

Design and Access Statement  
South Parade, Southsea

Revision A June 2014

EMMETT  
RUSSELL  
architects

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# 1. Introduction

## Introduction

### Project Description

#### The Site

This project is for the development of the site of the former Savoy Buildings and Savoy Court on South Parade, Southsea, between Alhambra Road and Clarendon Road. It sits within Conservation Area No.19: East Southsea .

#### The Proposals:

The proposal is for the development of 98 sheltered living apartments including 66 Assisted Living (Extra Care) apartments and 32 Retirement Living apartments with associated communal and support facilities and a ground floor retail unit. Parking for 49 cars will be provided on site as well as designated bike and mobility scooter stores.

Assisted Living accommodation provides the frail elderly with better and more extensive housing and care choices. It provides residents with not only safety, security and companionship and removes the heavy burden of property maintenance but by its very concept, also provides for independent living and at the same time, care tailored to the needs of individual residents. By doing this, it delays or prevents the need for a greater level of care in the future such as a move to a more conventional nursing home. Therefore, it reduces the anxieties and worries experienced by many elderly people living in accommodation that does not best suit their needs. The Retirement Living accommodation would also deliver age restricted housing for independent living for which there is an identified and continuing need.

### Planning Policy Context

In developing the design of the current proposals we have strived to provide a new building that enhances the character and appearance of this part of Southsea whilst addressing a pressing housing need. We have set out to address relevant areas of National and Local Planning Policy.

The following areas of policy have been considered in preparing the current proposals:

#### National Planning Policy Framework

##### Policies from the Portsmouth Plan :

PCS9 The Seafront  
 PCS10 Housing Delivery  
 PCS12 Flood risk  
 PCS13 A Greener Portsmouth  
 PCS14 A Healthy City  
 PCS15 Sustainable Design and Construction  
 PCS16 Infrastructure and Community Benefit  
 PCS17 Transport  
 PCS19 Housing Mix, Size and the provision of affordable homes  
 PCS21 Housing Density  
 PCS23 Design and Conservation  
 PCS24 Tall Buildings

##### Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents :

Solent Special Protection Areas, April 2014.  
 Residential Parking Standards SPD, 2008  
 Developing Contaminated Land SPG  
 Housing Standards SPD,  
 Planning Obligations,  
 Reducing Crime through Design SPD, 2006  
 Seafront Masterplan.  
 Southsea Seafront Strategy.

A separate Planning Statement has been prepared by The Planning Bureau to accompany the application. This provides details of the Planning History of the site, the Planning Policy context for the application and details of how Planning Considerations have been addressed in the current application. The document also provides more detail on the nature and concept of the proposed Assisted Living and Retirement Living accommodation.

The design team have worked closely with planning officers throughout the design process and have met with planners to discuss the proposals as the design has developed on the following dates:

24th January, 6th March, 27th March, 8th May, 9th May  
 15th May, 10th June.

We have also sought pre-application feedback on the emerging design from the Design Review Panel and have made significant changes in response to their comments.

## Introduction

### Supporting Information

In developing this design we have worked with a number of specialist consultants to provide detailed analysis of the existing site and advice and design input on the developing proposals. The following members of the team will provide specialist reports and/or supplementary drawings to accompany the application:

The Planning Bureau - Planning policy context  
 Beardmore Urban - Heritage Statement  
 Paul Basham Associates - Transport Statement  
 Ian Keen Ltd. - Arboricultural Survey / Report  
 Encon Associates - Energy Statement / CSH  
 Remarkable Group PR consultants - Statement of Community Involvement  
 Nicholas Pearson Associates - Verified Images  
 Peter Brett Associates - Flood Risk Assessment

*Below: Presentation to stakeholders*



### Public Consultation & Design Evolution

Extensive community consultation has been carried out during the development of the current proposals including two rounds of meetings, presentations and discussions with neighbours, stakeholders and local interest groups as well as a range of other forms of communication and feedback. The initial round of one-to-one meetings was followed up with a public exhibition on 8th May with around 180 people in attendance. Full details of the community consultation will be provided in the Statement of Community Involvement that is provided as a separate document within the Planning Application.

