

To: Councillor McKenna (Chair)  
Councillors Sokale, Carnell, Duveen, Ennis,  
Lovelock, McEwan, Page, Robinson,  
Rowland, DP Singh, Stanford-Beale,  
J Williams and R Williams

Direct ☎ : email:  
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28 January 2020

Your contact is: **Nicky Simpson**

**NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 5 FEBRUARY 2020**

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 5 February 2020 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1. MINUTES	Decision		11 - 16
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
3. QUESTIONS	-		
4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision		17 - 20
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information		21 - 28
6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL	Information		29 - 38

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

7.	191395/REG3 - LAND ADJACENT TO CANAL WAY	Decision	ABBEY	39 - 46
	<b>Proposal Recommendation</b>	New play area with equipment, bins and seats Application Permitted		

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<b>8.</b>	191924/FUL - 26-30 SWANSEA ROAD AND 28-32 NORTHFIELD ROAD	Decision	ABBEY	47 - 62
	<b>Proposal</b>	Full planning application for the demolition of the existing 2-bedroom dwelling and garages, and erection of nine dwellings, including eight three-bedroom houses and one three-bedroom coach house, with access and parking from Swansea Road, and associated landscaping.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>9.</b>	170134/FUL - 53-55 ARGYLE ROAD	Decision	BATTLE	63 - 88
	<b>Proposal</b>	Conversion from D1 use (former mental health Clinic) to C3 use as 10 self contained flats, three storey side/rear extension, associated access, parking, private amenity space, bin and cycle store (amended description)		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>10.</b>	191043/FUL - 43 LONDON STREET	Decision	KATESGROVE	89 - 134
	<b>Proposal</b>	Part-demolition of existing London Street facade and internal works to building alongside demolition of two storey building to rear to enable residential-led mixed-use development comprising 48 sqm community use (Class D1) and 21no residential units (2 x studio, 7 x 1 bed, 10 x 2 two bed and 2 x 3 bed units) together with associated services enclosures, parking and landscaping		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>11.</b>	191429/FUL & 191430/LBC - BROCK BARRACKS, OXFORD ROAD	Decision	NORCOT	135 - 144
	<b>Proposal</b> (for 191429/FUL & 191430/LBC)	Upgrade of existing telecommunications base station comprising the installation of 3No. replacement antennas, and 3No new antennas to chimney (in total 6 antennas), installation of 300m wide cable tray adjoining existing cable tray running up western elevation of chimney within curtilage of listed buildings comprising Brock Barracks.		
	<b>Recommendation</b> (for both)	Application Permitted		
<b>12.</b>	180471/FUL - 42 BULMERSHE ROAD	Decision	PARK	145 - 174
	<b>Proposal</b>	Demolition of existing garage and erection of a three storey (including basement) side extension comprising three 1 bed flats and associated car parking, landscaping, and cycle storage. (amended)		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>13.</b>	191634/FUL - HAMILTON CENTRE, 135 BULMERSHE ROAD	Decision	PARK	175 - 216
	<b>Proposal</b>	Conversion of Hamilton Centre into 2 storey Special Educational Needs College for 11 - 18 yr olds. Project also includes a 500m2 new build extension, car parking, landscaping and multi use sports area		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>14.</b>	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC	Decision		

At this point, the following motion will be moved by the Chair: “That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following Item on the agenda, as it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.”

**15. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT  
QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Information

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**WEBCASTING NOTICE**

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Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

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## KEY TO CODING OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. Planning application reference numbers are made up of 2 parts.
  - 1.1 The number begins with the year e.g. **19**
  - 1.2 This is followed by a consecutive number, showing what number the application is in any year (e.g. **190128**).
  - 1.3 The following codes are used to abbreviate the type of permission sought:
    - FUL - Full detailed planning permission for development or change of use
    - OUT - Principal of developing a site or changing a use
    - REM - Detailed matters “reserved matters” - for permission following approval of an outline planning application.
    - HOU - Applications for works to domestic houses
    - ADV - Advertisement consent
    - APC - Approval of details required by planning conditions
    - VAR - Significant change to a planning permission previously granted
    - NMA - Insignificant change to a planning permission previously granted
    - ADJ - Consultation from neighbouring authority on application in their area
    - LBC - Works to or around a Listed Building
    - CLE - A certificate to confirm what the existing use of a property is
    - CLP - A certificate to confirm that a proposed use or development does not require planning permission to be applied for.
    - REG3 - Indicates that the application has been submitted by the Local Authority.
2. The following is a key to existing officers with their direct dial telephone numbers.

<b>GF1</b>	-	Giorgio Framallicco	9372604
<b>JW6</b>	-	Julie Williams	9372461
<b>RJE</b>	-	Richard Eatough	9373338
<b>JPM</b>	-	Jonathan Markwell	9372458
<b>SDV</b>	-	Steve Vigar	9372980
<b>CJB</b>	-	Christopher Beard	9372430
<b>SGH</b>	-	Stephen Hammond	9374424
<b>MDW</b>	-	Mark Worringham	9373337
<b>AJA</b>	-	Alison Amoah	9372286
<b>SEH</b>	-	Sarah Hanson	9372440
<b>BXP</b>	-	Boja Petkovic	9372352
<b>MJB</b>	-	Matthew Burns	9373625
<b>EH1</b>	-	Ethne Humphreys	9374085
<b>TRH</b>	-	Tom Hughes	9374150
<b>SFB</b>	-	Susanna Bedford	9372023
<b>NW2</b>	-	Nathalie Weekes	9374237
<b>TF1</b>	-	Tom French	9374068
<b>CD3</b>	-	Connie Davis	9372413
<b>AS9</b>	-	Anthony Scholes	9374729
<b>JO1</b>	-	James Overall	9374532
<b>BC2</b>	-	Brian Conlon	9373859
<b>JPS</b>	-	James Schofield	9374656
<b>DB5</b>	-	David Brett	9374227

## Material planning considerations

Material planning considerations can include (but are not limited to):

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of daylight/sunlight or overshadowing
- Scale and dominance
- Layout and density of buildings
- Appearance and design of development and materials proposed
- Disabled persons' access
- Highway safety
- Traffic and parking issues
- Drainage and flood risk
- Noise, dust, fumes etc
- Impact on character or appearance of area
- Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Effect on trees and wildlife/nature conservation
- Impact on the community and other services
- Economic impact and sustainability
- Government policy
- Proposals in the Local Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Archaeology

Concerns that cannot be taken into account:

- Who the applicant is/the applicant's background
- Loss of views
- Loss of property value
- Loss of trade or increased competition
- Strength or volume of local opposition
- Construction noise/disturbance during development
- Fears of damage to property
- Maintenance of property
- Boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights
- Rights of way and ownerships disputes over rights of way
- Personal circumstances

## Glossary of usual terms

**Affordable housing** - Housing provided below market price to meet identified needs.

**Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** - Area where air quality levels need to be managed.

**Apartment-hotel** - A use providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living with the amenities of a hotel. Generally classed as C1 (hotels) for planning purposes.

**Article 4 Direction** - A direction which can be made by the Council to remove normal permitted development rights.

**BREEAM** - A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of generally commercial developments (industrial, retail etc).

**Brownfield Land** - previously developed land.

**Brown roof** - A roof surfaced with a broken substrate, e.g. broken bricks.

**Building line** - The general line along a street beyond which no buildings project.

**Bulky goods** - Large products requiring shopping trips to be made by car: e.g. DIY or furniture.

**CIL** - Community Infrastructure Levy. Local authorities in England and Wales levy a charge on new development to be spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area.

**Classified Highway Network** - The network of main roads, consisting of A, B and C roads.

**Conservation Area** - areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by the local authority. As designated heritage assets the preservation and enhancement of the area carries great weight in planning permission decisions.

**Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Competent Authority** - The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing regulations within the United Kingdom. They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors.

**Dormer Window** - Located in the roof of a building, it projects or extends out through the roof, often providing space internally.

**Dwelling**- A single housing unit - a house, flat, maisonette etc.

**Evening Economy** A term for the business activities, particularly those used by the public, which take place in the evening such as pubs, clubs, restaurants and arts/cultural uses.

**Flood Risk Assessment** - A requirement at planning application stage to demonstrate how flood risk will be managed.

**Flood Zones** - The Environment Agency designates flood zones to reflect the differing risks of flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, Flood Zone 2 is medium probability, Flood Zone 3a is high probability and Flood Zone 3b is functional floodplain.

**Granny annexe** - A self-contained area within a dwelling house/ the curtilage of a dwelling house but without all the facilities to be self contained and is therefore dependent on the main house for some functions. It will usually be occupied by a relative.

**Green roof** - A roof with vegetation on top of an impermeable membrane.

**Gross floor area** - Total floor area of the house, including all floors and garage, measured externally.

**Hazardous Substances Consent** - Consent required for the presence on, over, or under land of any hazardous substance in excess of controlled quantity.

**Historic Parks and Gardens** - Parks and gardens of special historic interest, designated by English Heritage.

**Housing Association** - An independent not-for-profit body that provides low-cost "affordable housing" to meet specific housing needs.

**Infrastructure** - The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community.

**Lifetime Home** - A home which is sufficiently adaptable to allow people to remain in the home despite changing circumstances such as age or disability.

**Listed building** - Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II and II\*, with I being of exceptional interest.

**Local Plan** - The main planning document for a District or Borough.

**Luminance** - A measure of the luminous intensity of light, usually measured in candelas per square metre.

**Major Landscape Feature** - these are identified and protected in the Local Plan for being of local significance for their visual and amenity value

**Public realm** - the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces whether publicly or privately owned.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument** - Specified nationally important archaeological sites.

**Section 106 agreement** - A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**Sequential approach** A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses.

**Sui Generis** - A use not specifically defined in the use classes order (2004) - planning permission is always needed to change from a sui generis use.

**Sustainable development** - Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for now and future generations.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)** - This term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** - An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA's consent.

**GUIDE TO USE CLASSES ORDER**  
and Permitted Changes of Use (England)

The table below summarises the permitted changes of use as of 25 May 2019. The table simplifies the complex legislation and should be read as a guide only.

From	To
<b>A1</b> (shops)	<p><b>A2</b></p> <p><b>A3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>B1</b> up to 500m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>C3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>D2</b> up to 200m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval and only if the premises was in A1 use on 5th December 2013</p> <p>A <b>mixed use</b> comprising an A1 or A2 use and up to two flats may also be permitted subject to meeting certain conditions</p>
<b>A2</b> (professional and financial services) when premises have a display window at ground level, but excluding betting offices or pay day loan shops	<p><b>A1</b></p> <p><b>A3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>B1</b> up to 500m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>C3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>D2</b> subject to Prior Approval and only if the premises was in A2 use on 5th December 2013</p> <p>A <b>mixed use</b> comprising an A1 or A2 use and up to two flats may also be permitted subject to meeting certain conditions</p>
<b>A3</b> (restaurants and cafes)	<b>A1</b> or <b>A2</b>
<b>A4</b> (drinking establishments)	<b>A4</b> drinking establishment with A3 (restaurants and cafes)
<b>A4</b> (drinking establishment) with <b>A3</b> (restaurants and cafes)	<b>A4</b> (drinking establishments)
<b>A5</b> (hot food takeaways)	<p><b>A1</b> or <b>A2</b> or <b>A3</b></p> <p><b>B1</b> up to 500m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>C3</b></p>
<b>B1</b> (business)	<b>B8</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>B2</b> (general industrial)	<p><b>B1</b></p> <p><b>B8</b> up to 500m<sup>2</sup></p>
<b>B8</b> (storage and distribution)	<p><b>B1</b> up to 500m<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>C3</b> (subject to prior approval)</p>
<b>C3</b> (dwellinghouses)	<b>C4</b> (small houses in multiple occupation)
<b>C4</b> (small houses in multiple occupation)	<b>C3</b> (dwellinghouses)
<b>Sui Generis</b> (casinos)	<p><b>D2</b></p> <p><b>A3</b> only if existing building is under 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>C3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval.</p>
<b>Sui Generis</b> (betting offices and pay day loan shops)	<p><b>A1</b></p> <p><b>A2</b></p> <p><b>A3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>B1</b> up to 500m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p><b>C3</b> up to 150m<sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval</p> <p>A <b>mixed use</b> comprising a betting office or a pay day loan shop, or an A1 or A2 use and up to two flats may also be permitted subject to meeting certain conditions.</p> <p><b>D2</b></p>



<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
<b>Sui Generis</b> (laundrette)	<b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval
	<b>C3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval
<b>Sui Generis</b> (agricultural buildings)	<b>A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1, C3, D2</b> , all subject to meeting relevant criteria and Prior Approval.

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**Present:** Councillor McKenna (Chair);  
Councillors Sokale (Vice-Chair), Carnell, Duveen, Ennis, Lovelock, Page, Robinson, Rowland, DP Singh, Stanford-Beale, J Williams and R Williams

**Apologies:** Councillors McEwan

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 101. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to noting that Councillor Singh had sent apologies for the meeting.

#### 102. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted, at the meeting, a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the under-mentioned application, together with any additional applications which the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of an unaccompanied site visit:

**191792 - 71-73 CAVERSHAM ROAD**

Demolition of former retail warehouse and erection of a new part 1, part 5, part 7 storey mixed-se building comprising 44 residential units, 239 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1) at ground floor and associated car parking, cycle parking and landscaping.

- (2) That officers investigate the possibility of providing members of the Committee with a video walkthrough of the site listed above.

#### 103. PLANNING APPEALS

**(i) New Appeals**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a schedule giving details of notification received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding four planning appeals, the method of determination for which she had already expressed

a preference in accordance with delegated powers, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

**(ii) Appeals Recently Determined**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted details of eight decisions that had been made by the Secretary of State, or by an Inspector appointed for the purpose, which were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

**(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted reports on the following appeal decisions in Appendix 3:

**180849 - LAND ADJACENT TO THORPE HOUSE, COLLIERS WAY**

The development proposed is residential development to provide a maximum of 14 dwelling units and demolition of dwelling at 16 Kirton Close to provide access.

Informal Hearing.

Appeal dismissed.

**172205/FUL and 172206/LBC - 18 RUSSELL STREET**

Erection of two-storey rear extension to accommodate a 1 bedroom flat.

Written representations.

Appeals dismissed.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;
- (3) That the reports on the appeal decision set out in Appendix 3 be noted.

**104. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of seven pending prior approval applications, and in Table 2 of five applications for prior approval decided between 27 November 2019 and 2 January 2020.

**Resolved -** That the report be noted.

**105. 191144/FUL - 49A-51A GEORGE STREET**

Residential development for a total of six dwellings (net increase of 4 dwellings), comprising re-modelling of 49A and 51A George Street, two storey and single storey rear extensions, rear dormer windows and external alterations to form four apartments and demolition of existing warehouse and construction of two apartments.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which clarified the construction methodology and a number of other points in the original report. The update report recommended amendment of the proposed construction management condition to require submission of phasing arrangements, and amendment of other related conditions to ensure that various facilities were provided in relation to the relevant apartment, no later than first occupation of the relevant apartment.

A verbal update was given at the meeting to explain that the central area policies referred to in the original report did not apply to this location, and to clarify that the affordable housing contribution referred to in the proposed Heads of Terms should be index-linked from the date of permission and payable on commencement of the development.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 191144/FUL subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 30 January 2020 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms as set out in the original report and verbally amended at the meeting;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, as amended by the update report, and with an additional informative regarding retention of the cobbled driveway;
- (4) That the conditions relating to external materials and the phasing of the development be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors.

**106. 191383/VAR & 191385/FUL - 8 ST JOHNS ROAD, CAVERSHAM**

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 JANUARY 2020

191383/VAR - Part-one, part-two storey side and rear extensions and associated alterations without complying with Condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission 171850 regarding building footprint, roof form and external appearance (Retrospective)

191385/FUL - Change of use from a C4 HMO to a Sui Generis 7-bedroom HMO with parking and amenity space

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above applications.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Shirley Strickland, the applicant's agent Chris Keen and Ward Councillor Richard Davies attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on these applications.

### **Resolved -**

That applications 191383/VAR and 191385/FUL be refused for the reasons set out in the report, with the informatives as recommended.

### **107. 191755/FUL - 60 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD**

Change of use of ground floor to Class A3 cafe/restaurant. Changes to shop front and kitchen extract equipment on rear flat roof.

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which summarised additional representations made.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Simone Illger and Robert Cox, and the applicant's agent Simon Millett attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

### **Resolved -**

- (1) That planning permission for application 191755/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report;
- (2) That discharge of the conditions relating to materials, delivery and servicing plan, acoustic assessment and odour management be consulted on with Ward Councillors and reported to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.03 pm)



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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
<b>Date:</b>	5 February 2020	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS		
<b>SERVICE:</b>	PLANNING	<b>WARDS:</b>	BOROUGH WIDE
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Julie Williams	<b>TEL:</b>	0118 9372461
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Acting Planning Manager	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk

## 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To identify those sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit might be appropriate before the meeting of the next Committee (or at a future date) and to confirm how the visit will be arranged.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you resolve to visit the sites which will be identified by officers in a paper in the update Agenda on the day of the forthcoming Planning Applications Committee and confirm if there are any other sites Councillors consider necessary to visit before reaching a decision on an application.
- 2.2 That you confirm how the site will be visited, unaccompanied or accompanied, and if accompanied agree the site visit date and time.

## 3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The potential list of agenda items submitted since the last meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be provided with the update Agenda on the day of forthcoming Planning Applications Committee. Where appropriate, I will identify those applications that I feel warrant a site visit by the Committee prior to formal consideration of the proposals.
- 3.2 Councillors may also request a site visit to other sites on that list if they consider it relevant to their ability to reach a decision on the application.
- 3.3 Officers may also recommend a site visit if they intend to report a normally delegated application to the Committee for a decision.
- 3.4 A site visit may also be proposed in connection with a planning enforcement issue which is before the Committee for consideration.

- 3.5 Site visits in the above circumstances should all take place in advance of a Committee decision and should only be used where the expected benefit is substantial.
- 3.6 A site visit is only likely to be necessary if the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and any supporting material including photographs taken by officers (although, if this is the case, additional illustrative material should have been requested); or, there is a good reason why the comments of the applicant and objectors cannot be expressed adequately in writing; or, the proposal is particularly contentious.
- 3.7 Accompanied site visits consist of an arranged inspection by a viewing Committee, with officers in attendance and by arrangement with the applicant or their agent. Applicants and objectors however will have no right to speak but may observe the process and answer questions when asked. The visit is an information gathering opportunity and not a decision making forum.
- 3.8 Recently Councillors have expressed a preference to carry out unaccompanied site visits, where the site is easily viewable from public areas, to enable them to visit the site when convenient to them. In these instances the case officer will provide a briefing note on the application and the main issues to be considered by Councillors when visiting the site.
- 3.9 There may also be occasions where officers or Councillors request a post completion site visit in order to review the quality or impact of a particular development.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 4.1 The purpose of the planning service is to support the delivery of economic and sustainable growth while providing appropriate regulation to secure an attractive and safe town. We do this by maintaining planning performance and developing policy and systems to secure sustainable development. This contributes to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-21:
- Securing the economic success of Reading;
  - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs;
  - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe;
  - Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

#### **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 Officers when assessing an application and when making a recommendation to the Committee, will have regard to its duties Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None arising from this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Reading Borough Council Planning Code of Conduct.

Local Safety Practice 2013 Planning Applications Committee site visits.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND  
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
<b>DATE:</b>	5 February 2020	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	PLANNING APPEALS		
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Julie Williams	<b>TEL:</b>	0118 9372461
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Planning Manager	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	Julie.Williams@reading.gov.uk

## 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on the status of various planning appeals.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the appeals received and the method of determination as listed in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 That you note the appeals decided as listed in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.3 That you note the Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions provided in Appendix 3 of this report.

## 3. INFORMATION PROVIDED

- 3.1 Please see Appendix 1 of this report for new appeals lodged since the last committee.
- 3.2 Please see Appendix 2 of this report for new appeals decided since the last committee.
- 3.3 Please see Appendix 3 of this report for new Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions since the last committee.

## 4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough and to meeting the 2015 -18 Corporate Plan objective for “Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.”

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Planning decisions are made in accordance with adopted local development plan policies, which have been adopted by the Council following public consultation. Statutory consultation also takes place on planning applications and appeals and this can have bearing on the decision reached by the Secretary of State and his Inspectors. Copies of appeal decisions are held on the public Planning Register.

## **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 Where appropriate the Council will refer in its appeal case to matters connected to its duties Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Public Inquiries are normally the only types of appeal that involve the use of legal representation. Only applicants have the right to appeal against refusal or non-determination and there is no right for a third party to appeal a planning decision.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Public Inquiries and Informal Hearings are more expensive in terms of officer and appellant time than the Written Representations method. Either party can be liable to awards of costs. Guidance is provided in Circular 03/2009 “Cost Awards in Appeals and other Planning Proceedings”.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1 Planning Appeal Forms and letters from the Planning Inspectorate.

## APPENDIX 1

### Appeals Lodged:

WARD: CAVERSHAM  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3240025  
CASE NO: 191325  
ADDRESS: 28 Clonmel Close  
PROPOSAL: Two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension  
CASE OFFICER: Tom French  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: HOUSEHOLDER REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 02.01.2020

WARD: WHITLEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/324949  
CASE NO: 191408  
ADDRESS: Waylands Volvo Reading, Unit 20 Sentinel End  
PROPOSAL: Construction of new access and egress for cars in to/from the existing car dealership customer forecourt on to Perkins Way.  
CASE OFFICER: Nathalie Weekes  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: NON-DETERMINATION  
APPEAL LODGED: 08.01.2020

WARD: KENTWOOD  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3242896  
CASE NO: 191460  
ADDRESS: 9 Elsley Road  
PROPOSAL: Extension to form double garage  
CASE OFFICER: James Schofield  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: NON-DETERMINATION  
APPEAL LODGED: 6.01.2020

WARD: REDLANDS  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/ W/19/3243024  
CASE NO: 191267  
ADDRESS: 69 Northumberland Ave  
PROPOSAL: First floor rear / side extension to facilitate 1no additional self-contained flat. Resubmission of 190719  
CASE OFFICER: Julie Williams  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 21.01.2020

## APPENDIX 2

### Appeals Decided:

WARD: REDLANDS  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3229604  
CASE NO: 190250  
ADDRESS: 25 Redlands Road  
PROPOSAL: Change of use from C3 use (residential dwellinghouse) to sui generis use (as a 'larger' HMO), infilling of undercroft, single storey extension to rear following demolition of existing rear single storey extension and conversion of garage to one-bedroom flat  
CASE OFFICER: James Overall  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: ALLOWED  
DATE DETERMINED: 7.01.2020

WARD: KENTWOOD  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3228876  
CASE NO: 181868  
ADDRESS: 16 Broomfield Road  
PROPOSAL: Erection of fence (part-retrospective)  
CASE OFFICER: Tom Hughes  
METHOD: Written Representation Householder  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 10.01.2020

WARD: BATTLE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3237799  
CASE NO: 190522  
ADDRESS: 39 Brunswick Hill  
PROPOSAL: Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings  
CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 23.01.2020

## APPENDIX 3

Address Index of Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.

- 39 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions attached.



**BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**  
**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 FEBRUARY 2020**

**Ward:** Battle

**Appeal No:** APP/E0345/W/19/3237799

**Planning Ref:** 190522

**Site:** 39 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

**Proposal:** Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings

**Decision level:** Committee decision on 10/09/2019

**Method:** Written representations

**Decision:** Appeal Dismissed

**Date Determined:** 23 January 2020

**Inspector:** James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 The application site extends to some 0.14 hectares (25 metre frontage/width, 56 metre depth, equating to 1400 square metres in area) and comprises a substantial 2.5 storey plus partial basement Edwardian detached house on the west side of Brunswick Hill, a residential road running north from Tilehurst Road.

1.2 The site has been the subject of three previous applications refused for a development requiring the demolition of the dwelling at 39 Brunswick Hill (05/00886/OUT, 891317/891318, and 190522/FUL).

1.3 In September 2019, Planning Applications Committee refused planning application 190522/FUL for the following reasons (summarised):

- Loss of dwelling (a non-designated heritage asset)
- Impact on character of the area (introduction of flats)
- The application fails to secure a s106 agreement for the provision of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) or to adequately provide for the require Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)
- Failure to provide a s106 agreement for the provision of a deferred affordable housing contribution

## **2. SUMMARY OF DECISION**

2.1 The Inspector considered that the main issues in the appeal were:

- the effect of the existing building and the redevelopment of on the character and appearance of the area including the loss of a non-designated heritage asset

2.2 The Inspector noted the previous appeal decision and the Inspector's report which noted the dwelling as being a non-designated heritage asset as defined within the NPPF.

2.3 The Inspector also noted that the large Edwardian villa has previously been assessed as not suitable for inclusion on the local list, and that the significance of the heritage asset is 'modest'. Notwithstanding this, the Inspector has determined that the loss of the heritage asset would conflict with Policies EN1 and CC7 of the Local Plan.

2.4 The Inspector has also noted that the design proposed has attempted to address the concerns of the previous appeal. However, the Inspector concluded that, "*the design*

*would not be of a suitably high quality design as to respond positively to the local context or reinforce local character and distinctiveness.”*

2.5 The Inspector outlined a number of concerns regarding the proposal. Specifically, the design was considered to be harmful to the character of the area due to:

- the considerable width and depth of the proposal;
- the bland nature of flank elevations;
- conspicuous roof-scape, large spans, and lack of variety;
- incongruous appearance within the street; and
- an insufficient level of design quality to mitigate loss of dwelling

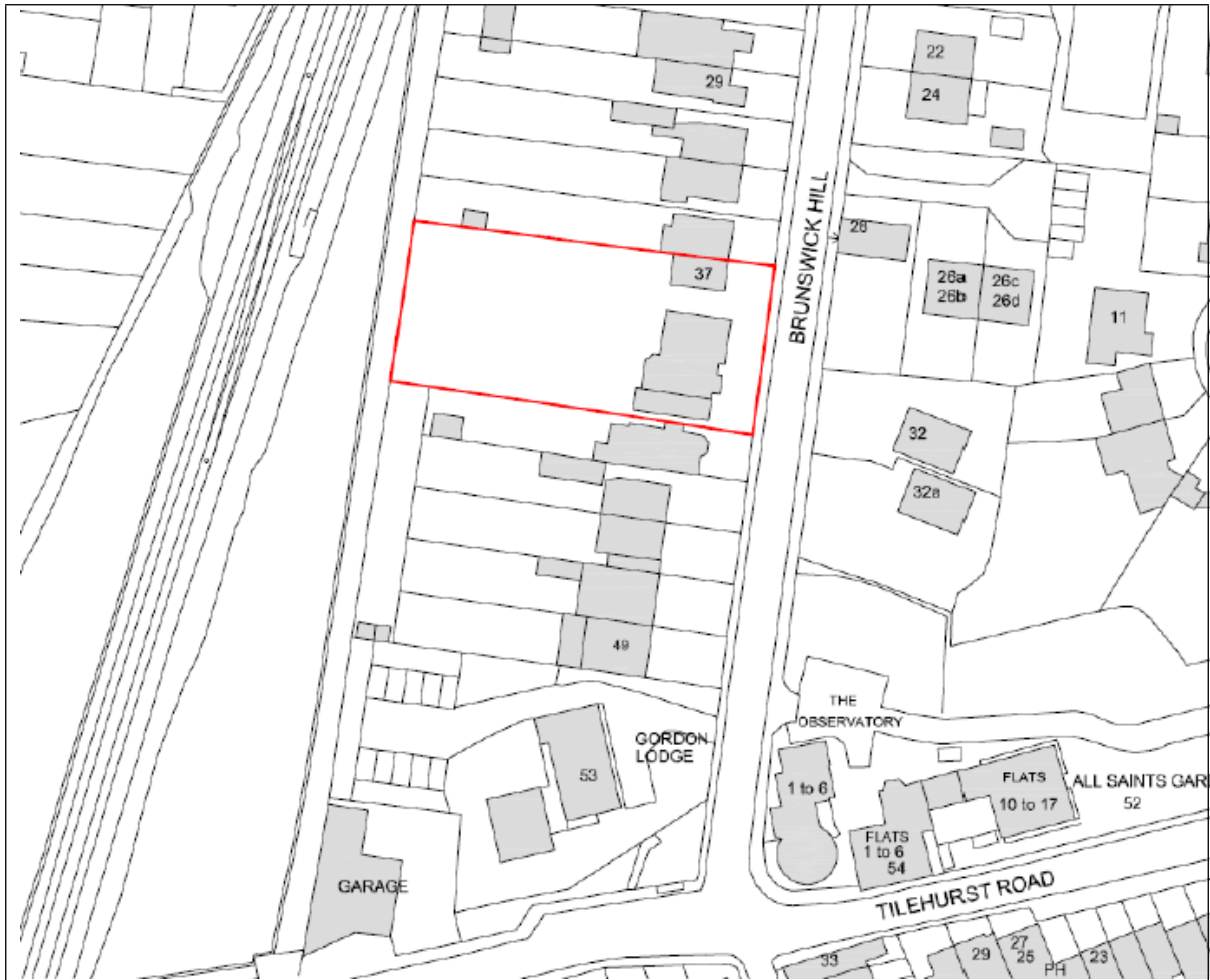
2.6 The Inspector concluded, on affordable housing, that an agreement between the Council and the applicant was apparent, but that the completion of a s106 would not lead to an altered decision by him.

Comment:

A pleasing decision which validates the Local Planning Authority’s design concerns for this development.

Although not meeting the requirements for local listing status, the National Planning Policy Framework allows for the consideration of a building as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in a planning decision, because of its heritage interest.

On affordable housing, your officers are content with the conclusions reached by the Inspector and are confident that this does not prejudice officers’ ability to secure affordable housing.



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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 February 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL		
AUTHOR:	Julie Williams & Richard Eatough		
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER (acting) & Team Leader	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk">Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk">Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk</a>

## 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of new applications and decisions relating to applications for prior-approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO 2015) as amended.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the report.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At your meeting on 29 May 2013 a report was presented which introduced new permitted development rights and additional requirements for prior approval from the local planning authority for certain categories of permitted development. It was agreed then that a report be brought to future meetings for information and to include details of applications received for prior approval, those pending a decision and those applications which have been decided since the last Committee date.

## 4 TYPES OF PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The categories of development requiring prior approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015, or amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)(Amendment) Order 2016 that are of most relevance to Reading Borough are summarised as follows:

- **Householder development - single storey rear extensions.** GPDO Part 1, Class A1(g-k).
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office, pay day loan shop or casino to A3 restaurants and cafes.** GPDO Part 3 Class C.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office or pay day loan shop to Class D2 assembly & leisure.** GPDO Part 3 Class J.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial and professional or a mixed use of A1 or A2 with dwellinghouse to Class C3 dwellinghouse.** GPDO Part 3 Class M\*
- **Change of use from an amusement arcade or a casino to C3 dwellinghouse & necessary works.** GPDO Part 3 Class N
- **Change of use from B1 office to C3 dwellinghouse** GPDO Part 3, Class O\*.

- Change of use from B8 storage or distribution to C3 dwellinghouse GPDO Part 3, Class P
- Change of use from B1(c) light industrial use to C3 dwellinghouse GPDO Part 3, Class PA\*
- Change of use from agricultural buildings and land to Class C3 dwellinghouses and building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building to the C3 use. GPDO Part 3 Class Q.
- Change of use of 150 sq m or more of an agricultural building (and any land within its curtilage) to flexible use within classes A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1 and D2. GPDO Part 3 Class R.
- Change of use from Agricultural buildings and land to state funded school or registered nursery D1. GPDO Part 3 Class S.
- Change of use from B1 (business), C1 (hotels), C2 (residential institutions), C2A (secure residential institutions and D2 (assembly and leisure) to state funded school D1. GPDO Part 3 Class T.
- Temporary use of buildings for film making for up to 9 months in any 27 month period. GPDO Part 4 Class E
- Development under local or private Acts and Orders (e.g. Railways Clauses Consolidation Act 1845). GPDO Part 18.
- Development by telecommunications code system operators. GPDO Part 16.
- Demolition of buildings. GPDO Part 11.

4.2 Those applications for Prior Approval received and yet to be decided are set out in the appended Table 1 and those applications which have been decided are set out in the appended Table 2. The applications are grouped by type of prior approval application. Information on what the estimated equivalent planning application fees would be is provided.

