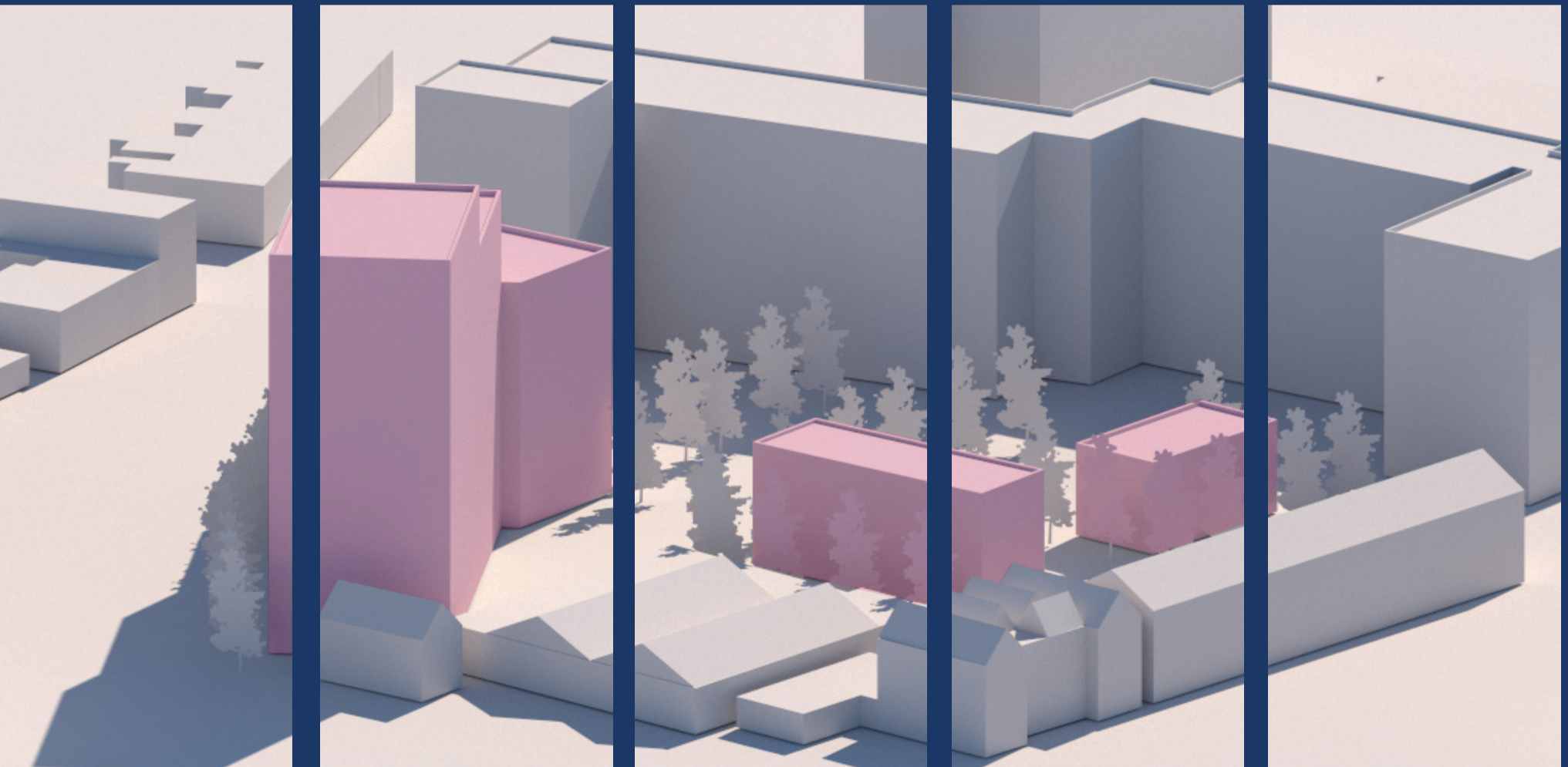


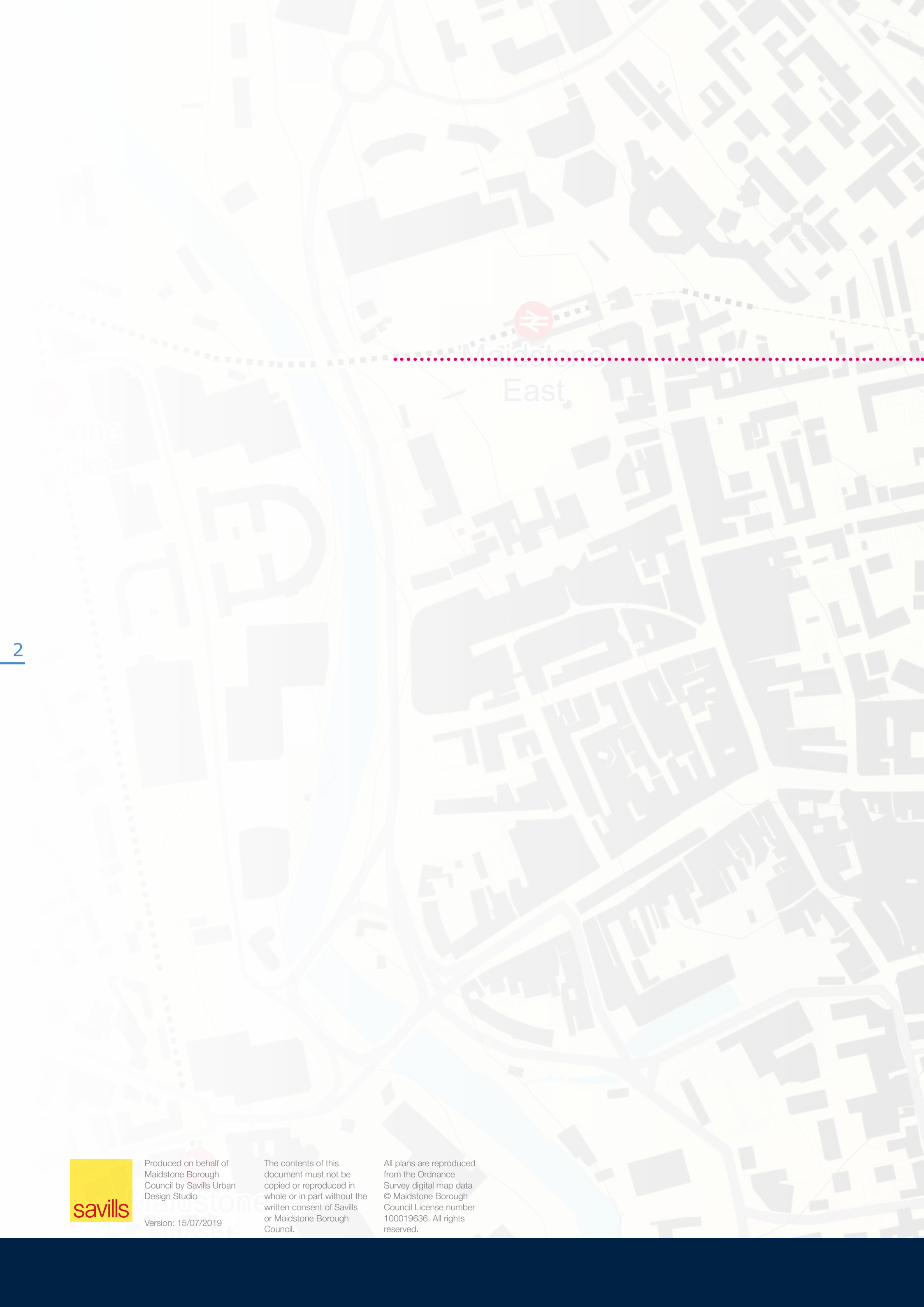
# Mote Road

Planning Guidelines | January 2019

OPPORTUNITY SITES

MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE





Produced on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council by Savills Urban Design Studio

Version: 15/07/2019

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## Vision Statement

*New development on the Mote Road site will contribute to a vibrant and exciting place to live and work, close to the heart of Maidstone town centre. The development will champion good design and provide high quality public realm and urban living, offering homes and opportunities to work within the heart of the town.*

# Objectives for the Site

## **To create a mixed use development incorporating office and residential space**

Development should comply with Maidstone Borough Local Plan (MBLP) Policy RMX1(6).

## **To enhance the public realm and scenic quality of Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way**

The development provides the opportunity to present a new frontage to this street, providing visual enclosure and associated natural surveillance. By setting the properties back from the street, the pedestrian environment can be improved and space allowed for large-scale avenue tree planting. With a significant set back from Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way, adequate space will be provided for tree planting (indigenous species) and this will help to soften and improve the local environment and also assist with combating air pollution.

## **To provide space for urban living**

The most viable use on the site will be apartments. This will complement the existing residential community to the south and recent residential conversions in Kent House and Miller House.

## **To respect and improve the setting of listed buildings on Romney Place**

Buildings in the northern area of the site should be set back from the northern boundary of the site. Building heights should be at their lowest here (no more than three storeys) and step up gradually towards to the southern end of the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage. Views of the listed buildings from Romney Place and Padsole Lane area will also need to be respected.

## **To enhance pedestrian permeability**

The development should, subject to agreement with landowners of Kent House, provide access to a pedestrian route between Romney Place and Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way, through the site.

## **To provide opportunities for planting and green space**

Opportunities should be taken to provide green space for both communal and private use as well as enhanced biodiversity. These could include car parking set within a strong structure of tree planting or a formal communal space at ground floor level as well as roof gardens and green walls.

## **To create a series of medium to high-rise buildings on Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way that complement the height of the adjacent tall buildings**

Given that the site is situated within a cluster of medium to tall buildings, there is the potential for new buildings to provide a continued frontage of similar massing along its Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage with buildings stepped to integrate with the existing built form.

## **To provide a viable and deliverable solution for the site**

This brief explores some of the key aspects of the viability and deliverability of development proposals on site; as market conditions change these issues may be subject to review and there may be scope for variation in the design and layout of the buildings and spaces within the parameters of the key design principles.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Role of the Planning Guidelines

1.1.1 These Planning Guidelines have been prepared by lead consultant Savills for Maidstone Borough Council. Their purpose is to encourage, promote and facilitate the redevelopment of the Mote Road site, Maidstone. This is an accessible site within the heart of Maidstone that could be deliverable within a relatively short time period. The extent of the site is shown on Figure 1.