Feedback from this process has helped shape the emerging design of the proposals in a number of ways.

The initial round of consultation focussed on the main design strategies including the layout of the building on the site, the height and massing of the building and the initial ideas for the treatment of the elevations. The proposals were generally well received but some concerns were raised that the facade appeared 'bland' and lacked modeling and vertical emphasis.

Subsequent design efforts focussed on addressing these issues and developing the details of the design. Changes included the introduction of colour to the reveals of the balconies and significant changes to the Clarendon Road block to provide more articulation.

By the time of the public exhibition and the second round of meetings the design had been developed in more detail. The exhibition produced a wide range of feedback and, along with feedback from the Design Review Panel, raised a number of issues that have been addressed in a various changes to the design.

Key changes include:

#### The Roof:

Since the exhibition the top storey of the building has been set back a further 1.3m from the facade of the building to reduce any overbearing impact. This has also had the effect of introducing a horizontal division in the roof that breaks up its apparent mass and helps the overall proportions of the building.

#### The Facade:

We have made significant changes to the facade in response to some of the adverse feedback received. We felt that it was important to give more vertical emphasis to the facade, provide more three dimensional modeling, and give more emphasis to the classical proportions on which the design strategy is based. The asymmetric treatment of the balconies and kitchen bays on the South Parade Elevation have been removed and replaced with a more simple arrangement. This involved removing the kitchen windows from the seafront facade and inserting them in the balcony reveal instead, providing an oblique view down the beach from the kitchen. This has allowed a much clearer and more straightforward articulation of the main elements of the facade.

The balconies have also been projected beyond the line of the facade to add articulation to the elevation and a projecting coping and pilasters has been added. Extensive changes have also been made to the elevations at either end of the front block facing Alhambra Road and Clarendon Road.

Other changes include improvements to the landscaped areas.

## Recent Planning History

Planning was granted at appeal in 2007 for the re-development of the Savoy Buildings site. At the time, Savoy Court was still in place. The approved scheme is for 92 apartments with ground floor commercial floor space and associated parking. The proposal fills the full width of the site and includes a basement car park. The apartment building is six storeys high along the front stepping down along Clarendon Road. The floor to floor heights of the building are much larger than conventional floor heights to tie in with the levels (and high ceilings) of Savoy Court. The Council have confirmed that permission had been lawfully implemented and is therefore extant.

A subsequent separate application for Savoy Court was passed in 2010 to convert Savoy Court into an apartment building with a ground floor shop.

Some drawings of the extant scheme for the Savoy Buildings Site are shown on this page and the next page.

Throughout the design process we have developed a new approach to the site that provides a high quality development that improves on the extant scheme in a number of ways. We have set out to:

- Reduce the footprint of the building.
- Reduce the impact of the building on its neighbours.
- Work with the established building heights.
- Improve the setting of the conservation area with a building that repairs the urban grain and enhances the seafront.



Above: Site plan for Extant Planning Permission

Extant Planning Permission



Top: Extant Scheme South Parade Elevation, Bottom: Extant Scheme Clarendon Road Elevation  
 Top Right: CGI of proposed building  
 Bottom Right: Figure-ground plan showing footprint of extant planning permission

## **2. Site Analysis**



## Site Analysis

### Site Location

The site sits in a prominent seafront location in Southsea on the site of the former Savoy buildings. It faces onto the South Parade Seafront and forms the end of a residential block bounded by Alhambra to the East and Clarendon Road to the west. The site is adjacent to the Royal Beach Hotel and close to the South Parade Pier. The site faces South across the promenade and beach with very open sea views and connections to parks on either side along the seafront.

