

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Outline Planning Permission for a Mixed-Use Development
at Commercial Street, Risca
prepared on behalf of Lidl GB Ltd.

January 2025

REV C



This Design and Access Statement supports the outline planning application for a mixed-use residential and retail development on Commercial Street, Risca, Wales. The proposal aims to create a dynamic and high-quality development that integrates modern architectural design with the established character of Risca's town centre. The scheme is designed to provide a sustainable and vibrant addition to the local community, contributing both to the regeneration of the area and to the wider economic and social fabric of Risca. Excellent transportation links make the site a ideal location for residential development creating a sustainable node within the heart of Risca.

This application seeks approval for the general principles of land use, scale, massing, and site layout. Detailed proposals for appearance, landscaping, and access will be submitted as part of future reserved matters applications.

The document is to be read in conjunction with a set of illustrative drawings and reports submitted as part of this application.



EXISTING SITE

TO CREATE A **VIBRANT, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY** AT THE HEART OF RISCA, WHERE MODERN RESIDENTIAL LIVING SEAMLESSLY BLENDS WITH DYNAMIC RETAIL EXPERIENCES.

THIS MASTERPLAN WILL TRANSFORM THE FORMER LIDL SITE INTO A THRIVING HUB THAT FOSTERS **CONNECTION, CONVENIENCE, AND A SENSE OF BELONGING** FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE.

WITH A FOCUS ON **GREEN SPACES, SMART DESIGN, AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT**, OUR VISION IS TO DELIVER A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LIVE, WORK, SHOP, AND PLAY IN HARMONY, WHILE PRESERVING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND HERITAGE OF RISCA.



EXISTING SITE PLAN WITH BOTH EXISTING LIDL SITE [RED] AND NEW LIDL SITE [BLUE]

The existing Lidl is to be relocated to a larger site further down Commercial street [shown in blue], in which the relocation creates a larger more modern store which in turn will enhance the area with improved customer offerings and the overall experience within Risca. The planning application for the relocation of the new and improved Lidl store has been submitted.

Commercial Street is a prominent location within Risca, a town that is undergoing a gradual process of regeneration, with efforts to revitalize both its retail and residential offerings. The site is located within walking distance of the town's railway station, bus routes, and key amenities such as schools, shops, and community facilities.

The surrounding area is predominantly urban in character, with a mix of 19th and 20th-century buildings, including terraced housing, small retail units, and commercial properties. The streetscape of Commercial Street itself is a mix of traditional building forms with contemporary infill developments. The site, currently occupied by a Lidl Foodstore, offers an excellent opportunity to deliver a high-quality mixed-use development that can play a key role in the ongoing revitalisation of Risca.

Given the urban context, the development is designed to respect and compliment the character of the area while introducing a modern aesthetic and sustainable architectural practices.



MAP SHOWCASING AMENITIES AND DISTANCE

The proposed site in Risca is exceptionally well-connected, offering a variety of public transport options. It benefits from a nearby train station, providing easy access to major cities and regional areas. Additionally, the area is served by a comprehensive bus network, offering multiple routes to surrounding towns and key locations. This makes the site highly accessible, ideal for those who prefer not to rely on personal vehicles, reducing traffic congestion and supporting a more sustainable lifestyle. Furthermore, the site is located along a prominent cycle route, promoting eco-friendly travel and offering an active commuting option. These transport links make the site a highly desirable location for residents and visitors alike.



TRANSPORTATION LINK MAP

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The proposed site faces several constraints and challenges, however, also present opportunities. Which can be utilised and overcome through thoughtful design and layout.

Constraints:

A - 8-meter flood offset no-build zone: This area could be used for parking and communal gardens.

B - Foul water sewer easement: Runs through the site, creating another no-build zone, restricting potential building space.

Opportunities:

1 + Relocation of Lidl: The existing Lidl on-site is to be relocated 600 meters east, opening up the site for a mixed-use development, to include much-needed housing.

