

Application No: 09/0888M

Location: 48, HOBSON STREET, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE, SK11 8BD

Proposal: DEMOLITION OF OFFICE BUILDING AND ERECTION OF 5 TOWNHOUSES (RE-SUBMISSION)

For MR ANDREW WOOTTON

Registered 24-Apr-2009

Policy Item No

Grid Reference 391684 372880

Date Report Prepared: 29.05.09

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions and receipt of any further representations.

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Design
- Impact upon highway safety;
- Impact upon residential amenity

REASON FOR REPORT

The application was 'called-in' to committee by the Councillor Gaddum due to neighbours' concerns in relation to the impact on neighbouring properties, the impact on the neighbouring conservation area and the likely increase in parking in that area. The application was considered at the Northern Planning Committee on 20.05.09. Members deferred the application for a site visit which was undertaken on 05.06.09.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site is a rectangular parcel of land located on the corner of Hobson Street and Cholmondeley Street. The eastern side of Cholmondeley Street (adjacent to, but outside the application site) is within the High Street Conservation Area. The site is presently occupied by a 2-storey building which was previously used as an office. To the south of the site are three prefabricated garages which front Hobson Street.

The immediate neighbourhood is characterized by residential development, which includes terraced properties and semi detached dwellings.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks permission to erect 5no. three bedroom townhouses in a 2 and a half storey terraced block. The scheme represents a scaled down submission following an application for 5 dwellings which was withdrawn on 16.09.08 (08/1813P). Each unit would comprise an entrance hall, kitchen/lounge and wc on the ground floor with 2no. bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor and a bedroom within the roofspace. The fifth unit would effectively have the appearance of a squat 3 storey dwelling.

The front of the dwellings face Cholmondeley Street. It has been designed as a terrace of four dwellings with the tallest building on the corner, fronting Hobson Street. This has been designed with reference to the house on the corner of Cholmondeley Street and Peel Street. The elevations would be faced in red brick with a slate roof.

There would be no off street parking provided with the development. Access would be provided to the rear of the properties for bin access to plots 2-5. Plot 1 would have access to the side of the dwelling onto Cholmondeley Street.

RELEVANT HISTORY

08/1813P - Demolition of existing two storey office building and erection of five town houses – Withdrawn 16.09.08

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1, DP5, DP6, DP7, L2, L4

Local Plan Policy

NE11, BE1, BE3, BE7, H1-H3, H13, DC1-DC3, DC6, DC8, DC38.

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

The Highways Engineer raises no objections to the proposed development.

Environmental Health:

The Environmental Health Officer raises no objections to this application. The Contaminated Land Officer notes that the application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present. A Phase 1 contaminated land report to assess the actual/potential contamination risks at the site should be submitted. If the Phase 1 report recommends that a phase 2 investigation is required then the results of this will also be submitted. If contaminants are found then a remediation statement will be required followed by a site Completion Report which details the conclusions and actions taken at each stage.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

15 letters of objection have been received. The letters are available for inspection on the application file and are summarised as follows: -

A resident of 51 Peel Street objects on the grounds of loss of light and sunshine, and the possibility that the boundary hedge may be removed. Concern is also raised in relation to traffic and parking in relation to Chapel Street, Peel Street, Cholmondeley Street and Hobson Street, especially at peak times. The area is a Conservation Area.

A letter has been received from the occupier of 79 Hobson Street who is seriously concerned that no allowance for parking is included in the above plans. Many of the residents have campaigned for years for tenant parking restrictions, which residents are very willing to pay for. The proposals include many environmental impacts that the proposed build may have, without including the people who have lived and made Hobson Street a quiet and friendly place to live.

A letter has been received from the occupier of 54 Hobson Street who raises the following issues: -

Out of keeping

Overdevelopment

Lack of parking space in the local area - the site is close to the entrance of South Park, which attracts many young people and families

The proposed development does not comply with the privacy guidelines for new development

There will be a loss of light to the side aspect and rear of 54 Hobson Street and garden area

There will be an impact on security as a passageway is proposed adjacent to the front door of no. 54 Hobson Street

The environmental impact of the development on the cusp of a conservation area

The impact on market value of the writers' property from such a dense development

Access to the writers' side gable wall for maintenance

Loss of trees

There is a lack of need for housing in the local area

The occupier of 60 Hobson Street objects to the scheme on the ground of insufficient parking accommodation within the vicinity of the site and as the garden at no. 60 is elevated, the writers feel that they will be completely overlooked.

The occupier of no. 3 Cholmondeley Street objects on the grounds of loss of parking and that the site is within a conservation area.