4.3 It should be borne in mind that the planning considerations to be taken into account in deciding each of these types of application are specified in more detail in the GDPO. In some cases the LPA will first need to confirm whether or not prior approval is required before going on to decide the application on its planning merits where prior approval is required.

4.4 Details of any appeals on prior-approval decision will be included elsewhere in the agenda.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

5.1 Changes of use brought about through the prior approval process are beyond the control or influence of the Council's adopted policies and Supplementary Planning Documents. Therefore it is not possible to confirm how or if these schemes will contribute to the strategic aims of the Council.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

6.1 Statutory consultation takes place in connection with applications for prior-approval as specified in the Order discussed above.

## **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Where appropriate the Council must have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising from this Report.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Since the additional prior notifications were introduced in May 2013 in place of applications for full planning permission, the loss in fee income is estimated to be £1,269,980.

(Office Prior Approvals - £1,153,547: Householder Prior Approvals - £74,732: Retail Prior Approvals - £12,256: Demolition Prior Approval - £2501: Storage Prior Approvals - £5716: Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval - £4306: Shop to Leisure Prior Approval - £305: Light Industrial to Residential - £16,518)

*Figures since last report*

Office Prior Approvals - £39174: Householder Prior Approvals - £330

9.2 However it should be borne in mind that the prior notification application assessment process is simpler than would have been the case for full planning permission and the cost to the Council of determining applications for prior approval is therefore proportionately lower. It should also be noted that the fee for full planning applications varies by type and scale of development and does not necessarily equate to the cost of determining them.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)(Amendment) Order 2016.

Table 1 - Prior-approval applications pending @ 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Application type CLASS A - Householder

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200029	20 Burnham Rise, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8XJ	Peppard	Rear extension measuring 5.50m in depth, with a maximum height of 4m, and 3m in height to eaves level.	07/01/2020	18/02/2020	£110
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	192023	50 Donnington Road, Reading, RG1 5ND	Redlands	Rear extension measuring 4.5m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.9m, and 2.5m in height to eaves level.	20/12/2019	30/01/2020	£110
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200049	55 Donnington Road, Reading, RG1 5NE	Redlands	Rear extension measuring 4m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.50m, and 2.50m in height to eaves level.	11/01/2020	27/02/2020	£110

Office to Residential Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	192059	Sapphire Plaza, Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RE	Abbey	Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) and Class to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 85 residential units.	24/12/2019	18/02/2020	£39174



### Light Industrial to Residential pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Prior Notification	191988	Onc House, 68 St Johns Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AL	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of use of central building from Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 7 x dwellings.	16/12/2019	10/02/2020	£3138

### Telecommunications Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments
Telecommunications Notification - Prior Approval	190789	Land At Mere oak Busway, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield, Reading, RG7 1NR	Whitley	Installation of a 20m Monopole, supporting 6 no. antennas, 3 no. equipment cabinets and a meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto.	14/05/2019	09/07/2019	

## Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/Cafe - Class C	192006	25 Church Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7AA	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Retail, betting office or pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services)) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3).	17/12/2019	11/02/2020	£366

## Retail Prior Approvals applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Retail Prior Approval	200068	576 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1EG	Battle	Change of use of ground and first floors from Class A1 (shop) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise of 2 x 1 bed flats with private access to both.	16/01/2020	12/03/2020	£828

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Retail Prior Approval	192004	940 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TJ	Kentwood	Change of use on the ground floor from A5 to C3 Dwellinghouse (Flat x 1).	17/12/2019	11/02/2020	£366
Retail Prior Approval	192005	940 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TJ	Kentwood	Change of use of basement from Class A5 (takeaways) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 1 flat.	17/12/2019	11/02/2020	£366

#### Demolition Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Equivalent planning application fee
Demolition Prior Approval	200054	Unit 6, Meadow Road, Reading, RG1 8LB	Abbey	Application for prior notification of proposed demolition.	14/01/2020	11/02/2020	£366

Prior Notification applications pending - None

Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications pending - None

Storage to Residential Prior Approval applications pending - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications pending - None

Table 2 - Prior-approval applications decided 2 January 2020 to 27 January 2020

Application type CLASS A - Householder

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191935	45 Lorne Street, Reading, RG1 7YW	Battle	Rear extension measuring 4.4m in depth, with a maximum height of 3m and 2.8m in height to eaves level.	02/12/2019	20/01/2020	Application Permitted
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191880	63 Blenheim Road, Reading, RG1 5NG	Redlands	Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.15m, and 3.0m in height to eaves level.	26/11/2019	08/01/2020	Application Withdrawn
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191910	76 Blenheim Road, Reading, RG1 5NQ	Redlands	Rear extensions measuring 3.19m and 5.97m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.35m, and 2.65m in height to eaves level.	02/12/2019	13/01/2020	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED

Light Industrial to Residential applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Prior Notification	191787	Onc House, 68 St Johns Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AL	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of use of building from Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 6 x dwellings.		15/01/2020	Prior Approval Notification - Refusal

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications decided

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Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/ Cafe - Class C	191818	172 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7PL	Abbey	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of Use from Retail, betting office of pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3).	12/11/2019	14/01/2020	Application Withdrawn

**Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Office to Residential Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Telecommunications Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Demolition Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Prior Notification applications decided - None**

**Retail to Residential applications decided - None**

**Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications decided - None**

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191395/REG3

Address: Land adjacent to Canal Way

Proposal: New play area with equipment, bins and seats

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: 24/10/2019

Extended Deadline: 7/2/2020

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 27/2/2019

### RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

#### CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) TL1 - standard time limit 3 yrs
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M3 - Materials as specified on the approved plans.
- 4) L4A - Landscaping to be implemented in accordance with approved plans
- 5) L7A - Works to be undertaken in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Report and Tree Protection Plan
- 6) C1 - Hours of construction and demolition
- 7) C2 - Construction Method Statement
- 8) No bonfires

#### INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 1) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 2) IF6 - Building Regulations
- 3) IF3 - Highways
- 4) IF7 - Complaints about Construction
- 5) IF1 - Positive & Proactive

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site is an existing open space, which is located at the junction of Canal Way and Orts Road. It has an area of 0.16ha and is owned by Reading Borough Council's Housing Department.

1.2 The site is bounded by public highway to the north and west, a footpath to the south, and by the rear gardens of houses in Florence Walk to the east. It is planted with mature lime trees along the western edge, and new limes have been planted on the site to the south. The rest of the

site is laid to grass, and there are two seats facing north on the southern boundary.

1.3 The Design and Access Statement states that the site is currently a valuable green space in the heart of the Orts Road estate, although it is only lightly used for recreational purposes. The DAS also clarifies that in 2019, councillors voted to use some of the 15% recreational funding available from the Community Infrastructure Levy to replace the old play area at Avon Place, with a new play area at Canal Way serving families across the estate. This new play area is the subject of this planning application.

1.4 As this is a Council application it is presented as a committee item.



Location plan



Aerial photo



Photo from south west corner

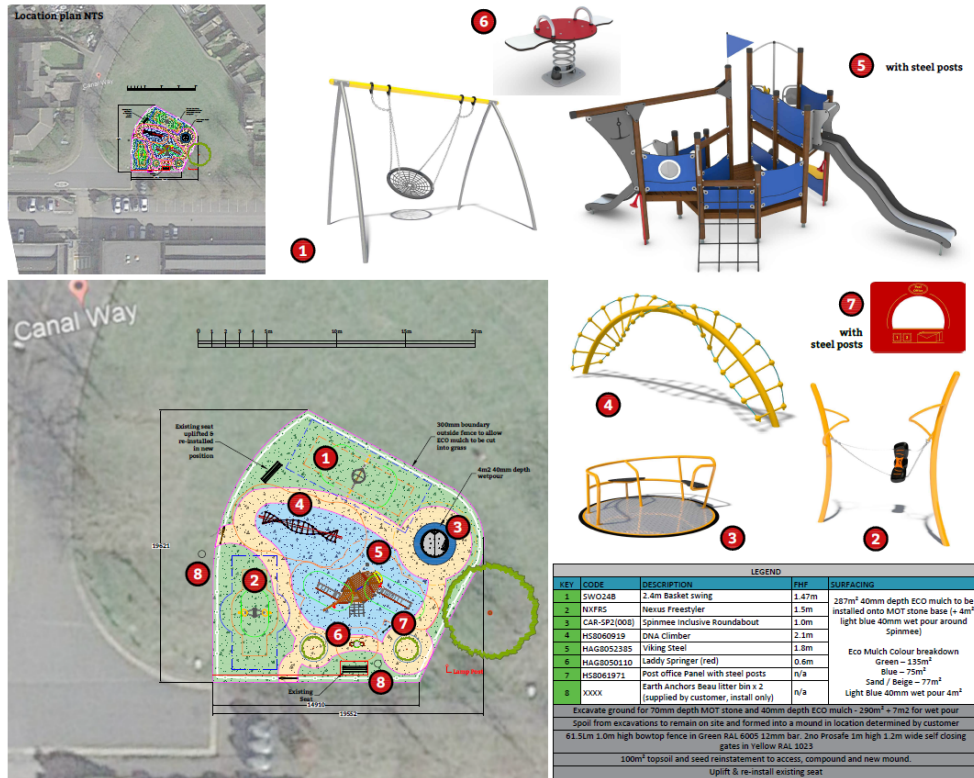
## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is for a new play area, catering for younger children who live in or visit the Orts Road area or the recreational public open space on Canal Way. The application site is part of the Canal Way amenity space, totalling 287sqm, and it is proposed to include seven pieces of play equipment, as shown in the imagery below, along with two relocated bench seats and two litter bins. It would be bounded



by a 1m high bow top metal fence in green and there would be two self-closing yellow gates.

2.2 New landscaping is also proposed, to include the planting of 12 flowering cherries behind the houses in Florence Walk, and bulb planting between the trees.



2.3 Submitted Plans and Documentation received 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019, unless otherwise stated:

- Location Plan, received 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- Design Proposal - Elevations - Drawing no: Q - 23160 - P6X6 - C Sheet 1 of 2 Rev 2
- Design Proposal - Location & Products - Drawing no: Q-23160-P6X6-C Sheet 2 of 2 Rev 2
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Parks, RBC
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019, prepared by Parks, RBC, updated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 and further revised 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (to include Tree Protection Plan), received 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020

2.4 *Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):*

In relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The scheme is CIL liable, but not chargeable under Reading Borough Council's Charging Schedule.

### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

None

### 4. CONSULTATIONS

#### 4.1 Statutory

None

#### 4.2 Non-statutory

##### **Natural Environment (trees)**

The initial comments were as follows:

I note the proposal only takes up a portion of the area outlined on the Block Plan and that one tree is indicated on the proposed plan. However, from an aerial photo there are trees on the other side (not shown) and no Root Protection Areas (RPAs) are indicated. Works to excavate for the surfacing and fencing will be required and we need to know if this is within RPAs.

A brief Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) will be appropriate indicating how trees will be protected during installation, including allocation of storage etc areas, identification of access (ground protection within RPAs if vehicles are passing over RPAs). This should include specifications for works within RPAs if applicable. The AMS could be secured by condition, however resolving this now would avoid a pre-commencement condition.

***Planning Officer note:*** Following the submission of a revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment (rec 24/1/20) which included a Tree Protection Plan, and landscaping details, the Natural Environment Officer confirmed the scheme would be acceptable subject to conditions as included above.

##### **Leisure & Recreation**

Support.

##### **Parks**

Support.

#### 4.3 Public

Nos. 10, 12, 14, 15 & 16 Leopold Walk, 19-29 (odd) and 20-28 (even) Orts Road, Reading College, 1,2 & 4 Canal Way, 1 Lock Place, 11, 12 7 14 Florence Walk and Fisherman's Cottage were consulted. No responses were received.

Within the DAS it sets out that pre-application consultation was carried out in 2 phases. The first being a community event held on the Canal Way site on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 and attended by ward

councillors and Council officers. Five alternative play schemes were displayed, as well as a plan of the overall proposals. Consultees were also asked what variety of trees they would like planted.

The second event was on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019 with year 5 and 6 pupils from Newtown Primary School who were asked to vote on their favourite of the five proposal, as well as their favourite trees (the results are set out in the DAS). These results and the play schemes were also made available to the Access Disabilities Group on 11th September 2019 for their comment. Following this a fully accessible wheelchair friendly carousel was added.

## **5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

5.2 The Development Plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Check policies

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN8: Undesignated Open Space

Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

## **6. APPRAISAL**

The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of development**
- **Access**
- **Landscaping and Ecology**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Sustainability**
- **Equalities impact**

### **Principle of Development**

- 6.1 The proposal to retain and enhance the existing open space with a play area, which the DAS refers to as including “fenced and unfenced and natural play space to encourage active and imaginative play” is considered to meet the NPPF requirements on providing access to sport and recreation, which is an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. It would also contribute to goals within the Councils’ Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2020) and meet objectives within the Council’s Open Spaces Strategy.
- 6.2 The retention of the open space, classed as ‘undesigned’ (in the RBLP), and which “*provide important recreational and amenity resources*”, also accords with Policy EN8.
- 6.3 The principle of the proposed use is therefore considered acceptable subject to meeting other policy considerations.

### **Access**

- 6.4 There is no public parking, nor direct public transport links to the site, however, as the site is intended mostly for local residents/visitors to the local area, and is directly accessible by pedestrians, this is considered acceptable.
- 6.5 There is a footpath that links the east and west sides of the Orts Road estate. Pedestrian access is possible on three boundaries, and although there are no formal road crossings, the roads are quiet and the speed limit is 20mph. Visibility for crossing is good and there is no barrier to wheelchair access along the southern boundary.
- 6.6 The site is considered to accord with Policy CC6, which states in the supporting text 4.1.25 that “locating development in areas accessible by walking and cycling can serve important public health goals”

### **Landscaping and Ecology**

- 6.7 The site comprises grass, which is regularly mown, so has negligible ecological value. Existing mature trees will be retained and those close to the proposed site would be protected during construction. There are two young trees within the proposed play area. these were planted in 2015 and are located immediately to the north of the footpath. A method of protecting these during and once the scheme is complete is included within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). The implementation of works, in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan, is included as a recommended condition.
- 6.8 The proposals also provide for enhancement of the existing landscaping with flower bulbs, and 12 no. new trees, on the eastern boundary of the site, at least 6m from the rear boundary of houses in Florence Walk and bulbs.

- 6.9 The proposals will meet the requirements of Policies CC7, EN12 and EN14.

#### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.10 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties.
- 6.11 The play area is located within one corner of the open space and has been sited to be as far away from houses as possible. Although residents will be aware of some noise from the play area when in use it is unlikely that this would be significantly different from the use of the open space at present, and as this would be for young children would be during acceptable hours.
- 6.12 No objections from neighbours have been received to the proposal.

#### **Sustainability**

- 6.13 Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. This includes surface water runoff and the use of appropriate tree and other planting. The proposed materials for the play area would be a permeable stone base with mulch on top. This combined with the proposed planting and the natural free draining grass of the remainder of the open space will ensure that the scheme complies with policy.

#### **Equalities Impact**

- 6.14 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and whether there is any indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application.
- 6.15 As part of the pre-application process, the Access Disabilities Group was consulted, which led to the inclusion of a fully accessible wheelchair friendly carousel. The proposed equipment is also intended to be suitable for children with disabilities including those with other mobility and sensory impairments. Therefore, it is considered that the needs of protected groups have been properly considered and addressed.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal complies with the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan as well as national and corporate policy objectives by improving access to sports and recreation facilities and promoting healthy communities. The scheme is recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatives.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

**APPENDIX 1: PLANS**



## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 February 2020	ITEM NO.
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Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191924/FUL

Address: 26-30 Swansea Road and 28-32 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH

Proposal: Full planning application for the demolition of the existing 2-bedroom dwelling and garages, and erection of nine dwellings, including eight three-bedroom houses and one three-bedroom coach house, with access and parking from Swansea Road, and associated landscaping.

Applicant: Elstree Land and Sovereign Housing Association

Deadline: 04/02/2020

### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 30<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (unless the planning officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- £306,577 towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough
- Or
- Provide 100% of the units as shared ownership housing
- And
- £18,800 contribution towards additional leisure facilities within the locality

### Conditions to include:

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement details of all external materials (including brickwork, roofing materials, glazing and reveals, chimneys, doors, guttering and downpipes)
4. Pre-commencement construction method statement (including noise & dust)
5. Pre-occupation provision of bin storage facility details
6. Pre-occupation implementation of cycle parking details provided
7. Pre-occupation notification of postal addresses (restricting parking permits)
8. No automatic entitlement to parking permits
9. Parking permit condition 2
10. Submission of security strategy and implementation before first occupation
11. Implementation of flood resilience, as set out in submitted Flood Risk Assessment
12. No development before implementation of approved remediation scheme
13. Reporting of Unidentified contamination
14. Construction hours (0800-1800 Mon-Fri; 0800-1300 Saturday; No work on Sunday/Bank holidays).
15. Implementation and retention of noise mitigation scheme
16. Pre-commencement hard and soft landscaping details (including biodiversity enhancements) and implementation
17. Demolition supervision by Ecologist
18. Remove PD rights for roof alterations (GPDO Parts B and C)
19. Pre-commencement SAP assessment - To be approved (new-build)

## 20. Pre-occupation SAP assessment (new-build)

### Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Highways informatives
3. Terms and conditions
4. Building Control
5. Party Wall Act
6. Contaminated land - reporting of unexpected contamination
7. Noise Transmission between residential properties (Building Regulations part E)
8. CIL
9. No burning of waste on site
10. Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreement
11. No parking permits informative

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises 0.29 hectares, a corner plot at the junction of Northfield Road and Swansea Road and consists of a two storey end of terrace dwelling with undercroft access on Swansea Road and a series of garages fronting Northfield Road which have historically been used for car repairs and as an MOT centre. There is a small yard area to the rear of the garages with an existing vehicular access from Swansea Road. The surrounding area predominantly consists of modest two storey terraced dwellings. To the east of the site along Northfield Road at the junction with Caversham Road is a large self-storage unit (Shurgard).
- 1.2 The site is located within the Reading Central Area as defined by the Proposals Maps (2019) and is also with flood zone 2 and an air quality management area. Northfield Road is a designated cyclerule.



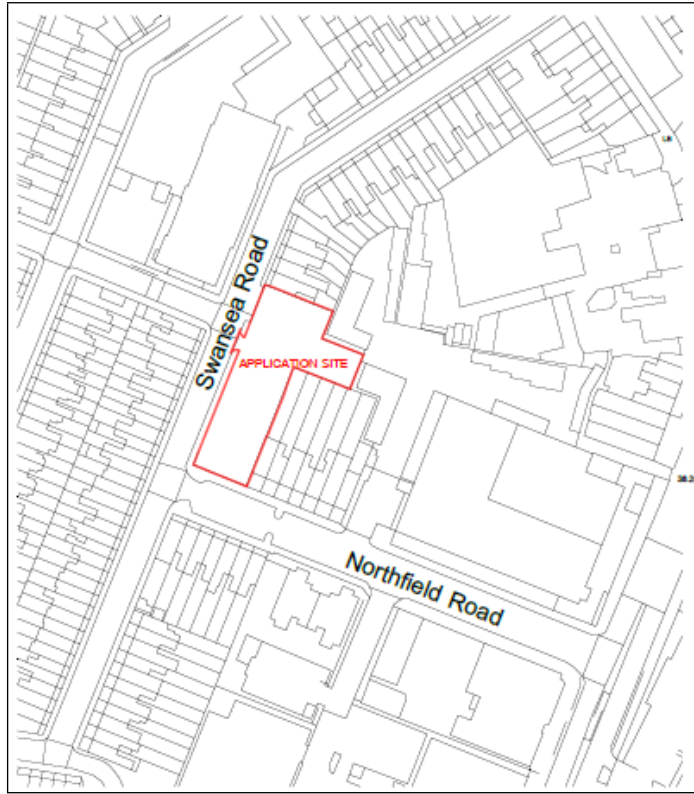


Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

## **2. PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing two storey dwelling and garages and erection of 8 x two storey terrace dwellings with rooms in the roof space and 1 x two storey coach house with rooms in the roof space with parking and access from Swansea Road.

2.2 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

Flood Risk Assessment Odyssey November 2019  
Sequential Test Savills November 2019  
Air Quality Assessment Syntegra Consulting November 2019  
Geo-Environmental Report Enzygo October 2019  
Noise Assessment Cass Allen November 2019  
Bat Roost Assessment Aspect Ecology October 2019  
Affordable Housing Statement November 2019  
051901-EL-01 Presentation Planning Layout  
051901-EL-02 Supporting Planning Layout  
051901-EL-03 Location Plan  
051901-SS01 Street Scene 01  
051901-SS02 Street Scene 02  
051901-GS Garden Scene  
051901-A-E1 House Type A - Proposed Elevations  
051901-A-E2 House Type A - Proposed Elevations  
051901-A-P1 House Type A - Proposed Floor Plans  
051901-B-E1 House Type B - Proposed Elevations  
051901-B-P1 House Type B - Proposed Floor Plans  
051901-C-E1 House Type C - Proposed Elevations  
051901-C-P1 House Type C - Proposed Floor Plans  
051901-CS-01 Cycle Shed  
7062 / ASP3 Landscape Strategy Plan B  
34824\_T Topographical Survey  
As received 4 December 2019

051901-SS01 Street Scene 01 - Rev A  
051901-SS02 Street Scene 02 - Rev A  
051901-B-E1 House Type B - Proposed Elevations - Rev A  
051901-B-E1 House Type B - Proposed Elevations - Rev A  
051901-C-E1 House Type C - Proposed Elevations - Rev A  
As Received 24 January 2020

2.3 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):  
In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. However, there are currently discussions with the applicant regarding the final CIL Liability calculation and further commentary will be provided in the update Report

## **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 None, although pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority was sought before submission of the planning application.

## **4. CONSULTATIONS**

Internal

- 4.1 RBC Ecologist - No objections, subject to conditions.
- 4.2 RBC Waste management officer- The proposed development would provide adequate bin store for the number of flats. Residents would be responsible for moving the bins out for collection days.
- 4.3 RBC Natural Environment Officer - No objection subject to conditions to ensure appropriate landscaping.
- 4.4 RBC Environmental Protection Officer - No objections subject to conditions.
- 4.5 RBC Transport Officer - comments awaited, response to be provided in the Update report.

**4.6 Public**

26 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH  
 47 Swansea Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EZ  
 13 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH  
 63 Swansea Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EZ  
 14 Northfield Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8AH  
 20 Northfield Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8AH  
 16 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH  
 65 Swansea Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EZ  
 45 Swansea Road, Reading, RG1 8EZ  
 49 Swansea Road, Reading, RG1 8EZ

- 4.6 One comment has been received, objecting to the façade treatments for the proposed dwellings.
- 4.7 Four comments have been received in support of the redevelopment of the site, with one comment suggesting the re-use of the building as a café.

**5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

5.2 Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019):

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- CC9: Securing Infrastructure
- EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment
- EN10: Access to Open Space
- EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
EN15: Air Quality  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
EM3: Loss of Employment Land  
H1: Provision of Housing  
H2: Density and Mix  
H3: Affordable Housing  
H5: Standards for New Housing  
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
CR1: Definition of Central Reading  
CR2: Design in Central Reading  
CR6: Living in Central Reading

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:  
Affordable Housing (2013)  
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)  
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)  
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Flood Risk
- Impact on surrounding and future occupiers
- Standard of Residential Accommodation
- Mix of units
- Transport
- Landscape/ecology
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters
- Equalities impact

### Principle of development

- 6.1 The site is not located within a designated core employment area and therefore there would be no in principle objection to loss of the existing vehicle repair and MOT use. Moreover, the site is predominantly surrounded by residential dwellings and therefore loss of this use is likely to be beneficial to the amenity of existing nearby occupiers in terms of removal of a source of potential noise and disturbance.
- 6.2 The existing building fronting Northfield Road to be demolished, is in a state of disrepair and although reflective of the character of the area, the building is not considered to have any particular distinctive architectural merit. The commercial building fronting Swansea Road is prominent within the street, being built up to the boundary of the pavement, and appears to be better maintained than the other buildings on the site. Further, there are no specific protections afforded to these structures, as such the loss of such there would be no objection to their removal, subject to the proposed

replacement buildings being of good design quality and contributing positively to the character of the area.

- 6.3 The principle of a residential development on the site is considered to accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development) whilst the proposal would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing).

#### Flood Risk

- 6.4 The site is located within flood zone 2 and the NPPF (2019) defines residential dwellings as a 'more vulnerable' development in terms of flood risk. The NPPF sets out that 'more vulnerable' development in flood zone 2 is required to undertake that it passes the flood risk sequential test. In addition, Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage) sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development that would increase risks arising from flooding.

- 6.5 The sequential test seeks to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities in their decision-making should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of river or sea flooding). Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 2 be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required.

- 6.6 The Council's latest 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' (May 2017) notes that, 'there are not sufficient sites to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in Reading on sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2'. Therefore, subject to a detailed sequential test assessment being submitted as part of any application. The onus is on the applicant to present a detailed sequential test for any development (where applicable) and demonstrate the case to the local planning authority. The sequential test area would include land within the whole of the Borough.

- 6.7 Residential development is classified as 'more vulnerable' in national policy. In accordance with the NPPF, 'more vulnerable' development in flood zone 2 is not required to undertake the exception test.

- 6.8 The applicant has provided a site-specific flood risk assessment which outlines a number of requirements to ensure the flood resilience of the proposed dwellings (i.e. higher electrical sockets, flood resistant external materials). Additionally, the applicant has undertaken a sequential test in line with Government guidance and has demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites for the proposed development. A condition is recommended to ensure flood resistance measures are carried out as specified in the accompanying flood risk assessment.

#### Design Considerations and effect on character

- 6.9 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area and Policy CR5 (Design in Central Reading) seeks to create appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces.

- 6.10 The proposed continuation of the terraced form of development to both the Northfield Road and Swansea Road frontages is considered appropriate and would integrate well with the surrounding area. Whilst the proposed plot sizes are small and narrow, this is in keeping with the character and urban grain of the surrounding area and is considered appropriate in this location. In extending the existing terrace, the proposal would also maintain the existing uniform building line and roof pitch/profile alignment which is considered important to the character of these Victorian/Edwardian terraced streets. The elevational drawings (revised during the consideration of the application) indicate a good level of architectural detailing to the front elevations, with the window and door surrounds, including lintel details, brick detailing, 'chimneys' and careful use of materials to match surrounding dwellings to tie in to the traditional architecture of the area.
- 6.11 The proposal also includes sizeable flat roof dormers in the main roof slope of the dwellings adjoining the two-storey attached projections. The scale of these dormer projections would take up most of the rear roof slope. Whilst not normally a design solution suggested in the Council's House Extensions SPG, in this case this is considered to be an appropriate design solution to facilitate the large 3-bedroom units and it should also prevent the opportunity for any future piecemeal dormer extensions. It is considered appropriate to remove the future pd rights to further extend the roofs of these dwellings.
- 6.12 The form of the proposed coach house (a dwelling with vehicular access underneath) is also considered to be in keeping with the area as such arrangements are commonly found in these terraced streets. The proposed brick boundary wall and metal entrance gates to the Swansea Road frontage are also considered to suitably link together this part of the street-scene. The proposals utilise the irregular shape of the site well to provide off-street parking to the rear hidden from view from the street frontages.
- 6.13 Policy H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space seeks that proposals for residential development are provided with small but adequately usable private or communal amenity space in keeping with the character of similar spaces in the surrounding area. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.
- 6.14 The applicant has considered the security implications of an open vehicle accessway to the rear courtyard. Concerns are with unregulated parking and unauthorised trespass. This matter is considered to be capable of being dealt with by a suitably-worded security condition to meet the concerns of Policy CC7.

Impact on surrounding and future occupiers

- 6.15 Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.
- 6.16 The siting and orientation of the dwellings are considered to prevent any undue overlooking or loss of privacy to surrounding occupiers. The closest relationship would be from the rear windows of the properties on Northfield Avenue to the upper floors of the coach house which would be

situated 10m to the side of the rear garden of the existing dwelling at no. 26 Swansea Road. This separation is considered sufficient, given this would be a side-on relationship and would affect only the end part of the adjacent property's rear garden.

- 6.17 The siting and orientation of the building is considered such that there would be limited impact on existing surrounding properties in terms of any loss of light or overbearing.
- 6.18 The proposed private parking court is considered to be located a suitable distance from existing dwellings such that noise and disturbance from cars coming and going would be limited and visually, less intrusive than the high levels of on-street parking that currently takes place on surrounding streets.
- 6.19 A construction method statement would be sought, to include measures for control of noise and dust to ensure existing surrounding occupiers would not be adversely affected by the proposed development during construction works.
- 6.20 Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and CR6 (Living in Central Reading) seek that future occupiers are provided with a suitable standard of amenity. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that future occupiers are adequately protected from the impacts of pollution. EN15 (Air Quality) sets out that given the site is located within an air quality management area and would introduce a sensitive use (i.e residential) any detrimental effects on that use must be mitigated. The applicant has submitted supporting evidence that has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Protection Officer. The report concludes that no additional measures are required for air quality mitigation in this instance due to the distance of the proposed dwellings from Caversham Road and the EP officer agrees with this view. A condition is recommended for the implementation of the approved noise mitigation measures.
- 6.21 The proposals are considered to provide for a suitable standard of accommodation with all units being of adequate size and served by good levels of outlook and daylighting. Policy H5 of the Local Plan requires that all new-build housing outside the town centre be built to meet the Nationally described space standards. The proposed development would comply with these requirements, although the site itself is within the Central Area, where these standards do not apply.
- 6.22 The development also lies on the site of a historic warehouse which has the potential to have caused contamination and the proposed residential development is considered a sensitive land use in this respect. The Environmental Protection Officer has reviewed the supporting documentation and the remediation of the site has been agreed and can be secured by condition.
- Mix of units
- 6.23 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) states that developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types and sizes, ideally a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units. Although the proposal is for 9 three-bedroom dwellings, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2016) carried out by the Berkshire Planning Authorities outlines the greatest need for housing within Berkshire

(including South Bucks) being for 3-bedroom houses (42% of the need to 2036). As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

#### Transport

- 6.24 Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Local Plan seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development. At the time of writing, a formal Transport response is awaited and any further clarifications shall be provided in the Update Report.
- 6.25 In terms of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, Swansea Road and Northfield Road are within Zone 2 of the primary core area, but on the periphery of the Central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.
- 6.26 In accordance with the Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide parking provision of 2 parking spaces each for the 3 bedroom dwellings. Therefore, the required total parking provision for the development would be 17 spaces. Only 9 parking spaces are to be provided, which falls significantly below the Council's current parking SPD requirements, however given the site's close proximity to the town centre and Reading Station, a lower provision is considered acceptable.
- 6.27 Only one access point to the site will be retained from Swansea Road, therefore all other access(es) will need to be closed up and kerbs realigned with the public footway. The proposed access is suitable for 2-way traffic entering and exiting the site, and appears to meet the appropriate standards for visibility. An informative is recommended to ensure the 'historic accesses' (including those with cobbled paving) are reprovided/evident in the eventual design and clarification on this matter will be provided in the Update report.
- 6.28 Any permission would need to be subject to a condition preventing future occupiers of the development from being eligible to apply for residents or visitor parking permits. The applicant has agreed to a condition to secure the appropriate number of on-site electric vehicle charging points in accordance with Policy TR5. In line with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, each dwelling is provided with 2 secure cycle parking spaces in a secure and covered location. The bicycle storage as shown on the plans will be secured by condition. Bin storage should also be identified on the proposed plans and should not be further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. The Transport response will confirm/update these matters and advise on policy compliance.

#### Landscaping/Ecology

- 6.29 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development should contribute positively to the area of Reading within which it is located, including by way of landscaping. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to protect the Borough's vegetation cover from damage or removal and sets out that new development shall make provision for tree planting. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) states that development proposals should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity.
- 6.30 The application site is a dense urban location, within an area of the Borough identified as having a tree canopy cover of 10% or less in the



Council's adopted Tree Strategy. There are no existing tree or landscape features on the site of any note, such as would be a constraint of the development of the site or worthy of retention in its redevelopment. The inclusion of new areas of soft landscaping are welcomed, although there is limited space in the site for substantial tree planting.

