

Proposed 'Homes for Later Living'

Design & Access Statement

Former Buzz Bingo Hall

**Bolton Road
BANBURY
Oxfordshire
OX16 0TH**

December 2021

planning*issues*
TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

Churchill
Retirement Living 

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1 INTRODUCTION

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

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 126

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Purpose

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

National Design Guide Paragraph 8

Proposal

The proposal is for the comprehensive redevelopment of the vacant buildings and associated land that comprises the former Buzz Bingo Hall and car park (The Site) at the corner of Castle Street and North Bar Street, Banbury, OX16 0TH, with construction of a retirement housing development of circa. 80no. apartments and associated communal facilities, vehicular access, car parking and landscaping.

Vision

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

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

Scope

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Planning Issues Ltd. on behalf of the applicant, Churchill Retirement Living, in support of a detailed planning application.

Matters relating to planning policies and other material considerations will be covered in a separate Planning Statement included with the application.

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



1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Requirements of an Ageing Population

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

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

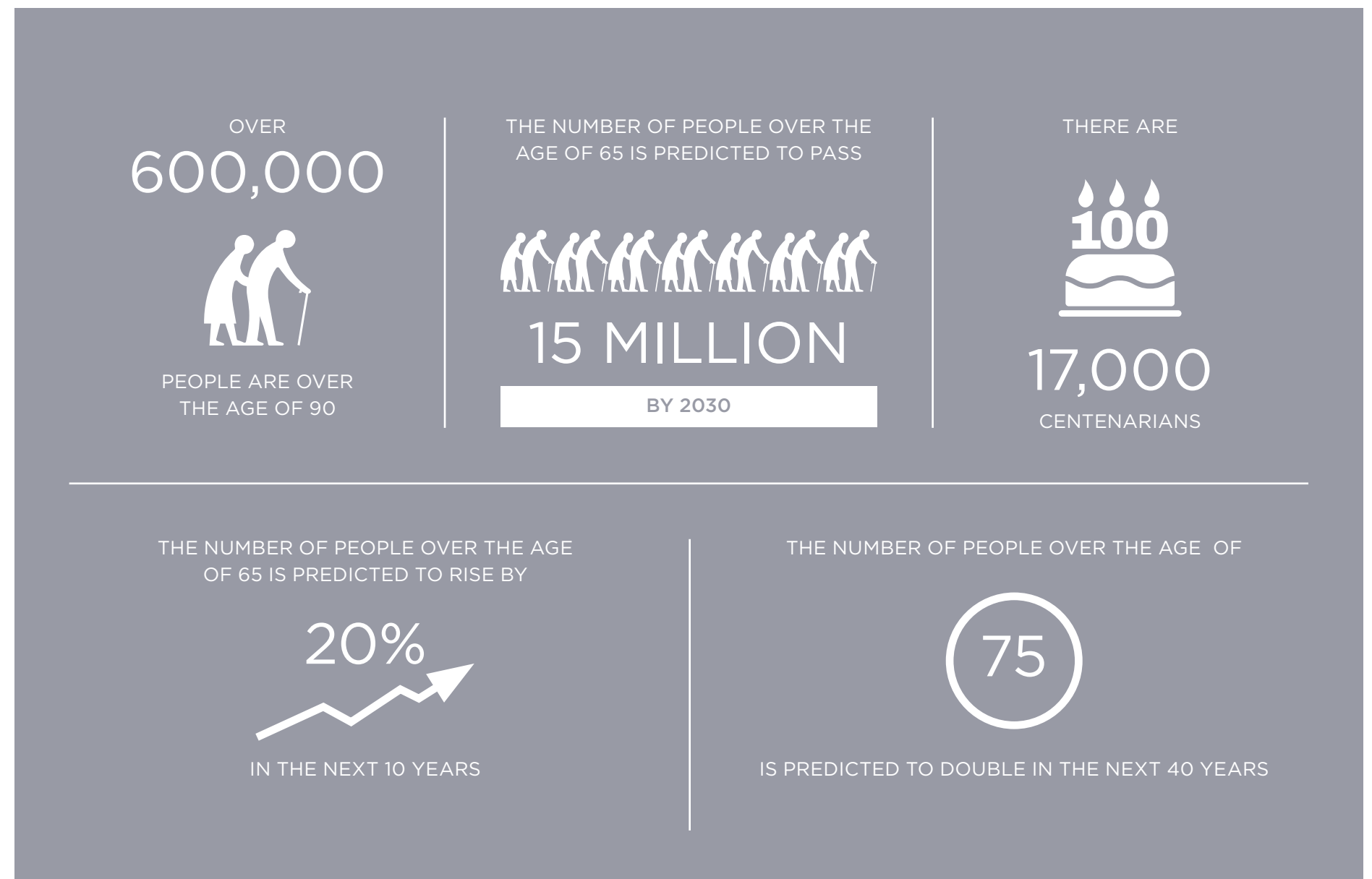
However the vast majority of our housing stock is not built with the needs of older people in mind. There are still far too few suitable new homes being delivered, and many older people are living in homes which are unable to meet their changing needs.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.3 Owner Occupied Retirement Living Typology