1.1.2 This document provides an analysis of the existing context of the site, presenting potential opportunities and constraints (Section 2).

Including a clear set of parameters for how the site could be taken forward that would be acceptable to Maidstone Borough Council in planning and urban design terms (Section 3) and an illustrative scenario (Section 4) which gives an indication of the likely capacity of the site, based on the guidance set out in Section 2 and within a context of improving market conditions.

1.1.3 The document sets out what could be achievable and acceptable in planning terms and would be welcomed by the Council. It is not intended to be a supplementary planning document. The document represents 'the art of the possible'.



Fig.1: Site Location

There may well be other ways of achieving appropriate solutions, utilising different approaches to those potential solutions illustrated here.

1.1.4 The guidelines are a culmination of an extensive design and feasibility study undertaken by Savills for five Maidstone Town Centre Opportunity Sites during the period April 2018 - July 2019. These opportunity sites are shown on Figure 2 and consist of:

- Site 1. Gala and Granada House
- Site 2. Mote Road
- Site 3. Len House
- Site 4. Maidstone Riverside
- Site 5. Maidstone West

## 1.2 Site location and context

1.2.1 The site measures some 0.389 hectares gross (0.96 acres) and is located on the southern edge of the town centre at postcode ME15. The site is owned by London and Cambridge Ltd and is currently in use as a privately managed surface-level car park.

1.2.2 The site is bounded to the north and east by properties on Romney Place and Padsole Lane respectively. To the north, this area includes some historic town houses (now office space), The Mall multi-storey car park, Maidstone bus station and a Sainsbury's supermarket. To the immediate east, there is a car hire facility with associated shed and a Victorian house (now office space).



Fig.2: Opportunity Sites

### Key

- 1** Granada House + Gala Bingo
- 2** Mote Road
- 3** Len House
- 4** Maidstone Riverside
- 5** Maidstone West

1.2.3 To the west there are a number of tall buildings on Romney Place and Mote Road, including Kent House, Medvale House and Miller House. To the south, the site fronts the A249 Mote Road/ Wat Tyler Way dual carriageway. Beyond this there is an area of Victorian terraces.

## 1.2.4 Process

1.2.5 The planning guidelines and proposals for all five Opportunity Sites have been developed through a collaborative process involving extensive stakeholder engagement. This has included two landowner/officer consultation workshops, a site walkabout and two round-table meetings with Maidstone Borough Council Members.

1.2.6 Savills team has included masterplanners, landscape architects, development consultants and heritage consultants. Markides Associates has provided transport advice.



*Eastern edge of site, from Mote Road*



*Vehicular access from site to properties on Romney Place*



*Site entrance off Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage*



## 2. Issues for Consideration

### 2.1 Opportunities and constraints

2.1.1 A thorough analysis of the site and its context has also been carried out, which is summarised in the attached appendices. The analysis and engagement process highlighted a number of issues and opportunities to consider/address in taking the site forward for development. These can be summarised as follows:

- The policy context is provided by MBLP Policy RMX1(6) which promotes a mixture of uses on the site, including 2,000sq.m office space. Any scheme which includes a lesser amount of office floorspace should be accompanied by a viability assessment that considers alternative delivery and management approaches and their impact on viability.
- The presence of listed town houses on Romney Place adjacent to the site's northern boundary and the need to respect their setting, as well as provide vehicular access to their southern side.
- The opportunity to enhance the visual amenity and pedestrian/cycle environment of Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way with tree planting, for example.
- The opportunity to enhance the townscape associated with the adjacent tall buildings of Kent House, Medvale House and Miller House to the west and Midhurst Court to the east, whilst respecting the privacy and light of existing occupiers.
- The presence of existing tall buildings and relatively wide scale of Mote Road/Wat Tyler way, means that further tall buildings within this area could be appropriate.
- The need to submit appropriate air, noise and contamination assessments with any planning application, together with measures for suitable mitigation.
- Access to the site will be via the existing Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way entrance, with no right turn from the site possible when exiting the site. If the site were to be brought forward in association with the Thrifty car hire site and adjacent building to the east, this may provide increased flexibility in relation to access as well as a more comprehensive approach to the site layout.
- The lack of a public pedestrian route connecting to Romney Place to the town centre.
- The site is generally flat, however some differences in level within the site and along its western edge will need to be accommodated (currently with retaining walls).



*From centre of site looking north-west towards Romney Place*

# 3. Overall Development Principles

**This section of the document provides guidance to potential developers as to how the site should be developed. This guidance is supported by precedent images and the design rationale plan at Figure 3. The key design requirements are set out as follows.**

## 3.1 Land use

3.1.1 The site is allocated for residential led mixed use development under Policy RMX1(6), to incorporate at least 2,000sq.m of office floor space, unless a viability assessment demonstrates otherwise. Policy RMX1(6) also states that leisure uses included in Class D2 are also considered to be appropriate. Whilst it is understood that there is lack of demand for office space at the current time, it is important to note that the local plan inspector specifically identified that offices should be the priority for the site, mixed with sufficient residential accommodation for a viable scheme.

3.1.2 New development on the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage should therefore be mainly residential with opportunities for employment space.

3.1.3 Non-residential uses such as offices or undercroft parking could be provided at ground floor. However, some residential, including entrances, should be included in order to help generate an active ground floor frontage.