- 6.31 Given the proposal would involve demolition of a number of buildings, some of which are in a poor state of repair, a bat survey has been undertaken. The conclusions of this report are that the building may host suitable habitat for bats, and that oversight by a trained ecologist is required during its demolition, and this has been approved by the Council's Ecologist. A condition is recommended to ensure works are carried out with supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, and that biodiversity enhancements (i.e. bat boxes) are integrated in the development.

#### Sustainability

- 6.32 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) states that new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. In addition, this policy sets a higher water efficiency standard for all new dwellings. These requirements will be secured by condition.

#### Affordable Housing

- 6.33 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 8 additional dwellings units, would be liable for a contribution towards affordable housing of £306,577.
- 6.34 At this time, the applicant has proposed to enter into a section 106 agreement for the provision of the units as 'shared ownership' (an affordable housing tenure) **OR** to pay the above financial contribution. The Local Plan sets a target of 70% affordable rent, and 30% shared ownership units to be provided within the Borough over the plan period. The scheme would be considered to be above the policy requirements in this regard. In addition, it would not specifically be meeting the identified need (more emphasis on affordable rent).
- 6.35 Although the proposed provision would not be specifically in line with the policy requirements, the provision of 100% of the units as shared ownership would assist Reading in meeting part of its identified need. As such, it is considered that securing the above would be acceptable. In addition, the applicant has suggested inclusion of a requirement within the section 106 for the priority of those eligible to purchase being from the Reading area. Further discussion is ongoing between Reading Housing Development and the applicant at the time of writing and clarification will be supplied in the Update Report.

#### Other Matters

##### *CIL*

- 6.36 The proposed development would result in the demolition of a large commercial unit. The unit appears to have been vacant for some time and as such is likely not to offset any of the CIL charge. Notwithstanding this, an indication of the CIL charge will be provided in an update report. It is noted that affordable units (of either social rent/affordable rent or shared ownership) are likely to qualify for an exemption from the CIL charge.

### **Equalities Impact**

6.37 When determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above. In summary, the development is considered acceptable in regard to:

- Demolition and replacement of the existing structures would clean up a long disused site;
- The existing structures are not sufficiently high quality to restrict the demolition and the replacement dwellings have been designed to integrate sympathetically within the streets;
- The parking, garden space, bin and bicycle storage are all acceptable; and
- The provision of affordable housing of either form proposed is acceptable in policy terms.

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

## 8. PLANS

### ELSTREE LAND

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Presentation Planning Layout 18.10.2018 (revised)  
 1:200 @ A1 scaling  
 051101-EL-01

### ELSTREE LAND

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- 1. Proposed buildings
- 2. Existing buildings
- 3. Proposed parking
- 4. Proposed landscaping

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Supporting Information Layout 18.10.2018 (revised)  
 1:200 @ A1 scaling  
 051101-EL-02



House Type A  
Plot 9

House Type C  
Plot 8

House Type C  
Plot 7

House Type A  
Plot 6

No 28 Northfield Road

No 24 Northfield Road



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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Ward: Battle

Application No.: 170134/FUL

Address: 53-55 Argyle Road

Proposal: Conversion from D1 use (former mental health Clinic) to C3 use as 10 self-contained flats, three storey side/rear extension, associated access, parking, private amenity space, bin and cycle store (amended description)

Date received: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Application target decision date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

### RECOMMENDATION

Amend the Heads of terms from the February 2019 PAC report recommendation (appendix 1) to the following:

- Provision of a deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism;
- Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis;
- ~~- The establishment of an on-site car club for a minimum of two vehicles, via an agreed car club provider~~

Amend condition 8 from the February 2019 PAC report recommendation (appendix) 1 to the following:

8. Pre-commencement BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Sustainability pre-assessment estimator report demonstrating a minimum BREEAM rating of ~~'Very Good'~~ 'Excellent'

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning application was considered and approved at Planning Applications Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 subject to a section 106 legal agreement (PAC report attached as appendix 1 to this report). The section 106 legal agreement sought to secure:

- Provision of a deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism;

- Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis;
- The establishment of an on-site car club for a minimum of two vehicles, via an agreed car club provider

1.2 However, the planning permission has not yet been issued due to delays in agreeing the detailed wording of the section 106 legal agreement.

*Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure Levy*

1.4 The applicant submitted a viability appraisal to inform the level of affordable housing which could be achieved as part of the original application. At the time this was reviewed by the Council's viability consultant who concluded that it was not viable for the scheme to provide on-site affordable housing units or to secure an initial financial contribution towards any off-site affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. However, a deferred affordable housing contribution payment mechanism was to be secured as part of the section 106 legal agreement as set out in the terms above a to ensure that the Council shared in any uplift in value or savings in costs associated with the development in the future.

1.5 However, in preparation of the section 106 agreement and deferred payment mechanism it has become apparent that the expected Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability for the scheme was significantly more than the Applicant had anticipated. The Applicant's viability appraisal had considered the scheme on the basis that only the proposed extensions would be liable for CIL and not the existing parts of the building to be converted. This is on the basis that existing buildings are not liable for CIL subject that they have been in use for a minimum continuous period of 6 months within the previous three years. This was the case for the application building at the time of submission of the planning application (January 2017) and therefore this detail was incorporated within the Applicant's viability appraisal (albeit the Applicant had incorrectly stated that this was not the case on the CIL Additional Information Form originally submitted with the application so this was not questioned by officers at the time).

1.6 Due to delays in the determination of the planning application, primarily in the viability review process, the application was not reported to Committee until February 2019. As a result of this delay, the existing part of the building was no longer exempt from CIL, given that the time period within which a building must be occupied to qualify for the exemption is taken from the planning permission decision date and not the date the application was submitted, and this 3-year period had now elapsed. As a result of this, both the existing building and proposed extensions are now liable for CIL with a charge of £86,000 required as opposed to only £13,000 considered as part of the Applicant's original viability appraisal. This difference has resulted in the scheme becoming even more unviable. An amended viability appraisal has been submitted for review by the Council's viability consultant who has confirmed this to be the case and a lower maximum sum for the affordable housing deferred payment mechanism will be calculated taking into account the increased cost of the CIL charge. This the



maximum sum is the maximum amount of money that the Council can share in with the applicant if there is any future uplift in value or savings in costs associated with the development.

- 1.7 The maximum sum was deferred to officers to agree under the original PAC report and Officers would again look to agree this revised sum with the Council's viability consultant. This review is considered a reasonable approach given that if officers had determined the application in a timelier manner then the Applicant would have been able to claim an exemption on a significant proportion of their CIL liability.
- 1.8 Since the application was last considered at PAC, the new Reading Borough Local Plan has been adopted. The new policy regarding affordable housing is H3 but this does not change the affordable housing requirements of this proposed development.

#### *Car Club*

- 1.9 In addition to the above, the original heads of terms for the section 106 considered at PAC in February 2019 sought to secure a financial contribution towards the setting up of an on-site car club due to an under-provision of car parking. This included a car club contribution of £42,000. This contribution in addition to the increased CIL levy is also having a negative effect on the viability of the scheme and the applicant is seeking removal of this requirement and contribution.
- 1.10 Officers have identified that the number of flats proposed within the development (which was reduced to 10 units during the application's consideration) is in fact below the threshold for when a car club should be secured in accordance with the Council's adopted Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) which states that car clubs are applicable to proposals of more than 10 units. Therefore, officers are content to remove the requirement which would also assist in making the development more viable and in enabling the currently vacant building to be refurbished and brought back into use.
- 1.11 Regarding the impact of the new Reading Borough Local Plan the new relevant transport policies are TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging). The new policies carry forward the standards from the previous policies and there are no implications for parking or other transport related standards for this development.

#### Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

- 1.12 Officers have considered all other aspects of the proposed development in the context of the new Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The only implication of the new policies on the development is regarding Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) which requires that major conversions to residential (10 or more units) meet a BREEAM standard of 'Excellent'. This is an increased standard from

the previous development plan policy which only sought a standard of 'Very Good'. Therefore, it is recommended that condition 8 of the original PAC report (appendix 1) is amended to require this enhanced 'Excellent' standard.

- 1.13 The officer recommendations regarding all other aspects of the development remains as per the previous report at appendix 1.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.14 Agree the proposed changes to the section 106 heads of terms and wording of condition no. 8 of the February 2019 PAC report as per the recommendation box at the top of this report.

**Case Officer: Matt Burns**

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Ward:** Battle

**Application No.:** 170134/FUL

**Address:** 53-55 Argyle Road

**Proposal:** Conversion from D1 use (former mental health Clinic) to C3 use as 10 self-contained flats, three storey side/rear extension, associated access, parking, private amenity space, bin and cycle store (amended description)

**Date received:** 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**Application target decision date:** 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (Extension of Time)

### RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- Provision of a deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism;
- Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis;
- The establishment of an on-site car club for a minimum of two vehicles, via an agreed car club provider

### CONDITIONS

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre commencement details of all external materials
4. Pre-commencement construction method statement (including noise and dust measures);
5. Pre-commencement hard and soft landscaping details
6. Implementation of the approved landscaping no later than during the first planting season following the date when the development is ready for occupation
7. Landscaping maintenance / replacement for a period of 5 years
8. Pre-commencement BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Sustainability pre-assessment estimator report demonstrating a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'
9. Pre-occupation final BREEAM Certificate Pre-occupation implementation of cycle parking and subsequent maintenance;
10. Pre-occupation implementation of bin storage facilities and subsequent maintenance;
11. Pre-occupation notification of postal addresses (restricting parking permits)

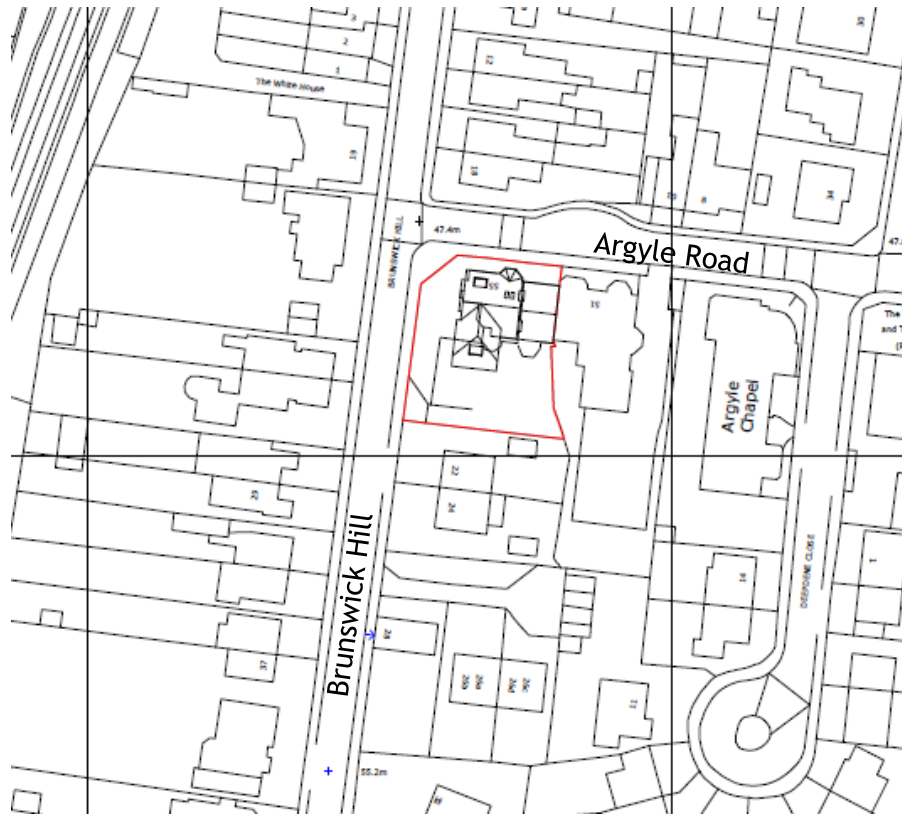
12. No automatic entitlement to parking permits
13. Pre-occupation implementation of obscure glazing
14. Pre-occupation provision of car parking spaces
15. Pre-occupation implementation of SUDS, maintenance and management thereafter
16. Maintenance of SUDS
17. Notwithstanding the provisions of the GPDO 2015 no change to the unit mix (2 x studio flats, 3 x 1 bedroom flats, 3 x 2 bedroom flats and 2 x 3 bedroom flats) shall be made to the development hereby permitted without express planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.
18. Control of construction hours
19. No burning of waste on site

**Informatives:**

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Highways
3. Sound insulation
4. Section 106 Legal Agreement
5. Pre-commencement conditions
6. Building Control
7. Terms and conditions
8. CIL

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application relates to a semi-detached four storey building located at the junction of Argyle Road and Brunswick Hill. The site is accessed from Brunswick Hill.
- 1.2 The building was most recently in use as D1 for medical health care. To the rear the site contains parking spaces and to the west there is communal amenity area. The adjoining property (no.51) has also been converted into residential use (flats) and the surrounding area predominantly consists of residential dwellings of a range of sizes and styles. There is a change in levels across the site as Brunswick Hill slopes up steeply from north to south.
- 1.3 The site is located within an air quality management area.
- 1.4 The application is to be determined at Planning Applications Committee given it relates to conversion of a property to 10 flats and is therefore a major category application.



Site Location

**2. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 5235 - Conversion to form 2 dwellings - Granted - 16/08/1957
- 2.2 17878 - Conversion to guest house - Granted - 25/09/1970
- 2.3 20825 - Change of use from guest house to hostel - Granted - 15/12/1972
- 2.4 93/00838 - Change of use from residential to mental health clinic - Granted - 10/03/1994
- 2.5 161259/PREAPP - Change of use to C3 for self-contained flats or a large Sui Generis HMO - Pre-application advice given.

**3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for change of use and conversion of the building from D1 use (former mental health Clinic) to C3 use as 10 self-contained flats including a three storey side/rear extension.
- 3.2 Vehicular access would be via an existing entrance point from Brunswick Hill where the existing car park would be used to provide 7 car parking spaces for the flats. An internal bin store would be provided within the extended building whilst the

western part of the site between the building and Brunswick Hill would provide a shared garden area of 162m<sup>2</sup> and bin store area.

- 3.3 The 10 flats proposed would consist of 2 x studio flats, 3 x 1 bedroom flats, 3 x 2 bedroom flats and 2 x 3 bedroom flats.
- 3.4 Amended plans were submitted during the course of the application following officer concerns raised regarding the massing and appearance of the building in relation to the existing and adjoined building and impact on the wider street-scene. The amended plans submitted reduced the number of proposed flats from 11 to 10 and reduced the height and massing of the proposed three storey side/rear extension by removing a proposed upper roof level floor of accommodation.
- 3.5 The applicant sought pre-application advice regarding the proposed development prior to submitting the application.

#### 4. **CONSULTATIONS**

##### **RBC Transport**

- 4.1 No objection, subject to conditions to secure implementation of proposed car parking spaces, cycle and bin storage, SUDS, restrictions on access of future occupiers to on-street parking permits and submission, approval of a construction method statement. A section 106 agreement is also sought to secure provision of car club (car sharing) spaces.

##### **RBC Environmental Protection**

- 4.2 No objection, subject to conditions to control hours of construction and to restrict burning of materials on site.

##### **RBC Natural Environment**

- 4.3 No objection, subject to conditions to require submission and approval of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, implementation of any subsequently approved landscaping scheme and its future maintenance.

##### **Public Consultation**

- 4.4 Flats 1-11 51 Argyle Road and nos 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 Brunswick Hill were notified of the application by letter and a notice was also displayed at the application site. These properties were also re-notified following the submission of amended plans.

Objections have been received from owners/occupiers of two different properties, raising the following issues:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Scale of the proposed extension is overbearing

- Loss of day and sun light
- Insufficient parking provision

One letter of observation has been received raising the following points:

- No application site notice was displayed at the site
- Supportive of the development but seek restriction on access of future occupiers to on-street parking permits

## **5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.
- 5.2 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 5.3 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

### **Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008 - amended 2015)**

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS5 Inclusive Access
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS9 Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS16 Affordable Housing
- CS18 Residential Conversions
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)
- CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources

### **Sites and Detailed Policies Document - (Adopted October 2012, - amended 2015)**

- SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM1 Adaption to Climate Change
- DM3 Infrastructure Planning
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM5 Housing Mix

DM6 Affordable Housing  
DM8 Residential Conversions  
DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
DM19 Air Quality

Supplementary Planning Document: Affordable Housing (July 2013)

Supplementary Planning Document: S106 Planning Obligations (March 2014)

Supplementary Planning Document: Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main issues raised by this planning application are as follows:

- Principle
- Design and Impact on the Character of the Area
- Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers
- Standard of Residential Accommodation
- Unit Mix
- Sustainability
- Natural Environment
- Transport
- Affordable Housing

### Principle

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.2 The application building is currently under D1 use class for health care services and ancillary offices to support the administration functions. Policy CS31 Additional and Existing Community Facilities of the Core Strategy 2008 (2015) refers that 'proposals involving redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility'.
- 6.3 The historic permission which saw the use of the building changed to health care restricts use of the building to that as a health care centre only and does not permit any other uses under the D1 class. Therefore, it must be considered whether the application clearly demonstrates that there is no longer a need to retain the health care facility.
- 6.4 The applicant has submitted a statement of justification for the proposed change of use and loss of the D1 medical facility with the application. This sets out that the NHS sold the building to the applicant in March 2016 following a lengthy period of marketing whereby no other medical provider showed significant interest in acquiring the building. The reason for the sale was because the NHS has consolidated their service provision. Furthermore, the NHS themselves made a pre-



application enquiry to the Local Planning Authority in 2015 in relation to a potential change of use and conversion of the building to residential. The applicant's statement also sets out that the availability of medical facilities nearby the site, identifying several different doctors' surgeries.

- 6.5 It is considered that the application satisfactorily demonstrates that the health care facility use of the site is no longer required to be retained, in particular given the fact the site was disposed of by the NHS some time ago. The proposal is not considered contrary to Policy CS31 in this respect.
- 6.6 In terms of the proposed C3 residential use, this would provide an additional 10 dwellings to the Borough's housing stock, the principle of which would align with the broad objectives of Policy CS14 in assisting meeting annual housing targets whilst the location and accessibility of the site for residential development is considered to accord with Policy CS4.
- 6.7 There is no in principle objection to the proposed change of use of the building from D1 health care to C3 residential subject to the other policy and material planning considerations set out below.

#### **Character and Appearance of the Building and Surrounding Area**

- 6.8 Policy CS7 seeks that development proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the area of Reading within which they are located.
- 6.9 The existing building is fairly irregular in form with a number of different style roof and bay window projections at different heights. The building to which it is adjoined appears different and is greater in height with brick rather than render finish and also black and white timber boarding to gable features to the upper floor. The buildings do share certain features though with projecting bay windows of different heights and, lower ground floor part basement level and similar style and proportion windows.
- 6.10 The buildings irregular form, slightly uncoordinated appearance, semi-detached nature, relationship with the adjoined dwelling and prominent corner location are such that is a challenging building to extend.
- 6.11 Whilst there is a contrast between the existing building and that which it adjoins, the general form of the application building follows the bulk and massing that you would typically expect of a semi-detached building with roof heights falling and appearing subordinate as they project off from the main part of the building.
- 6.12 In its original form the application sought to reverse the roof profile of the building to the front elevation to Argyle Street, such that the roof profile would step up in height as you move away from the central part of building. This resulted in an unusual and unbalanced appearance to the dwelling and officers raised concerns with the applicant regarding this roof form profile and the dominance of this enlarged part of the building at this prominent corner location both in terms of impact on character of the host and adjoined building and also the surrounding street-scene.

- 6.13 The amended plans which were submitted and upon which this report is based retain the roof profile of the Argyle Road elevation of the building as existing and remove the proposed roof space accommodation, including an unsympathetic flat roof dormer projection, such that the roof steps down in height away from the central section of the building. The only alterations proposed to the Argyle Road (north) elevation are the replacement of an upper ground floor level window and access door and steps window with four windows, two at upper ground floor level and two at first floor level. These windows reflect the siting and proportion of existing windows to the property and are considered to result in a more coordinated and balanced appearance to this elevation of the building and to enhance its contribution to the street-scene.
- 6.14 The bulk of the proposed three storey extension would infill the area to the rear of the western most part of the building which in its existing form is of lesser depth than that the central section of the building where it attaches to the adjoined property. As such the extension would project only 3m beyond the existing main rear elevation of the property. The extension would appear subservient to the existing building and notably in relation to the lowest part of the Argyle Road elevation. The proposed shallow hipped roof of the extension also assists in creating a subservient appearance. This feature was introduced as part of the submission of amended plans and replaced the original roof design which presented a large gable incorporating roof space accommodation, following officer concerns about the massing and dominance of this design.
- 6.15 The extension does incorporate a significant number of windows to the west flank elevation fronting Brunswick Hill but these are considered to be positioned and portioned such that the elevation does not appear unduly homogenous, whilst the inclusion of two small projecting bays with gable roofs helps break up the façade and roof line and articulate the elevation. Materials would be to match the existing building with white render elevations and slate roof, details of which can be secured by way of condition.
- 6.16 Whilst presenting a more significant elevation to Brunswick Hill, the extension would retain a 6.5m set back from the site boundary in a part of the site where a communal landscaped garden is to be provided. The levels of the site are also set below that of the road such that the extension would not present itself as a full three storeys in height when viewed from street level. A brick boundary wall which wraps around the corner of the site as it turns from Argyle Road to Brunswick Hill that ranges between 1.5m and 2m in height is also to be retained. This would shield much of the lower ground floor level of the extension from views from the road.
- 6.17 The extension would retain 12m separation to the side boundary with the two storey residential dwelling at no. 22 Brunswick Hill to the rear (south) of the application site with a 15m separation to the dwelling itself. The extension would also not project forward of the front elevation and building line of this adjacent dwelling and its semi-detached pair at no. 24, albeit the building line is varied to the section of Brunswick Hill to the south of the site.

- 6.18 It is considered that the proposed extension retains a suitable level of subservience to the host building and in terms of detailed design is considered to integrate satisfactorily with its character. This subservience and design, the position and set back of the extension from Brunswick Hill and surrounding properties, together with the lower site levels compared to the street are such that the proposal is not considered to appear unduly dominant within the street-scene or harmful in this respect. The façade alterations to the Argyle Road frontage of the building are considered to enhance the contribution of this part of the building to this section of the street-scene and the proposal is considered to accord with Policy CS7.

#### **Unit Mix**

- 6.19 Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) details that developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures. Policy DM5 (Housing Mix) goes in to more detail and seeks that developments of 10 or more dwellings outside the central area of Reading should ensure that over 50% of dwellings are 3 bedroom or more.
- 6.20 The application proposes 10 units with a mix of the 2 x studio flats, 3 x 1 bedroom flats, 3 x 2 bedroom flats and 2 x 3 bedroom flats. Whilst not in accordance with Policy DM5, this policy more accurately relates to new housing developments more so than flats and in particular not in the context of proposals which are for conversion of existing buildings. In the context of the proposal being a largely a conversion of an existing building the proposed mix, in particular provision of 2 x 3 bedroom units is considered to be good and to accord with the general aims of Policy CS15.
- 6.21 It is recommended that a condition is secured whereby, notwithstanding the provisions of the GPDO 2015, no change to the unit mix (2 x studio flats, 3 x 1 bedroom flats, 3 x 2 bedroom flats and 2 x 3 bedroom flats) shall be made to the development hereby permitted without express planning permission from the Local Planning Authority. This is to safeguard the mix altering to potentially unacceptable mixes in the future, while also having a dual benefit of not altering the sales values of units (which could improve scheme viability) without this being managed and assessed by the local planning authority.

#### **Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers**

- 6.21 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks that development proposals should protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Policy CS34 seeks to protect residents from the impacts of pollution.
- 6.22 The proposed development and in particular the proposed three storey side/rear extension is not considered to result in any harmful overbearing impact or loss of light to surrounding properties. The extension is set off the shared boundary with the adjoining property (no. 51 Argyle Road) by 8m. This adjoining property has been extended similarly to the rear with a similar set off from the shared boundary such that there are no light or overbearing concerns. In addition the separation to the adjacent residential property at no. 22 Brunswick Hill to the south (12m to the boundary and 15m to the dwelling itself) and that to the

residential properties on the opposite side of Brunswick Hill (18m) is considered sufficient such that there would be no harm to these properties in this respect.

- 6.23 In terms of privacy, no new windows are proposed to the elevation of the new extension which would face the shared boundary with the adjoined property, which is in use as flats. However, there is an existing bay window projection which is replicated at lower ground, upper ground and first floor levels to the existing rear elevation of the building close to the shared boundary with no. 51. The bay is served by three windows one of which is angled towards the shared boundary and would serve living rooms and bedrooms as part of the proposed conversion works to the existing building. It is considered reasonable to require the window which is angled towards the shared boundary to be obscurely glazed to upper ground floor and first floor level to prevent any direct views and overlooking to the adjoined property. This can be secured by way of condition.
- 6.24 The separation distance to no.22 Brunswick Hill, the adjacent dwelling to the south of the site and that to the dwellings on the opposite side of Brunswick Hill (both referred to above), are considered adequate to prevent any undue overlooking or loss of privacy. Whilst no.22 has three windows facing the application site these are small windows serving non-habitable spaces.
- 6.25 Suitable noise mitigation upon the existing residential occupiers of the adjoined building (no. 51 Argyle Road) would be secured under the relevant building regulation requirements. In terms of the general impact of the change of use, the site is of a good size and located in an existing residential area. The use of the site and extension of the existing building to provide 10 flats is not considered to result in an over intensive use or to result in any general noise and disturbance concerns to existing surrounding residential properties.
- 6.26 Construction related noise, dust and traffic related concerns would be addressed by way of a construction method statement to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development on site.
- 6.27 The proposed development is not considered to result in any adverse harm to the amenity of surrounding occupiers and accords with Policies DM4 and CS34.

#### **Standard of Residential Accommodation**

- 6.28 The unit and room sizes proposed are considered adequate and to provide a reasonable living space for future occupants. In addition it is considered that the proposed layout and assignment of rooms to windows would allow for adequate outlook and daylighting for each flat.
- 6.29 Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that useable private or communal amenity spaces are in keeping with the character of amenity spaces to the surrounding area, noting that communal amenity spaces are likely to be acceptable for flats. The proposal incorporates a shared garden of 162m<sup>2</sup>. This is considered to be adequate for the proposed development, given the site's relatively central location and access to nearby public recreation facilities.

- 6.30 The proposed development is considered to provide a suitable standard of amenity for future occupiers and accords with Policies DM4 and DM10. There is level access to the lower ground floor of the building to the rear. As a conversion of an existing building this is considered to be acceptable in the context of Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access).

#### **Sustainability**

- 6.31 In accordance with Policy CS1 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2007), as a residential conversion, the proposal would be required to demonstrate a BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment level of 'Very Good'. Details of this shall be secured by way of a suitably worded condition.
- 6.32 The proposals include a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SuDS). This has been reviewed by Local Flood Authority via RBC Transport Officers and is considered to be acceptable. Implementation of the drainage scheme can be secured by way of condition prior to occupation of the development, as well as its future maintenance and management.

#### **Natural Environment**

- 6.33 Policy CS7 seeks that to secure appropriate landscaping as part of the development proposals.
- 6.34 There are no trees of any particular arboricultural quality within the site that would be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 6.35 The RBC Natural Environment Officer recommends that additional tree planting is secured to soften the visual impact of the new proposed extension from Brunswick Hill and this, together with implementation and maintenance of a landscaping scheme, can be secured by way of condition in accordance with Policy CS7.

#### **Transport**

- 6.36 Policies DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015 and CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 6.37 The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. The zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 on-site parking space per dwelling. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document also states that fewer spaces would be acceptable for residential schemes providing there is no detriment to highway safety.
- 6.38 The plans submitted indicate that the provision of 7 car parking spaces will be available on site which falls below the current requirement. Given the lower than required parking provision on site, the applicant is proposing to enter into a S106 obligation for provision of car club spaces. This will take the form of a partnership

with Co-Wheels car club. This was discussed and supported in the pre-application meeting, as a way to encourage car sharing within the local community and prevent any additional pressure on street parking.

- 6.39 Given the close proximity of the development to town and the provision of a car club, the reduced number of car parking spaces is considered acceptable in this instance.
- 6.40 There is a “No Waiting” restriction in the form of double yellow lines directly outside of the property. The development site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 08R. Whilst the site is accessible to good public transport links and local shops, the shortfall in residential parking should not be accommodated on the surrounding roads where there is already significant demand for on-street parking. Under the Borough’s current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. Therefore, there is an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed dwelling will not be issued with a resident parking permit. This would be secured by way of conditions and an informative. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.
- 6.41 Access to the rear of the development will be through the existing driveway on Brunswick Hill into the existing car parking area. No modifications are required to the existing dropped crossing.
- 6.42 Bin storage is shown on the proposed plans and would comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in terms of being located within 15m of the access point of the site. This is to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods and is considered acceptable.
- 6.43 In accordance with the Council’s Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development should provide 0.5 secure cycle storage spaces for each dwelling. The plans submitted indicate a bike store within the car parking area, adjacent to the bin storage area. The store will be equipped with secure stands and is considered acceptable.
- 6.44 The proposal is considered to accord with Policies CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015 and Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015.

#### **Affordable Housing & CIL**

- 6.45 With regard to affordable housing, in line with Policy DM6 and as a proposal for 10 units, a 30% on-site provision is required (3 units). In this instance the applicant is seeking to provide nil affordable housing and has submitted viability justification (as referenced in Policy DM6 in instances where proposals fall short of the policy target). The viability submission has been assessed on behalf of the local planning authority by BPS Chartered Surveyors. BPS has subsequently concluded that the scheme cannot viably support an affordable housing

contribution. Although naturally disappointing to officers in light of the pressing need for affordable housing in the Borough, the nil provision at this point in time has been suitably evidenced in a robust manner, in line with the circumstances allowed by Policy DM6.

- 6.46 Notwithstanding this, BPS have recommended that there is a sufficient basis to secure a deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism, which would enable the Council to share in any subsequent uplift in actual value, based on a later re-appraisal of viability. The applicant has confirmed agreement to the principle of this mechanism, with the exact details to be secured within the s106 Legal Agreement.
- 6.47 Furthermore, officers also consider it necessary to secure a further s106 legal agreement obligation relating to affordable housing in this case. This relates to contributions to affordable housing applying on a cumulative basis (rather than individual application basis) should the building be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided (e.g. a 2-bed unit becomes 2 separate 1-bed units) in the future. This is also necessary in part due to (future) conversions resulting in a change of use under 10 units (as could be proposed at a later date) not attracting affordable housing contributions (as per the application of Policy DM6). Hence, in practice, each part of any future proposal at the site shall make an appropriate contribution to affordable housing, having regard to the contribution that would arise from a single assessment across all components.
- 6.48 Typically any additional contribution would take the form of a financial contribution to affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough, given the likely difficulties of incorporating further on-site provision in this instance. Such an approach was sought and considered appropriate on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate elsewhere in the Borough in June 2018 (see Ref 170251 at City Wall House, 26 West St Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/W/17/3188270) and is being sought to be applied where relevant on other current proposals in the Borough (e.g. 180591 at Mulberry House and 181117 at 34-36 & 38 Southampton Street at the 6<sup>th</sup> February Planning Applications Committee).
- 6.49 The applicant is agreeable to the principle of a S106 Legal Agreement in terms of both obligations. If these elements are secured as recommended, although acknowledging and accepting that no on-site / off-site affordable housing provision or financial contribution is provided at this stage, this has been specifically evidenced, justified and independently reviewed as such, as Policy DM6 allows for. Thus, on balance, this is considered the best possible contribution towards affordable housing in this instance. The proposal is therefore considered to be policy compliant in this regard.
- 6.50 In terms of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability the total floor area of the development is calculated as 547.8m<sup>2</sup>. The applicants CIL Additional Information Form states that the existing building had not been occupied in its lawful D1 use for a minimum continuous period of 6 months within the 36 months prior to the application being submitted. On this basis both the floor space of the proposed extension and that to be converted within the existing building would

be liable for CIL. Based on the 2018 indexed CIL rate of £148.24 per sq.m for residential development this equates to a liability of £81,205.

