

*Application for 3 new 2 bedroom dwellings on land to the rear of Oaklands Court*



Liam Russell Architects (LRA)

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Liam Russell Architects (LRA) has prepared this document on behalf of William Pears as part of a planning application for the provision of 3 new family homes on under-used (due to an over-provision of) car parking spaces to the rear of Oaklands Court.

This document is submitted in support of the drawings and other information submitted with the application to the London Borough of Bromley Council.

This application, being the culmination of many iterations for the same site, proposes a modern design that responds to its surroundings (in terms of mass and materials) creating a subtly eye catching series of low buildings.

Liam Russell Architects (the practice) is based in Sussex and works across the UK and internationally in a range of industry sectors such as housing, education, leisure and hospitality, commercial and listed building and restorations.

The practice is organised around a studio environment where all members are within the same space. This ensures that there is a natural cultivation of information between projects leading to accountability from all members. The work of the practice is regarded by its clients (following a poll by external reviewer) as a conceptual practice with the ability to build – this (we believe) puts us into a rare category of architectural practices that design buildable and inspiring buildings.

[www.liamrussellarchitects.co.uk](http://www.liamrussellarchitects.co.uk)



Oaklands Court is a block of 20 flats that the William Pears Group (WPG) own (on AST tenancies) and includes communal gardens with 34 parking spaces. Within the grounds there are also bike and bin store areas, and as far as we are aware there are no Tree Preservation Orders (following discussions with Coral Gibson @ LBB) however this may have changed following our most recent planning application (16/05397/FULL1).

WPG general information documents regarding this block states parking is available on a first come first served basis, and there is a barrier access to the car park. It is our understanding that the parking is not used by all 20 flats and is also not actually part of their AST tenancy agreements. Many of the tenants do not have cars and instead use public transport from Bromley North Station which is near by (0.8miles / only 15 min walk) along with local Bus routes.

In 2008 WPG looked into the possibilities of adding a small development in the car park / garden areas, however this was deemed low priority and never really got going past pre-planning stage.

In 2006 WPG submitted Pre-planning Consultation to Bromley Council regarding proposals for three storey block of 6 x 2 bed flats and a larger scheme of 10 flats which may have been a rear extension attached to the existing block.

However the Council were opposed to the proposal of 6 and 10 flats based on their suggestion that following the outcome of a car parking survey, the car park is well used and not abused as WPG first thought.

LRA then became involved in December 2013, submitting for pre-application advice in June 2015 for a run of 4 x 2 bed terraced houses and then a full planning application submission for 3 x 2 bed detached houses in March 2016.

Our planning officer throughout has been Susanna Stevenson.



# Oaklands Court, Oaklands Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 3SW

No pre-application meetings had been held, only brief telephone conversations with Robert Buckley and Coral Gibson.

Official pre-application advice was then submitted and registered mid-August 2015 (PREAPP/15/00169). Our planning officer was Susanna Stevenson and we received feedback on 04th November.

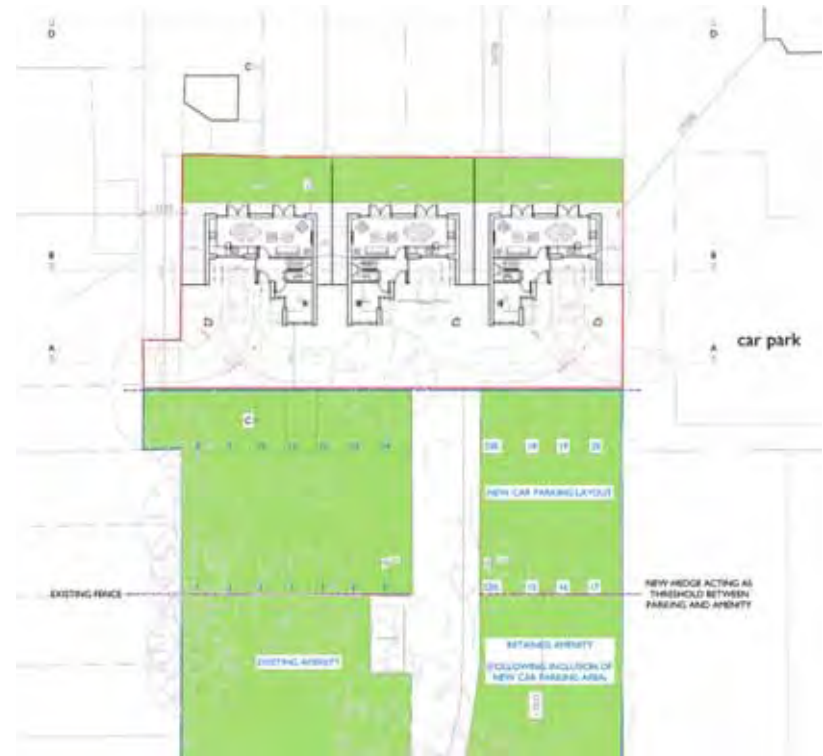
The key points as we see them were:

