

Application Number	19/01597/AS	
Location	Home Plus, Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 7RR	
Grid Reference	Easting 601063 Northing 142081	
Parish Council	No Parish Council	
Ward	Victoria	
Application Description	The erection of 216 residential units comprising 207 apartments and 9 townhouses (C3) and commercial floorspace comprising 3 commercial units (Units A, B and C) for a flexible range of uses (A1, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2) and roof top restaurant, with associated access and landscaping..	
Applicant	A Better Choice for Property Developments	
Agent	Emma Hawkes – DHA Planning	
Site Area	9093 sqm	
(a) 7/4R	(b) -	(c) KCCH&T-X

Introduction

1. At the Planning Committee held on the 9th December 2020, Members resolved to defer the consideration of the application for the following reasons:

Resolved: Defer for Officers to seek the following:

1. ***Improvements to the overall quality of design across the whole site based on Members' comments on design issues and as set out in Annex 1 to the June 2020 Committee Report (the Design Review by d:se), which together include;***

- ***Breaking up and articulating the overall massing and appearance of the development with clearly differentiated building forms and heights.***
- ***In particular, addressing the massing, form and appearance of the Avenue Jacques Fauchaux north elevation of this development on this landmark site, to improve views from the entrance to the International station***

- **Improvements to the design of the Beaver Road elevations; and,**
 - **Strengthening of the architectural language of each façade that draws on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context.**
2. **Amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Fauchaux.**
 3. **To renegotiate the arrangements for payment of the planning obligations set out in Table 1 of the report.**
2. This largely mirrored the design reasons for deferral in June 2020, which were.

Resolved: Defer for Officers to seek clarification and scheme amendments as necessary from the applicant to deal with the following matters;-

1. *Improvements to the overall quality of design across the whole site based on Members' comments on design issues and as set out on page 131 (annex 1) of the Committee Report, which together include;*
 - *Breaking up and articulating the overall massing and appearance of the development with clearly differentiated building forms and heights.*
 - *In particular, addressing the massing, form and appearance of the Avenue Jacques Fauchaux north elevation of this development on this landmark site, to improve views from the entrance to the station*
 - *Improvements to the design of the Beaver Road elevations.*
 - *Strengthening of the architectural language of each façade that draws on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context.*
 2. *Working with the Highway Authority to introduce landscape improvements along the entire Avenue Jacques Fauchaux frontage (north elevation) to provide screening of views and to provide noise and air quality mitigation to address reservations over the quality of residential amenity on the north facing elevations.*
3. Therefore, as a result of the December Committee the following two reasons for deferring the scheme were added:
- *Amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Fauchaux.*
 - *To renegotiate the arrangements for payment of the planning obligations set out in Table 1 of the report.*
4. One reason for the deferral set out at June Planning Committee issue that has been satisfactorily addressed through the amendments submitted prior to the December committee included;
- *Working with the Highway Authority to introduce landscape improvements along the entire Avenue Jacques Fauchaux frontage*

(north elevation) to provide screening of views and to provide noise and air quality mitigation to address reservations over the quality of residential amenity on the north facing elevations.

5. The full Committee reports from June 2020 and December 2020 can be found via the link below
 - December 2020 Report link below *(which includes June 2020 report contained in its Annex)*
<https://planning.ashford.gov.uk/planning/IDOX/default.aspx?docid=1916327>
6. Following the December deferral by Planning Committee, and based on the weight members gave the previous Design Review Panel held in April 2019, officers recommended to the applicant that it may be prudent to take the proposals to a follow up Design Review workshop. It was felt that this might be useful in gaining an independent view on the scheme and how it had progressed in response to Members comments.
7. On 19th January a follow up special Ashford Design Review workshop meeting was held with two of the original design panel members. The panel workshop was independently assess the current scheme not only in respect of whether *the scheme had improved since the original Design review (April 2019) but also whether the quality of the scheme as it now stands likely acceptable in the light of the subsequent Planning Committee's concerns?* The review focussed on the reasons for deferral and considered the following;
 - *Does the scheme overall successfully break up and articulate the overall massing, form and appearance and create clearly differentiated building forms and heights?*
 - *Does the amended scheme improve the Avenue Jacques Faucheux north elevation to create attractive landmark views from the station, and address the issues set out above in point 1. of overall massing, form and appearance and clearly differentiated building forms and heights?*
 - *Have the designs of the Beaver Road elevations improved?*
 - *Has the architectural language of each façade been strengthened so that they draw on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context?*
 - *Are the amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Faucheux deemed satisfactory?*This follow up Design Review panel workshop session were also encouraged to overall impressions and primarily whether there were any small/modest design amendments that they felt would help improve the design of the scheme.
8. Following the Design Review meeting, but before the Design review letter was received, a concept sketch was produced by the applicant to try and capture the ideas the panel were seeking to highlight.



Figure 1 Avenue Jacques Faucheux (North) Elevation

AVENUE JACQUES FAUCHEUX ELEVATION

- Increased the window aperture sizes to the top section of the middle section (red) block with more glazing added to introduce a more 'loft / penthouse' feel to the scheme adding a greater choice of unit types for the end user. This will now include for a mezzanine floor.
- Increased height of the middle section (red) block.
- Increased height to the 'book end' block on the most western part of the street elevation to allow for more penthouse style units.
- Increased amount of glazing to the bookend block with mezzanine floors added to the penthouse units.
- Metal cladding removed from bookend block, the façade is now intended to be brickwork.
- Please note that the brickwork detailing and colour will be explored further as part of the detailed amendments.

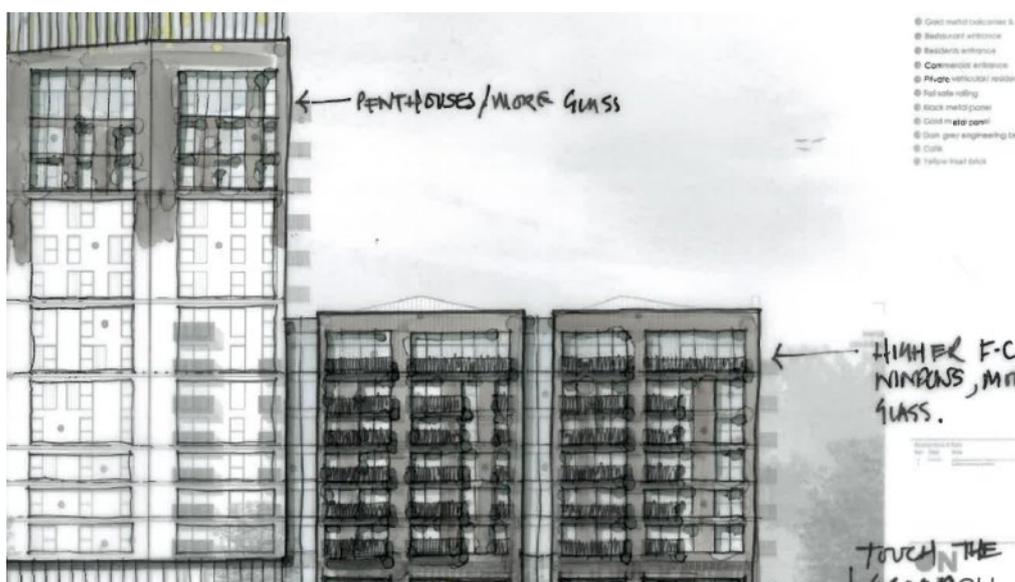


Figure 2 - Beaver Road Elevation (West)

BEAVER ROAD ELEVATION

- *Increased the window aperture sizes to the top section of the tower and more glazing added to introduce a more 'loft / penthouse' feel to the scheme adding a greater choice of unit types for the end user.*
- *Removed the metal cladding to the plinth section of building.*
- *Removed the pitched roof design.*
- *Increased the amount of glazing to the upper units with increased floor to ceiling heights. Adding to an alternative mix of unit types.*
- *Taken the brick work façade to the floor, thus grounding the residential element above. This also create diversity of commercial unit types to the lowest two floors.*

9. Also before the Design Review letter was received, the planning case officer then quickly followed this up by providing a response comments and diagrams that overlaid onto the applicants initial follow up sketch responses. Collectively this advice and associated sketches were trying to build on the ideas came out of the follow up design review panel workshop discussion. It was simply intended to be a useful tool to help address the comments made by the Members at the previous Planning Committee meeting.
10. On February 1st 2020, a full copy of the letter setting out the thoughts of this special follow up Ashford Design Review Panel workshop meeting (held on 19th January 2021) were received. The full set of comments are set out in Annex 1 of this report
11. In summary, the design advice from the Design Review Panel workshop was;
- The design could be more ambitious and embed greater value through the inclusion of more varied apartment and housing types, which would provide a richer opportunity architectural composition and expression
 - A simple yet robust and repeatable set of architectural principles should be defined and implemented across the site, beginning with a massing exercise which distinguishes building height, proportion and scale before adding richness through articulation and detail.
 - Greater vertical differentiation within the lower building block facades should be emphasised over the horizontal, as this will reduce the development's overall visual scale and provide opportunity for grounded and distinctive building frontages.
 - The silhouette and pitch proportions of the proposed roofscape should more carefully and appropriately reference the architectural language of local light industry, which has a particular repetitive form, rhythm and character.
 - Detailed material and bay studies should be included as part of the information pack, as this will help to reveal key aspects façade design such as window and balcony depth, proportion and detailing.
12. In summary the main advice that came out of the follow up design review panel workshop in response to each highlighted question based on Members reason for deferral, included the following

1. Does the scheme overall successfully break up and articulate the overall massing, form and appearance and create clearly differentiated building forms and heights?

- Suggest a more repeated and rigorous language which could be simpler overall, yet create a richer, stronger identity and character.
- Lots of small and unrelated ideas which complicate the overall architectural language should be avoided.
- The tower element is more differentiated from the remaining lower scaled buildings than previously shown
- Create a simple yet strong tectonic principle for the site, with two contrasting architectural languages.
- Proposed frontages of the lower building elements could be divided up further, with a stronger vertical emphasis
- More varied mix of housing types, including some larger and more generous apartments
- Key openings and larger windows could become compositional devices and be expressed more playfully on the façade.

2. Does the amended scheme improve the Avenue Jacques Fauchoux north elevation to create attractive landmark views from the station, and address the issues set out above in point 1. of overall massing, form and appearance and clearly differentiated building forms and heights?

- The northern elevation is improved but needs to become a sufficiently attractive landmark
- 'undulating' roof line is taking steps in the right direction but is still underplayed and height differentials should be made more distinctive
- Where buildings vary in height these differences should be made more distinct this creating a stronger roof line and building silhouette.
- The top of the building to eastern-most block would be better if considered part of the language of the other lower scaled buildings

3. Has the design of the Beaver Road elevation improved?

- The western elevations along Beaver Road are improved, including the use of recessed elements to split the architectural frontages
- More can still be done before it can be considered a landmark quality building
- The overall composition should be more balanced with a more vertical emphasis and repeated bays would be more elegant and help to break down the scale of this elevation
- Splitting this lower element into 3 or 4 distinct 'frontages' with a repetitive roof pitch rhythm could help balance this facade in relation to the tower

- Roof pitch should be simplified, strengthened and allow for repeated elements

4. *Has the architectural language of each façade been strengthened so that they draw on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context?*

- Support the nod to a light industrial riverside vernacular.
- Recognise that the site and wider Ashford does not have a particularly strong architectural identity and so forming a reference to the city's industrial past, with its proximity to the River Stour is supported.
- relationship between adjoining symmetrical and asymmetrical suppressed roofs is visually uncomfortable
- If pitches are to be maintained, references to industry would be more appropriate
- Houses on the river are the most successful part of this scheme, however the roof pitches could still be simplified and be consistent with the overall character and language.

5. *Are the amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Faucheux deemed satisfactory?*

- The materials of the façades must be of a high enough quality to attract people to come and live in Ashford.
- no fundamental issue with the choice of materials or their colour but raise some concern over how they are used
- the application and combination of materials must emphasise the overall architectural principles and not to confuse it
- Detailed specifications and construction principles should be provided.
- individual development blocks could use a single material and be distinguished from each other in a vertical division, reinforcing the difference between each other, with the individuality of each one expressed
- Quality and specification of bricks is important. Exchanging for alternative, poorer-quality material, or compromising the detailing, which would affect the overall quality and perception of the development
- Materials should be carefully specified as part of the proposals
- Façade bay studies from ground to parapet level, with plans and material details are important.
- Window reveal depths, parapet details, balcony proportions and details will greatly influence the three-dimensional quality of the façades.

13. The detail of the resulting amendments to the proposals that were made following the follow up Design Review Panel workshop assessment are set out below in the Proposals section.