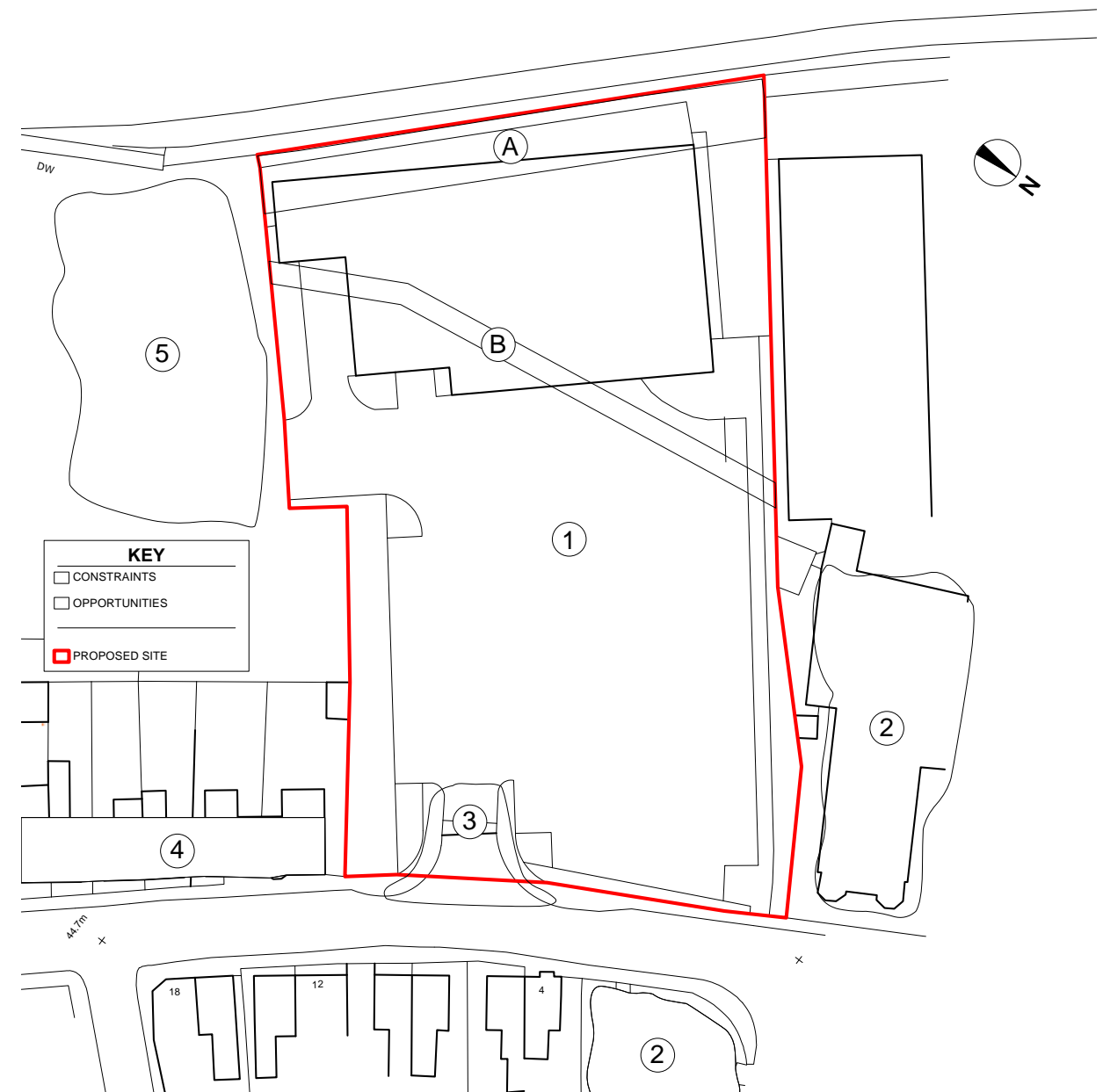
2 + Response to listed buildings: Opportunity to design the development in a way that responds to and complements nearby listed buildings, respecting the architectural heritage.

3 + Single access point: A single access point simplifies traffic management and enhances connectivity to the development.

4 + Street scene regeneration: Opportunity to regenerate the street scene and massing along Commercial Street, creating a more cohesive and inviting environment.

5 + Tree retention: Opportunity to preserve the existing trees on-site and on adjoining land, contributing to green spaces and local biodiversity.

EXISTING SITE PLAN DEMONSTRATING CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



EXISTING STREET SCENE ALONG COMMERCIAL STREET – PHOTOMONTAGE USING GOOGLE EARTH

DESIGN CONCEPT - SKETCH



The proposal site is an integral element along Commercial street, which the design requires a robust concept which not only expands but compliments the current street scene as well as improving the current site for existing and future Residents of Risca. The development of the proposal has been derived from the constraints and opportunities identified, analysis of the existing context and indicative concept. The design is split into three diverse elements:

- + Retail Space
- + Residential Space
- + Communal open area/ parking

These uses have been carefully chosen, as they will contribute positively to the vitality and viability of Risca Town Centre. The mix of uses will complement the wider regeneration ongoing in Risca and help cater for the residents and visitors.