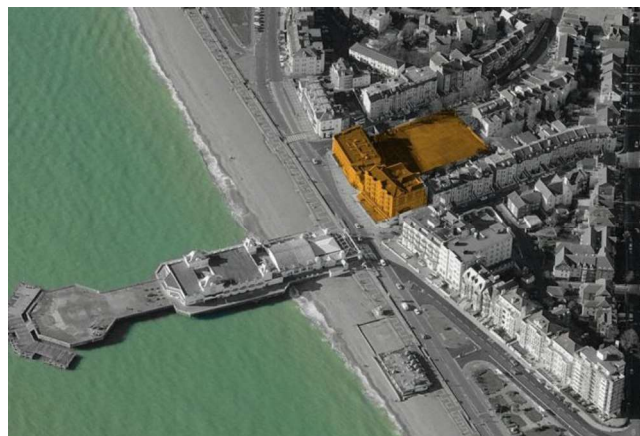
The site is well served by public transport with five different bus routes (Numbers 1, 7, 16, 17, & 19) passing immediately adjacent to the site. Three of those routes are served by a bus stop next to the site on Clarendon Road and the other two served by a stop close by on South Parade. The nearest railway station is Fratton which is 1.4 miles away and is accessible by bus directly from the site.

The map shows the proximity of local shops and services. The central Southsea shopping area has a variety of shops and department stores from national chains as well as other services including a Library. This is approximately 0.6 miles from the site. Albert Road provides a different range of shops, mainly smaller independent shops and is about 0.7 miles from the site. There are also a few small convenience stores on Clarendon Road, closer to the site.

Top Right: Location plan showing site in relation to nearby shops

Bottom Left: Aerial view of site in relation to pier.

Bottom Right: Bus map with site shown as red dot.