The occupier of no. 69 Hobson Street objects on the grounds that the dwelling will appear out of place and that the rooflights will give the tenants a birds eye view into neighbouring gardens. The gable end of Plot five will be an eyesore. The noise and disturbance during the development will be unacceptable.

The occupier of no. 53 Peel Street objects on the grounds of loss of privacy in the writers back garden and loss of light during the summer months. If the trees to the rear are cut down then this will affect the bats which currently reside there. The buildings will be out of keeping. There is already insufficient parking in the area. It is a complete over development of the land.

The occupier of no. 56 Hobson Street objects on the grounds of loss of light, privacy and parking. The development fails to comply with a list of local plan policies (a list is provided). The design is out of character with the area, which adjoins a conservation area. The proposal will double the number of residents on Cholmondeley Street, which cannot be comfortably accommodated. Access to the rear will be from Hobson Street and this will allow passers by to access the site and compromise the security of surrounding dwellings.

The occupier of no. 48a Peel Street objects on the grounds that the Hobson Street façade is a disadvantage, it would be better if Plot 5 was turned to face Hobson Street.

The occupier of no. 74 Hobson Street objects on the grounds of lack of parking.

The occupier of no. 2A Cholmondeley Street objects on the grounds that Cholmondeley Street is very small to start with and is used as a race course cut through by other road users. The development will also cause a loss of light into the writers' house.

The occupier of 58 Hobson Street objects on the grounds that the townhouses would cause overcrowding. Cars which belong to people who work in the offices at the top of the street, have vanished to the top of Hobson Street and John Street. A planning company has these offices and this company was involved in submitting the previous application. Concern is raised for bats which may live in the roofspace of the existing building. Parking in the vicinity will increase due to the redevelopment of the skate park.

The occupier of no. 62 Hobson Street objects on the grounds of loss of parking, security, removal of trees, possible drainage problems and potential impact on bats who may be in the existing property.

The occupier of no. 34 Hobson Street objects on the grounds of loss of parking, the height of the development and loss of light.

The occupier of no. 71 Hobson Street objects on the grounds that the height has not been reduced significantly and no facility has been made for off-road parking.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted to accompany the application which considers issues such as use, layout, scale, landscape, appearance and access. The report is available on the application file and concludes that the scheme has been altered following discussions with the Council's Officers in relation to the planning policies contained within the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. The scheme's footprint has been reduced in depth so altering the ridge height of the proposal. The proposal is now in keeping with the existing street scene and will compliment the High Street Conservation Area. Using the design of windows and boundary treatments, the proposal would have little or no impact on residential amenity and would respect and enhance the visual amenity and character of the area. The site is a highly sustainable location within a predominantly residential area. The proposal will make good use of a previously developed piece of land and help meet the council's requirements of additional housing in sustainable locations.

A Highways Statement has also been submitted which considers the impact on parking within the local area. A parking survey has been carried out.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The determining issues are whether the 5no. dwellings would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, the potential impact on local residents, the impact on trees, the impact on the housing policy, the desirability of maximising the use of previously developed land and impact on parking and highway safety.

Policy

The site lies within a Predominantly Residential Area on the adopted Macclesfield Borough Local Plan where residential uses are acceptable in principle. The application needs to be assessed against Local Plan Policy BE1 (Design Guidance), BE3 (Conservation Areas), BE7 (High Street Conservation Area), H1, (Housing Phasing), H2, (Environmental Quality in Housing Developments), H3 (Making Best Use of Land), H13 (Protecting Residential Areas), and Development Control Policies DC1, DC3, and DC38, which relate to the standard of design, amenity and space standards. Policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. Policy DC8 relates to landscape and tree issues.

The scheme would provide accommodation to meet the needs of the Borough's population in accordance with the Borough's Housing Strategy.

A report on the supply of housing has been approved by the Environment Policy Development Committee and the Cabinet of MBC, which effectively replaced the previous SPG on Restricting the Supply of Housing with the new guidance "PPS3 Housing and Saved Policies Advice Note".

The Advice Note is based on a list of 5 criteria outlined in PPS3 which planning authorities should have regard to when deciding planning applications for new housing and on the Council's saved policies and other guidance in PPS3. In summary, the Advice Note states that planning applications for new housing should meet the following criteria.

1. Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives (*does the application accord with the housing objectives of the Borough and wider policy objectives e.g. affordable housing and urban regeneration*)
2. Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people (*does the application meet the housing needs of the area and/or provide affordable housing*)
3. The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability (*is the site in a suitable and sustainable location, is it previously developed land, what constraints exist*)
4. Using land effectively and efficiently (*is the density at least 30 dwellings per hectare*)
5. Achieving high quality housing (*is the site accessible to public transport and services, is the development well laid out, safe, accessible and user friendly, is there adequate open space and/or access to recreational open space, does the design complement/improve the character of the area, is the car parking well designed and integrated, does the development enhance biodiversity*)

In this case it is considered that the proposal broadly complies with the five listed criteria. The site is considered to be in a suitable and sustainable location. It is a previously developed site, within an area surrounded by housing, which is within walking distance of public transport links and to services. The scheme achieves high quality housing in a town centre location.