- Sensitivity to the character of the surrounding residential area
- Highways and car parking
- Loss of amenity
- Policy H9 requires a 1m side space to dwellings
- There is an assumption that the first floor living room could be used as a bedroom, making these 3 bed houses – *this is a subjective point*
- Assumption made that windows are unopenable – *this is incorrect*

We addressed these points by:

- Reducing number of units
- Instructing a Highways survey (*attached as part of this planning application*)
- Instructing an Arboricultural survey (*attached as part of this planning application*)

At the time, we felt comfortable in submitting these agreed (with Susanna Stevenson) plans for planning approval but had to withdraw due to more technical points being raised throughout the process – the key email chain is included on the following pages.



From: Stevenson, Susanna [<mailto:Susanna.Stevenson@bromley.gov.uk>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2017 9:31 AM

To: Scott Currie <[Scott.Currie@liamrussellarchitects.co.uk](mailto:Scott.Currie@liamrussellarchitects.co.uk)>

Subject: RE: 170117 SJC to SS + KC DH LGR RE: 16/05397/FULL1 - Oaklands Court, Oaklands Road, Bromley BR1 3SW

Dear Mr Currie

When we discussed the case on the telephone I identified the service vehicle access issue as one of the concerns regarding the proposal.

As it currently stands in my view the application is unlikely to be granted planning permission. There are a number of concerns regarding the scheme, including potential trees impact (although I am awaiting comments from the Trees Officer), highways and parking/manoeuvring and the cramped nature of the development in conjunction with its siting. These were concerns expressed in part or raised as issues at pre-application stage.

The options you have as I see it are to withdraw the application or alternatively wait for the application to be determined. I anticipate that a decision on the application will be made by the 25<sup>th</sup> January (the 8 week date). If planning permission is refused you have the right to appeal the decision and/or submit a fresh application free of charge.

I am sorry that my comments cannot be more positive.

Kind regards

Susanna Stevenson  
Planner – Development Control (West)  
[susanna.stevenson@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:susanna.stevenson@bromley.gov.uk)  
020 8313 4039

Good afternoon Susanna,

Thank you so much for your swift response. Really appreciate it...

The scheme that has been submitted for planning is entirely based on the pre-application feedback received, and looks to address each point raised; the reduction from 4 units down to three is key to addressing and therefore overcoming these. To confirm (in running order of the pre-app feedback letter dated 04<sup>th</sup> November 2015):

1. "The NPPF states that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (Brownfield)" – *this applies to our site in a positive way*
2. "Policy H7 refers to potential problems associated with tandem development. Back land development is also referred to, stating that such development may be acceptable provided it is small-scale and sensitive to the surrounding residential area" – *this applies to our site in a positive way*

