

Proposed Retirement Living Apartments Design & Access Statement



Edwina Mountbatten House,
Broadwater Road,
Romsey, SO51 8GH
June 2023

1 INTRODUCTION

“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 126

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Purpose

“The underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities. This includes older people, both able-bodied and disabled.”

National Design Guide Paragraph 8

Proposal

The proposal is for the comprehensive redevelopment of the vacant buildings and associated land that comprises Edwina Mountbatten House (The Site) with construction of a retirement housing development of circa. 47 flats with one and two bedroom apartments and associated communal facilities, vehicular access, car parking and landscaping.

Vision

Churchill Retirement Living’s vision for the site is to deliver a development that meets our customers’ needs and the local need for retirement apartments whilst also contributing to the character of Romsey, and making a positive contribution locally in terms of socio, economic and environmental benefits.

Our aim is to create a high quality development that embraces sustainable design, enhances the setting of the area and maintains the local vernacular.

Scope

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Planning Issues Ltd. on behalf of the applicant, Churchill Retirement Living, in support of a detailed planning application. Matters relating to planning policies and other material considerations will be covered in a separate Planning Statement included with the application.

This statement concentrates solely on the rationale for the proposed design. The purpose of this document is to explain the context, character and identity of the Site and its surroundings; factors that have influenced the design evolution; and the component parts of the development proposals and how they relate to the prevailing planning policy framework.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Requirements of an Ageing Population

The fact that we are all living longer should be a cause for celebration, as more people are able to enjoy a long and fulfilling retirement. Current average life expectancy in the UK is 83 for women and 79 for men. In 1901 it was 49 and 45 respectively¹. The number of UK citizens expected to be 65 or over is projected to rise to 15 million by 2030².

We would all wish to live well as we live longer. We want to remain active, useful members of a community and retain as much control over our lives as possible.

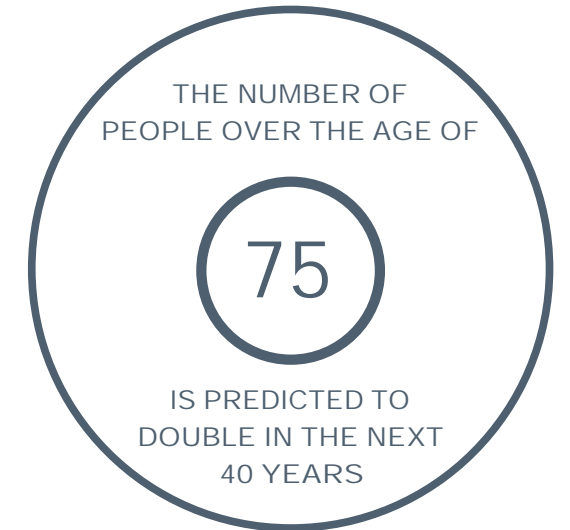
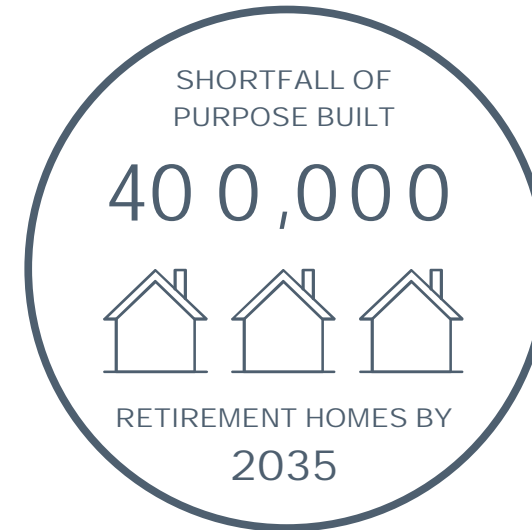
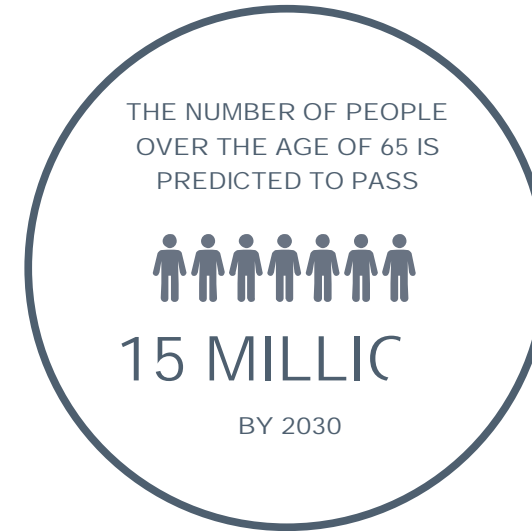
However the vast majority of our housing stock is not built with the needs of older people in mind. There are still far too few suitable new homes being delivered, and many older people are living in homes which are unable to meet their changing needs.

It is estimated that there will be a shortfall of 400,000 purpose-built homes for older people by 2035³.

With insufficient supply and choice most people remain in their existing unsuitable homes for too long, often struggling with maintenance, upkeep and loneliness. Building more specialist homes to meet their needs works better for them but also frees housing stock for younger people; building more retirement homes benefits all age groups.

For far too many people the decision to move home in later life is precipitated by a crisis in their existing home. This is the case despite strong evidence that those who are able to think proactively about the type of home that will meet their changing needs, and who move before they are too frail to play an active part in their new community, have better outcomes than those who move later.

Housing has a fundamental role to play in helping us live well for longer. Given that for most people mobility, sociability and income decrease in old age, it is not just about the home we occupy, but also about the place in which we live, who we live with and who we live close to. The right kind of housing can help people to stay healthy and support them to live independently for longer.



¹ The King's Fund, 'Demography: Future Trends', part of the Time to Think Differently programme, 2018

² Age UK, Older People as Volunteers Evidence Review, 2011

³ Ian Copeman and Jeremy Porteus, Housing Our Ageing Population: Learning from councils meeting the needs of our Ageing Population Local Government Association, 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

1.3 Owner Occupied Retirement Living Typology

“Well-designed places include a variety of homes to meet the needs of older people, including retirement villages, care homes, extra-care housing, sheltered housing, independent living and age-restricted general market housing. They are integrated into new settlements with good access to public transport and local facilities.” National Design Guide Paragraph 117

‘Homes for Retirement Living’, means specially designed housing suitable for older people who want to maintain the independence and privacy that comes with having a home of their own but no longer want or need a family sized house.

This proposal is for age-restricted one and two bedroom apartments designed to help people remain independent, safe, secure and sociable for as long as possible. In planning terms these are C3 (Dwellings) developments and not care homes, nursing homes, extra-care or other needs based accommodation. Owner’s homes are their own and they can furnish and decorate as they wish.

Key differences to mainstream housing are:

- The provision of extensive communal areas where neighbours can socialise, host visitors and be part of a friendly, like-minded community. This is centred on the ‘Owner’s Lounge’ which is the heart of the community and where owners often organise social events. There is usually a coffee or tea bar associated with the Owner’s Lounge.
- The presence of a Lodge Manager to look out for people’s welfare, be a point of call if help is needed, make sure the communal areas are well maintained and to be a reassuring, friendly presence. Lodge Managers also create the community; organising events and trips.
- A limited number of entrances, usually one, that is close to the Lodge Manager. This keeps the community secure and allows passive surveillance of the entrance area.

- A lift to all floors with level access throughout.
- Each apartment with its own front door giving privacy whenever desired.
- A guest room which can be booked by residents for visitors.
- A digital ‘Careline’ support system in all apartments for emergency support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Communal grounds with well landscaped external space available to all.
- Communal upkeep and maintenance including the exterior of the building landscaping.
- Reduced reliance on cars due to sustainable locations close to amenities.
- Buggy store.
- Communal areas amount to circa. 25% of the internal area.



1 Homes for Retirement Living, *Healthier and Happier*, September 2019



1 INTRODUCTION

1.4 Benefits of Homes for Retirement Living

“Well-designed places include a variety of homes to meet the needs of older people, including retirement villages, care homes, extra-care housing, sheltered housing, independent living and age-restricted general market housing. They are integrated into new settlements with good access to public transport and local facilities.”

National Design Guide Paragraph 117

Older peoples housing produces a large number of significant Social, Economic and Environmental benefits.

Social

Retirement housing gives rise to many social benefits:

- Churchill Lodges offer significant opportunities to enable residents to be as independent as possible in a safe and warm environment.
- Retirement housing helps to reduce anxieties and worries experienced by many older people living in housing which does not best suit their needs by providing safety, security and reducing management and maintenance concerns.
- The Housing for Retirement Living Report (2019) shows that on a selection of well-being criteria such as happiness and life satisfaction, an average person aged 80 feels as good as someone 10 years younger after moving from mainstream housing into housing specifically designed for Retirement Living.

Economic

Retirement housing gives rise to many economic benefits:

- Each person living in a home for Retirement Living enjoys a reduced risk of health challenges, contributing fiscal savings to the NHS and social care services of approximately £3,500 per year (Homes for Retirement Living September 2019).
- With circa. 47 units proposed, at a ratio of 1.3 people per apartment, there will be around 61 occupants. At a saving of £3,500 each per year, this equates to a saving of £213,500 per year in local NHS and social care costs, in comparison to mainstream housing. This is a significant economic benefit.
- A recent report entitled Silver Saviours for the High Street (February 2021) found that retirement properties create more local economic value and more local jobs than any other type of residential development. For an average 45 unit retirement scheme, the residents generate £550,000 of spending a year, £347,000 of which is spent on the high street, directly contributing to keeping local shops open.
- An average retirement scheme will support the following new jobs:
 - 85 construction jobs
 - 87 Supply chain jobs
 - 4 Direct jobs (new commercial/community uses) and
 - 9 supported jobs (by increased expenditure in local area)

Environmental

The proposal provides a number of key environmental benefits by:

- Making more efficient use of land thereby reducing the need to use limited land resources for housing.
- Providing housing in close proximity to services and shops which can be easily accessed on foot thereby reducing the need for travel by means which consume energy and create emissions.
- Providing shared facilities for a large number of residents in a single building which makes more efficient use of material and energy resources.
- The proposal includes renewable technology through the use of solar panels to assist in the reduction of CO2 emissions.
- All areas of the building will be lit using low energy lighting and where applicable utilise daylight and movement sensor controls.



Our schemes free up family housing by older people looking to downsize - a typical 41 unit retirement development generates approx 92 moves in the chain



A development that maximises the use of previously developed land reducing pressure on greenfield sites



Our developments bring health and social care savings - each person living in a Home for Later Life saves the NHS & Social Services approx £3,500 per year



Economic and social benefits of older people using local shops, services and facilities. Our Owners shop locally, supporting businesses and communities



Due to its sustainable location, retirement living housing reduces the need to own a car. Owners often shop locally on foot or by public transport



Our developments allow for independent, secure living and provide companionship which helps to reduce isolation and loneliness

1 INTRODUCTION

1.5 The Applicant - Who are Churchill Retirement Living Ltd?

Churchill Retirement Living (CRL) is a privately-owned British Company, highly trusted and respected within the housing industry. CRL prides itself on building beautiful purpose-built one and two bedroom retirement apartments in desirable locations across the UK, for those looking for an active independent, safe and secure lifestyle. Our developments can be found in 23 counties throughout the UK.

