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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Brownfield Estates in support of a full planning application for the redevelopment of the site at 57 River Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5DD.

The planning submission follows a number of pre-application meetings and discussions with the Planning and Heritage officers at Arun District Council and presentation of the scheme to the Planning Committee of Littlehampton Town Council.

The 475m2 site is within the River Road Conservation Area. The existing warehouse and yard are a remnant of the historic working riverfront. During the twentieth century the east side of the river has almost entirely been developed as an attractive and popular residential setting. The warehouse at 57 River Road and the retained elevations at 47 River Road are the only remaining structures from the time when the east side of the river was a busy working river front. The west side of the river is still populated with boat yards and sheds.

The existing warehouse is in poor condition and challenging to renovate to modern building standards particularly in the context of the Arun Flood Risk area. The historic river wall has been replaced as part of the Environment Agency flood defence strategy (LU/291/17/PL) and the new wall significantly reduces views to the waterfront from River Road.

The scheme described within this document and the associated drawings and reports reflect positive discussions with planning and heritage officers at Arun District Council. While it is not commercially viable to retain and renovate the historic warehouse in it's entirety the client and architect believe that retaining the River Road façade and boundary wall is an appropriate means of mitigating for the loss of the remainder of the building.

The proposals replace the warehouse with six two and three bedroom apartments with private amenity space and parking and cycle storage. The proposed built form seeks to resonate with both the historic and contemporary architecture fronting River Road and the River Arun. Two buildings each containing 3 apartments are bridged by a glazed stair core maintaining a sense of openness to the river. A series of set backs in the building envelopes reduce the impact on the street and neighbouring properties with top floor terraces adding interest and activity to the street. All the apartments also benefit from generous balconies taking in views up and down the river. The layout of the apartments and access are generous and well considered creating an attractive place to live that adds to the character and quality of the area.

The Environment Agency have identified that all habitable spaces should be at least 0.3m above the predicted 1 in 200 year flood of 4.83m AOD. The finished floor level of the lowest apartment is at 5.15m AOD. Stair and lift access is set at grade (approximately 3.4m AOD).

A floating pontoon offers residents mooring spaces and is consistent with other residential developments along the river. The site is 280m walk from the railway station and 480m from the High Street. As a highly sustainable town centre location the inclusion of 8 parking spaces with rapid charge points is appropriate. 8 cycle spaces are located conveniently near the entrance.

1.2 Relevant Planning History

LU/291/17/PL - Approve Conditionally 13-11-17
Addition of a new segment to the Littlehampton East Bank Tidal Walls Reach 4 Flood Defences. This application affects the character & appearance of the Littlehampton River Road Conservation Area.

NB. The new segment of Tidal Wall has now been implemented by the Environment Agency.

LU/72/14/PL - Refused 23-05-14
Replacement of existing river wall and new floating pontoon and access ladder. This application affects the character and appearance of the Littlehampton River Road Conservation Area.

LU/106/14/PL - Refused 24-07-14
Demolish existing building, retaining the existing facade (part) on River Road and party wall on the South East boundary. Change of use to residential. Construct new three storey building consisting of 4 no. four bed houses and open parking at ground floor level. Resubmission following LU/257/13. This application affects the Character and Appearance of the Littlehampton (River Road) Conservation Area.

LU/247/20/PL - Refused 11-12-20
Partial demolition of existing building, retention of boundary wall & street facade, partial demolition of boundary wall to incorporate new pedestrian gateway & gate, erection of 6 No. flats in 2 blocks connected by shared stair & lift core, on site parking yard for 8 No. cars & 8 No. cycles & space for communal refuse & recycling bins. This application affects the character & appearance of the Littlehampton River Road Conservation Area & is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as flats.

In preparing the submitted proposals careful regard has been made to relevant planning policy and guidance including:

Arun District Local Plan 2011-2031

Arun District Design Guide SPD 2021

Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

National Design Guide 2019

1.3 Design Team

Brownfield Estates have appointed a highly experienced project team to develop the scheme for this planning submission

Applicant
Brownfield Estates

Architect
John Pardey Architects

Heritage
JP Heritage

Ground Contamination
Ashdown Site Investigation

Flood Risk
AKT II Engineers

Building Surveyor
Marshall Clark Chartered Surveyors

Market Analysis
Marshall Clark Chartered Surveyors

Ecology
Mackley

2.0 Site

2.1 Location

The site is located on River Road and within the River Road Conservation Area.

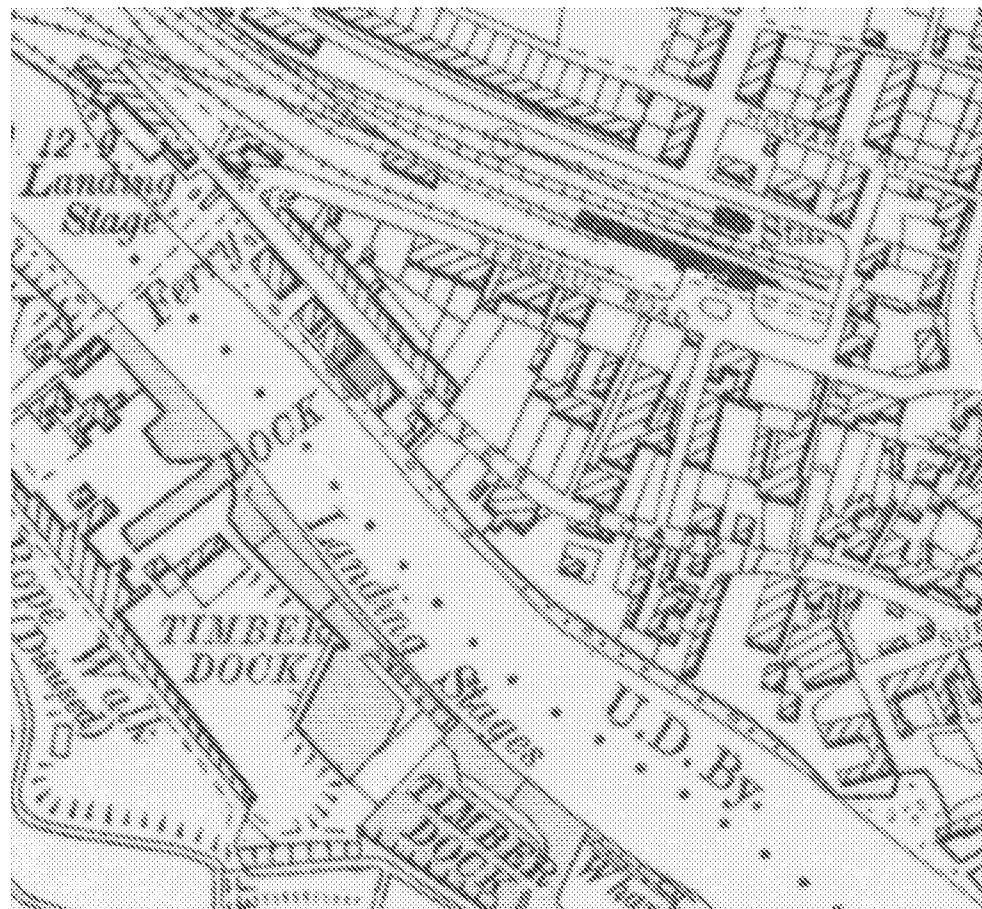
The site is close to the town centre and railway station as well as two Public Houses

The warehouse and yard that occupy the site along with the retained elevations at neighbouring 47 and 49 River Road are remnants of the historic working waterfront and lend valued character and identity to the area.