3. "The proposal would not provide the minimum 1m side space required under Policy H9" – *due to the reduction from 4 units to three, we can achieve 1.7 – 1.8m each side, and then 2.4m in between units.*
4. "In my view, the proposed building would appear unduly cramped in relation to the boundaries of the proposed site, and that a reduced scheme may be more likely to be acceptable in terms of providing a more satisfactory layout and impression of spaciousness" – *agreed and implemented (4 units down to 3 detached)*
5. "Comments received from the Environmental Health department stated that the first floor room labelled the 'living room' will be a habitable room and could be used as a bedroom. Traditionally in two storey houses the living room will be found on the ground floor. The proposal includes a large ground floor kitchen/dining room and it is not unreasonable to suggest that any family moving into one of the proposed houses would assume the first floor room labelled 'living room' was in fact a bedroom" – *without meaning to aggravate, all rooms are habitable. By this rationale any room could be considered a bedroom. Due to the fact that we have incorporated an undercroft car parking space, we deemed the ground floor fit for kitchen / dining / seating all leading onto the rear garden, and then home office to the front. In terms of 'the traditional', this scheme isn't. It is more in line with Le Corbusier's 'machine for living'; in which he would raise the building off the ground and allow air to circulate beneath, include roof terraces to bring nature into an urban setting and a free plan that allowed interior space to be distributed at will. We feel this point is completely subjective.*
6. "It is considered that the window design to bedroom 2 would be unlikely to provide a reasonable view or outlook of the surroundings, and as the window is un-openable it will also not provide adequate natural ventilation to the room". – *A balance was found between the outlook from the bedroom, and the perceived effect on the neighbours. The windows are of course openable as per submitted drawings. Please refer to the attached image – the windows will continue this approach down the side of the beds also.*
7. Trees – *Arboriculture report submitted as part of application.*
8. Access – *GTA Civils to provide addendum to Transport assessment.*
9. Waste – *storage within houses / undercroft, and to be taken top front communal store as existing building arrangement.*
10. Road layout – *the scheme is based around the car, and the turning heads shown on the plan are as per the Metric Handbook – Design for the vehicle (4.3). The road in front of the houses is 5m wide or 1.1m wider than the existing access path.*
11. Cycle parking – *we can incorporate as many as you need. This is a moot point.*
12. Residential amenity – *the dwellings and gardens are as per the LHDG. We design to these standards across the country, always.*

Please do confirm receipt of this email, and that the above has been taken into account as it is crucial to the process.

Kind regards,

Scott Currie BA (Hons) Arch Associate

The typology of the surrounding area is characterised by several distinctive elements:

- The site is 2670 square metres, with built form making up 487 square metres of this (or only 18%)
- Bromley Hill Cemetery is found to the north on the A21 London Road (opened in 1907 containing over 6,000 grave spaces) behind Beadles Volkswagen along with Millwall FC's training ground on Calmont Road
- London Road Cemetery is found to the east – Bromley's oldest cemetery; this 4.8 acre site originally opened in 1877
- Main retail is found to the south along with Bromley College, Law Courts, supermarkets and Bromley north train station
- Warren Avenue Playing Fields are found to the west (with Summerhouse Playing fields and Beckenham Place Golf Course further still)
- The immediate area sits within the Bromley Town Ward, is not in a Conservation Area, nor is it a listed building

We looked at a terrace of 4 houses (pre-app) and then 3 detached houses (as part of the withdrawn planning application) and following feedback, along with understanding the Council's appetite for development, now propose a tried and tested solution for this type of site...



## Use

The existing and proposed use of the site is for housing (C3).

## Amount

### EXISTING SITE AREA:

Approximately 2670 sq m

### EXISTING BUILDING AREA (GROSS EXTERNAL AREA):

487 sq m (or 18%)

### PROPOSED SITE AREAS:

Area of new development site approximately 625 sq m  
Area of new houses approximately 170 sq m (or 27.2%)

### PROPOSED INTERNAL BUILDING AREAS (GIA):

47.5 sq m Ground floor  
43 sq m First floor

**Total = 90.5 sq m**

### EXTERNAL AREAS (from left-to-right):

Unit 1 = 75 sq m + bin and bike storage \*  
Unit 2 = 57.8 sq m + bin and bike storage \*  
Unit 3 = 83.6 sq m + bin and bike storage \*

*\* Each garden planted with 2 x silver birch trees*

1 x off-street car parking space per house + 2 unallocated (5 spaces in total)

## Access

Vehicular and pedestrian access is as per the existing arrangement from Oaklands Road.





## The Site Context

It is an important consideration of the proposals to respond to the site's context. The proposal has reacted as follows:

- The site's main aspect is its open space within the block development (of Oaklands Road, Spencer Road and London Road)
- The site's rear (north) is underused and has been considered as part of a wider character appraisal
- This rear area of the site is 35m away from the rear of Oaklands Road to the west, 20m to the rear of Spencer Road to the north and 68m across the car park of Charmine Court to the rear of the homes on London Road.