14. **Developer Contributions**
Following Members' deferral of the application in December, the applicant has also made an offer of £250,000 towards meeting the usual Section 106 requirements that would be generated by the proposal. This is discussed in more detail below.
15. The full details of the proposals can be seen in the December 2020 Planning Committee Report which also contains the first Committee Report from June 2020 in the annex of the December Report. Below is a link to the December Planning Committee Report
- 9th December 2020 Committee Report (click link below)
<https://planning.ashford.gov.uk/planning/IDOX/default.aspx?docid=1916327>
(this includes June Committee report within its annex 1)
 - 17th June 2020 Committee Report (standalone) can also be seen by clicking here <https://planning.ashford.gov.uk/planning/IDOX/default.aspx?docid=1868391>

Site and Surroundings

16. A summary of the site and its surrounding is set out below. Further detail can be seen in paragraphs 2-8 of the original June 2020 Committee Report,

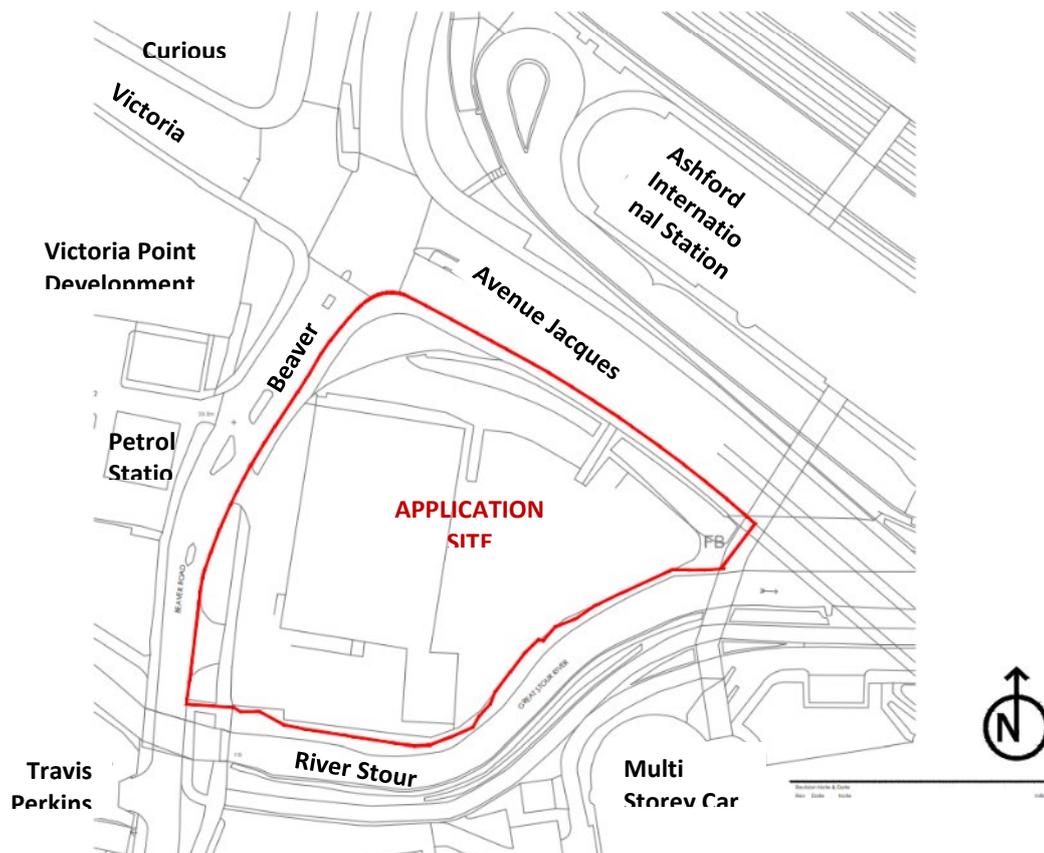


Figure 3 – Site Location

17. The Homeplus buildings and workshops have all been demolished since the summer, and the site has been levelled.

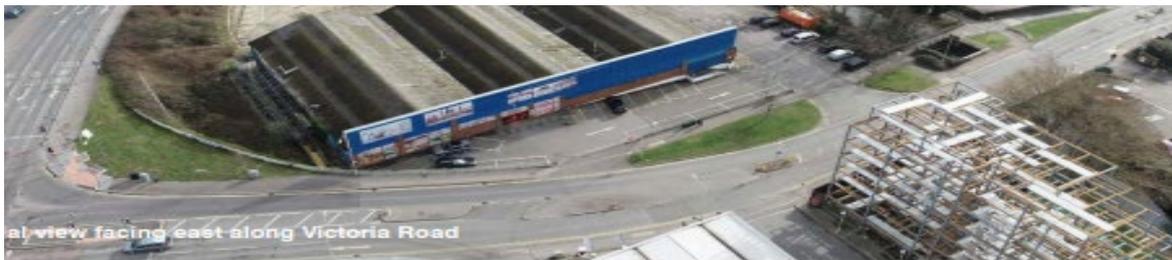


Figure 4 – Homeplus site 2019



Figure 5 - Sep 2020. During site clearance works



Figure 6 – Existing Site March 2021



Figure 7 - Existing site March 2021

18. The adjoining residential development Victoria Point is now completed and some units are now occupied. Some further update images of the Victoria Point development are shown below.



**Figure 8 – View of Victoria Point development and petrol station across Beaver Road
Immediately to west of site**

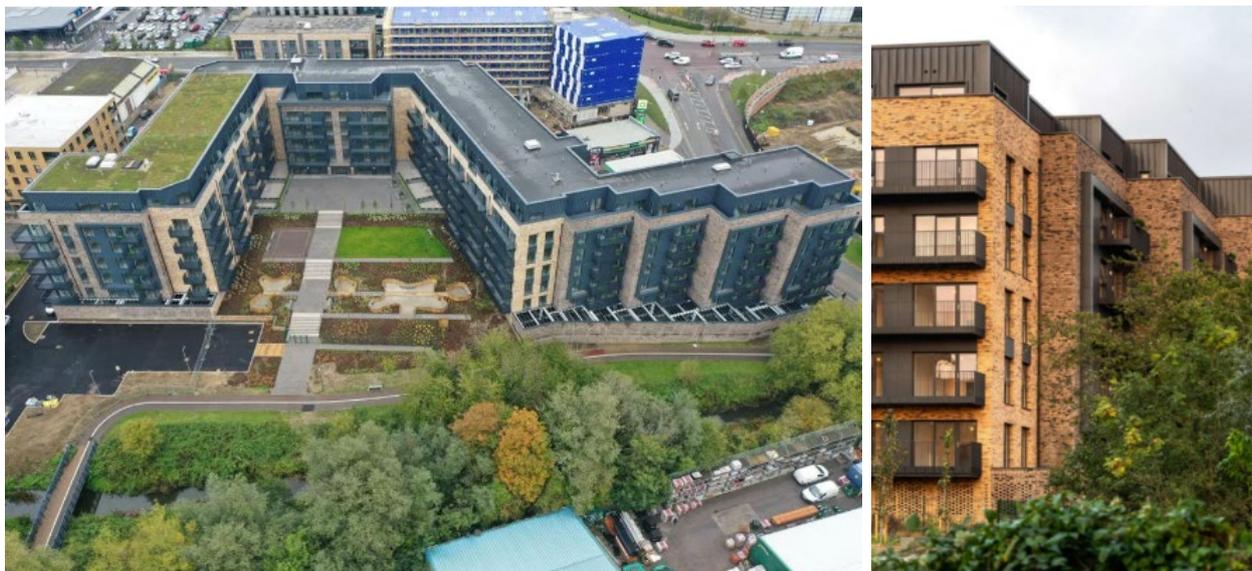


Figure 9 : Victoria Point – Views of development immediately to west of application site

Proposal

19. To clarify, the proposals have not changed substantially since the application was reported to the Committee in December. The changes relate to architectural improvements and changes to the s106 contributions.
20. The layout and the number of residential units, which remains at 216 residential units in total, and consists of 207 apartments and 9 riverside townhouses.
21. The housing typology mix remains the same as follows;
 - 66 x 1 bed apartments (31% of overall total)
 - 117 x 2 bed apartments (54% of overall total)

- *Materials - A comprehensive review to the materials proposed to be utilised has also been carried out to enhance the scheme's appearance and to improve the architectural relationship between the various elements. The emphasis is very much now on a simplified building form with emphasis on the use of brick with brick detailing inserts rather than metal cladding. The changes to the glazing and materials has resulted in a common architectural language throughout the whole façade of the development.*
- Beaver Road elevation
 - *Removal of pitched roof detailing along*
 - *Grounding of the building through the use of materials on the Beaver Road elevation*
- Avenue Jacques Faucheux (AJF) elevation
 - *Changes to sloping roof to book end block*
 - *removal of green metal cladding*
 - *Copper coloured metal cladding panels incorporated in one section of the AJF elevation.*

[Note - red/brown colour not weathered green coloured copper]

 - *simplification of building form with use of materials and removal of sloping roof plus more fenestrational interest in middle and bookend sections with double height windows which adds height but not additional storeys/units*
- *Riverside townhouse elevations*
 - *Amended form for townhouses with additional balcony detailing, amended roof form (additional height and bulk), fenestration detailing with more interesting window detailing.*
- *More landscaped roof terraces have been added to provide penthouse gardens*

26. The full details of the amendments include

Across Development

- Penthouse units have been introduced to upper storeys of both main blocks. The proposed design now celebrates this executive level with larger floor to ceiling heights, mezzanine floors and larger window apertures.
- Some larger window and doors have the added luxury of large balconies which all together achieves an architectural hierarchy that draws attention to the upper levels.
- Minor changes to the extent of the green roofs.
- Proposed materials
 - Gold, copper/yellow, and grey cladding
 - Gold, dark grey balconies
 - Dark grey, mid grey, light grey, red, buff coloured bricks
 - Teal glazed brickwork

- o Red and grey recessed brickwork decoration



Figure 11 – *Impression of proposals presented to December 2020 Planning Committee*



Figure 12 – *Current Amended Scheme (March 2021)*

Beaver Road (Block 1 including Tower)

- Commercial layer at the foot of block 1 has been broken down by grounding the upper facade material treatment whilst accentuating the base of the tower.
- Metal cladding to the plinth section of the building has been removed. Brick work facade has been taken to the floor, thus grounding the residential element above. This also creates diversity of commercial unit types to the lowest two floors.
- Subtle banding of the soldier coursing, which set out the frames and clusters are spaced at intervals, to create a scaled illusion, which accentuates the height of the block
- Pitched roof forms have been removed allowing for a levelled roofline for a more consistent appearance
- The roofscape of the lower blocks have been simplified to achieve a more balanced and inferior hierarchy to the tower. This simple varied parapet height is consistent with the local light industrial roof scape and that of locally proposed developments.
- Metal cladding has been removed and brickwork is proposed
- Rear courtyard facing balconies extended to top floors
- Increased window aperture sizes with more glazing added to tower that breaks up expanse of brick to north-east and north-west edges to full height of tower. Some glazing to tower rationalised.
- Increased amount of glazing to the upper units along Beaver Road with increased floor to ceiling heights, this adds to an alternative mix of unit types.
- Additional balconies have been added to tower and some have been repositioned on tower.
- Balconies – some have been removed and repositioned, some have been added and some extended on parts of the development.



Figure 13– BEAVER ROAD (WEST) ELEVATIONS 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 14 – BEAVER ROAD (WEST) ELEVATIONS Current Amended Proposals 2021



Figure 15 – COURTYARD ELEVATION 2020 (East) Superseded Plans



Figure 16 - COURTYARD ELEVATION 2020 (East) Amended Proposals 2021

Avenue Jacques Faucheux (Block 2)

- A portion of the block has been increased at roof level and roof form simplified/levelled and to create more variation in roofline, roof heights and material/ colour variation making the block more distinguished.
- Roof form has been raised on 13 storey section to give more variation in roofline. Higher flat roof allows for some mezzanine levels in top floor apartments to create more penthouse style units.
- Weathered copper colour (green) metal cladding removed from previous book-end 13 storey section of block, and replaced by buff brick
- Rear Balconies have been removed and replaced elsewhere on building.
- Balconies added to top floors of 13 storey block facing north, west and south.
- Increased window aperture sizes with larger glazing to some of the upper 2 storeys on north elevation along Avenue Jacques Faucheux to introduce a more 'loft / penthouse' feel to the scheme adding a greater choice of unit types for the end user. Mezzanine floor now included to the penthouse units.
- More formalised arrangement of fenestration with additional windows added
- Grey panel cladding feature added around windows
- Landscaped roof terraces have been added to provide the penthouses with amenity space



Figure 17 – AJF North Elevations – 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 18 – AJF NORTH ELEVATION Amended Proposals 2021

SOUTH ELEVATIONS – COURTYARD



Figure 19 - 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 20 - Amended Proposals 2021

Riverside Townhouses (Block 3)

- riverside houses now include roof forms that instigates and differentiates the typology
- Green weathered copper colour clad roof has been removed and replaced by centrally pitched roof forms in dark cladding as a setback top floor
- Centralised taller gable roof pitch introduced allowing for higher glazing
- The pitched roof forms have been formalised and the height and glazing have been increased to introduce a more loft / penthouse feel to the scheme adding a greater choice of unit types for the end user.
- Additional glazing introduced.
- Balconies extended overlooking riverside setting.



Figure 21 – RIVERSIDE TOWNHOUSES - 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 22 – RIVERSIDE ELEVATIONS - Amended Proposals 2021

RIVERSIDE SOUTH ELEVATION



Figure 23 - 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 24 - Amended Proposals 2021

VIEW SOUTHWARDS FROM BEAVER ROAD BRIDGE



Figure 25 - 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 26 - Amended Proposals 2021

VIEW EASTWARDS FROM VICTORIA WAY



Figure 27-2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 28 - Amended Proposals 2021

VIEW WESTWARDS FROM ALONG AVENUE JACQUES FAUCHEUX



Figure 29 - 2020 Superseded Plans



Figure 30 - - Amended Proposals 2021

27. The following updated documents have been submitted since December 2020 in support of the application:

28. **Supplementary Planning Letter /Statement**

The committee report in December 2020 provided a detailed assessment by Officers of the design changes proposed and concluded that the design issues raised by Members have been satisfactorily addressed. The design changes to the height and scale of the proposed building and form, together with a stronger architectural language and improved mix of quality contemporary materials were considered appropriate and were fully supported by Officers. Therefore Officers recommended that Members grant planning approval for the amended scheme subject to suitably worded conditions and a Section 106 Agreement.

However, some Members in attendance at the December planning committee meeting expressed concern with the amended design and Members voted to defer the application on design grounds again. Despite being pressed by the Head of Strategic Projects to give specific guidance to Officers and the applicant on the design concerns with the amended design, this was not forthcoming from Members.

The minutes for the December 2020 planning committee meeting are as follows:

‘Defer for Officers to seek the following:

1 Improvements to the overall quality of design across the whole site based on Members’ comments on design issues and as set out in Annex 1 to the June 2020 Committee Report (the Design Review by d:se), which together include;

- Breaking up and articulating the overall massing and appearance of the development with clearly differentiated building forms and heights.*
- In particular, addressing the massing, form and appearance of the Avenue Jacques Fauchoux north elevation of this development on this landmark site, to improve views from the entrance to the International station*

- **Improvements to the design of the Beaver Road elevations; and**
 - **Strengthening of the architectural language of each façade that draws on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context.**
2. **Amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Faucheux.**
 3. **To renegotiate the arrangements for payment of the planning obligations set out in Table 1 of the report’.**

The application has been deferred by Members on two separate occasions, but for the same reason on design grounds (reason 1). In order to move forward following the December Planning Committee meeting, the applicant arranged a further meeting of the Design Review Panel in order for the Panel of design experts to review the proposal as considered at the December 2020 committee and to provide advice on whether the amended design addresses the design points raised in order to assist Members with the determination of the current application.

A Design Review Panel meeting was held on 19th January 2021 via Zoom and the Panel Report was issued on 1st February 2021. This particular workshop was focused on the quality of the architectural expression, external materials and elevations in order to provide helpful expert feedback following planning committee deferral on design matters. There were 5 key questions put to the panel in relation to members’ concerns and were used to structure the discussion.

The Design and Access Statement Addendum sets out in detail the 5 key questions, the key points raised by the panel in relation to the questions, and the design response to these issues. Feedback given during the meeting and within the report was very constructive. The key in our view is simplicity and to incorporate the Panel’s key recommendations including more varied apartment types with the use of glazing, the inclusion of simple yet robust architectural principles, greater vertical differentiation, a review of the proportions of proposed roofscape and the inclusion of detailed material and bay studies. The scheme as subsequently amended has addressed all of these points, together with many of the points which you raised informally following the Design Review Panel meeting.