The site sits within an area categorised as Flood Zone 3. The Environment Agency have implemented Flood Defence Improvements along the length of the River Road waterfront protecting it to predicted 1 in 300 year flood levels (4.80m AOD).

Adjacent sites

- To the north west of the site the site is 47 River Road also developed by Brownfield Estates.
- To the south east of the site 49 River Road - a locally listed workshop building which has been substantially redeveloped as a residence
- Pharos Quay on the north east side of River Road is a twentieth century apartment development
- The majority of river frontage properties benefit from floating pontoons for mooring of leisure craft
- The west bank of the Arun is occupied by boat building yards and light industrial units



OS Map 1896



2.0 Site



47 River Road



49 River Road



Pharos Quay



Riverside frontage including floating pontoons and new River Wall



Boat sheds and industrial units on west bank



Looking south east along River Road



East river frontage - building heights generally 3 to 6 storeys



2.0 Site

2.2 Scale

As the building heights diagram illustrates the river frontage is predominantly 3 - 6 storeys with dwellings enjoying a southerly aspect, views of the river and views across the low lying land to the open sea.

The varying skyline creates an attractive silhouette from south of the river although other than the raised riverside sections of the English Coast Path, there are limited vantage points due to the low lying land.

River Road is fronted primarily with 2 and 3 storey dwellings punctuated with the 4 storey development at 47 River Road and the set back massing of the 4-6 storey building at Mariners Quay

The proposal is for 2 blocks of 3.5 storeys and 4 storeys with ridge heights lower than the adjacent development at 47 River Road and marginally higher than the ridge height of the 3 storey flats at Pharos Quay on the opposite side of River Road.

The retained façades at 47 River Road and the warehouse at 57 and former workshops at 49 River Road are all 2 storeys in height and offer an interesting contrast of scale with the taller buildings along the street. More recent gabled garage buildings further east on River Road continue this variety of scale. This variety of scales contributes to the character of the area and offers clues for the development proposals at 57 River Road.

The streets to the north of River Road are also predominantly 2 and 3 storeys with some 4 storey development along Terminus Road.

Paragraphs 117-123 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires the effective use of land. Paragraph 118 identifies that planning policies and decisions should:

(c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

(d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and

(e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

2.3 Connection to the river

A number of narrow passages connect River Road with the waterfront. Although narrow these offer glimpse views of the river and are an important feature. 3 of the passages connect with the Coast Path.



2.0 Site



Mariners Quay



Look & Sea Centre



Fairlight Court



River Road from Surrey Street



2 + 3 storey dwellings on north side of River Road



2-5 storey residential development on south side of River Road



Varied skyline from the English Coast Path on the south side of the river. The Harwood Road gas holder is due to be dismantled.

2.0 Site

2.4 The Warehouse and Yard

The following text is extracted from the Heritage Statement appended to this report:

A date stone on the front elevation of 57 River Road records the name T Isemonger. The date is a little less clear, possibly 1830. Isemongers of Littlehampton appear to have been specialists in the coal trade between Sunderland and Littlehampton.

Externally

57 River Road is of coursed flint cobble construction with brick dressings. The gabled roof is finished with asbestos tiles.

The front elevation includes a pair of 20th century doors below a timber lintel on the ground floor. There is a door opening with a segmental arched brick head to the left. On the first floor there is a smaller loading bay opening with double doors below a timber lintel. There is a single loading bay door to the roof space.

The south-east elevation includes a large central window opening on the first floor. This is flanked by a truncated window opening on the left hand side and a door opening to the right. The door opening to the right may be a later insertion associated with the construction of steps. There is a 20th century door opening with an I-beam lintel on the left hand side of the ground floor.

The south-west end bay of 57 River Road was demolished in the c. mid-20th century. The south-west elevation is clad with corrugated metal sheets. Part of the flint cobble plinth survives and demonstrates the extent of the original building.

Internally

The floor beams are dropped tie beams which rest on brick lined recesses in the longitudinal walls. Some of these beams include evidence for shipping marks. The joists are hand sawn rather than machined.

The roof structure includes collars which are jointed to the principal rafters with halved lap joints fixed with iron nails. These collars clasp side purlins with splayed scarfs, also fixed with nails, located at the collar positions. The principal elements of the roof include mill sawn timbers. The softwood rafters are regularly sawn and are probably machine sawn. There are chalk marks referring to foresails and topsails on the inside leaf of the door.

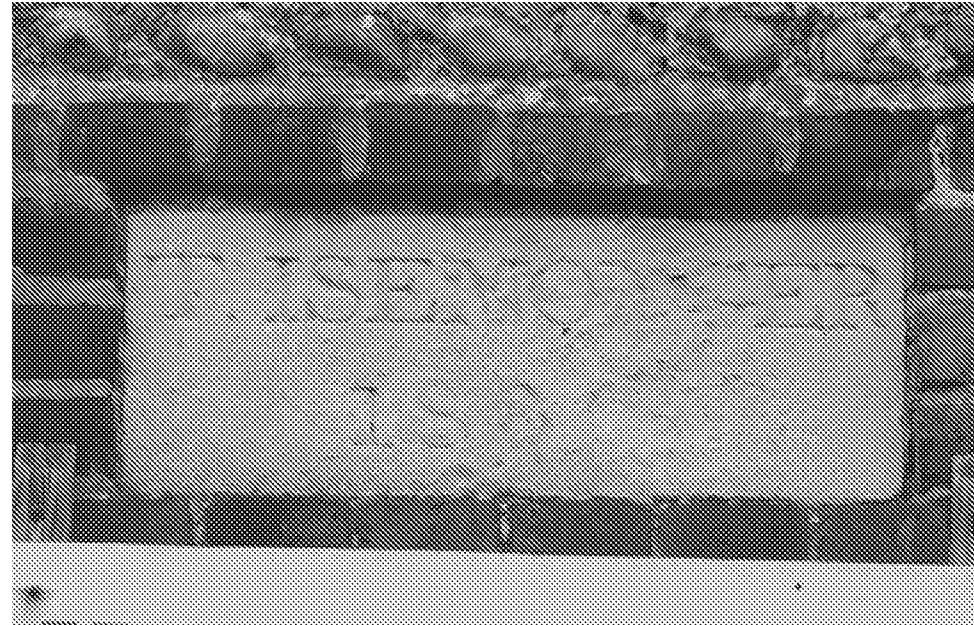
The Yard

The yard on the south-east side of 57 River Road is accessed through a boundary wall of coursed flint cobble construction. The wall then returns along the south-east side of the yard and includes a mix of coursed flint cobbles and areas of brickwork. The gate piers are of brick. The yard has an informal surface and is used for car parking.

