

# PLANNING STATEMENT

Conversion of The Old Alma with Rear and Side Extensions  
To accommodate 4 No. 1-Bedroom Flats

Demolition of Existing Outbuildings

Erection of 2 No. 2-Bedroom Flats

The Old Alma  
Canterbury Road, Chilham,  
CT4 8DX  
December 2020

APPLICANT

Mr A. McNamara

PREPARED BY

Michael Tamsett

Architectural Designs

## CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
2	Planning History	3
3	Application Site	4
4	Relevant Planning Policies	10
5	Application presented for Pre-App Advice	18
6	Pre-App Advice	20
7	Application Submitted for Demolition of the Old Alma and Erection of 8 flats.	25
8	Pre-application Advice following Withdrawal	29
9	Proposals	31
10	Conforming to Planning Policies	33
11	Ecology and Trees	35
12	Summary and Conclusion	36

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The applicants seek permission to convert the existing building, known as The Old Alma, with rear and side extensions to accommodate four 1-bedroom flats, demolish the existing outbuildings, and to erect two 2-bedroom flats.

## **2 PLANNING HISTORY**

There are three previous applications shown on the Ashford Borough Council's website.

83/01181/AS Toilets for public house. Permitted

95/01553/AS Change of use from public house to private home. Permitted

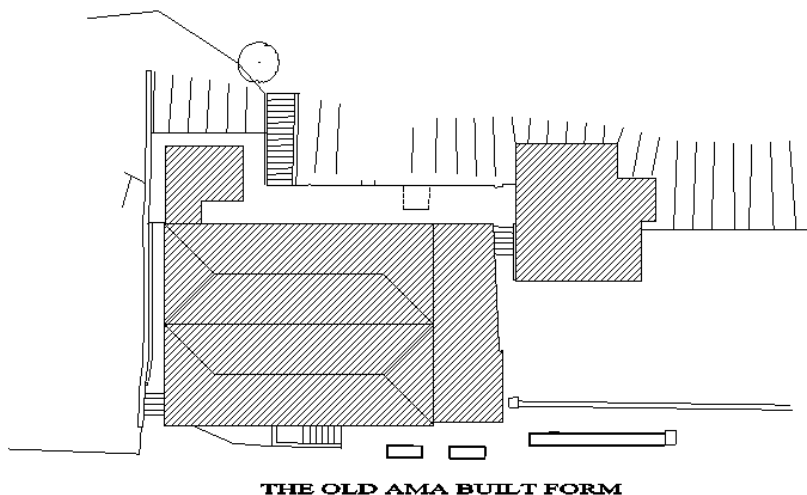
20/00910/AS Demolition of the former Old Alma Inn and Erection of 8 Flats.  
Withdrawn

### 3 APPLICATION SITE



*Google Aerial View*

- 3.1 The Old Alma was a former Victorian public house built in 1854 as the Chatham Railway Hotel.
- 3.2 The public house was closed in 1996 following planning permission for the change of use to a private home.
- 3.3 The Old Alma started trading as a bed and breakfast shortly after 1996. (without planning permission)



*The Old Alma former public house, toilet extension and associated outbuildings. (93m<sup>2</sup>)*



3.4 The site lies outside of the AONB which surrounds the site to the east, south and west.



*The AONB (hatched area).*

3.5 The 1033m<sup>2</sup> site is of a square shape and lies to the north of Canterbury Road and the Great Stour river.

3.6 To the south of the site are several industrial units and the Hope View School.



*View to the south.*

- 3.7 Chilham Railway Station lies less than 100m to the south.
- 3.8 Residential properties are scattered around The Old Alma to the north, west and north east with the closest properties being Berry House to the north west and The Cherries to the north east both some 115m away.
- 3.9 There are two listed buildings to the south, Bagham Farmhouse (78m away) and Bagham Farmhouse Barn, two further listed buildings to the south west, Bagham Cottage and Denmark House and the listed building of Pilgrims (218m away) to the west. The Old Alma itself is not listed.



*Historic England Map of Listed Buildings.*

- 3.10 The site lies in a Flood Zone 1 having a low probability of flooding -despite being close to the Great Stour River.



*Environment Agency Flood Map.*



- 3.11 The Old Alma building is between 1 and 2m from the highway with a parking area to the side.



*View of The Old Alma from Canterbury Road.*

- 3.12 The buildings and car park area have been cut into the bank with the north half of the site approx. 4.5m higher.







*View across the site from the upper level towards Canterbury Road*

3.13 The upper level has open boundaries with no fencing to the west or north.



*View to the north from the upper level.*





*View to the east with post and rail boundary fencing to The Cherries.*

3.14 The applicants purchased the site, including the bed and breakfast business, last year but it soon became apparent the business was failing badly and unsustainable.

## 4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

4.1 **NPPF 2018.** The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in 2018. The key new policies below are of relevance to this proposal:

4.1.1 Paragraph 11:

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. For decision-taking this means:
- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

4.1.2 Paragraph 38:

Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.



#### 4.1.3 Paragraph 70:

Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area.

#### 4.1.4 Paragraph 122.

Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- b) local market conditions and viability;
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

#### 4.1.5 Paragraph 123.

Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

- a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centers and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate.
- b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and
- c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where

they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).

#### **4.2 Ashford Local Plan 2030 – adopted February 2019**

4.2.1 The Local Plan proposes an allocation strategy that has been assessed against a broad range of issues, promoting suitable sites that can provide a range of housing opportunities across the Borough. This approach gives considerable weight to more ‘local’ factors and takes account of recent rates of development in different villages whilst encouraging the small-scale evolution of some smaller settlements which might otherwise stagnate. Overall, the strategy seeks to direct a greater scale of new development towards the most sustainable villages where services are more extensive and well established and public transport connectivity is greatest, consistent with the thrust of the NPPF, whilst accepting that smaller scale development can potentially be accommodated in smaller villages subject to local factors.

4.2.2 As of April 2018, the borough had a housing delivery shortfall of around 2,462 dwellings which demonstrates that, except for 2015/16, housing completion rates in the borough had not kept pace with the annual requirement for new housing indicated by the OAN.