In terms of key changes we can advise the following:

- *Removal of pitched roof detailing on Beaver Road elevation and on bookend block on Avenue Jacques Faucheux;*
- *Removal of green metal cladding on Avenue Jacques Faucheux bookend section;*
- *Copper coloured metal cladding panels incorporated in one section of the Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevation;*
- *Retention of 9, 10 and 13 storey elements including parking levels on Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevation, but simplification of building form with use of materials and removal of sloping roof plus more fenestrational interest in middle and bookend sections with double height windows which adds height but not additional storeys/units;*
- *Incorporation of grey coloured capping on all building elements (at the top of the buildings) to add quality;*

- *Differentiation of brick shades on all elevations to create detailing/interest;*
- *Grounding of the building through the use of materials on the Beaver Road elevation;*
- *Amended form for townhouses with additional balcony detailing, amended roof form (additional height and bulk), fenestration detailing with more interesting window detailing.*

A comprehensive review to the materials proposed to be utilised has also been carried out to enhance the scheme's appearance and to improve the architectural relationship between the various elements. The emphasis is very much now on a simplified building form with emphasis on the use of brick with brick detailing inserts rather than metal cladding. The changes to the glazing and materials has resulted in a common architectural language throughout the whole façade of the development.

Given the changes to the massing and appearance of the proposed development, we maintain that the changes are acceptable for consideration as an amendment to the current planning application.

With regards to the S106 Agreement and proposed developer contributions, as you will recall and as reported in the December 2020 planning committee report, various assessments have been undertaken by the applicant on the viability position of the development following the amendments to the scheme. The purpose of this work was to explore what the maximum level of Section 106 contributions the development can provide, whilst exploring whether such payments would render the scheme commercially unviable.

The Viability Assessment (Addendum) concluded the following:

'The change in market conditions coupled with the assumptions used as part of the Council's Viability Study Update (2017) and financial obligations which were requested on schemes immediately adjoining the application site, have led to the Applicants reviewing their position in terms of viability. It is on this basis that the Applicants submit that they would be unable to provide the financial contributions being requested by the Council and the need to a viability assessment at the application stage has been fully justified.

The outcome of this Addendum clearly demonstrates that the amended scheme which would result in the removal of seven units, would produce a negative residual land value of -£1,559,705 even without the Section 106 contribution being provided, which is well below the benchmark land value outlined in section 4.6 of this report. On this basis, it is submitted that the development would be unable to provide the Section 106 contributions being sought by the Local Planning Authority'.

Whilst it is noted that the report to the previous Planning Committee meeting in December concluded that on balance, the overall planning benefits of the scheme outweigh the sub-optimal position in respect of the potential shortfall of S106 mitigation, there were concerns raised by Members and the Central Ashford Community Forum regarding the lack of any S106 contributions in this particular case.

Whilst it is clear from our own appraisal and that of the Council's independent assessor that no contributions should be made, our client is willing, on a without prejudice basis to make a one-off payment of £250,000 towards developer contributions which can be distributed how the local planning authority see fit. Clearly this will significantly reduce the agreed developers profit, however our client is willing to accept this in order to address the local concerns.

29. Design & Access Statement Addendum

A full copy of the Applicant's Design & Access Statement Addendum can be viewed by clicking on the link below - <https://planning.ashford.gov.uk/planning/IDOX/default.aspx?docid=1940151>

The original application was submitted on 06/11/2019 for the construction of residential accommodation, including 1, 2 and 3 bed apartments and 9 town houses at the former B&Q site within Ashford Town Centre. The proposals also include, commercial and office units and a destination restaurant on two top floors.

The scheme was previously amended following the committee meeting on June 17th and in July 2020 amended drawings were submitted. In August 2020 a Design & Access Statement Addendum Document was submitted.

Following deferral at the Council's Planning Committee Meeting in December 2020, the scheme has been reconsidered by members of the Design Review Panel during a further Design Review Panel meeting held online via Zoom on 19th January 2021.

Additional amendments have now been made to the scheme following the Design Review Panel meeting.

The previous scheme submitted in July 2020 following the committee meeting on June 17th 2020, comprised 216 units with a 0.93 parking ratio. This scheme resulted in an overall loss of 7 residential apartments since the original planning application, which was submitted on 6th November 2019 (Ref: 09/01597/AS).

*Following feedback from the Design Review Panel Meeting on 19th January 2021, we have made a series of fundamental changes to the massing overall design of the scheme, which are illustrated in the following pages.
For the purposes of this document and for clarity the building has been*

Conclusion

Following comments received from a Design Review Panel meeting, which was held online via Zoom on 19th January 2021, the design for the proposed scheme has been thoroughly reconsidered. We feel that the revised proposal has addressed all major comments from the members, bringing forward a design which is more suited to its prominent location within Ashford.

The sloped parapets have been removed and an increased height in block 1 and 2 are proposed to allow for more penthouse style units and the proposed design now celebrates this executive level, with larger floor to ceiling heights, mezzanine floors and larger window apertures. The roofscape of the blocks have been simplified to

achieve a more balanced and inferior hierarchy to the tower. This simple varied parapet height is consistent with the local light industrial roofscape and that of locally proposed developments.

The revisited design and materiality of the building provides variation and interest to both the Beaver Road and Avenue Jacques Faucheux frontage.

The massing has successfully been broken up through careful use of materiality and detailing, which creates a separation between each of the building elements.

Additional trees have been introduced at each of the main elevations of the building, which softens the appearance of the building and public realm surrounding the proposal.

The town houses have been adapted to integrate them further with the scheme as a whole.

Overall we believe that the amendments to the scheme following the Design Review Meeting in January 2021 has resulted in a more appropriate and considered scheme.

Clarification of design amendment details

30. Building Heights

- Beaver Road frontage (lower 9-10 storey blocks) height has been lowered by 1.74m
- Avenue Jacques Faucheux (central section of this frontage) has increased by 1.95m
- Avenue Jacques Faucheux (13 storey book-end of block) sloping roof has been flattened with increase varying between 0.47m and 0.99m higher than previous proposal.
- Townhouse gable ridges (4 storeys) have increased by 3.04m

Penthouses

- Top floor (Penthouses) units without a mezzanine have increased floor to ceiling heights from 2.4m to 3m.
- On the 7 units with a mezzanine, the floor to ceiling heights have been increased by 2.60m achieving double height spaces of 5m and including 2.3m of headroom at mezzanine level.

Balconies

- Units have maintained compliance with the required amenity space.
- Smaller balconies in some instances have been omitted and others made larger to accommodate this. This is in order to achieve a stronger architectural language.

Windows

- The floor to ceiling windows at penthouse levels have increased substantially relative to the increased floor to ceiling heights at penthouse level.
- Increased width of windows where reasonably possible.

31. **Nutrient Neutrality Assessments And Mitigation Strategy**

Using census data, Water Environment Ltd has determined the average occupancy rate and the total number of new residents has been calculated at 350 people.

The proposal includes green roofs, which will result in a small reduction in the nutrient load from surface water runoff compared with the existing site. However, wastewater from the development will increase the overall nutrient load from the site.

In summary, and after accounting for both the improvement in the surface runoff, and the additional wastewater, the nutrient budgets for the site are 453.86kgN/year and 7.53kgP/year. This can be offset by converting approximately 0.61ha of agricultural land to fully utilised wetlands. These wetlands would need to be located such that there is sufficient water flow in order to provide any treatment.

In 2018, the European Court of Justice ruled that any additional nutrient loading to Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and potential Special Protection Areas sites, henceforth collectively referred to as 'designated sites', that were already in an unfavourable condition would not be permissible by law, and that any developments in their respective catchments would have to demonstrate that there would be no "Likely Significant Effect" from the development on the downstream designated site. This means that new development must not increase the level of nutrients from a site

The site is located in South Ashford, at the intersection of Beaver Road and Ave. Jacques Faucheux. Wastewater from the development will be conveyed to the Ashford Wastewater Treatment Plant. This means that Ashford Borough Council will need to prepare an Appropriate Assessment as required by Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. To assist with the Appropriate Assessment, this nutrient neutrality assessment and mitigation strategy has been prepared to ensure that the development fully mitigates all nutrients from the site post-development.

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing warehouses onsite, and construction of several tower blocks, for a total of 216 new units. Using census data from 2011, the average occupancy rate was determined, and hence the total number of new residents calculated at 350 people.

The proposal includes green roofs, which will result in a small reduction in the nutrient load from surface water runoff compared with the existing site. However, wastewater from the development will increase the overall nutrient load from the site.

After accounting for both the improvement in the surface runoff, and the additional wastewater, the nutrient budgets for the site are 453.86kgN/year and 7.53kgP/year. This can be offset by converting approximately 0.61ha of agricultural land to fully utilised wetlands. These wetlands would need to be located such that there is sufficient water flow in order to provide any treatment.

Conclusions & Recommendations

6.1 Following the procedure outlined in the latest Natural England guidance it has been demonstrated, through the implementation of the proposed mitigation strategy, that the proposed development will not have a likely significant effect on the nutrient levels in Stodmarsh.

6.2 As the site is in urban setting, onsite mitigation is not practical for this site. As such, it is proposed that the nutrient budget be offset through offsite land improvement.

6.3 Approximately 0.61ha of fully utilised wetland will be required to fully offset the nutrient load for the site. This number will vary slightly based on what the selected land is used for.

6.4 The proposed mitigation strategy is subject to the detailed design of each of the strategy components to ensure the required levels of TN and TP reduction are met.

32. Viability Statement

33. Full details of the applicant's most recent Viability case are set out in paragraph 20 (pages 21-23) of the December 2020 Planning Committee Report. An assessment of this viability position was set out in section (g) of the main Assessment section (paragraphs 69-88)

34. Applicant's Latest Position Statement

35. Following the two previous deferrals of this application, the applicant has informed officers in writing of their intention to appeal against the non-determination of the application should the Committee fail to determine the application at this meeting.

Planning History

36. A complete planning history of the site is set out on *pages 29-31) of the original June 2020 Planning Committee Report (a copy is also contained on page 97-98 of Annexe 1 of Dec 2020 Committee Report.)*. Below is short update of situation since June 2020.

37. In the summer of 2020 it was determined that prior approval was not required for the demolition of the Homeplus store in Beaver Road and adjoining hand car wash

building to enable preparation of the site for redevelopment. Subsequently, the existing buildings on the site have been demolished.

38. An approval on 8th June 2020, of full planning permission (application ref 20/00512/AS) was granted for “Proposed enabling works application to prepare the site for redevelopment with enabling works comprising erection of site hoarding, erection of protective fencing for retained trees, clearance of site vegetation, pruning of tree T9, removal of trees T2, T3, T10, T13 and T16, disconnection of all live services, removal of asbestos, demolition of buildings including grubbing up foundations and redundant drainage pipes and manholes, breaking out of existing hard surfaces, crushing concrete and hard-core and stockpiling on site for use as a pile mat for main construction works, sheet piling, excavation to formation level and probe/excavate to remove obstructions in made ground at pile locations”.

Consultations

39. Previous comments from consultees and residents can be found on page 24-28 of the December Planning Committee Report. The comments received in connection with original scheme as deposited and some amendments from June Report are set out in annexe 1 section on page 98-116.
40. The only additional representations received in respect of the most recent amendments to the scheme are reported as follows:-

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation:

On 2nd March, KCC H&T commented that as the existing buildings on site were demolished in the summer of last year and the site therefore now had no existing fall-back position in terms of existing traffic generation. Consequently, they sought amendments to the submitted Transport Assessment to now assess the impact of the proposals on the local highway network.

KCC H&T also drew attention to their previous comments on the 10th August 2020 in relation to the proposed street trees on the Beaver Road and Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevations and confirmed that further details of these will need to be submitted and agreed with them through a suitably worded planning condition in the event that planning permission for the proposals is forthcoming.

Following this representation, the applicants were asked to prepare a technical note updating the traffic generation element of the TA in light of the demolition of the previous buildings and the amendments to the scheme itself that have been made since the TA was prepared. This note has been prepared and considered by KCC H&T who, in summary, have now commented as follows:-

“The technical note states that the potential change in vehicle trips does not affect the outputs from the junction capacity models within the original Transport Assessment because the flows within the models are made up of growthed base

flows (which include those trips to the site when it was in use) and the change in development vehicle trips (which is now, if anything, slightly less as a result of the removal of 7 apartments from the scheme). This is acceptable to KCC Highways and Transportation as long as the mitigation previously agreed for the Beaver Road arm of the Beaver Road / Victoria Way and Avenue Jacques Fauchaux junction and installation of a box junction is secured.”

Residents– 1 objection received

One additional representation from a local resident objects on the basis that they believe the size of the proposal is too large for the site and out of scope for the area, being too tall in comparison to other properties in the area. The number of units will also need a large quantity of parking spaces and increase traffic in a small residential area. Also, that the scheme does not encourage businesses to move into the town centre to support the local community.

Central Ashford Community Forum (CACF) comment:

The CACF still has great concerns about the limited S106 contributions of this plan. While we acknowledge the developers offer to make a one-off payment of £250,000 towards the S106 requirements, we note this represents only 18% of the requirements and leaves an additional £1,115,000 left unpaid unless a unrealistic bar of each of the 216 units in this development sales price “exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment” is met. From the developers viability study, dated July 2020, this leaves the developer with a potential profit of £12,631,444, while leaving the residents of Ashford a bill of £1,115,000 to mitigate the impacts of this development. We do not believe this represents good value for the town and its residents and disagree that any benefit that might be derived from this development offsets this cost.

We are concerned about the addition of more flats into Ashford with little support provided to the impacts of such develop of infrastructure. This concern is only increased with the changing market demands brought about by the current COVID pandemic. Additionally, the CACF would ask that the concerns raised by the Environmental Agency and KCC ecology are addressed prior to this development moving forward. Also, we are concerned that the current plan doesn’t detail the development’s plan to mitigate or offset the impact of this development on Stodmarsh Nature Reserve.

We don’t believe this development pulls on any of the current or historical architectural qualities of Ashford. There is no echo of the station, the brewery, the Works clock tower, the kiln, the Church, Stanhay works, or the Designer Centre. There is no attempt to echo the Victorian, Edwardian and Pre-war details of the rest of the buildings on Beaver Road. We disagree with the report stating this

development represents "architecture that is in keeping with the town of Ashford". This is city architecture in a medium sized town and it is completely out of place.

We are not opposed to development, especially on a brownfield site, but we believe that development must be done in a way that is sympathetic to the town, has limited impact on the environment, and is financially viable enough as to not require the residents of Ashford to subsidize the impacts of the development on the community."

Kent Fire & Rescue comment:

"Fire service access should be provided to allow for a fire appliance to reach within 45 metres of all points of all dwellings. The road providing access should be in accordance requirement B5 of Building Regulations. Where appliance access is not available to this requirement suitable non automatic fire fighting systems should be installed within the building. Automatic fire suppressions systems may also be included in the design, suitable access and facilities should also be provided for the underground car park areas."