2.5 Heritage Impact Assessment

As a local heritage asset, 57 River Road is considered to be of low to moderate significance. The proposed demolition would, therefore, have a direct physical impact on the heritage asset and would result in its partial loss.

In accordance with paragraph 197 of NPPF, the impact should be weighed against significance of the heritage asset as well as the impact of the replacement and new buildings. It is considered that the harm arising from partial demolition could be mitigated through a programme of historic building recording to an appropriate level. Retaining the front elevation will to a certain extent preserve the historic integrity of the street scene. This in combination with a design of appropriate scale, form and use of materials that complement the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is considered to further mitigate the potential harm to the heritage values of this part of River Road.



2.0 Site

2.6 Building Condition

A Building Condition report is appended to this report. The Executive Summary (abridged) identifies the poor state of the building:

Generally, the property upper floors appear original and it has suffered from lack of care and maintenance to keep it wind and watertight. The property now suffers bird ingress and nesting in the top floor due to incomplete or broken roof and rear wall claddings as well as water saturation which has resulted in degrading and spalled flintwork to the north side party wall and soaking of timbers.

Whilst not to current standard the roof framing arrangement is adequate looking at timber sizes, position of horizontal 'purlins' at half height up the pitched rafters. Importantly, there are diagonal bracing timbers fixed in place to end bays of the roof structure to both back and front areas. There are horizontal collars at mid height across the pitched roof to tie to both set of purlins and rafters which also help to prevent roof spread.

The junctions of all walls/floors and roof rafters need restraining or fixing in position to prevent spread and ongoing movement, best carried out by installing discrete fixtures. Floors have flexed and are considered overloaded for the upper floors particularly given the long spans. These can be broken down with posts strategically located on pad foundation to strengthen the floors effectively lessening the spans.

Externally the cracking and movement is attributed to corrosion and decay of lintels or beams over door and window openings for which beams can be renewed and walls which have then moved restrained in their current position. There is the need for some local rebuilding of flint walls where necessary to north wall particularly at the rear due to water ingress through the roof and south wall due to bowing where lintels have failed.

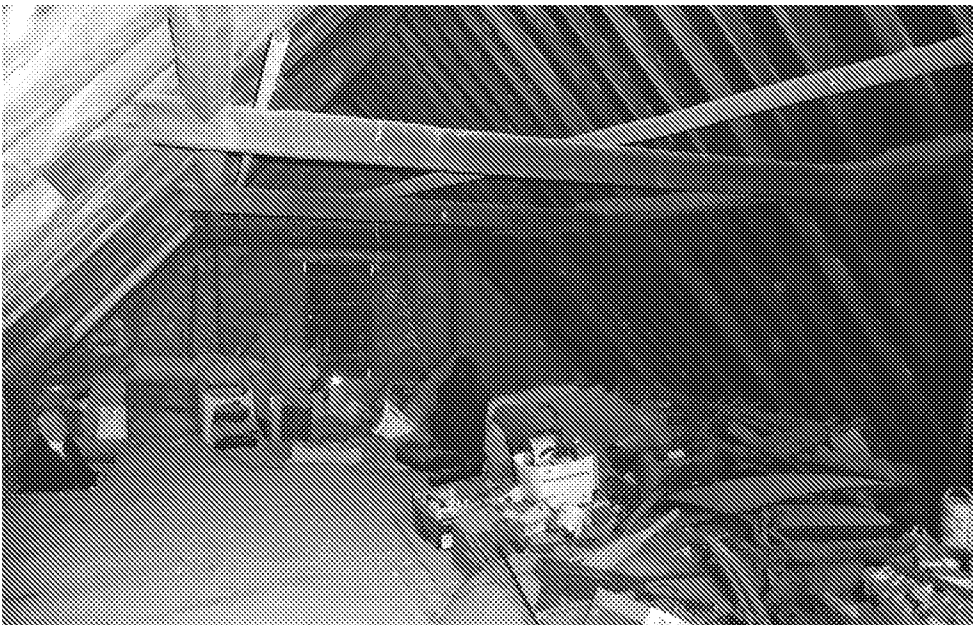
The missing roof claddings, the party wall valley gutter and the river elevation claddings all need replacement. All windows need renewal and all door require thorough overhaul as a minimum with full decorations to follow. Doubtless joinery repairs will be found in the process.

Nonetheless the property is repairable and doubtless Planners would want to protect the exterior of this period structure in a Conservation Area to retain the historic image and street-scene. This will come at significant costs for which I refer to the attached repairs schedule.

2.7 Market Assessment

A Market Assessment is appended to this report. The assessment considers 3 options for renovating the warehouse and yard to return it to a safe state with a continuing commercial/employment use. The assessment concludes:

The property is reasonably well located close to Littlehampton town centre and means of communication. If the existing building has to remain on site we find it difficult to see any economic use for it at the moment other than making it safe and boarding up. The amount of cost that is needed to put it into a usable condition is not reflected by any form of realistic return that you could get on that investment. Equally we have difficulty in seeing that a light industrial/warehouse user would want to be occupying in the modern age a building like this when they can go and rent/occupy a modern industrial/warehouse unit on the nearby estates with a good eaves/floor to ceiling height plus no doubt much more competitive running and repair costs. On the refurbishment to create bespoke offices, this would undoubtedly be a pleasant place to operate from but the amount of money required is disproportionate to the end result.