Site Analysis

Historic Context

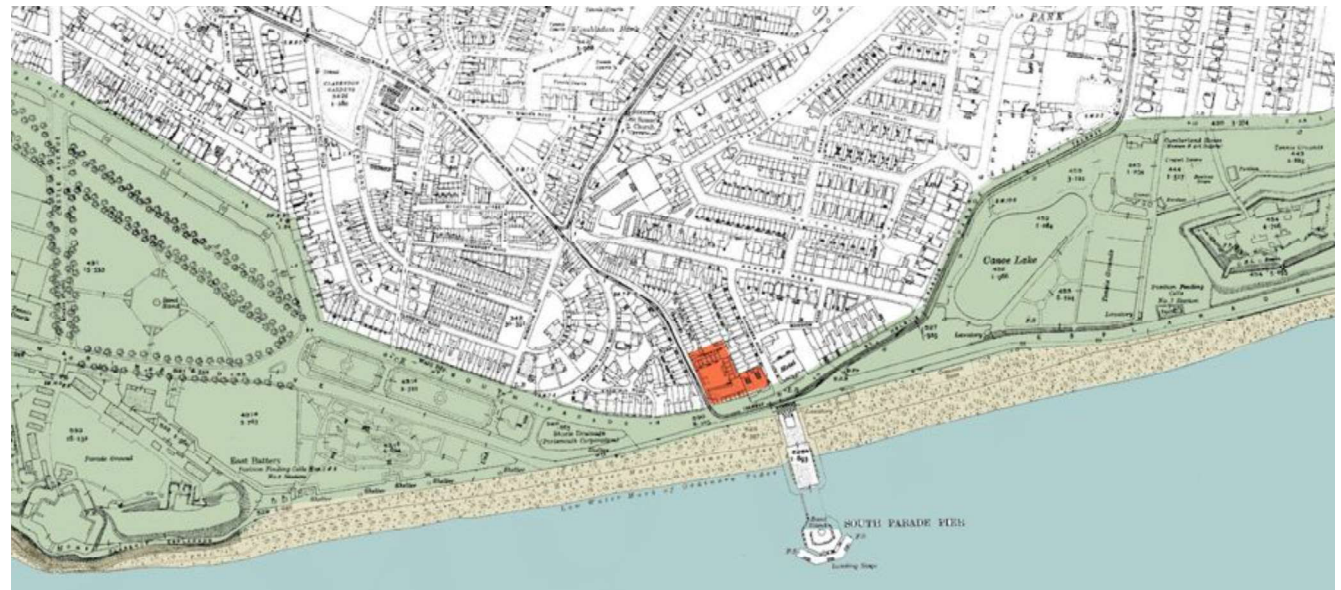
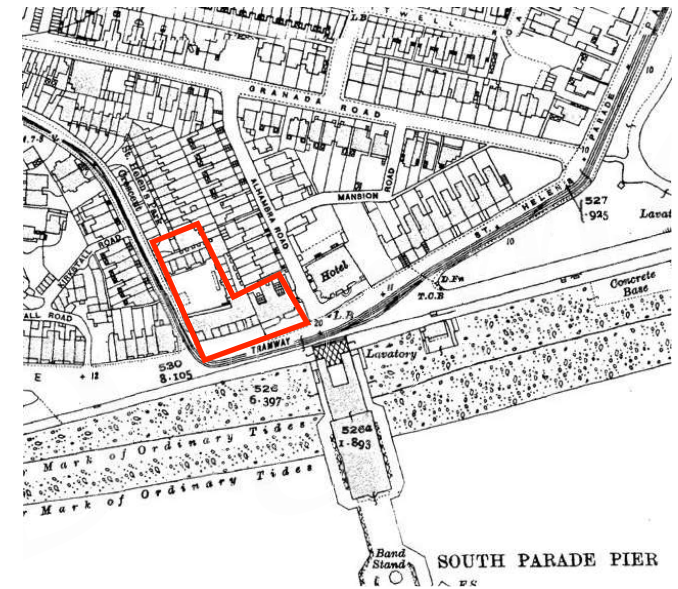
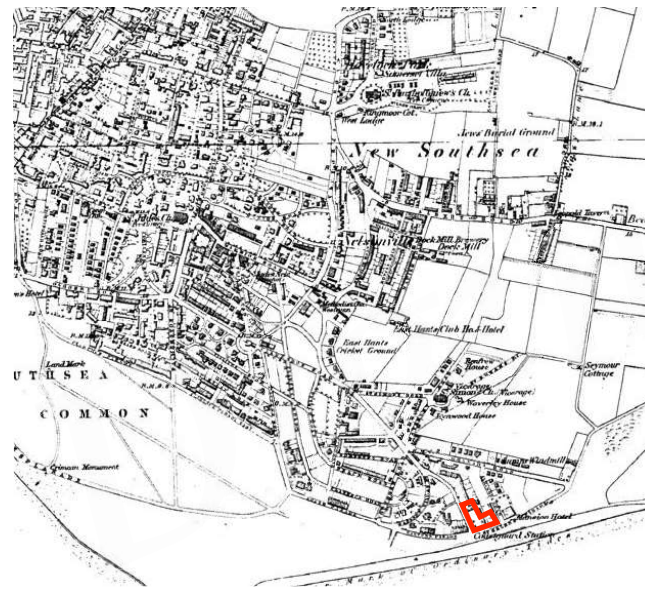
Interestingly this stretch of buildings along the South Parade seafront are the most Southerly tip of Portsmouth's urban area and the point at which the built up area of the town comes closest to the sea.

Whilst some of the buildings along Southsea Common date from the 18th and early 19th Century, the significant growth of the area as a sea-side resort coincided with the arrival of the railways in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. The architecture of this stretch of seafront reflects the various periods of growth and development that have occurred since then. The buildings along the seafront include a variety of Victorian and Edwardian properties that have been developed in a piecemeal way to provide accommodation for the burgeoning tourist industry. These vary in height from the smaller ones with two storeys and an additional attic storey to larger hotels and apartment buildings with up to six storeys. Later developments throughout the Twentieth Century have added a wide range of building styles and greater heights to leave a very diverse and varied frontage.