Planning Policy

41. Refer to December Planning Committee Report Annexe 1 page 116- 119 paragraphs 42-47 for breakdown of the relevant planning policies.

Assessment

42. Summary of the main issues.
- (a) Have the changes to the design improved the overall quality across the whole site specifically in relation to addressing the need to -**
 - i. Break up and articulate the overall massing and appearance of the development with clearly differentiated building forms and heights;**
 - ii. Improve the massing, form and appearance of the Avenue Jacques Fauchaux north elevation in order to improve important landmark views from the entrance to the International Passenger Station.**
 - iii. Improve the design of the Beaver Road elevations;**
 - iv. Strengthen the architectural language of each façade in a way that draws on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context.**

v. Improve the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevation.

(b) Viability / Section 106 Contributions - To renegotiate the arrangements for payment of the planning obligations set out in Table 1 of the report.

(c) Habitat Regulations Assessment (Stodmarsh Lakes)

(d) Housing Land Supply

(e) Other miscellaneous planning issues

43. I deal with these issues in turn below.

(a) Have the changes to the design improved the overall quality across the whole site.

44. The applicant's design team have worked hard to evolve the design for this site since 2018. They have listen carefully and acted diligently on the comments provided on both occasions by the Planning Committee as well as advice from officers, stakeholders, the public, and both the Ashford Design Review Panel meetings/workshops. The applicant's team have throughout the process produced physical models, created animated video fly-throughs and ensured high quality Computer Generated Images were available to show clear impressions of what each different scheme and design iteration would like on the site and in its context. The applicant's design team should be commended for this approach.

45. Over these last three years the applicant has also sought to respond to Members concerns and planning officer's suggestions for changes. To date this has resulted in amendments to reduce the number of units, increasing the parking ratios, adapting the heights of buildings, and changed materials. This was despite the challenging viability issues faced by the site and scheme and also despite the unprecedented and difficult economic climate of the past year.

46. The applicant has once again carried out several design changes since the December Planning Committee following some brief advice also offered by planning officers.

47. The recent amendments are discussed at length below, but the applicant has reiterated that the design of the building cannot be substantially changed any further and therefore they have requested that members determine the proposed development on its own merits as it now stands. As previously mentioned they are intending to appeal if the application is deferred for a third time.

48. I will assess each of the main design amendments in more detail and give an analysis of the recent changes made to the scheme.

49. In assessing whether the changes to the design have improved the overall quality across the whole site and are acceptable, I have addressed the Planning Committee's specific concerns based on each of the reasons for deferral. Broadly this includes regarding whether the scheme is acceptable in terms of massing, built form, differentiated height, appearance and quality of materials suitable for this landmark site in this town centre context.

(i) *breaking up and articulates the overall massing and appearance of the development with clearly differentiated building forms and heights'*

50. Members expressed concerns at Planning Committee in December about the design and supported breaking up the form more. This was also acknowledge by the design panel follow up review workshop, who, whilst supportive of the general evolution of the design since 2019, felt the design and massing could be broken down and differentiated more. They felt the previous designed scheme was too complicated. The subsequent design amendments have sought to directly address these issues.

51. The proposed design amendments include greater variation to the roof forms and key frontages of the scheme in order to ensure a better differentiation to the appearance of each of the blocks. The amendments have led to the breaking up the horizontal mass of the scheme which adds a better vertical emphasis in many parts of the facades.

52. The amendments include the introduction of a more simple repetition and stronger patterns in the different parts of the façade detailing. This serves to help create a richer, stronger identity and a character. I consider that the Design Panel workshop advocated this as they felt it would help to overcome Planning Committee members concerns, by improving the overall form and appearance.



Figure 31 Avenue Jacques Faucheux (Superseded 2020)

Current Amended Proposal (2021)



Figure 32 Beaver Road (*Superseded 2020*)



Current Amended Proposal (2021)



Figure 33-Eastern 13 storey block (*Superseded 2020*)



Current Amended Proposal (2021)



Figure 34 – Riverside elevations (*2020 superseded*)



Current amended scheme 2021

53. As the images above demonstrate the design amendments have omitted fussy external detailing which were previously felt to complicate the overall architectural language of the building. The proposals include the removal of the green cladding, and the welcome introduction of more glazing and balconies. I consider a much more striking variation in eaves heights and more pronounced breaks in the façade have been achieved which will give a better balanced and consistent architectural style. I support these aspects of the design amendments.

54. The design amendments also include giving the tower stronger definition to differentiate it from the remaining lower scaled buildings. This was encouraged by the Ashford Design Review panel workshop session. I regard this to have been successful by changes to ensure the architectural language of tower differs to the ground floor design of Beaver Road façade. Previously this ground level treatment included a series of glazing and repetitive fins and along the entire frontage of Beaver Road to create a lightweight feel to match the base of the tower. The current proposals show a more striking difference. Along the lower blocks in Beaver Road the design now includes more brick rather than just glazing along its base with bolder vertical column like features that meet the ground level. This treatment at the street and first floor level gives a much more solid identity and complements the rather different lightweight treatment of the base of the lowest two building levels of the much taller tower. I consider this to be a less uniform and more elegant approach and visually appropriate since and these two different architectural styles help draw attention to the different scale of the buildings within this street.



Figure 35 – (Left) Superseded scheme lightweight ground/first floor level. Compared to (right) the amended scheme with contrasting architectural approaches at base of tower and 9/10 storey block.

55. I support these design changes since they achieve a better defined overall architectural style for the building, by emphasising clear contrast for the tower in relation to lower buildings around it. Overall though there is still a complementary architectural language that design review panel workshop suggested might by an effective way of responding to members concerns. I support these particular changes to the design.
56. In response to members concerns about the main facades the design panel workshop session put forward the idea of dividing up the proposed frontages of the lower surrounding blocks to the tower to introduce a stronger vertical emphasis. The design changes have addressed this through increase in height in some places and slight reduction in others, in order to create clearer definition to each section of the building.

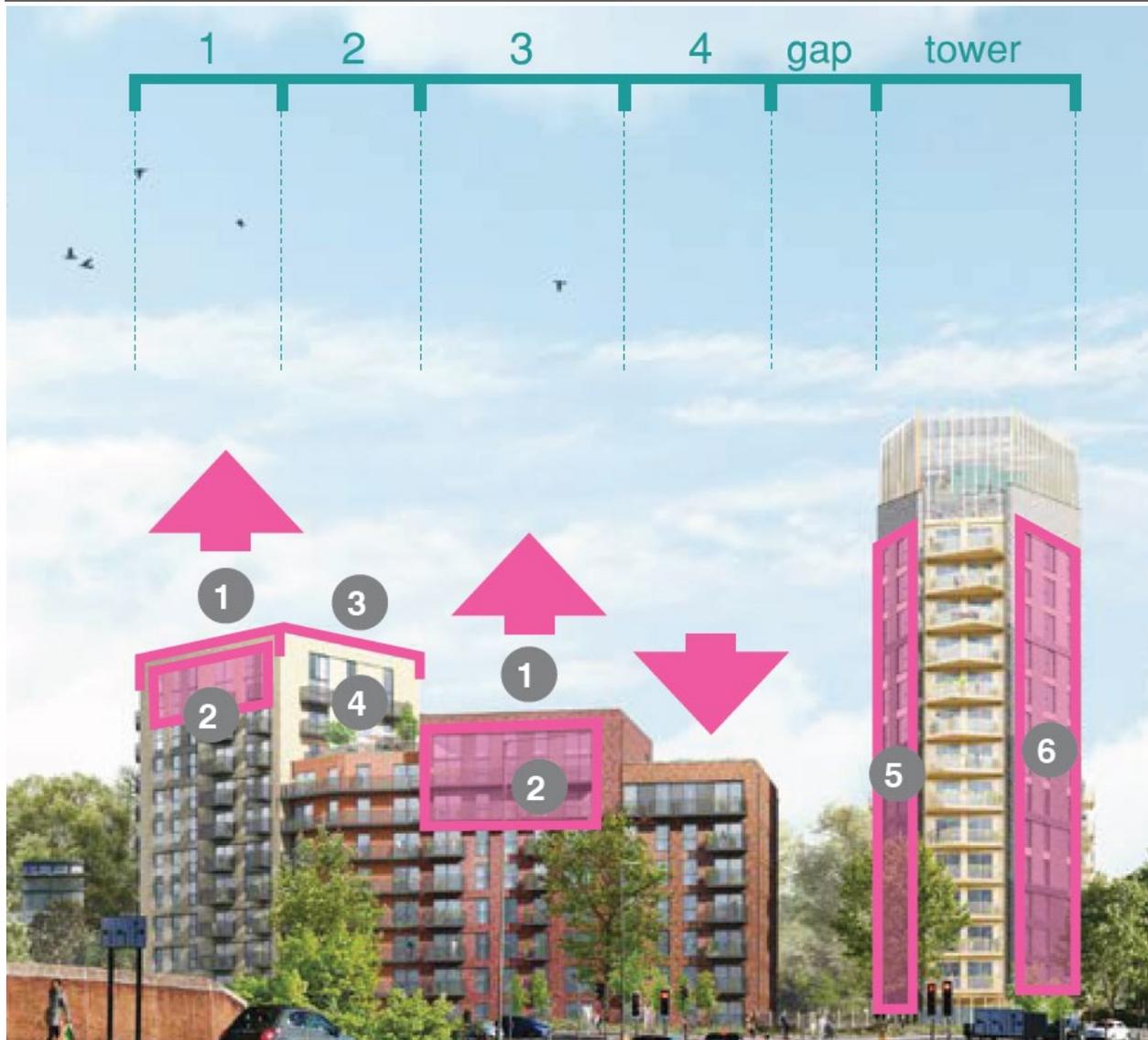


Figure 36- *Illustration of where building has increased and decreased in height, alterations to architectural language of façades and how this emphasises different vertical characteristics*

57. I consider the design amendments achieve these objectives and overall I am very satisfied with the way the design amendments attempts to break up the horizontal form, with interesting setbacks and contrasting materials and detailing to facade. I support these changes to the elevations and do not recommend any further changes to the design on these grounds.
58. To try and breaking up the form and massing required by members, the design review panel workshop advocated introducing a mix of housing typologies to upper floors to create more variety internally that could be expressed externally in the built form, massing and architectural expression. The proposals now include some larger and more generous penthouse apartments on the top floors.



Figure 37 – Detail of upper floor Avenue Jacques Fauchoux



Figure 38 - Detail of upper floor Beaver Road block



Figure 39 Detail of upper floor Tower

59. The proposed inclusion of top floor penthouses would result in more obvious variety to the external appearance. This is achieved by introducing some more generous internal floor to ceiling heights which has created an opportunity to create different roof eaves and parapet levels which are more pronounced and noticeable.

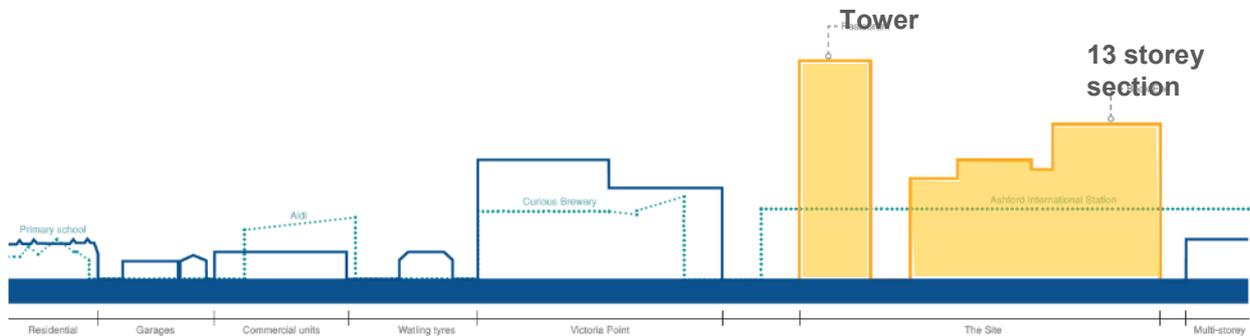


Figure 40 – The proposal varied roof form in relation to local context.

60. This adds further richness to the proposed building and adds further distinctiveness and interest to the skyline in this part of the town centre. On these grounds I consider the amendments have responded positively to the concerns of the Planning Committee, and have listened to the advice provide at Design Review panel workshop and I support these design amendments to the form of the building.

61. In response to improve the overall form and appearance of the buildings that members were concerned by, the design panel workshop recommended that key openings and larger windows could become compositional devices that could be expressed more playfully on the façade. As the comparison images of the amended detail demonstrate below, the external elevations would result in a more distinctive mix of different sized window forms that is enhanced by the combination and subtle mix of materials.



Figure 41 – Tower detailing (2020 Superseded)



2021 Current Amended scheme



Figure 42–AJF End block North Elevation (2020 Superseded)



2021 Current Amended scheme



Figure 43 -AJF North Elevation 10 storey (2020 Superseded)



2021 Current Amended scheme



Figure 44–Upper 13 storey east elevation (supersede 2020)



Current amended proposal 2021



Figure 45 *Upper Beaver Rd detail 2020 (superseded)*



Current amended proposals 2021

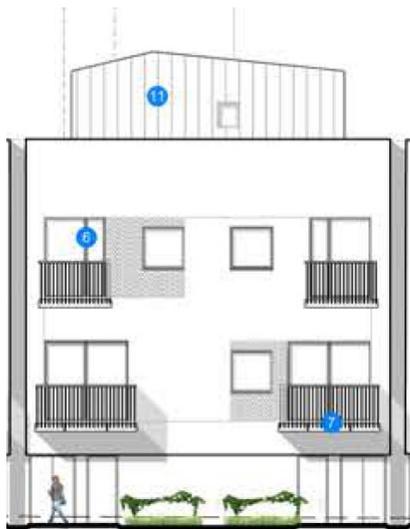


Figure 46 *Riverside South Elevation (2020 Superseded)*



2021 Current Amended scheme

62. I am satisfied the form and composition of the fenestration and the playful use of materials has enhanced the external appearance of the many different sections of the building. I regard one of the most important main strengths of the building to be the way the building has subtle different composition and style on different elevations, whilst maintaining an overall harmonious elegance

63. Members wished to see improvements across the whole site by breaking up and articulating the overall massing and appearance of the development with more clearly differentiated building forms and heights. I consider the design amendments have successfully addressed these concerns. I also am satisfied that the design amendments have fully embraced the advice of the design review workshop panel by creating more varied roof forms and heights, greater difference

in appearance between the different parts of the lower buildings and making the tower appearance different from its surrounding lower buildings. Also I am comfortable that the articulation and differentiation of form achieves a strong vertical emphasis through simpler more logical architectural language. A better repetition in architectural features and the variation in form works well visually. The introduction of penthouse units and fenestration to sections of the upper floors of buildings helps the building's architecture appear more confident and coherent identity.