#### **4.3 Policy HOU5 - Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside**

4.3.1 Proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines of the following settlements will be acceptable:

Ashford, Aldington, Appledore, Bethersden, Biddenden, Brabourne Lees/Smeeth, Challock, Charing, **Chilham**, Egerton, Great Chart, Hamstreet, High Halden, Hothfield, Kingsnorth\*, Mersham, Pluckley, Rolvenden, Shadoxhurst, Smarden, Tenterden (including St Michaels), Wittersham, Woodchurch and Wye.

Providing that each of the following criteria is met:

- a) The scale of development proposed is proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day to day service provision currently available and commensurate with the ability of those services to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in this Local Plan and committed development in liaison with service providers;
- b) The site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement, and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;
- c) The development is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area;



- d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;
- e) The development must conserve and enhance the natural environment and preserve or enhance any heritage assets in the locality; and,
- f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design and meets the following requirements:-
  - i) it sits sympathetically within the wider landscape,
  - ii) it preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement,
  - iii) it includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside, it is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used, it does not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents, it would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and / or adjoining area and not adversely affect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENV1.

#### 4.4 **Policy HOU12 - Residential Space Standards (internal)**

All new residential development, including dwellings created through subdivision or conversion, shall comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards set out in Table 1.

#### 4.5 **Policy HOU14 - Accessibility Standards**

Accessibility in compliance with building regulations part M shall be provided as follows: -

At least 20 percent of all ‘new build’ homes shall be built in compliance with building regulations part M4 (2) as a minimum standard; and,

In ‘new build’ properties which are affordable, a proportion of wheelchair accessible homes complying with building regulations part M4 (3b) will be required. The number of homes built to M4 (3b) standards will be dependent upon the number of households on the Council’s housing waiting list requiring wheelchair accessible homes and the suitability of the location for wheelchair users, and should be provided within the affordable rented element of the scheme, capped at a maximum of 7.5%.

#### 4.6 **Policy HOU15 - Private External Open Space**

Unless drawings indicate alternative provision of private useable external open space, new dwellings, whether created as ‘new build’, subdivision or conversion shall be

provided with an area of private open space. Unless demonstrably unfeasible, this should not be overlooked from the road or other public spaces.

For flats, a minimum of 5m<sup>2</sup> of private outdoor space should be provided for 1 or 2 bedspace dwellings, and an additional 1m<sup>2</sup> should be provided for each additional bedspace. The minimum depth and width for all balconies and other private external spaces (e.g., roof garden, patio) should be 1.5m.

For houses, as a starting point, the private garden area should be calculated as the width of the dwelling (m) x 10m. This standard can be flexible providing it can be adequately demonstrated that alternative solutions provide a sufficient area of usable private outdoor space which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area and ensures a high standard of living conditions can be achieved.

These standards also apply to any proposals which result in the loss of private external space to existing residential property.

#### 4.7 **Policy EMP11 -Tourism**

The Council will support the retention of existing tourism facilities and encourage sustainable growth of tourism through the provision of a wide variety of new facilities in appropriate locations across the borough.

Proposals for new hotel and B&B development will be permitted in locations that are accessible by a choice of modes of transport and will be particularly encouraged in the Ashford and Tenterden urban areas.

Proposals for conference and exhibition facilities in Ashford town centre, potentially in association with a hotel development, will be supported subject to other Local Plan policies.

#### 4.8 **Policy TRA3 (a) - Parking Standards for Residential Development**

Proposals for residential development within the town centre area identified on the Policies Map or within 'central areas' of larger developments shall deliver a minimum parking standard of 1 space per residential unit on average. It is expected that all of this provision should be delivered on-site.

Proposals for residential development elsewhere shall achieve the following minimum parking standards:

Suburban and Rural locations

1-bed dwelling	1 space per unit
2-bed dwelling	2 spaces per unit
3-bed dwelling	2 spaces per unit
4-bed house	3 spaces per unit



Visitor parking should be provided primarily off-plot in short stay car parks where available OR on-plot at 0.2 spaces per dwelling in major residential schemes where layout permits.

Parking to support residential development within the Borough shall follow the design, layout and accessibility guidance contained within the Council's Residential Parking and Design Guidance SPD.

#### 4.9 **Policy TRA6 - Provision for Cycling**

Cycle Parking shall be provided at a minimum as per the following:

C3 1 space per unit (flats/maisonettes)

#### 4.10 **Policy ENV1 – Biodiversity**

Proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported. Proposals for new development should identify and seek opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity. In particular, development should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks.

Proposals should safeguard features of nature conservation interest and should include measures to retain, conserve and enhance habitats, including BAP (Priority) habitats, and networks of ecological interest, including ancient woodland, water features, ditches, dykes and hedgerows, as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife.

Development that will have an adverse effect on the integrity of European protected Sites, including the Wye and Crundale Special Area of Conservation and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar and SPA sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not be permitted. Any proposal capable of affecting designated interest features of European sites should be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment screening.

Development that will have an adverse effect on nationally designated sites, including the borough's Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves, will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives including overriding public interest, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution.

Development should avoid significant harm to locally identified biodiversity assets, including Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and the Ashford Green Corridor as well as priority and locally important habitats and protected species. The protection and enhancement of the Ashford Green Corridor is one of the key objectives of the Plan and therefore all proposals coming forward within or adjoining the Ashford Green Corridor should comply with Policy ENV2 in the first instance.

Where harm to biodiversity assets cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation will be required in line with a timetable to be agreed with the Local Authority.

Normally any mitigation measures will be required to be delivered on-site, unless special circumstances dictate that an off-site model is more appropriate. A financial contribution - in lieu of on-site mitigation - will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances and where it is demonstrated that the proposed mitigation is deliverable and effective.

Opportunities for the management, restoration and creation of habitats in line with the opportunities identified for the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) and targets set out in the Kent Biodiversity Strategy will be supported.

#### **4.11 Policy ENV7 – Water Efficiency**

All new residential development must achieve as a minimum the optional requirement set through Building Regulations for water efficiency that requires an estimated water use of no more than 110 litres per person per day.