The company has undertaken over 160 developments and sold over 5,000 units. Through a group company, Churchill Estates Management, CRL retain the operation, management, care and responsibility of every apartment of their completed developments.

Churchill is a company built on integrity and trust. Our focus on design excellence and build quality is supported by an ongoing commitment to the successful management of our developments for the long term, providing an independent lifestyle that meets the needs of our 10,000+ apartment owners.

Our developments not only provide well documented benefits to our customers but also to the wider community. Our customers tend to shop locally providing much needed 'daily shoppers' for local shops and businesses.



“People living in specialist retirement homes typically experience reduced health risks, contributing to fiscal savings to the NHS and social care services of c. £3,500 per person per year.” Healthier and Happier –Homes for later Living, September 2019.

Typically, our customers downsize from a 3 or 4 bedroom family home. Therefore, for each retirement apartment occupied, a family home is released for sale into the wider housing market.

CRL is an award winning business having recently won a number of prestigious industry and wider business awards including -

- The WhatHouse Awards. The only retirement housebuilder ever to have been awarded 'Housebuilder of the Year' and in 2019 was again named 'Best Medium Housebuilder'.
- The HBF Customer Satisfaction Survey. Churchill has consistently retained its top '5 star' status having been recommended by more than 90% of customers.

CRL has a full complement of in-house professionally qualified Architects, Town Planners, Surveyors and Engineers employed in the seamless delivery of projects through every stage of the process from site identification to construction completion and home sales. The business benefits from a wholly owned town planning consultancy, Planning Issues, which advises on planning related and public consultation matters.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.6 Applicant's Brief

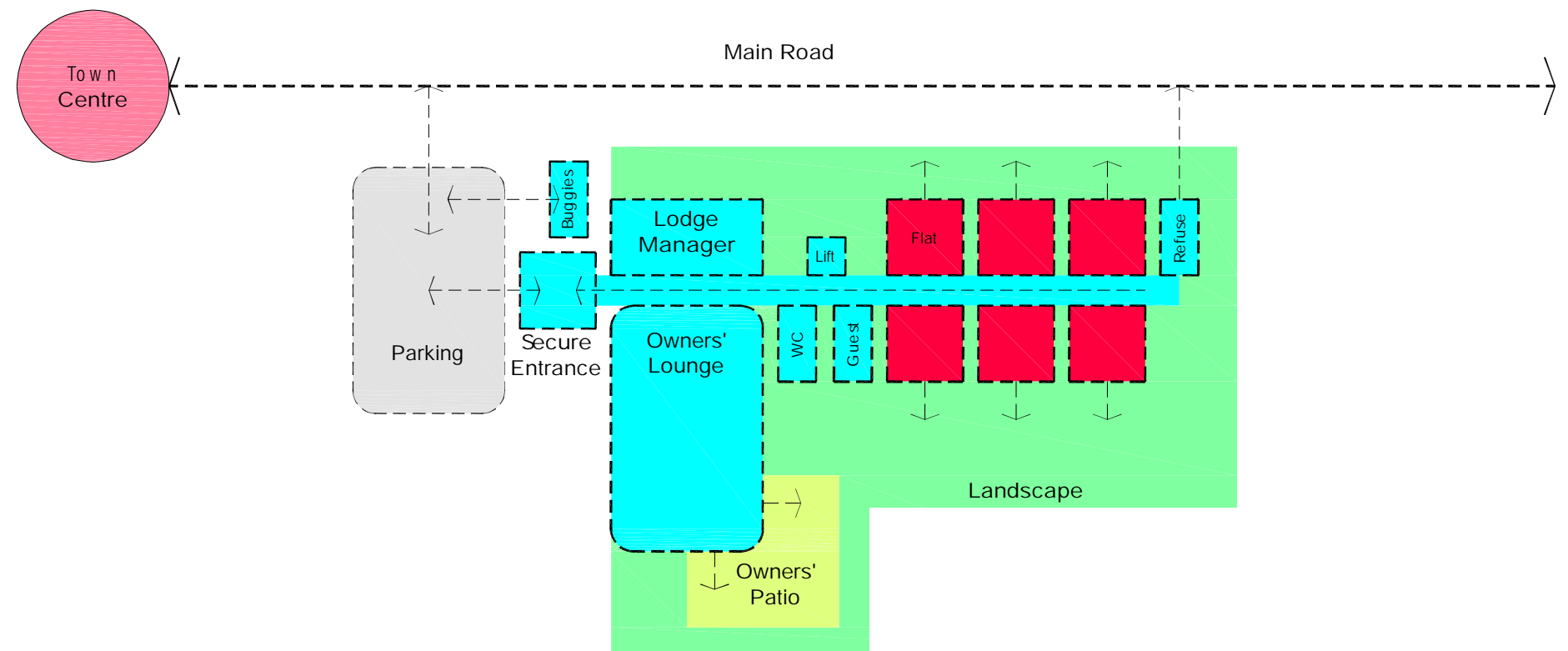
Site selection close to amenities and in an area with identified need is key in the first instance. The proposed location in Romsey fulfils this need.

Key client requirements for the architectural design are:

- A single building, allowing secure access to all communal facilities.
- Apartment numbers - a minimum of 25 apartments so that the shared service charge for future owners remains affordable.
- Internal level access throughout.
- Single secure entrance from the car park area to maintain passive security from the Lodge Manager over the parking area and ease of entrance for residents. There needs to be 'progressive privacy' from the public realm to one's apartment. A video link from the entrance intercom to owner's apartments allows owners to see who is requesting entry, responding to the particular need for safety and security for this demographic.
- Concierge reception (staffed by a Lodge Manager with their own office).
- Owners Lounge (communal), coffee bar.
- Accessible toilet.
- Guest suite (for use by friends and family).
- A central lift serving all floors.

- Apartments, double aspect where possible but single aspect typically due to the requirement for double loaded corridors necessitated by the need to optimise the development potential of sites and to ensure efficiencies in design and build costs. Churchill's experience shows that there is a wide variety of preferences from customers in terms of aspect, with some preferring sunny aspects and others shaded positions, some busy streets and others more private locations. Therefore a range of choice of aspect for apartments is desirable.
- Apartments with external doors to living spaces, with balconies where possible and external access at ground floor, typically providing a very 'active frontage'.
- Landscaped communal gardens where visual amenity and biodiversity are more important than usable area. Large flat areas for recreational use are not required.

- Waste management store appropriately sized and located based on previous experience of operating these type of developments.
- Parking with an appropriate ratio of 1 space per 3 apartments, based on extensive experience of operating these type of developments, research and appeal decisions, as well as how accessible the site specific location is. This is because the sustainable location and average age of purchasers at 79 years old means a lower average car ownership requirement than mainstream housing.
- Provision for mobility scooters within a 'Buggy Store' at a ratio of 1 per 7 to 8 apartments.
- Low maintenance, long lasting materials and detailing which respond to the local context.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.7 Brief Requirement Examples



Secure Main Entrance from Parking



Owners' Lounge



Owners' Patio



Concierge Reception Lodge Manager



Typical Guest Suite



Typical Coffee Bar

1 INTRODUCTION

1.8 Precedent Developments



Abbey Lodge, Romsey



Harrington Lodge, Chichester



St. Athelm Lodge, Wells



Rothesay Lodge, Highcliffe



Mottisfont Lodge, Romsey



Sarum Lodge, Salisbury

2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

“An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities.”

National Design Guide Paragraph 39



2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Site Description

The Site, identified by the red boundary is Edwina Mountbatten House, a former Care Home. The site sits to the corner of Broadwater Road and Palmerston Street, and is set back from the A27 Bypass Road.

The site lies to the south of the historic core of Romsey, and it lies outside Romsey Conservation Area, however the site is in the setting of the Conservation Area. Historic photographs suggest the site was once a timber yard.

The site is bounded by Broadwater Road to the north, Palmerston Road to the east, a masonry wall separating the site with the car park to Crosfield Hall to the west, and trees and Tadburn Lake to the south adjacent to the A27.

The site is broadly square in shape and is approximately 0.305 hectares in area, measuring 60.5m north-south and 55m east-west. The site is generally flat with some soft landscaping to the northern and eastern boundaries, and the central courtyard. The site is raised above Palmerston Street.

The existing points of vehicular and pedestrian access are from Broadwater Road to the north boundary, as this is the only part of the site that enjoys a degree of level access. The site sits approximately 1.5m above the level of Palmerston Street and the A27.

The former care home is a roughly pentagon shaped building with a central courtyard. It is generally a single-storey brick building with punched openings and white uPVC windows, and a clay-tile pitched roof, with the exception of the northern elevation that is two-storeys tall. The courtyard is accessed from an undercroft in the northern elevation.

An open electricity sub-station lies outside of the site to the north-eastern corner of the site, and an existing single-storey garage lies with the site to the north-western corner of the site.

The character of the immediate area (east and north) is that of terraces, cottages and townhouses sat on the kerbside of historic burgage plots. The roads are narrow and the density of the existing properties is tightly knit. Squat two-storey buildings with simple detailing sitting directly adjacent to three-storey buildings with grander detailing and proportion is common to the area.

The character to the west is more fractured; a combination of open car parks and large footprint buildings.