## Figure Grain

It is an important consideration of the proposals to respond to the area's Figure Grain. The proposal has reacted as follows:

- Through careful analysis of the existing and proposed Figure Grain to ensure that the proposals sit comfortably within the overall context to which they are placed and;
- By identifying areas of potential development within the site through a recognition of the neighbouring development

It is an important consideration of the proposals to respond to the site's existing configuration. The proposal has reacted as follows:

- The site is 2670 square metres, with built form making up 487 square metres of this (or only 18%);
- The front of the site remains as residential development. By virtue of this development to the rear the street scene remains unaffected;
- Access remains on the southern boundary of the site

The new houses sit on a newly formed development line to the rear of the site. This development line is dictated by the existing car parking arrangement. It was deemed acceptable to 'concentrate' the car parking within 20 existing spaces (1 per existing flat) and with slight reconfiguration provide 2 disabled bays (equating to 22 spaces in total). 14 spaces would therefore be handed over to the development plot for housing and amenity.



# Oaklands Court, Oaklands Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 3SW

It is an important consideration of the proposals to respond to the site's existing configuration. The proposal has reacted as follows:

- No negative overlooking
- Positive overlooking towards parent building through natural surveillance and the use of 'under-utilised' areas
- Existing and proposed tree screening retains character of the area
- The placement of servicing elements such as refuse allows for managed collection via either a temporary location on 'bin-days' or refuse collection directly
- Private amenity space is provided via balconies and gardens. Screening is provided to the rear balconies to avoid unwanted interaction between neighbouring properties
- Distance from closest point in Spencer Road a minimum of 17.5m

Regarding the access of Service vehicles – there is already a process in place to service the parent building that is arranged over 4 floors, as confirmed by the landlord (this was undertaken by Asbestos Line Limited).

Having discussed the access of Service vehicles to the new development site with a private Building Control company we work with, we have the following to add/confirm and discuss further with your Fire Department:

Liam,

If this is in East Sussex the local fire authority accept fire tender access within 90m of all parts of the dwelling if sprinklers are provided. This is a local rule developed due to the East Sussex Act and is not mentioned in any guidance- we advise early consultation with the fire authority to confirm at this site.

The standpipe or horizontal dry riser is another option. Fire authorities are sometimes a little against these as there is additional management to ensure they remain usable (vandalism is more likely as they external). I believe there is sometimes questions on water pressure for very long runs. Again with this option early consultation the fire authority is advised, suggest stating a robust maintenance plan to alleviate any concerns on vandalism.

Tom may be able to add a little more to this, but I would suggest either (not both) of the options should show compliance with B5 if justified within a fire strategy report.

**Peter Louis**  
BSc(Hons) MRICS C.Build E MCABE  
Principal Building Control Surveyor

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The site is not prominent on the street scene but the façade of the parent building that presents itself to the street scene is. The main aspect of the development sits behind this façade that has gated access.

The buildings that will see our development are mainly to the north on Spencer Road (top) (24.7m façade to façade) and to the west on Oaklands Road (bottom) (Ashcroft Court – 35m façade to façade).

The site has two main aspects – its dominant parent building to the front and its abundance of space to the rear (void of any overlooking due to the distances between buildings). The rear of the site is featureless in so much as it does not have a particular defining characteristic apart from the 'wallpaper of existing rear elevations' and existing trees. The front of the site will remain and continue to contribute to the street scene. Therefore the design intent is as follows:

- The main building is to be refurbished where necessary with accesses remaining as existing – the understanding and way-finding around the site will remain unaffected
  - Our new homes are to the rear of the site – the furthest away from the parent building and central to the overall 'block' this car park sits within
1. The site has no historic features to reference – instead this is a study of large surrounding masses of which there is a limited material palette applied. Anything new should respect this but also look to introduce new materials, such as lead, copper or timber. All 3 materials have been explored within a façade treatment
  2. (Previous scheme) there is repetition within the overall surrounding street scenes, notably on London Road. This will now be made up of 3 detached houses, albeit of the same appearance and fenestration
  3. Amenity space is further achieved by introducing inset balconies – balconies are used to the rear of Oaklands Court (both protruding and Juliet) – this is a tool that allows us to break up the form and create a layering of uses resulting in enhanced privacy
  4. A simple hierarchy of masses and understanding of the structural elements – brick is used to match the surroundings, along with easily read lintels and protruding windows at first floor similar to those seen on Ashcroft Court to the west