Highways

The Highways Engineer comments that the proposal causes no concern for the highway department. It was noted under the previous application that there was spare capacity for on-street parking available within the vicinity of the site. A condition should be attached which requires pedestrian visibility splays either side of the access drive to the garage which is to be retained fronting Hobson Street.

Design

The site lies within a residential area of a mixture of traditional terraced properties, semi detached dwellings and a four storey apartment block. The predominant walling material is brick, however there are some rendered frontages to properties.

This property does not lie within a Conservation Area nor is it Listed; however it does lie adjacent to the High Street Conservation Area. The applicant entered into pre-application discussions with the Conservation Officer and advice has been taken on board. The building would be sympathetic in design terms to the terraced properties contained within the Conservation Area. The unit on the corner of Cholmondeley Street and Hobson Street would be effectively 3 storeys in height and it is considered that this would provide visual interest to the corner.

This proposal has addressed some of the concerns were expressed in relation to the original application regarding the appearance and scale of the proposed development have now been addressed. The dwellings would be set back approximately 2.3 metres back from the pavement. It is considered that the general massing and proportions of the development would be similar to the other terraced properties in the close vicinity of the site.

The western elevation which fronts Hobson Street would have blanked off windows to provide visual interest and avoid a large blank wall. The southern elevation (facing the rear of no. 54 Hobson Street) would have roof lights in the roof and angled first floor bay windows.

The overall design makes use of traditional elements of brick, and slate pitched roofs. Chimneys, stone lintels and brick arches above windows would also be included for visual appeal.

Amenity

The dwellings to all sides of the application site have been closely considered in respect of the impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

The proposed development includes the demolition of existing buildings on site. The existing building is constructed adjacent to the pavement on Cholmondeley Street, where as the proposed dwellings would be set back approximately 2.3 metres from the pavement. The building on the corner would however be taller at this point. Overall, it is considered that the amenity of the occupants of no. 44 Hobson Street (in respect of space, light and privacy) would either be improved or at least maintained at existing levels. In regards to the impact on properties to the north (on Cholmondeley Street), the proposed dwellings would result in being approx. 11m from the front of the existing dwellings (no.2 and 4). The distance between the side elevation of Plot 5 on no. 63 Hobson Street would be approximately 16 metres. Although the distances above do not meet the desired distance standards for new build, it is noted that the general relationship between properties front-to-front on Cholmondeley Street and Hobson Street (and within the area) ranges between approx. 9 metres and 16 metres. Hence, the proposed development ensures that a commensurate degree of space, light and privacy between these properties is achieved, which accords with policy DC38. There would be a degree of overlooking from Plots 1 to 3, over the rear gardens on no. 54 and 56 Hobson Street.

Bearing the above points in mind it is considered on balance that the impact on neighbour amenity would be acceptable given the space distance, orientation of the properties, and overall relationships.