Aerial image of Site, courtesy of Google Earth (not to scale)

2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.2 Existing Care Home Building

The existing building has the following characteristics -

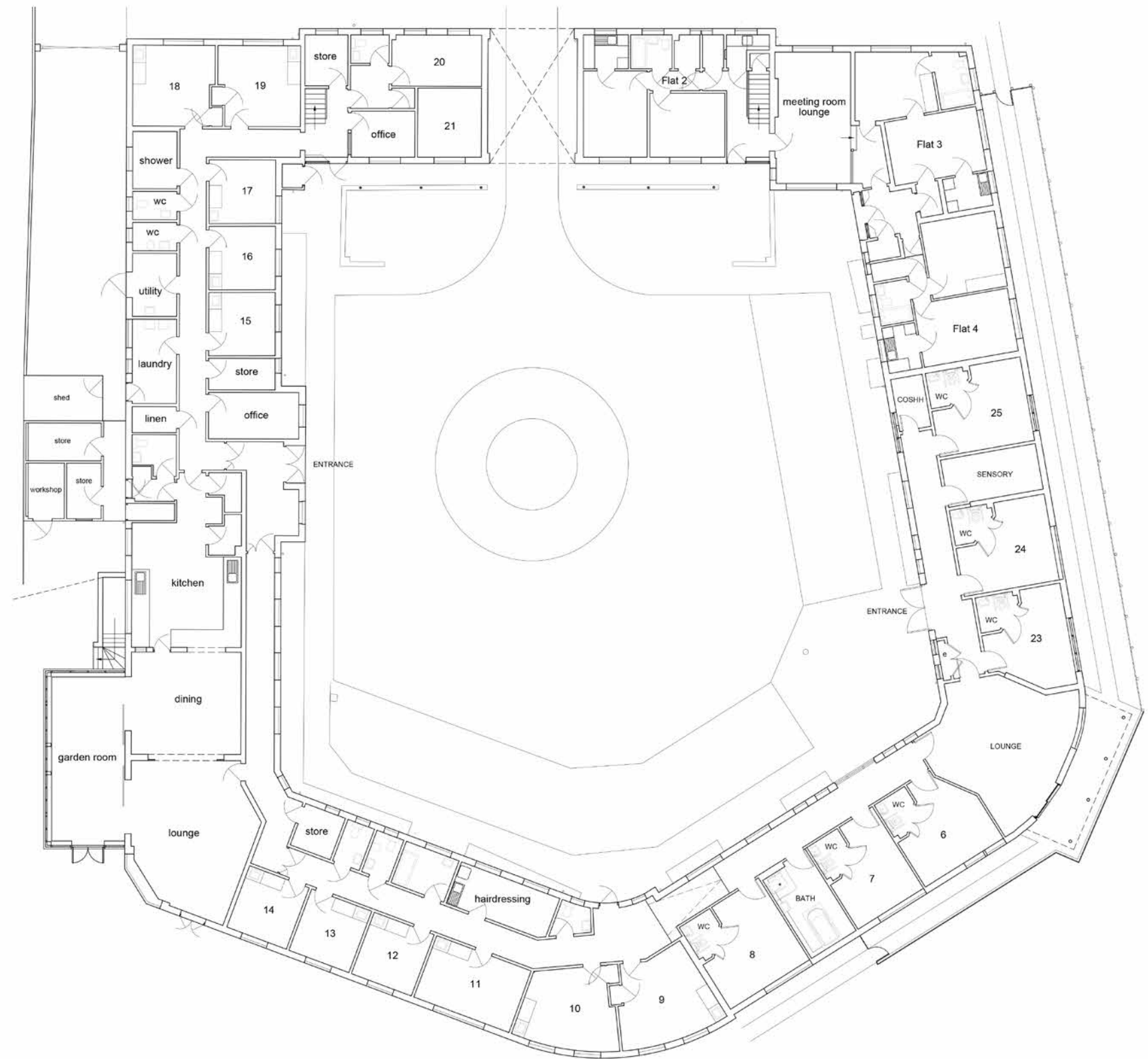
- Generally a single-storey building with two-storeys facing Broadwater Road, in an elevated position, with a limited amount of first floor accommodation to the northern elevation.
- Arranged around a courtyard with access from Broadwater Road to the north.
- Centrally located car parking; little sheltered amenity space.
- Cellular internal arrangement.
- Facing materials is predominately a reddish-brown brick.
- Clay hanging tiles to first-storey.
- Roof materials are predominantly red clay tile.
- Rainwater goods, eaves and fenestration are predominately white uPVC.

As a general point, the existing building sits squat on the site and addresses Broadwater Road rather than Palmerston Street. There is an architectural nod to the south-east corner that the plot faces the roundabout (through a hipped canopy), however this is a weak architectural device; a near anonymous indication of arrival into historic Romsey.

The layout and architectural treatment is incongruous to that of upper Palmerston Road. The proportions of the care home are in the horizontal orientation rather than the more vertical orientation of the immediate area.



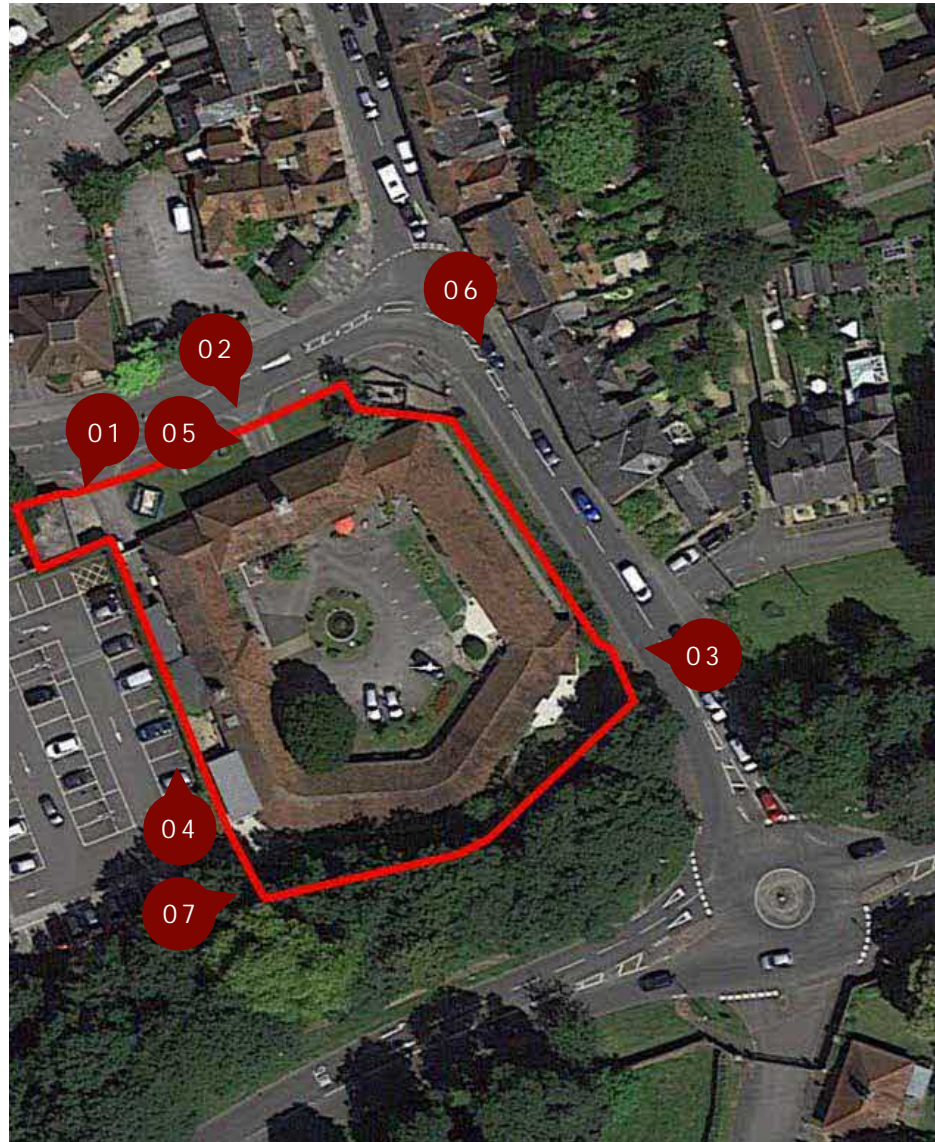
Existing Care Home northern elevation facing Broadwater Road (courtesy of Google Streetview)



Existing Ground Floor Plan (not to scale)

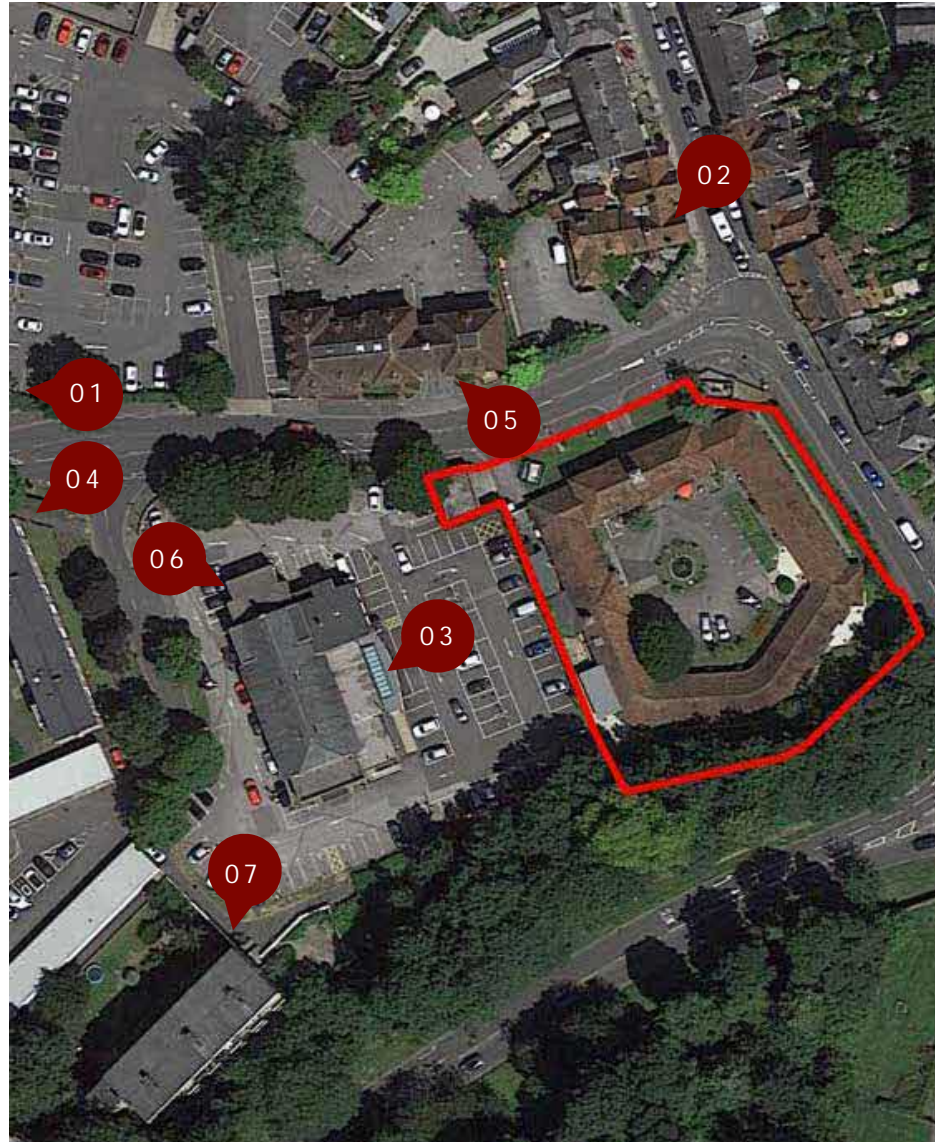
2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.3 Existing Site Photographs