#### **4.12 Policy ENV9 - Sustainable Drainage**

All development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality, and to mimic the drainage from the pre-developed site.

On greenfield sites, development should discharge at a maximum of 4l/s/ha, or 10% below current greenfield rates for the existing 1:100 storm event, whichever is lower. There must be no increase in discharge rate from less severe rainfall events, with evidence submitted to demonstrate this principle.

On Previously Developed Land, development must endeavor to achieve 4 l/s/ha runoff or seek to achieve 50% reduction of existing peak runoff rates for the site where existing discharge rates can be established.

On smaller sites (less than 0.25ha), development should achieve a maximum discharge of 2l/s.

Any SuDS scheme must demonstrate regard to the adopted Sustainable Drainage SPD and any subsequent revisions.

SuDS features should always be the preferred option and provided onsite wherever practicable.

All development proposals will be required to:

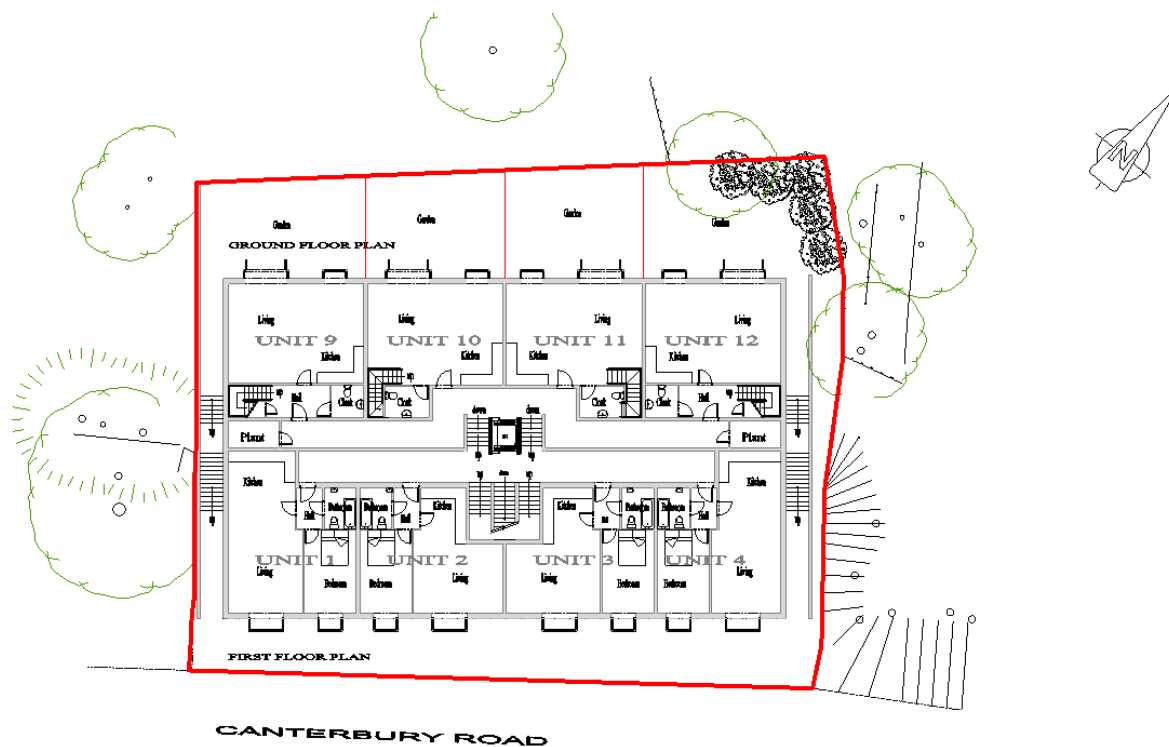
- a) Ensure all new developments are designed to reduce the risk of flooding, and maximise environmental gain, such as: water quality, water resources, biodiversity, landscape and recreational open space.
- b) Ensure that all new developments are designed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
- c) Lower runoff flow rates, reducing the impact of urbanisation on flooding.

- d) Protect or enhance water quality. Incorporating appropriate pollution control measures, to ensure there are no adverse impacts on the water quality of receiving waters, both during construction and in operation.
- e) Be sympathetic to the environmental setting and the needs of the local community.
- f) Incorporate a SuDS scheme that is coherent with the surrounding landscape and/or townscape.
- g) Provide a habitat for wildlife in urban watercourses; and encourage natural groundwater recharge (where appropriate);
- h) Demonstrate that opportunities have been taken to integrate sustainable drainage with biodiversity enhancements through appropriately designed surface water systems, as well as contribute to amenity and open spaces.
- i) Demonstrate that the first 5mm of any rainfall event can be accommodated and disposed of on-site; and,
- j) Demonstrate that clear arrangements have been established for the operation and maintenance of the SuDS component for the lifetime of the development.



## 5 APPLICATION PRESENTED FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

- 5.1 Pre-application advice was sought to demolish the existing Old Alma building and outbuildings and replace with a new quality build development of one- and two-bedroom apartments.



*Proposed site layout*



*Proposed elevations*

- 5.2 The split-level site was to be utilised with eight one-bedroom apartments to the front above garages and four two-bedroom apartments to the rear.
- 5.3 There was to be 10 garaging spaces with a central entrance lobby to the front at road level.
- 5.4 The front entrance lobby would give access to the upper two floors of the front apartments and to the ground floor of the rear apartments. A central lift would also provide the same access points.
- 5.5 The eight one-bedroom apartments were to be affordable housing aimed at the affordable renting market with the Chilham Railway opposite offering an ideal commute.
- 5.6 The four two-bedroom apartments with rear gardens were to provide market housing.