3.1.4 Whilst current market demand would mean that the site is likely to be residential led, the Council would be willing to consider a range of B1(a) type uses, such as those to encourage micro-businesses, with flexible floorspace to encourage start ups and other creative businesses, which are potentially more sought after in town centres.

3.1.5 The central and northern areas of the site are most suited to low-rise development, car parking or open space. This would respect the listed buildings to the north and create a 'mews' character behind the main frontage.

3.1.6 The Council would expect residential units to meet Policy DM2 in terms of building standards and include a minimum provision of 30% Affordable Housing at a 70:30% split in favour of affordable rent.

3.1.7 In summary, the main use classes will be:

- C3 Residential
- B1 Business

3.1.8 An illustrative capacity study for this approach is provided in Section 4.

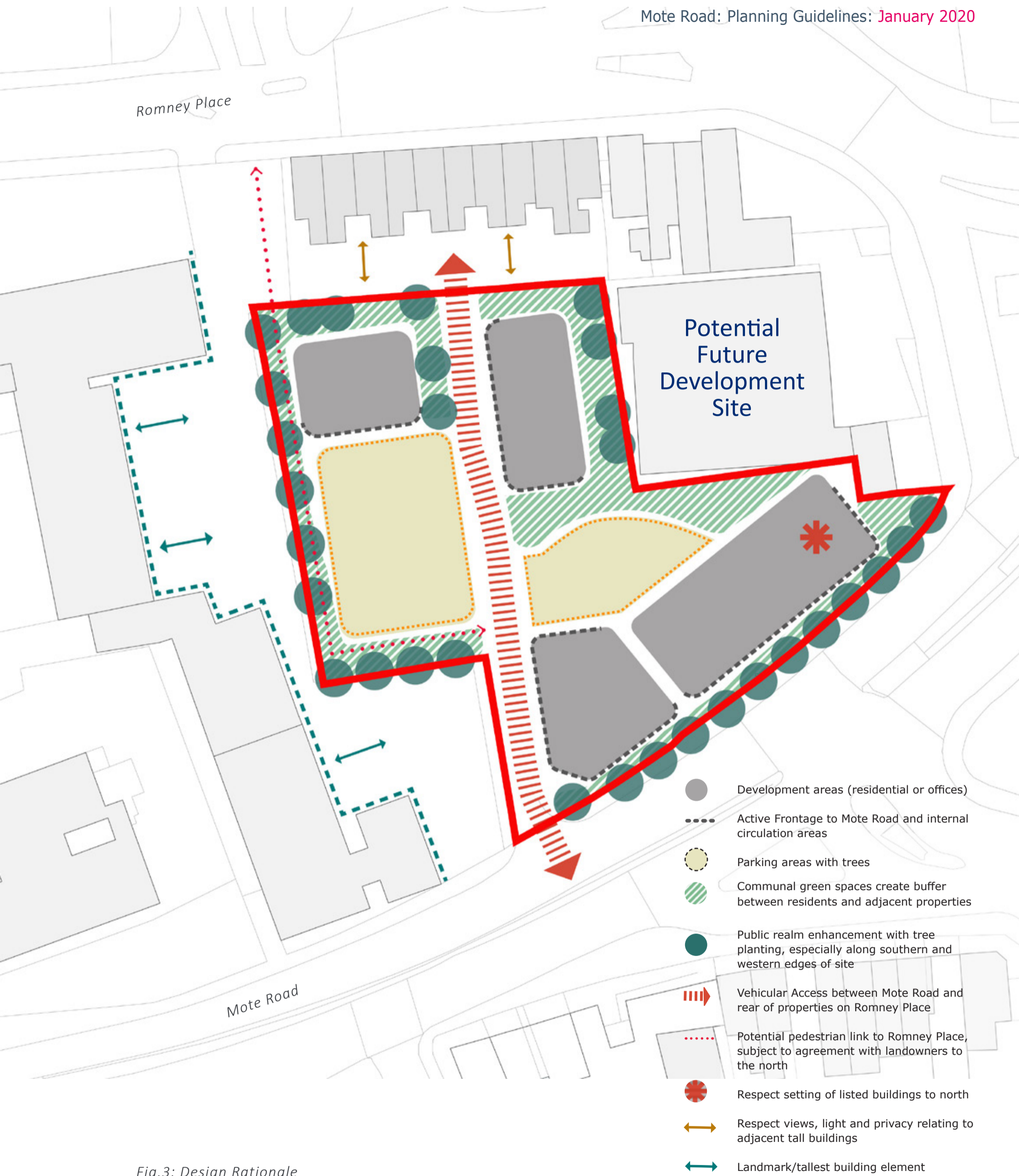


Fig.3: Design Rationale



12 Opportunities for medium-rise redevelopment with active street frontages



Opportunities for inset and open balconies to improve amenity

## 3.2 Phasing

3.2.1 The Council recognises that a phased approach may be required to the delivery of the site, with a first phase of residential development required to provide investment for the later development of office space. This would be acceptable, subject to an appropriate mechanism, such as a legal agreement, to ensure that the offices would be delivered at an appropriate stage and to avoid the completion of residential blocks without the offices being delivered.