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

‘Homes for Later Living’¹ means specially designed housing suitable for older people who want to maintain the independence and privacy that comes with having a home of their own but no longer want or need a family sized house.

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

Key differences to mainstream housing are:

- The provision of extensive communal areas where neighbours can socialise, host visitors and be part of a friendly, like-minded community. This is centred on the ‘Owner’s Lounge’ which is the heart of the community and where owners often organise social events. There is usually a coffee or tea bar associated with the Owner’s Lounge.
- The presence of a Lodge Manager to look out for people’s welfare, be a point of call if help is needed, make sure the communal areas are well maintained and to be a reassuring, friendly presence. Lodge Managers also create the community; organising events and trips.
- A limited number of entrances, usually one, that is close to the Lodge Manager. This keeps the community secure and allows passive surveillance of the entrance area.
- A lift to all floors with level access throughout.
- Each apartment with its own front door giving privacy whenever desired.
- A guest room which can be booked by residents for visitors.
- A digital ‘Careline’ support system in all apartments for emergency support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Communal grounds with well landscaped external space available to all.
- Communal upkeep and maintenance including the exterior of the building landscaping.
- Reduced reliance on cars due to sustainable locations close to amenities.
- Buggy store.
- Communal areas amount to circa 25% of the internal area.



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



1 INTRODUCTION

1.4 Benefits of Homes for Later Living

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

Social

Retirement housing gives rise to many social benefits:

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

Economic

Retirement housing gives rise to many economic benefits:

- Each person living in a home for later living enjoys a reduced risk of health challenges, contributing fiscal savings to the NHS and social care services of approximately £3,500 per year (Homes for Later Living September 2019).
- With circa 80 units proposed, at a ratio of 1.3 people per apartment, there will be around 104 occupants. At a saving of £3,500 each per year, this equates to a saving of £364,000 per year in local NHS and social care costs, in comparison to mainstream housing. This is a significant economic benefit.
- A recent report entitled Silver Saviours for the High Street (February 2021) found that retirement properties create more local economic value and more local jobs than any other type of residential development. For an average 45 unit retirement scheme, the residents generate £550,000 of spending a year, £347,000 of which is spent on the high street, directly contributing to keeping local shops open.
- An average retirement scheme will support the following new jobs:
 - 85 construction jobs.
 - 1 permanent job in repairs and renovations.
 - 2.3 permanent jobs in management and care.
 - 3.2 permanent jobs on the local high street (residents are basket shoppers and will do their shopping locally).

Environmental

The proposal provides a number of key environmental benefits by:

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



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



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



£3,500 P/A

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



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



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



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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.5 The Applicant - Who are Churchill Retirement Living Ltd?

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

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

“Our commitment to developing excellence and quality on every occasion rests in our continuing to provide the lifetime needs and communal services requirements of each of our 10,000+ resident home owners.”