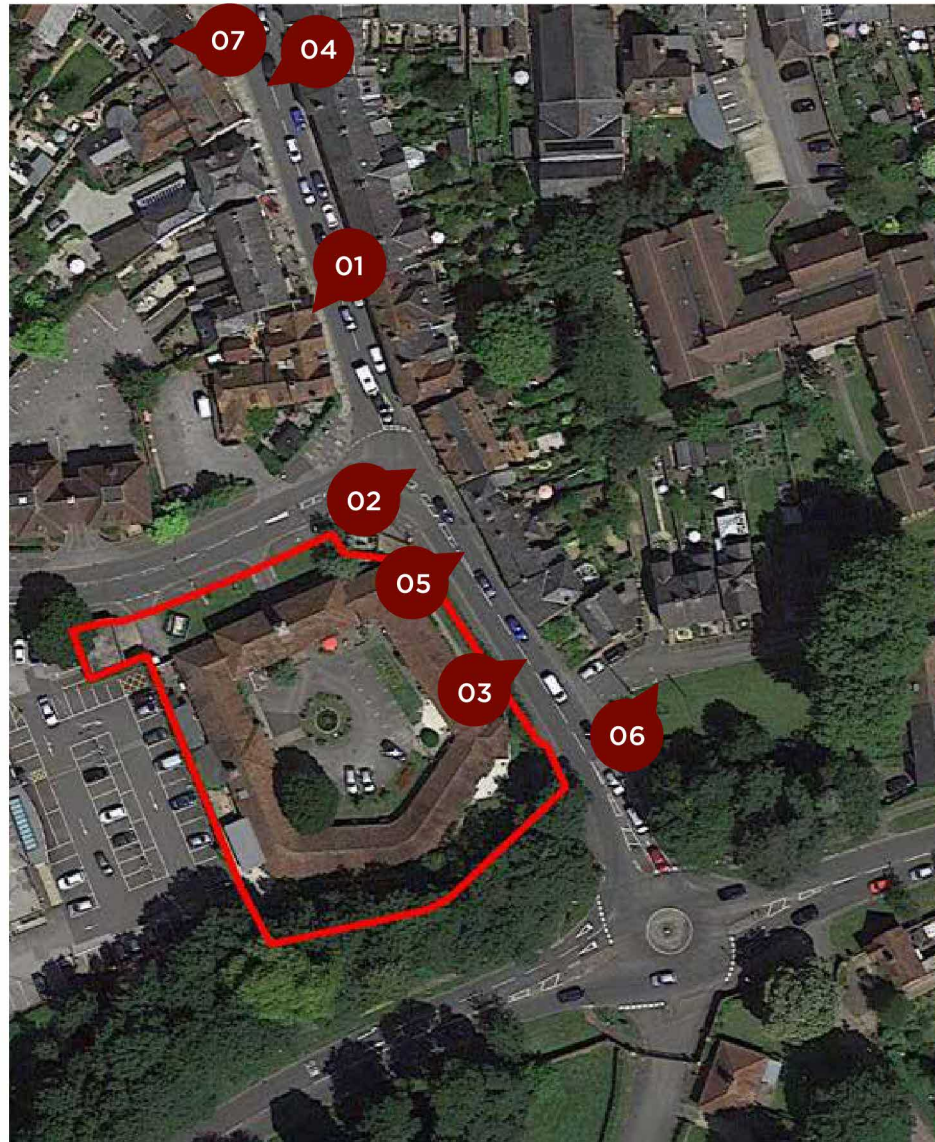
2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.4 Wider Site Photographs



2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.5 Wider Site Photographs



2 CONTEXT

2.6 Site Panoramas



Panoramic of the corner of Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road looking south



Panoramic of the corner of Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road looking north

2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.7 Historic Palmerston Street



Aerial view of Palmerston Street and The Hundred c.1920



Corner of Palmerston Street and The Hundred c.1965



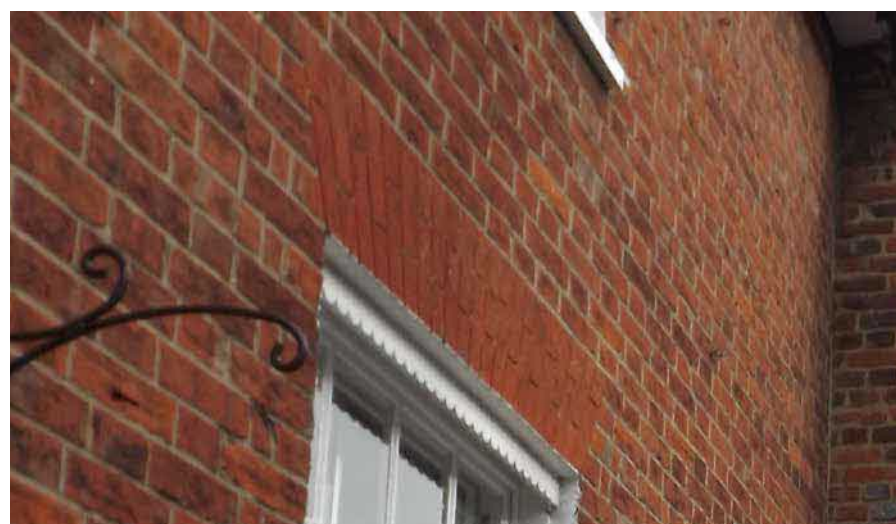
View looking north-west up Palmerston Street c.1880



View looking south-west towards corner of Palmerston Road and Broadwater Road, c.1900

2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.8 Local Architectural Detailing



1 INTRODUCTION

2.9 Previous Churchill Retirement Living Developments in Romsey



Abbey Lodge, Romsey



Mottisfont Lodge, Romsey

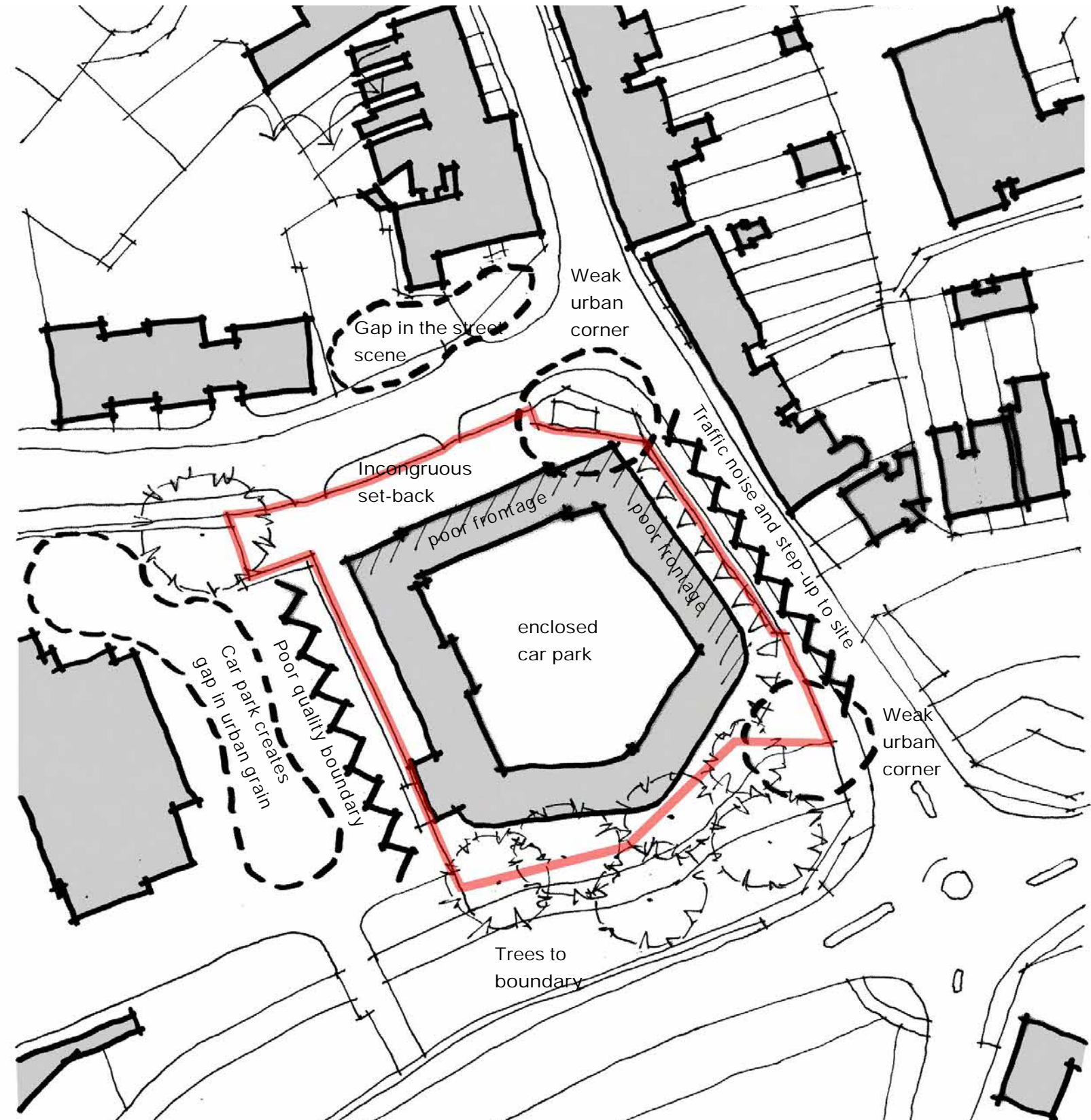


2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.10 Site Constraints

The site has numerous constraints that affect the potential for a successful urban development, including but not restricted to the following -

- The site is mostly in Flood Risk Zone 2.
- The existing building is one- and two-storeys, which is lower in height than the rest of the surrounding buildings.
- Existing building is of relatively low density compared to other development in the area.
- The existing building demonstrates inefficient use of the site.
- Building set back from road frontage to northern boundary, exacerbating the gap in the street scheme on the opposite side of the road.
- Elevational treatment of existing care home unsympathetic and incongruous to Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road frontages.
- As a courtyard development, the existing care home's urban form is incongruous to the urban pattern or grain to the area.
- Weakly-designed building corners fail to address the junctions surrounding the site.
- Disused building with unsympathetic elevations and massing.
- Traffic noise.
- Levelled site restricts pedestrian or vehicular connectivity or permeability to northern boundary only.
- Trees to southern boundary.