The piecemeal development of this part of Southsea over the past 140 years is partly as a result of its proximity to the 'Great Morass' an area of marshy ground set back from the sea front.

The map from the end of the 1860s indicates a number of buildings surrounding the site were already in place at this point. These include St Helen's Park Crescent immediately to the North of the site on Clarendon Road and 38-42 South Parade.

Above Left: Map of Southsea, 1860s  
 Above Right: Map of Southsea, 1930s  
 Below Left: Southsea 1950s



## Site Analysis

### Site History

The site for this project was formerly occupied by the Savoy Buildings and Savoy Court, which at various times comprised of a hotel and several night clubs. These buildings, together with the adjacent seafront buildings, provided a backdrop to the pier and the beach and the tourist activities of the seafront.

The historic photos serve as reminders of this former heyday. Residential neighbours may have fewer fond memories of the site's more recent past as buildings deteriorated and night life grew louder. The site became vacant following the demolition of the Savoy Buildings for redevelopment and the subsequent fire in 2011 which destroyed the remaining Savoy Court building to the South East.

Maps from the 1860s and 1870s, prior to the construction of Savoy Buildings or Savoy Court, show the site occupied by a Coastguard Station arranged as an L-shaped configuration of two storey cottages around an open space. Part of this was cleared to make way for Savoy Buildings around 1930. Savoy Court shown in these Edwardian Photographs (top) appears to date from the 1890s.

The aerial photos below show the remnants of the coast guard cottages prior to their demolition in the 1950s.

Planning Permission was granted at appeal in 2007 for the redevelopment of the Savoy Buildings site to provide a residential development with some ground floor commercial uses.



## Site Analysis

### Seafront Context

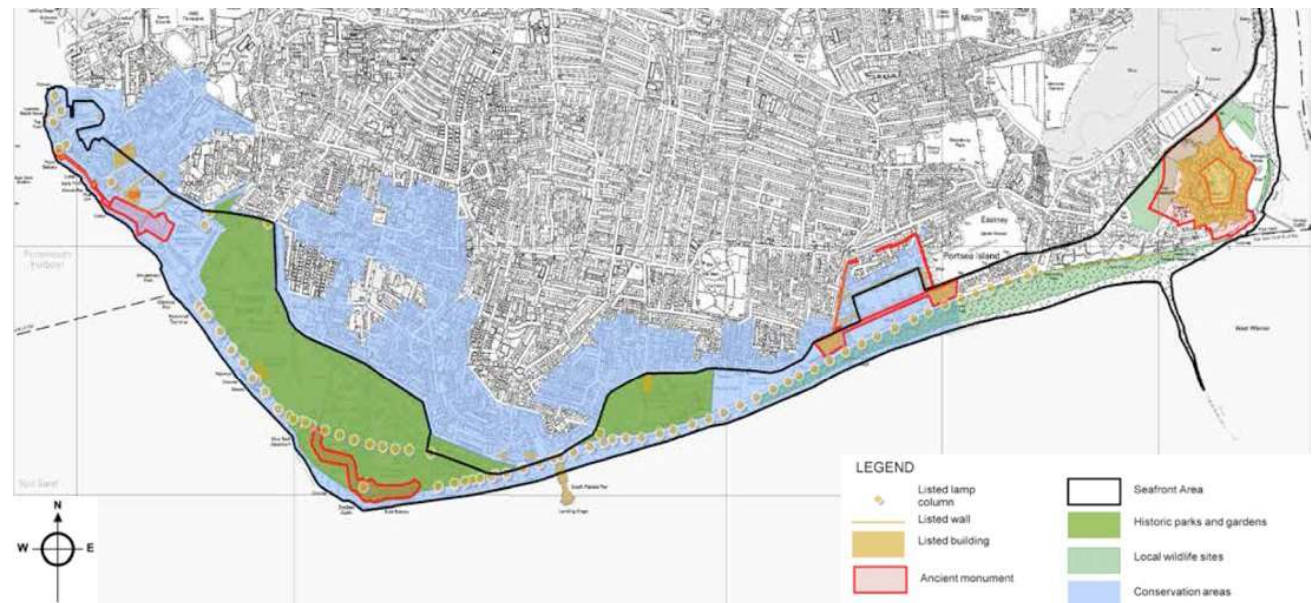
The sea front at Southsea stretches between Portsea Island in the West and Fort Cumberland in the East and includes a number of public parks, two piers and an esplanade running alongside the beach. The seafront is made up of a wide variety of buildings reflecting the evolution of the area over the last 200 years. The site is within the East Southsea Conservation Area (No. 19) and adjacent to the Seafront Conservation area.