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

- **The WhatHouse Awards.** The only retirement housebuilder ever to have been awarded ‘Housebuilder of the Year’ and in 2019 were again named ‘Best Medium Housebuilder’
- **The HBF Customer Satisfaction Survey.** Churchill retain the top ‘5 star’ status having been recommended by more than 90% of our customers
- **The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For.** In 2019 Churchill achieved 2nd place in this prestigious business award and in 2020 we achieved 3rd place

Summarised below are some of CRL's key statistics;

- **Over 7,500 apartments under management**
- **Five regional offices around the country**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.6 Applicant Brief

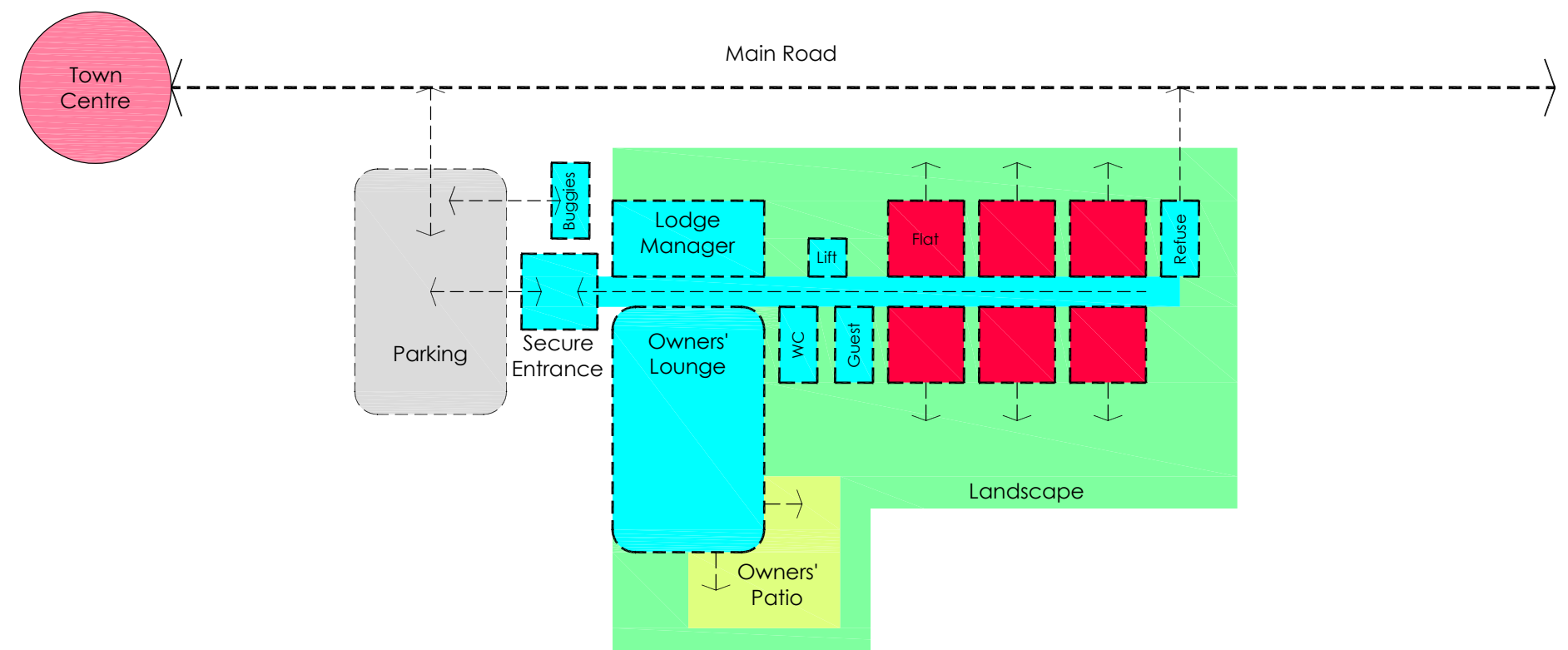
Site selection close to amenities and in an area with identified need is key in the first instance. In designing the development the subject of this planning application, Planning Issues have had a clear brief on the specific requirements of Churchill Retirement Living in order for the design to be successful.