The site is split informally along a private and public line, with the front section dedicated to retail unit and the rear being more private.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN – SKETCH LAYOUT

DESIGN CONCEPT

PARAMETERS

Land use - up to 42 dwellings (Class 3) and up to 350 sq m of flexible commercial space (Class A1, A2 and A3) and Landscape area up to 1900 sq m.

RETAIL SPACE

The layout of the proposal albeit indicatively shown, is designed to create homage to the commercial street retail scene with expanse of glazing creating open and active shop frontage. Ground-floor retail unit positioned at the front of the site, up to 350 square meters [approx. 3700 sqft], will provide space for local shops, cafes, or other retail uses. The unit is designed to be split into smaller units or kept as one larger allowing flexibility which will enhance the vitality of Commercial Street, contributing to the local economy and community.

LANDSCAPING AND GREEN SPACES

The development will include green spaces and communal areas for residents. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated into the landscaping design to manage stormwater effectively. Additionally, native planting and biodiversity measures will be integrated into the public and private spaces to improve the ecological value of the site.

RESIDENTIAL SPACE

Upto 42 residential units, comprising a mix of 1- and 2-bedroom apartments and houses designed to appeal to a variety of demographics, from young professionals to families. The residential units will be located primarily away from Commercial street creating a public and private divide of the site. Residential units above the retail unit on the first floor are set back from road to create privacy and improved outlook. The set back also reduces overbearing massing along the existing footpaths along Commercial Street.

The development of various scaled residential properties in the centre of Risca Town will play a crucial role in addressing local housing demand. The specific mix and tenure will be determined in consultation with housing officers within the Council during the detailed planning phase. In addition to fulfilling this housing need, the project will provide social and economic advantages, as well as the significant environmental improvements.



Scale and Massing

The overall massing of the units has been designed to follow the existing urban grain of Risca, whilst providing the appropriate public and private divide. The proposed main massing at the front of the site respects the surrounding context by stepping back at upper levels to reduce the visual impact on the street. All buildings will be of an appropriate height to complement the town centre's existing fabric, with a continuous street frontage that enhances the public realm and provides a welcoming face to Commercial Street.

Public Realm and Active Frontages

The ground-floor retail unit will be designed to **re-establish a strong streetscape** by incorporating active frontages that engage directly with the street. The design will prioritize pedestrians, featuring large windows that ensure visual permeability, fostering a dynamic connection between the interior spaces and the public realm. This approach will play a crucial role in **regenerating the area** by transforming the site into a hub for activity. Additionally, the **effective use of this highly accessible site** will be maximized through enhanced pavements, landscaping, and strategically placed seating areas, all aimed at increasing footfall contributing to the overall vibrancy of the town centre.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a key design consideration. The project will incorporate energy-efficient design measures such as high-quality insulation, passive solar heating, and triple-glazed windows to reduce energy consumption. The use of zinc and limestone will also support sustainability goals, as both materials have long lifespans and are relatively low-maintenance. The development will incorporate renewable energy solutions such as solar panels, where appropriate, to further enhance its environmental performance.

DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

At this Outline stage, it is not intended for the architectural style of the development to be discussed in detail, as the focus is on the overall planning and layout. However, it is important to note that the architectural style will be designed to reflect the local vernacular of Risca, ensuring the development harmonizes with its surroundings. The materials for both the walls and the roof will be carefully selected from a limited palette to avoid over-saturation of the street scene, maintaining a balanced and cohesive aesthetic that complements the existing architectural character of the area.



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN – ARTISTIC IMPRESSION

ACCESS

Access to the site is integral to its seamless integration into the wider town of Risca, as well as its connection to the surrounding areas. Ensuring ease of movement for all users—whether by car, foot, or bike—is crucial in promoting the development as a vibrant and sustainable addition to the local community. The proposed access strategy emphasizes the following key elements:

Movement and Parking

The development will provide up to 62 parking spaces, which are designed to meet the needs of both residents and commercial users, ensuring ample parking without overwhelming the site. Of the total parking spaces, no more than 9 will be allocated to commercial use, reflecting the priority of promoting sustainable transport options for the commercial space.