The site itself is a relatively uniform mixture of traditional materials and typical vernacular details:

## Massing

The articulation of the mass of the buildings is typical of its time and the resultant referencing-buildings of later years – with gables, hips and diminished bearing by creating smaller hips and lower ridges on the various buildings,

## External Walls

A combination of brick and render can be found on the subject site and adjacent sites – the red/brown brick and local 'soft' red brick can be seen from within the site and looking towards neighbouring properties,

## Roofs

A mixture of slate roofs found on the parent building and red clay tile,

## Fenestration

Windows are typical of the various periods of development from sash windows of the late 19th and early 20th Century to casement of the later 20th Century. The doors tend to be of solid construction, half glazed or mainly glazed,

## Detailing

Lead soakers and trays can be seen across most of the buildings which reinforces the importance of such a material in the character of the area. Fret-work barge designs can be seen on some of the buildings but this is not typical,

## Quality

The parent building (the front façade in particular) is completely detached from our proposal. We are looking to use similar traditional materials yet in a modern, less decorative manner

## Overall Assessment

There is nothing of particular significance identified as part of the site's review



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The landscaping scheme is intended to be simple and enjoyable.

Accent lighting that acting as security lighting is proposed for the approach.

High quality terrace-paving materials are proposed. The paving will be permeable in order to aid surface water drainage.

Planting will be simple and specified at a later date / via planning condition.

The surface to the car-spaces is intended to be an enhancement to the usual tarmac surfacing – we have suggested a stone additive to 'enliven' the surfacing.

The fencing to the 'boundary/party fence situations' will be a close board timber fence (treated).

The existing site has three trees identified that are to be reviewed. The less important trees and shrubs will be removed and replaced. For the gardens (to the houses) a residential-landscaping programme will be undertaken that promotes choice and personalisation in due course. A small terrace is proposed to each with permeable paving to assist with rainwater run-off/absorption.

In addition the proposals provide new balconies that offer landscaping potential. The applicant would be pleased to discuss other opportunities although the high number of parks and open spaces nearby make landscaping of secondary importance.



Sustainability is a key design factor for LRA – the development will not give rise to contamination or atmospheric pollution in accordance with usual planning policies.

The development has been designed according to the principles of Secure-by-Design with restricted access into the private dwelling. All areas (where possible) have a degree of natural surveillance offered by the surrounding buildings.

Windows and openings accessible from outside at ground level will be fitted with security fastenings.

Photo voltaic electricity production is not currently proposed as it is not suited to the size of development / location. However the building utilises light as much as practicable to save energy whilst this has been carefully judged to avoid an 'over glazing' of any aspect of the façade which negatively affects the building's energy consumption and privacy

The internal spaces will be lit by energy efficient/low energy fixtures and fittings that have the potential to be proximity and movement-sensor controlled to reduce their burden on the overall energy use of each site.

Natural light is available for all of the main rooms. Open-able windows within the perimeter walls give good manual air conditioning/control. The energy use of artificial light will be reduced with low energy lighting (as above) and occupants will be encouraged to continue using low energy products for the life of the building by receiving the relevant information on the original specification and types of products.

The design provides sufficient space for a 220 Litre Wheelie Bin and a 55 Litre recycling box with lid for stacking. As well as ample space for recycling facilities we have provided easy access for waste collection by Waste/recycling services.



Our aim for this home is to be a benchmark for residential accommodation within Brighton and Hove City Council. The site will be run as an exemplar in line with the following statement:

*"The development proposals look to demonstrate how regard has been given to the minimisation and reuse of construction waste by:*

*The construction methods applied to the proposals will be commensurate to the scale of the development and will utilise construction methods which minimise the use of raw materials and maximise the use of secondary aggregates, and recyclable and recycled materials.*

*Any construction waste will be used as much as possible on site and into the design of the development.*

*On site sorting and recovery of waste materials will be carried out where applicable.*

*The Principal Contractor will work in accordance with The Site Waste Management Plans Regulations 2008 and section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990(3) and the Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991(4)".*