64. I am satisfied the amendments to the building forms and heights break up the massing and appearance of the development, and in a way that overcomes the previous concerns expressed by Members on these matters.

(ii) Have the changes to the design improved the massing, form and appearance of the Avenue Jacques Faucheux north elevation in order to improve important landmark views from the entrance to the International Passenger Station.

65. At the December Planning Committee members expressed concerns about the appearance and form of the elevations facing northwards towards the International Passenger Station. The follow up Design Review workshop in January 2021, noted the north elevation had improved significantly since the panel had originally commented on the scheme in 2019 at a pre-application stage, but they too concluded that they felt the design needed work to become the more attractive landmark that members envisaged.
66. At the workshop the design review panel advised that the 'undulating' roof line was an appropriate idea to take forward but that as it stood it was underplayed and further steps were need to improve this aspect. The panel suggested that where these buildings varied in height on the north elevation the difference between each component could be increased to make each section more distinctive and to create a varied roof line and building silhouette.
67. The applicant has subsequently heeded this advice and the current proposed design now includes varying the roof heights and better distinction between the constituent parts of the block along Avenue Jacques Faucheux (AJF).



Figure 47- Roof form along AJF north elevation (2020 superseded)



Figure 48 – Roof form along AJF north elevation (2021 current amended proposal)

68. As highlighted earlier in the assessment, a section of the 10 storey red brick part of this elevation originally with terracotta coloured metal cladding has been increased in height and other sections reduced slightly.



Figure 49–East AJF 13 storey book end (2020 superseded)

Current amended proposal 2021

69. The roof form of the yellow brick corner of the 13 storey eastern block has been levelled, flattened and partly increased to create a clear definition and a more striking contrast with the lower sections of roofline. As a result it will become slightly taller to accommodate the new mezzanine floors for the penthouses here which creates double height spaces internally. I consider that the partial increase in roof heights and the material colour variation will help make the different partitions of this block's façade much more distinguishable from one another and reads as a series of different linked buildings rather than one mass. On balance I consider these amendments will create a clear identity and richer character that is appropriate for the location and which is considered to be of good enough design quality to reflect its landmark location. The alteration of the flat roofed sections to introduce some penthouse units has responded well to the suggestion by the design review panel.

70. The introduction of the penthouse units is welcome as the design has helped improve the definition at these upper storeys by including a different architectural treatment consisting of more generous expanses of glazing combined with distinctive cladding. Also these changes include interesting textured brickwork with some decorative banding and recessed brickwork in places to add decoration. The design of these penthouse units has still however followed the themes and language of the rest of the façades on which they sit, which successfully ties it in to the overall appearance. I very much support these penthouse additions as the design improve this most important and prominent elevation directly fronting the International Station.



Figure 50 – *The amended improved landmark design on Avenue Jacques Faucheux opposite station*

71. The advice from the design review panel workshop was that the eastern-most block would improve if it was considered as part of the architectural language of the other lower scaled buildings. As mentioned above the roof has been levelled but the previous green weathered copper coloured metal cladding has now been omitted and replaced by buff brick which I consider to be is a very positive improvement.
72. I welcome the introduction of the mezzanine floor, the modest roof height increases, and slight reduction in roof height in other places, plus the pattern of glazing and balconies and removal of green cladding. Collectively these improved design features combine to respectfully and politely replicate the architectural expression of the main façade. At the same time the form and architectural language provide a pleasing palette of visually contrasting materials. These more sophisticated materials combine well to break up the form and appearance of this substantial elevation. I regard the resulting overall language to be a very welcome feature and I consider this to be very much in keeping with the advice of the

review panel workshop that tried to help convey and respond to Members expectations. I therefore support the amended form, massing and appearance of this landmark elevation.

73. The design review workshop highlighted concerns that the horizontal pattern of windows on the elevations read more strongly than the vertical forms and heights of the various sections along this north elevation. The design amendments have responded by proposing a slight increase in glazing to this north elevation, but with a more apparent formal vertical pattern of glazing. As a result this is now better aligned on each the façade and with each section of the building. The glazing has also neatly combines attractive deep grey panel cladding features around the borders of the windows especially across the uppermost sections of the façade. This brings more definition to these higher parts of the building and make them stand out in and contrast to the lower and smaller sections of the façade. I support this aspect of the current design amendments as it will emphasise the height contrast of the different partitions of the frontage and create a more striking appearance.
74. The further important design amendments of note on this façade include the attractive landscaped roof terrace to the ten storey part of the north elevation and more balconies to the 13 storey book end section. I consider this will further enhance the elevation and should be supported.
75. I consider the design of the amended scheme has taken on board the advice given at the design review panel workshop to address Planning Committee members' previous concerns and reasons for deferral. I am satisfied that the changes to the building heights help emphasise the contrasting qualities of the different sections of the façade, the simpler roof form to the eastern most 13 storey section, introduction of penthouse units, more balanced patterns of glazing patterns, and improved materials will all combine to help differentiate the building forms and heights more clearly. I regard these aspects of the amendments to be well designed and consider they improve the overall design quality, massing, form and appearance of the Avenue Jacques Fauchaux landmark north elevation in particular seen from the entrance to the International Passenger Station. I consider the changes address the issues previously raised by members and recommend supporting the changes to this elevation.

(iii) Have the changes to the design improved the design of the Beaver Road elevations?

76. At the December Planning Committee members expressed strong concerns about the design of the Beaver Road elevation. The panellists at the follow up Design Review workshop felt the western elevations had improved since they were last presented with the scheme, before the application was submitted, and particularly supported the recessed sections on this frontage. At the design review workshop the panel were very clear however that more could be done to improve this part of the building for it to be considered a landmark quality building.
77. The panel focussed on the relationship between the tower and the lower scale blocks. They recommended changing the nature and form of the lowest

commercial frontage levels at street level of the Beaver Road block adjoining the tower. They suggested differentiating the frontage from the base of the tower which sought to create the impression of a lightweight base. The suggestion by the panel to include a more solid brick connection at ground level was to address members concerns about varying the form and appearance of this elevation.



Figure 51 – Superseded Beaver Road street level elevation detail



Figure 52 – Amended proposal for Beaver Road street level



Figure 53 – Amended detail of Beaver Road Ground Floor design

78. As briefly discussed in paragraph 55 - 56, the amended designs do not include the continuous line of fins along the ground floor commercial frontage. The proposal is for a slightly reduced amount of glazing and wide brick sections that appear like columns. I support these design amendments that provide greater variation in the form of the building as it contrasts nicely with the more lightweight glazed appearance at the base of the tower. The designs now also mean the sections of the Beaver Road frontage a much stronger vertical emphasis. I therefore support the design amendments on the grounds that it will result in a better balanced appearance at street level.
79. The two main lower elements of Beaver Road were considered by the panel to have a rather squat proportion and the panel workshop advocated splitting these up further into 3 or 4 sections of repeated bays, to create a more vertical emphasis to the frontage and to break down the impression of the scale of this elevation.



Figure 54—*Superseded Beaver Rd 2020 elevation*



Current Beaver Rd Elevation 2021 amended proposal



Figure 55 *South Elevation Beaver Rd/Riverside 2020*



Current amended proposal 2021

80. I consider the proportions of the two main lower sections along Beaver Road to be acceptable as illustrated above. The pattern and extent of the extended brickwork to ground floor level, removal of the metal cladding at upper level, changes to balcony positions and the reconfigured flat roofs will create a sense of verticality to the façade. On these grounds I am satisfied the overall composition is well

proportioned and balanced and support these amendments and I consider they will overcome some of the concerns of members.

81. The design review panel workshop expressed reservation over the inclusion, asymmetry and shallow proportion of the roof pitch forms to Beaver Road. The panel considered that the weak form of these pitches created an unnecessary complex form and language. The panel advised that any pitched roofs here should be simplified and repeated elements or avoided all together.
82. Through design negotiations it was felt this sloping roof pitch on a ten storey building was not typical for this scale of built form and the making them flat was one way of giving the vertical emphasis considered important for these two sections of buildings. I consider that this amended roof form and other improvements to this elevation will improve the proportions and appearance of this elevation and would be more in keeping with the character of the building and the immediate surrounding area.
83. I regard the design amendments will significantly enhance the Beaver Road elevation and recommend this aspect of the proposals is supported.

(iv) Do the amendments strengthen the architectural language of each façade in a way that draws on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context?
84. At the December Planning Committee members were concerned that the proposed building elevations were not appropriate for the context of Ashford and that a traditional building form and appearance would be more suitable.
85. It should be noted that the design review panel workshop supported the overall design approach for the site and considered that it had been appropriately influenced by creating a light industrial riverside vernacular which the panellists considered appropriate. They did agree with members that this architectural character should be strengthened further
86. However this formed the basis for their reservations about the use and proportion of the low pitched roof forms along the ten storey sections in Beaver Road discussed above in that it was a contrived roof form that didn't work visually on a building of this scale and that a different simpler roof form would be more typical of the town.
87. The design review panel commented that the overall integrity of the designs would be more important than complying with individual stylistic ideas which add unnecessary complexity and incoherence to the scheme. The panel felt on this basis that the inclusion of pitched roofs was considered to be more about the scale and domesticity of buildings and industrial vernacular. The panel did however regard the houses on the river to be the one of the most successful part of the scheme.

88. The design amendments have subsequently responded to this advice by proposing a coherent series of built forms across the development that I consider will reflect the appearance of the town's industrial heritage context more appropriately. The consistent use of robust brickwork combined with some limited use of attractive metalwork and cladding is also representative of Ashford's industrial and railway character. I support the design and appearance of the building of this scale in what was once a more industrial working area based around the station.
89. It is especially pleasing to note that the design amendments have responded to the opportunity to introduce more of a domestic style of pitched roof form on the townhouses along the riverside. I regard these designs amendments to be very well designed and appropriate along the softer riverside edge that faces southwards towards the more domestic scale of Victorian residential buildings that lie across the river.
90. Having reviewed the advice of the design review panel and studied the justification for the design amendments, I support the proposed form and appearance of the large buildings on the site and the smaller scaled homes along the riverside. I consider the subtly different styles across the development to respect the character of the place overall and does so in a manner which genuinely tries to respond to members concerns. I therefore consider that the development proposals draws closely on the qualities of Ashford yet creates a strikingly contemporary expression of the place and its context. On these grounds I fully recommend these aspects of the design amendments are supported.

(v) Have the changes to the design improve the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevation.

91. At the December Planning Committee members were concerned by the proposed colours of some sections of the Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevation. In particular the green cladding and a red coloured cladding were questioned.



Figure 56 – Superseded AJF Elevation and materials palette

92. The review panel made it very clear that the materials of all façades must be of a high enough quality to look attractive and help to entice people to come and live in this development in Ashford. Whilst the review panel had no fundamental issue with the choice of materials or their colour, the workshop raised some concern over how they were proposed to be applied externally. They stated the proposed configuration and combination of materials must emphasise the overall architectural principles rather than confuse it. On this matter the panel recommended that materials should be rationalised and simplified with clear reasoning to why they have been selected and consider how they relate to each other and advised that detailed specifications and construction principles should be discussed.
93. In light of this advice the applicant has reviewed the material's palette and rationalised the range and mix of materials but with the focus remaining on their continued quality. The proposals include substantially more brickwork and a more subdued colour of high quality metalwork that relates more to the vertical form and style of the architecture, as well as the local context.



Figure 57 – Current proposed improve palette of materials

94. The amended scheme has responded to advice offered at the design review workshop who did not agree with the arbitrary application of the green 'weathered copper' colour metal cladding on the most eastern building block facing Avenue Jacques Faucheux. The panel suggested members were more likely to be more comfortable with high quality brickwork embellished with complementary high quality materials. In direct response to this, the scheme has been amended to more brick on this end building and I support that revision.

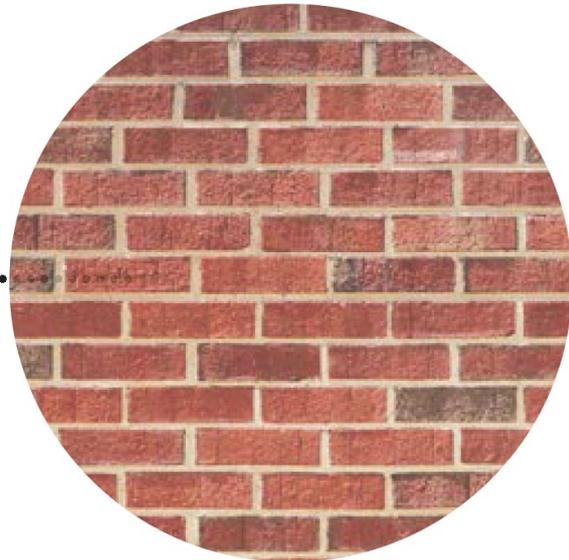
95. The materials include a mix of

- Buff, Light buff brick and relief brick, soldier coursing, reveals
- Red shade of brick and relief brick
- Grey shades of brick and relief brick
- Teal coloured glazed brick
- Copper coloured cladding panel (traditional red/brown colour match)
- Gold coloured window frames, vertical louvres, cladding panel, balconies and bands
- Grey coloured fascia, balcony and balustrades, louvres, projecting frame, capping, cladding panel, entrance canopy, spandrel panels
- Teal coloured doors
- Curtain wall glazing
- Green glazed brick planter

96. Some impressions of what these bricks might look like are set out below;



Figure 58 – Main Materials – Yellow buff



Red stock brick



Figure 59 Cladding Gold Standing



Copper Coloured Cladding



Figure 60 Brickwork (Light/mid/dark grey)

Recessed brick sections.



