with their name, address and any comments or concerns they had. Not everybody wanted to do so. A copy of these comments sheets can be seen in Appendix G.

General feedback was supportive of proposals to convert and extend the former public house as proposed. People were pleased to know that there are plans with the dilapidated site due to concerns of the anti-social behaviour it attracts to the area. The main concern raised was with respect to parking. Many of which were associated with residents from the nearby housing opposite that use the car park during evenings and

weekends rather than customers of the shops or users of the Community Centre.

Although this is a valid concern, the car park is not there for this purpose and should not be treated as a means to address parking issues within the housing estate itself. This is a wider issue across the whole estate that needs addressing separately by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council.

Further along Millfields Way, opposite Hardwick Road, 9 off-road parking spaces have been formed into the grass verge. A number of attendees referred to this as a precedent for helping to address their parking shortages. As such proposals were outside of the control or scope of this application we explained that we were unable to make such proposals as part of this planning application.

Local business owner Glenn Edwards expressed his thoughts over the car park and the potential impact on it generated by the development. Glenn is very supportive of our proposals and understands that we have carefully thought through the layouts and the extension of the car park in order to maximise parking and reduce the impact on customer car parking. He welcomed the designation of 20 parking spaces for residents (1 per flat + 2 visitors) with the remaining 8 shared amongst residents and customers.

External lighting across the car park was also raised as a concern. Currently the car park has no lighting and is a rather daunting place to park or walk through at night. As part of our works to the car park we would be happy to consider a scheme for external lighting and would request that such details be subject to a condition if planning consent is granted.

Residents and Glenn also raised concern that the two retail/commercial units could well not be viable given that 3rd unit on Strasbourg Square has been empty for some time and suggested that perhaps additional flats might be more suitable.

There were no comments raised that required amendment to the scheme and as such the information displayed is as submitted within this planning application.

A copy of the information displayed at the consultation can be seen within Appendix C.

County Council Infrastructure requirements

As part of the Pre App consultation we received advice on the likely contributions to be sought from the County Council. Details of the response can be found within Appendix D.

Design Development

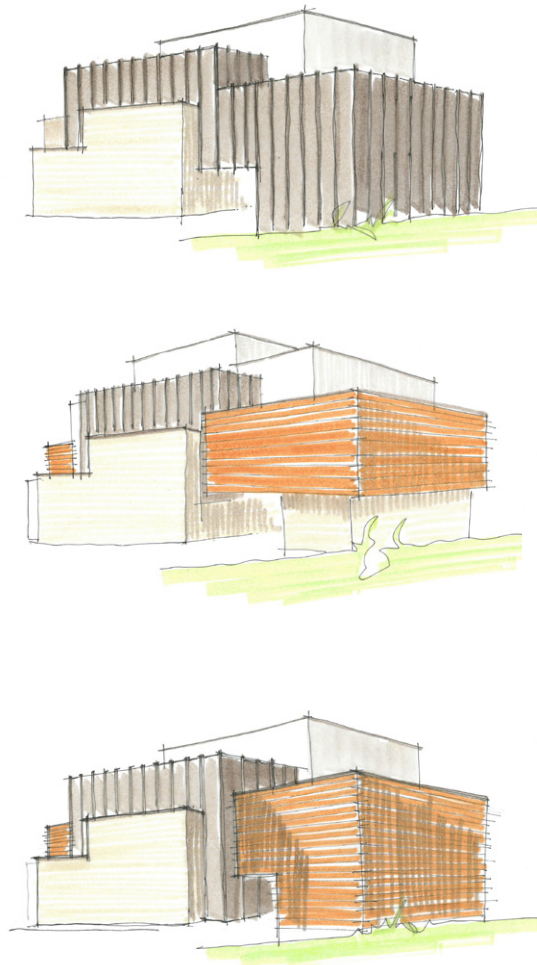
The concept for extending and re-dressing the existing building is to be simple and reflective of the rectilinear forms of the existing building.

A limited palette of materials are proposed that will allow the existing building fabric to be over clad to meet current requirements for thermal performance and airtightness.

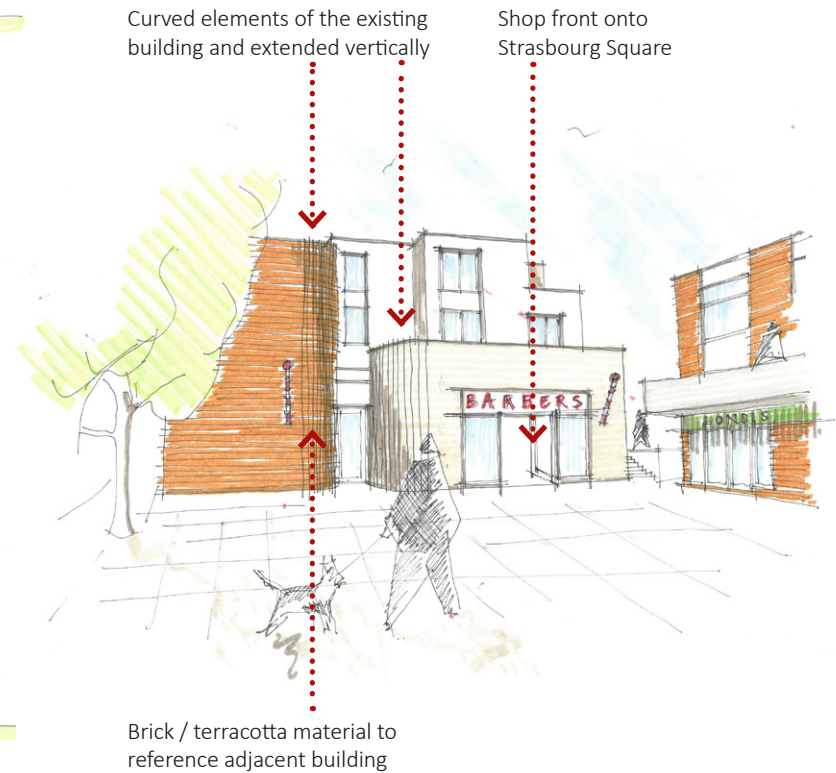
Lightweight structures are proposed to reduce new loads on the existing structure.

An additional volume and material would help to break up the massing of the additions and set a tone for stepping the arrangement of extensions to respond to the heights of surrounding buildings.

A clay brick or terracotta tile cladding would reference the existing buildings around Strasbourg Square.



Above: Design ideas for massing from car park



Above: Design ideas for massing from Strasbourg Square

Design Development



The images to the top of the page were discussed during the Pre Application meeting with West Suffolk County Council in November 2015. The Planning Officer raised concerns regarding the scale of the proposals facing on to the car park to the west and the public highway, Millfields Way, to the north.

To address this the number of flats to the 2nd floor was reduced and the line of the 2nd floor was set back as indicated within the sketch to the right. The Planning Officer viewed these changes as positive so we have developed the massing with this in mind.

The final proposal (bottom right) pulls the north facing elevation further away from Millfields Way as the vehicle underpass has been omitted from the scheme.