Roof Space



First Floor



Ground Floor



3.0 Proposed Scheme

3.1 Sustainable Development

Unfortunately the decrepit nature of the warehouse, the constraints of the flood risk issues and the low values for the lettable space have determined that the only commercially viable option for the retention of the warehouse is to make it safe and board it up and seek tenants for the yard as a storage/parking facility. This option fails to secure a sustainable long term and commercially viable solution for the site for - a use that is economically and environmentally aligned to the vision and objectives of Littlehampton Town Council and Arun District Council. Key considerations for a Sustainable Development are:

- The site sits in a Zone 3 area of the River Arun flood plain necessitating habitable accommodation to be raised 0.35m above the 1 in 300 year flood level
- The site sits in a highly sustainable town centre location
- The site represents an excellent opportunity to provide much needed high quality dwellings in a district that is unable to demonstrate an adequate 5 year Housing Land Supply
- Properties along the river front are typically 3 to 6 storeys tall
- The existing warehouse is 3 storeys including the roof space

- The adjacent dwelling at 49 River Road is 2 storeys
- A sustainable proposal must balance the challenges of efficient land use with an architectural approach that is sensitive to the scale and character of the immediate and wider context
- The building forms and materiality must balance efficient form and performance with appropriate massing and relationship to the river and street

3.2 A Scenographic Approach

The elevation of the warehouse at 57 River Road bears the patina and scarring from close to two hundred years on a working river front. The client fell in love with these qualities and bought the site to save them for Littlehampton but mindful that to do so needed to be commercially viable.

Having ruled out options to retain the whole of the warehouse it was felt that continuation

of the scenographic approach adopted at 47 River Road offered an architecturally sophisticated means of retaining and treasuring the qualities of the historic waterfront buildings and facilitating the efficient use of a town centre brownfield site for much needed housing.

Like 47 River Road the buildings that sit behind the retained facade and boundary wall have been developed to be appropriate in scale, language and massing to ensure they sit comfortably within the context. They contribute to an exciting and theatrical streetscape addressing road and river. A solution that aligns with the client and town's aspirations to enhance the perception of Littlehampton as a dynamic and thriving place to live, work and visit.

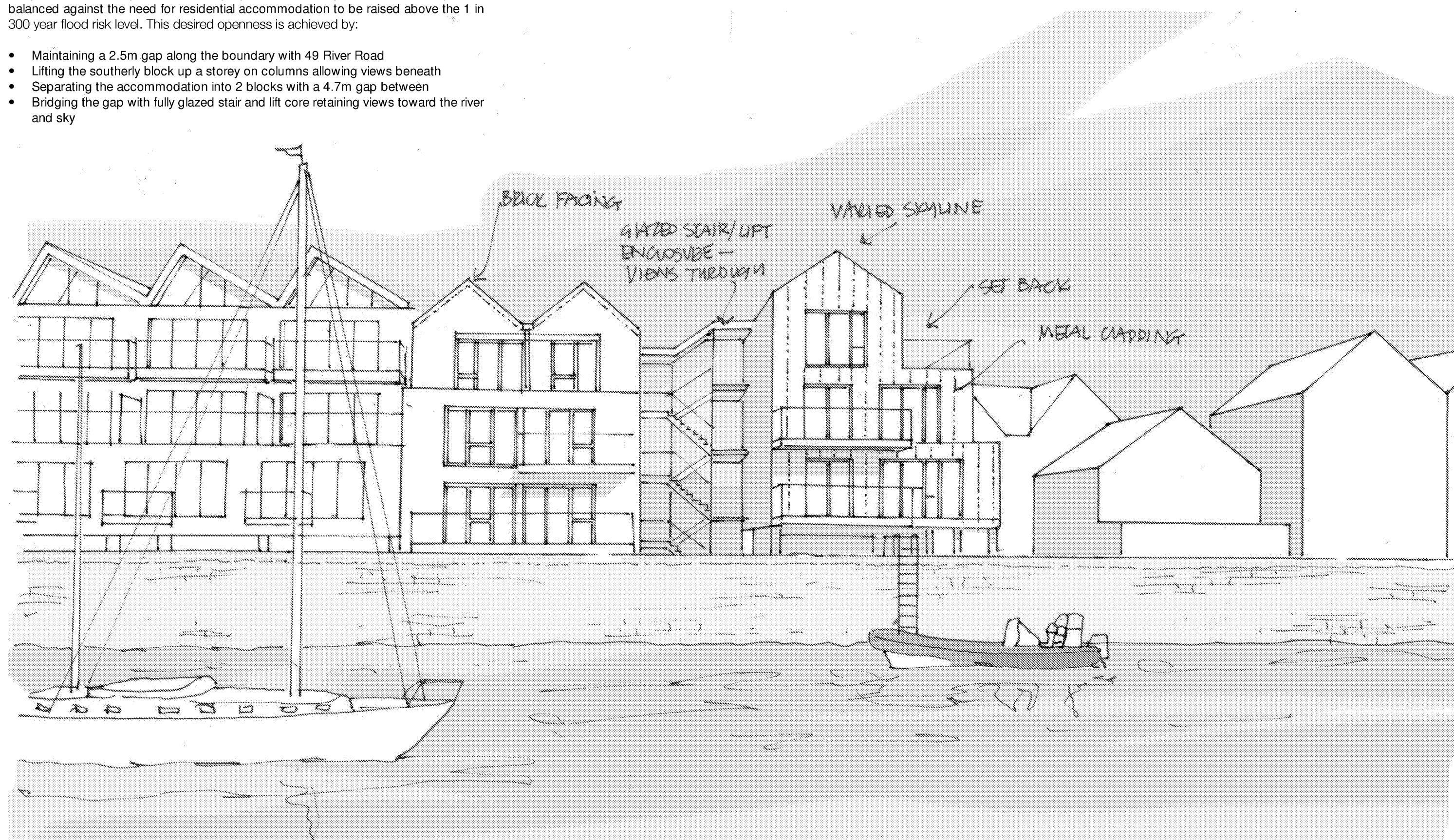


3.0 Proposed Scheme

3.3 Retaining Connection with the River

Historically there were views of the river at certain states of tide through the gate opening to the yard. The new Environment Agency Flood Defence Wall is at approximately eye height meaning the river is no longer visible from River Road. Nevertheless the sense of openness is still important and the proposals have sought to retain these qualities balanced against the need for residential accommodation to be raised above the 1 in 300 year flood risk level. This desired openness is achieved by:

- Maintaining a 2.5m gap along the boundary with 49 River Road
- Lifting the southerly block up a storey on columns allowing views beneath
- Separating the accommodation into 2 blocks with a 4.7m gap between
- Bridging the gap with fully glazed stair and lift core retaining views toward the river and sky



