

## 1.0

### Introduction

Covell Matthews Architects (the Agent) have been instructed by G&N Homes (FK-L) Limited to provide architectural and planning advice with regard to the proposed development of Affordable Housing flats, associated amenities and landscaping on a vacant site at the corner of King Street and Thornhill Road, Falkirk.

This Supporting Statement accompanies the design drawings to form a full planning application submitted to Falkirk Council under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006).

## 2.0

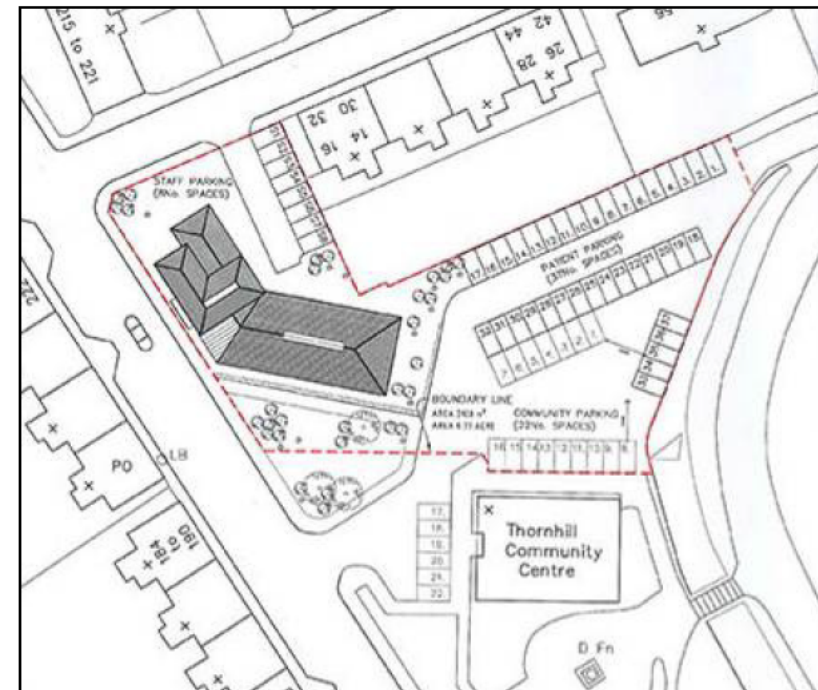
### Planning History

A previous application for the erection of a medical centre and associated parking was granted in October 2006 (Ref 06/0499/FUL). This approved development was never started and subsequently the site has remained vacant and unused for the past 13 years since the approval, if not longer prior to the application.

Pre-application advice was sought for this proposal and received from John Milne in October 2017 (Ref ENQ/2017/1019).

An official pre-application submission was made for this proposal on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018 (Ref EHQ/2018/0760). Advice was received from various consultants resulting in extended discussions and site re-designs to incorporate requests and suggestions where reasonably possible. Where full compliance with requested changes has not been possible – justification and support has been provided.

The submission of this planning application following the above mentioned pre-application submission has been delayed due to the change in developer; however the principals of the application and the Housing Association involved have remained the same.



Proposed Medical Centre Application Site Plan  
By Kenneth Reid Architects

### 3.0

#### Site

A vacant Brownfield site located on the corner of King Street and Thornhill Road that extends down and around between the rear gardens of existing King Street dwellings and Victoria Park to the east. The site is used by local residents as a pedestrian thoroughfare from Thornhill Road to Victoria Park playing field and as a car park for the neighbouring Thornhill Community Centre.

The highest level of the site is the north west corner on King Street and then slopes down across the site approximately 3.5m towards the playing fields and to the north east. The site is currently a mix of grass and asphalt surfaces of poor quality.

A variety of housing types ranging from 2 storey rendered semi-detached and terraced houses to 3 storey rendered blocks of flats can be found in the residential streets to the north of the site and backing onto the site from King Street. The large Victoria Park playing field dominates the eastern boundary along with a public basketball court and a number of children's playgrounds. Immediately south of the site is Thornhill Community Centre, a public garden extends further down Thornhill Road behind the centre. Thornhill Road bounds the west of the site with 2 storey stone faced terraced houses immediately opposite. A church is located diagonally opposite the sites key King street/Thornhill Road corner.

The site is located only 150m outside the boundary of the council designated Falkirk Town Centre.