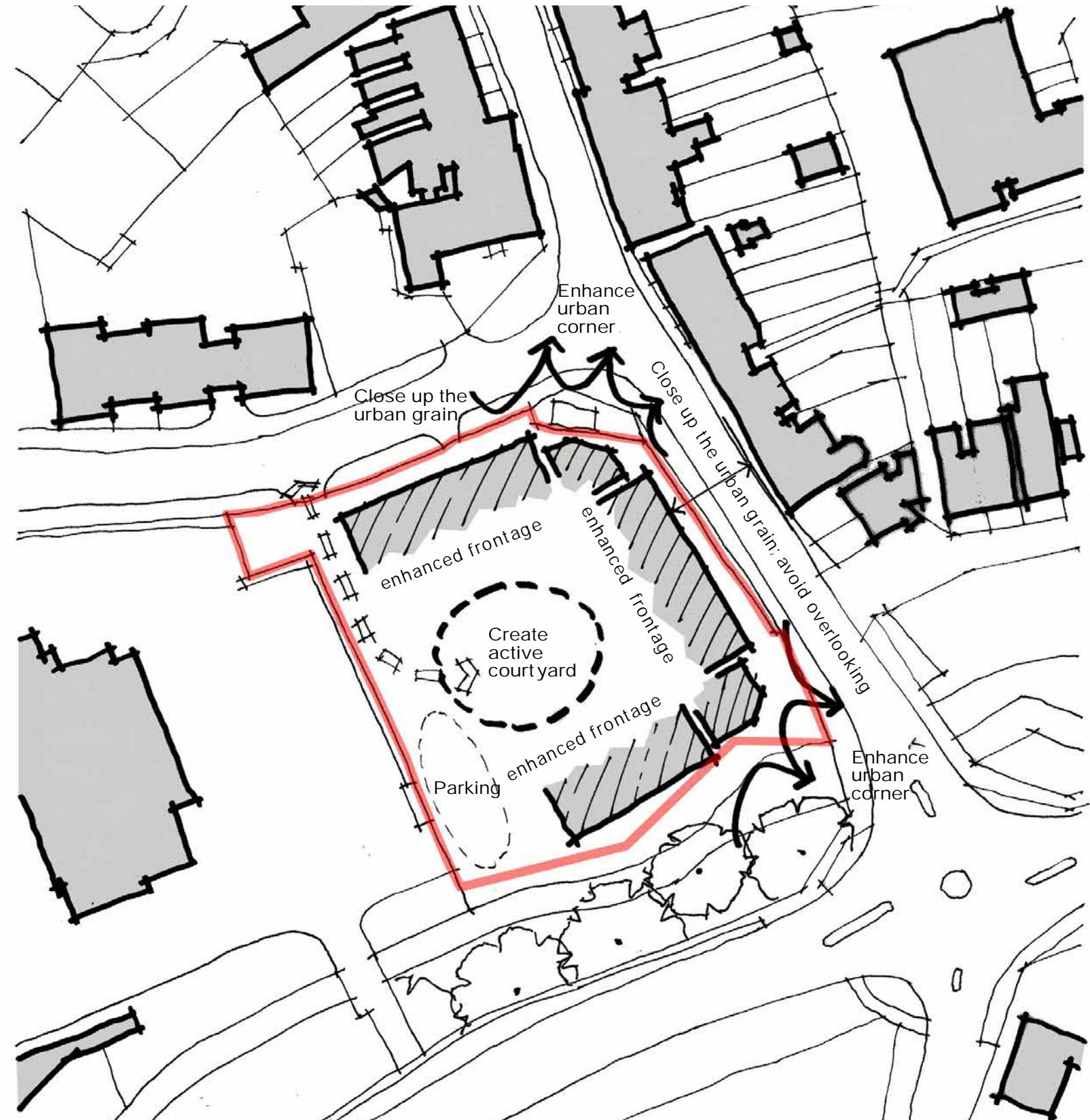
Sketch illustrating the constraints that affect the site

2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.11 Site Opportunities

The clearance and removal of the existing structures creates numerous opportunities and potential for a successful urban development, including but not restricted to the following -

- Creation of a new urban gateway building at an important entrance point to Romsey.
- Creation of a new urban gateway building that completes the street scene.
- Creation of a strong, detailed, high-quality and architecturally sympathetic frontages to Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road.
- Front the proposals away from the poor quality western boundary.
- Utilise the principles of 'Gentle Densification' to increase the density and height of this disused brownfield site.
- Set forward the scheme to Broadwater Road to tighten up the existing urban grain.
- Create feature corners within the proposals to address and enhance the existing street corners.
- Creation of new vehicular permeability into the site.
- Creation of better quality south-west facing amenity space.
- Creation of new private amenity spaces within the site.
- Creation of better quality active and passive surveillance to the general area.



Sketch illustrating the opportunities afforded to the site

3 PLANNING

“.....significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents.....”

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 134

3 PLANNING

3.1 Planning Policy

The Romsey Local Plan (2016)

The Test Valley Local Plan was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016, providing a framework for Test Valley up to 2029. The relevant policies within the Local Plan in relation to the redevelopment to older persons housing on this proposal site are listed below -

- Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
- Policy COM1 (Housing Provision 2011-2029)
- Policy COM2 (Settlement Hierarchy)
- Policy COM7 (Affordable Housing)
- Policy E1 (High Quality Development in the Borough)
- Policy E7 (Water Management)

The Local Plan also identifies there is an ageing population. It is noted to help support older people there will be an increased demand in sheltered, extra care housing and housing specifically designed to meet the needs of older people. The Council will consider proposals positively if they help meet the Council's Housing Strategy aims.

Housing Strategy 2020-2025

The Housing Strategy 2020-2025 sets the Council's strategy and priorities for the next 5 years and beyond.

Theme 3 - Meeting the Challenge of an Ageing Population acknowledges the ageing population within the Test Valley Borough. The Council have identified the priority of developing a range of alternative housing options for older persons, actively encouraging downsizing to free up family homes.

In accordance with the above, the 2021 Census data also identifies that on Census Day there was a 29.5% increase in people aged 65 years and over in Test Valley. This is significantly higher than the UK average of 20.1%. Most notably, people falling within the age bracket of 70-74 years more than doubled between 2011-2021 (showing a 52% increase). Therefore, there is an acknowledged ageing population within Test Valley.

South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Report (2020)

The site also falls within the South of Romsey Town Centre: Masterplan Report (2020). The aim of the masterplan is to strategically regenerate Romsey Town Centre. Romsey Future also seeks to safeguard the town's future as a vibrant and thriving market town, interacting with its surrounding communities. Given these aims, it is considered the proposal of retirement living will positively contribute to this strategic Masterplan by way of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The Redevelopment Principle

The development is in accordance with the adopted Test Valley Local Plan (2016), therefore the principle of residential development at this site is acceptable. The proposal will make efficient use of land in a sustainable location and will provide much needed 1 and 2 bed apartments, which in turn will help free up family housing elsewhere.



3 PLANNING

3.2 Romsey Conservation Area Appraisal

The Romsey Conservation Area Appraisal (December 2020) identifies ten areas of special architectural interest.

The Site (identified in red) lies adjacent to Area 3: Market Place and Historic Core, but more so Area 4: The Hundred and Palmerston Street.

The conservation area boundary (red line) does not include the Site (identified opposite in red).

The Site is in the setting of the conservation area and the setting of the Grade II* Listed Broadlands Park, and setting of listed buildings on Palmerston Street.

Area 3 (Market Place)

Area 3 (shown in yellow) notes that plots follow their medieval burgrave plot patterns, and the street pattern is very narrow; some plot amalgamation has taken place allowing a variety of frontage widths.

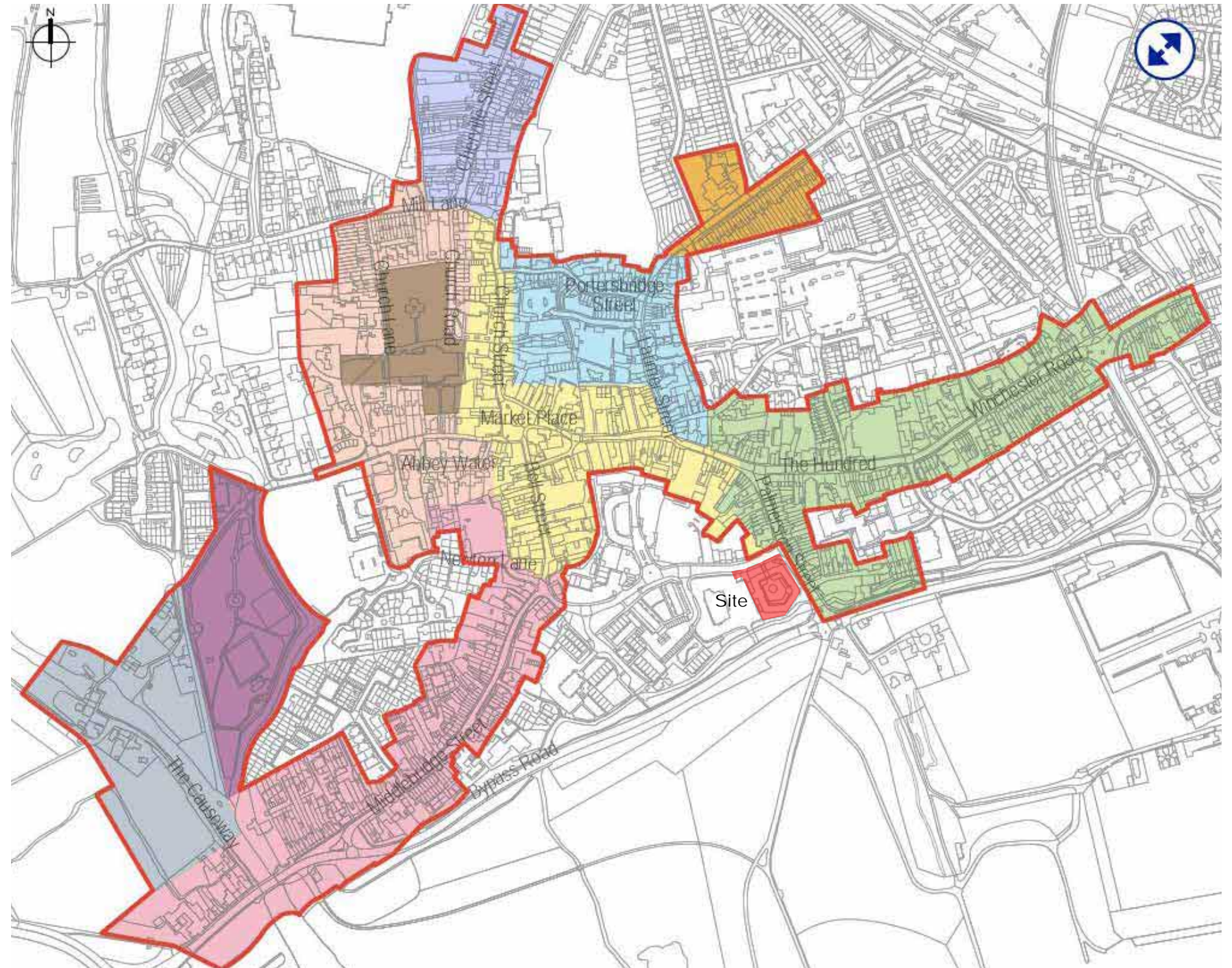
The general scale is two- to three storeys; the urban grain is very fine with few gaps between buildings. Buildings are generally red brick or are rendered or painted white. Decorative features, where present, are modest.

Area 4 (The Hundred and Palmerston Street)

Area 4 (shown in green) notes that street development occurred in a piecemeal fashion, and that consequently plot size varies. Until the Victorian period, significant gaps remained in the street frontage which were subsequently filled with terraced rows.

The general scale is two- to three storeys; there is a significant variation to plot width, roof form and height. Buildings are generally red brick or are rendered or painted white in pale tones. Decorative features, where present, are modest or have no applied decoration at all.

Boundary treatments are mixed; historic boundaries are brick or railings.