## 3.3 Scale and Enclosure

3.3.1 Buildings should form a continuous frontage and create a strong sense of enclosure to Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way. The new street frontage will also help to repair the 'perimeter block' formed by Romney Place, Mote Road and Lower Stone Street. Buildings should be set back from the street and allow space for avenue street tree planting to soften the form of development and assist with street enclosure.

3.3.2 Properties on this frontage should complement the existing building heights in the local area, and can be stepped up to a maximum of 13 storeys in height at the eastern side of the site.

3.3.3 The design of the residential development should include opportunities for balconies (inset or open) and terraces to enhance amenity.

3.3.4 Buildings close to the northern boundary of the site should be no more than three storeys in height and no closer than 10m from the boundary, ensuring they do not have an overbearing influence on the listed buildings to the north.

3.3.5 Given the site's location in the town centre and access to local transport links, there is an opportunity to maximise residential density in the context of high quality design and layout. The scale of development must allow for maximum sunlight onto the public realm.

3.3.6 Visually, it would be appropriate for any new buildings on the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage to step down from the west of the site to the east, with massing designed to form a transition between Midhurst Court towards the listed buildings and lower buildings to the north and east.

## 3.4 Scale and Design and Materials

3.4.1 The design of the development across the site will need to respond to the context of the site and the key buildings in the local area, creating a frontage to Mote Road that is unified in terms of fenestration and colour of materials. New buildings should not seek to replicate the character of the existing 1960s/70s blocks, however, instead integrating them into an attractive new street elevation and strong street enclosure.

3.4.2 The design and materials should complement both the late 20th century high-rise blocks to the west, as well as the brick townhouses to the north. The site presents an opportunity for a high quality landmark contemporary design and use of contemporary materials such as high quality metal cladding and high proportions of glazing, however the use of traditional materials such as terracotta tile cladding and use of Kentish Ragstone details would also be incorporated.



*Range of appropriate materials that could be used for a contemporary design of building, including the use of Kentish Ragstone as a detail (top right and middle - House of Fraser)*



*Images: The use of a limited palette of complementary materials should provide an attractive and varied elevation, to avoid a monolithic appearance*





*Incorporation of set back from street and tree planting.*

### 3.5 Public realm and open space

3.5.1 Maidstone Borough Council places great importance on maximising opportunities for providing functional green spaces within the town centre. Any scheme for the site should deliver good living environments for those living in and using the revitalised site, as well as improved biodiversity. Whilst this is a compact site, green space can be provided in the form of roof terraces, as well as ample space for tree planting on the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage and within the parking areas. In addition, the MBLP allows for a financial contribution to be made to improve existing sites and enhance the capacity of existing provision if suitable opportunities for new open space cannot be identified within the specified accessibility standards due to site constraints.

3.5.2 With regards to the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage, sufficient space should be provided for large-scale street trees such as London plane, maple or lime trees. This tree planting will soften the hard character of the street as well as providing some privacy to ground-floor residents.

3.5.3 Opportunities should also be taken to enhance cycle safety in the area, perhaps through financial contributions to the provision and maintenance of off-site cycle routes.



3.5.4 Within the site, public realm detailing should be of high quality, with the potential for a shared surface block paved route to the parking areas and access to the office buildings to the north. This will contribute to the 'mews' character of the area and create a high quality setting for the new buildings. Sufficient space should be allowed to provide light and private amenity space around the ground floor flats. This can include front garden space planted with ornamental shrubs and enclosed by metal railings and rear gardens that allow tree planting adjacent to the site's boundary with the Thrifty Car Rental facility and listed buildings to the north. Private amenity space should also include private balconies and terraces, together with communal roof gardens on apartment buildings where space allows.

3.5.5 If possible, the treatment of the public realm should be designed alongside any improvements to the Kent House and Medvale House areas, enabling them to appear as a unified space. This could include the removal of the existing wall between the two sites and introduction of the terracing/stepping to link the two sites. Similarly, an existing retaining wall within the site (to the east of the access road) will need to be incorporated within the built form of the site, or removed by levelling.



*Greening the environment: space for tree planting along the Mote Road frontage and within the site as well as roof terraces on the apartments and offices*

## 3.6 Access, parking and sustainable travel

3.6.1 Vehicular access should be provided via the existing Mote Road/Tyler Way entrance with buildings set back to allow appropriate visibility splays. If opportunities arise, it would be preferable to provide a further access via the Thrifty Car Rental site.

3.6.2 A vehicular route through the site will be required to provide continued access to the rear of the Romney Place properties from Mote Road.

3.6.3 Subject to agreement with landowners to the north, it is desirable to incorporate a pedestrian route between Mote Road and Romney Place.

3.6.4 The MBLP proposes a maximum of one parking space per one or two bed flat/house in the town centre. Due to space constraints and given the sustainability of the location, it is likely that only 0.5-0.75 spaces may be achieved on the site and this is considered acceptable in planning terms, reflecting its town centre location and close proximity to both public bus and rail services.