#### **Issues Raised in Representations**

- 6.51 Concern was raised as to whether a site application site notice was displayed at the site. Officers can confirm that a site notice was displayed and there is a record of this.
- 6.52 All other issues raised are considered to have been addressed in the main body of the report above.

### **7 Equality**

- 7.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which identifies protected characteristics or groups. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current applications) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

### **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in this report. As such the application is recommended for approval, subject to satisfactory completion of a section 106 legal agreement and the recommended conditions.

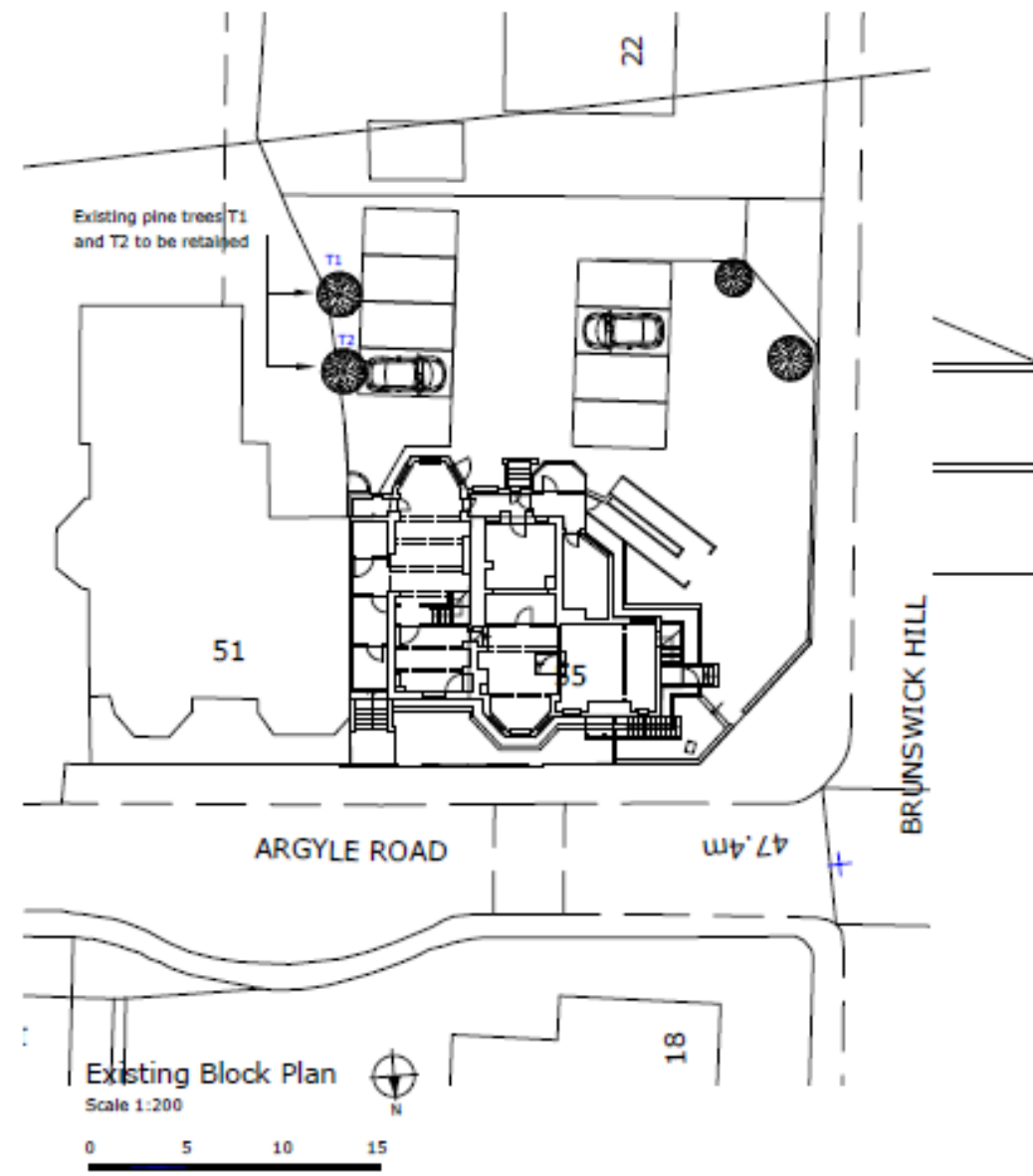
### **9 DRAWINGS SUBMITTED**

- 01 A - Existing Floor Plans
- 02 A - Existing Upper Floor Plans
- 03 A - Existing North and West Elevations with Site Location Plan
- 04 - Existing South Elevations
- 05 A - Existing Street-Scene Elevations with Existing Block Plan
  
- 06 B - Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
- 07 C - Proposed Upper Ground Floor Plan
- 08 D - Proposed First and Second Floor Plans
- 09 E - Proposed Elevations
- 10 E - Site Location and Block Plan

**Case Officer: Matt Burns**







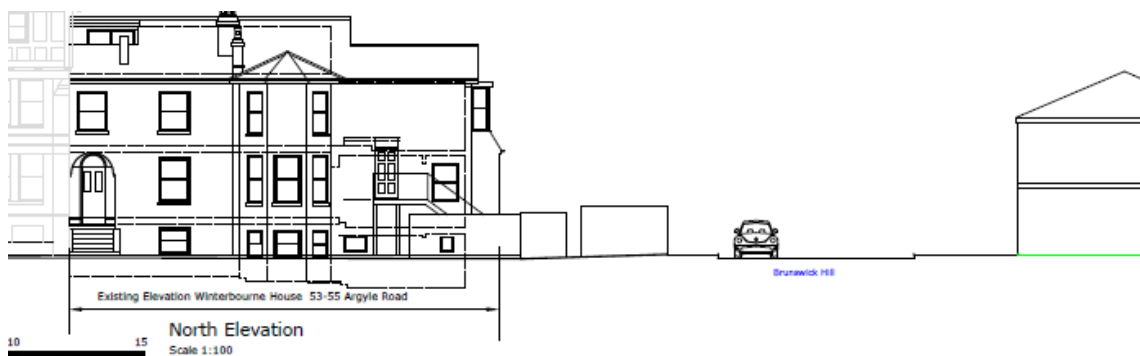
Existing Block Plan



South Elevation  
Scale 1:100

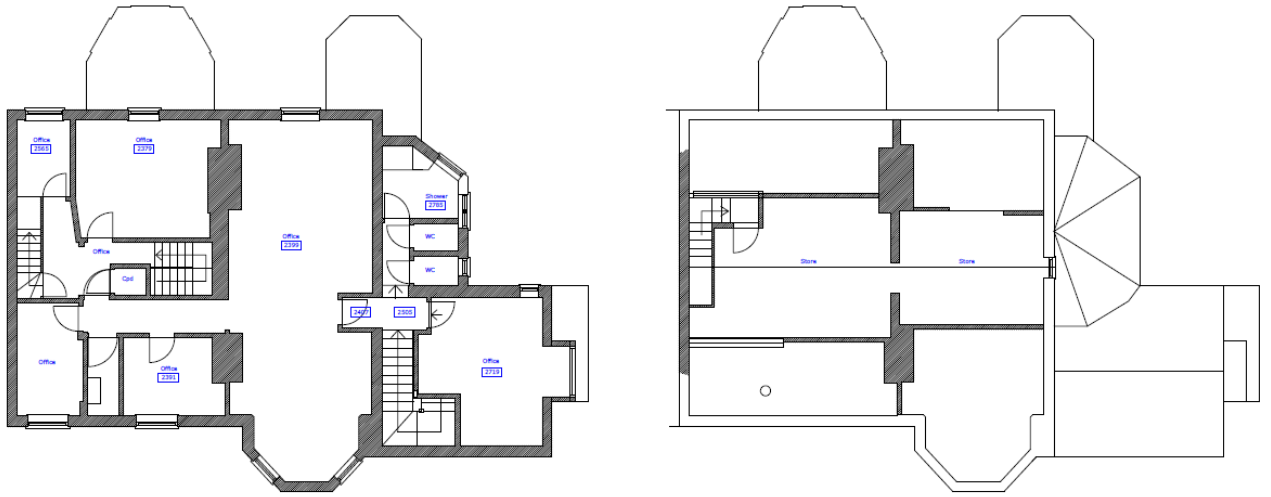


West Elevation  
Scale 1:100

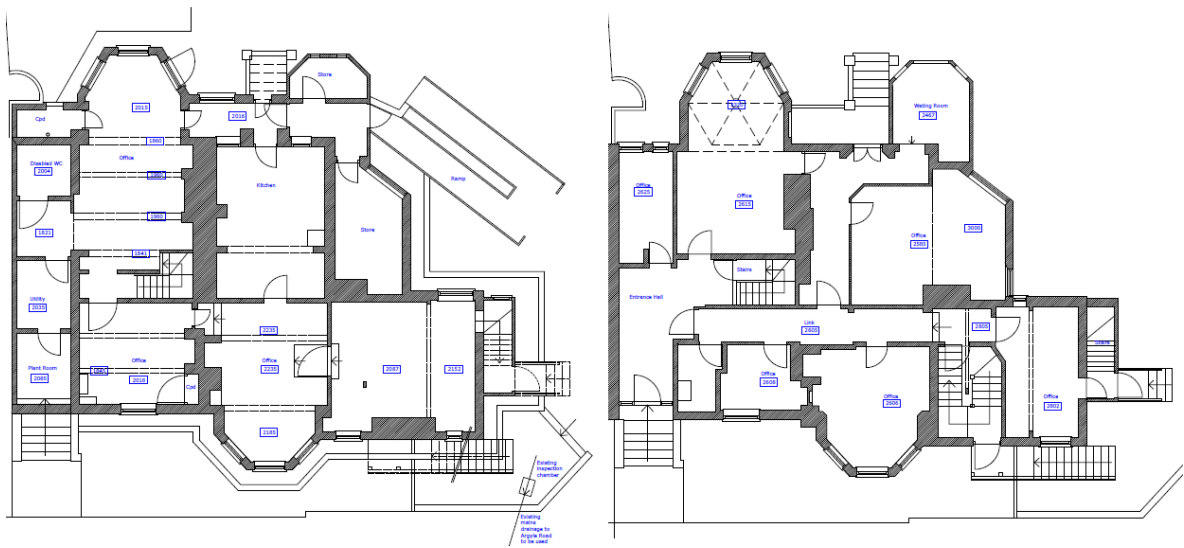


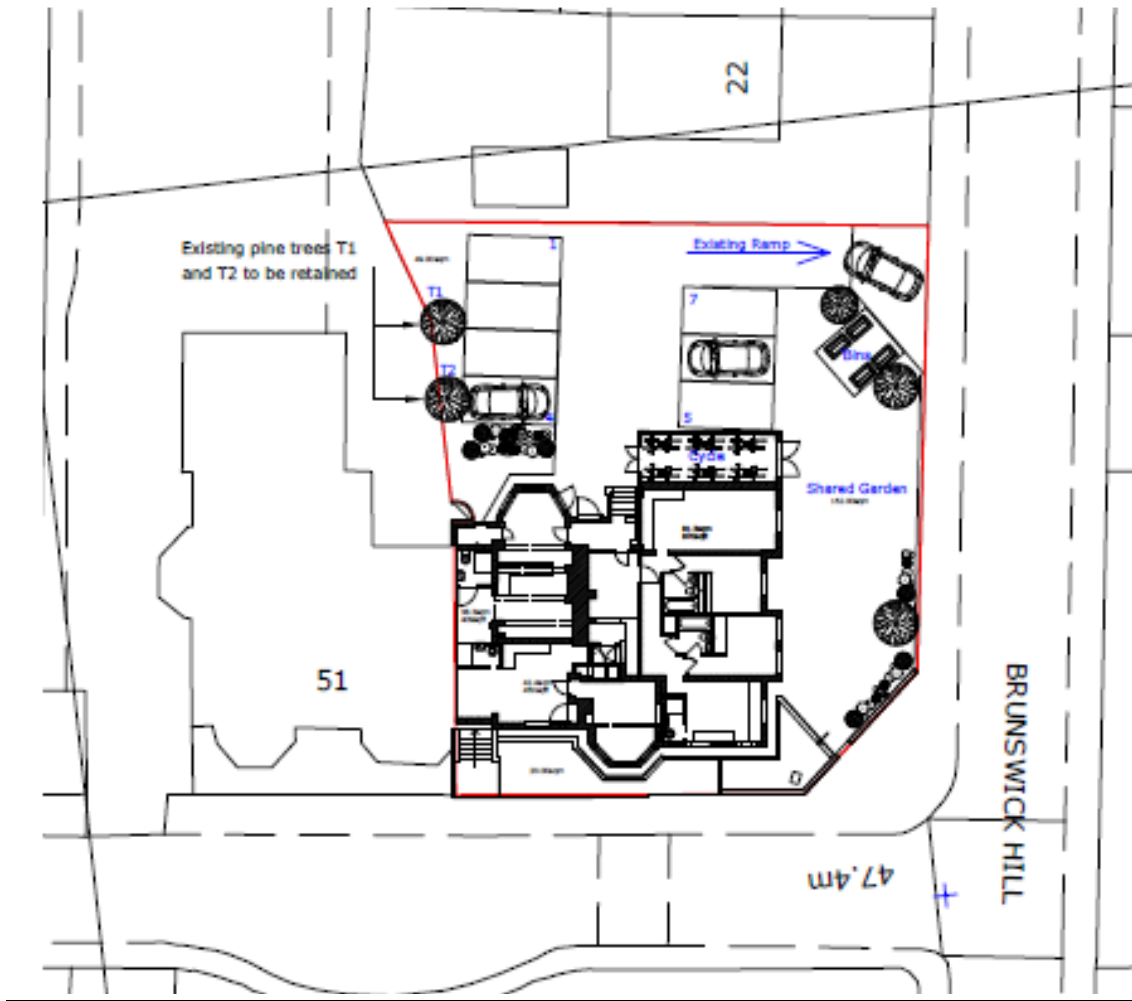
North Elevation  
Scale 1:100

**Existing elevations**

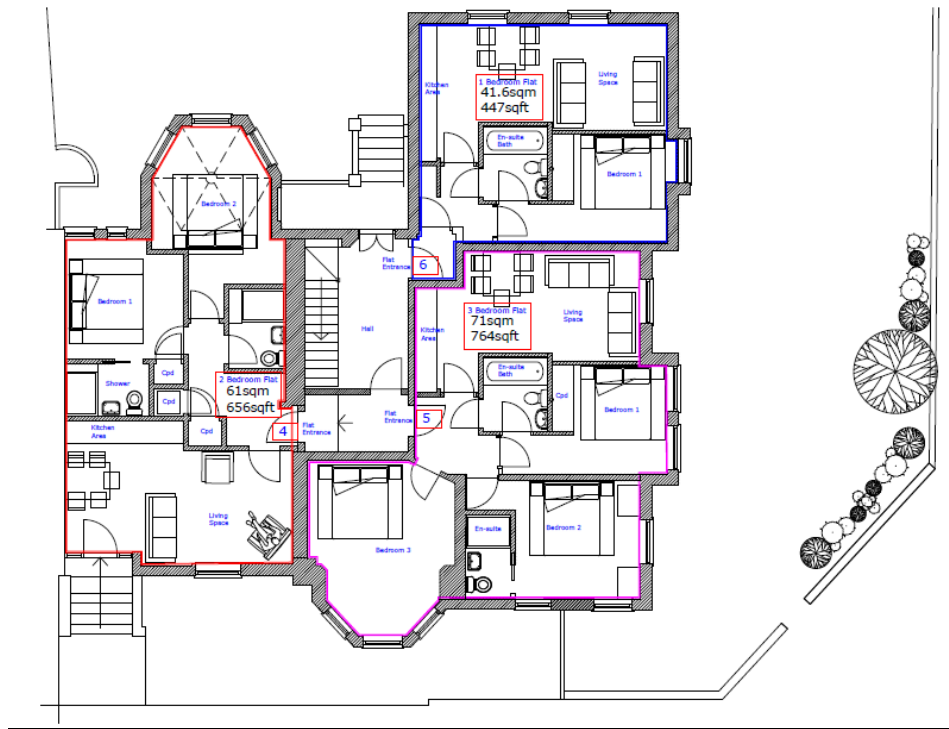
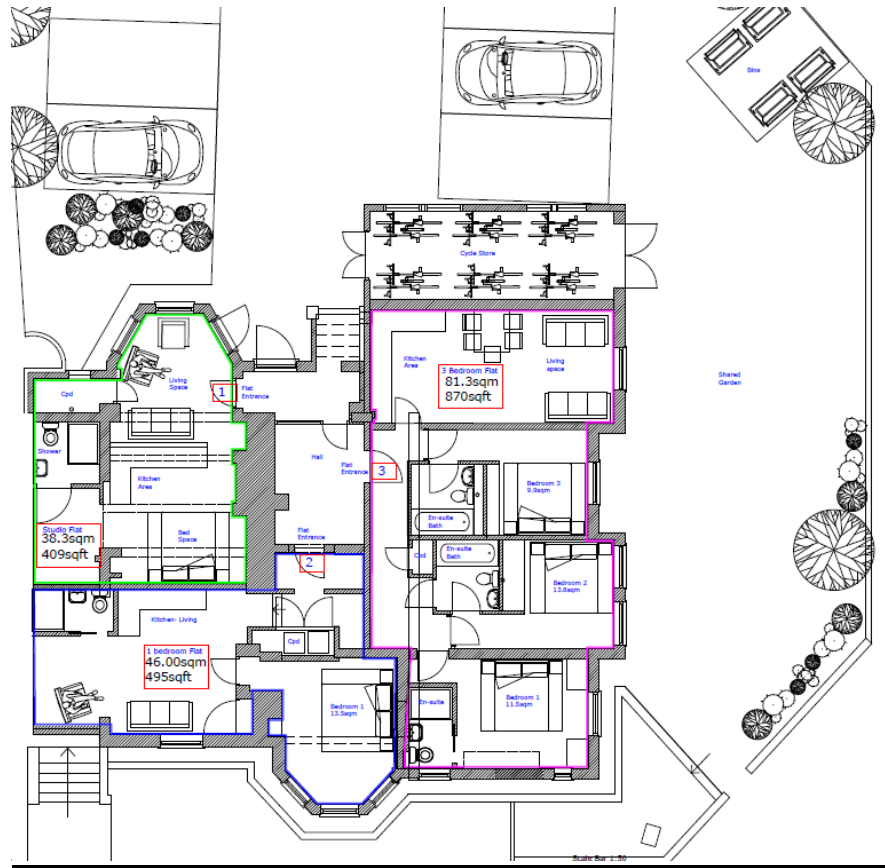


**Existing first and second floor plans**

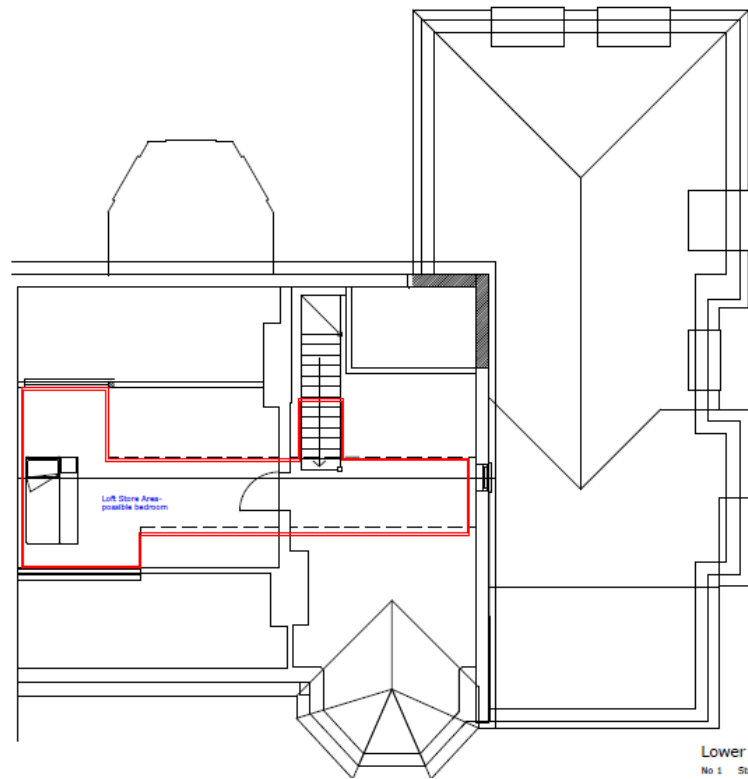
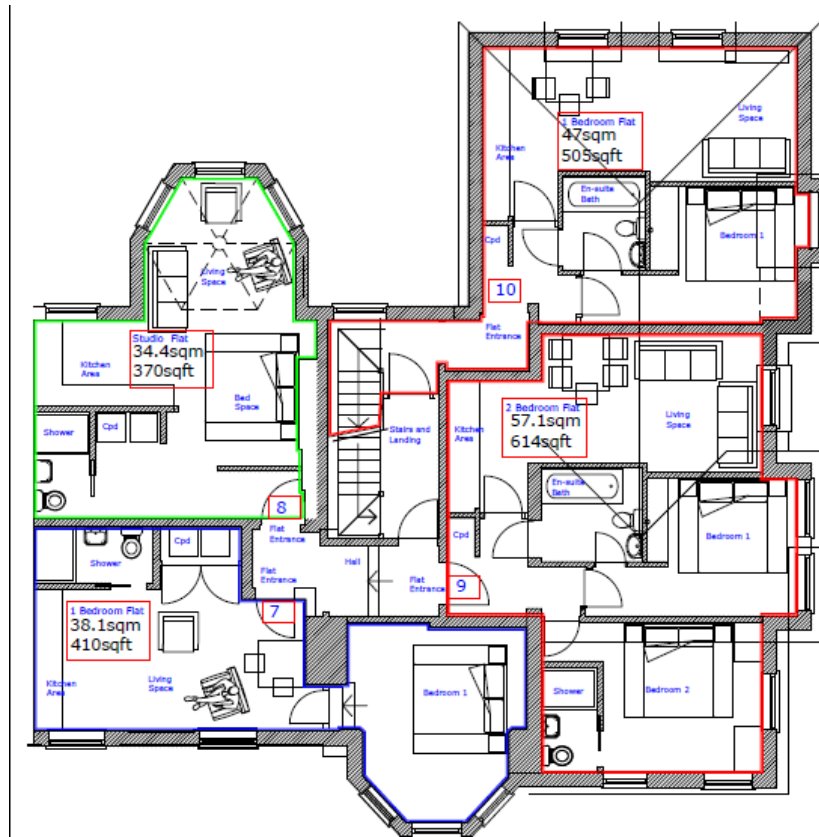




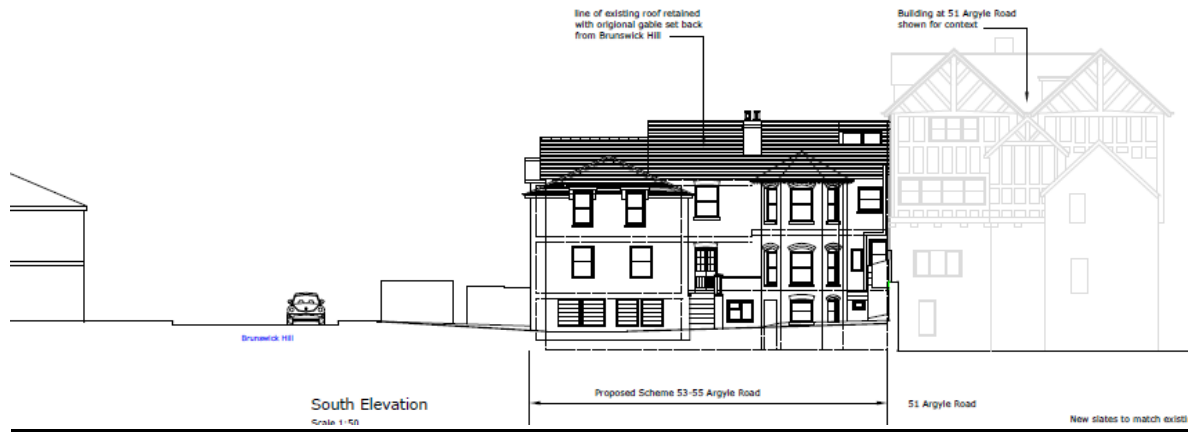
Proposed Site Plan



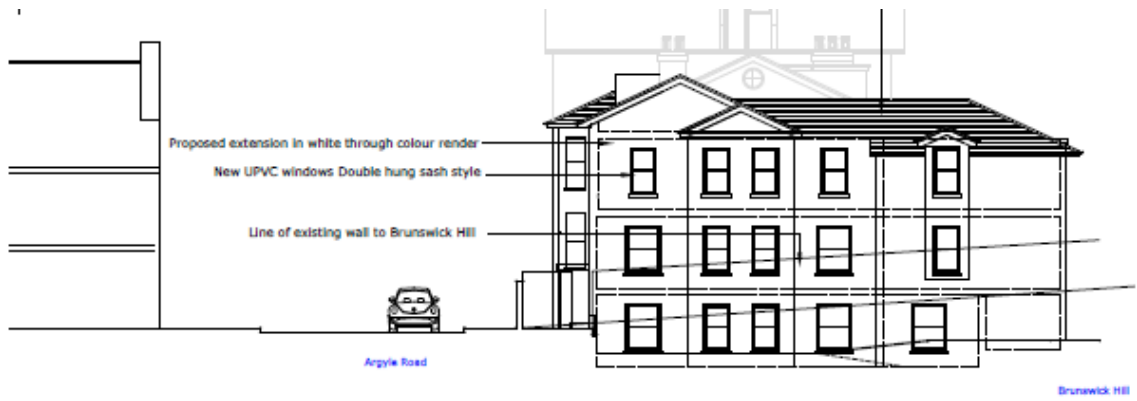
**Proposed lower and upper ground floor plans**



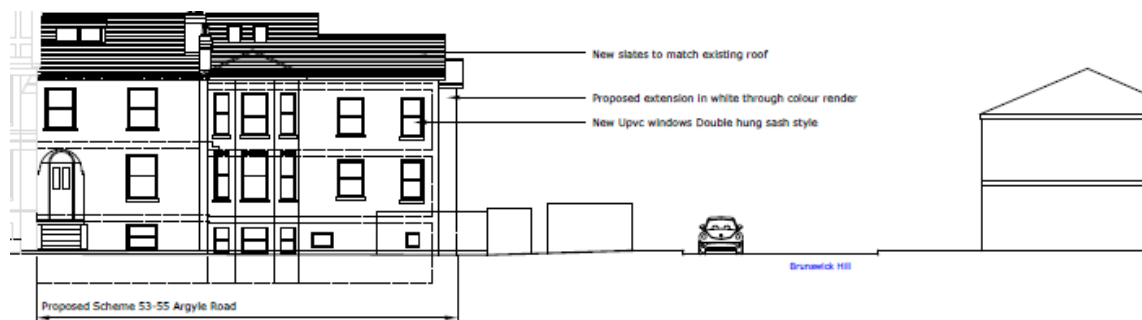
**Proposed first and second floor plans**



**Proposed south elevation**



**Proposed west elevation**



**Proposed north elevation**



BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 February 2020

ITEM NO.

**Ward:** Katesgrove

**App No.:** 191043

**Address:** 43 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

**Proposal:** Part-demolition of existing London Street facade and internal works to building alongside demolition of two storey building to rear to enable residential-led mixed-use

**Date Application Valid:** 16 July 2019

**Target decision date:** 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020

## RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning & Regulatory Services (HPRS) to (i) GRANT Full Planning Permission with appropriate conditions and informatives, subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 legal agreement by 7th February 2020, or;

(ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 7th February 2020 (unless officers on behalf of HPRS) agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The legal agreement shall secure the following Head of Terms:

1. £100,000 contribution towards affordable housing to be paid before first occupation of the 6th unit hereby approved;
2. Provision of a deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism whereby if the value of the residential element exceeds a total of £6.6m, then the Council will receive 25% of any extra proceeds in addition to the £100k capped at the cash equivalent off 30%. This will be assessed on the sale of the 18th unit hereby approved;
3. Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis;
4. Commitment to provide a Construction Phase Employment and Skills Plan (ESP); otherwise a payment towards such in accordance with the Council's adopted Employment, Skills and Training SPD.

And the following conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Dwelling mix restriction
4. Materials to be submitted
5. Means of enclosure - to include privacy screens
6. Rainwater goods, venting & ducting

7. Soft and hard landscaping scheme - To include details of green roofs.
8. Bat survey - To include any required mitigation prior to commencement of development.
9. Bat licence to be submitted.
10. Sustainability
11. SAP Assessment - Design stage (to be approved)
12. SAP Assessment - As built (to be approved)
13. Details of PV
14. Water efficiency requirement
15. EV charging point
16. Surface water drainage strategy
17. Construction Environmental Management Plan
18. Hours of working - Construction and demolition phase
19. No bonfires
20. Air quality assessment and mitigation - As submitted.
21. Mechanical plant (noise assessment required)
22. Noise assessment and mitigation scheme to be submitted - To take account of relationship to and existing noise generated by nearby venues.
23. Notification of new residents to nearby live music venues
24. Sound proofing measures in accordance with Building Regulations to be implemented.
25. Site security strategy
26. Contamination - Site Characterisation
27. Submission of Remediation Scheme
28. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme
29. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination
30. Land Gas
31. Construction Method Statement
32. Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
33. Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
34. Parking permits 1
35. Parking permits 2
36. Bin storage - To include measures to prevent pests and vermin access.
37. Refuse collection details
38. Delivery and servicing single unit (to be approved)
39. Written scheme of archaeological investigation

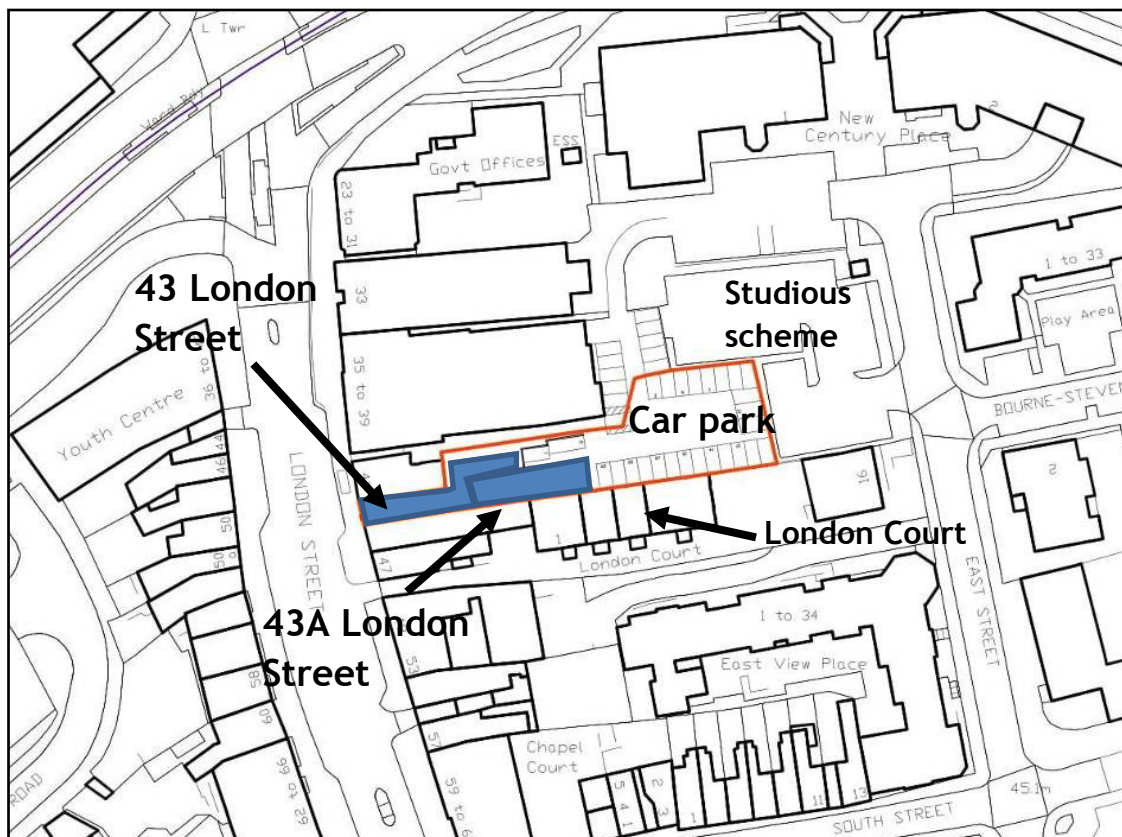
#### Informatives

1. Positive and proactive requirement
2. S.106 legal agreement relevant
3. CIL-liable
4. Terms and conditions
5. Pre-commencement conditions
6. No parking permits
7. Works affecting the Highway

- 8. Fee for conditions discharge
- 9. Building Regulations
- 10. Building Regulations Approved Document E.