## 6 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

### *Site and surroundings*

*The application site relates to a detached building currently in use as a B&B on the outskirts of the village of Chilham. To the south of the site lies Chilham railway station and there is a regular bus service, both of which provide access to Canterbury and Ashford.*

*The site is within a landscape character area and fronts onto the A28 Canterbury Road. To the north of the site, the land rises steeply.*

### *Principle*

*The loss of tourist facilities is something which policy EMP11 of the Local Plan and NPPF seeks to avoid as such facilities contribute to the rural economy. Therefore, should a formal application be submitted, I consider it would be reasonable to expect details of the viability of the current B&B provision on the site to demonstrate its loss would not be detrimental to the rural economy. This should be for a period of at least 6 months.*

*In terms of the redevelopment of the site to residential, the site is outside of the built-up confines of Chilham which lie to the west of the site. However, the site is within close proximity to the built-up confines and within easy walking distance of basic day-to-day services in Chilham and has excellent access to public transport links as set out above. I therefore consider in principle, subject to meeting all of the relevant criteria set out under HOU5 these are outlined below, the development of the site for residential could be considered acceptable.*

### **HOU5**

- a) The scale of development proposed is proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day to day service provision currently available and commensurate with the ability of those services to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in this Local Plan and committed development in liaison with service providers;*
- b) The site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement, and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;*
- c) The development is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area;*
- d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;*
- e) The development must conserve and enhance the natural environment and preserve or enhance any heritage assets in the locality; and,*



*f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design and meets the following requirements:-*

- i) it sits sympathetically within the wider landscape,*
  - ii) it preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement;*
  - iii) it includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside,*
  - iv) it is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used,*
  - v) it does not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents,*
  - vi) it would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and / or adjoining area*
- and not adversely affect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENVI.*

*The existing building is modest and of local historic importance as a former public house. The proposed development would result in the loss of this building and replacement with a large building with a central link allowing for the change in levels from the front of the site to the rear. The proposed building would take up the entire frontage of the site and the full depth of the existing street level part of the site, with shallow depth gardens to the rear where the land rises. The rear part of the building would rise above the ridge of the front section of the building. The plans show that at ground floor level there would be parking in undercrofting.*

*I have some serious concerns with the quantum of development and the bulk and massing of the resultant building which I consider would be detrimental to this edge of village location where development is more sparse and further to east set back from the road and not widely visible. This would appear incongruous and uncharacteristic of the location and I do not consider it would comply with the relevant criteria set out under HOU5 and also SP6 of the Local Plan, the latter of which requires a high quality of design.*

*Undercrofting of this nature could appear unattractive. These often become uses for storage of wheelie bins and other domestic storage etc. This is not an approach which I consider is appropriate in this rural location and has highway safety impacts.*

*The scale of the development in my view would constitute an overdevelopment of the plot and would lead to related issues as outlined in the sections which follow below.*

*If the site were to be redeveloped, something more in keeping with the surroundings in accordance with HOU5 criteria.*

### ***Residential Amenity***

*The Local Plan outlines the minimum requirements for internal and external space standards under HOU12 and HOU15 respectively.*

*I have not assessed whether each of the residential units would comply with HOU12 but I can advise that should any of these fall below this, the development would be unacceptable as it would provide a poor level of amenity for future occupants.*

*Only 4 of the units would benefit from external amenity space and this would be located to the north of the building and due to the height of the building above ground level and existing trees, which is presumed would be retained to the west of the site, could give rise to a poor level of amenity for future occupiers which would fail to accord with policy HOU15.*

*There is a requirement for new build properties that there is compliance with policy HOU14, this would need to be demonstrated in any formal submission.*

*Given the above, I consider this demonstrates alongside the other concerns outlined above under the visual amenity section, that this demonstrates the proposal would overdevelop the site.*

### **Highway Safety and Parking**

*The site currently benefits from an existing vehicular access. The proposed development would appear to open up the frontage of the site to create wide crossover and single depth parking area at ground floor level in undercrofting. This would likely involve vehicles having to either reverse into the parking spaces proposed or reverse off onto the busy A2 Canterbury Road. Given this and the proximity to existing junctions to the west and south of the site. Therefore there would be significant potential for conflict which would give rise to highway safety concerns as the intensification of the use of the site would increase. KCC Highways and Transportation would be consulted on any formal application submitted but they do also offer pre-application advice as a separate service. I would encourage you enter into discussions with the Highway Authority prior to submitting any formal application.*

*The proposed development would generate the need for 12 parking spaces for residents and a further 3 visitor parking spaces in accordance with policy TRA3a of the Local Plan. The proposal would fail to provide sufficient parking, notwithstanding the above. However,*

*I also would draw your attention to the Council's Residential Parking SPD which details the dimensions of parking spaces which are enclosed.*

### **Other issues**

*Given that the number of units proposed exceeding 10, there would be a requirement to comply with policy HOU1 in terms of affordable housing provision on site. In this location, the requirement would fall under "Rest of Borough" which requires the following:*

Area*	Affordable/Social Rented requirements (% of total dwellings)	Affordable Home Ownership Products (% of total dwellings)	Total affordable housing requirements (% of total dwellings)
Ashford Town (Zone A)	0%	20% (including a minimum of 10% shared ownership)	20%
Ashford Hinterlands (Zone B)	10%	20% (including a minimum of 10% shared ownership)	30%
Rest of Borough (Zone C)	10%	30% (including a minimum of 20% shared ownership)	40%

*Furthermore, because of the development constitutes a major development, it would be required to comply with HOU18. I do not consider that the proposal would fail in this regard given there are a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom properties.*

*There would be other financial obligations through consultation with our Cultural Services Department for off-site contributions and also NHS, Social Care and Education contributions required in conjunction with consultation with relevant bodies. These would be secured by S106 agreement should permission be granted.*

*If you remain of the view that you wish to submit a formal application, the following information would be required to be submitted with any application:*

*Affordable housing statement*

*Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan*

*Visibility splays and confirmation of compliance with TRA3a and the Residential*

*Parking SPD dimensions for spaces*

*Design and Access Statement (major application)*

*Details of storage for refuse*

*Bicycle storage as required under TRA6*

*Drainage strategy in accordance with ENV9*

*Confirmation of water efficiency in accordance with ENV7*

*Confirmation of accessibility in accordance with HOU14*

*Ecological surveys in accordance with standing advice from Natural England and other best practice to ensure compliance with ENV1 and HOU5.*