Figure 61 Grey Balconies,

Grey panels

Gold balconies

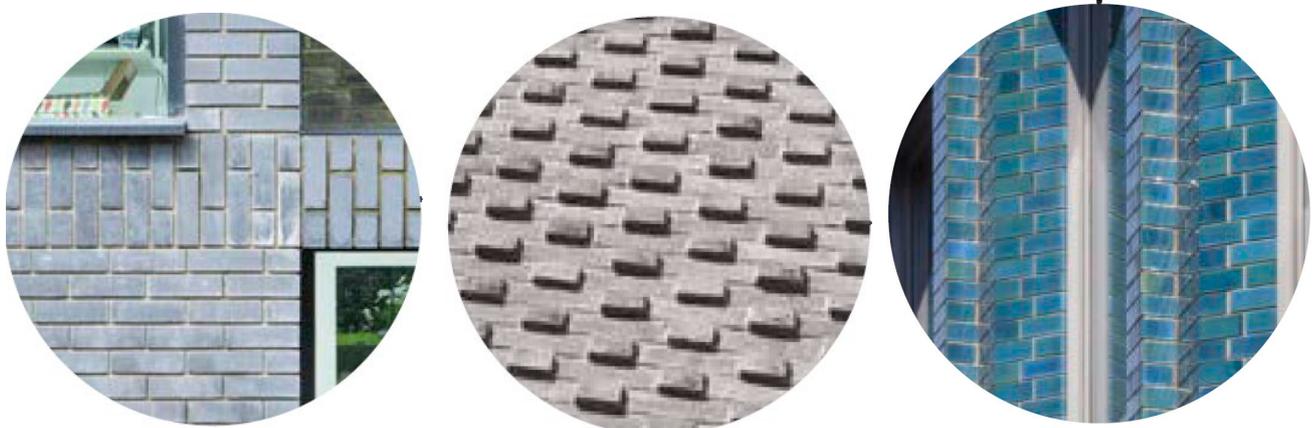


Figure 62 Soldier course detail

Recessed brickwork

Glazed teal brick

97. Overall I support the manner in which the individual development blocks use a more restrained colour of metal cladding materials and restricted the amount of cladding across the development. There is a much clearer and simpler approach to how brick and metal material are combined on this elevation which I consider will bring significant benefits to this building's overall appearance, with colour, texture, richness and a consistent and interesting language. I consider the better colour of the cladding and its restrained application will help distinguish the individual vertical partitions across the buildings.

98. For these reasons I am supportive of the amendments to materials across the building and especially along the Avenue Jacques Faucheux frontage and recommend these proposed materials are supported.
99. The design review panel highlighted how the importance of the final selection of the quality and specification of all external materials is critical and must not be compromised by viability concerns.
100. Therefore should the scheme be supported, I recommend that a small group consisting of an officer and a Planning Committee member could form a materials selection working group with the applicants, to help agree the main final external specifications of materials on the building at the conditions approval stage. I have agreed this approach in principle with the applicant.
101. The exact nature of this would need to be worked up but I would anticipate it would involve having up to 1m x 1m sections of materials samples and sections set up on or near the site to explore their quality, their application and also how different materials would be combined. This is expected to involve mortar colours and techniques, brick expansion joints, and by looking at samples of joints and fixings which would be viewed and agreed as a group. This could then potentially be dealt with in the normal manner by condition in regular meetings during the construction of the projects.
102. If member's feel it is important this small working group might also want to be engaged with condition sign off for external architectural detailing such as vertical recesses, brick courses, reliefs, window reveal depths, parapet details, balcony proportions and other external detail's that greatly affect the three dimensional quality of the building's facades. This will provide checks and balances that the detailing proposed are accurately reflected in the final built form. These details will be covered by condition sign off in the normal manner regardless.
103. The design includes improved colours of external metal materials to the apartment blocks on the Avenue Jacques Faucheux elevation and throughout the development. I recommend that members support the changes to the external materials as the applicant has listened the advice of the Planning Committee, the design review panel workshop session and myself as case officers. If the scheme is approved the applicant is willing to engage with the Council in further dialogue on materials condition approval and during the construction phases of the development to test and ensure the external materials are of the highest quality.

(b) Viability / Section 106 Contributions

104. As expressed in the Committee Report in December 2020, development viability has been considered through a number of assessments. This is covered in paragraph 20 of the December report and also paragraphs 69–88. These assessments were in accordance with Policy IMP1 and IMP2 of the Local Plan 2030, and were consistent with the NPPF (2019) and the standardised approach set out within the Planning Practice Guidance.

105. These assessments clearly showed that a significant negative residual land value of -£1,559,705 would be derived from the scheme, even without the S106 requirements being taken into account. This is clearly well below the benchmark land value agreed upon. As such the scheme would be unable to provide the S106 contributions being sought by the LPA and remain viable. Table 1 of the December Committee Report reflected this position and it was also considered in the overall balance through the officer recommendation.
106. The changes being proposed for this scheme do not warrant a re-exploration of the viability of the development. However, the applicants have written the LPA to state:
- ‘Whilst it is clear from our own appraisal and that of the Council’s independent assessor that no contributions should be made, our client is willing, on a without prejudice basis to make a one-off payment of £250,000 towards developer contributions which can be distributed how the local planning authority see fit. Clearly this will significantly reduce the agreed developers profit, however our client is willing to accept this in order to address the local concerns’.*
107. Therefore in comparison with the previous proposal in December, the applicants are now offering a ‘pay regardless’ figure of £250,000 towards the range of infrastructure requests set out in the revised Table 1 below. The remaining S106 requests should still be subject to the deferred contributions mechanism, as expressed as required by policy IMP2 of the Local Plan.
108. Based on the advice of the Council’s independent viability assessors, I am content that the development remains unviable and the evidence which supported the position in December stands.
109. The proposed ‘pay regardless’ figure is welcomed and in my view provides the opportunity for contributions to be targeted towards projects that can be delivered, to help meet the needs generated by this development. As set out in Table 1 below, the full financial request for off-site affordable housing can now be secured as can the entire requests for indoor sports and the voluntary sector. The benefits of providing money to help secure affordable housing, in the locality, are numerous. In addition, it is clear that this scheme will generate demand at the Stour Centre, given its proximity to the site. Also, the voluntary sector is very active in the town centre and contributions can therefore be targeted towards local projects for the benefit of the local community. Alongside the small sum to cover the request from KCC to cover a Travel Plan for site over 5 years to ensure that the development meets its transport targets for trips and modal split, this equates to a ‘pay regardless’ sum of approximately £246,500. It is proposed that the balancing sum of approximately £3,500 be allocated to one or more of the ‘heads’ where deferred contribution(s) are proposed to be sought when it is received, under delegated powers.

110. My view remains that this scheme provides overall planning benefits which outweigh the sub-optimal position in respect of not being able to deliver a full range of S106 benefits. The scheme would deliver a much better, highly efficient use of the land, on a highly sustainable brownfield site, in an area which is going through significant regeneration.

Planning Obligation				Regulation 122 Assessment
Detail	Amounts (s)	Trigger Points (s)		
Potentially applies to any size/scale of residential development				
1.	<p>NHS – Primary Healthcare</p> <p>Towards provision in the Ashford Stour Primary Care Network</p> <p>Deferred contributions mechanism.</p>	£780 per dwelling	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	<p>Necessary: as more population will place extra pressure on the health service. Approach is compliant with Policy COM1, COM2 and IMP1 of the Local Plan 2030.</p> <p>Directly related: as occupiers will use healthcare facilities and the facilities to be funded will be available to them.</p> <p>Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind: the calculation derived reflects the scale and nature of the development and targets a capital project to be delivered locally.</p>
2.	<p>ABC – Monitoring Fee –</p> <p>Contributions towards the Council's costs of monitoring compliance with the agreement or undertaking</p>	£500 per annum until the development is completed.	First payment on the commencement of the development and on the anniversary therefore in subsequent years to be Paid Regardless of viability.	<p>Necessary: in order to ensure the planning obligations are complied with.</p> <p>Directly related: as only costs arising in connection with the monitoring of the development and these planning obligations are covered.</p> <p>Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind: relates to the scale of the development and the obligations to be monitored.</p>
3.	<p>ABC – Affordable housing –</p> <p>Offsite contribution to be paid towards the delivery of affordable housing within the urban area in lieu of onsite provision of the relevant proportion of 40%</p>	Total cost of offsite commuted sum payment of £144,200	Total contribution to be paid in accordance with a phasing plan.	<p>Necessary: in order to aid the delivery of affordable housing and compliance with Policy HOU1 of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Directly related: figure derived in lieu of on-site contribution</p> <p>Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind: relates to</p>

	affordable housing as required by policy,			the scale of the development and calculated as such.
4.	<p>ABC – Outdoor Sports –</p> <p>Contribution towards outdoor sports pitch provision at Ashford, to be targeted toward quantitative or qualitative improvements at the ‘hubs’ identified in the Local Plan 2030</p> <p>Calculations derived from the latest Sports England Calculator, as prescribed in Policy COM2 of the Local Plan 2030</p> <p>Deferred contributions mechanism.</p>	£1,034 per dwelling (capital and maintenance).	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	<p>Necessary: as outdoor sports pitches are required to meet the demand that would be generated and must be maintained in order to continue to meet that demand pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies COM1, COM2, and IMP1, Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD and guidance in the NPPF</p> <p>Directly related: as occupiers will use sports pitches and the facilities to be provided would be available to them.</p> <p>Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind: considering the extent of the development and the number of occupiers and the extent of the facilities to be provided and maintained and the maintenance period is limited to 10 years.</p>
5.	<p>ABC – Indoor Sport Buildings</p> <p>Capital contribution to go towards the Stour Centre improvements or at indoor sport buildings at Ashford, to be targeted toward quantitative or qualitative improvements at the other ‘hubs’ identified in the Local Plan 2030.</p> <p>Calculations derived from the latest Sports England Calculator, as prescribed in Policy COM2 of the Local Plan 2030.</p>	£83,581 total contribution (£386.95 per dwelling – capital only as per SE Calculator)	Total contribution to be paid in accordance with a phasing plan.	<p>Necessary as additional indoor sports facilities are required to meet the demand that would be generated and must be maintained in order to continue to meet that demand pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies COM1, COM2, and IMP1, Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use sports pitches and the buildings to be provided would be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and the number of occupiers and the extent of the facilities to be provided and maintained and the maintenance period is limited to 10 years.</p>

6.	<p>ABC – Strategic Parks</p> <p>Capital contribution towards provision of Conningbrook Country Park. Management and maintenance of Conningbrook Country Park</p> <p>Deferred contributions mechanism.</p>	£147.4 per dwelling (capital and maintenance).	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	<p>Necessary to meet the additional demand for use of the country park and must be maintained in order to continue to meet that demand pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1, COM2, COM3, IMP1 and IMP2, Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use the strategic park and the facilities to be provided would be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and the number of occupiers and the extent of the facilities to be provided and maintained, and taking into account the provision of the bridge</p>
7.	<p>ABC – Informal/natural greenspace:</p> <p>Off-site contribution to be targeted towards the adjacent Green Corridor and nearby improvements being proposed at Victoria Park or at nearby informal/natural greenspace.</p> <p>Deferred payments mechanism.</p>	£580.55 per dwelling (capital and maintenance)	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	<p>Necessary as informal open space are required to meet the demand that would be generated and must be maintained in order to continue to meet that demand pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1, COM2, COM3, and IMP1, Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use informal open space and the facilities to be provided would be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and the number of occupiers and the extent of the facilities to be provided and maintained</p>
8.	<p>ABC – Play provision</p> <p>Provision of play facilities off-site, within the Town</p>	£1,002 per dwelling (capital and maintenance).	From any Deferred Contributions received,	Necessary as children’s play are required to meet the demand that would be generated and must be

	<p>Centre area, including the Victoria Park area.</p> <p>Deferred payments mechanism.</p>		<p>allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.</p>	<p>maintained in order to continue to meet that demand pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1, COM2, COM3, and IMP1, Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use play space and the facilities to be provided would be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and the number of occupiers and the extent of the facilities to be provided and maintained</p>
9.	<p>ABC – Voluntary sector provision</p> <p>Contribution towards groups active within the Town Centre Area</p>	<p>£13,692 total contribution</p> <p>(£63.39 per dwelling)</p>	<p>Total contribution to be paid in accordance with a phasing plan.</p>	<p>Necessary as new/enhanced voluntary provision is needed to meet the demand that would be generated from the development pursuant to Local Plan 2030 policies COM1 and COM2 and the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use these spaces and the spaces to be funded will be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of users and is based on stewardship policies in the Local Plan 2030.</p>
10	<p>ABC – Allotments</p> <p>Contribution towards allotment provision within the area</p>	<p>£247.5 per dwellings</p>	<p>From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as</p>	<p>Necessary as new/enhanced voluntary provision is needed to meet the demand that would be generated from the development pursuant to Local</p>

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	Deferred payments mechanism.		determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	Plan 2030 policies COM1, COM2 and COM3 and the NPPF. Directly related as occupiers will use these spaces and the spaces to be funded will be available to them. Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of users.
11.	ABC – Art provision Contributions sort for provision within the Town Centre, including the ‘Ashford Giraffes’ project. Deferred payments mechanism.	£156.95 per dwelling.	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	Necessary as new/enhanced art provision is needed to meet the demand that would be generated from the development pursuant to Local Plan 2030 policies COM1 and COM2 and the NPPF. Directly related as occupiers will use these spaces and the spaces to be funded will be available to them. Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of users and is based on stewardship policies in the Local Plan 2030.
12.	KCC – Highways - Travel Plan Travel Plan requirements directly related to the scheme	£5,000 (£1,000 per annum for 5 years)	To be Paid Regardless of viability. Trigger for payment to be agreed in accordance with a phasing plan	Necessary to ensure the scheme is sustainable in travel terms in accordance with Local Plan 2030 policies SP1 and TRA4. Directly related: specific to the scheme Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind: reflects the scale and nature of the scheme being proposed.
13.	KCC – Community Learning	£16.42 per dwelling Total£3,661.66	From any Deferred Contributions received,	Necessary as enhanced services required to meet the demand that would be generated and pursuant to

	<p>Towards additional equipment and resources for Adult Education Centres locally</p> <p>Deferred payments mechanism.</p>		<p>allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.</p>	<p>Local Plan 2030 Policies COM1, IMP1 and IMP2, KCC's 'Development and Infrastructure –Creating Quality Places' and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use community learning services and the facilities to be funded will be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of users and is based on the number of dwellings.</p>
14.	<p>KCC – Primary Education</p> <p>Towards new school provision in the planning group (13 additional spaces).</p> <p>Deferred payments mechanism.</p>	£935.64 per dwelling.	<p>From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.</p>	<p>Necessary pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1 and IMP1, KCC's 'Development and Infrastructure – Creating Quality Places' and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as children of occupiers will attend primary school and the facilities to be funded would be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of primary school pupils.</p>
15.	<p>KCC – Secondary Education</p> <p>Contribution towards new school provision at the Chilmington Green secondary school or alternative provision in the planning group (9 additional places)</p>	£967.00 per dwelling.	<p>From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling</p>	<p>Necessary as insufficient capacity to meet the needs of the development and pursuant to, Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1, IMP1 and IMP2, Developer Contributions/Planning Obligations SPG, KCC's 'Development and Infrastructure – Creating Quality Places' and guidance in the NPPF. .</p>