Plan 2 extracted from p.15 of Romsey Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (December 2020)
Edwina Mountbatten House location identified just outside the Conservation Area in red

3 PLANNING

3.3 Romsey Town Design Statement

The Romsey Town Design Statement (January 2008) shows The Site as being located in 'Area 8 Romsey Old Town' (map p.31 and p.14).

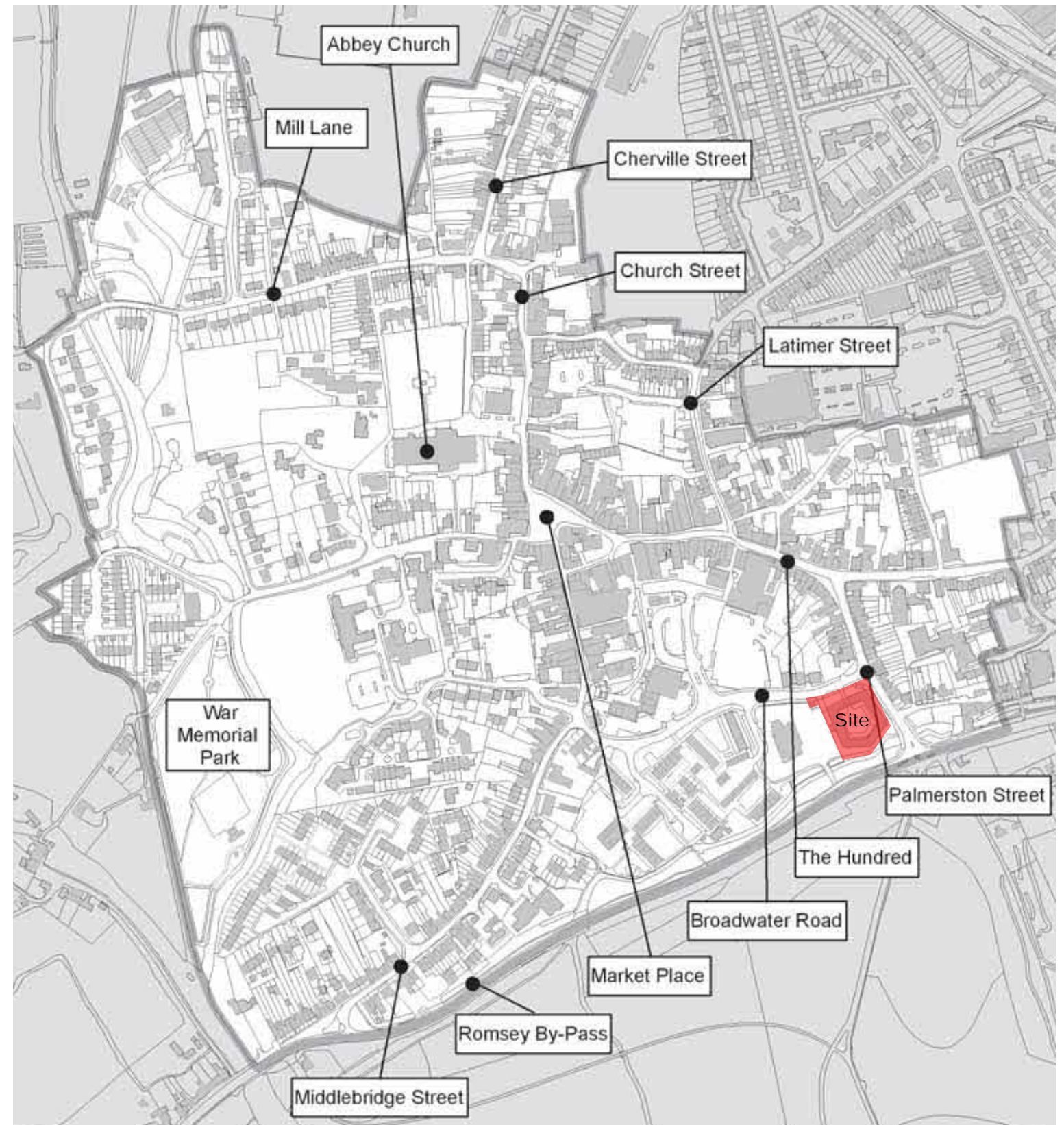
The Design Statement echoes the Conservation Area Appraisal in identifying the primary characteristics of this area as follows -

- Scale is typically two- to three- storeys.
- Balconies are not usual and there are examples.
- New buildings should be well-designed with interesting features and avoiding a 'plain block' appearance.
- Fenestration should have rhythm.
- The diversity of building styles, including details, should be retained.
- The unity of the groups of terraces should be retained.
- The predominant building material in Romsey is red brick.
- Many houses have small examples of brick decoration at the intersection of ground floor and first floor, or at the eaves.
- Tile hanging is common at first floor instead of brick.
- Most roofs are pitched with clay tile or slate.
- The provision of ornamental railings around new developments "...should be encouraged."

Response to Town Design Statement

In general terms, the design has sought to incorporate the following characteristics in the proposals -

- The building is 2-3 storeys, with a red tile and slate-effect roof.
- The building is broken up into a diverse series of interesting terraced and individual houses, avoiding a 'plain block' appearance.
- The proposals have a diversity of building styles and detailing.
- The unity of the terraces to Palmerston Street is retained.
- Windows have simple brick and stone decoration, and the fenestration has rhythm.
- Ornamental railings will feature to Broadwater Road.



Plan of Area 8 extracted from p.31 of Romsey Town Design Statement (September 2020)
Edwina Mountbatten House location identified in red

3 PLANNING

3.4 South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Overview

The South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Report (September 2020) identifies a strategic vision to transform the land to the south of Romsey town centre.

The study area encompasses the adjoining, Crosfield Hall, Aldi, Romsey Bus Station, Dukes Mill and flatted development owned by Aster Communities.

The Site is not included in the masterplan but is made reference to in terms of the setting adjacent to the plan area.

The proposals concentrate development to the north and east of The Site, however Edwina Mountbatten House is within it's 'sphere of influence'.

The photolog on pages 20-21 of the report (image 7) identifies The Site / corner of Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road as an example of an area where the townscape could be enhanced for residents and visitors.

Figure 4.1 on page 32 identifies the corner of Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road as a 'Gateway' into this new transformed area.



Artist's Impression of the proposed Masterplan (page 7) (not to scale)