The buildings along the seafront are predominantly finished with painted render interspersed with the occasional brick building. The light colour accentuates the intense light of the South Facing coastline, and emphasizes the modeling of the facades. Where they are visible, roofs are generally slate although some are lost behind parapet walls.

Whilst the building heights and materials vary enormously along the seafront, the building line is consistent and provides a continuous line that forms a backdrop to the life of the beaches and parks. The current site represents a 'missing tooth' in this otherwise complete seafront.

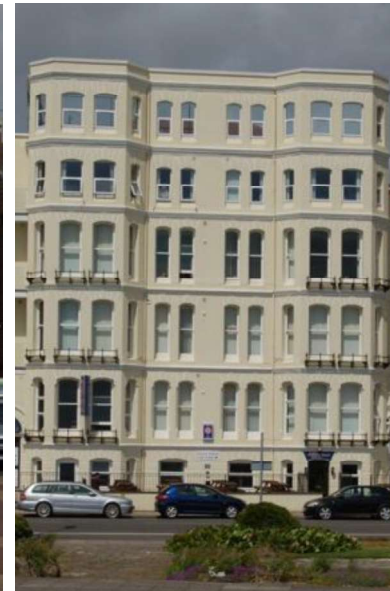
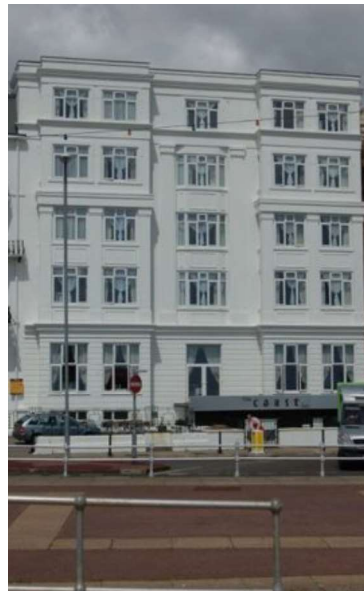
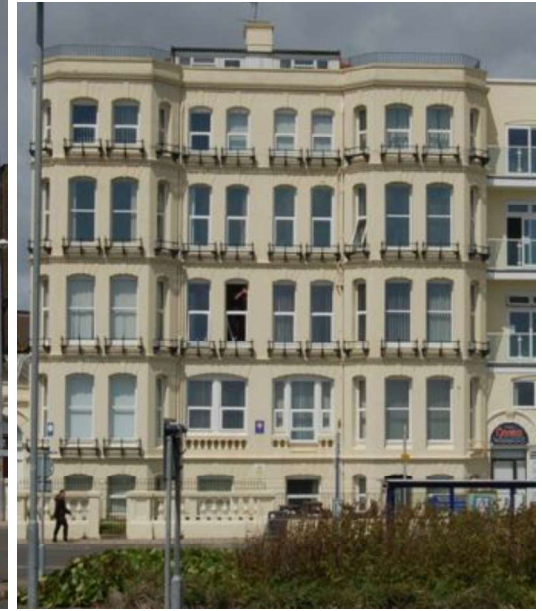
The map below shows a black line around the area of the Seafront Masterplan Strategy. The Seafront Masterplan SPD sets out strategies to encourage more use of the seafront area. Whilst this site is not within the area of the masterplan, the development of the site is important in improving the visual appearance of the Seafront and increasing activity in the area.