	Deferred payments mechanism.		exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	<p>Directly related as children of occupiers will attend secondary school and the facilities to be funded would be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of places needed.</p>
16.	<p>KCC – Youth Services</p> <p>Towards additional resources for the Ashford Youth service or equivalent outreach programme.</p> <p>Deferred payments mechanism.</p>	£65.50 per dwelling.	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	<p>Necessary as enhanced youth services needed to meet the demand that would be generated and pursuant to Local Plan 2030 policies SP1, COM1 and IMP1, KCC document ‘Creating Quality places’ and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use youth services and the services to be funded will be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of users and is based on the number of dwellings.</p>
17.	<p>KCC – Library services</p> <p>The provision of additional library books.</p> <p>Deferred payments mechanism.</p>	£55.45 per dwelling.	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as	<p>Necessary as more books required to meet the demand generated and pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1 and KCC’s ‘Development and Infrastructure – Creating Quality Places’ and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will use library books and the books to be funded will be available to them.</p>

			identified by the viability assessment.	Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because amount calculated based on the number of dwellings.
18.	KCC – Social Care Towards increasing capacity at the Braethorpe Wellbeing Centre (Ashford Day Centre) Deferred payments mechanism.	£146.88 per dwelling.	From any Deferred Contributions received, allocated as determined by Officers under delegated powers. Payable if the actual sales price of each dwelling exceeds the predicted sales price as identified by the viability assessment.	Necessary as enhanced facilities required to meet the demand that would be generated pursuant to Local Plan 2030 Policies SP1, COM1, and IMP1, KCC's 'Development and Infrastructure – Creating Quality Places' and guidance in the NPPF. Directly related as occupiers will use community facilities and services to be funded will be available to them. Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and because the amount has taken into account the estimated number of users and is based on the number of dwellings.
19.	Deferred payments mechanism Mechanism to monitor sales/rental values to ensure that 40% of any rise in values is paid to the council towards those contributions above that are deferred	Up to the value of all deferred contributions (index linked)	To be paid if the circumstances prevail	Necessary, directly related and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind for the reasons set out above and pursuant to Ashford Local Plan Policy IMP2.
<p>Notices must be given to the Council and County Council at various stages in order to aid monitoring. All contributions are index linked in order to maintain their value. County Council contributions are to be index linked by the BCIS General Building Cost Index from Oct 2016 to the date of payment (Oct-16 Index 328.3). The Council and County Council's legal costs in connection with the deed must be paid.</p> <p>If an acceptable deed is not completed within 3 months of the committee's resolution, the application may be refused.</p>				

(c) Habitat Regulations Assessment (Stodmarsh Lakes)

111. The position remains the same as reported to the Planning Committee in December. The applicant accepts that the proposal would generate additional

nitrogen and phosphorous outputs, which without adequate mitigation could have a significant impact (when considered cumulatively with other proposals) on the quality of the European-level protected habitats at Stodmarsh Lakes. As adequate mitigation on-site is not achievable, it is recognised that planning permission would be subject to the subsequent identification and delivery of off-site mitigation and this is reflected in the recommendation below. In the event that an acceptable form of mitigation cannot be secured, then it would be appropriate for this scheme to be reported back to the Planning Committee prior to a decision being issued.

(d) Housing Land Supply

112. The Council's position on 5 year housing land supply is highly material to the consideration of this application. On the 27th November 2020, the Council published its updated position in respect of housing land supply. This confirmed that the deliverable housing land supply for the borough was equivalent to 4.8 years. As a consequence, paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF is triggered which requires decision-makers to grant planning permission for new housing development 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".

I do not consider that either exemption could be said to apply in this particular case.

(e) Other miscellaneous planning and design issues

i. Architectural expression and materials

113. The amendments are recommended for approval. The choice of materials is recommended to be selected by a small working group consisting of a planning officer and a member of the Planning Committee to work with the applicant's design team on the selection of the main external materials.
114. Members may wish to extend this to cover all the external architectural detailing which I would recommend to ensure the design quality is executed to meet Members' expectations for this landmark site.

ii. Building height changes, penthouses, mezzanine

115. There are some small changes to increase the height of various small parts of the building to create penthouse units with a mezzanine floor that provides higher floor to ceiling heights on the Beaver Road and Avenue Jacques Fauchaux elevations. A small area along Avenue Jacques Fauchaux will reduce slightly in height. Paragraph 30 of this report, lists the small amendments to building heights. As

discussed previously in this report these changes in height are necessary to improve the architectural appearance of the building.

116. Likewise the modest changes to the 4 storey riverside townhouses proposes a slight increase to ridge height to introduce a welcome gable roof form. I consider the slight to necessary on design and appearance grounds and such a modest increase is entirely acceptable in this location.
117. The slight increase in roof heights are necessary, and modest and they do not raise any other planning concerns

iii. Balcony changes

118. The proposed changes to the balconies include extra balconies added, with some removed. The size of some balconies are proposed to increase with others proposed to decrease in size. I accept that the design reasons for the changes to the balconies are necessary in order to improve the architectural expression of the building externally and this has led to a welcome improvement to the external elevations. The applicant has confirmed that all units will retain adequate total private external outdoor areas in accordance with policy HOU15 (Private External Amenity Space).
119. I therefore recommend a condition that ensures any balcony cannot be provided at less than 1.5metres deep and 2 metres wide. Furthermore I would also wish to recommend a condition is attached in respect of external balcony doors, to ensure they are installed to either open inwards or to ensure sliding doors are installed. This will further improve the usability of all balconies. Subject to imposing these conditions, I can support the amendments to balconies in the revised proposals.

iv. Rooftop design

120. The minor changes to the roof form of block 2 facing Avenue Jacques Faucheux will retain the same amount of green roof provision and will still form part of the sustainable drainage system and the proposals still contain rooftop photovoltaic panels integrated with the green roof. The amendments to the Avenue Jacques Faucheux block result in the provision of a small external amenity terrace space serving the penthouse apartments.
121. I recommend the support for the inclusion of this amenity space as it will provide some further valuable external space as well as the balconies and the communal courtyard space above the car parking.

Human Rights Issues

122. I have also taken into account the human rights issues relevant to this application. In my view, the “Assessment” section above and the Recommendation below represent an appropriate balance between the interests and rights of the applicant (to enjoy their land subject only to reasonable and proportionate controls by a public

authority) and the interests and rights of those potentially affected by the proposal (to respect for private life and the home and peaceful enjoyment of their properties.

Working with the applicant

123. In accordance with paragraphs 38 of the NPPF, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and creative approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and creative manner as explained in the note to the applicant included in the recommendation below.

Conclusion

124. Following the previous deferral of this application, I am content that the design issues raised by members have now been satisfactorily addressed. A workshop was held with Ashford Design Review panel in order to seek independent advice on the overall design quality of the scheme and how the scheme could address the concerns of members. This has proved very useful and the applicant has listened carefully to that advice. Using the advice from the Design Review Panel as the basis for design amendments I have worked with the applicant to amend the scheme in order to try and address the reasons for deferral at the December 2020 Planning Committee.
125. My detailed observations are contained in the main body of the report above and demonstrate that the scheme has evolved and progressed to a point where both officer and independent design advice considers it to be acceptable.
126. On balance the amendments have responded well to the advice of the design review panel workshop and officers. The applicant has been expressed a clear willingness to engage in further dialogue during condition discharge and construction stages to make sure the building is executed to a very high quality. The applicant has also welcomed an opportunity to set up a materials condition working group with an input from members and officers should that be considered to be beneficial.
127. In terms of developer contributions, I have concluded that the 'pay regardless' offer of a £250,000 one-off payment towards contributions is a reasonable one and should be accepted. The viability case made by the applicant is still a valid one and therefore Policy IMP2 of the Local Plan 2030 is still engaged. It remains my judgement that the scheme, as proposed, would still be able to deliver further wider planning benefits which warrant the mix of 'pay regardless' and deferred contributions approach to be utilised in this case and my recommendation below reflects this.

128. The Council's position on 5 year housing land supply is reported above and this is highly material to the consideration of this application. In the circumstances, additional weight should be given the potential delivery of a significant number of new dwellings in a location where residential development is not just acceptable in principle but would be in a highly accessible and sustainable location with the potential to provide increased local population to support town centre shops and services. I consider that this lends added force to the positive recommendation below.
129. Where necessary the aim has been to identify any conditions that can be refined and combined and if members are minded to support this proposal, I recommend the amended list of conditions set out below.

Recommendation

PERMIT

- A. Subject to the applicant first entering into a section 106 agreement/undertaking in respect of planning obligations detailed in Table 1 above in terms agreeable to the Development Management Manager or the Strategic Development and Delivery Manager in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer, with delegated authority to either the Development Management Manager or the Strategic Development and Delivery Manager to make or approve changes to the planning obligations and planning conditions and notes (for the avoidance of doubt including additions, amendments and deletions) as she/he sees fit; and,**
- B. Subject to the applicant submitting information to enable an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations to be adopted by the Head of Planning and Development which identifies suitable mitigation proposals such that, in his view, having consulted the Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer and Natural England, the proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the Stodmarsh SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site; and with delegated authority to the Development Management Manager or the Strategic Development and Delivery Manager to add, amend or remove planning obligations and/or planning conditions as they see fit to secure the required mitigation.**
- C. Subject to planning conditions and notes, including those dealing with the subject matters identified below (but not limited to that list) and those necessary to take forward stakeholder technical representations, with wordings and triggers revised as appropriate**

and with any ‘pre-commencement’ based planning conditions to have been agreed with the applicant.

Recommended **conditions** to cover:

1. Standard time conditions for commencement
2. Development carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
3. Phasing plan for construction internal fit out.
4. Remove Permitted Development rights of the 9 townhouses.
5. Restrict certain Permitted Development rights use relating to changes of use for the Commercial Units

Construction

6. Construction Environmental Management Plan (including Routing of construction and delivery vehicles; Parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and site personnel; Timing of deliveries including HGV movements; Provision of wheel washing facilities; and Temporary traffic management / signage, Dust Management Wheel washing, site set-up and contractor parking arrangements)
7. Site Waste Management Plan
8. Hours of construction to reflect Covid-19 flexibility.

Architecture.

9. Submission of samples of all external materials , (potentially with engagement from a small materials working group)
10. Submission of detailing –
 - a. External features
 - b. Rooftop details including lift overruns.
 - c. Rainscreen cladding / plant room external treatment
 - d. Balcony detail - including privacy screens and wind screens balustrades to mitigate. No doors shall open outwards onto balconies
 - e. Brickwork features and mortar details e.g. colour /depth/recess/joint technique
 - f. External fixtures and fittings such as external weep holes, expansion points, vents, flues, cables, pipes, metre boxes, junction boxes, post boxes, cctv cameras, security systems, information boards or signage etc.
 - g. Details of metal climbers and associated plants and species
 - h. Internal security measures in agreement with Kent Police

11. Fine details of external construction of all ancillary external structures such as boundary walls, access gates, railings, balustrades, riverside steps and handrails, bollard lighting, seating, any other furniture.

Landscaping

12. Details of all hard and soft landscaping works and materials including climbing plants, riverside area and landscaping courtyard/quad space, rooftop terrace including information on structural limitations on planting (consult with Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership)
13. Tree details sizes and integrated tree pits and construction protection measures based on below ground services survey and where necessary in agree in with KCC Highways
14. Arboricultural Method Statement
15. Landscape management plan
- 16.

Public Realm & External Open Spaces

17. Details and hard and soft Landscaping beyond the site in consultation with Kent Highways.
18. Wind - measures such as landscaping to provide sheltered seating, wind shields or installations to minimise wind levels around building at street level and within courtyard. (Within 12 months of first occupation)
19. Lighting strategy

Residential Amenity

20. Units to be built in accordance with the plans to ensure internally it meets all national space standards and agreed bed-spaces, unit sizes (gross internal floor area), number of bedrooms; built in storage sizes (msq); minimum floor to ceiling heights for each unit; and to ensure it complies with ABC standards for private external amenity space area including sizes and depths of balconies.
21. Sound performance between individual residential units and between the commercial and residential units, specifying the chosen glazing, ventilation, and wall and floor construction etc. to be agreed with ABC Environmental protection before occupation.

Commercial

22. Hours of opening
23. A flexible infrastructure provision for plant/extraction systems to all commercial units (air-con, air handling, kitchen extract, etc.) Within 3 months of the start of construction.
24. Commercial signage

Sustainability

25. Sustainable building construction details including green roof, photovoltaic panels and drainage system relate to each other.
26. Compliance with approved Energy Strategy, unless agreed in writing with LPA.
27. Water efficiency – compliance with water use of dwellings no more than 110 litres per person per day
28. Air quality

Access & Highways

29. Alterations to the Beaver Road arm of the Beaver Road / Victoria Way and Avenue Jacques Faucheux junction and installation of a box junction
30. Delivery of proposed raised table junction in Beaver Road.
31. Condition relating to main access surface treatments and consultation with ABC on s.278 detail
32. Submission of a TRO (loading/unloading deliveries and refuse layby)
33. Section 278 Highway Agreement Shared footway / cycleway.
34. Completion of the off-site highway improvements
35. Finer details of the proposed retaining wall at the junction of Beaver Road and Avenue Jacques Faucheux
36. Provision and retention of parking, vehicle loading/unloading and turning areas
37. Submission of a car parking management strategy for the site detailing how the car parking within the application site will be managed by the applicant.
38. Beaver Road condition survey
39. Motorcycle parking spaces
40. EV charging to Mode 3 SMART standard / future proofing strategy to all car park
41. Electric cycle parking / future proofing strategy
42. Provision and retention of secure cycle parking facilities
43. Car park spaces allocation, layout including disabled bays and details including markings, lines, signs, lighting or any other paraphernalia
44. Travel Plan (cycle voucher/bus pass)
45. Visibility splays

Riverside, Drainage & Flooding (Environment Agency)

46. Mitigation - Finished floor levels mitigation - Ordnance Datum (AOD)/ habitable rooms/sleeping

47. Long term management plan- Protection of 8m Riparian margin/ Landward buffer zone details. Restoration plan
48. Contamination controlled waters
49. Verification Report
50. Contamination not previously identified
51. No infiltration of surface water drainage
52. Piling risk assessment

Foul Water Sewage (Southern Water)

53. Foul water sewerage disposal details
54. Diversion of public sewers,
55. Sewerage network reinforcement
56. Sewer discovered during construction.
57. Details of the proposed means of foul water sewerage

SUDs KCC

58. Pre-construction – surface water drainage system
59. Pre occupation Verification Report, pertaining to the surface water drainage system.

Archaeology

60. Archaeological field evaluation works and further archaeological investigation. (Pre-construction)

Ecology (recommended by KCC Biodiversity)

61. Ecological Enhancements / Ecological Management Plan (Pre Commencement) (recommended by KCC Biodiversity)
62. Green Corridor Improvement Plan
63. Bats & Lighting (recommended by KCC Biodiversity)
64. Invasive Species - Pre commencement. (recommended by KCC Biodiversity)
65. Water voles.