Key client requirements for the architectural design are:

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

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

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



1 INTRODUCTION

1.7 Brief Requirement Examples



Secure Main Entrance from Parking



Owners' Lounge



Owners' Patio



Concierge Reception Lodge Manager



Typical Guest Suite



Typical Coffee Bar

1 INTRODUCTION

1.8 Precedent Developments



Dartford



Sittingbourne



Carshalton



Huntingdon



Portswood



Locks Heath

2 CONTEXT

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

National Design Guide Paragraph 39



2 CONTEXT

2.1 Site Description

The site is located within the western side of central Banbury, Oxfordshire.

The site comprises a single large detached industrial building situated to the corner of Castle Street and North Bar Street. The current building envelops Trelawn House, an existing Grade-II Listed property which fronts North Bar Street.

The site is broadly rectangular in shape and is 0.50Ha, measuring approximately 58m in length from north to south, and 105m from east to west.

The site is sloping; there is a rise from the north of the site to south of approximately 3.25m. The wider area of Banbury also slopes south-to north. The junction of North Bar Street, Castle Street, Southam Road and Warwick Road appears to be the low point of the wider area.

The site addresses two main roads within Banbury; the northern boundary fronts onto Castle Street which leads east to Castle Quay Shopping Centre, the western boundary fronts onto North Bar Street, a historic thoroughfare on the western side of the town, which leads to the historic High Street and the Banbury Cross statue.

The eastern boundary fronts onto Bolton Road, a side road which acts as a service road that leads to rear ends of the majority of the burgage plots in the immediate area. The south boundary is formed by a pedestrian walkway that separates the site from 42 North Bar Street.

The character of the area is mixed. It contains older terraced buildings and dwellings, ranging from 2.5 to 3.5 stories in height, generally from the late Georgian or early Victorian period. The majority of these are sited towards the front of their plots and to the back edge of the footway. On the corner of North Bar Street and Warwick Road is a modern 4 storey development

Immediately to the east of the site is the Bolton Road long stay car park, which used to be a multi-storey car park but has since been demolished.

The site is designated within the 'Banbury Vision & Masterplan' document (December 2016) as 'development site 8', with an aspiration to improve and lengthen the frontage to Castle Street, and introduce new strategic landscaping.



2 CONTEXT

2.2 Contextual History

Historically, the site and immediate area of Banbury has been a built-up urban area of Banbury from the late 18th century onwards.

The junction of Warwick Road, North Bar Street, Castle Street and Southam Road was the site of 'North Bar', one of the 5 historic town toll stations.

Whilst North Bar Street, more so to the south of the site, has avoided major change, Castle Street was originally far narrower than it is today. Similarly, the urban grain was far denser.

They can be characterised by long terraced development and burgage plots

Over time, the buildings that were directly adjacent and opposite to the Three Pigeons public house were demolished and Castle Street gradually widened.

Similarly, the open green space to the north-west of the site and bowling green to the east of the site has been consumed by urban development.

The site was once home to a Tanners Yard, though that has long since been demolished.

At the start of the 1980's the site was redeveloped into a Bingo Hall with associated car parking, and commercial offices fronting Castle Street and North Bar Street, enveloping Trelawn House on three sides.

The Banbury Conservation Area Appraisal (BCAA), point 22.2.5.5, describes the Castle Street / Bolton Road area as follows -

"The town planning schemes of the 20th century have left Banbury with current day Castle Street and Bolton Road area, the remains of the northern working canal-side suburb of the town. The area now comprises a limited number of terraces of 19th century housing which sits ill with the 20th century roads that have been engineered through. The multi-storey car park has now gone and the site sits ready for a heritage inspired scheme sympathetic to the northern boundary of the medieval core and the remaining terraced housing with will enhance the approach to the canal."