The blue areas on the map indicate the Conservation areas around Southsea.



## Site Analysis

### Seafront Context Cont...



### Surrounding Buildings

The Savoy Buildings site sits on a stretch of seafront characterised by apartment buildings of between 4 and 10 storeys. The surrounding buildings are generally painted render with white or cream coloured facades. The buildings on this page are typical of the buildings on either side of the site along the seafront.

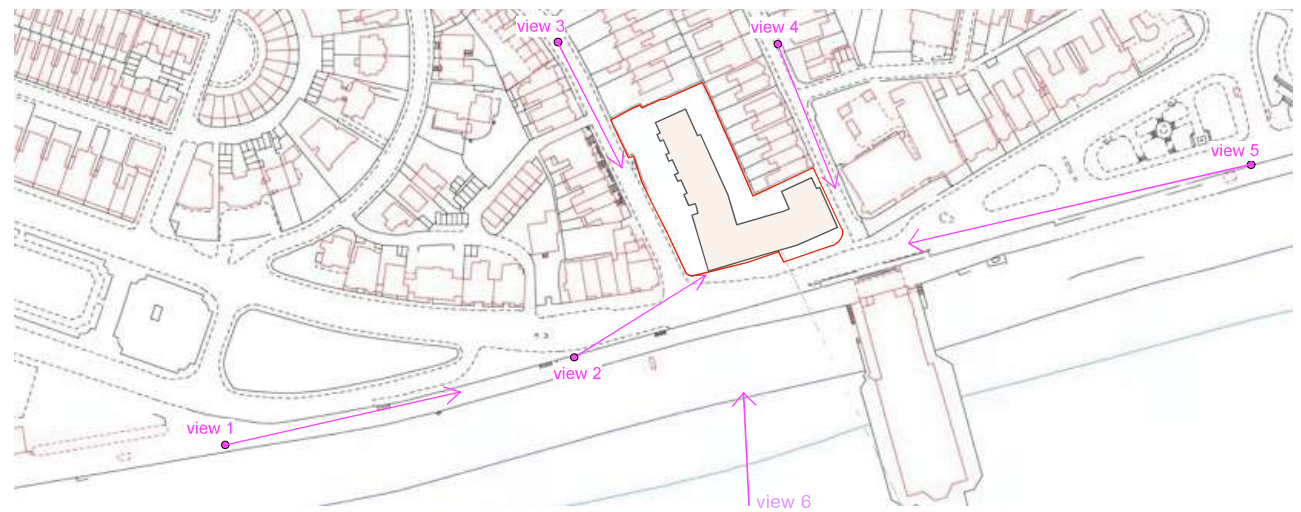
## Site Analysis

### Important Views

In developing the design of the proposals we have set out to consider the impact of the building from a wide range of different viewpoints and to ensure that the height, scale, massing and architectural treatment of the building fits comfortably within the context of the surrounding conservation areas.

The map at the top of this page shows the six key views that have been identified in discussion with the Planning Officers, to use in testing the three dimensional impact of the building. Photographs of the views are shown below.

View 6, the marine approach, is not shown on this page.