Contamination

66. Compliance with contaminated land investigation and watching brief
67. Remediation, verification and dealing with any unexpected contamination found during construction.

Services & Utilities

68. Provision and retention of secure bin storage to be agreed with LPA in liaison with ABC Street Scene & Open Spaces Officer to include;

- Refuse bin storage area (excluding the bin maintenance area) shall not be less than 431 sq. m and shall remain available for this use only in perpetuity.
 - The distance from the presentation point to the refuse truck loading bay in Beaver Road shall not be greater than 10m and shall have a gradient that is no steeper than 1:12.
 - Following details to be agreed by LPA in consultation with ABC Street Scene & Open Spaces Officer
 - a. Site Refuse/Waste Management Plan.- residential and commercial
 - b. The number and size of refuse/recycling containers, recycling bags, kitchen caddies and commercial bins
 - c. Hardstanding presentation point/area delineation
 - d. Pathway route from refuse stores to layby.
 - e. Internal access ramp no steeper than 1:16
 - f. Freight Platform Lifts – size to ensure the lifts can carry the maximum weight of the largest full containers.
 - g. All double doors in refuse store open both ways
 - h. Smell prevention control measures and including ventilation system
 - i. Lighting
69. Details of wet risers to be agreed with Kent Fire & Rescue.
70. Broadband provision
71. Monitoring

Note to Applicant

1. Working with the Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 38 of the NPPF Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and creative approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service,
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application
- where possible suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome,
- informing applicants/agents of any likely recommendation of refusal prior to a decision and,
- by adhering to the requirements of the Development Management Customer Charter.

In this instance

- the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit,
- was provided with pre-application advice,
- the applicant/agent responded by submitting amended plans, which did not address all the outstanding issues, and an objection was raised,
- The applicant was provided the opportunity to submit amendments to the scheme/address issues.
- The application was dealt with/approved without delay.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

2. Informatives

- To be reviewed and clarified based on original informatives (refer to original report in Annexe 1 (pages 164-171)).

Background Papers

All papers referred to in this report are currently published on the Ashford Borough Council web site (www.ashford.gov.uk). Those papers relating specifically to this application may be found on the [View applications on line](#) pages under planning application reference 19/01597/AS)

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Report of the Ashford Design Review
Panel

Former B&Q Site (Home Plus) Beaver Road Ashford

1st February 2021

The design workshop

Reference number	1541/190121
Date	19 th January 2021
Meeting location	Online via Zoom
Panel members attending	Chris Bearman (chair), architecture, housing Nick Lee Evans, architecture, historic environment
Panel manager	Jade Huang, Design South East
Presenting team	Keith Hollidge, A Better Choice for Property Development James Rowland, On Architecture David Weir, On Architecture Emma Hawkes, DHA Planning
Other attendees	Mark Chaplin, Ashford Borough Council
Site visit	As this was a follow up workshop no site visit was required.
Scope of the workshop	As an independent design review panel the scope of this review was not restricted. However, this particular workshop was focused on the quality of the architectural expression, external materials and elevations in order to provide helpful expert feedback following planning committee deferral on design matters. There were 5 key questions put to the panel in relation to members' concerns and were used to structure the discussion.
Panel interests	Panel members did not indicate any conflicts of interest.
Confidentiality	Full details of our confidentiality policy can be found at the end of this report.

The proposal

Name	Former Home Plus Site
Site location	Former Home Plus Site, Beaver Road, Ashford, TN23 7RR
Site details	The site measures approximately 0.9ha and is close to Ashford train station, a short walk from the town centre. The former Home Plus retail store is vacant. The eastern side of the site is bound by the River Stour. Constraints include the river protection zone, flood constraints, change in level and a main sewer easement.
Proposal	The proposal is for a residential-led mixed use development comprising of 216 dwelling units, including 207 apartments and 9 town houses. Commercial floorspace for flexible use and a roof top restaurant are also included, with associated landscape and ancillary uses.
Planning stage	Post-application. A detailed application was submitted in November 2019 and deferred twice by Planning Committee on design grounds in June 2020 and December 2020.
Local planning authority	Ashford Borough Council
Planning context	The site was previously identified within the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (now superseded) as part of the International Station Quarter. It is within the Town Centre Boundary in the new Local Plan.
Planning authority perspective	<p>The planning authority seeks advice on Committee Members' concerns on the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Does the scheme overall successfully break up and articulate the overall massing, form and appearance and create clearly differentiated building forms and heights?2) Does the amended scheme improve the Avenue Jacques Faucheux north elevation to create attractive landmark views from the station, and address the issues set out above in point 1. of overall massing, form and appearance and clearly differentiated building forms and heights?3) Have the design of the Beaver Road elevations improved?4) Has the architectural language of each façade been strengthened so that they draw on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context?5) Are the amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Faucheux deemed satisfactory?
Previous reviews	This scheme was previously reviewed by the Ashford Design Review on March 21 st 2019. An extract of this report, 'Development principles – height, mass and layout' was referred to during the June 2020 Planning Committee.

Workshop summary

We accept that the scheme's massing, form and appearance has improved since the previous iteration, and appreciate the further articulation of the elevations and greater differentiation of the tower element. However, we do not yet believe that the scheme is ambitious enough and more can still be done to create a suitably high-quality landmark development for this prominent location in Ashford town centre.

The proposal is still relatively uniform, with little variation in dwelling types, apart from the town houses, which are the most successful part of the development. A greater offer in mix and apartment types could provide stronger character and create architectural opportunity. Instead, the scheme relies on external application of façade treatments to provide architectural distinction. This approach can work, but it requires a rigorous and clear architectural order and material language, which is strong enough to tie to the scheme together yet provide opportunity for distinction within individual blocks and buildings. The current proposal lacks this robust order and relies on visually complex moves to provide interest. This compromises the overall quality and architectural richness of the development.

Key recommendations

1. The design could be more ambitious and embed greater value through the inclusion of more varied apartment and housing types, which would provide a richer opportunity architectural composition and expression.
2. A simple yet robust and repeatable set of architectural principles should be defined and implemented across the site, beginning with a massing exercise which distinguishes building height, proportion and scale before adding richness through articulation and detail.
3. Greater vertical differentiation within the lower building block facades should be emphasised over the horizontal, as this will reduce the development's overall visual scale and provide opportunity for grounded and distinctive building frontages.
4. The silhouette and pitch proportions of the proposed roofscape should more carefully and appropriately reference the architectural language of local light industry, which has a particular repetitive form, rhythm and character.
5. Detailed material and bay studies should be included as part of the information pack, as this will help to reveal key aspects façade design such as window and balcony depth, proportion and detailing.

Detailed comments and recommendations

1. **Does the scheme overall successfully break up and articulate the overall massing, form and appearance and create clearly differentiated building forms and heights?**
 - 1.1. Although the scheme is much improved from the previous iteration, the design of the facades is complicated with many visual and material 'tricks' implemented to create interest. We do not consider these applied moves to be of architectural interest and would instead suggest a more repeated and rigorous language which could be simpler overall, yet create a richer, stronger identity and character. Lots of small and unrelated ideas which complicate the overall architectural language should be avoided.
 - 1.2. The tower element is more differentiated from the remaining lower scaled buildings than previously shown however this could still be emphasised further. The current proposed glazed lower storey which wraps around the ground floor of the development unifies it and presents a lost opportunity to provide distinction. Instead, the lower buildings may work better if conceived as 'grounded', with solid, masonry material emerging from the ground, whereas the tower element could become more lightweight, panellised and 'propped up' via columns or glazing. This would create a contrasting height, lightness and elegance. The vertical architectural order of the tower could be double that of the lower buildings, for example, which would also emphasise its verticality. This would create a simple yet strong tectonic principle for the site, with two contrasting architectural languages on which further articulation and detail can be added.
 - 1.3. The proposed frontages of the lower building elements could be divided up further, with a stronger vertical emphasis. The current proposal combines vertical recesses that emphasise separation with horizontal banding of windows, which diminishes the overall intention of distinctive, smaller scale building blocks.
 - 1.4. The uniformity of the windows is not helping the overall composition of the facades. Consistent horizontal stripes of windows should be avoided, which could be reminiscent of 1970s housing blocks or office buildings. Instead, a more varied mix of housing types, including some larger and more generous apartments or maisonettes with double height spaces could not only provide greater value and resilience within a changing market, but also provide inherent architectural interest. Key openings and larger windows could become compositional devices and be expressed more playfully on the façade.
2. **Does the amended scheme improve the Avenue Jacques Faucheux north elevation to create attractive landmark views from the station, and address the issues set out**

- above in point 1. of overall massing, form and appearance and clearly differentiated building forms and heights?**
- 2.1. The northern elevation is improved, with vertical stacked balconies on the eastern building block that addresses the views up Avenue Jacques Faucheux, however, we do not yet consider this to a sufficiently attractive landmark.
 - 2.2. The proposed 'undulating' roof line is taking steps in the right direction but is still underplayed and could be pushed further as advised in Section 1. The height differentials should be made more distinctive. Currently there is only the difference of a parapet height between the central 'building' façade, and the façade adjacent to the east, with no difference in number of storeys of accommodation. There is a narrow and unconvincing allowance for roof structure behind the parapet to the east, which may not be achievable in construction terms. At present, horizontal window alignments read more strongly than the differentials in height. Where buildings vary in height these differences should be made more distinct this creating a stronger roof line and building silhouette.
 - 2.3. The proposed sloped roof and change of materials which accentuates the top of the building to eastern-most block is an anomaly and would be better if considered part of the language of the other lower scaled buildings. Refer to Section 1.
- 3. Has the design of the Beaver Road elevation improved?**
- 3.1. The western elevations along Beaver Road are improved, and we support the use of recessed elements to split the architectural frontages. However, more can still be done before it can be considered a landmark quality building.
 - 3.2. The proposed elevations of the lower elements are divided into two parts, which creates a 'squat' proportion. We do not insist that the façade follows the 'true' number of buildings, in this case we understand that there is only one core at this location, however, the overall composition should be more balanced. A more vertical emphasis with repeated bays would be more elegant and help to break down the scale of this elevation. Splitting this lower element into 3 or 4 distinct 'frontages' with a repetitive roof pitch rhythm could help balance this facade in relation to the tower. Please refer to point 1.2 for further advice on the relationship between the tower and the lower scale blocks.
 - 3.3. The asymmetry and shallow proportion of the roof pitch again creates an unnecessary complex form and language. This should be simplified, strengthened and allow for repeated elements as discussed in point 1.1, and further in 4.2.

4. **Has the architectural language of each façade been strengthened so that they draw on the qualities of Ashford to develop a strong contemporary expression of the place in its context?**
 - 4.1. This was not explicitly addressed in this presentation; however, we support the nod to a light industrial riverside vernacular. We recognise that the site and wider Ashford does not have a particularly strong architectural identity and so forming a reference to the city's industrial past, with its proximity to the River Stour is supported.
 - 4.2. We have reservations about the use and proportion of pitched roofs across the development. The relationship between adjoining symmetrical and asymmetrical suppressed roofs is visually uncomfortable. If pitches are to be maintained, references to industry would be more appropriate than the pedimented proportions currently indicated. The design must be clear about which type and character of 'pitch' it is referencing and be bolder with its inclusion. For example, industrial pitches are often much more vertical and are repeated across a façade as a 'sawtooth' or symmetrical rhythm. The houses on the river are the most successful part of this scheme, however the roof pitches could still be simplified and be consistent with the overall character and language.
 - 4.3. Be wary of the language and definition of design comments received so far, as overall integrity is more important than complying to individual stylistic ideas which add complexity and incoherence to the scheme (see point 1.1). For example, a suggestion about included pitched roofs could actually be about a scale and domesticity, or equally about an industrial vernacular, which are very different. The design team should be clear which principle of expression they are referencing.
5. **Are the amendments to the proposed colours of external materials to the apartment blocks on the elevations on Avenue Jacques Faucheux deemed satisfactory?**
 - 5.1. The materials of the façades must be of a high enough quality to attract people to come and live in Ashford. We have no fundamental issue with the choice of materials or their colour but raise some concern over how they are used. In relation to points set out in 1.1, the application and combination of materials must emphasise the overall architectural principles and not to confuse it. Materials should be rationalised and simplified with clear reasoning to why they have been selected and relate to each other. Detailed specifications and construction principles should be provided.
 - 5.2. We were not convinced about the arbitrary change from brick to copper coloured metal cladding on the most eastern building block facing the Avenue. There should be a clearer principle about how brick and metal sheet material are combined. For example, individual development blocks could use a single material and be distinguished from each other in a vertical division, reinforcing the difference

between each other, rather than the current proposal to combine both materials with a horizontal emphasis. This would also help residents and visitors identify their own homes, with the individuality of each one expressed.

- 5.3. Metal cladding can be a good choice for commercial buildings, but we note that it can be expensive, particularly if detailed well. Therefore, it is not commonly used for residential buildings if there is an issue of viability. This increases the risk of exchanging in an alternative, poorer-quality imitation material, or compromising the detailing, which would affect the overall quality and perception of the development. Using brick as the predominant material in the development could be simpler, however, we note that there are great variations in the quality and specification of bricks and these should be carefully specified as part of the proposals.
- 5.4. Façade bay studies from ground to parapet level, with plans and material details should form part of the information pack. Window reveal depths, parapet details, balcony proportions and details will greatly influence the three-dimensional quality of the façades. It is therefore difficult to make proper judgement on the elevations without this information and we recommend submitted as part of planning application.

Confidentiality

If the scheme was not the subject of a planning application when it came to the panel, this report is offered in confidence to those who attended the review meeting. There is no objection to the report being shared within the recipients' organisations provided that the content of the report is treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the content of the report, nor the report itself can be shared with anyone outside the recipients' organisations. Design South East reserves the right to make the content of this report known should the views contained in this report be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). Unless previously agreed, pre-application reports will be made publicly available if the scheme becomes the subject of a planning application or public inquiry. Design South East also reserves the right to make this report available to another design review panel should the scheme go before them. If you do not require this report to be kept confidential, please inform us.

If the scheme is the subject of a planning application the report will be made publicly available and we expect the local authority to include it in the case documents.

Role of design review

This is the report of a design review panel, forum or workshop. Design review is endorsed by the National Planning Policy Framework and the opinions and recommendations of properly conducted, independent design review panels should be given weight in planning decisions including appeals. The panel does not take planning decisions. Its role is advisory. The panel's advice is only one of a number of considerations that local planning authorities have to take into account in making their decisions.

The role of design review is to provide independent expert advice to both the applicant and the local planning authority. We will try to make sure that the panel are informed about the views of local residents and businesses to inform their understanding of the context of the proposal. However, design review is a separate process to community engagement and consultation.