3.6.5 The Council recognises the growing capacity issues for residents parking in the town centre. Given that the town centre is such a sustainable location, a parking ratio of below 1:1 is appropriate for the five opportunity sites. However, the Council will ensure that there is not a detrimental impact of this policy on existing

neighbourhoods. Inasmuch residents that move into new homes on the sites that do not benefit from an allocated parking space/s, will not be able to apply for residents parking permits to be used in the surrounding streets. Furthermore, in terms of the overall quantum of parking that is provided on site, adequate provision will be held back for the use of visitors, and these arrangements will be enforced. In addition, the restrictions on access (such as controlled entry) together with the type, size and mix of homes will be taken into account.

3.6.6 Any undercroft parking will need to be carefully designed and should not dominate the ground floor of the street frontage, where a more active frontage will be required.

3.6.7 Opportunities to facilitate sustainable travel should be maximised. The development may be expected to provide an individual travel plan, to ensure full developer commitment to encourage sustainable travel and provide real sustainable alternatives to the end user of the development. This should include secure bicycle storage on the site for both office users and residents.

## 3.7 Safety and security

3.7.1 Development on the site should deliver the following key principles to create a safe and secure environment by:

- Ensuring natural surveillance and human presence including ground floor flats and offices and buildings fronting onto the public realm. Apartments should be arranged to provide natural surveillance over the vehicular route to the Romney Place houses to the north and external car parking courtyards.
- Minimising conflict by providing safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and managing traffic movement in the locality
- Providing secure and surveyed parking areas, overlooked by residential apartment blocks
- Ensuring that all publicly accessible space is easily surveyed by properties and secure access given to private space
- Secure cycle parking areas to be provided within the apartment blocks.



*Active frontages with main rooms and inset balconies overlooking the streets and parking courts to provide natural surveillance*



*Car parking should be set within a leafy context with space for mature trees and shrubs.*



*Sufficient space for covered cycle parking*

# 4. Illustrative Development Scenarios

## 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section sets out a potential scenario for how the site could be developed, reflecting the parameters set out in Section 3. The scenario is presented as an illustration as to how the site may be developed, based on good placemaking principles and an understanding of the local property markets, although it should not be seen as the only solution to developing the site. The scenario will be residential led with some employment.

Romney Place. Both of these respect the setting of the three storey listed buildings on Romney Place to the north and are arranged to provide natural surveillance over the street and parking court.

4.2.3 Either office or residential accommodation would be possible on the Mote Road/Wat Tyler frontage with its entrance adjacent to the vehicular entrance to the site. This element will be designed up to eight storeys to help reduce the visual mass of development and scale adjoining the site entrance. This building also reflects the height of the adjacent Medvale House.

4.2.4 To the east of this building, the remainder of the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage can increase in scale to 11 and 13 storeys respectively, ensuring that they do not exceed the height of Midhurst Court.

4.2.5 Buildings form a continuous frontage along Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way, helping to repair the 'perimeter block' formed by Romney Place, Mote Road and Lower Stone Street

4.2.6 The scenario illustrated on Figures 4 - 6 could accommodate approximately 84 apartments in addition to 2000 sq.m of office space. Given that the site is 0.39ha in size, this gives a residential density of approximately 218 dwellings per hectare.

## 20 4.2 Illustrative Scenario

4.2.1 This scenario provides some office space, as promoted by MBLP Policy RMX1(6), together with apartments. Parking will be accessed via the internal courtyard, including surface parking and some undercroft parking.

4.2.2 The form of the development responds to the site opportunities and constraints and can include a varying mix of office accommodation and residential. However it is likely that the northern part of the mews court will provide for small office units at three to four storeys in height. This approach would be responsive to the context of the existing office and commercial accommodation situated within the terrace along

## Parking

4.2.7 The scenario shows approximately 63 parking spaces on the ground floor of the office/apartment blocks and within a parking courtyard. Given the close proximity of Chequers public car park, which is open during office hours, it is anticipated that the majority of parking spaces

would be allocated to the residential units rather than the offices, with an approximate ratio of 0.5 spaces per apartment. Whilst this is a relatively low parking provision, the highly sustainable location of the site close to public transport and town centre facilities should mean that a high proportion of residents need not be car owners.