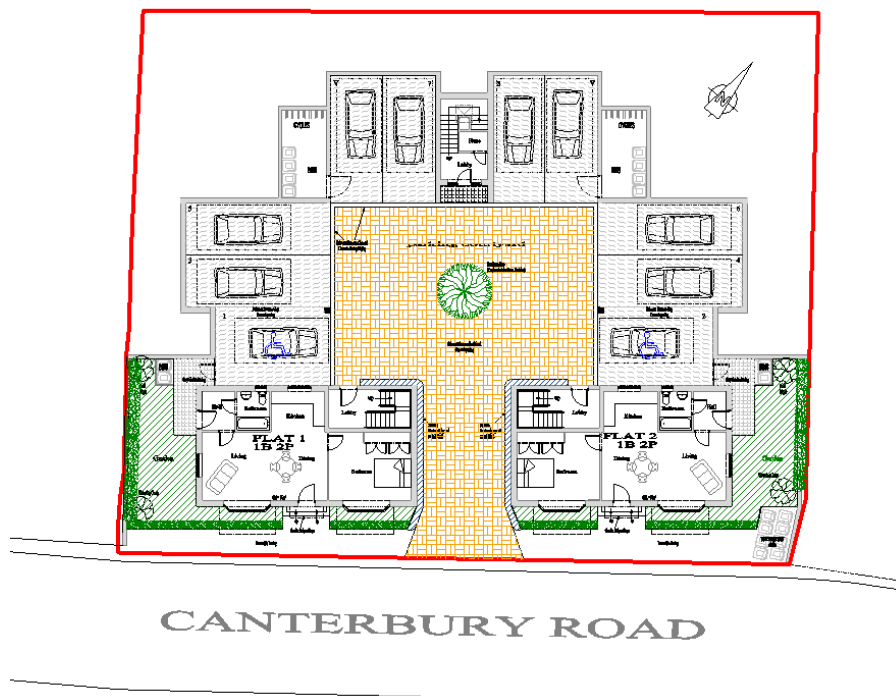
*As the application would be a major development (over 10 units), the application would be required to be reported to the Council's Planning Committee.*

### ***Conclusion***

*In light of the above, it is my view that the proposed redevelopment of the site, if it can be demonstrated that the existing tourist facilities are no longer required could be acceptable but that the nature and scale of the redevelopment, should this be satisfied, would need to be significantly reduced and all of the relevant criteria under HOU5, based purely on a desktop assessment would need to be addressed and met.*

## 7 APPLICATION SUBMITTED FOR DEMOLITION OF THE FORMER OLD ALMA INN AND ERECTION OF 8 FLATS (20/00910).

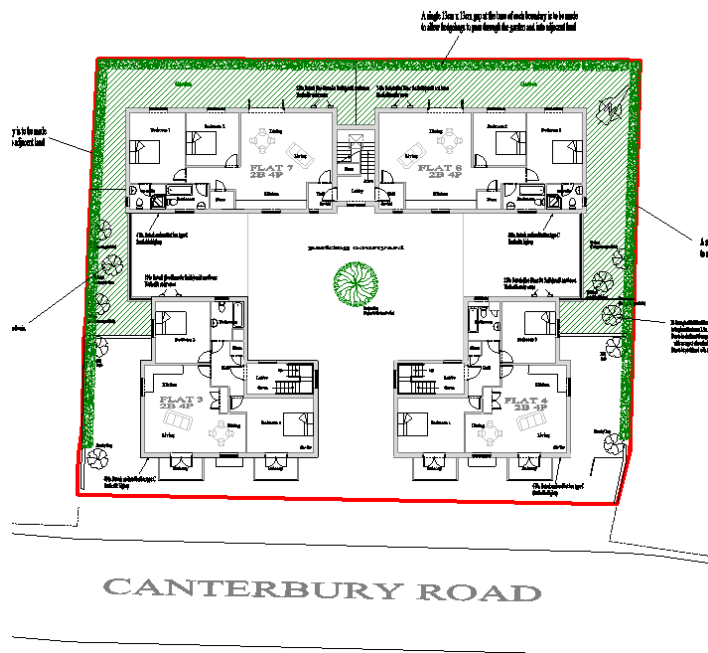
- 7.1 Following the pre-application advice, a new scheme was developed in consideration of the advice.
- 7.2 The revised scheme was for 6 No. 2 bedroom flats and 2 No. 1 bedroom flats.
- 7.3 The design took a symmetrical approach with a block of 3 flats either side of a central entrance to the front and to the rear two single storey flats either side of a central entrance stairway.



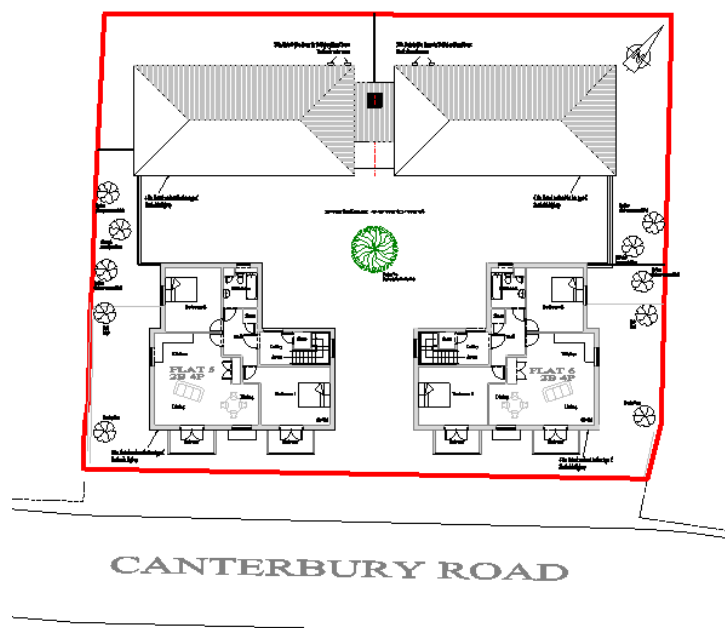
*Ground Floor Plan*

- 7.4 A central access off Canterbury Road led to a parking courtyard in the centre of the site.
- 7.5 The parking courtyard provided 10 parking spaces. One for each flat (including 2 disabled spaces) and 2 for visitors -complying with Policy TRA3a.
- 7.6 The ground floor front flats were to be accessible and built in compliance with building regulations part M4 (2) – complying with Policy HOU 14 for new development to provide 20% accessible homes.

