

BATFORD MILLS

I. Introduction

1. Batford Mills Design and Access Statement

Unlimited Assets LTD were commissioned by our Client, Harpenden Development LTD, to re-design the blocks of flats previously approved as part of the new development of high architectural quality to replace the existing industrial shed located on the corner of Crabtree Lane and Lower Luton Road.

This document supports this planning application and demonstrates the analysis of the existing context of previous planning approval, design development and details of the proposed scheme.

2. The Site Location

Batford Mill
Lower Luton Rd
Harpenden
AL5 5ES

3. Area surrounding Batford Mills

The surrounding buildings are of a mixed scale and quality, with good examples of period properties and a listed cottage to the east. To the north lies Lea Spring, an 'extra care development', offering independent living with communal amenities and on-site care. The architecture has tried to relate to the mill buildings with moderate success.

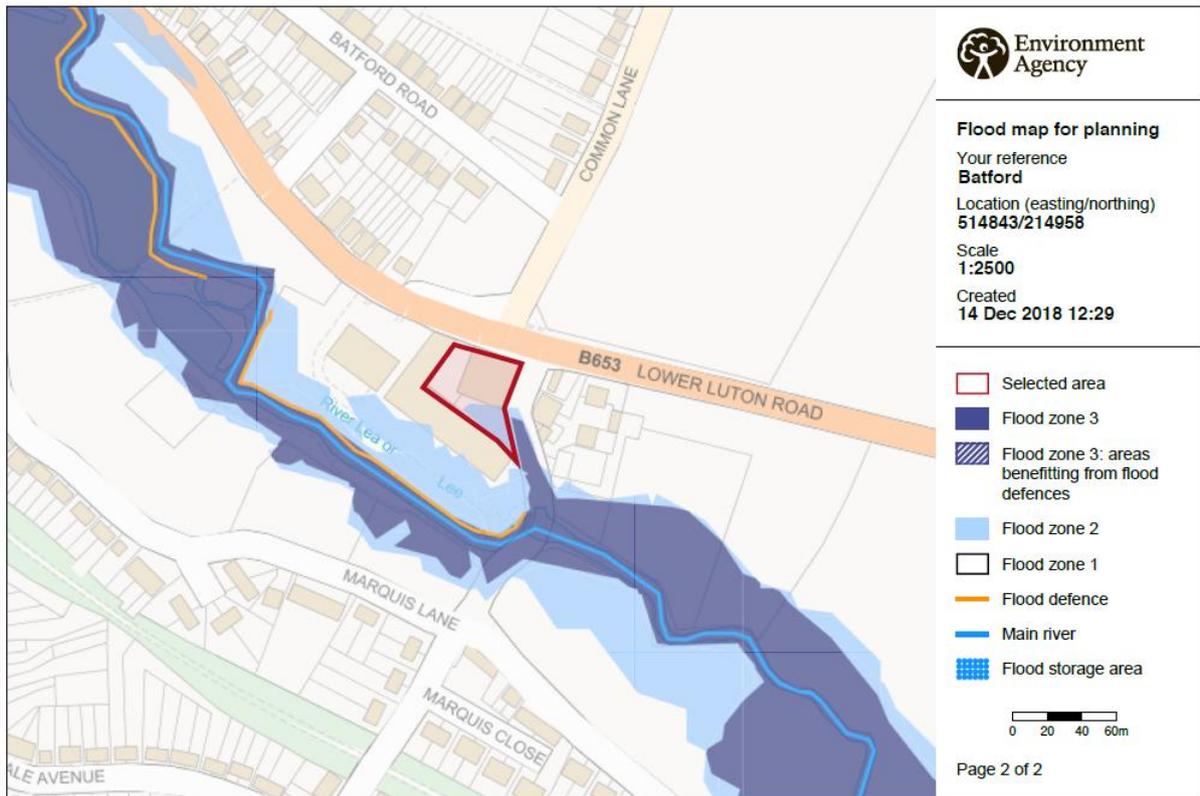
4. Local Proposals Map

The proposal map indicated nothing of note on the site itself, but it is opposite a Grade II-listed cottage and near green belt land.



5. Flood Risk Map - Environment Agency

The site borders flood risk zone 3 and partially sits within flood zone 2. A full flood risk assessment has been included within the full planning application. Please also see page 31 for more details on how the proposal has accommodated this risk.