## Listed Buildings

There are two notable Listed buildings in proximity of the site:

- 38-42 South Parade on the corner of Clarendon Road and South Parade was designed by T.E.Owen in the 1840s and is characteristic of his work around Southsea. (shown top right)
- South Parade Pier: The pier has had a chequered history including three major fires in 1904, 1967 and 1974 that have caused widespread damage. Each has required significant rebuilding work. During the Second World War it also suffered damage when it was partly dismantled for military reasons. The pier remains in a poor state and is not currently accessible to the public. However it remains strategically important and will provide an important focus for the regeneration of this part of Southsea. (Below from left to right: Pier in the 1950s, 1974 and 2014)



## Site Analysis

### Immediate Surrounding Context

Alhambra Road runs to the East of the site perpendicular to the seafront and is characterised by apartment buildings that have three principal storeys with additional semi-basement and roof storey with dormers giving a total of 5 storeys.

Further down Alhambra Road, away from the seafront, the buildings step down to four storeys (including attic storey and semi-basement). These lower buildings have very distinctive white brick facades that we have picked up on in the design of the proposals for the Savoy Buildings Site. This combination of white brick facades and dark grey roof storey has provided the model for the new proposals.

On Clarendon Road, to the West of the site the buildings are similarly five storeys (including a semi-basement and attic with dormers). On the Eastern side of the road St Helens Park Crescent adjoins the northern boundary of the site. This row of houses sets out a building line that is set back significantly from the pavement. Historically this space between the street and the building was occupied by a shared garden. In recent decades this has been taken over as off street parking for each property.

The current proposals have picked up on this set back building line with a shared garden in front to provide a model for the new development along Clarendon Road.

Above Left: White brick buildings on Alhambra Road  
 Above Right: View towards Pier along Alhambra Road  
 Below Left: View from Seafront down Clarendon Road  
 Below Right: View towards seafront from Clarendon Road.





## Building Heights / Scale

The plan on this page shows an analysis of building heights in the area surrounding the site with our current proposals included on the map. The height and scale of buildings in this part of Southsea form a distinctive pattern:

The main seafront is characterised by taller buildings, where the huge scale of the open space in front of the buildings acts as a counterpoint to the height of the buildings themselves. Behind the seafront the buildings step down in scale with 4-5 storey buildings on Clarendon Road and Alhambra Road giving way to smaller more suburban buildings on the streets behind.

Historically the Royal Beach hotel and Savoy Court provided a high point in the centre of the seafront framing South Parade Pier in between. The loss of the buildings on the site has left this part of the seafront rather unbalanced. The existing pattern of development would suggest that a building of similar height to the Royal Beach hotel would be appropriate on the site to restore a coherent backdrop to the pier.

On the streets on either side of the site the urban design strategy for any development should be to provide enclosure and continuity to the streets and provide buildings of a scale to fit the existing 4-5 storey buildings.

As the proposed building will exceed 20m in height we have prepared a Tall Buildings Statement to accompany the application.



## Site Analysis

### Flood Risk

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by Peter Brett Associates as has been submitted as a separate report to accompany the application. The report gives details of the Flood Risk and the proposed mitigation measures as well as setting out details of the NPPF Sequential test and Exception Test.

The report indicates that the site is in an area of 'high probability' of coastal flooding and that the proposed development will need to take on board flood mitigation measures.

The design team have worked with Peter Brett Associates from the outset to ensure that:

- The proposals take account of flood vulnerability from all sources.
- There is no increased risk of flooding for third parties as a result of the development.
- The design provides measures to protect occupants and users of the building.

A key recommendation to come out of the Flood Risk Assessment is that all residential floors should be raised to a minimum of 4.56m AOD to ensure that the residential units remain clear of projected future flood levels. This has been an important driver of the design of the current proposals.

Concerns about potential flood risk have also led the design team to avoid any basement areas or parking below ground level. Whilst the extant planning permission includes a basement car park, this has been omitted in the current proposals.



*Above: Waves over topping on the Southsea Seafront*

*Top right: Environment Agency map showing areas susceptible to sea flooding*

*Bottom Right: Environment Agency Map showing areas susceptible to surface water flooding*