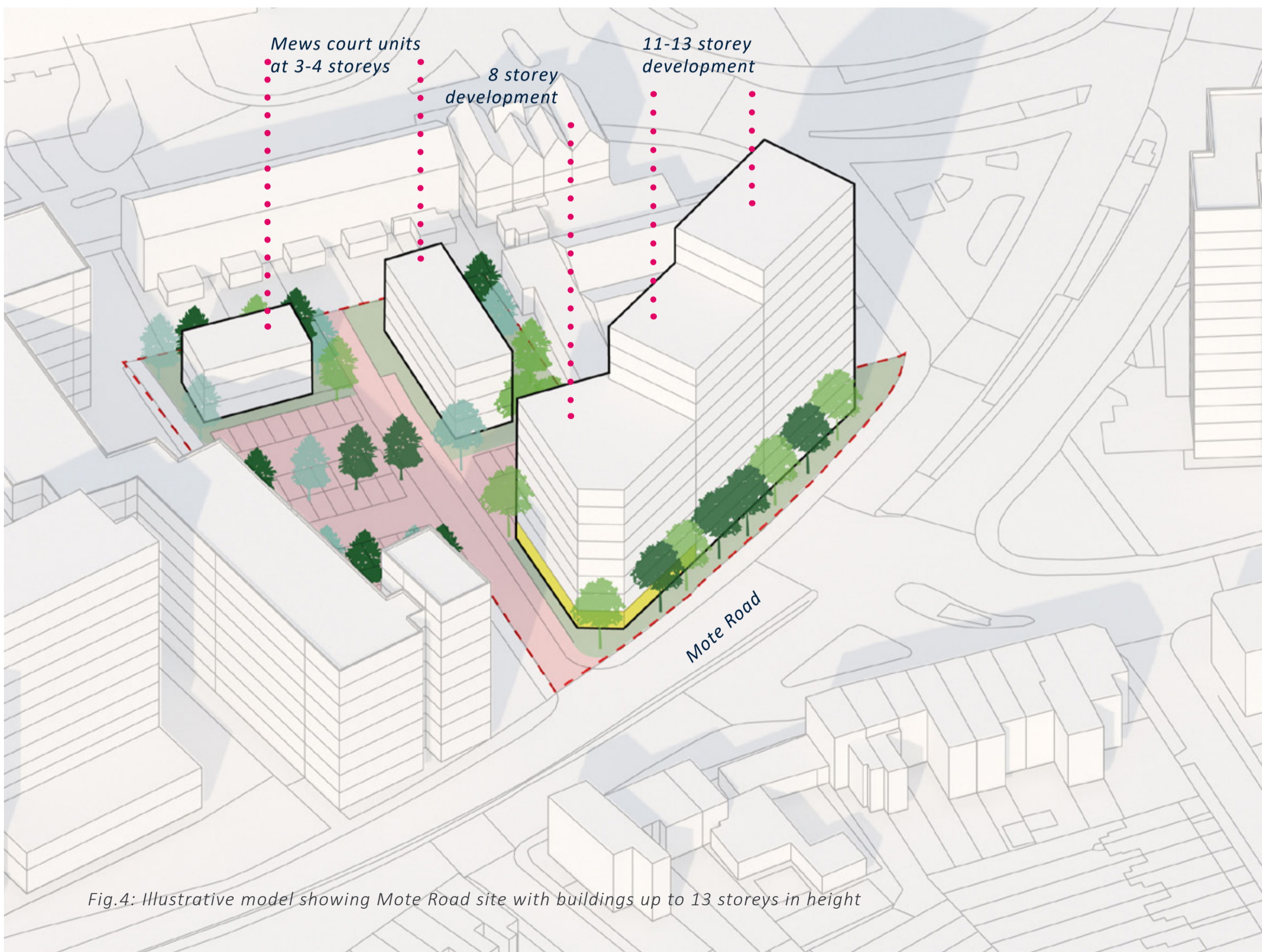


Fig.4: Illustrative model showing Mote Road site with buildings up to 13 storeys in height



Fig.5: Preferred Scenario: Capacity Plan

- Key:
- Vehicular Access
  - Potential Pedestrian Route (subject to agreement with adjacent landowner)
  - Mixed Use ground floor (optional)
  - Potential Green Space

	min. GIA	mix	average unit size
1bed	50m <sup>2</sup>	40%	60
2bed sml	61m <sup>2</sup>	45%	
2bed lrg/ 3bed sml	86m <sup>2</sup>	15%	

	Use	No. of floors	Gross External Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Net Internal Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	No. of units	Parking spaces	
a.1	Residential	3	295	236 (80%)	4		
a.2	Residential	4	630	504 (80%)	8		
a.3	Employment + Office/ Retail ground floor	8	2360	2006 (85%)	-	63	
a.4	Residential+ GF parking	11	2288	1830 (80%)	28		
a.5	Residential+ GF parking	13	3601	2881	44		
					<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>63</b>

4.2.8 Whilst a small green area could be incorporated in the centre of the site, its urban context means that it may not be well-used. As an alternative such a scheme should provide roof gardens on the main blocks on the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage. Further private amenity space is provided around the two smaller apartment blocks, including space for tree planting to provide visual separation with the Thrifty Car Rental building and listed buildings to the north. The apartments can also incorporate inset or open balconies to provide further private amenity space. As an alternative to play and sports space on the site, financial contributions would be required to improve existing off-site public open space, via a Section

106 Agreement (such as enhancements to play and sports facilities at Mote park).

4.2.9 Along the Mote Road/Wat Tyler Way frontage, space is allowed for public realm enhancements including avenue tree planting. A set back is also allowed for the incorporation of private front garden space, to provide privacy and security to ground floor apartments here.

4.2.10 A vehicular route is included to provide continued access to the rear of the Romney Place houses. Apartments are arranged to provide natural surveillance over new streets within the site. These could be detailed as shared surface areas to provide a high quality public realm.