3.0 Proposed Scheme

3.4 Stepped Massing

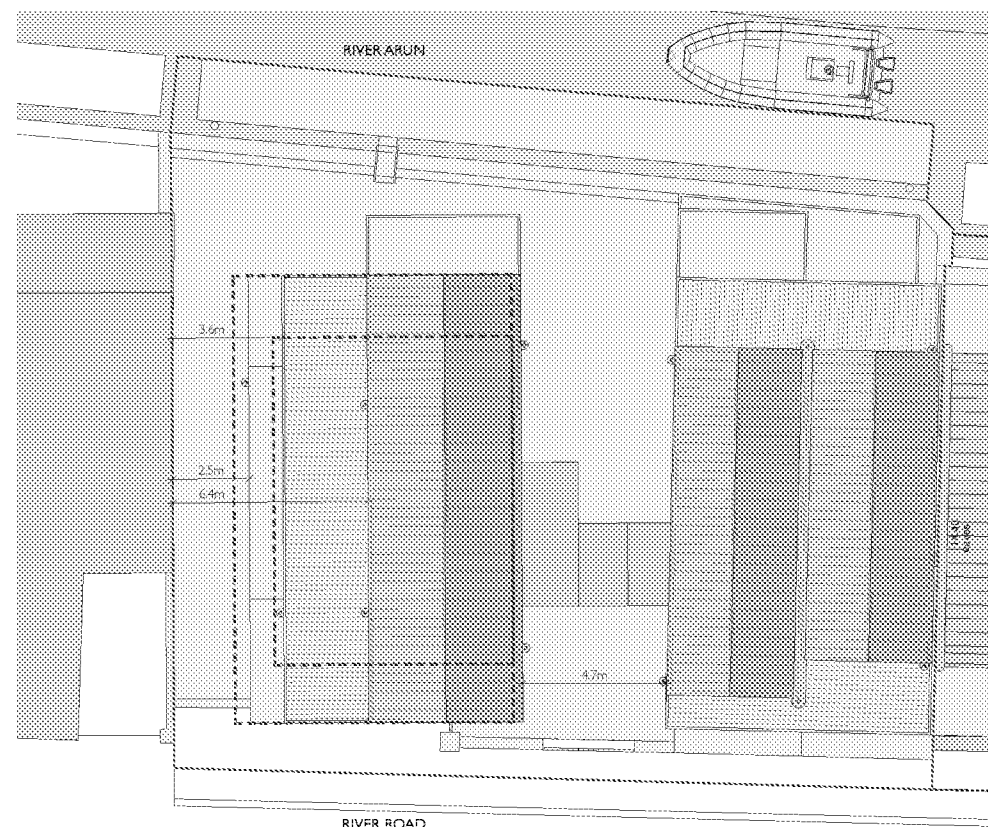
The massing of the 2 buildings seeks to sit comfortably within the street and river scene.

River Road is relatively narrow making the oblique views along the street important visually. The top floor of both buildings is significantly smaller than the lower floors reducing the overall massing and creating roof terraces.

Compared with Application LU/247/20/PL the top floor of the southerly block is further reduced and set further from 49 River Road to increase the stepping down in scale. The southerly block has also been slimmed in width and edged further from the boundary with 49.

As the sketch view illustrates the proposed roofline reflects the general scale and character of River Road. Similarly the articulation of the building massing is also consistent with the varying building frontages of River Road.

The upper set backs are utilised as amenity terraces bringing interest and activity to the street and river. Lower set backs are inaccessible to maintain the privacy of residents of 49 River Road.



Blue lines indicate footprint and roof extent proposed in Application LU/247/20/PL

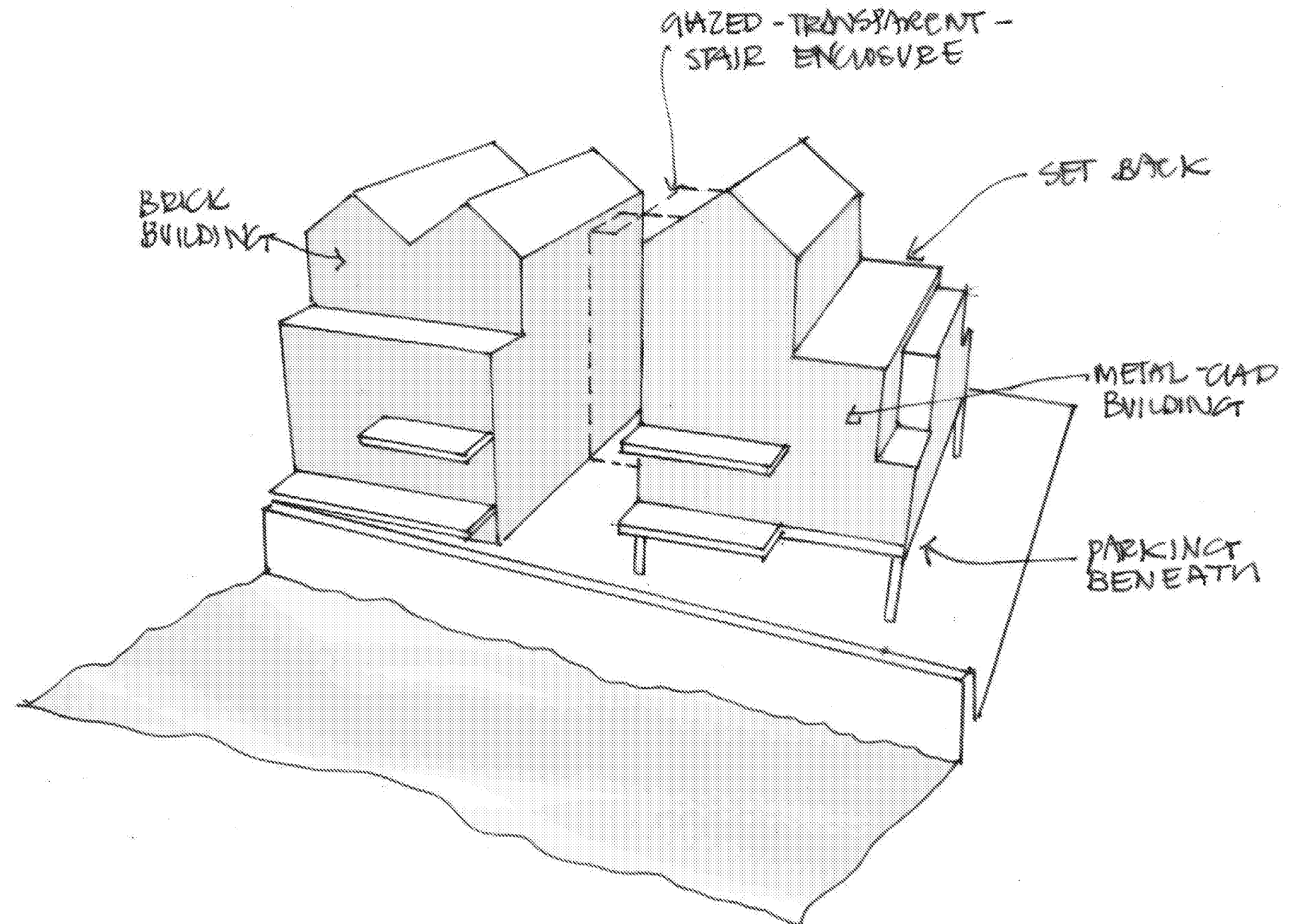
Design & Access Statement, June 2021

3.0 Proposed Scheme

3.5 Siblings

The 2 wings of accommodation are conceived of as siblings - sharing familial characteristics but different in colouring and build:

- Like the warehouse it replaces the northerly building is stoic and resolute - brick is the obvious material for a ground bearing and robust architecture
- The southerly element is lifted above the old yard on columns and should feel lightweight and lofty. Crisply detailed folded metal cladding lends levity and is a nod both to the corrugated rear façade of the replaced warehouse and the boat building sheds on the west bank of the river
- The siblings share similar silhouettes - gabled roofs are a nod to the historic warehouse façades and the roof profiles of adjacent developments
- Other elements such as balconies, windows and rainwater goods emphasise the familial qualities of the scheme and lend a clean industrial aesthetic rather than a domestic character.



3.0 Proposed Scheme

3.6 Materiality

Robust materials and architectural detailing evoke associations with the warehouses and wharves that historically lined the east side of the river and still create the character of the west bank.

Brick

A grey stock brick harmonises with the flint walling of the warehouse elevations and the cedar cladding at 47 River Road.

Cast Lintels

Like the warehouse, window and door openings in the brick building incorporate cast lintels.

Zinc Grey Rainscreen Cladding and Roofing

Evocative of the corrugated steel sheeting on the river elevation of the warehouse and the boat sheds and industrial units on the west bank.

Metal Rainwater Goods

Rainwater goods are often an afterthought on modern buildings but historically were often used to bring a flourish to even utilitarian buildings such as warehouses.

Composite Timber and Aluminium Windows

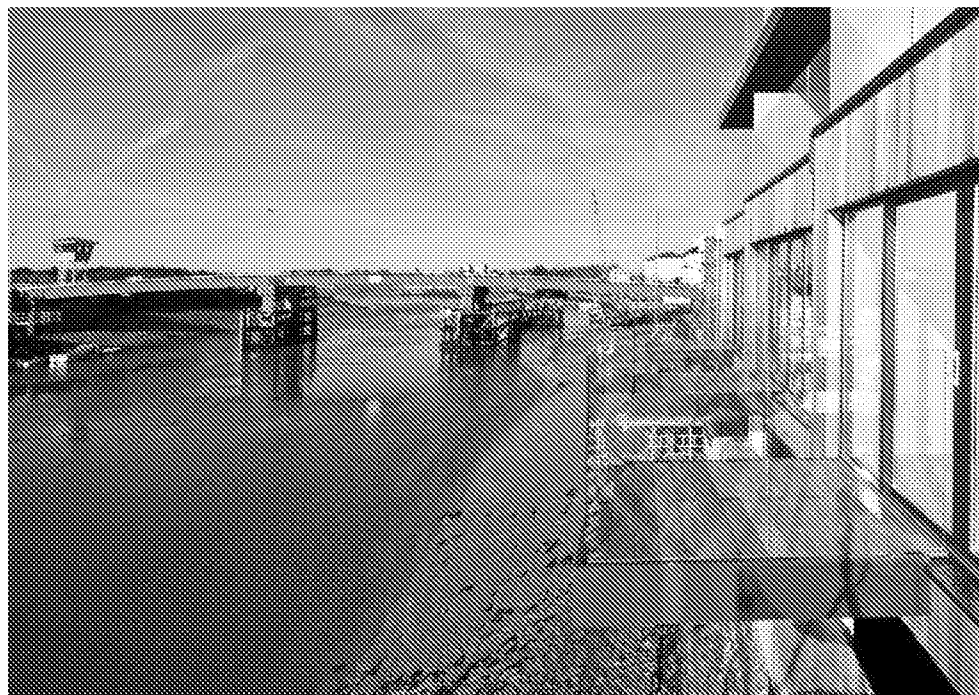
Composite timber and aluminium windows are energy efficient and visually clean lifting the architecture away from a domestic character

Structural Glazing and Cantilevered Glass Balconies

The staircore and lift enclosure will be detailed to achieve the maximum transparency and minimum visual clutter. Cantilevered glass balconies complement this approach allowing panoramic views up and down the river and River Road.

Red Oxide Paintwork

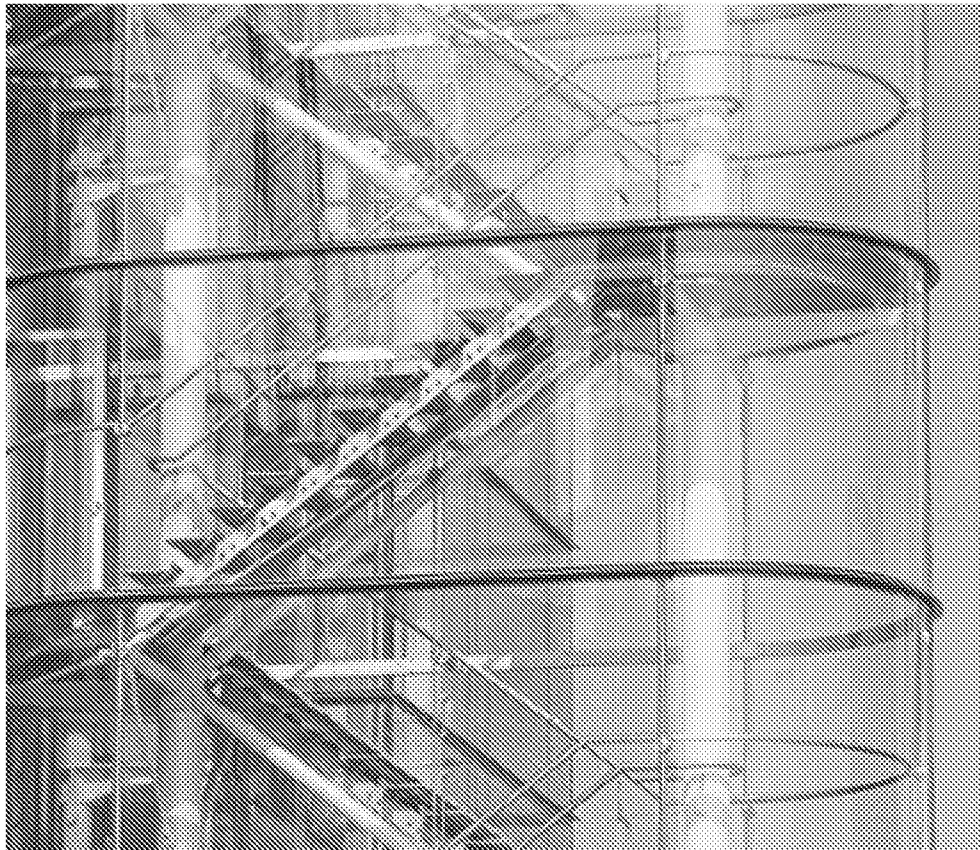
The red oxide paintwork of the nearby bridge inspired the balcony downstands at 47 River Road and this same signature colour is adopted for balcony downstands, lift steelwork and new pedestrian and vehicular gates.