## Energy

The construction, insulation, heating/controls, ventilation, solar, accredited details, and air permeability, as defined in the 'design stage' SAP calculation (ND2502) are adopted:

- Greater than 75% low energy lighting
- Adequate and secure space for 6m drying line per dwelling with posts and footings
- New fridge / freezers, washing machines and dish washers to be 'A' rated tumble and washer dryers to be 'B' rated
- Information to be provided under the EU energy labelling scheme
- External lighting all dedicated low-energy with luminous efficacy > 40 lumens per circuit watt and security lighting max 150w with movement sensors and daylight cut-off
- Cycle storage (secure and weather-proof shed, garage or similar) for 2 cycles. Lock to conform to BS 3621:2004
- Designated space for home office/study, in suitable quiet location, with at least 1.8m of wall length, openable window, 2 double power sockets, and telephone point(s)

## Water

Water consumption to be 105 litres/person/day or less, by use of water efficient fittings and appliances all in accordance with the CSH Wat1 calculator tool.

A water butt (minimum 200 litres) will be provided for each dwelling, on stable base, connected to downpipe with automatic overflow, with lid and tap

## Materials

At least 3 of the 5 key building elements must achieve a Green build guide 2008 rating of A+ to D (see <http://www.bre.co.uk/greenguide/podpage.jsp?id=2126>).

A proportion of the basic building elements to have at least 80% of their materials responsibly sourced. Credits are awarded where materials used in the finishing elements are responsibly sourced

## Surface water run-off

Peak rate run-off into a watercourse will be no greater for the developed site than it was for the pre-development site (we understand credits are awarded where developments are located in areas of low flood risk or where in areas of medium or high flood risk appropriate measures are taken to prevent damage to the property and its contents in accordance with the code criteria in the technical guide).

## Waste

Adequate space is provided for waste storage of at least 220 (+55) litres (assuming collection once per week). All containers are accessible to disabled people, and sited on a hard level surface. A Local Authority collection scheme for recyclable household waste, with at least 3 bins (7 litres+ each, total 30 litres+) for pre collection sorting will be located in kitchen cupboards.

A Site Waste Management Plan is to be developed and implemented in accordance with Code requirements, to reduce waste generated on site in accordance with best practice.

## Pollution

All applicable insulation materials (used in roofs, floors, external walls, lintels, loft hatches, cylinders, pipes, storage tanks, external doors) will use substances that have a GWP < 5 (manufacturer/installation).

See <http://www.gwpforum.org/servlet/PSP?iNodeID=125>.

All boilers to have dry Nox emissions of 40 mg/kWh or less.

## Health and wellbeing

- Living and dining rooms have daylight factor of at least 1.5%.
- 80% of working plane in the above rooms receives direct light from the sky
- Credits are awarded where performance standards exceed those required in Building Regulations Part E. This can be demonstrated by carrying out pre-completion testing or through the use of Robust Details Limited (<http://www.robustdetails.com/>)
- All dwellings have external private gardens
- Principles of Lifetimes Homes (16 criteria) are fully adhered to.



## Management

A home user guide will be compiled (for both the dwelling and site/surroundings), and will be available in different formats (if necessary).

We and our client understand that credits are awarded where there is a commitment to comply with best practice site management principles using either the Considerate Constructors Scheme or alternative locally/nationally recognised scheme (<http://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>).

Credits are awarded where there is a commitment and strategy to operate site management procedures.

Credits are awarded for complying with section 2 – Physical Security from Secured by Design – New Homes. An Architectural Liaison Officer (ALO), or alternative, needs to be appointed early in the design process and their recommendations incorporated.

(<http://www.securedbydesign.com/professionals/index.aspx>)

## Ecology

We know one credit is awarded for developing land of inherently low value.

A credit is awarded where there is a commitment to enhance the ecological value of the development site which we are doing i.e new planting and landscaping.

A credit is awarded where there is a commitment to maintain and adequately protect features of ecological value, such as all of the trees to the rear of the site.

Transport assessment by GTA Civils – refer to separate document

Tree survey by PJC Consultancy – refer to separate document

*“I search for surprise in my architecture. A work of art should cause the emotion of newness”*

*Oscar Niemeyer*

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# Liam Russell Architects

architecture and development

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