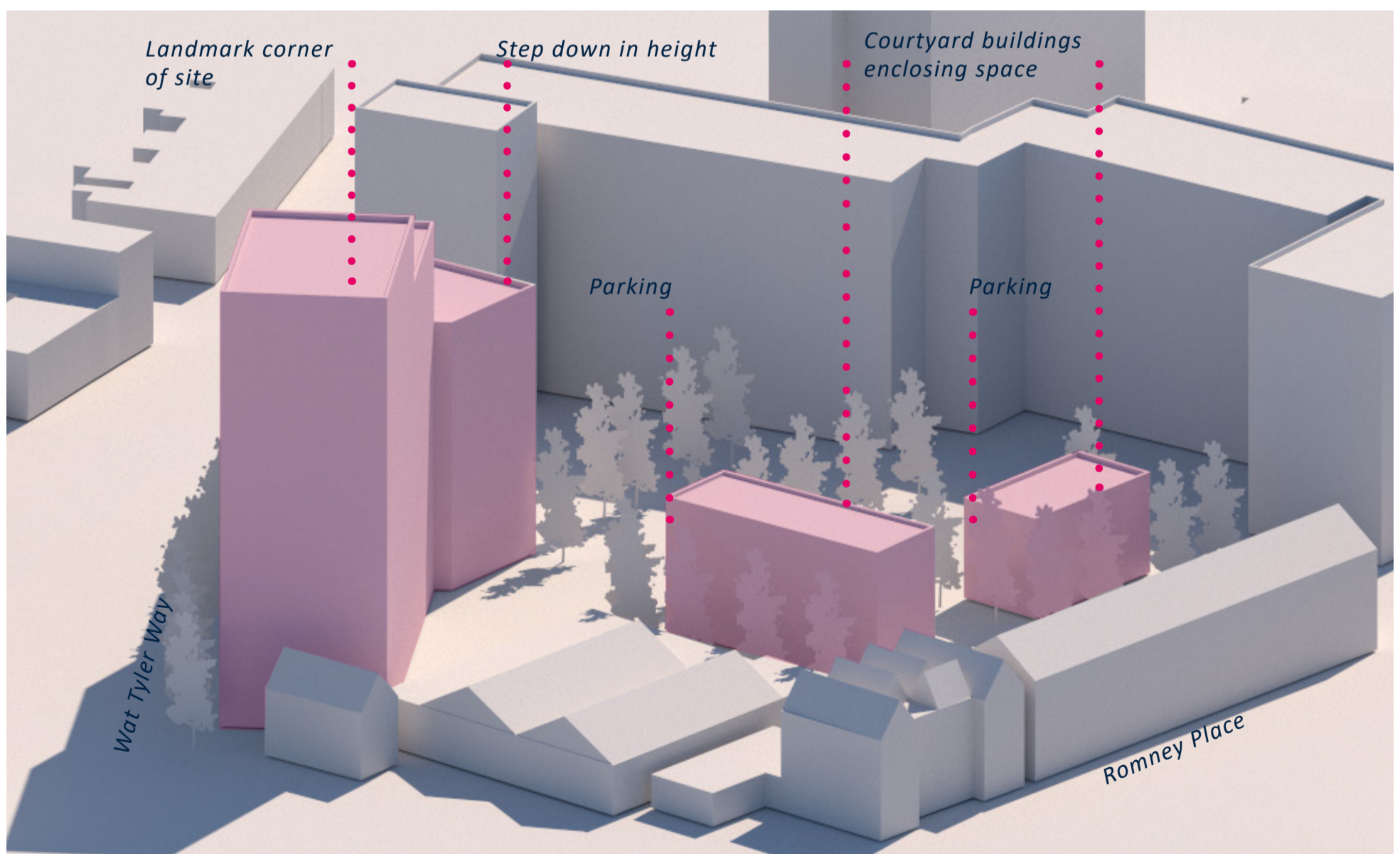


Fig.6: Model showing proposed massing of an illustrative scheme with buildings up to 13 storeys in height

4.2.11 Space is allowed for a potential pedestrian route between Mote Road and Romney Place (subject to permission to cross private land adjacent to Kent House to the north).

## 4.3 Variations

4.3.1 The preferred development scenario, as set out above, was the most feasible proposal for the site when this study was carried out. Market condition will inevitably change over time. Nevertheless, a number of additional scenarios have been considered and tested. These include increased office space across the site and also a purely residential approach.

### Dispersed office space

4.3.2 The scheme could incorporate a greater dispersal of office space across the site, including the potential for offices along the Mote Road frontage. Whilst an increased proportion of office space (B1) could be delivered across this site, it is likely that such a larger quantum of floorspace would only be delivered on a bespoke and non-speculative basis, such as a single employer with a particular need in the area.

### All Residential

4.3.3 Subject to a viability assessment and justification as required by MBLP Policy RMX1 (6), a variation of the scheme could include less or no office space.

If the scheme were to be entirely residential, with undercroft parking at ground floor level along the Mote Road frontage, the scenario could deliver approximately 112 apartments with 74 parking spaces (0.66 spaces/unit) across the site. Given that the site is 0.39 hectares in size, this would give an approximate residential density of 287 dwellings per hectare.

4.3.4 Given that there are three storey town houses (now offices) adjacent to the site's northern boundary, this part of the site may also be suited to the provision of three storey town houses with integral parking instead of the three and four apartment blocks here. This would enhance the housing mix, with the incorporation of family housing in the town centre. However, it is unlikely that this typology would be desirable, given the highly urban character of the adjacent area, including overlooking from the adjacent apartment blocks as well as the reduced housing capacity that would be delivered.

### Wider Site development

4.3.5 Further opportunities for developing the site could be achieved by incorporating the adjacent Thrifty Car Rental site and Victorian office on Padsole Lane. This could enable a further access to the site to be provided as well as an enhanced frontage to Padsole Lane and more flexibility with regards to the site's internal layout.