- 7.7 Each flat was designed to conform with the Nationally Described Space Standards as set out in Table 1 and all room sizes presented within the Design and Access Statement. The flat layout designs complied with Policy HOU12.
- 7.8 All flats had a private external amenity space complying with Policy HOU 15.
- 7.9 The development conformed with national refuse waste standards.



*First Floor Plan*



*Second Floor Plan*



- 7.10 The proposed development of 8 No. flats was proportionate to the size of Chilham and the service provision currently offered.
- 7.11 The site is within easy walking distance to the centre of Chilham village and is immediately opposite Chilham railway station which is on the Margate to London St. Pancras line.
- 7.12 The proposed development can be safely accessed from the local A28 Canterbury Road and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area. The proposed 4.4m wide drive between the buildings would provide good vehicular access (including emergency vehicles) with the parking courtyard providing adequate turning facilities.
- 7.13 The proposed development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services.
- 7.14 The proposed development would conserve and enhance the natural environment through its landscaping scheme and general design layout.
- 7.15 The proposed development would preserve the existing heritage assets as demonstrated within the Heritage Statement.
- 7.16 It was considered the proposed development sat sympathetically within the wider landscape with its layout, scale, design, materials, and landscaping.
- 7.17 It was considered the proposed development would preserve the setting of Chilham with its careful design to construction details and materials and adherence to the Chilham Parish Design Statement.
- 7.18 The proposed low level single storey flats and their gardens with boundary hedges to the rear were appropriately sized and designed as an appropriate buffer to the wider landscape.
- 7.19 The clay tiled pitched roof design, red facing brickwork walls, wooden panelled doors with lead canopies and sash Georgian style windows were all consistent with the local character and built form of Chilham and its surrounding villages and compliant with the design guidelines set out in the Chilham Parish Design Statement.
- 7.20 The proposed buildings were of a very comparable bulk to that of the existing Old Alma building having ridge lines 0.7m higher and being 0.4m less in width.



- 7.21 The site is isolated from neighbouring properties. The nearest dwellings are approx. 100m away to the north-east and north-west. Opposite lies an industrial unit and the Hope View School. The proposals would therefore not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or amenities.
- 7.22 The arboricultural and ecological surveys and their recommendations were incorporated into the landscaping scheme to ensure the biodiversity is enhanced.
- 7.23 Each of the parking bays were to be fitted with “active” electric vehicle charge points.
- 7.24 Following comments from local residents and the planning case officer, the application was withdrawn with a view to redesign the scheme in consideration to the objections and pre-application was again sought.
- 7.25 A preliminary, revised scheme was presented for the conversion of The Old Alma with extensions to accommodate 4 flats and the erection of 2 flats to the rear.



*The Old Alma converted to 4 flats with 2 new flats erected to the rear.*



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION (EAST)

## 8 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL OF 20/0091/AS

*The revised scheme seeks to address the concerns previously raised in correspondence.*

*The revised scheme has resulted in a reduced scheme for 6 units, four of which would be located within the converted and extended existing Alma Inn building. The remaining two units would be detached and located to the rear of the site in an elevated position. Parking would be located on the existing area of land to the side of the building which would be significantly enlarged.*

### **Principle and Loss of the B&B**

*The redevelopment of the site would be acceptable in principle subject to the concerns raised previously being addressed, I would refer you to the previous correspondence and also the sections below under the relevant headings.*

*The proposed loss of the B&B would still need to be addressed but it is understood this information would be forthcoming should a formal application be submitted to demonstrate that it is no longer viable.*

### **Visual Impact**

*The proposed conversion of the existing building, which enables it to be retained are welcomed. The existing main building has a hipped roof with various additions which are single storey to the side. The removal of these and replacement with a two storey addition to the side could be acceptable subject to revisions to its design and form. The proposed extension to the side would appear bulky and out of proportion with the existing building. The height of the eaves and the ridge should sit lower in relation to the main building. The roof form should also be hipped to reduce the bulk and massing and to ensure the addition is a subordinate addition. The fenestration would need to be better proportioned so that it relates better to the existing building.*

*The addition of the building to the rear for two of the units would be acceptable in visual terms and provide an area of land to form a curtilage for each of the units which would not result in harm in visual terms. However, to facilitate this, retaining structures would be required which are unclear on the proposed drawings as they are not a full suite of drawings and I am uncertain what the elements annotated on the attached plan is supposed to indicate (green inverted triangles). This could over-engineer the appearance of the site and together with the large car parking area, appear incongruous in this edge of village location. I consider the proposed addition to the rear would over-develop the site as this leads to the need for large retaining structures and an excessive parking area to the detriment of this edge of village site in the countryside. The building to the rear relates poorly to the existing building which gives rise to number of residential amenity issues.*

*As a result of the above, I have some significant concerns regarding the proposed addition of the single storey element to the rear of the site.*

**Residential Amenity**

*The internal living accommodation would comply with HOU12.*

*I have concerns regarding compliance with policy HOU15. The windows of unit 4 and unit 5 would overlook the private garden area of Unit 2 to the detriment of the future occupiers as a result of a lack of amenity space which is free from overlooking. The external amenity space for unit 2 would therefore be compromised and be unacceptable. The proposed dimensions and layout of the private amenity space for units 3 and 4 would be unacceptable in my view. It would be poorly related and overlooked and not provide a good level of privacy for future occupiers.*

**Highway Safety**

*The proposed parking spaces appear to fall short of the dimensions required by the Residential Parking SPD. KCC Highways would be consulted on the amended scheme if submitted in respect of the impact on highway safety.*

*Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with TRA6. The area shown for storage would appear to fall short of the required standard of one space per unit.*

**Other issues**

*As outlined in your accompanying email, there is no means of being able to achieve the relevant accessibility standards under HOU14 for the new build homes. A clear justification as to why this could not be achieved should accompany any formal application.*