Vehicular Access:

Vehicular access to the development will be provided via **Commercial Street**, a key access point that will lead to a dedicated entrance for residential parking. This approach ensures that the residential and commercial areas are well separated, maintaining a smooth flow of traffic while minimising potential congestion.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access:

The site's location within Risca places it within a highly accessible area, and the development will harness this connectivity by integrating pedestrian and cycle access throughout. The **ground-floor retail units** will open directly onto **Commercial Street**, fostering active engagement with the street and promoting foot traffic. This direct access not only supports local commerce but also enhances the vibrancy of the area. **Cycle parking** will be provided within the development to encourage the use of bicycles as a sustainable mode of transportation. The development aims to align with local transportation goals by reducing reliance on private cars and promoting a healthier, environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

Universal Design and Accessibility

The development places a strong emphasis on **universal design**, ensuring that the site is fully accessible to people of all abilities. This commitment extends to both the **public** and **private** areas of the development. Key accessibility features will include:

Step-free access to all buildings to ensure that individuals with mobility impairments can navigate the site without difficulty.

Wide doorways that accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, or other mobility aids.

Lifts where necessary, ensuring that all levels of the development are accessible to everyone, regardless of their physical ability.

By prioritizing accessibility, the development not only meets regulatory standards but also creates a welcoming environment for all users, promoting inclusivity and equal access to the amenities and spaces within the development.

Integration with the Wider Town

The access strategy is designed to ensure that the site integrates seamlessly with the wider town, creating a cohesive link between the development and the surrounding areas. This includes enhancing the **public realm** with pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, ensuring safe and efficient pedestrian crossings, and considering the movement of both people and vehicles to minimise congestion. The layout of the site will also encourage movement through the development rather than merely serving as an isolated enclave, contributing to the broader goal of improving connectivity within Risca.



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN – PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICLE MOVEMENT



ABOVE – BETHANY ENGLISH
BAPTIST CHURCH AND
SUNDAY SCHOOL
[GOOGLE EARTH]



LEFT – WAR MEMORIAL
STAND [GOOGLE EARTH]

The proposed mixed-use development is situated in a sensitive heritage context with multiple Grade II listed buildings in its vicinity.

To the west of the site lies the Grade II-listed Bethany English Baptist Church [pictured left above] and its attached Sunday School, both of which are of significant architectural and historical value. The new development must be carefully designed to respect the visual and spatial relationships with these important buildings, ensuring that the scale, massing, and materials complement the existing structures, and that their historic significance is not overshadowed or detracted from.

Directly opposite the site, the Grade II-listed Commercial Street War Memorial stands as a prominent landmark [pictured left below], which further underscores the need for thoughtful integration of the development to preserve the visual prominence of the memorial. Additionally, to the west of the church, the Grade II-listed Former Risca Palace Cinema, another important cultural landmark, must be considered in the design, ensuring that the new development respects the character of the area and does not harm the setting of these key heritage assets.

Careful consideration of these listed buildings will ensure that the development enhances the area's historical and architectural integrity while providing contemporary living and retail spaces.

The massing and height have been designed to blend sensitively with the surrounding built environment, ensuring that the development enhances, rather than overwhelms, the street scene.

Detailed design including the appearance and architectural form will be submitted as part of future reserved matters applications.

Conclusion

The proposed mixed-use development at Commercial Street, Risca, is designed to create a modern, sustainable, and vibrant addition to the town centre. By combining residential and retail spaces in a well-considered design, the scheme will enhance the vitality of Risca, contributing to its economic and social regeneration. The architectural design, incorporating high-quality materials such as zinc and limestone, will respect the character of the area while offering a contemporary and sustainable solution to the town's evolving needs.

The comprehensive access strategy places a strong emphasis on ensuring easy, sustainable, and inclusive access to and from the development, supporting the town's wider transportation and accessibility goals. It encourages the use of multiple modes of transport, with a particular focus on walking, cycling, and public transport, and ensures that the site remains a vibrant, connected, and accessible part of the town for all users.

Future detailed applications will refine the design, ensuring the scheme integrates seamlessly with the surrounding environment and meets the needs of the community.



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN— ARTISTIC IMPRESSION



York Place Studio,
8 Britannia Street,
Leeds,
LS1 2DZ,
t: 0113 244 3457
e:admin@htcarchitects.co.uk
w:www.htcarchitects.co.uk