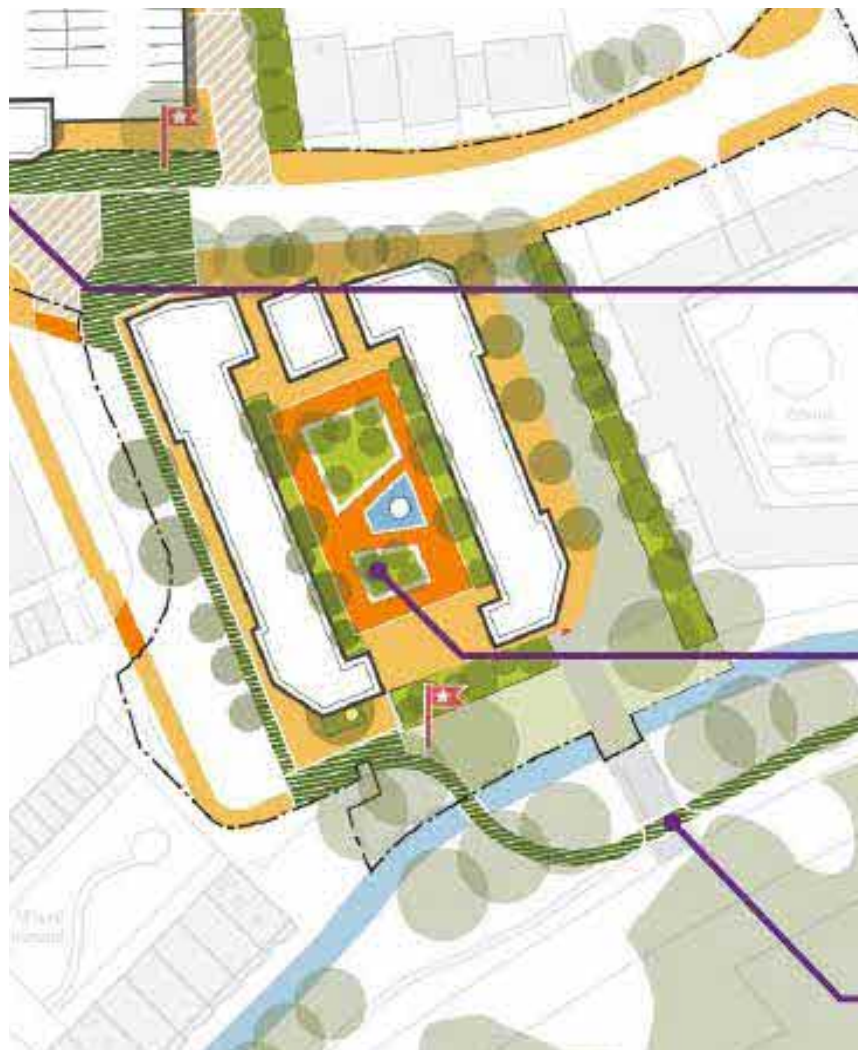
3 PLANNING

3.5 South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Site Review

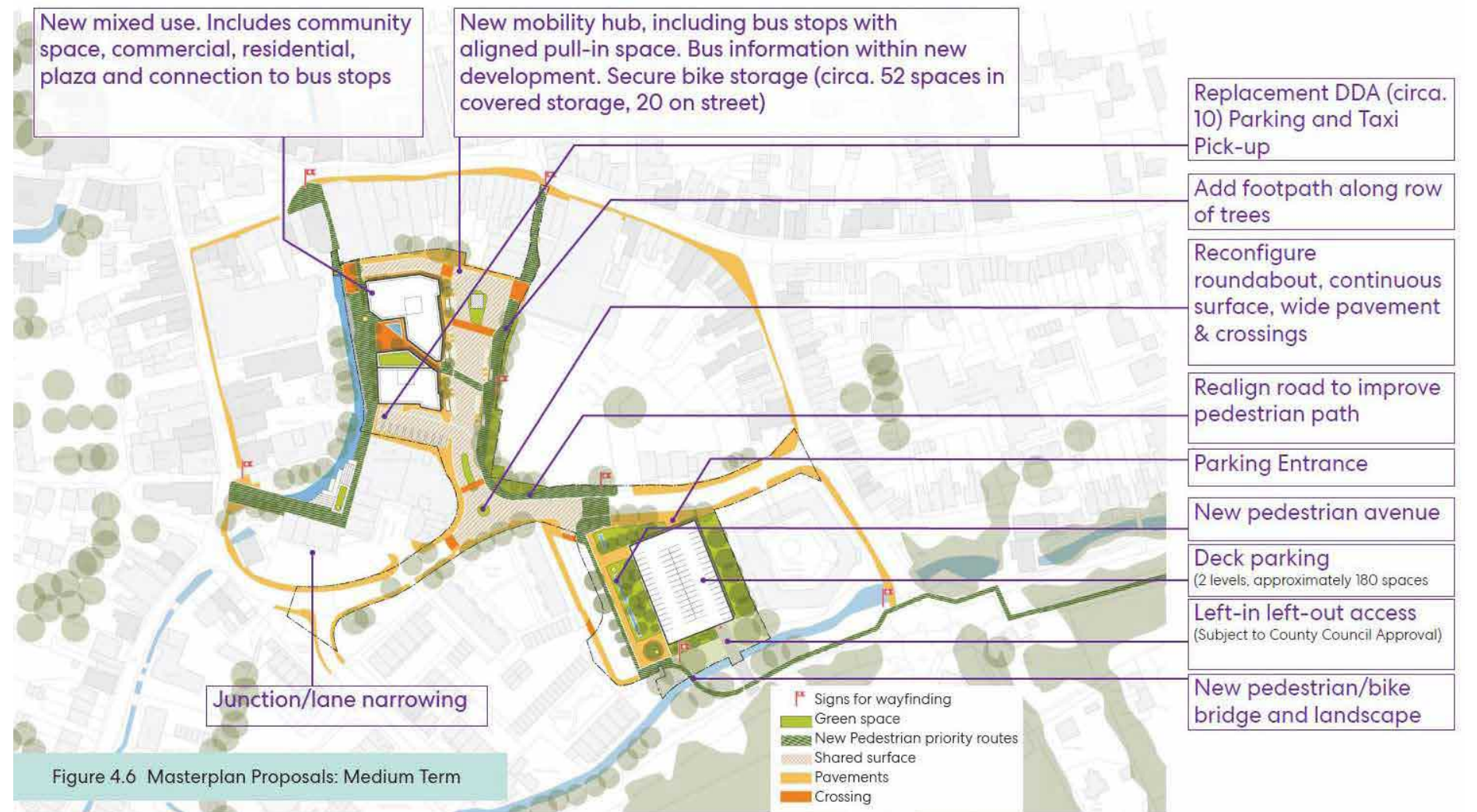
As part of the strategic vision, Crosfield Hall is identified in the South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Report as being a site for redevelopment in the medium and long-term future.

Following a review into the most appropriate means to relocate the community facilities from Crosfield Hall to other areas, the medium term plan is to clear the site and establish a temporary two-storey, three-deck multi-storey car park, and an Aldi Supermarket to replace this in the longer term (right).

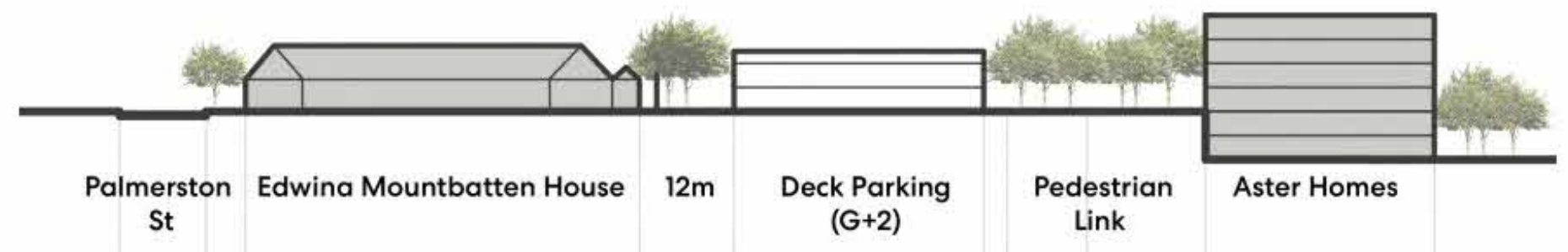
An alternative plan (p.60) could see the Aldi retained in it's current location and Crosfield Hall instead redeveloped for residential blocks (below).



Proposed alternative layout (p.60) (not to scale)



Proposed medium term vision (p.50) (not to scale)



Indicative Section through site looking south, showing the temporary car park to Crosfield Hall (p.49) (not to scale)

3 PLANNING

3.6 South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Site Review

As part of the strategic vision, The Aldi car park is identified in the South of Romsey Town Centre Masterplan Report as being a site for redevelopment in the medium and long-term future.

The proposal is for a two-storey three-deck multi-storey car park, with a 4-storey band of apartments (flexible working units on ground floor) wrapped around the west and south sides to create active street frontage.

The concept and layout demonstrates the desire for additional 3-4 storey development within the curtilage of the town centre.

The plan (p.60) shows how this arrangement may sit within the Masterplan (below).



Proposed layout (p.54) (not to scale)

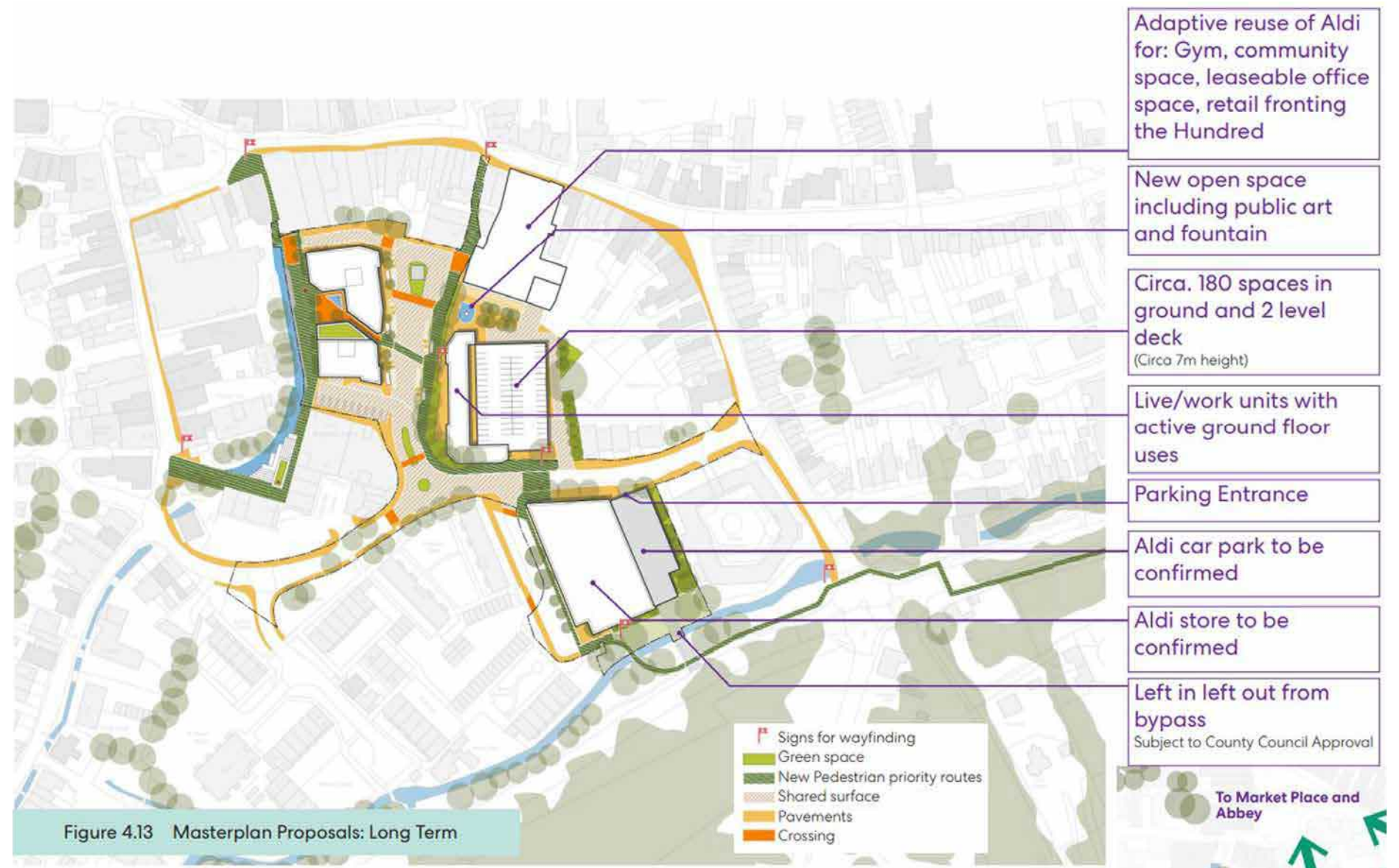
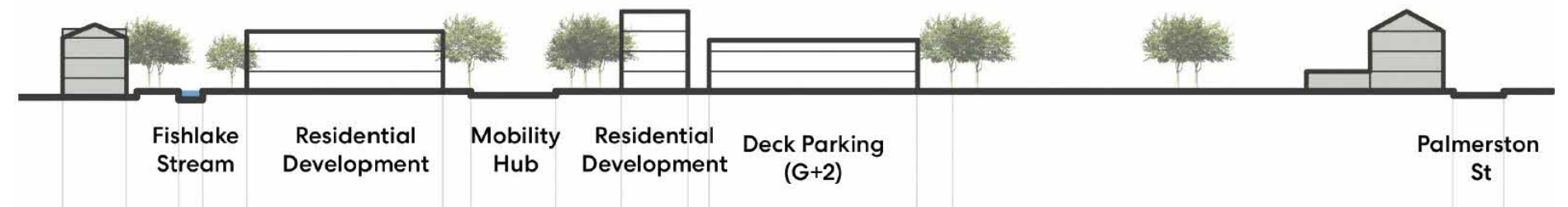


Figure 4.13 Masterplan Proposals: Long Term

Proposed long term vision (p.50) (not to scale)



Indicative Section through site looking south, showing the temporary car park and apartments (p.55) (not to scale)

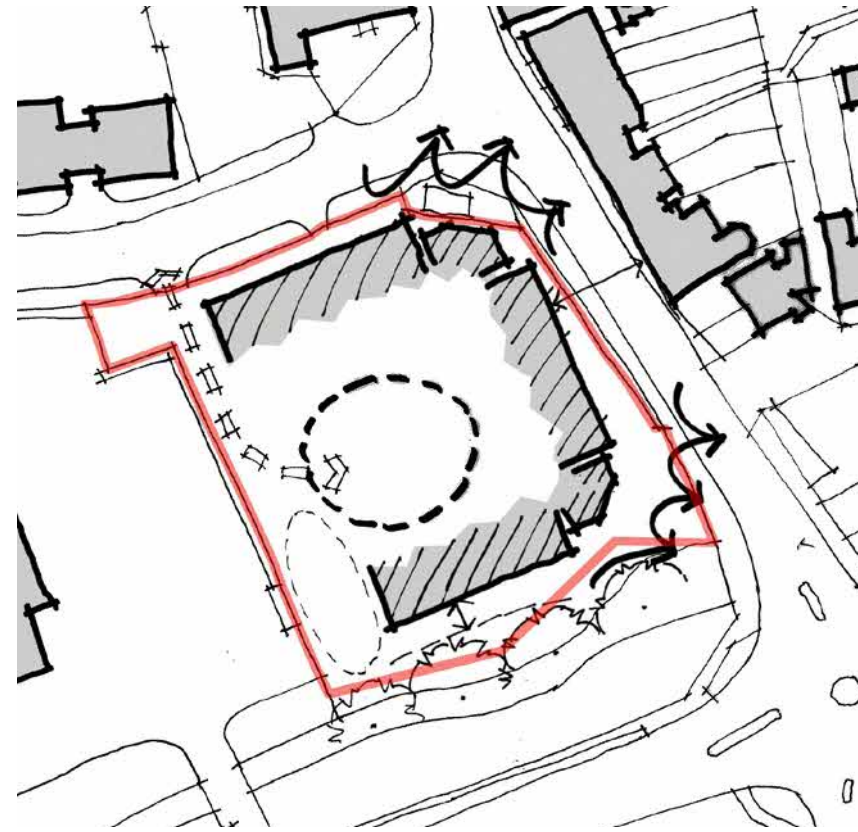
3 PLANNING

3.6 Pre-Application Scheme

A pre-application document was issued to Test Valley Borough Council in January 2023 by Planning Issues. The document contained a location plan of the site, photographic site analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site, and indicative elevations to Palmerston Street, Broadwater Road and Bypass Road A27 illustrating proposed scale, massing and heights.