Ordnance Survey Map, circa 1882



Ordnance Survey Map, circa 1966



View of North Bar Street, circa 1908



View of North Bar Street, circa 1920, now demolished

2 CONTEXT

2.3 Conservation Area & Listed Buildings Character

Although the site is not located within the 'Main Route' conservation area, it sits on the eastern boundary of it. Similarly the site lies south of the 'Castle Street' conservation area, on the opposite side of the road. It is however recognised that the site lies within 'the setting' of these two conservation areas.

The Buzz Bingo Hall envelopes Trelawn House, a Grade II Listed building, on three sides.

Trelawn House was a building that was formerly part of a narrower terrace, and was extended to the rear (on the east facing side). These extensions have been removed.

Trelawn House is noted within BCAA as a 'Designated Heritage Asset' within the Banbury Conservation Area. 42, 45, 48 and 49 North Bar Street are also recognised as Designated Heritage Assets, as is the Three Pigeons Public House.

Historic maps show that before the road widening of Castle Street and North Bar Street it was the end building within this row, and occupied a 'corner' position.

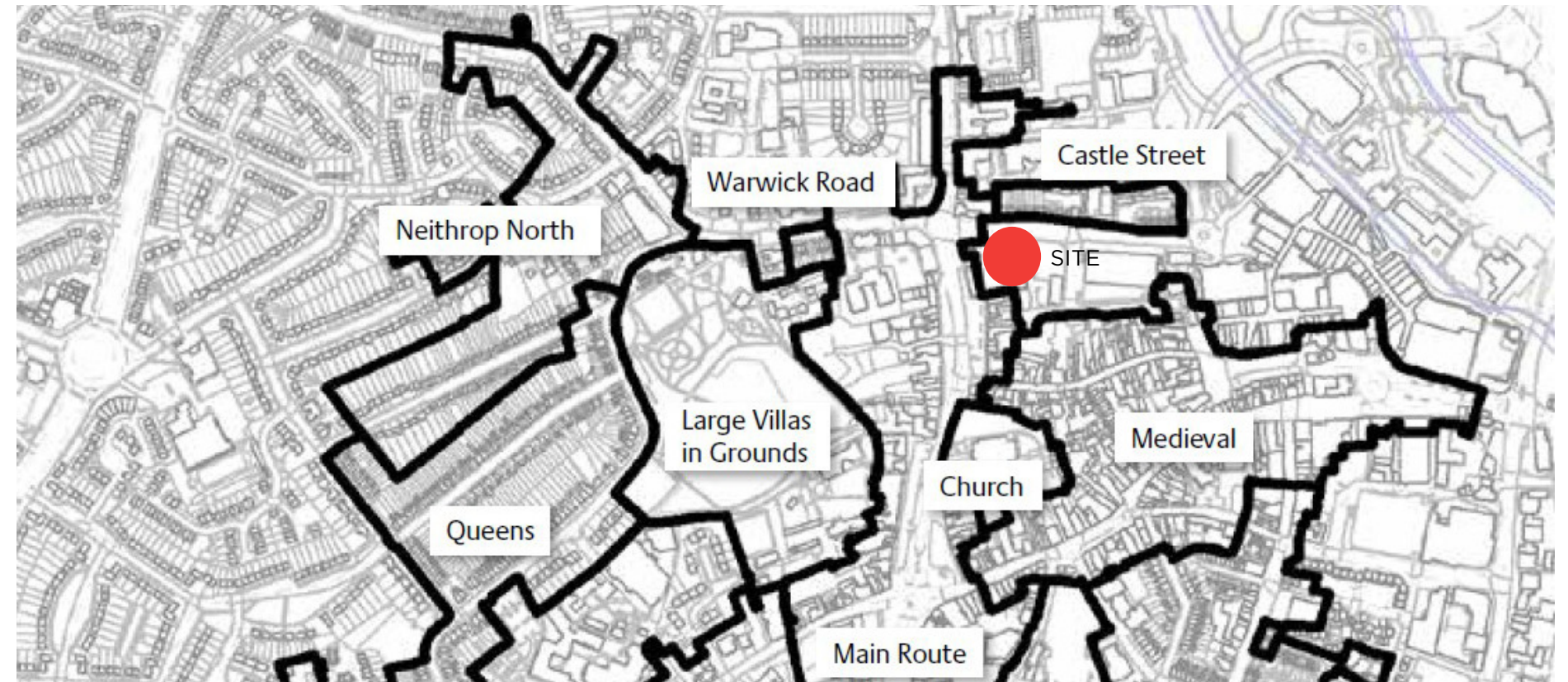
Historic England describes the building as the following -