**Conclusion**

*In light of the above, I still have some concerns with the scale of the development on the site and the execution of this on visual and residential amenity grounds. I also have concerns regarding the loss of the B&B which would be to the detriment of the rural economy. Therefore, at this time, I am unable to lend my officer level support to this revised scheme on the basis of the information available to me at this time.*



## 9 PROPOSALS

- 9.1 A separate document has been prepared with a statement that outlines the declining viability of the business at The Old Alma and reasons why it is believed the B&B business has become unsustainable.
- 9.2 Pre-application advice has deemed the principle of development on the site for residential use to be acceptable subject to meeting all the relevant criteria set out under HOU 5.
- 9.3 Response to the previously submitted application showed a strong desire for the Old Alma building to be retained as it was felt to be an historical asset. The current application is for the main Old Alma building to be retained with its front façade unaltered.
- 9.4 The existing outbuildings are to be demolished and a part single storey and part two storey side extension (1.1m lower ridge) is to be erected on the same footprint.

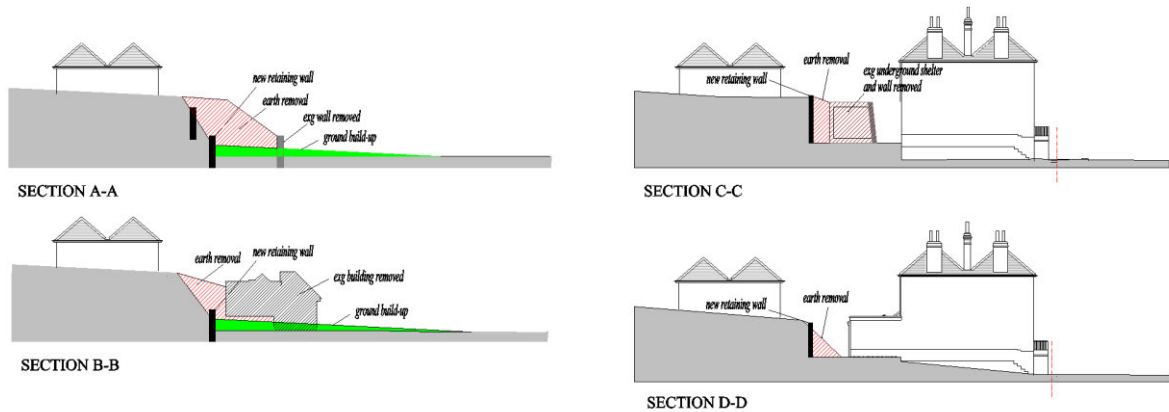


*The existing front elevation (above) and the proposed front elevation (below)*



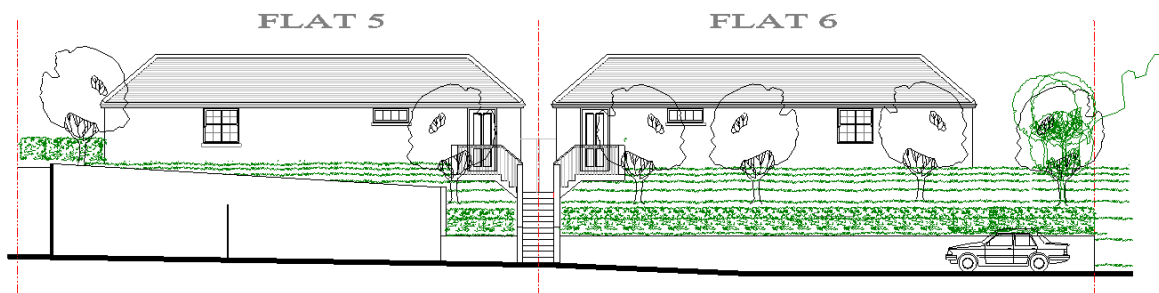
*The existing rear elevation (above) and the proposed rear elevation (below)*

- 9.5 A two storey rear extension is to be erected to provide additional floor space to accommodate the four new flats.
- 9.6 The existing car park area is to be utilised and extended back into the bank with a raked slope.



*Sections indicating the amount of engineering works*

- 9.7 A cut and fill approach is to be taken to cut back into the bank and provide a shallow slope. There is a large amount of the bank already cut out to accommodate the existing outbuildings and it is considered the amount of engineering works will be minimal.
- 9.8 The advantage of creating a 3° slope to the car parking area is that it will provide a relatively level approach to the rear of the building making Flats 1 and 2 accessible for disabled use.
- 9.9 The two new flats to the upper rear area are to be accessed off the rear of the car parking area via a central staircase.



**FRONT ELEVATION (SECTIONAL)**

*Flats 5 and 6 from the car parking area.*

## 10 CONFORMING TO PLANNING POLICIES

10.1 The pre-application advice considered residential development on the site was acceptable provided it met and conformed with Policy HOU5.

10.2 In relation to HOU 5 the development conforms accordingly.

a) The scale of the development is considered to be proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day-to-day service provision currently available. It is also considered that Chilham has the services and ability to absorb this level of development in combination with the planned allocations in the Local Plan.

b) The site is within easy walking distance to the center of Chilham village and its day-to-day services and has excellent access to public transport links with the Chilham railway station and a regular bus service to both Canterbury and Ashford.

c) The development can be safely accessed from the local road network with excellent visibility splays in excess of 90m to the west and 190m to the east and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area.

d) The development is in an extremely sustainable area regarding the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

e) The development will conserve and enhance the natural environment and will preserve the historical Old Alma building and the local character.

f) The development will be of a high quality design that meets the following requirements:-

i) it sits sympathetically within the wider landscape,

ii) it preserves and enhances the setting of the nearest settlement;

iii) it includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside,

iv) it is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used,

v) it does not adversely impact on neighbouring amenities.

vi) it will enhance the biodiversity of the site.

### 10.3 Visual Impact

10.3.1 The front part of the side extension is to be single storey with the two storey element having an eaves height 0.75m lower than the main building and a ridge 1.1m lower than the main building.

10.3.2 The side extension roof has been fully hipped to reduce the bulk and massing ensuring it a subservient addition.

10.3.3 The pre-application advice agreed the erection of the building to the rear forming 2 flats would be acceptable in visual terms and the area of land forming the curtilage for each of the flats would not result in harm in visual terms.