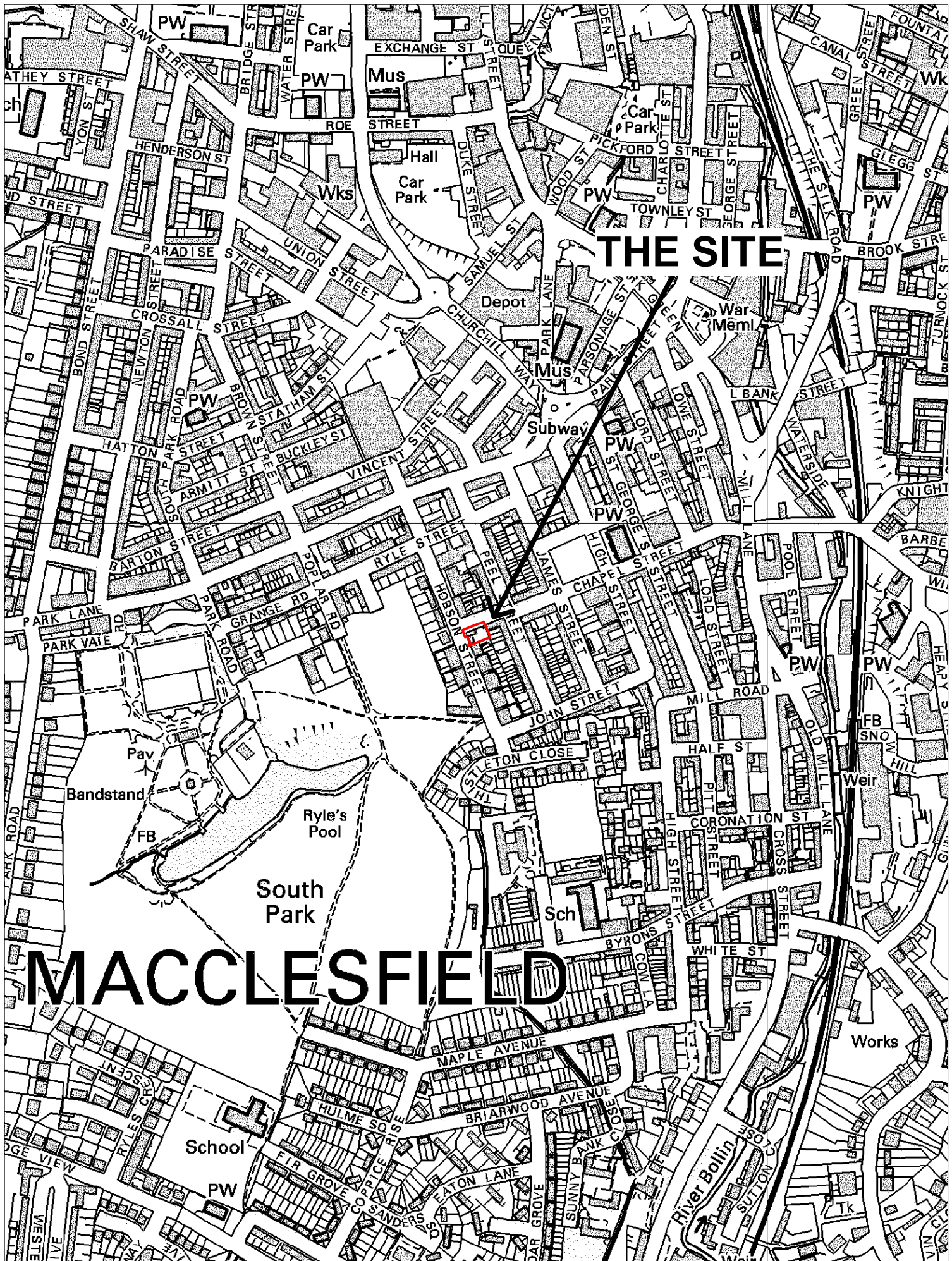
Ecology

There are two trees to the rear of the application site. The Arboricultural Officer considers that they are of low amenity value and make no significant contribution to the street scene. It is also noted that the trees have a poor social proximity to neighbouring properties.

The Nature Conservation officer raises no objections to the proposals as it is not anticipated that there would be any significant ecological impacts associated with the proposed development. Whilst the loss of the trees would have a minor impact on the local bat population through a reduction in foraging habitat, the change of use from an office to town houses with what would be gardens which can be planted with a range of species, is likely to mitigate for this. A condition should be attached for the incorporation of features into the scheme suitable for use by roosting bats.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The demolition of the existing office and the erection of five terraced town houses is an efficient use of this brownfield site. The comments of the residents are noted. It is acknowledged that the proposed development does not comply with the desired distance standards for new development; however, the development would be commensurate with the space, light and privacy distances within the area. The removal of two out of three of the prefabricated garages adjacent to no. 54 Hobson Street would make a positive contribution to the general amenity of the area. The dwellings are located in a sustainable location and contribute to the housing needs of the Borough. It is considered that the design is in keeping with the area and that the proposed scheme would make a positive contribution to the views into and out of the Conservation Area and the street-scene in general. No objections have been raised by the Conservation Officer. The development has been considered from a secure by design perspective and it is not considered to raise any significant issues for any residents of the scheme or any neighbours. The impact on a residents' property value is not a material planning consideration, nor is the issue of how a neighbour's side wall would be maintained. Overall, the benefits of the proposed development are considered to outweigh any negative aspects and a recommendation of approval is offered, subject to any further representations from neighbours.



09/0888M 48, HOBSON STREET, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE

N.G.R. - 391,690 - 372,880

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Application for **Full Planning**

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
3. A02EX - Submission of samples of building materials
4. A17EX - Specification of window design / style
5. A01LS - Landscaping - submission of details
6. A04LS - Landscaping (implementation)
7. A22GR - Protection from noise during construction (hours of construction)
8. A23GR - Pile Driving
9. Contaminated land report
10. Features suitable for roosting bats
11. Visibility splays either side of garage