## 1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises of No. 43 London Street, No. 43A London Street and a private parking area to the rear. No. 43 London Street is a narrow two-storey building fronting onto London Street. It is sandwiched between two taller properties either side, both of which are Grade II Listed. Whilst not listed, number 43 (together with Nos. 45 to 47) is designated as a Building of Townscape Merit. Number 43 was last used as a dental surgery and has been vacant since 2016.



*Figure 1 - Annotated Location plan with key features (Not to scale)*

- 1.2 To the rear, No. 43A is an uninspiring flat roof infill building, accessed from London Street via the covered passageway of Sims Court. It was formerly used as a separate office in association with the dental practice which existed at number 43, however more recently it has been used for a range of alternative purposes. 43A was built on an area originally occupied by mews housing which fronted onto Sims Court.
- 1.3 To the rear of No. 43A, the passageway of Sims Court elevates to an existing private parking area. This car park is accessed by a vehicle ramp from East Street. The car park is bounded by the flank wall of London Court to the south, the rear of 35 - 39 London Street (RISC Cafe) to the west and recently constructed Studios scheme to the east.



*Figure 2 - Aerial view from London Street (application site highlighted)*



*Figure 3 - Aerial view from East Street (application site highlighted).*

- 1.4 The immediate land to the rear of London Street consists of range of historic and modern buildings accessed via Sims Court, London Court and East Street. These consist of blocks of flats, offices, Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and community uses.
- 1.5 The application site is within the Reading Central Area but just outside of the Central Core as defined by the Local Plan. The site lies within easy walking and cycling distance of both

the town centre and railway station. It is also located within the eastern edge of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, the boundary of which runs along the centre of East Street. Public access is both attainable from East Street via the existing car park ramp from London Street along Sims Walk alleyway.

- 1.6 Members might be aware of the context of the immediately adjoining Studios Scheme which was allowed on appeal in August 2018 for 103 rooms of PBSA (ref. APP/E0345/W/17/3190317). Subsequent approval was then granted for a variation to increase this by 5 additional student rooms at ground floor level. This resulted in provision of 108 rather than 103 student rooms. Finally, a revised application 181849/FUL was approved at Planning Applications Committee for an increase in height of this building to five storeys and a total of 135 units of PBSA.
- 1.7 The consequence of this appeal being allowed and the subsequent construction of a large 5 storey building to the eastern side of the site, is that the visual setting of land to the rear of London Street, and this application site in particular, has been fundamentally altered.

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This planning application seeks permission for the partial-demolition and extension of the existing upper floor facade of 43 London Street, internal works, alongside demolition of the existing two-storey building to the rear at 43A to enable a residential-led mixed-use development comprising 48 sqm community use (Class D1) and 21 residential units together with associated services enclosures, parking and landscaping.
- 2.2 Specifically, the proposal consists of the following distinct parts:
1. **Front of the site (43 London Street)** - Partial-demolition, conversion, refurbishment and extension of 43 London Street to continue to provide D1 community use on ground floor and 3 flats (C3 use) on upper floors, and green roof gardens;
  2. **Rear of the site (43A London Street, Sims Walk and car park)** - Demolition of the existing two-storey building to the rear (43A London Street) and creation of new residential mews style block containing 18 units, bin/cycle store, and communal areas including a private courtyard.
- 2.3 The proposal has been through extensive pre-application negotiations with officers, along with engagement with Members, the Design Review Panel and local interest groups at various stages since 2018. The resultant proposals have sought to incorporate comments as appropriate and most notably respond to the changing site context as a direct result of the approval and now construction of the adjoining Studios scheme.
- 2.4 Most recently a comprehensive set of revisions were accepted and consulted upon in January 2020. For clarity these changes are summarised as follows:
- Eastern element of the scheme reduced and set back in line with façade of RISC building in order to widen gap to the student accommodation being constructed on the adjoining site.

- Lift shaft lowered to reduce height of scheme on corner and timber cladding incorporated on stair tower to reduce area of glazing and reinforce residential scale.
- Enlarged courtyard area forming new 'Sims Square' to maintain outlook from existing windows at the rear of London Court with deep built in planters around the perimeter to maintain privacy and gates to provide security.
- Bays on to Sims Square faced in frosted glass / translucent panels to maintain privacy and prevent overlooking into adjoining properties.
- Balconies repositioned and/or fitted with privacy screens to prevent possible overlooking of/from adjoining properties. Translucent glass fitted to first floor balconies facing Sims Court to provide privacy to bedrooms.
- High retaining wall on north boundary replaced by lower brick wall enclosing new terrace/garden area to lower ground floor Flat 18 and effectively expand communal garden of student accommodation.
- Terrace to upper ground floor Flat 19 enclosed by frosted glass privacy screens to prevent overlooking.
- Shallower bays on north and east façades clad in frosted glass / translucent panels to prevent overlooking of adjoining development.
- Flat 22 reconfigured as a maisonette set back from building perimeter with curved enclosure on south side to widen gap to the adjoining student accommodation and form 'rotunda' feature at top of the building.
- Roof terrace to top floor Flat 22 enclosed by frosted glazed privacy screens on perimeter to prevent overlooking of surrounding properties.
- Bays facing Sims Court remodelled to provide small terrace areas to flats on the second floor.
- Reconfigured refuse and cycle storage areas with bedroom on lower ground floor of Flat 5 omitted.

2.5 The application is being reported to Planning Applications Committee as a major category planning permission.

### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

#### 3.1 43 and 43A London Street

77/00328/00 - ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO DENTAL SURGERY FACILITIES  
GRANTED unconditionally 03 June 1977

76/00559/00 - CONSTRUCT NEW DENTAL BLOCK. Withdrawn 30 September 1977

84/TP/1046 - CHANGE OF USE FROM DENTAL SURGERY TO OFFICES  
GRANTED (Conditionally) 25 February 1985

**3.2 Adjoining site (Land at East Street)**

170019 - Erection of 4-storey building to provide 103 student accommodation units (Sui Generis), landscaping, access and ancillary works, following removal of a 49-space car park. REFUSED then ALLOWED ON APPEAL (ref. APP/E0345/W/17/3190317).

181629/NMA - Non-material amendment to application 170019 (Allowed under appeal APP/E0345/W/17/3190317) for re-configuration of consented basement arrangement and associated changes to internal layout at ground floor level  
AGREE NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENT.

181849/FUL - Erection of a part-4 part-5 storey building (plus basement) to provide 135 units of purpose-built student accommodation and associated facilities (Sui Generis), landscaping and access  
APPROVED at PAC.

**4. CONSULTATIONS**

**4.1 RBC Heritage Consultant: No objections subject to conditions. Full comments available on the public file and summarised by officers as follows:**

Retention of the façade to No. 43 London Street is considered a positive benefit. The addition of a two-storey matching brickwork extension with parapet would also be in-keeping with character of the adjoining area and Listed Buildings.

The proposed replacement mew style building to the rear of No. 43 is considered appropriate to the scale and character of the Conservation Area and would replace the existing poor-quality building on the site. There are, therefore, no objections in principle to the proposals which would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, subject to conditions.

**4.2 Thames Water: No objection.**

**4.3 RBC Transport: No objection subject to conditions following receipt of additional information by email on 02/10/2019 which consisted of a Highway Response Note including the Vehicular Swept Paths (Drawing no. TR04). Recommended conditions:**

- CO2 Construction Method Statement
- DC1 Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
- DC3 Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
- DC7 Parking permits 1
- DC8 Parking permits 2
- DC6 Bin storage
- C00 Refuse collection
- IF3 Highways
- I13 Parking Permits

Full comments available on the public file.

4.4 RBC Environmental Protection: No objections subject to conditions. Full comments available on public file and summarised by officers as follows:

Noise - A noise assessment has been submitted with the application which proposes suitable glazing and acoustic trickle vents. However, as the assessment does not clearly predict internal noise levels, identifies mechanical plant in the vicinity which was not on at the time of the assessment and has not included noise from RISC café bar as there were no events planned in on their calendar. As such, further investigation is needed to be secured as part of a noise assessment condition.

Air Quality - The air quality assessment submitted with the application concludes that the EU limit values for NO<sub>2</sub> are likely to be exceeded at the London Street façade and at ground floor level at the receptor near to the London Street façade. The assessment therefore proposes mechanical ventilation with the inlet at roof level, or the use of NO<sub>2</sub> filtration within the air intake should these be at the polluted façade. This can be secured via condition.

Contamination - Conditions are recommended to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

Refuse storage - There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste. Standard refuse and recycling details will therefore include measures to prevent pests and vermin access.

4.5 RBC Natural Environment Team: No objection subject to conditions.

*“There are no significant tree or landscape features to be harmed as a result of this application. I welcome the introduction of landscaping to the site and the inclusion of green roofs on the build. I can confirm that there are no tree/landscape objections to this planning application. If planning permission is granted we will require landscaping conditions L2a, L2b, L3 if planning permission is granted”*

Comments received following revised plans:

*“I have no objections to the proposed amendments. Please attach the following amended landscape condition if planning permission is granted: (Amended L1)”*

4.6 RBC Ecologist: Bat survey required.

*“The proposals include the demolition of one building and works to a second building which will affect the roof of the building. Images on Google Map show that the existing buildings on site may contain features suitable for use by roosting bats. There is suitable bat foraging habitat nearby as the site is close to the River Kennet (I have seen a bat flying across London Street at dusk in this location). As such, the proposals could affect roosting bats and a bat survey would need to be undertaken to assess whether or not this is the case, and a report*



*detailing the assessment would need to be submitted with the application. Further details are given below.*

*Legislation - All species of bats receive protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (the SNCO - Natural England in England).*

*Planning policy - Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document was not revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:*

*“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”*

*In this case because neither the presence or otherwise of protected species, nor the extent to which they may be affected has been established, the application would not be in accordance with the above planning policy, or other planning policy in relation to biodiversity.*

*Survey requirements - A presence / absence bat survey is normally undertaken in two stages, firstly a preliminary roost assessment, whereby the inside and outside of the building is surveyed for bats and signs of bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.*

*If bats are found or features within the building have the potential to support roosting bats and these will be affected by the proposals, further dusk emergence and or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during the bat active season (i.e. between May and the end of August/ sub optimally until mid-October) would need to be carried out. The applicant would then need to submit the results of the survey(s) along with any associated mitigation strategy prior to determination of the application.*

*Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey bats.*

*Summary - The buildings may host roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so how bats will be affected by the proposals, a bat survey will need to be carried out. The survey will need to be carried out prior to determination of the application or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been*

*provided to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process).*

4.7 RBC Archaeology: No objection subject to written scheme of archaeological investigation. Full comments available on public file.

4.8 RBC Waste Team: No objection subject to private waste collection to be secured via condition.

#### Public Consultation

4.9 4 letters of representation were received from 99 London Street, Flat 3 (1 London Court), Colin Wells and Hamilton Property Investments Ltd (owners of 4 London Court). These representations are summarised as follows:

- Proximity to the buildings on London Court will negatively impact the character of the surrounding area;
- Overbearing on the buildings on London court of which several are in residential use;
- Development will adversely affect the light to 2 and 3 London Court;
- Development would be out of place and imposing on all other properties in the area.
- The construction of this development would be disruptive.
- Overlooking issues at varying vertical angles and direct line of sight potentially afforded in to all of the rear windows of 3 London Court.
- Requirement for any planters not to block fire exit of 3 London Court ground floor Development would abut an old wall with poor DPC and potentially cause future structural issues.
- Upper ground/first/second floor would cause overlooking.
- Roof layout highlights a “trough” arrangement which would need surface water collection provision and conditions if consented.
- Hamilton Property Investments Ltd - Whilst generally welcoming the redevelopment of this site, concern over:
  - The affect on privacy of our existing residential apartments,
  - Drainage from the existing pitched roof of London Court
  - Concern that the proposed development will involve underpinning London Court, with considerable disruption to existing occupants.
  - Existence of 4 ventilation ducts on the rear elevation of 4 London Court, and can see no provision for these being incorporated into the proposals.

4.10 *Officer comments* - Matters concerning character, privacy, loss of light and possible disruption caused during construction are important material considerations which are covered in detail in the main body of the report. With regard to ventilation ducts, drainage between both roofs and privacy, officers have been made aware of an agreement being reached between the applicant and the owner of 4 London Court (Hamilton Property Investments Ltd). This confirms that the flank wall of the development is able to incorporate vertical ventilation ducts for No.4 which can extract at high level. It also confirms that the gutter at the rear of London Court already overhangs the application site, meaning access for cleaning and maintenance is currently undertaken from the applicant’s land. Section drawing LSR/032/P2 identifies that the scheme will be set back at second floor level to allow for the gutter to be retained and it will be accessible for maintenance from the new

landscaped courtyard. Details of rainwater goods and venting & ducting arrangement can be secured via a suitable worded condition covering both matters. Finally, it has been confirmed that balconies and roof terraces in the development will be enclosed by 1.8 m high frosted glass screens to prevent any overlooking of adjoining properties including the top floor flat of No4.

- 4.11 A site notice was displayed on the London Street frontage for the requisite time period and a press notice published.

## 5. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Local Planning Authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.2 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. In this case the development plan consists of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 5.4 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

### Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CC2: Sustainable design and construction

CC3: Adaptation to climate change

CC5: Waste minimisation and storage

CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development

CC7: Design and the public realm

CC8: Safeguarding amenity

CC9: Securing infrastructure

EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment

EN2: Areas of archaeological significance

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN4: Locally important heritage assets

EN5: Protection of significant views with heritage interest

EN6: New development in a historic context

EN12: Biodiversity and the green network

EN15: Air quality

EN16: Pollution and water resources

EN18: Flooding and drainage

H1: Provision of housing  
H2: Density and mix  
H3: Affordable housing  
H5: Standards for new housing  
H10: Private and communal outdoor space

TR1: Achieving the transport strategy  
TR3: Access, traffic and highway-related matters  
TR4: Cycle routes and facilities  
TR5: Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

OU1: New and existing community facilities

CR1: Definition of central reading  
CR2: Design in central reading  
CR6: Living in central reading

#### Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)  
Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (2015)  
Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013)  
Residential Conversions SPD (2013)  
Affordable Housing SPD (2013)  
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)  
Tree Strategy for Reading (June 2010)

#### Other Reading Borough Council documents

Reading Tree Strategy (2010)  
Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal Document 2007  
Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Reading Borough Council

#### Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)  
Section 66(1) of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990  
Section 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990  
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)  
Department for Transport Manual for Streets  
Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2  
Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Berkshire Authorities and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Final Report, February 2016, prepared by GL Hearn Ltd  
Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard, DCLG, 2015  
Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice (BR 209), P. Littlefair, 2011

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance of the area
- Residential Amenity
- Transport and access
- Other matters

### 6.1 Principle of development

6.1.1 It is helpful to identify the two main components of this proposal which must be considered in order to establish the principle of development. These are:

- The loss of any existing non-residential uses at either 43 and 43A London Street; and
- The principle of residential development.

6.1.2 Policy CC1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 outlines a positive and proactive approach to new development which directly reflects the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy CC1 is clear that any proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

#### *Loss of existing non-residential uses at 43 and 43A London Street*

6.1.3 43 London Street was last used as a Dental Surgery (D1 community use). The Dental Surgery has since vacated the premises and relocated to another part of the town centre. Whilst the premises remain vacant, the lawful permitted use of this building remains D1 community use.

6.1.4 Given officer concern expressed over the loss of an existing community facility at pre-application stage, this proposal now seeks to retain 48sqm of refurbished D1 community use at ground floor of 43 London Street, whilst converting the upper floors of this building to residential. Policy OU1: 'New and Existing Community Facilities' of the Local Plan 2019 is clear in its support for improved community facilities in sustainable locations.

6.1.5 For 43a London Council records highlight a 1985 permission for a change of use of this part of the site from a Dental Surgery to offices (B1). The most recent authorised use of 43A London Street was its lease to a telecommunications business (B1 use) from April 2014 to June 2018 and no permission was sought for this use. It appears this company left this space early, allowing the unauthorised use of the building as a place of worship in 2016. Information provided from Valuation Office Agency (VOA) highlights clear separation of use between number 43 and 43A, with the former described as 'Surgery and Premises' and the latter as 'Offices and Premises'. The VOA records confirm that this separate arrangement has been in place since at least 2003, which is the first record for 43A. The business rate

records for 43 also clearly establish that the dental surgery had its own office space within the building.

6.1.6 Therefore officers are satisfied that 43 and 43A London Street should be treated as separate planning units, with 43 identifiable as Class D1 community use (Dental surgery) and 43A identifiable as Class B1 (Office use).

6.1.7 The proposal is not considered to result in any harmful loss of D1 community use floorspace, as the unit has been vacant for over three years and a small element of D1 floorspace is retained and the loss of the sub-standard office use would not be contrary to Local Plan policies. Therefore, the principle of the loss of the two non-residential uses is acceptable.

*The principle of residential development.*

6.1.8 As the site is located within the Reading Central Area as defined by the Reading Local Plan, it is considered an acceptable location for residential development in accordance with the aims of Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development). The provision of new housing in this location would also align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in continuing to meet the borough's annual housing targets through suitable windfall sites. The principle of residential development on the remainder of the site is therefore accepted.

*Housing mix*

6.1.9 In terms of housing mix, Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) seeks that residential developments within the town centre area should incorporate a maximum of 40% of 1 bedroom units and a minimum of 5% of 3 bedroom units.

6.1.10 The application seeks the following housing mix:

- 9 x 1-bedroom units (42.8%) (Including studio flats)
- 10 x 2-bedroom units (47.6%)
- 2 x 3-bedroom units (9.5%)

6.1.11 Whilst marginally in excess of the maximum proportion of 1-bedroom units (42.8% compared to a maximum 40% required), the proposal provides a higher proportion of 3-bedroom units than the required minimum. Furthermore, the percentage of 1-bedroom units is composed of two distinct house types, 1-bedroom flats and single studio flats. Based on the characteristics of the site and the appropriateness for smaller units in such an arrangement, the overall dwelling mix proposed by the development is therefore considered adequately justified in accordance with the requirements of Policy CR6.

*Affordable housing*

6.1.12 Policy H3 of the Local Plan (Affordable Housing) seeks to ensure that development proposals of more than 10 dwellings should provide the equivalent of 30% on-site provision of affordable housing. The applicant has provided an Affordable Housing Financial Viability Appraisal (FVA) which demonstrates that the development cannot sustain such a contribution towards affordable housing. Policy H3 states that where proposals fall short

of the policy target as a result of viability, the Council will take an 'open-book approach' with the onus on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.

- 6.1.13 The submitted viability showed that the development carries a significant negative position as verified by the Council's Valuer but your officers are conscious of the need to sensitively explore ways to allow the scheme to either/or provide some form of contribution or achieve policy compliance over time. Whilst the Local Plan contains no specific requirement to pursue a deferred payment mechanism for these circumstances, there is a need to consider advice contained within both the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Council's RBC Affordable Housing SPD (2013). All these documents, whilst not adopted policy, are important material considerations applicable in considering the position of such schemes that are unable to meet the Council's full affordable housing requirement.
- 6.1.14 Despite the above, officer are happy to report that a minimum upfront affordable housing contribution of £100,000 has been negotiated to be paid before occupation of the 6th unit. In addition, agreement has been reached to put a deferred payment mechanism in place based on the sale values of the units. Whereby if the value of the residential element exceeds a total of £6.6m, then the Council will receive 25% of any extra proceeds in addition to the £100k capped at the cash equivalent of 30%. This will be assessed on the sale of the 18th unit. Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis. All these affordable housing measures shall be secured at individual Heads of Terms within any S106 agreement should permission be granted.
- 6.1.15 With regard to those specific circumstances/abnormal applicable to this site, the above approach negotiated with the developer is considered positive and pragmatic, and realistically constitutes the maximum that can be secured. Therefore, whilst the current proposal would not secure the full 30% on-site as required by policy, any shortfall must be weighed against other material considerations, including the wider benefits of the scheme if the proposals are to be considered acceptable.

#### *Other material considerations*

- 6.1.16 As described above, the NPPF (2019) is an important material consideration in any determination. This Framework clearly identifies that planning should promote the efficient use and redevelopment of brownfield land. The NPPF also seeks to 'boost significantly the supply of housing' and deliver a wide range of homes, of different types and tenures.
- 6.1.17 At the heart of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development are defined as economic, social and environmental. The economic role requires proposals to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The social role requires planning to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and states that it should create a high-quality built environment. The environmental role states that the natural built and historic environment should be protected and enhanced and should mitigate and adapt to climate change. In light

of the failure to comply fully with policy H3, there is a need to consider the proposal against each in turn.

- 6.1.18 The proposed development would clearly contribute to and encourage associated economic activity within the borough during the construction phase by directly sustaining jobs in the construction industry. In the longer term, future residents of 21 dwellings will undoubtedly contribute to the viability and vitality of businesses in London Street and the nearby Town Centre at a time where investment in town centres and High Streets is a council priority. Other related economic benefits include CIL contributions, the matters set out in the S106 Heads of Terms, as well as the award of new homes bonus payments to the Council. The development would therefore be expected to perform a positive economic role through its contribution to the local economy.
- 6.1.19 In terms of the social role, the provision of an adequate range of dwelling sizes and the maximum negotiated financial contribution towards affordable housing will ensure this site does as much as it can to meet the identified general and affordable housing need over the local plan period. In a part of town which has experienced a number of large office-to-residential conversions and PBSA schemes, the benefit of purpose-built well-designed dwellings will help to raise the quality of housing stock in this area. By reinstating a missing portion of the urban grain (the mews) the scheme will also provide much needed visual uplift to an area that has recognised problems with drug abuse and anti-social behaviour through better natural surveillance and activity, whilst reflecting the need to visually soften views through to the much larger Studios scheme to the rear. The development would also ensure continued provision of community facilities in an improved building in a sustainable location. The positive social roles of this development are therefore recognised.
- 6.1.20 With regard to the environmental role of this development, it is recognised that new purpose-built residential development would inherently meet an enhanced level of sustainability through compliance with the Council's enhanced energy efficiency and sustainability standards, through the efficient use of previously developed land, and the use of PV technology mounted to the roof. The introduction of significant on-site planting will help provide visual and environmental uplift to the site and the immediate area and confidently perform a far greater environmental role than it does as a car park at present.
- 6.1.21 In addition, the site's town centre location allows convenient access to sustainable modes of travel, positively reducing the needs of future residents to travel by private vehicle. This along with the reduction in on-site car parking spaces, electric charging points and the additional landscaping mentioned will help meet the Council's commitment to improving air quality for residents of the town and its obligation to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The development would therefore provide a positive environmental role when compared to the site's existing use as a car park and this is afforded considerable weight in the overall planning balance and.

#### *Principle summary*

- 6.1.22 In summary, the development represents a sustainable form of development compliant in principle with the development plan and which positively performs an economic, social and



environmental role. Overall, the principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.

## 6.2 Character and appearance of the area

6.2.1 The key Policy CC7 aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located. Policy CR2 'Design in the Centre seeks to secure appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and frontages, specifically seeking to build on the existing structure of streets and places and provide high levels of access and connectivity into the centre and to the public transport interchanges. Policy CR3 requires proposals to make a positive contribution towards the quality of public realm in the central area of Reading. With regard to specific heritage implications, Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) seeks to preserve or enhance the historic character and setting of heritage assets, whilst Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) seeks to conserve and enhance the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas.

6.1.2 The main considerations of this section based on the proposal are therefore:

- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Layout, scale and design

### *Impact on Heritage Assets*

6.2.3 A Heritage Statement and corresponding Heritage Assessment has been submitted with this planning application and considered by the Council's Heritage consultant. The significance of identified heritage assets and the impact, if any, the proposed development would have upon their significance and setting has been considered in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Local Plan.

6.2.4 Following pre-application advice provided by the Local Planning Authority and extensive engagement with both the Council's Heritage Consultant and Conservation Area Advisory Panel, the changes proposed to 43 London Street were altered from its complete demolition to its retention and redevelopment of upper floors to accommodate the necessary residential conversion and green roof.

6.2.5 The site is located within Area 1: London Street, south of the IDR and has medieval origins. Nos. 49-53 London Street are Grade II Listed. 49-53 along with 37-39 & 41 London Street are the buildings most likely affected by any works to the frontage on to London Street. No. 43 is located between these buildings and identified as buildings of Townscape Merit within the Conservation Area Appraisal (2007).

6.2.6 The proposal includes restoring the existing façade to the original brickwork, removing the white paint and making good the brickwork. As described above, the front elevation would be extended by the addition of an extra storey, in a matching style to the brickwork with a parapet, but importantly remain below the height of the adjacent Listed properties, thereby maintaining the historic subservience and relationship. The proposed roof extension to the building would also be set back from the street and include a 'green' balcony on the top level. The CAAC express support for this part of the scheme in that it makes a positive use of the space available. At lower levels, all non-original shopfront joinery and 1st floor

window would be removed and replaced with new timber framed sash style windows above a new shopfront which is considered much more sensitive and historically appropriate to the Conservation Area. This part of the scheme is not considered to harm or detract from the buildings status as being of Townscape Merit.



Figure 4 - London Street frontage, existing and proposed (Taken from Design and Access Statement)

- 6.2.7 The addition of the two-storey matching brickwork extension with parapet is in-keeping with character of the area and those identified Listed Buildings adjoining. Therefore, the retention and restoration of the façade to No. 43 London Street and roof extension is recognised as being a positive benefit reinforcing the historic significance and evolution of the building and immediate area.
- 6.2.8 In considering the impact of development to the rear of No.43, the importance and weight given to the significance of local heritage assets (in this case views into and out of the site from the east) has altered quite significantly since the approval at appeal and the subsequent construction of the Studios scheme.
- 6.2.9 The existing poor-quality infill building at 43A and the associated car park area would be replaced with a new residential infill in a linear Mews style. This is acknowledged to continue the historic pattern of houses found in Sims Court and re-introduce a style of dwelling largely cleared during the last century in favour of car parking or lower density detached forms of development.
- 6.2.10 The proposed scheme effectively reinstates built form and the urban grain into Sim’s Court where it once existed, albeit in a contemporary format. Whilst at a density commensurate with the inner urban location and form, the reinstatement of mews style housing is an entirely appropriate and original design response to an historically constrained back street site. This approach also presents the Council with a valuable opportunity to re-purpose an existing car park (which may otherwise have remained heavily compromised by the approved student accommodation) for reversion to much needed housing.
- 6.2.11 The proposals are recognised as providing significant public and heritage benefits by considerably enhancing the site, the setting of listed and locally listed buildings and the Conservation Area through the creating a more ‘traditional’ and more domestic visual

termination than the much larger and intuitional Studios scheme when approaching east along Sims Walk from London Street.

- 6.2.12 By replacing an existing poor-quality building (43A) and part of the existing car park to the rear, the proposed Mews building provides a repurposed sense of place and in accordance with the supporting text of the Local Plan, respects the heritage significance of its surroundings - namely the scale and character of the Conservation Area. The CAAC are supportive of the principle and appearance of the mews subject to the further materials detailing as part of specific planning conditions and likewise no objection has been raised by the Council's Heritage consultant.
- 6.2.13 Finally, in identifying whether there is any harm to key views within the Conservation Area, it is necessary to define the extent to which public views are attainable through, within or towards the site. The Conservation Area Appraisal shows the two relevant 'key views' - north along London Street and South along London Street. The only other view (not listed) is from East Street looking west towards the recently constructed Studios scheme. Having looked at such views carefully, Officers do not consider this to be a particular 'key view' given its limited extent and heavy influence by large commercial scale buildings, including the constructed Studios scheme, which almost entirely obscures the application site from the west. The only presence this proposal has from any recognised 'key view' is the part facing London Street, which Officers and consultees have widely accepted as being an enhancement over the present situation.
- 6.2.14 In conclusion, both elements of this scheme at 43 & 43A London Street site will preserve the setting of Listed Buildings to the London Street frontage and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. The Council has therefore satisfactorily discharged its duties under S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposed scheme is consistent with the urban design and heritage policies of the NPPF and Local Plan.

#### *Layout, scale and design*

- 6.2.15 The overall approach to the design of this scheme has heavily influenced by officer, design review and local interest group engagement at pre-app stage through 2018 and 2019 and was required to evolve to the changing context as a result of the allowed appeal at the Studios scheme.
- 6.2.16 As discussed in the above section, the overall mews layout is consistent with the existing and historic pattern of development to the rear of London Street. In its simple form, it represents a new urban block holding the southern edge of the site along Sims Walk. It adjoins the existing largely blank façade of London Court to the south, allowing the new dwellings to have front garden/terrace areas facing north. These will be enclosed by stepped brick walls with the front of the mews housing having projecting bays, and a recessed glazed stairwell.



*Figure 5 - Sketch view showing roofline and eastern end of the scheme (Taken from Design and Access Statement) Note - Lift core amended see fig 3.*

6.2.17 In terms of scale, this part of the proposal remains subservient to the more traditional pitched roof line of London Court to the south, increasing in height where appropriate to do so in design terms, particularly where the site adjoins the new Studios scheme. The principle and design of a continuous building to the south was considered by the Design Review Panel to perform well, along with the now altered easternmost section which would successfully terminate views along the mews before the constructed Studios scheme. The rhythm created by the linear mews was considered by the DRP to be a positive aspect of this scheme (see proposed elevations).



*Figure 6 - View up Sims Court eastwards (existing photo and proposed sketch) taken from Design and Access Statement*

6.2.18 Of note is the taller eastern terminating part of the mews responding to the enlarged Studios scheme. This allowed the central part of the scheme to be effectively reduced in scale allowing a break to be provided between the eastern and western sections of the mews to form a usable and attractive courtyard (Sims Court). This allows occupants in opposing flats at the centre of the scheme greater access to natural light and those few existing north facing windows to the side elevation of London Court to be successfully accommodated into this proposal.



*Figure 6 - Existing windows at rear of London Court facing car park*



*Figure 7 - Proposed sketch view of north (rear) elevation of London Court and new 'Sims Square'*

- 6.2.19 The usable balconies and courtyards provide a good level of amenity for the style of housing proposed. The chamfered bays provide welcomed rhythm to the design allowing more access to daylight than say a more traditional mews arrangement (as exists opposite at the RISC offices), although obscure glazing is required in places to maintain acceptable levels of privacy. This will be discussed later in the report.
- 6.2.20 The upper floor of the eastern-most part of the scheme will accommodate a maisonette set back from building perimeter. This would have a distinctive curved enclosure on south side to widen the gap to the Studios scheme forming a 'rotunda' feature at top of the building. This takes its inspiration from the existing rotunda style feature which exists at East View Place to the southeast of the site. This nearby building can be seen in the top corner of Fig 5, whilst the rotunda's overall design is appreciated from an aerial view to the south in Fig 15. The proposed material palette would include a mixture of brickwork, render and timber cladding to reflect the traditional detailing of the surrounding buildings in Sims Court, yet in a contemporary style which meets the Local Plan strategy for Central Reading in creating a 'distinctive' high quality environment. Such specific details are appropriate to secured via condition.
- 6.2.21 The roof garden at 43 London Street and the landscaped terraces to the northern and eastern elevation of the scheme (139m<sup>2</sup> in total) successfully replicates the character already introduced by the highly valued communal roof garden of the RISC building. Replicating this approach through the development where possible, allows the scheme to transform an area dominated by hard surfacing. The scheme's design approach therefore reinforces the positive natural and landscaped elements which already exist in proximity to the site.
- 6.2.22 In summary, the overall design approach to the building's features and materiality is considered to successfully take influences from the existing urban grain of the area, whilst allowing a distinctive building to be brought forward which will undoubtedly add to local interest, draw out positive existing natural features and respect the area's heritage. The layout, scale and design of the proposal is therefore considered acceptable subject to relevant conditions.