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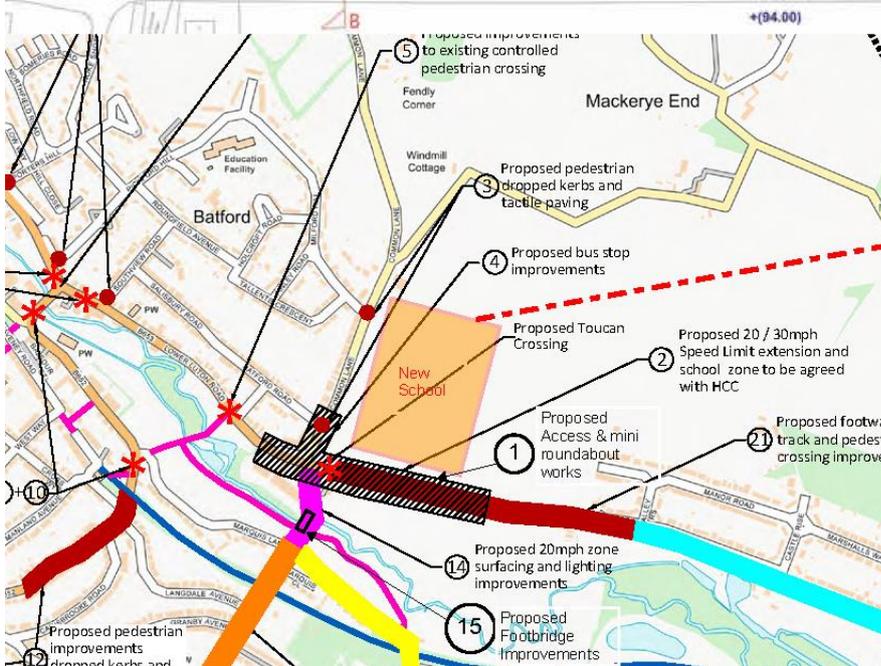
6. Katherine Warington School - New School Building

The new Katherine Warington School is currently under construction and is therefore an important consideration in terms of our context.

The school uses red brick and metal cladding, with flat roof forms. The school is directly opposite our site and will bring a new level of activity to this part of Harpenden.

It seems appropriate to consider a new residential development, which will provide new houses for families, possibly with children attending this new local amenity.





7. Local Historic Buildings - Cottages and Inns

We have looked at the historic buildings that are in the vicinity of our site and considered the architecture of them carefully.

There is a predominance of red brick and pitched roof forms, which is something we are interested in exploring within our proposed designs.





8. Design elements - Industry, Offices and Residential

There are a number of local architectural elements that can inspire us for our own new facades:

- Pitched roofs
- Chimneys
- Vertical and horizontal openings
- Redbrick
- Expressed concrete lintels
- Expressed base to the buildings





9. Precedents and Materials

- A Contemporary Response - Contextual and Sympathetic

We are interested in taking inspiration from the local context and re-interpreting these elements and materials in a contemporary manner. On the right are some examples of other projects that have done this successfully.



10. Previous application and Planning Approval

Ref: permission 5/2019/2656 dated 15/09/2021

Following the previously approved planning application, this proposal searches to increase the flat building to increase the staircase of the building to fulfil the requirements of the Approved Documents and allocate three one-bedroom units more to the development.