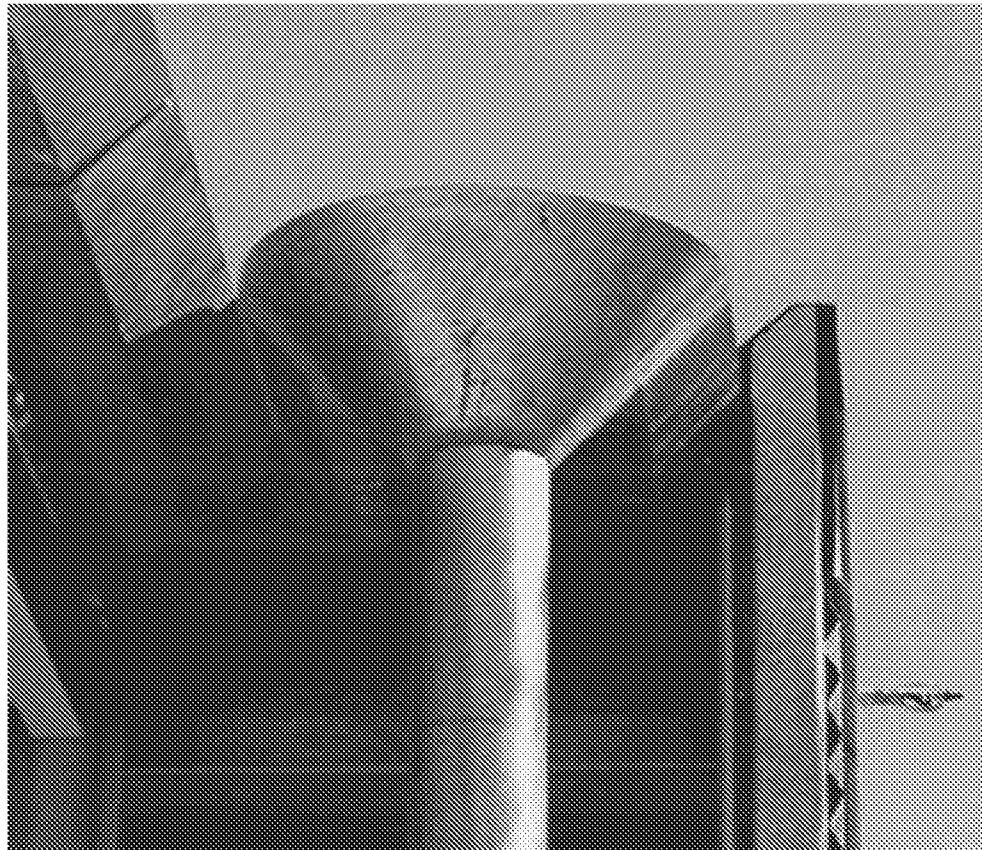
3.0 Proposed Scheme



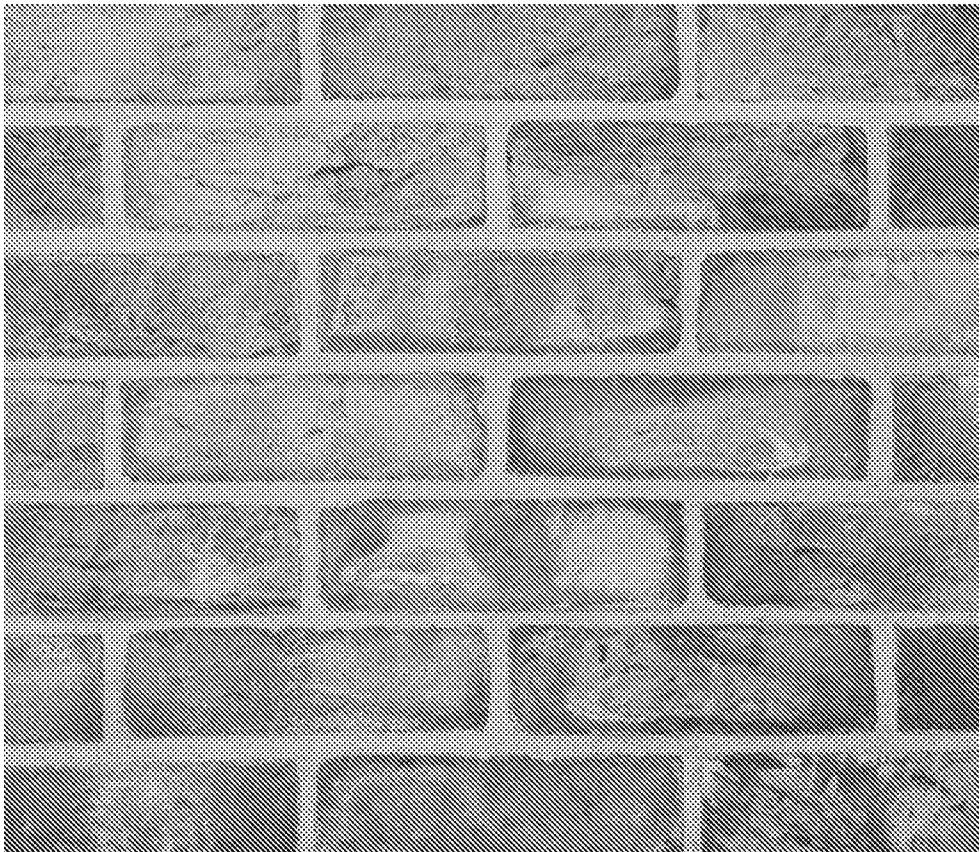
Zinc Grey Rainscreen Cladding and Roofing



Glazed staircore



Rainwater goods embellishing architecture



Grey stock brick



High performance composite timber and aluminium windows



Feature lintel on historic warehouse

4.0 Access

4.1 Pedestrian Access

The development is accessed via a level entrance from the street into a level yard leading to a glazed communal entrance lift and stair core. The lift serves all the apartments but due to the offset floor levels only provides level access to the 3 apartments in the southerly building. The 3 apartments in the northerly element are accessed either fully by the stair or a combination of lift and stair. The stair would meet the requirements in Approved Document M of The Building Regulations.