#### *Sustainability/energy*

- 6.2.23 A Sustainability Statement and BREEAM pre-assessment estimator has been submitted in support of this application. These demonstrate that the minimum requirements for a BREEAM Very Good rating for both building types can be met. The principles of Reading Borough Council's sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) can also be met by the higher energy and water efficient requirements proposed within the overall design, thereby achieving this overall BREEAM Very Good rating. Of note is the intention to make use of on-site efficient energy generation using a Photovoltaic (PV) array on the uppermost south facing roof slope of the new-build portion of the development. Full details of this and green roofs will be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions. In addition, the proposed development is also required to comply with the current Building Regulations Approved Document Part L1A, which is managed independent of the planning system.
- 6.2.24 All new build homes need to comply with the higher water efficiency standards required by the updated Building Regulations of 110 litres per person per day. The proposal specifically includes water efficient Dual flush WCs, showers with efficient flow rates and garden spaces

and incidental landscaping that will not require permanent irrigation systems or to be irrigated using treated rainwater. This approach to water resource complies with Policy H5 of the Local Plan and will be secured via relevant conditions to ensure the proposal fulfils wider updated sustainability obligations as required by Policy CC2, CC3 and EN16.

### *Landscape and ecology*

6.2.25 The proposal is accompanied by an ambitious Landscape Strategy. The proposal would substantially enhance the level of greenery simply through planting along Sims Court and adjacent to the eastern site boundary via a series of landscaped terraces. Of note is the creation of a new c. 50 sqm inner courtyard garden where undesirably at present vehicles park directly adjacent to bedroom windows. This would provide an additional gated amenity space for residents and an opportunity for meaningful landscaping proven to be effective in similar relationships and would be in addition to the landscaping opportunity provided for by the numerous private balconies and terraces included within the scheme. In addition to the above, green and brown roof areas (totalling 140sqm) is proposed at roof level in order to provide increased biodiversity and rainwater retention. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has considered the proposal and raises no objections subject to standard landscape conditions being attached.

6.2.26 The Council's Ecologist has considered the proposals and notes that demolition is involved of structures which contain features suitable for use by roosting bats. Government guidance makes it clear the need for the presence or otherwise of protected species and the impact upon them to be established before the planning permission is granted. Covering such matters via planning condition after the grant of consent should only be explored in exceptional circumstances. The surveys would not be able to be carried out until May 2020 at the earliest (with possible implications for the delivery of the site), but suitably worded conditions could be used to prevent pre-commencement until such surveys (and mitigation) is completed, on this occasion.

6.2.27 Finally, the provision of a landscaped courtyard, alongside significant greening of the site and its perimeter is considered to substantially enhance the biodiversity and ecology value of the site given its current condition as a car park without any form of natural greenery.

### 6.3 Residential amenity

6.3.1 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) in the Local Plan sets out the various ways in which amenity could be negatively affected and a summary of the various impacts, with reference to the policy, are set out below.

#### *Privacy and overlooking*

6.3.2 Whilst the overall design of the development has been informed by pre-application, design review and stakeholder engagement, including that of adjoining landowners, there is a need to carefully consider the impact this development would have on both neighbouring occupiers in terms of privacy and overlooking, but also the impact that users of surrounding buildings will have upon the future occupant of this development.

6.3.3 The mews typology itself emerged through pre-application discussions as a way of maximising the limited separation between existing buildings and the scheme. The innovative use of

chamfered windows to ensure no direct overlooking has heavily informed the overall external appearance of the building, so too has the use of obscure screened on parts of the terraces.

#### RISC offices

- 6.3.4 Directly opposite the development along Sims Walk is the RISC offices. These are located within an historic timber clad part of the original mews. The case officer has visited the RISC offices and viewed the site from a number of available first and second floor windows. Whilst the internal arrangement and use of RISC offices means that many windows are either obstructed internally or unable to be approached because of office furniture, the adjoining application site would undoubtedly be visible when looking from these windows opposite. Those views attainable would not be any more harmful than views already attainable to 43A, the upstairs windows of 43, or a across mews arrangement of comparative proximity.



*Figure 9 - View west along Sims Court (RISC offices to the right)*

- 6.3.5 Whilst the RISC office is not considered to pose any harm to future occupants of this development, the oblique angled views created by the chamfered bays, location of the habitable living spaces, and the occupants discretion to use any internal screening, allows the amenity of future occupant of the development to be protected in the event the RISC offices be converted to residential in future. The design of the development takes into account any views attainable from this neighbouring building, whilst 5m - 5.5m physical separation exists, a separation of 7-8m would be attained through the use of chamfered bays. Figure 10 below shows a comparative angle and distance to the upper floor of 43A which occupies a similar set back to the proposed scheme.





*Figure 10 - View west from the second-floor window of RISC offices along Sims Walk*



*Figure 11 - View east from the second-floor window of RISC offices along Sims Walk*

## London Court

- 6.3.6 London Court is a former industrial building located to the southern boundary of the site. It was most recently converted into flats from offices using the prior approval process. All London Court flats have south facing entrances and windows providing access to primary levels of natural light, unless rooflights are provided on upper floors. The conversion of this building has resulted in a number of substandard internal arrangements (which were unable to be controlled by Officers) which has had design implications for the current proposed development.
- 6.3.7 The building contains 4 windows on the north elevation at various heights serving three separate flats. The odd arrangements and size of these windows are as a consequent of the physical limitations of the subdivision and the buildings historic non-residential use. The three properties in London Court that have windows facing north onto the car park were made available to the case officer to inspect internally



*Figure 12 - South elevation of London Court*



*Figure 13 - Existing windows to the rear elevation of London Court*

- 6.3.8 All three properties are compromised in variety of ways. The lowest of the four windows (see figure 13) serves a bedroom (window 1). Currently this window has no outlook or ability to be opened without a safety issue for the occupants. Because of its location directly next to the parking area, it provides very limited amenity for the occupant during daylight hours. The development would result in window 1 being located to the centre of Sims Square (see Figure 7). This new courtyard area would create a landscaped and secured area directly outside of this (and other windows), thereby fundamentally improving the ability of this window to not only provide natural light, but ventilation and outlook too.
- 6.3.9 The two small windows directly above this (windows 2 and 3) are unusually located low down at floor level within the flats that they serve. Window 2 serves the northern side of an open plan living/kitchen area and window 3 a bedroom. When standing in the living room, a downward north facing view of the car park is possible from window 2. Both windows have very limited amenity value, except to provide natural ventilation. The proposed development would improve this function by the removal of the car park and by providing more natural light and improved outlook.
- 6.3.10 Finally, window 4 is much larger, and like the others appears to be permanently obscured internally to prevent any views in or out. This window is located directly next to the pedestrian rear entrance of the former office use in 43A (See Fig 12 above). The development would result in a much more domestic and appropriate relationship between window 4 and surrounding uses, thereby removing the serious safety issues posed by the existing arrangement. Whilst the internal configuration of this flat is unknown, like window 1 the occupier will have a much more pleasant outlook and the ability to begin using this window for ventilation and outlook within the relative safety of the newly created Sims Court should they so wish.

## The Studios scheme

- 6.3.11 The Studios scheme is a five storeys PBSA scheme approved via appeal and at committee. The design of this proposal has been revised a number of times to take into account the existence and proximity of this neighbouring scheme. Of note is a greater setback secured between the northern part of the eastern block and the southern elevation of this student block.
- 6.3.12 At lower levels, terracing of amenity space and a gradual set back allows a consistent distance to be maintained between these buildings, replicating that which would exist between the RISC office and the part of the scheme opposite along Sims Court (the more traditional mews arrangement). This separation will continue around the eastern side of the scheme between the Studios scheme to the south to the east side of London Court.
- 6.3.13 The scale of the western end of the development has been increased to reflect the scale and particular use of the adjoining student block. This in turn allows a meaningful courtyard to be created in the centre of the site. Despite a dense urban layout, residents are considered to have high level of privacy maintained by to chamfered bays and angled windows, allowing only acute angles of visibility to be gained from window to window.

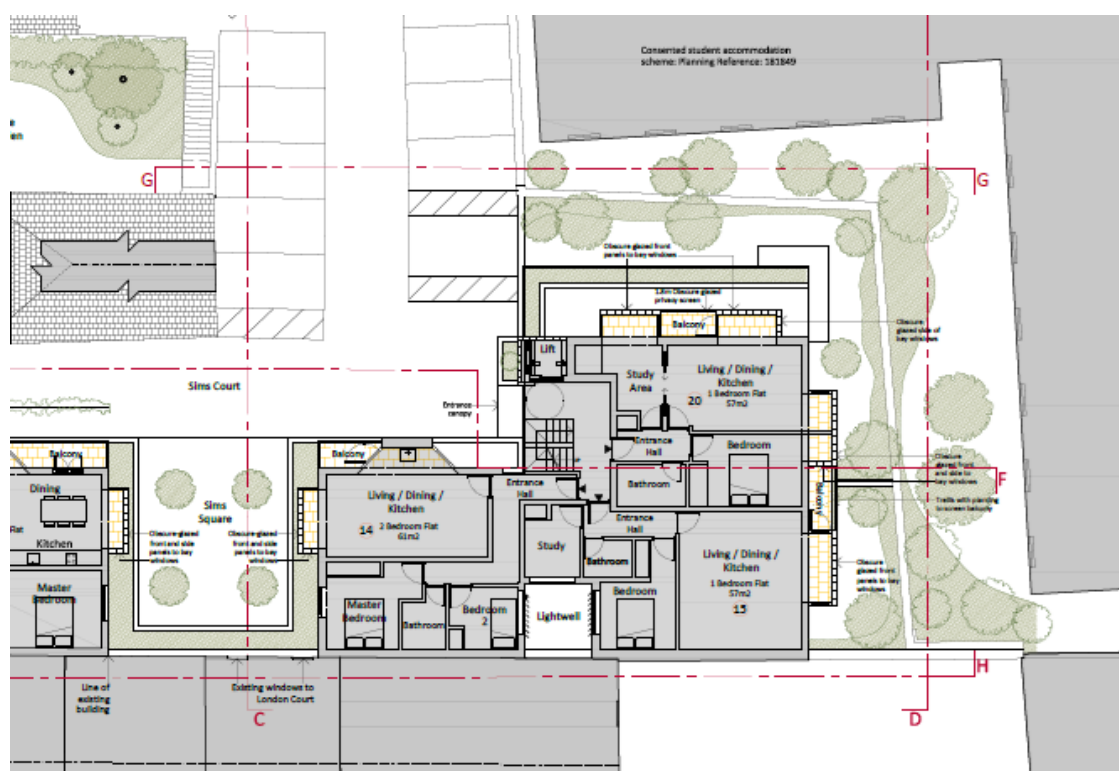


Figure 14 - Relationship to Studios Scheme (not to scale)

- 6.3.14 Views are attainable into the private rear courtyard of ground floor flats and those at upper ground floor level to the north and eastern elevations. Likewise, views in reverse are attainable from future occupants into the communal garden created for the student accommodation. Obscured glazed bay windows prevent views into habitable rooms from the building opposite.



*Figure 15 - Aerial illustration of eastern part of the scheme when viewed from the south.*

#### *Noise and disturbance*

- 6.3.15 The Council's Environmental Protection Team have considered a noise assessment submitted with the application. This assessment proposes the use of suitable glazing and acoustic trickle vents. However, as identified in the consultee comments section, this assessment does not clearly predict internal noise levels, identifies mechanical plant in the vicinity which was not in operation at the time of the assessment, and most importantly, not included noise from RISC café/bar as there were no events planned in on their calendar.
- 6.3.16 The RISC café/bar is a popular community-based café and bar next door to the site which frequently puts on live music, DJ sets, film screening and community events. As a charity, RISC is an important part of the town's cultural, ethical and environmental movement and the café/bar a popular part of the night time economy. As a recognised community facility and entertainment venue of considerable value, there is a distinct need to ensure that future occupiers of this development are able to suitably co-exist.
- 6.3.17 In this regard, the application has triggered the 'Agent of change' principle. This principle is a successful means of protecting such venues from unnecessary closure. Local authorities have traditionally been required to act upon complaints from residents in new developments over noise levels from established music venues in the area in which they are located. Along with the 'office to residential' prior approval process, this has been cited as a major factor across the country in the large numbers number of venue closures in recent years.
- 6.3.18 The principle holds that the person or business responsible for the change must also be responsible for managing the impact of the change. This would mean that the developer of this new residential development near the existing RISC venue is required to include appropriate noise attenuation measures for future occupants to manage the existing noise

generated from that venue. This position is held irrespective of how long the 'nuisance' has existed, historic instances of the same noise being a nuisance, or whether someone has moved into the vicinity of the noise in full knowledge of it.

- 6.3.19 In light of the above, it is particularly important that the developer undertake further investigation into this nearby use, understand how often events are held and how loud they are. This would allow the LPA to ensure that any relevant noise attenuation measures are able to be put in place prior to occupation and maintained thereafter. In addition, a condition will make it the responsibility of the landowner to make prospective occupiers aware of the current relationship to this nearby venue in order to prevent noise complaints from resulting in the imposition of overly restrictive restrictions on the RISC venue.

#### *Daylight, sunlight*

- 6.3.20 The application was accompanied by two reports considering the impact of the proposed development and the daylight and sunlight provision to the new flats. The Council commissioned the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to evaluate these reports. It should be noted, the BRE's assessment of these reports was based upon the initial proposals, before the revisions listed in paragraph 2.4 were received. The consequence is that the BRE have made a detailed assessment of a much 'less desirable' and larger version of the scheme than assessed in this report.
- 6.3.21 The primary document used to consider daylight and sunlight is BRE Report BR 209 '*Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight, a guide to good practice*'. This guidance is advisory in nature and is intended to assist with good design and the BRE recognise that there is no formal requirement to comply with the advice it contains.
- 6.3.22 In first considering the loss of daylight to existing properties, those assessed would be well within the guidelines in the BRE Report for all of the existing properties considered except those three flats served by window 1 - 4 in the north elevation of London Court. These windows would have losses outside the guidelines in the BRE Report. As discussed already in this report, London Court stands on the site boundary and unusually these windows are dependent on daylight across the application site to the north. If the development were to have the same relationship with the boundary as London Court, the windows would receive no light at all. Furthermore, given the units were created via an office-to-residential conversion, this process did not allow for any assessment of daylight to future occupant to be considered by the Council. It is therefore reasonable to apply some flexibility to any loss, provided the rooms are left with an acceptable level of daylight. One of these windows would retain levels not far below the standard recommended by the BRE. The other three are more typical of windows which already experience substantial levels of obstruction from other buildings. The BRE referred to the fact that significant changes in the design would be needed to reduce the impact of the development on these properties.
- 6.3.23 Changes sought by your officer to improve this situation were the enlargement of the courtyard area forming the new 'Sims Square' to maintain comparable levels of daylight and outlook from existing rear London Court. At ground level within the square, where vehicles currently park directly up against this wall, blocking light and outlook (see Fig 13), a new landscaped courtyard would now exist, maintaining privacy and gates providing security (Fig

7 and 16). Fig 16 below shows the revisions made to improve the situation of these windows since the BRE comments made above.

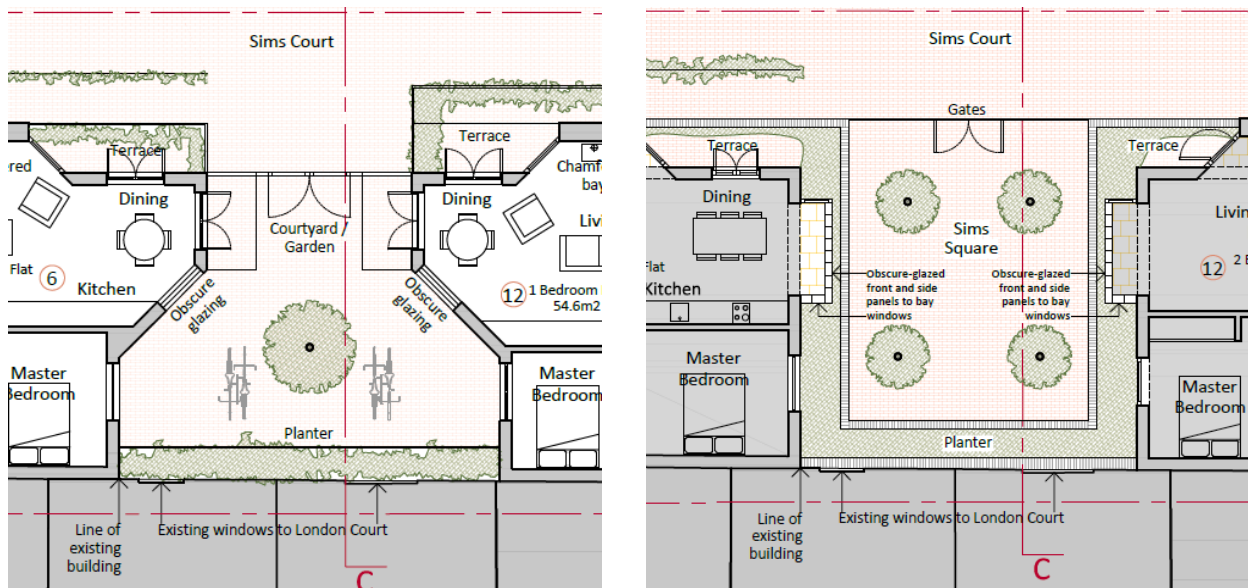


Figure 16 - Originally submitted Sims square configuration (Left) and revised Sims square configuration now proposed (Right) Not to scale.

6.3.24 The BRE also made the important observation that both of the flats at 3 London Court are currently listed online as serviced apartments. This being the case, they would be occupied for short periods of time rather than as a permanent place of residence. Whilst any subsequent change of use between serviced apartment and normal use as dwelling is unable to be controlled by the prior approval process which has occurred, officers have taken a more flexible view of daylight and sunlight to these windows.

6.3.25 The BRE noted that the consented Studios scheme adjoining the site to the east was not included in the loss of light report, but calculation data were provided on request. As this scheme is not yet constructed, let alone occupied, the BRE considered it reasonable to consider retained daylight and sunlight rather than loss, as occupants will not have the opportunity to become accustomed to the current levels. Furthermore, changeover in students each academic year would have the same effect meaning the amount of daylight they retain would be more important than any degree of change. The BRE note that the student rooms would already all be very poorly daylit due to their own design and be well below the recommended minimum. Below the top floor, the proposed development would reduce this substantially more. The rooms on all of the floors except the lowest would retain enough sunlight or would lose a small amount which would be within the BRE guidelines. 10 rooms on the lowest floor would retain an amount of sunlight below the recommended levels. Similarly, the garden would already be poorly sunlit on 21 March and would become worse. In summer it would be better sunlit, and the proposed development is considered to have very little impact.

6.3.26 Whilst a level of disagreement existed between the BRE and the developer's consultant's that the student accommodation would not have a reasonable expectation of daylight due to the poor daylighting afforded by its own design, calculations do suggest that the impact of the proposed development would be reasonable if the scheme matched the height and

dimensions of its neighbours. Like with London Court, BRE expressed the view that significant changes to the design would be needed to reduce the identified impact on the adjoining Studios Scheme. In this regard and as discussed, accepted revisions saw the north-eastern element of the scheme reduced and set back further south in line with façade of RISC building along the mews in order to widen gap to the Studios Scheme and the lift shaft lowered to reduce scheme on the (Fig 17 below).

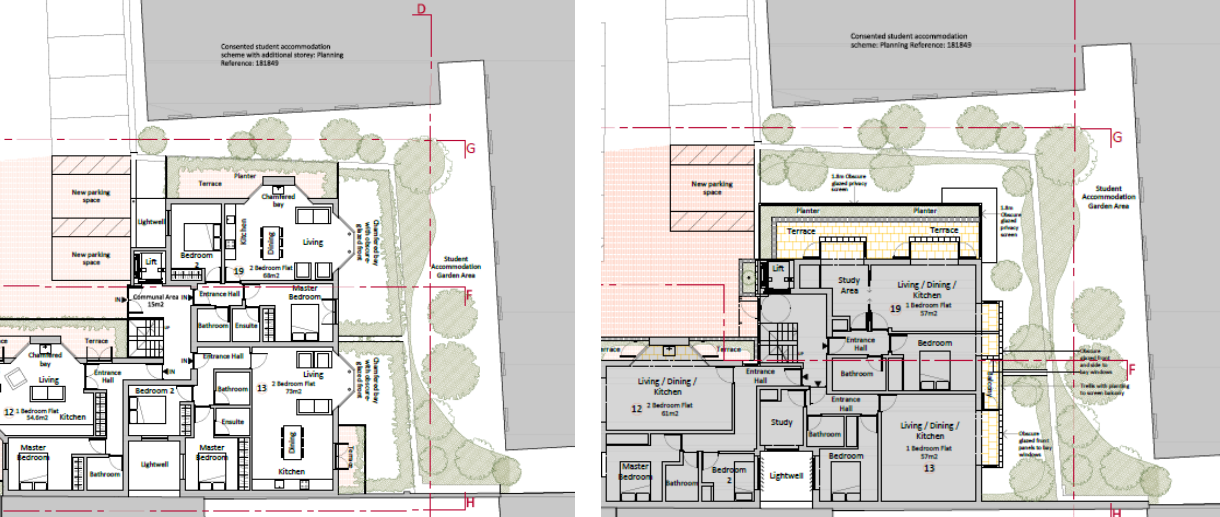


Figure 17 - Originally submitted ‘Studios relationship’ (Left) and revised relationship now proposed (Right) Not to scale.

6.3.27 Another revision secured by officers was the lowering of the existing retaining wall to the north and eastern boundary with the Studios scheme. Not only does this allow greater level of light penetration to lower levels it acts in an equally positive manner for the occupants of the Studios scheme living too.

6.3.28 In considering daylight and sunlight provision to the development itself. Five rooms in the proposed development (of 37 in total) would be poorly daylit; three bedrooms, one study and one study/bedroom (treated as a study). One of these, a bedroom is so poorly lit as to be essentially non-daylit. These rooms all face onto lightwells which present a significant constraint to daylight. One such room, labelled a study, is not considered a habitable room given its internal size. Officers note that notwithstanding the primary purpose of bedrooms for sleeping, those rooms affected would not be the only or primary bedroom serving each flat. Occupants would continue to benefit from generous internal spaces and access to private outside amenity space. Regarding daylight to those other rooms without the constraint of lightwells, the BRE consider the level of sunlight to be reasonable.

6.3.29 The BRE recognise that the development has significant constraints on sunlight provision due to the presence of another building right on the southern boundary to the site. Given these constraints, the amount of sunlight received by the living rooms could be considered reasonable in the circumstances.

6.3.30 Therefore, in summary, the proposed development has been subject to a detailed assessment of daylight and sunlight impacts by officers and the BRE and further improvements to the scheme secured as a consequence. Whilst recognising there are rooms



within the development that would benefit from very little light, the proposed layout, scale and design is considered to ensure that the majority of future occupants can expect a reasonable level of daylight in such constrained circumstances. Furthermore, any impacts on adjoining buildings are considered within accepted guidelines.

#### *Internal space*

6.3.31 Policy H4 (Standards for New Housing) seeks to ensure that sufficient internal space is provided within units to maintain a good quality of life for residents of the Borough. However, Policy H4 only requires housing built outside the Central Area to comply with the Department for Communities and Local Government - Technical housing standards - 'nationally described space standards'. Nonetheless, this development provides internal space compliant with the 'nationally-described space standard. Furthermore, the layout, room combination and availability of multi-use study rooms within the one-bedroom units provide additional internal space for the use of occupants. In order to ensure the unit mix does not change later should be permission be granted, it is considered necessary and reasonable to impose a condition securing the dwelling mix and number of bedrooms.

#### *Private and communal amenity space*

6.3.32 Policy H10 'Private and Communal Outdoor Space' seeks that proposals for residential development are provided with small but adequately usable private or communal amenity space in keeping with the character of similar spaces in the surrounding area. The immediate area is not characterised by low density development or private gardens. As such the development is recognised as having the opportunity to create a distinct sense of place through private landscaped terraces, courtyards and roof gardens. This replicates the character already instilled by the widely supported approach taken by the communal RISC roof garden. Whilst overlooked to varying degrees each property would benefit from either a private enclosed terrace (ground floor and upper ground floor), to more substantial balconies (to first-floor), whilst upper floors would have projecting balconies built into the bay windows columns. The larger family size units are located to the lower ground floor eastern elevation and benefit from private garden terraces at the same level as the adjacent student communal garden on the opposite side of the existing retaining wall. Above them smaller terraces serve flats at upper floors.

6.3.33 In terms of communal space, the new inner courtyard garden (circa 50 sqm), will be a gated amenity space exclusively for residents in addition to private projecting balconies and terraces provided for some residents. Whilst accepting the inner urban location and the fact that virtually all locations to the rear of London Street are overlooking each other to some extent, the proposed approach to amenity space provision is considered proportionality generous and supportive of comfortable urban living. The character generated by these amenity spaces is positively at odds with that set by the more aggressive office-to-residential conversions and the Studios scheme in the area. Officer do not consider it appropriate that this unplanned higher density living should stifle this site's approach to private landscaped amenity space provision. The scheme is therefore considered to be consistent with the aims of H10 of the Local Plan.

### *Deliveries, servicing and construction phase*

6.3.34 Whilst residential properties in the vicinity may notice an increase in activity at the site through comings and goings, there is no indication that these impacts would be severe enough to have a significant detrimental impact on residential amenity given the existing character of the area.

6.3.35 Full details of the construction phase along with matter such as dust management will be secured through a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan condition (CEMP) to protect nearby residents. The following matters are also appropriate to manage via condition:

- Hours of Working - construction and demolition phase
- Bonfires
- Bin storage - rats
- Details of bin stores'

### *Crime prevention and design*

6.3.36 In the absence of any comments from the Crime Prevention Design Adviser (CPDA), Secured by Design (SBD) principles can be secured through a condition securing a Security Strategy to this agreed standard. Any recommendations received by the CPDA can be discussed in the Update Report.

## 6.4 Transport and access

6.4.1 The Council's Transport Team has looked carefully at this proposal and provided two rounds of consultation comments following the receipt of a Highway Response Note and Vehicular Swept Path drawings.

6.4.2 Vehicular access to the site is gained via East Street Side which runs along the east of the site. This would not change, continuing to allow access to other adjoining units and those existing parking spaces to the north which fall outside of the application site area. The application site currently encompasses in the region of 22 parking spaces located at the rear of the property. The proposals indicate that the development would result in a loss of all parking on the site, aside from a disabled parking bay retained at upper ground floor level.

### *Parking provision*

6.4.3 The site is located within the Zone 2 (the primary core area) but is on the very periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of the town. The site is within 250m of the Oracle shopping centre and multi-storey car park and within 500m of Broad Street with a range of shops and community services. London Street and the surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. A residents' parking scheme is in operation in East Street and within the surrounding residential roads.

6.4.4 In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per 1/2 bedroom residential unit and 1.5 spaces per 3 bedroom residential unit. The Transport Statement indicates that the development would be promoted as car free aside from a disabled parking bay. This provision

falls short of the Council's current standards, however as the site is located in close proximity to the town centre, and the need to actively improve air quality and mitigate against climate change, this reduced provision is considered entirely acceptable given the inner urban location and excellent provision of alternative means of transport.

- 6.4.5 As is standard practice, the Council would ensure that the future residents of the properties would not be entitled to apply for a residents parking permit for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. This would be implemented via two specifically worded planning conditions.
- 6.4.6 The Council's Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 - 2026 and new Local Plan includes policies for investing in new infrastructure. This includes a network of publicly available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public transport. Policy TR5 specifically states that "*All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points*". Whilst the development only provides a disabled parking space, the applicant is willing to provide EVC point for the new parking space to be secured by condition.
- 6.4.7 The proposals include 15 secure and sheltered cycle parking spaces located at lower ground level accessed via ramp. This facility is supported and deemed acceptable in meeting the Local Plan requirements in this regard.

#### *Deliveries, servicing and refuse collection*

- 6.4.8 The required refuse and recycling facilities are located on the lower ground floor level accessed via a ramp. Refuse and recycling for the commercial unit is located within a separate store. However, the Council's Waste and Recycling Team have advised that the refuse vehicles would not collect the bins from the proposed bin storage area as the walking distance is too far. The bins would need to be presented on London Street by the loading bay in front of the bus stop and removed from public highway after collection.
- 6.4.9 As bins left on the footway pose a hazard for blind or partially sighted people and may prevent wheelchair and pushchairs users from getting past, Transport Officers are not able to support refuse being collected from this location. The applicant has offered for refuse collection to be undertaken by a management company which will wheel the bins from the storage area to the existing bin location on collection day and then take the empty bins back to the storage area after collection. In order to prevent bins obstructing the footway for extended periods of time, the applicant is willing to employ a private refuse contractor to undertake refuse / recycling collection. This is the preferred option supported by the Council Transport and Council's Waste and Recycling Team and the specific details of which can be secure via a standard refuse and recycling condition.
- 6.4.10 The applicant has indicated that all deliveries will take place from the loading bay directly opposite the site on London Street. However, it is likely that supermarket /small parcel deliveries will aim to get as close as possible to the entrance of the residential flats. The applicant has stated that it would be possible for a delivery van to manoeuvre within the

parking area with the removal of one parking bay. This has been adequately shown via swept path plot in Appendix B of the submitted Highway Response Note.

6.4.11 There is existing public pedestrian access to the site, mainly from East Street. The access via Sims Walk from London Street is lockable but is generally left for open access and occupiers of this site have right of access with the owner of this gate. The intention is to retain the current arrangement as the alleyway from London Street is used by RISC staff and also for access to the rear buildings of this centre. Providing this access along a more formalised and secure route is also considered to provide an overall amenity benefit and will not reduce or affect existing levels of public access.

## 6.5 Other matters:

### *Flooding*

6.5.1 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a low risk of flooding. The site currently comprises of hardstanding and as such the available approach to surface water management can be controlled to ensure that disposal is managed into the existing sewer network. It is also recognised that the provision of green/brown roofs will also increase water retention capacity on-site, providing an element of attenuation prior to discharge. The surface water drainage regime for the site can be controlled through the use of permeable hard surfacing materials, and drainage details secure via conditions. In light of the above Policy EN18 of the Local Plan is fully complied with.

### *Planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy*

6.5.2 In addition to the affordable housing contribution and deferred payment mechanism secure by your officers, the proposal would be liable for CIL. The exact amount will be reported by officers in the PAC Update Paper.

6.5.3 A construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan would be secured which identifies and promotes employment opportunities generated by the proposed development, or other developments within Reading, for the construction phase of the proposed development. Sometimes this requires a payment to Reading UK CiC, the Council's partner, to prepare the plan usually payable at least 1 month prior to implementation and index linked from the date of issue of planning permission. As such, the S106 will secure this in a flexible manner covering both options.