10.3.4 The pre-application advice however expressed concerns relating to the retaining structures and amount of engineering works that could “over-engineer the appearance of the site and together with the large car parking area, appear incongruous in this edge of village location.” These concerns were based on the preliminary drawings presented.

9.3.5 Sections have been prepared to demonstrate the amount of ground works required. It can be seen that much of the bank has already been removed to facilitate the existing outbuildings and a good proportion of the “cut out” will be used to “fill in” on the car parking area to create a gentle slope up to the rear.

9.3.6 The retaining wall is to be of a comparable height to the existing and set back 5.2m. This will create a more open space.

#### 10.4 Residential Amenity

10.4.1 The internal living accommodation complies with HOU 12.

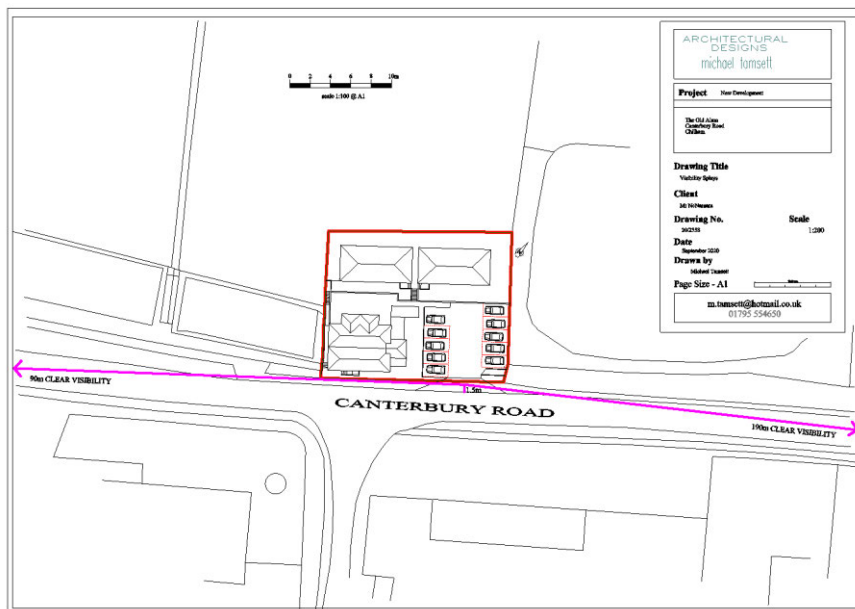
10.4.2 The flats have all been designed to avoid any overlooking issues with no windows overlooking the private amenity spaces or adjacent flat windows.

10.4.3 Flats 1,2,5 & 6 all have private rear gardens that cannot be overlooked.

10.4.4 Flats 1 and 2 are accessible with level access from the rear car parking area and are to be built in full compliance with building regulations part M4 (2). This complies with Policy HOU 14 for new development to providing 20% accessible homes.

#### 10.5 Highway Safety

10.5.1 The parking spaces conform to the Residential Parking SPD and the site access has excellent visibility splays.



*Visibility Splays of 90m to the west and 190m to the east.*

10.5.2 Cycle parking is to be provided in accordance with TRA6.



## **11 ECOLOGY AND TREES**

### **11.1 Ecology**

- 11.1.1 An ecology appraisal has been undertaken by KB Ecology and the report is attached as part of the application.
- 11.1.2 The ecology survey concluded the site was unlikely to support great crested newts, reptiles, hazel dormice, bats, or [REDACTED]. In accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's guidelines two night time surveys were undertaken to provide confidence in negative preliminary roost assessment and the report is attached as part of the application.)
- 11.1.3 The report noted the site had potential to support breeding birds and hedgehogs. The landscaping scheme (shown on all floor plan levels) has included the provision of bird boxes within all trees and the perimeter hedges will allow for the movement of hedgehogs.
- 11.1.4 The landscaping scheme has also introduced integrated bat boxes into the new buildings.
- 11.1.5 For the protection of any existing habitat all precautionary measures recommended within the ecology report prior to and during construction are to be adhered to.
- 11.1.6 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identified the risk of bats being present. Night-time bat surveys were undertaken that observed no bats emerging from the building and concluded that the building was not considered as being used as a bat roost and no mitigation or licence was needed.

### **11.2 Trees**

- 11.2.1 The proposal requires the removal of two Category C trees the loss of which will have a neutral impact upon the arboricultural or wider landscape value of the area.
- 11.2.2 Mitigation for these tree losses have been made with the proposed planting scheme.
- 11.2.3 The precautionary and protective measures outlined within the report are to be adhered to ensuring the proposed development will have no impact upon trees for retention.
- 11.2.4 The planting proposals include native species selected for their upright growth habits and in keeping with the rural ambience of the site location.
- 11.2.5 Fifteen new trees are to be planted as shown on Drawing No. CAS/2020/160.
- 11.2.6 Hornbeam hedging is to be planted around most of the upper flats perimeter to soften the impact of the development and enhance the biodiversity of the site. Further hedging is to be planted between the car parking area and The Old Alma and behind the bins collection point.

## **12 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 This planning statement has been provided to accompany a detailed planning application for the conversion of the existing Old Alma building with rear and side extensions and for the erection of 2No. Flats with associated hard and soft landscaping.
- 12.2 The site is very sustainably located close to Chilham village centre and Chilham railway station. It will be well served by existing services and amenities and the site offers ideal development opportunities.
- 12.3 The existing Old Alma building has no architectural merit but, during the consultation period of the previous submission, it became apparent that the local residents felt it had significant historical interest and should be retained. This scheme proposes to retain the Old Alma building and its façade and convert the interior, together with side and rear extensions, into four flats to make efficient and effective use of the building.
- 12.4 The proposals have been carefully designed to fully meet all the relevant criteria set out under HOU5 of the Local Plan and to be in line with the design principles set out in the Chilham Parish Design Statement.
- 12.5 It is concluded that, considering all the above, the proposals are in accordance with local and national planning policies and we therefore respectfully ask that the application be granted permission.