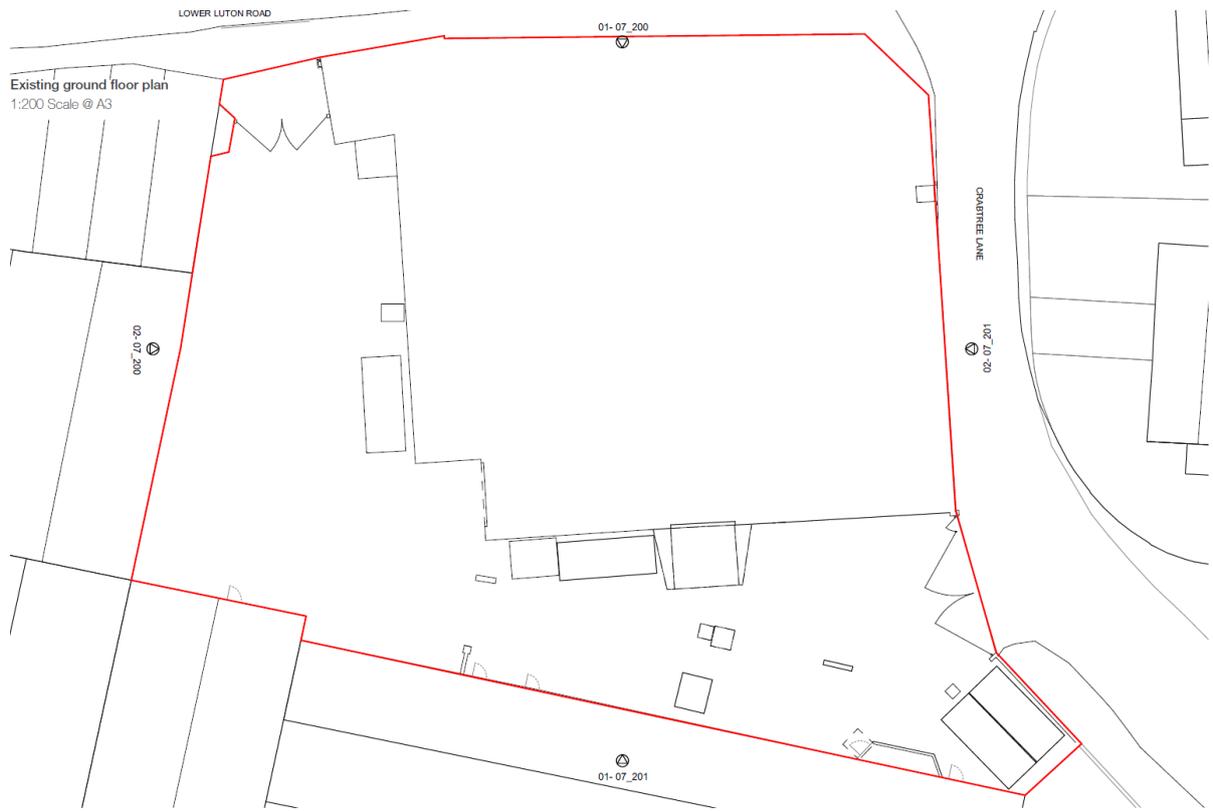


11. Preferred Block Plan - Block Plan

The block plan on the right demonstrates the footprint of the development. We envisage a larger scale apartment block to the west, with a row of townhouses running along the northern boundary and two more on the southeastern corner. This provides an interesting mixed development, with varying scales of building related to the surrounding context.