### *Equality Act*

6.5.4 In determining this application, the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

## 7. CONCLUSION

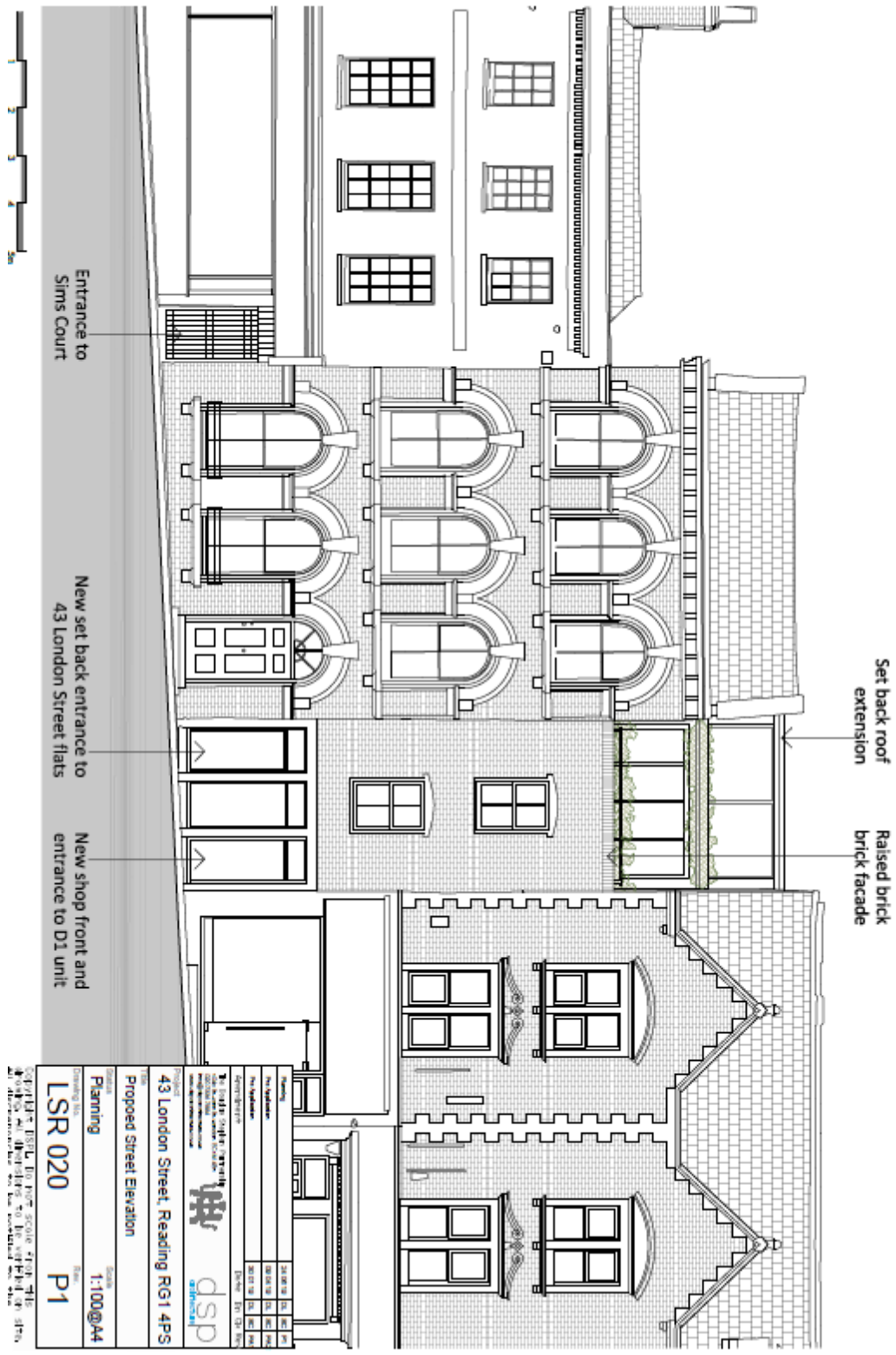
- 7.1 This proposal is not considered to result in the harmful loss of any existing use within either 43 or 43A London Street and is considered an acceptable location for new residential development. Whilst not significant, the provision of 21 flats as a windfall site would contribute towards the borough's annual housing targets. Based on the characteristics of the site, the overall dwelling mix proposed by the development is considered adequately justified in accordance with the requirements of the local plan. However, it is apparent that the current proposal would not secure the full 30% on-site as required, and therefore this shortfall must be weighed against other material considerations, including the wider benefits of the scheme.
- 7.2 In terms of 'other material considerations', the proposal would as a minimum, be expected to perform a positive economic role. However, uniquely, it would perform an important social role by reinstating a missing portion of the historic urban grain of the area (the mews) and provide much needed visual uplift to a car park which has recognised problems with drug abuse and anti-social behaviour. Finally, through the efficient use of previously developed land, significant on-site planting, creation of a new visually pleasing courtyard and the use of PV technology mounted to the roof, the proposal a much needed visual and environmental uplift to the site and perform a far greater environmental role than it does as a car park.
- 7.3 In considering the heritage implications, both elements of this scheme at 43 & 43A London Street site are recognised to preserve the setting of Listed Buildings and enhance the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. The overall design approach is considered distinctive and pleasing, adding to local interest, whilst softening views from within the historic alleyway to the Studios scheme. There are less than desirable aspects to the proposal, notably the fact that a number of rooms within the proposal will not benefit from the levels of daylight one would ideally expect, however, such relationships are not unusual and are reflective of the site's inner urban location.
- 7.4 Adequate planning conditions and implementation of agreed details can ensure transport, environmental protection and drainage matters can be adequately dealt with, whilst CIL liability and the planning obligations under the S106 to secure some affordable housing contribution are considered satisfactory outcomes.
- 7.5 In concluding what is a complex and finely balanced case, the identified social, heritage and environmental benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh, albeit marginally, the shortfall in affordable housing and the identified less than ideal relationships to certain nearby buildings. The application is therefore, on balance, recommended to PAC for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions listed above.

**Case officer:** Brian Conlon

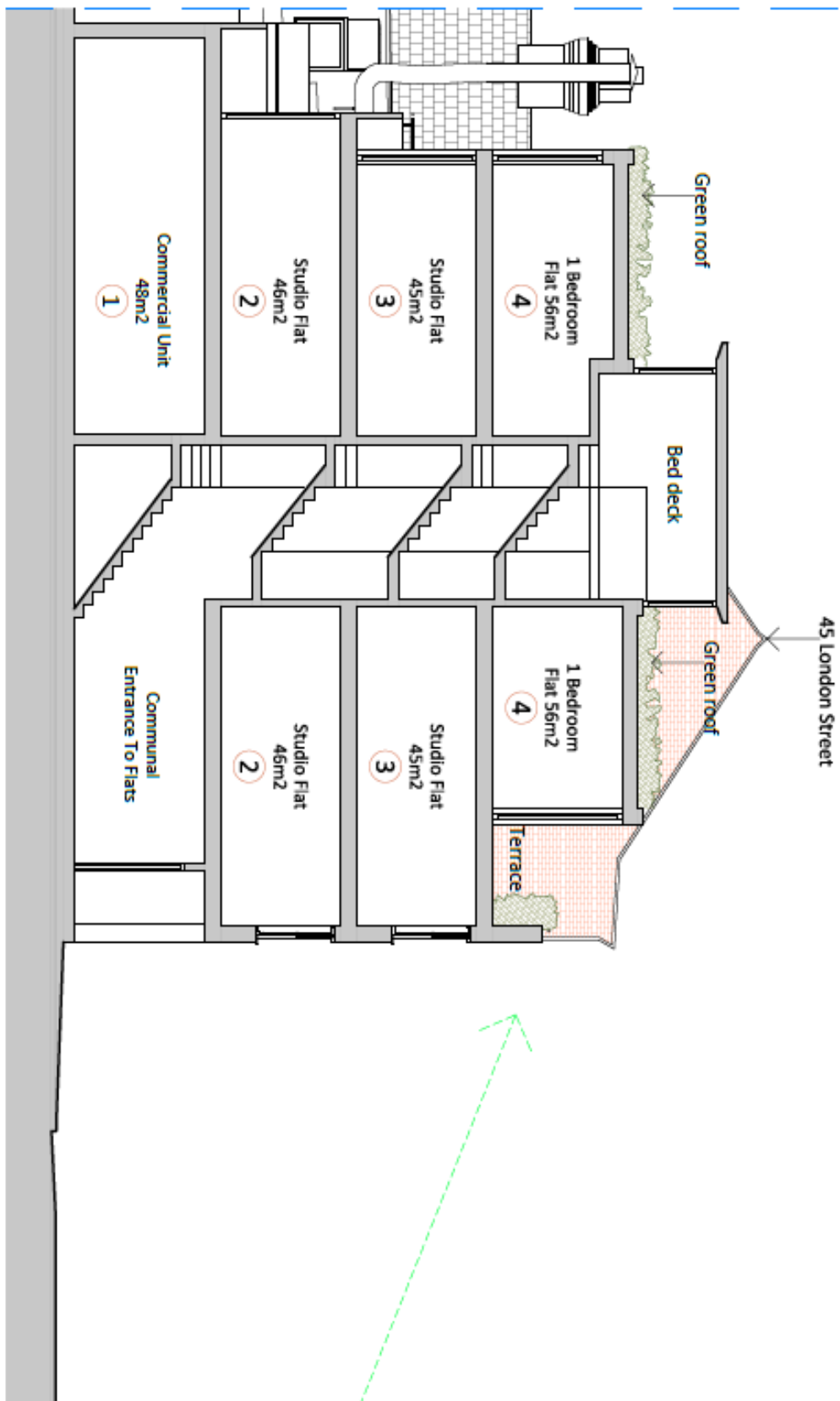
## 8. Plans:

A selection of plans are available below (Not to scale). Full sets of plans and documentation is provided on the publicly accessible planning file here:

[planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb\\_PL/search.asp](http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/search.asp)



London Street elevation (Not to scale)

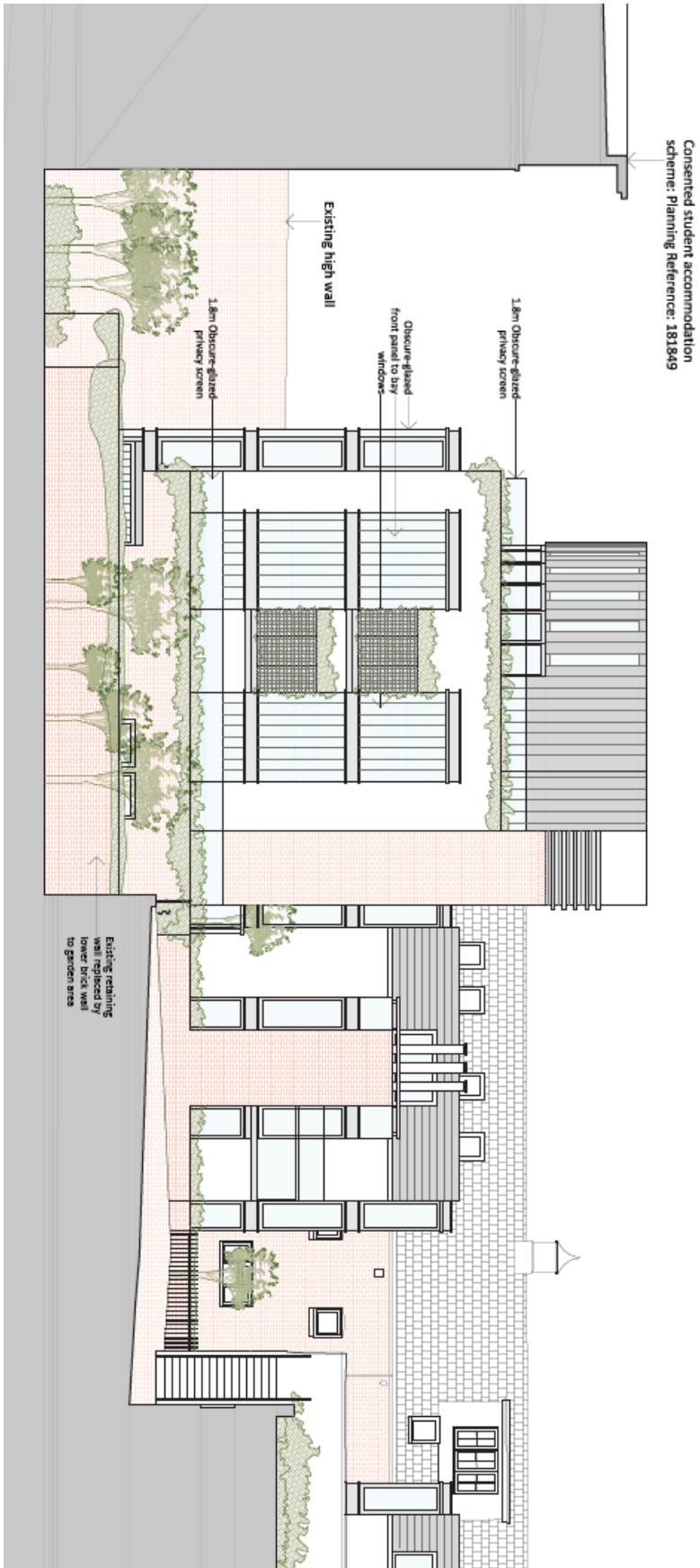


Section through 43 London Street (Not to scale)

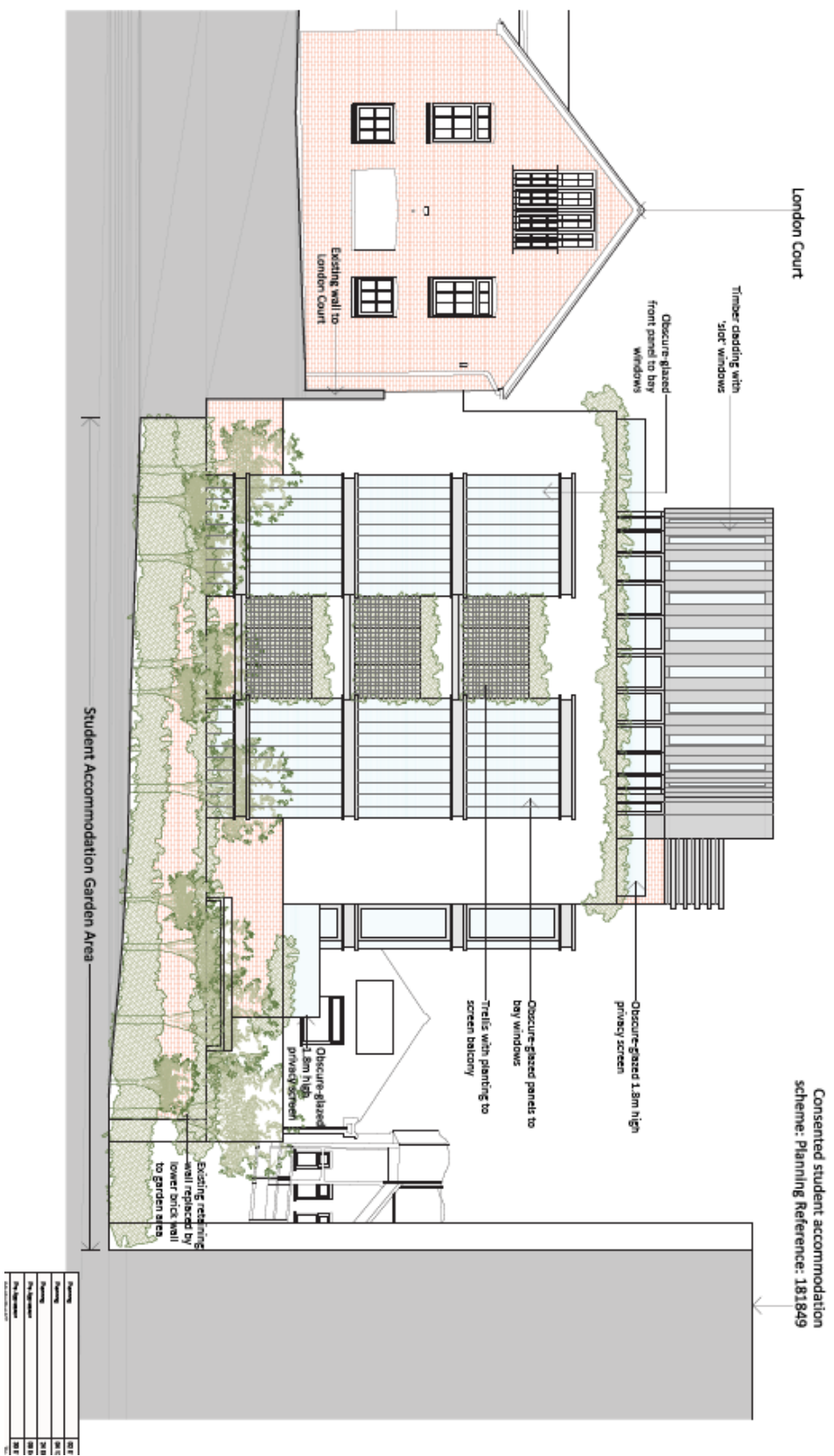


North elevation along the proposed mews (Not to scale)

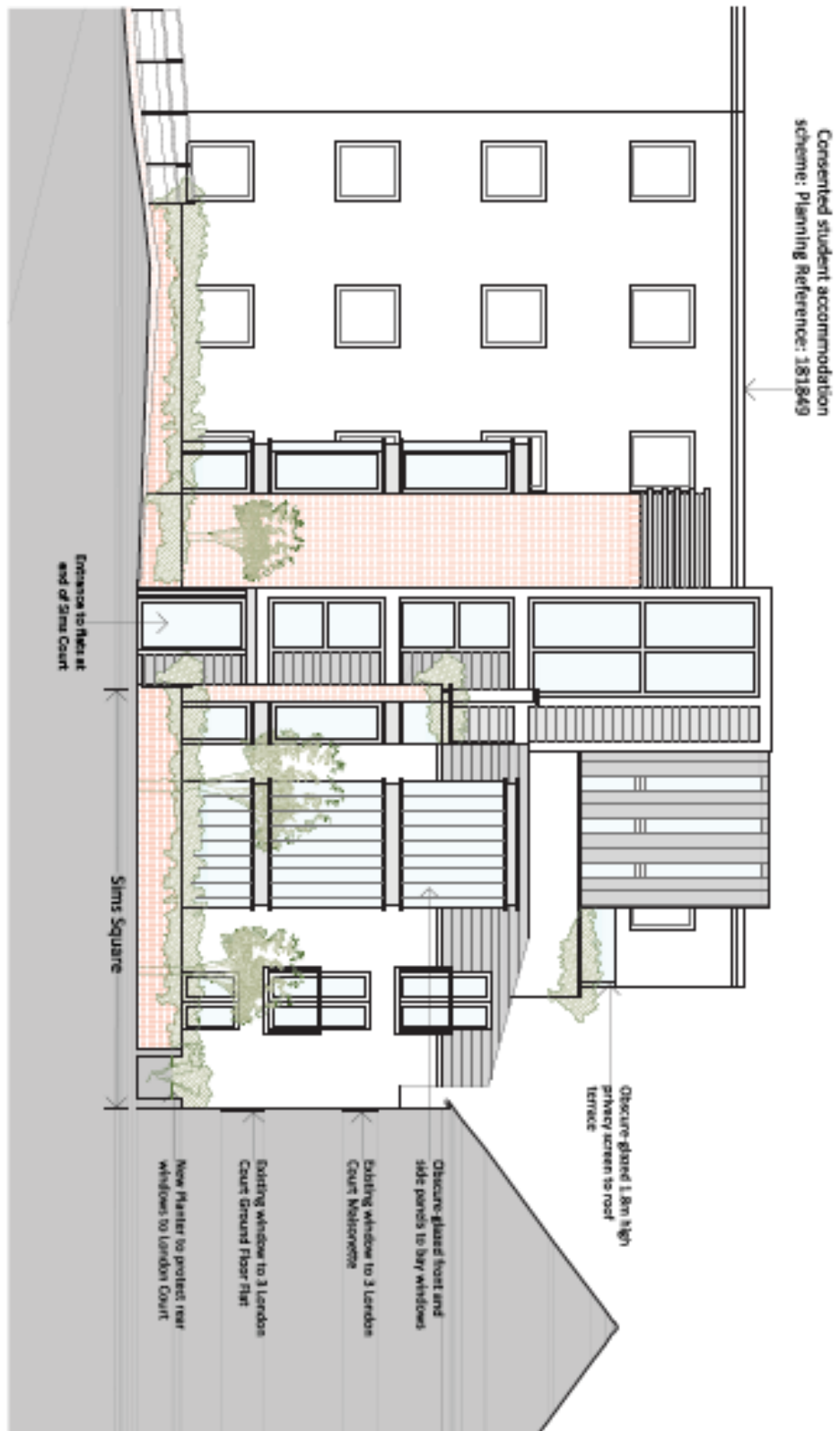




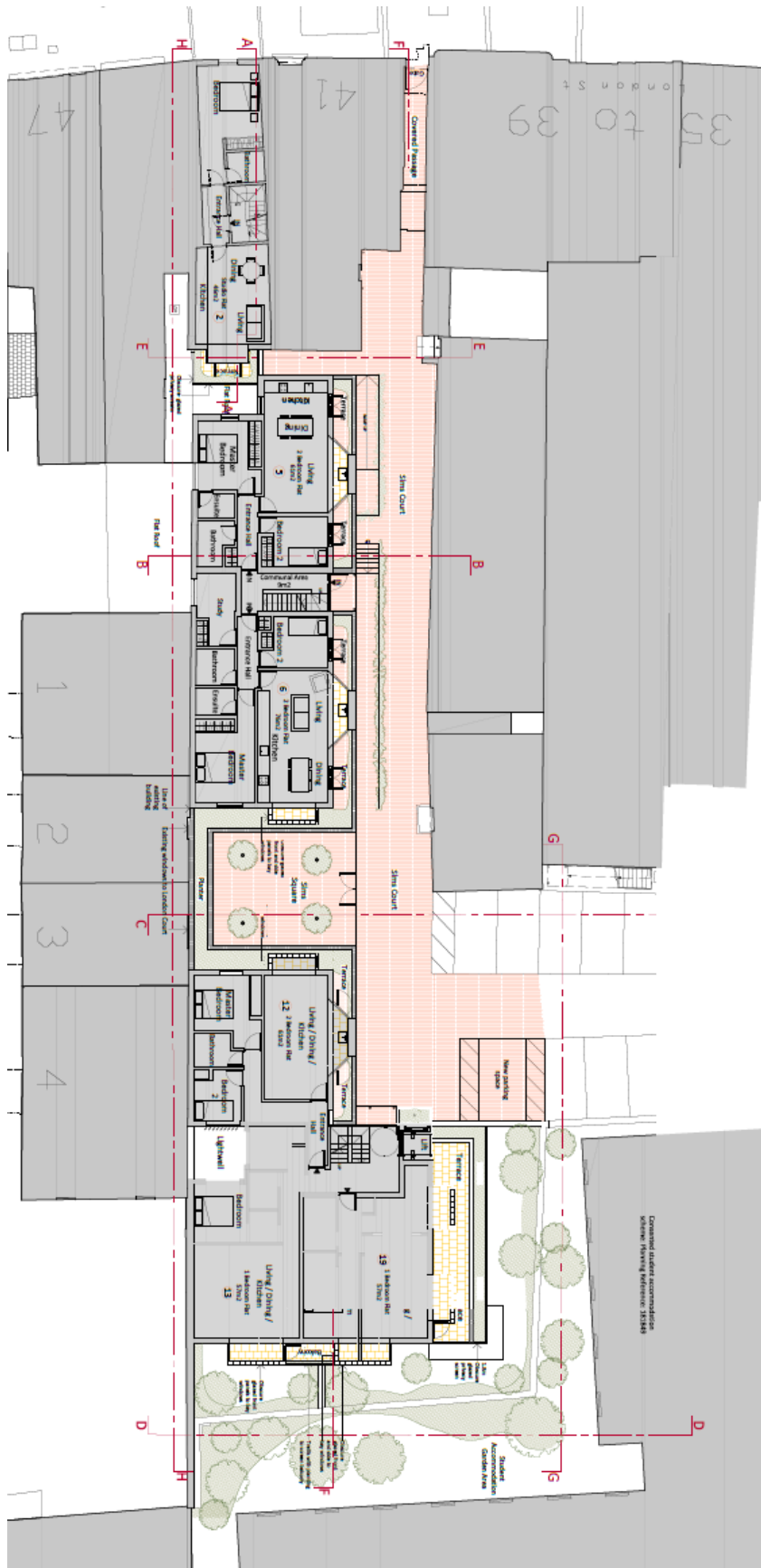
Northern elevation of eastern block (Not to scale)



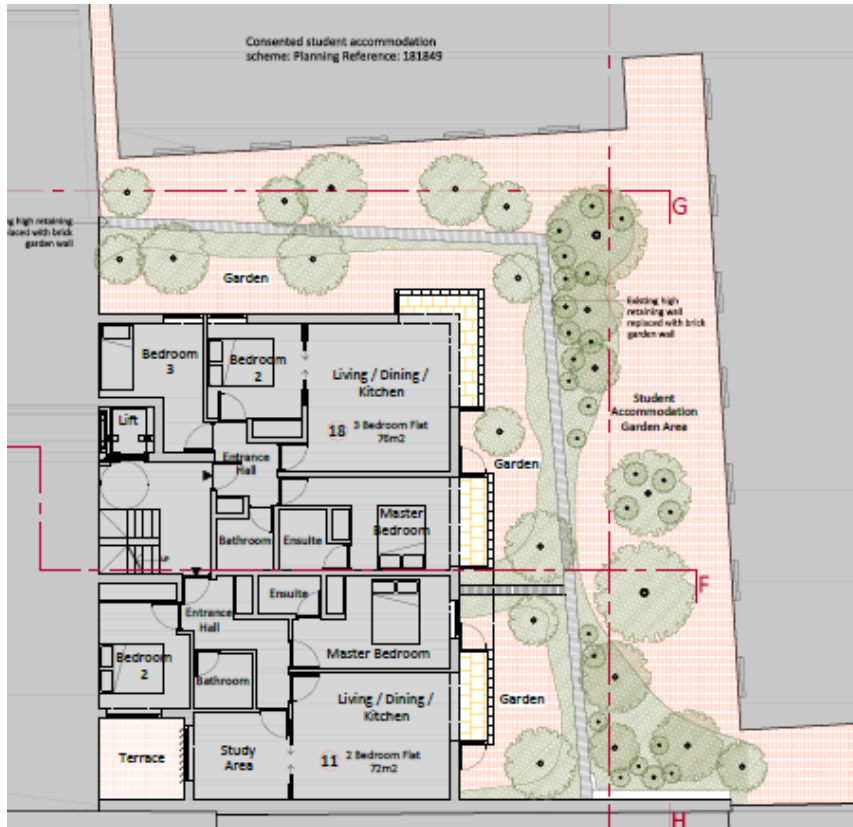
West elevation of eastern block (Not to scale)



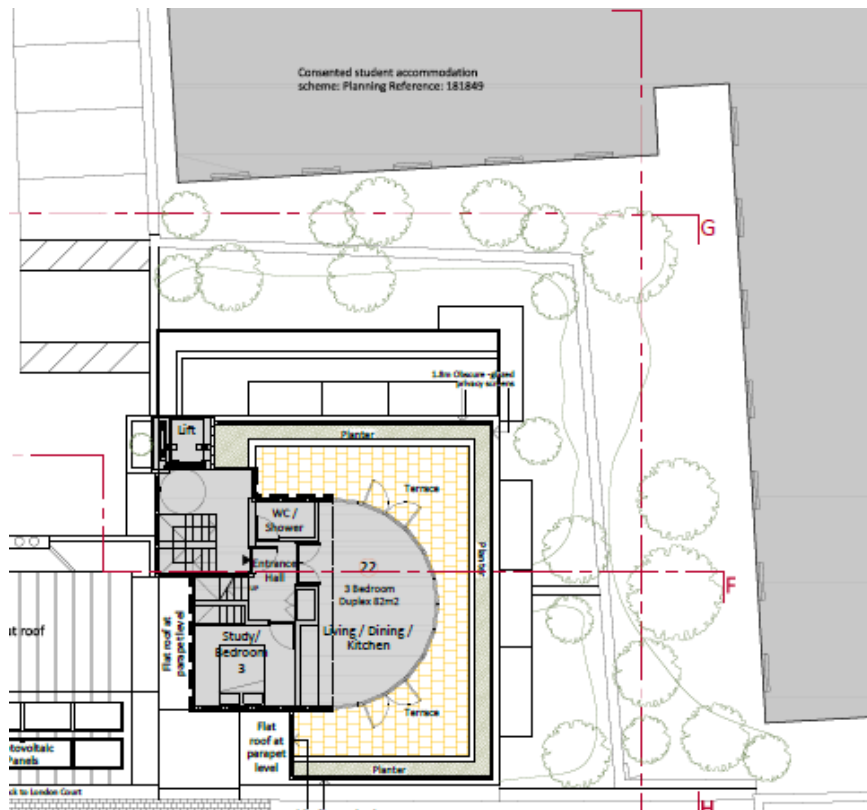
Western elevation of eastern block with Studios scheme behind (Not to scale)



Upper ground floor plan (Not to scale)



Lower ground floor layout adjoining Studios scheme (Not to scale)



Third floor layout adjoining Studios scheme (Not to scale)

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BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Ward: Norcot

App No.: 191429/FUL & 191430/LBC

Address: Brock Barracks, Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1HW

Proposal: Upgrade of existing telecommunications base station comprising the installation of 3No. replacement antennas, and 3No new antennas to chimney (in total 6 antennas), installation of 300m wide cable tray adjoining existing cable tray running up western elevation of chimney within curtilage of listed buildings comprising Brock Barracks.

Applicant: Cornerstone Ltd

Agreed Target Date: 07/02/20 (Extension of time)

## RECOMMENDATION:

**GRANT 191429/FUL subject to the following conditions**

1. Time Limit
2. Plans
3. Matching materials

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Regulations approval may be required
3. Complaints about construction
4. Highways
5. Telecom Applications
6. Requirement for Listed Building Consent
7. Positive and Proactive working

**GRANT 191430/LBC subject to the following conditions**

1. Time Limit
2. Plans
3. Compliance with materials submitted

Informatives:

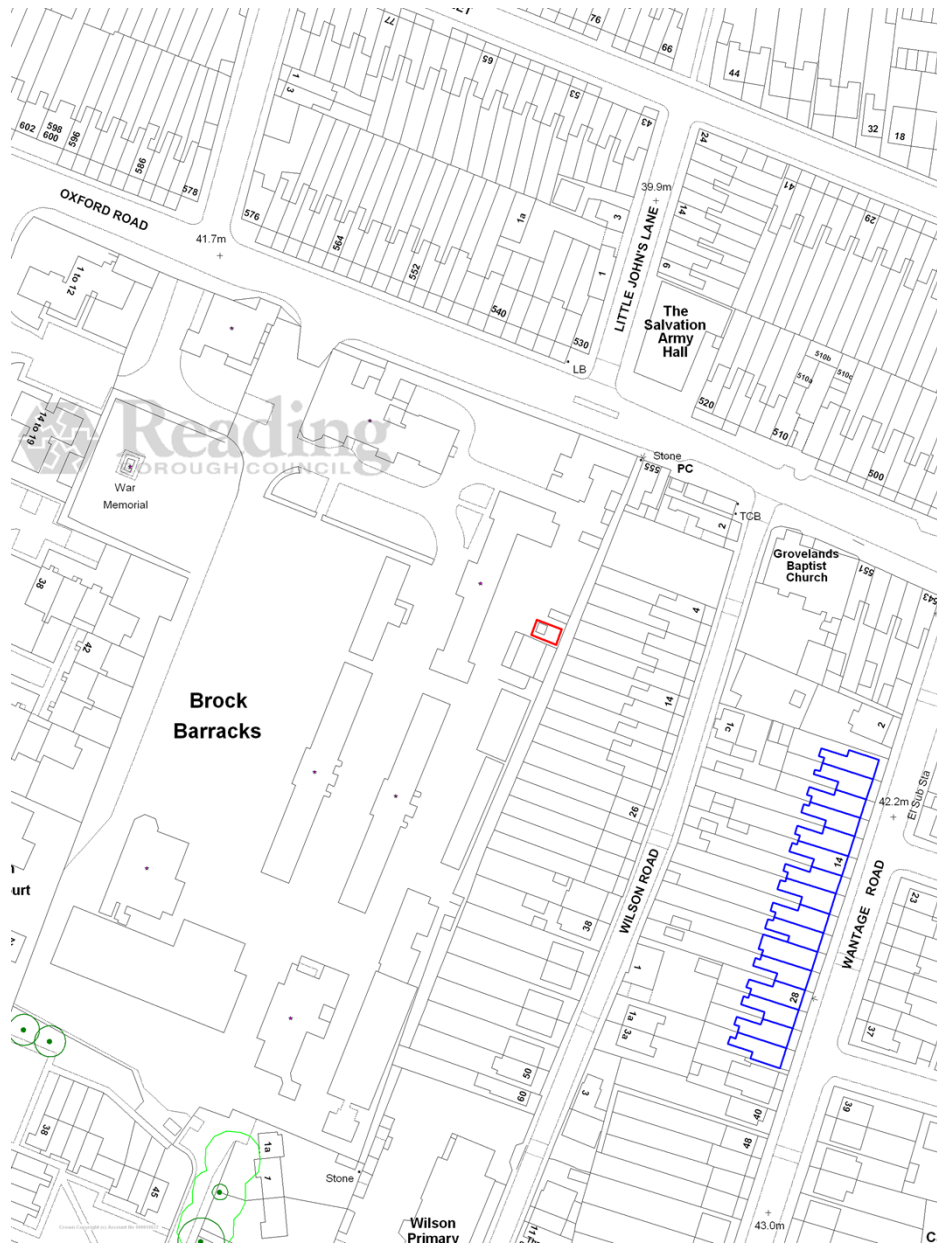
1. Terms
2. Building Regulations approval may be required
3. Complaints about construction
4. Requirement for full planning permission
5. Positive and Proactive working

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application site relates to a chimney that forms part of the Brock Barracks situated off Oxford Road. Some of the buildings (i.e. Anson Barrack, former hospital, former married quarters, former sergeant's quarters, officers' quarters and mess, Tofrek Barrack, the Keep and attached walls and gateway) within

Brock Barracks are Grade II listed, but the chimney is listed only by virtue of being a curtilage structure.