The proposed layout consists of but not limited to the following features -

- Vehicular and pedestrian access from existing servicing position at north-west corner of the site.
- Removal of the primary existing access to make better use of the site
- Building frontage to Broadwater Road set closer to allow better use of site and be more characteristic of streets in Romsey.
- Parking located to the south-west corner of the site, as frontage parking is uncharacteristic of the area.
- Centrally located amenity garden for the residents, accessed directly off the car park.
- A palette of red brick, painted brick and render, natural slate roof tiles and flush casement uPVC windows.
- Secure, monitored main entrance adjacent car park.
- Good separation distances to all boundaries.
- Proposals set back from mature trees to southern boundary to allow good daylighting and amenity.
- Layout respects existing roads.
- Scale of the proposals respects existing adjacent and listed properties.
- Ground Floor level set at +16.700 AOD for the avoidance of flooding from Tadburn Lake.



Concept Diagram



Pre-Application Site Plan



Indicative elevation to Palmerston Street

3 PLANNING

3.7 Pre-Application 3D Model Views



View of proposed massing model from corner of Palmerston Street and Broadwater Road



View of proposed massing model from Bypass Road A27 roundabout



View of proposed massing model from opposite side of Palmerston Street

3 PLANNING

3.8 Design Review Panel Comments

Planning Issues presented the proposals on behalf of Churchill Retirement Living on 7th March 2023 to a Design Review Panel arranged by Test Valley Borough Council.

The general feedback from this meeting was as follows; our design responses are in bold -

Design

- Had 'sympathy' for the design approach.
- The design could be either traditional or contemporary.

The design is context-led, and references many design features and materials from the houses and cottages to Palmerston Street.

- 2.5- and 3-storeys in general was considered acceptable.

The proposals are 2, 2.5 and 3-storeys in height.

- The creation of a 'street scene' to Palmerston Street was a 'laudable aim', though partially successful at this present time in the design life of the project.

The street scene has continued to be developed and has been reduced in height. All elements within the elevations are of a 'domestic scale' nature.

Scale

- As the site is elevated, consideration should be made to reducing the Palmerston Street elevation to 2-storeys to avoid overbearing the properties on the opposite side of the road.

The street scene facing Palmerston Street is now predominately 2-storeys.

- The scale of the Broadwater Road elevation facing the Veterinary Practice had a better relationship.

We have continued this relationship through the design development.

All elements within the elevations are of a 'domestic scale' nature.

Materials

- Would like the scheme to incorporate red brick, render and painted brick.

The majority of the scheme is proposed as red brick and white painted brickwork.

- Insisted on high quality materials and 'quirky' detailing within the scheme.

This will be agreed through condition as the design develops.

- Insisted on the removal of the portico door to the north-eastern corner of the site.

The portico door to the north-eastern corner of the site has been omitted.

The 'cupola' feature has now been omitted.

- Dormer windows, brick detailing, balconies should be considered in detail to ensure a high quality of finish.

This will be agreed through condition as the design develops.

- Preference for timber windows over uPVC.

uPVC windows are a more sustainable product than timber due to its ability to be recycled, and their energy efficiency.

Slimmer profile products with a timber appearance are available.

Orientation

- The layout should be parallel to Palmerston Street, and the Design Review Panel suggested that several trees outside the Site and in Council ownership should be removed to allow this.

The elevation to Palmerston Street is now parallel with Palmerston Street rather than at an angle.

- Approximately 20no. apartments were north-facing, potentially receiving no sunlight.

Without north-facing apartments facing Broadwater Road, the development could not address Broadwater Road.

Churchill Retirement Living have found their customers prefer a wide choice of flat types and orientations, and therefore we design in this choice.

Please refer to our previous developments in Romsey - Mottisfont Lodge and Abbey Lodge.

Abbey Lodge also has a north-facing elevation. This is to allow it to present itself to the street scene, as does this proposal to Broadwater Road.

- Dual aspect apartments were favoured; the central corridor was not.

A flatted development that doesn't incorporate a central corridor will result in a scheme that fails to optimise the full potential of the site.

Two recently completed schemes, Glebe Court (by McCarthy Stone) and Nightingale Lodge (by People Living+ and TVBC) both follow this plan type.

Entrance

- The main entrance should not be tucked to the side of the building, but be better expressed in the elevation.

The main entrance to now centrally placed within the south-facing elevation within the courtyard, within full view of the residents car park.

Landscaping

- A detailed landscape solution should accompany the application.

A feature landscape area is proposed to the centre of the internal courtyard. A landscape strategy accompanies this application.

- The case officer should open a dialogue with the County Council regarding the adjacent trees and their thinning out / removal.

This is a matter for the case officer.

3 PLANNING

3.9 Test Valley Borough Council Comments

Planning Issues issued the proposals to Test Valley Borough Council on behalf of Churchill Retirement Living in March 2023. Comments were received in April 2023 from TVBC's Senior Planning Officer.

The general feedback from this meeting was as follows; our design responses are in bold -

Setting

- The site and Care Home is deemed very visible and public on all sides.
We agree which is why believe in a contextually appropriate design response.
- The application site is within a historically sensitive location.
- The site falls within the setting of the Conservation Area, not in.
- The existing Care Home is of no architectural merit.
We concur that the site is in a historically sensitive location, is within the setting of the CA, and that Edwina Mountbatten House has no architectural merit.

Masterplan

- The proposals should 'positively align' with the Romsey SOTC Masterplan, compliment its contemporary design approach as well as the sensitive setting of the conservation area.
We believe that the proposals 'positively align' with the Masterplan by proposing a development that responds positively to a gateway to Romsey, enhances the adjacent Conservation Area and completes the street scene to Palmerston Street.
We believe the proposals are a positive enhancement to the area.

Design

- The design fails to reference the scale, features or appearance of closer / adjacent buildings.

The design is context-led, and references many design features and materials from the houses and cottages to Palmerston Street.

The NPPF and the Planning Inspector's ruling from Appeal APP/B1740/W/20/3265937 states that a design deemed context-led design automatically qualifies as one of 'high-quality'.

We understand that either a contemporary or context-led design could be successful. We have developed a context-led scheme which we believe is the most appropriate.

- The proposed building is clearly trying to look like a row of individual townhouses but is not successful; it is obviously all one building.

We believe the design solution is successful in conveying the appearance of terraces and townhouses to the primary elevations.

- General style of the building is very repetitive, and it will be obvious it was built at the same time.

We believe this point to be irrelevant as there are many single- phase large footprint buildings within the setting of the CA, including Edwina Mountbatten House.

- The general repetitive style of the building does not reflect the locality.

We do not believe this to be correct; each elevation has it's own individuality depending on the buildings it is facing and referencing. The elevation to Broadwater Road is very different to Palmerston Street, and so on.

Scale

- No clear consideration of scale of existing buildings beyond that which is cited in the conservation area report.

We did not feel it appropriate or necessary to undertake a town-wide assessment.

- The design has tried to 'break up the building by including different roof heights which is, in theory a positive thing to do.'

Noted.

- The eaves line and windows are too regimented; the windows are all the same size.

The windows are required to meet a minimum level of internal daylighting, but also not create an overheating issue within the apartment, therefore some level of regimentation is required to meet these technical requirements.

- Three storeys would be too tall for this location; it is likely to be out scale with Palmerston Street.

The majority of the proposed elevation to Palmerston Road has been reduced to 2-storeys. Where the elevations are proposed as 3-storeys, these would be at a similar height to the Medical Practice opposite. 3-storeys development already exists to Palmerston Street.

Materials

- The design retains the cupola - this is not a positive addition.
The design does not now retain the cupola.

Landscaping

- Trees to south of the development may have a notable shading effect to the flats to the south elevation; residents may seek to cut them back.

The building line is similar to EMH. Residents will not be permitted to undertake works to the trees.

- The proposals for the sub-station may adversely affect the Hornbeam tree beyond to the north-eastern corner of the site.

A tree survey accompanies the application, demonstrating that there will be no negative effect to the root zone of the Hornbeam.

- A tree survey will be required to accompany the application.
As above point.

3 PLANNING

3.10 Public Consultation

“Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.” National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 128

A on-line public consultation was held between the 8th - 14th May 2023.

In total, 14 responses were received by the end of the consultation period. The project website received 715 views from 155 people from during the event.

Given the level of interaction with the project website, it is considered that the majority of local residents either liked the proposals, had no concerns over the proposals or were apathetic to the proposals having viewed the website.

Overall, the feedback showed that more than half of respondents were supportive of the principle of the development and half of all respondents felt that the significant benefits arising from purpose-built homes for older people to local health services and the NHS were either important or very important.

Additionally, residents raised comments regarding lack of parking and impact on the character of the local area of the proposed development.

These comments have been responded to as part of the submitted application with the final design evolving from the public engagement to the submission of the planning application as detailed above.



Screen shot from the virtual Public Consultation

3 PLANNING

3.11 Town Council Comments

The initial proposals were presented to Romsey Town Council on 7th March 2023 which set out our initial pre-application scheme and discussions with the Design Review Panel.

A productive discussion was held around the principles and approach to development.

The amended proposals were fed back to a limited number of members of Romsey Town Council for their comments on 12th June 2023, following the public consultation.

The scheme was generally well received however the Town Council requested a few changes which have subsequently been incorporated into the design. These were -

1. Move the area of white painted brick work in the elevation facing Palmerston Street to the south.
2. Reduce the north-western most corner of the building to 2.5 storeys and make the elevation facing Broadwater Road more symmetrical.
3. Increase the parking to 16no. spaces, to a ratio comparable to our other recent retirement living developments in Romsey. This is now the same as Mottisfont Lodge on Alma Road.

These changes have all been integrated within the application scheme,



Changes to Palmerston Road



Changes to Broadwater Road



Changes to Parking numbers