12. Existing Plan



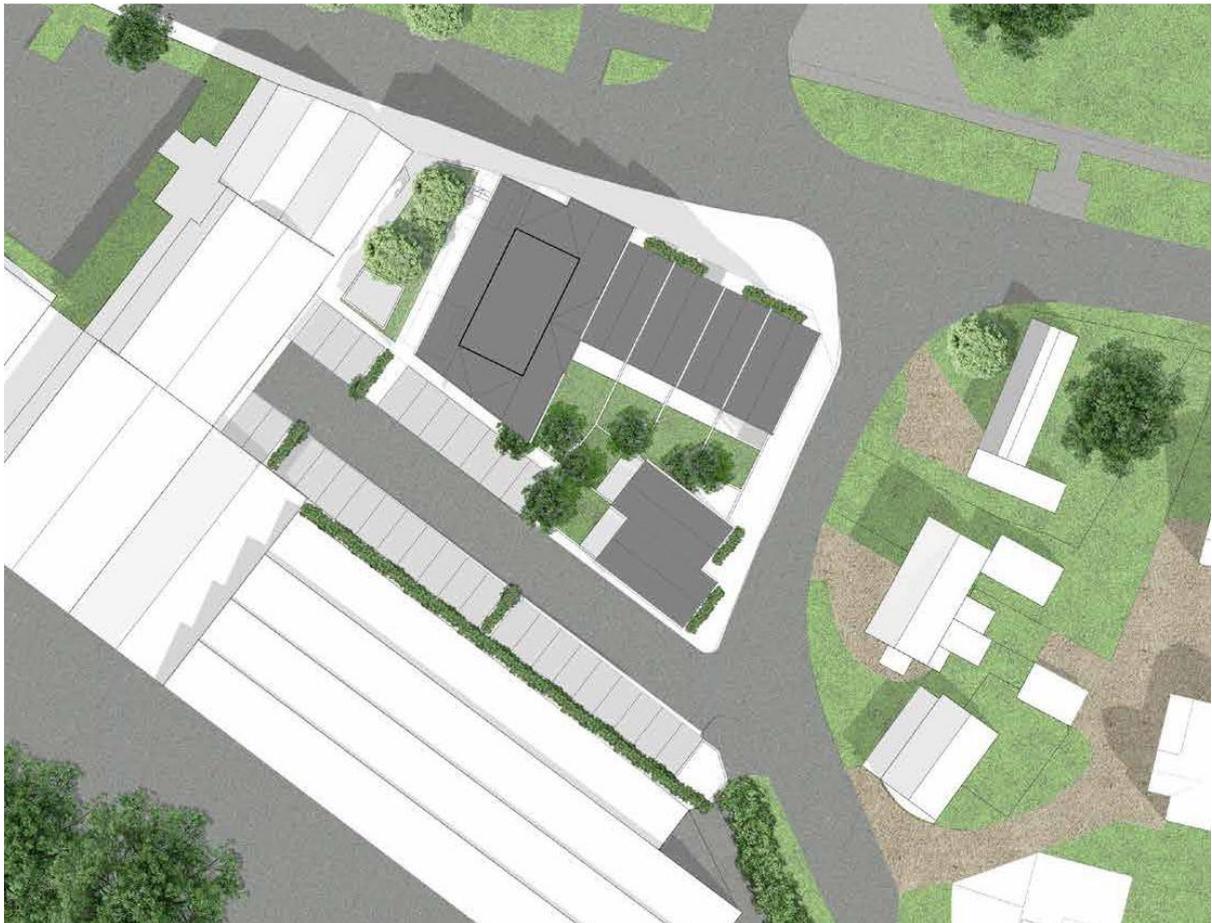
13. Landscape Plan

Greening the Site

In contrast to the existing site condition of hard surfacing (mainly tarmac and concrete), the proposal seeks to add significant soft landscaping to the site.

Generous gardens are at the rear of every townhouse and shared amenity space is included alongside the apartment building. The car parking is broken up with planting and has a border to the southern edge.

Although the communal green space is below the guidance, the site is less than 5 minutes walk to the common land and nature reserve to the south.



14. Proposed Plans



15. Proposed Elevations



16. Area Schedule

Total Development Floor Areas

GEA and GIA

The area schedule on the right gives all of the relevant figures for the proposal. The figures are also broken down into flats and houses, with individual units detailed to ensure compliance with minimum space standards.

Existing Areas

Floor	Use	GEA (sqm)	GIA (sqm)
Ground	Industrial	1020	993
Total (sqm)		1,020	993
Total (sqft)		10,975	10,685

Proposed Flat Areas

Floor	Use	GEA (sqm)	GIA (sqm)
1	Residential	366	280
2	Residential	366	280
3	Residential	306	232
Total (sqm)		1,038	792
Total (sqft)		11,172	8,525

Efficiency (Ratio of 'Flat GIA' to GIA)	76%
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Proposed House Areas

Floor	Use	GEA (sqm)	GIA (sqm)
0	Residential	303	277
1	Residential	315	282
2	Residential	104	93
Total (sqm)		722	652
Total (sqft)		7,769	7,016

Efficiency (Ratio of 'GIA' to GIA)	96%
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Proposed Commercial

Ground	Type	GIA
	Retail	69
	Gym	71
Sub-Total		140

Proposed Flats GIA

Plot	Floor	Type	Flat GIA (sqm)	Units	Bedrooms
A	1st	2b4p	72.03	1	2
B	1st	3b6p	109.44	1	3
C	1st	3b5p	102.50	1	3
D	2nd	2b4p	72.03	1	2
E	2nd	3b6p	109.44	1	3
F	2nd	3b5p	102.50	1	3
G	3rd	2b4p	72.03	1	2
H	3rd	1b2p	109.44	1	1
I	3rd	3b5p	102.50	1	3
Total			851.91	9	22

Proposed House GIA

Plot	Type	Flat GIA (sqm)	Units	Bedrooms
J	4B8P	134.00	1	4
k	4B8P	134.00	1	4
l	3B4P	89.00	1	3
M	3B4P	89.00	1	3
N	3B4P	89.00	1	3
O	3B4P	89.00	1	3
Total		624.00	6	20

Unit Type Mix

Type	no.	%
1 Bed	1	7%
2 Bed	4	27%
3 Bed	8	53%
4 Bed	2	13%
Total	15	100%

Refuse requirements

Type	Waste	Recycling
Requirement	60l per bed	60l per bed
Total (Litres)	2160	2160
Total Bins Req.	2.0	2.0

1100l bins assumed

Parking requirements

Unit	Ratio	Spaces
1 bed	1.5	6
2 bed	2	8
3 bed	2.5	15
4 bed+	3.5	7
Total		36

17. Employment Space

Improved Local Amenity Provision

One of the concerns at the pre-application stage was the loss of employment space.