"House now offices. Early C19. Red brick. Hipped slate roof. 2 brick end stacks. 2 storeys; 3-window range. Central entrance has panelled door with decorative overlight and doorcase with fluted Ionic columns. Doorway is flanked by 2 sashes with glazing bars (3-pane width). 3 similar windows to first floor. All windows have stepped keystone voussoirs. Interior: plain C19 details including doors, door frames, ceiling mouldings and staircase."

It is a distinct building within the area, although its presence on the street scene is somewhat diminished by the Bingo Hall.

The Banbury Conservation Area Appraisal (BCAA), page 4, describes the Main Route Corridor area as follows -

"Despite comprising of a variety of building types, ages, uses and architectural styles, the homogeneity of this character area is derived from its linear space clearly defined by strong building lines."



Map showing boundaries of Banbury Conservation Areas (p.29, Banbury Conservation Area Appraisal)



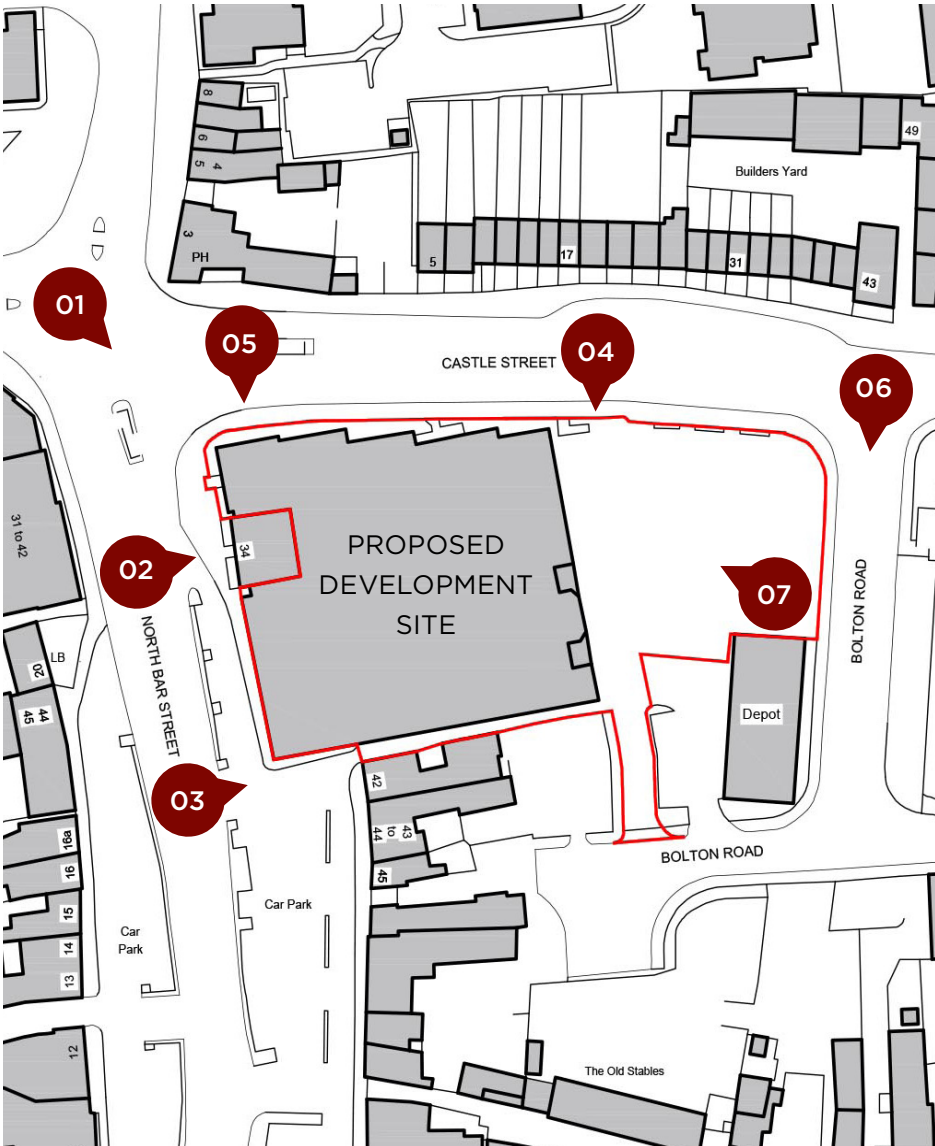
View of North Bar Street, circa 1920



View of North Bar Street, circa 1982

2 CONTEXT

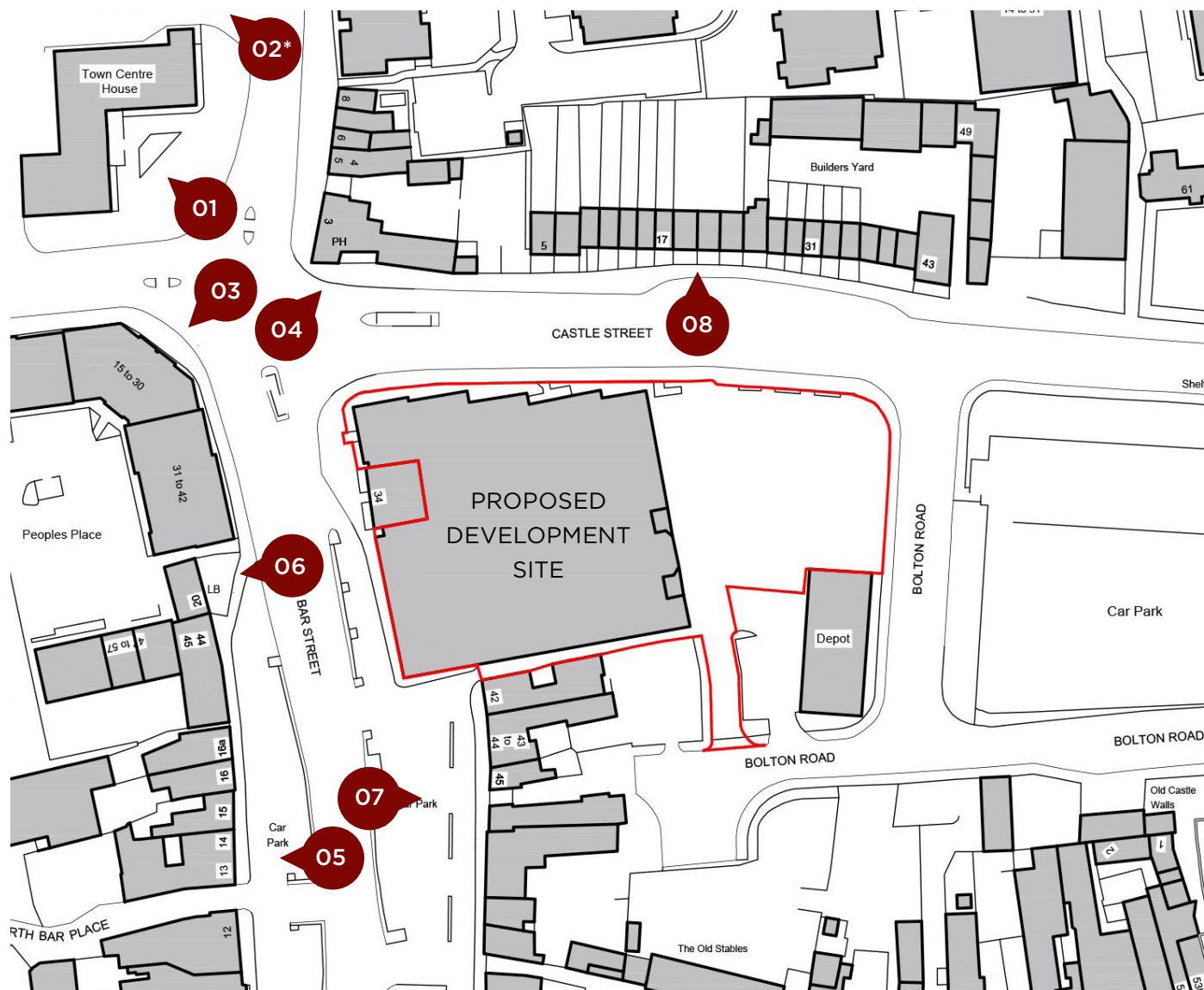
2.4 Existing Site Photographs



2 CONTEXT

2.5 Site Context Photographs

Note - some of the context photos are taken of development slightly beyond the area shown on the above map. These are indicated with a (*).



2 CONTEXT

2.6 Design Precedents

The predominate style of building that surrounds the site is that of older terraced buildings sited to the front of long, narrow burgage plots, or newer buildings that take their inspiration from this historical feature.