Looking across corner from Thornhill Road towards King Street



Looking down pedestrian pathway from Thornhill Road towards playing fields



Looking back at site from most north eastern point

### Contamination

We have received the following feedback from the SI contractors:

*"Having reviewed the chemical results and ground gas/water monitoring results thus far the interim report is as follows.*

*No elevated toxic/phytotoxic contamination was recorded in the shallow soils, however, asbestos was detected (0.013%) at 0.5m depth in TP02 (refer Appendices). From the proposed development layout, this sample location appears to be below an area of proposed hardstanding (car parking/road area). Provided these development proposals do not change – at this preliminary stage – we do not envisage any further remedial action will be required in relation to the asbestos detection (i.e. it was not recorded anywhere else within the site and is below an area of proposed hardstanding).*

*UKWIR analysis has indicated that polyethylene (PE) pipes will be suitable for the proposed development.*

*The ground gas/water monitoring thus far has not indicated any concern related to significant ground gas (methane/carbon dioxide) generation. Carbon dioxide was recorded to range from 0.4 to 2.1% v/v. Methane was recorded as 0.0% v/v for the duration of the monitoring period thus far. There are still another 3 rounds of monitoring to complete, however, so the potential for ground gas issues cannot be discounted."*

### Coal Mining Risk

*"Based on the published geological information, records relating to past mineral operation and mineral reports which were done in the past, we can anticipate the following information regarding the existing geology and mineral activity in the proposed site:*

*According to published geological information, the superficial deposits in this area are alluvial in nature -clay, silt, salt and gravel- and estimated to be in the order of 35 - 40 metres thick, based on nearby boreholes reports. The solid strata immediately underlying the area belong to the lower part of the Productive Coal Measures and appear to dip generally towards the south-west. The foregoing series of rocks are sedimentary in nature and are represented by cyclic sequences of sandstone, siltstone, fireclay and mudstone, interspersed with seams of coal and ironstone.*

*However, based on the mineral report made in the past, according to the Geological Memoirs of the District published in 1917, no minerals groups appear to be well developed in the central or deepest part of the Falkirk Coalfield.*

*Although The Coal Authority website recommends a mining report to be undertaken for this area, the previous site investigations state that while the seams located at or about the base of the Productive Coal Measures were extensively extracted nearby, no record was found of workings extending under or in close proximity to the site under review. Therefore, it was concluded in a previous site investigation that the underlying minerals are low risk."*



## 4.0

### Proposal

The introduction of a residential development on a long standing vacant site will be beneficial to the amenity of the neighbourhood as well as increase the security and amiability of the existing pedestrian thoroughfare which currently passes through the inactive, unobserved site.

The proposal is to provide 23 Affordable Housing units with associated car parking and amenity spaces. The units are spread between two 3 storey buildings, Block A occupying the corner location facing onto King Street and Block B located further into the site maximising views over Victoria Park playing field.

The corner of King Street and Thornhill Road has been identified as an opportunity to create architectural focus and strengthen the corner within the urban realm. Corner windows on each floor sit in the prominent position maximising views from inside as well as creating interest externally. A rusty red timber effect cladding has been proposed to surround the corner windows, accentuating it further. The timber effect cladding is also utilised throughout each building to highlight the main entrances and add texture to some of the less fenestrated facades. The remainder of the buildings comprise a mixture of a crisp smooth finish white render contrasted by a dark rough brick, and an equally dark concrete tiled roof. Block B which is positioned further away from existing neighbouring dwellings is 3 storeys high. Block A is 3 storeys high for the majority however the roof height drops slightly over the corner and reduces to 2 storeys where directly adjacent the existing dwellings on King Street.

The balanced mixture of materials intentionally fragments each block, reducing the mass of the buildings, and the colour palette introduces a modern sense to the traditional form, helping to accentuate and rejuvenate the currently tired, unoccupied corner site.

#### Housing Type

The units are to be 100% social rented housing. The flats are designed for general needs provision with the exception of the two ground floor flats in Block A which are wheelchair accessible and one of the ground floor flats in Block B which is ambulant disabled/older person accessible. All flats are designed to comply with Housing for Varying Needs standards.

The proposed accommodation schedule is:

9no. 1 bed flats

13no. 2 bed flats

1no. 2 bed house

Falkirk council has confirmed a high demand for Affordable Housing and this residential site close to the town centre, amenities and transport is the ideal location for a 100% Affordable Housing development.

#### Low Carbon Development

The buildings will benefit from photovoltaic panels integrated into the roofs for generating sustainable electricity.

Sustainable Travel Packs will be provided to residents when they first move into their new home. More information has been provided on this in the Access and Transport section following.