The existing industrial unit is staffed by one person and is largely used as a storage facility for the individual's personal belongings. The building itself is unattractive and in poor repair.

The new proposal seeks to include 140sqm of new commercial space, split into two tenancies: retail space (A1 use class) fronting onto Lower Luton Road and a gym/studio space (D2 use class) facing onto the communal amenity space to the west.

This new commercial space will provide amenities for the local residents and the new school and better animate the streetscape with active frontage.

We anticipate that the proposed employment will increase, as a minimum of 2 people will be required to operate both units, as opposed to the single employer at the existing industrial unit.

Therefore, this proposal offers a significant improvement over the existing townscape condition and will not result in any loss of employment.



18. Parking and Servicing

Appropriate Parking and Servicing

We have provided commercial and residential parking spaces within the scheme that gives appropriate provision for the accommodation. The commercial parking is located close to the commercial units, while the residential parking acts as a buffer to the existing industrial units to the south.

Two communal bin stores are located on the development, offering secure storage for eurobins. A separate enclosure provides The full parking and servicing strategy is covered within the accompanying Transport Statement by Origin.

19. Flood Risk

Ground Floor Levels

Our proposed townhouses to the south of the site do encroach on the flood risk zone 2. However due to the addition of a new pavement along Crabtree Lane, the houses will be raised by 150mm from the existing car park level. This means the house thresholds are at a level of 84.9, which takes them out of the flood risk zone.

The flood risk assessment accompanies this application and provides further details.

20. Secure by Design

The previous planning application was designed following the Designing Out Crime officer, who was consulted and provided written responses, extracts of which are on the right, along with how we have resolved the issues raised. This proposal following the same principle.

“The entry into the apartment block is via the car park or from the Lower Luton Road. Both routes are via a relatively narrow strip of land with virtually no natural surveillance from surrounding buildings. The design shows a large recess into the building before reaching the double door.

This layout has the potential for users to be ambushed within the area without any escape. I would recommend the doors be brought forward to the building line and an open glass-topped canopy be employed for weather protection. This allows for good special awareness while entering and leaving the building.”

- The apartment block's main entrance has been moved onto Lower Luton Road and has been made to be a flush entrance door to avoid any recess.

“The car parking area is quite extensive and will require dusk to dawn lighting to act as a deterrent to vehicle crime, which is on the increase.”

- Dusk-to-dawn lighting will be incorporated.

“There is no indication of where the dust bins will be located or presented on collection day. What I fear most is alleyways to the rears of gardens granting access to the rears of housing where most criminal entries are made.”

- Refuse storage areas have been shown on the drawings - no alleyways exist in the gardens.

“The lack of a footpath down the Eastern side of the plot is of concern to me. People parking their cars in the rear parking area will not circumnavigate the whole site in a clockwise location. Rather they will walk out into the road.”

- Footpaths have been introduced along Crabtree Lane and to the south of the site, allowing pedestrians to circumnavigate the whole development safely.

“As most of these homes are likely to be for families, there will be children using this route with obvious dangers from HGV type vehicles entering the commercial areas of the existing site. I would ask for the installation of a paved footpath with railings to protect all pedestrians accessing their homes.”

- No HGV's will be entering the site or using Crabtree Lane once it has been developed. A footpath has been provided.

21. Artistic Impression

Crabtree Lane View

This proposed view shows how the scale of the houses is appropriate to the lane and how each house is articulated. The garden walls offer privacy and a material consistency around the development.

Blind windows offer texture and interest to the otherwise blank flank walls.



Lower Luton Road View

The view illustrated here shows how the development steps down in scale towards the eastern boundary but also steps back in plan from the main road.

The apartment building offers a strong street frontage, which gives active retail space at ground floor.



22. Conclusion

A Sympathetic and Contextual Development

We believe this scheme will be a high-quality development acting as a gateway to Harpenden from Lower Luton Road and will complement not just the historic surrounding context but also the new school buildings opposite. It will replace an ugly and introverted industrial building and enhance this important corner.

The proposal is sympathetic in materials, forms and heights. However, the scheme is also contemporary in its detailing and fenestration. An appropriate 21st-century interpretation of a mill site.