The apartment layouts are designed with generous circulation and habitable space meeting the requirements of Approved Document M.

4.2 Sustainable Transport

The site is 280m from the railway station and 480m from the High Street making walking a very convenient choice for many journeys.

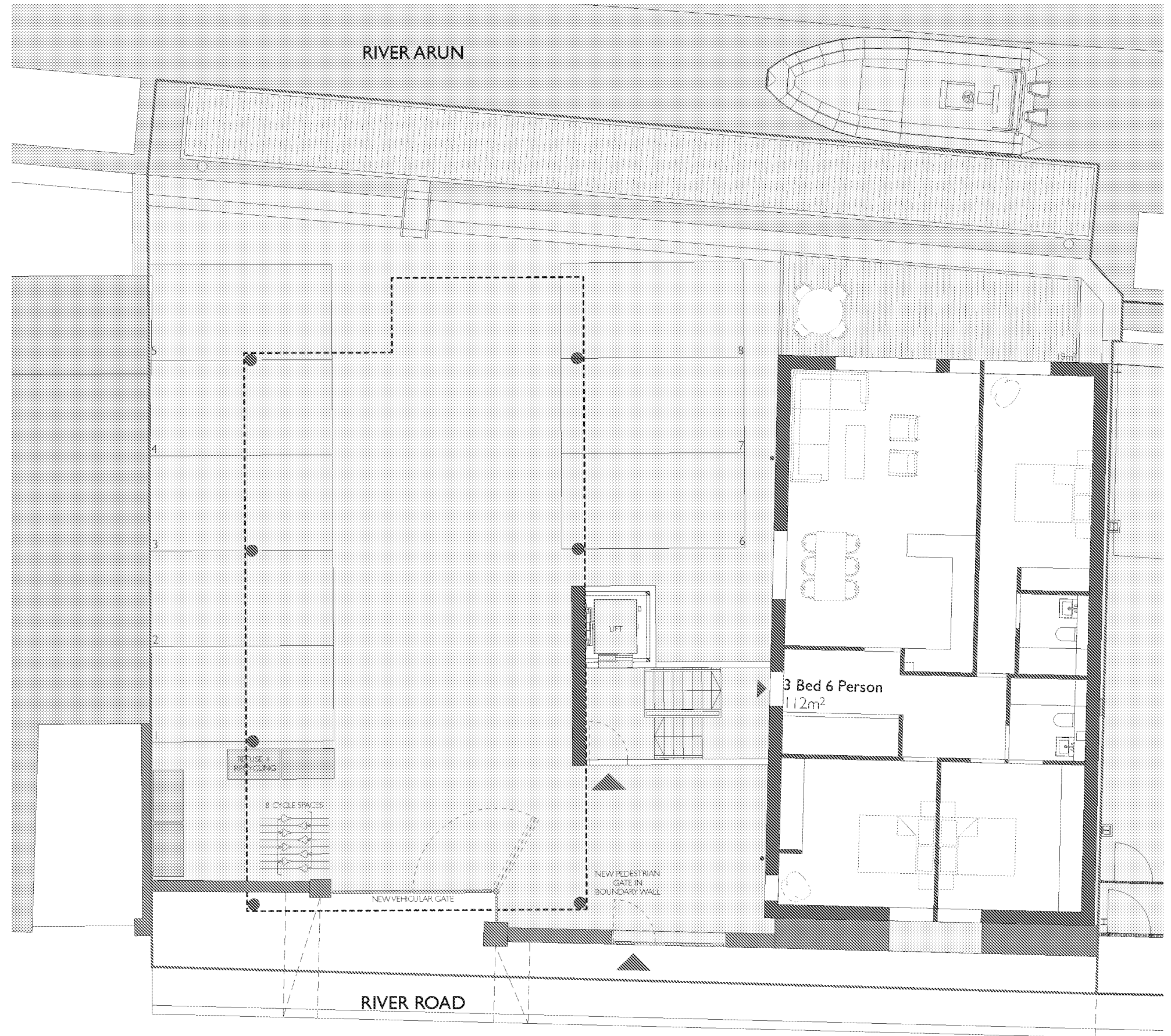
Additionally 8 cycle spaces are located conveniently near the entrance.

The railway and local bus routes offer good options for using public transport for longer journeys.

4.3 Car Spaces

As a highly sustainable town centre location the inclusion of 8 parking spaces with rapid charge points has been identified as appropriate in Pre-application discussions with ADC.

The car parking layout allows forward entry and exit of cars.



5.0 Sustainability Strategy

5.1 Energy Efficiency

Like all new development the proposals will be subject to the nationally determined building regulations which incorporate an emphasis on a fabric first approach of high levels of insulation and air tightness and glazing that allows for passive solar gain in the colder months while avoiding over heating in the summer through shading and good levels of ventilation. The proposals have an efficient form and good orientation to allow these approaches to be effective. Detailed analysis of the most appropriate and beneficial suite of building fabric and renewable energy systems will follow during the detailed development of the scheme subject to a successful planning application.

Energy and Carbon reduction

- High performance fabric
- Efficient heating and hot water production
- Low carbon technologies will be adopted.
- Low energy lighting.

Monitoring Energy Use

- Smart Meters

5.2 Refuse and Recycling

Space for 4 1100L eurobins (2 for residual waste and 2 for recyclable materials) is provided adjacent to the vehicular gate and conveniently for residents. As with other gated developments access for collection will be agreed with the ADC contractor.

5.3 Water Efficiency

Balconies and terraces will incorporate rainwater harvesting tanks. Water efficient sanitary fixtures and fittings and white goods will be used to meet the demanding requirements set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations.

5.4 Other Environmental Measures

Land Use - Development of Brownfield site

Site Layout & Building Design

- High-quality material palette referring to local materials and forms
- Implement durable and sustainable materials
- 100% of the timber used at the Proposed Dwelling will be FSC certified or similar.
- Low environmental impact materials selected in line with BRE's Green Guide

Waste

- Contractor will implement best practice site management techniques
- Dedicated storage bins for recyclable waste
- Construction/Resource Management Plan developed during construction

Air Quality - Minimisation of emissions of dust from construction activities

Noise

Reduce noise at source

Design noise out of the scheme (Part E of Building Regulations)

Light Pollution - External lighting will be selected to reduce emissions to sky

Transport

- The site is well located for walking or cycling to town centre amenities and public transport options
- Secure and covered cycle parking
- Rapid charging points for all car spaces

Health and wellbeing

- Generous private balconies and terraces
- Well ventilated and day-lit internal spaces

Community - Considerate Constructors Scheme