The heights of the buildings range from low 2-storeys (the Three Pigeons Public House) to 3.5- and 4-storeys (Peoples Place, Town Centre House). Buildings of differing heights sit adjacent to one another.

The predominate building material to Castle Street is red brick and the building style is traditional. The main brick is supplemented by a palette of light renders and stone flat-arched heads and cills. The prevalence of stone becomes more dominant further to the south of the site.

The roof ridge lines along Castle Street and North Bar Street are relatively continuous, only broken by the different heights of the dwellings and internal gables. There are few irregular gaps and breaks between properties and roof finishes are predominantly grey tile.

Common features include chimneys, feature gables, uPVC glazing with glazing bars, stone headers and cills, dormer windows (some with pitched roofs) above.

There are very few boundary hedges / trees to soften the strong built forms along Castle Street and North Bar Street. Frontage boundaries are defined by the buildings presenting themselves directly to the back edge of footway.

The more recent buildings in the area tend to have less articulation than older buildings, are mainly of one type of brick with little variation in height, eaves line, ridge line, steps in form, distinct and separate frontages, and have square windows etc.



Terraces to Castle Street, opposite the Site



Peoples Place, opposite corner of the site



Merisham Court, to the north of the site



Keys Court, to the north of the Site

2 CONTEXT

2.7 Building Heights

In general terms, the majority of the buildings that surround the proposed development site are 3-storeys interspersed with buildings that are 2 storeys or 2.5 storeys.

The Bingo Hall and Land Tyre Service are bulky, 'tall' 2-storey buildings, which have no residential scale or features to them.

The majority of the residential properties to Castle Street are 3-storeys.

The majority of the properties to North Bar Street are 2.5- to 3-storeys.

The height to the corner of Warwick Road, Southam Road and North Bar Street rises from 3-storeys to 4-storeys.



Comparison of building heights surrounding the site

2 CONTEXT

2.8 Building Typology

In general terms, the majority of the buildings that surround the proposed development fall into two categories with distinct and separate characteristics.

The buildings identified in purple are more from the historic medieval core. They address the footway and are towards the front of their burgage plots when viewed from the street. Each burgage plot is very narrow and so is the frontage of the building in the terrace.

The buildings identified in blue are more recent development / re-development. They address the footway but are more subtly positioned towards the centres of their plots. Their plots are wider and squarer and subsequently their elevations are longer, with less variation in materials and features.

The site sits at an junction between the two typologies.



Comparison of building typology surrounding the site