- 1.2 The Barracks are partly surrounded by a 3m high brick wall which runs along most of the Oxford Road frontage to the site. There are residential properties surrounding the Barracks to the east, south and west. To the north, across Oxford Road, the uses are more mixed. The chimney is generally well screened from locations outside of Brock Barracks but is visible when viewed from locations on Wilson Road and, to a lesser extent, parts of Oxford Road and Little Johns Lane.



## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal intends the replacement of three existing mobile phone antennas with modern equivalents that would provide 5G coverage for Vodafone and Telefonica customers. In addition, 3 further antennas are proposed. The antennas would be located 15m above ground level which is the same height as the antennas already located on the chimney. They would be fixed to the



chimney on mounted support poles. Additional infrastructure to support the antenna (300mm wide roof mounted cable tray) is proposed to be located on top of the existing meter cabinet located next to the chimney. Cable would then run up the western side of the chimney. In addition, a dish is proposed alongside the antennas. All equipment is proposed to be painted to match the existing brickwork and mortar.



Example of existing antennas on the chimney.

2.2 The proposed antennas would be slightly taller and wider than the existing antennas.

- Existing antennas - approx. 2000mm (H) 300mm (W)
- Proposed antennas - 2100mm (H) 400 (W)

2.3 The proposed antennas would project from the chimney to a greater depth than the existing. The proposed would project by approx. 500mm and the existing project by approx. 300mm.

2.4 The fact that the works/development would be sited on a curtilage listed building means that both planning permission and listed building consent is required.

2.5 Submitted Plans and Documentation (for both FUL and LBC application):

Drawing No.

303 Rev A - South Elevations

304 Rev A - West Elevations

604 Rev A - Wall Mounted Support Pole  
 605 Rev A - Cable Management

Received 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019

200 Rev A - Site Plan Existing  
 300 Rev A - North Elevation Existing  
 100 Rev A - Site Location Maps  
 201 Rev A - Site Plan Proposed  
 202 Rev A - Site Block Plan Proposed  
 301 Rev B - North Elevation Proposed  
 302 Rev A - East Elevations  
 400 Rev A - Antenna & Equipment Layout  
 101 Rev A - Lease Drawing

Received 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Planning & Heritage Impact Statement  
 Supplementary Information  
 ICNIRP Declaration (safety declaration: radiation emittance levels)  
 General Background Information for Telecommunications Development  
 Health and Mobile Phone Base Stations statement

Received 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019

2.6 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The proposal would not be CIL liable.

**3. PLANNING HISTORY**

140829/LBC	Part retrospective application for the removal of the 3 existing antenna, to be replaced with 3 new antennas on existing mounting brackets, painted to match the existing brickwork. Existing feeders to be reused and all equipment to be installed in existing cabin.	APPROVED 10/09/14
140828/FUL	Part retrospective application for the removal of the 3 existing antenna, to be replaced with 3 new antennas on existing mounting brackets, painted to match the existing brickwork. Existing feeders to be reused and all equipment to be installed in existing cabin.	APPROVED 10/09/14
100448/FULTEL	Addition of a single 200mm antenna dish, pole-mounted.	APPROVED 22/08/10

100449/LBC	Addition of a single 200mm antenna dish, pole-mounted.	APPROVED 24/08/10
101243/LBC	Replacement of 3 existing face mounted/colour coded antennas with new smaller antennas, removal of vertical pipe and feeders and ancillary development.	APPROVED 10/07/10
101279/FULTEL	Replacement of 3 existing face mounted/colour coded antennas with new smaller antennas and ancillary development.	APPROVED 02/07/10
010735/FUL	Extend height of existing chimney by approx.2m. Installation of 3 face mounted antennas, radio equipment housing (3.6m x 2.4m) and ancillary development.	APPROVED 12/09/01
010967/LBC	Extend height of existing chimney by approx. 2m Installation of mobile phone equipment comprising of 3 antennas, one equipment cabin and associated ancillary development.	APPROVED 12/09/01

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

##### 4.1 External consultation

4.2 A site notice was displayed for both the FUL and LBC applications. The consultation period for both ran between 15<sup>th</sup> November - 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

No responses have been received.

##### 4.3 Internal Consultees

##### 4.4 *Transport*

No objections as the existing site is being used and therefore would not result in any obstruction or encroachment onto public footway or carriageway. However informatives relating to works to the highway and telecom applications are recommended.

##### 4.5 *Natural Environment (tree officer)*

There are no significant trees adjacent to the telecommunications site which is set well back from the highway to the rear of residential properties. There are no objections to this planning application and no tree / landscape conditions are required.

##### 4.6 *Heritage*

The proposed new antennas would be located between the antennas proposed to be replaced and be disguised in a similar manner with cable tray and aerial covers painted to match surrounding brickwork.

Given that the chimney is unlisted, although of some historic and architectural interest, and there are existing antennas on the chimney which are not visually intrusive, there is no objection in principle to the proposal.

## **5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

5.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

5.3 This application has been assessed against the following national policies:

National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance

5.4 In addition to national level policies, for this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

CC7: Design and the Public Realm  
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment  
OU3: Telecommunications Development

## **6. APPRAISAL**

6.1 The main matters to be considered are:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) Design and Impact on Listed Building
- (iii) Health considerations
- (iv) Other Matters
- (v) Equalities impact

### **(i) Principle of Development**

6.2 Chapter 10 of the NPPF states that ‘*planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections*’.

6.3 The application site is host to an established Vodafone mobile phone base station. Therefore, the principle of upgrading and expanding telecommunications equipment and to share with another operator is considered acceptable, subject to assessment of whether the proposed development would significantly worsen the visual amenity of the surrounding area (including its impact of the character and appearance of the adjacent listed buildings) and confirmation that acceptable health standards would remain in place.

**(ii) Impact on surrounding area and listed building**

6.4 Policy OU3 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided they do not have an adverse impact on visual amenity of the surrounding area or on the significance of a heritage asset. The apparatus is designed to minimise its visual impact. Policy EN1 states that planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. Policy CC7 states requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6.5 As detailed at Section 2.1 of this report, the 3 additional antennas are proposed, along with replacing the 3 that are existing. The size of these is slightly greater than the existing and would protrude a greater depth from the chimney than the existing. However, officers consider that this change would not be unduly harmful when viewed from public locations due to the chimney's set back from the road, or from the windows of properties within the vicinity.

6.6 Subject to the antennas and cable being painted to match the existing brickwork and mortar of the chimney (as stated will be done on the submitted plans), the proposed antennas would be unlikely to appear much different from those currently in situ. A condition is recommended to control the external finish. Therefore, subject to compliance with this condition, the proposal would result in minimal impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area and would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Brock Barracks listed building.

6.7 In design terms, and subject to adherence to the recommended conditions, the proposal complies with Policies CC7, EN1 and OU3.

**(iii) Health Issues**

6.8 The NPPF states that *“Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure”*. The supporting text to Policy OU3 states that *Applicants will also need to ensure that proposals are supported by an acceptable ICNIRP (International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) declaration which demonstrates that the apparatus would meet the EU Council's recommendation of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields*. An ICNIRP declaration has been submitted by the applicant as part of this application and confirms that the proposed equipment is compliant.

**(iv) Other Matters**

Consultee responses:

6.9 The proposal is considered acceptable from a transport and Natural Environment perspective.

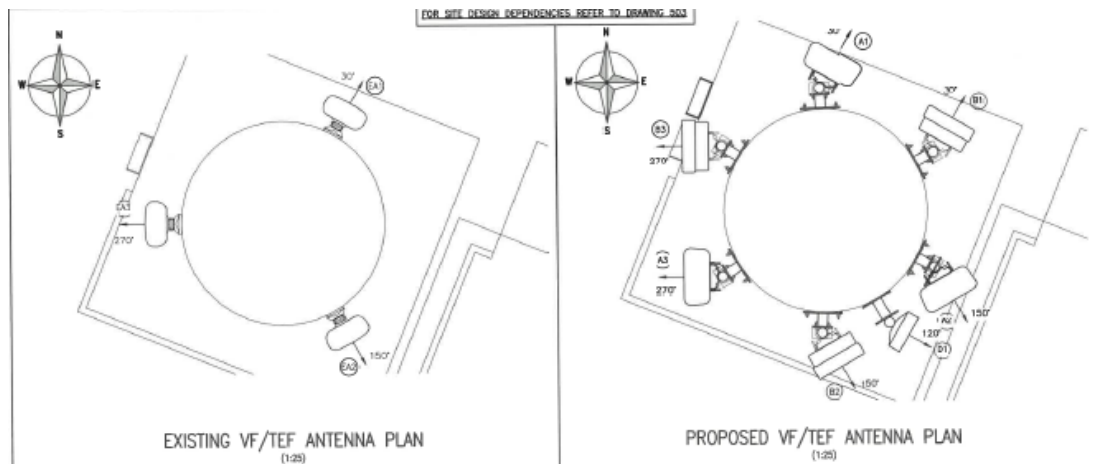
**(v) Equalities Impact**

6.10 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

**7. CONCLUSION**

7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and national level planning policy. The recommendation for both the full planning and listed building consent applications are shown at the start of this report.

Case Officer: Connie Davis



Birds eye view of the antennas on the chimney (Existing and Proposed)



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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th February 2020

Ward: Park

App No.: 180471

Address: 42 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 8BD

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and erection of a three storey (including basement) side extension comprising three 1 bed flats and associated car parking, landscaping, and cycle storage. (amended)

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Dillon

Deadline: 31/10/2018

Extended Deadline: 31/3/2020

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 6/2/2019

### RECOMMENDATION:

**Approve** Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of a S.106 legal agreement.

**OR Refuse** permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services.

**The Section 106 Legal Agreement to Secure the Following:**

#### ***Affordable Housing***

Financial Contribution towards the provision by the Council of Affordable Housing in the Borough, index-linked from the date of permission and payable on commencement of the development.

### **CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:**

- 1) TL1 - standard time limit 3 yrs
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 4) Plan to be submitted and approved to include decorative brick banding and corbels
- 5) L2 - Landscaping, to include the retention and improvement of boundary walls, and a soft landscaping buffer to the boundaries of the site, including adjacent to the access and parking areas, adjacent to no. 38, landscaping measures to enable habitat enhancement, and suitable permeable surfaces for access and parking areas.
- 6) L7 - Arboricultural Method Statement to be approved.
- 7) L10 - Habitat Enhancement Scheme
- 8) Vegetation clearance outside of nesting season.
- 9) SU3 - SAP Assessment Minor - Design Stage
- 10) SU4 - SAP Assessment - Minor - As Built

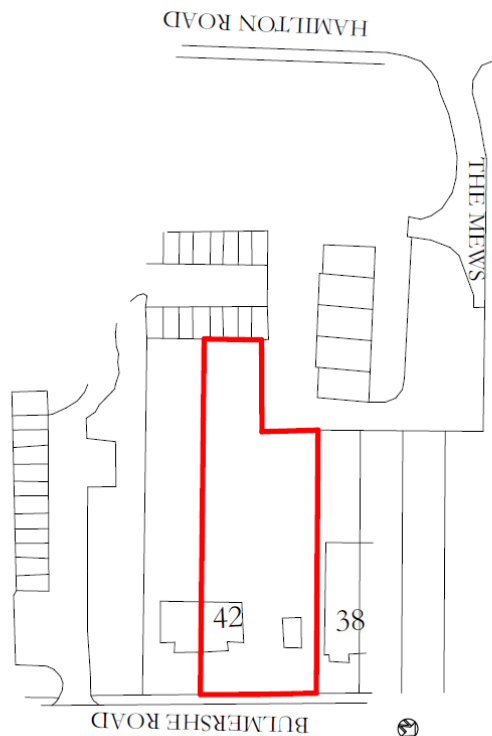
- 11)DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 12)DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified
- 13)DC6 - Cycle Parking to be approved
- 14)DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof).
- 15)Cycle storage - details to be submitted and approved.
- 16)Parking to be provided and retained.
- 17)D20 & D21 - Parking Permits
- 18)C1 - Hours of construction and demolition
- 19)C2 - Construction Method Statement
- 20)No bonfires
- 21)Development to be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in the approved Sustainability Statement and evidence provided post-construction to demonstrate which measures have been undertaken.

**INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:**

- 1) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 2) IF6 - Building Regulations
- 3) IF3 - Highways
- 4) IF8 - Encroachment
- 5) I10 - Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building - To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.
- 6) Any works to demolish the existing single storey garage must be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, and which requires the applicant to notify the HSE of the Non-Licensed Work with Asbestos.
- 7) Japanese Knotweed Control - The applicant is advised to ensure its removal and safe disposal. Advice is available on the following web pages and it is strongly advised to use the services of a specialist contractor:  
The Royal Horticultural Society <https://rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=218>  
Defra <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-the-spread-of-harmful-invasive-and-non-native-plants>  
If a management programme is not put in place and the plant is allowed to spread, legal action could be taken.
- 8) I15 - Advice about protection afforded to TPO trees and trees in Conservation Areas.
- 9) I11 - CIL
- 10)IF4 - S106
- 11)I13 - Parking Permits
- 12)I29 - Access Construction
- 13)IF1 - Positive & Proactive.
- 14)IF2 - Pre-commencement Conditions
- 15)IF7 - Complaints about Construction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site is located on the western side of Bulmershe Road between no. 38 and no. 42. It is currently an area of vacant and overgrown land occupied by a single garage. The surrounding area is predominantly residential comprising a mixture of substantial 2 and 3 storey properties from the late 19<sup>th</sup>. and early 20<sup>th</sup>. centuries. The site is near, but not within the South Park Conservation Area.
- 1.2 No. 42 is a semi-detached three storey plus basement property, comprising 4 no. flats. Access to the large rear garden and parking area is between no. 42 and the application site. The Scots Pine tree to the front, located immediately adjacent to the boundary wall/fence between no. 42 and the application site, is protected under TPO (ref. 121/06).
- 1.3 No. 38, a two-storey house has a series of rooms at ground and first floor which have windows which only face the application site.
- 1.4 The site has been the subject of a number of applications for residential use since 2010, which have been refused and dismissed at appeal, set out in further detail below.
- 1.5 This application was called to your meeting by Councillor White due to the neighbour concerns raised and given the planning history of the site. This application was also the subject of a Committee Site visit on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018.



Location plan

## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal - which has been amended since the submission of the application - is for a large side extension to no. 42 comprising three one bed flats over lower ground, ground and first floors, seven car parking spaces (to serve the proposed and existing flats at no. 42), shared garden, cycle and bin storage. It is considered as an extension as accesses to some of the existing flats would be from the new development and vice versa.

2.2 Submitted plans and documentation received 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019, unless otherwise stated (including amended details) is as follows:

- Location Plan - Drawing no: PL-01, received 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018
- Block Plan - Drawing no: PL-02 Rev D
- Proposed Site Plan - Drawing no: PL-03 Rev D
- Lower Ground Floor Plans - Drawing no: PL-04 Rev D
- Upper Ground Floor Plans - Drawing no: PL-05 Rev D
- First Floor Plans - Drawing no: PL-06 Rev D
- Roof Space - Drawing no: PL-07 Rev D
- Roof Plan - Drawing no: PL-08 Rev D
- Propose and Existing Front Elevation - Drawing no: PL-09 Rev D
- Proposed Rear and North Elevation - Drawing no: PL-10 Rev D
- 3D Views - Drawing no: PL-11 Rev D
- Bat Scoping Report, dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018, prepared by The Ecology Co-op, received 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018
- Design and Access Statement, dated March 2018, prepared by The Keen Partnership, received 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018
- Sustainability Statement, dated August 2018, prepared by the Keen Partnership, received 24<sup>th</sup> August 2018
- Tree Survey Report, dated May 2016, prepared by Venners Arboriculture, received 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018

2.3 *Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):*

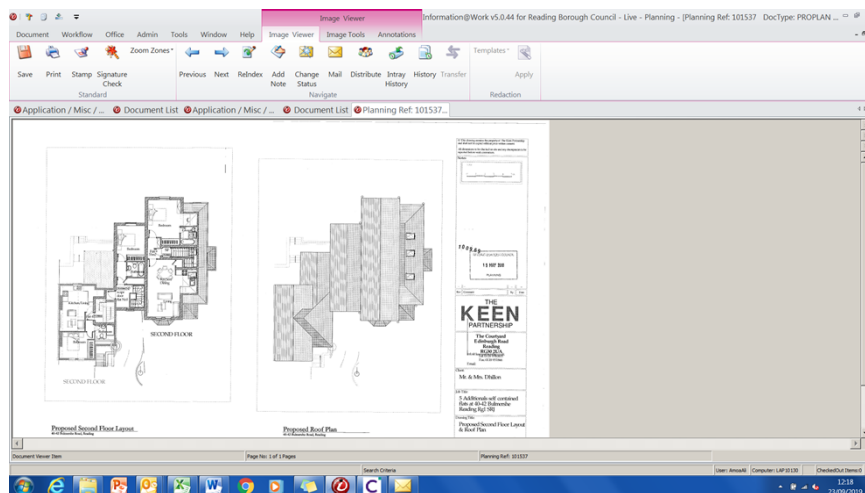
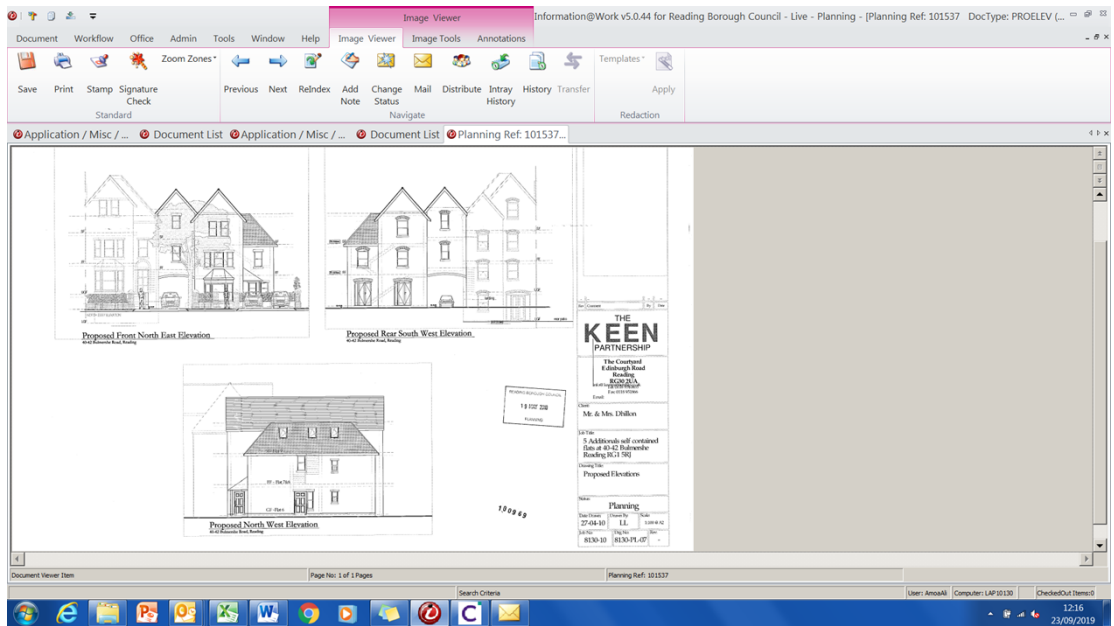
In relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The estimated amount of CIL chargeable from the proposed scheme would be £16,559 based on £157.18 (2020 indexed figure) per sqm of Gross Internal Area (GIA).

## 3. PLANNING HISTORY

**06/00248/FUL (061308)**- Erection of rear extension and conversion of premises from dwelling house to four self- contained flats - Approved 5/5/2006

**10/00969/FUL (101537)** - Extension and alterations to create 5 additional self-contained flats (1x 2 bed, 3x 1 bed and 1x 1 bed

maisonette) - Refused 14/7/2010 - based on design, amenity space, residential amenity, visibility, tree, sustainable design and S106.



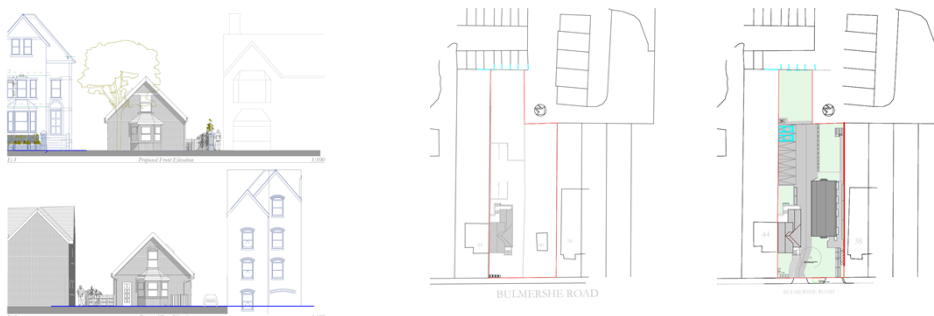
11/01340/FUL (110516) - Erection of 5 self-contained flats to land adjacent to property - Refused 18/7/2012 - based on building line, quantity of hardstanding, windows on the side and perceived overlooking, loss of residential amenity, amenity space, visibility, cycle storage, trees and lack of a S106 agreement. Appeal ref: APP/E0345/A/13/2191303 - dismissed 4/9/2013 based on outlook (overbearing on no. 38) and amenity space.



**160535** - Erection of a 3 storey building with three 2 bed self-contained flats - Withdrawn 19/7/2016

**161665** - Erection of a terrace of 3 x 1 bed chalet bungalows with basement - Refused 1/11/2016 - based on height and proximity (overbearing), loss of privacy to no. 38, inadequate amenity space, effect on TPO tree, effect on Green link, incongruous addition to the street scene, substandard access width, poor outlook from one of the proposed units, and lack of a S106 agreement.

Appeal ref: APP/E0345/W/17/3174759 - dismissed 21/9/2017 - based on the detrimental impact on the character and appearance of Bulmershe Road, overbearing impact on no. 38 due to proximity, height and length, loss of privacy for no. 38, poor outlook for one of the proposed units, poor amenity space, highway safety and lack of S106 for affordable housing.



**Application 180471** - With regard to the original submission (shown below) the case officer raised a number of issues with the agent in November 2018, summarised as:

- Overall height, width and depth not subservient to the host dwelling.
- Reduce the overall footprint and in particular the part at the rear, which extends beyond the existing extension.
- The section to the rear also creates impacts of being overbearing and would be likely to affect daylight and sunlight to the rear windows of the existing rear rooms at basement, ground and first floor levels, especially those that are habitable rooms.
- Errors on plans - 44 does not have a rear two storey projection, which gives a false impression of the overall context. This needs to be amended; existing chimneys not shown; a doorway needs to be shown for access to the first floor from the existing building; proposed site plan and block plan need to tally; relabel 'obscure glazing non-opening window panel' to obscure glazed side privacy screen serving proposed balcony'.
- The access to the private garden for Flat A is shown from a bedroom. Suggest reconfiguring the internal space so that access to the garden space is from a shared space - kitchen/ lounge.
- Could the parking area be reduced? It looks bigger than required to serve the development, and in turn increase the overall amenity space. We discussed whether it might be possible to focus the parking and manoeuvring space at the widest part of the site, i.e. adjacent to number 38, which might enable the garden area to continue from the house along the length of the plot.
- Please provide a parking plan, which shows the vehicle tracking path.



**Original 180471 submission**

A number of amendments, and further comments, were produced during the application period and the final set of amendments, as received 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019, is that presented within this report and as reconsulted on in January 2020.

**4. CONSULTATIONS**

**4.1 Statutory**  
None

**4.2 Non-statutory**

**Ecology**

The initial response was as follows:

The application site comprises a semi-detached house and a detached garage where it is proposed to demolish the existing garage and to erect a three-storey semi-detached dwelling. The site is surrounded by habitat of moderate suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats - large connected gardens with scattered and groups of trees, green areas bordered by trees 172m east, and a Local Wildlife Site (Reading Cemetery) 180m north.

Considering the location of the house and the extent of the works, there is a risk that the proposals may affect roosting bats and a bat survey report (including the trees to be felled) will need to be



provided before this application is determined. Further details are given below.

All species of bats receive protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (the SNCO - Natural England in England).

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document was not revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

*“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”*

In this case because neither the presence or otherwise of protected species, nor the extent to which they may be affected has been established, the application would not be in accordance with the above planning policy, or other planning policy in relation to biodiversity.

A presence / absence bat survey is normally undertaken in two stages, firstly a preliminary roost assessment, whereby the inside and outside of the building is surveyed for bats and signs of bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.

If bats are found or features within the building have the potential to support roosting bats and these will be affected by the proposals, further dusk emergence and or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during the bat active season (i.e. between May and the end of August/ sub optimally until mid-October) would need to be carried out. The applicant would then need to submit the results of the survey(s) along with any associated mitigation strategy prior to determination of the application.

Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey bats.

The garage and trees recommended for removal may host roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so how bats will be affected by the proposals, a bat survey will need to be carried out. The survey will need to be carried out prior to determination of the application or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process).

***Planning Officer note:*** Following the submission of a bat survey report, Ecology provided the following further comments:

The bat survey report (The Ecology Co-op Environmental Consultants, October 2018) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the garage and the trees recommended for removal are unlikely to host roosting bats.

The report states that since vegetation removal is to be undertaken, this should be carried out outside the bird nesting season (May - August inclusive). This should be secured through a condition.

In summary, since the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect roosting bats or other protected species, subject to the condition below, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

**Environmental Protection & Nuisance (EP&N) - Standing advice - All small residential developments new build - 9 units or fewer**

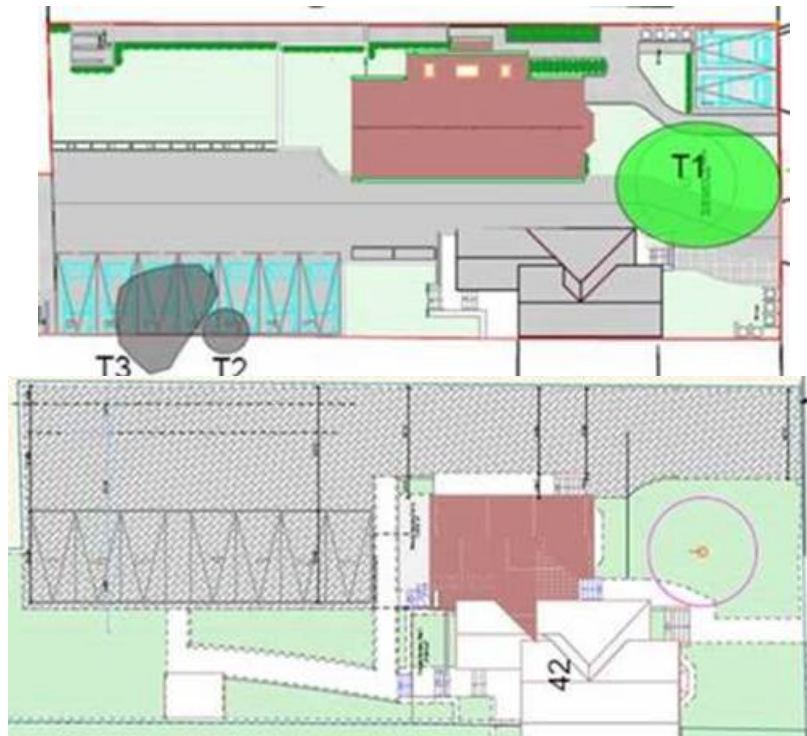
The advice recommends the inclusion of conditions - Control of Noise and Dust; CMS to be submitted; Hours of Working; and no bonfires. This is because fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. The burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.

In addition, EP&N now considers that, due to a widespread problem in Reading with rats, especially where developments involve shared bins, it is important for bin stores to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste. A recommended condition is that details of bin stores need to be submitted and approved.

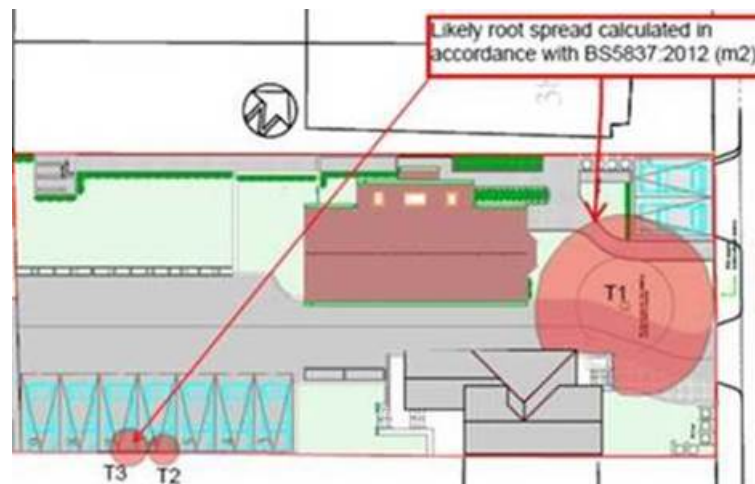
**Natural Environment (tree officer)**

The layout proposed is different to that considered in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement and this is not acceptable. Any Arboricultural document submitted in support of an application should be relevant to the proposal in question. In addition, the Tree Survey is more than 3 years old, which again is not acceptable as tree conditions can change in that period of time.

The Layout in the Arboricultural document (below, top) compared with proposed layout (below, bottom):



You can see when looking at the Root Protection Plan (RPA) plan within the Arboricultural document that ground works will be within the RPA:



It is not correct to say (as they have done) that nothing has altered or that it 'eliminates any work around it' - both these statements demonstrate a lack of appreciation of how the tree may be impacted.

In other circumstances I would say that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the development is acceptable in relation to the protected tree for the reasons above. However, (and only because) given the site history and that the principle of similar development has been acceptable in the past, subject to appropriate

conditions, then I would say in this case it is reasonable to offer no objections but to accept the proposal subject to the following standard conditions: L2 (Landscaping), L7 (Arboricultural Method Statement), and Informative I15 (tree works).

### ***Transport***

The initial comments were as follows:

The proposal consists of the erection of a 2 storey dwelling consisting of 3 flats (2 x 2 Bed and 1 x 1 bed) attached to the existing dwelling on land adjacent to No42 following the demolition of a small detached garage.

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. The site is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. The site is also within easy walking distance of the Town Centre.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide parking provision of 1 space for each 1 - 2 bedroom flat as well as retaining parking provision for the existing flats at No42. The Design and Access statement states that a total of 7 parking spaces will be provided for the entire development which is in accordance with the Councils current standard.

Each parking space should be a minimum of 2.5m x 5m and have a forecourt depth of 6m to allow manoeuvrability in and out of the spaces. The access point illustrated on the site plan PL-03 illustrates an access measuring in width of 4.8m which is deemed acceptable; however, it is noted that the carriage way narrows to 3.4m, 138m into the site for a short length before widening (Site Plan PL-03). In order to fully determine this application revised plans are required illustrating the proposed parking layout including widths of the carriageway. It would appear from google images that there is already a dropped kerb in place which served the single garage to be demolished. This access will need to be widened to accommodate two-way traffic and any unrequired access points will need to be reinstated and realigned with the footway. A licence is required from the Highways department to undertake any work on the public highway.

There is significant demand for on-street parking. The site is located within an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area Zone 03R. Therefore, the parking conditions and informatives would be applied to prevent any future occupants of the flats from obtaining a residents parking permit for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure.

In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision 1.0 cycle storage spaces should be provided per chalet. The Design and Access Statement states a covered bike store is to be provided. Details will need to be provided about the number and type of secure and covered provision proposed and illustrated on revised plans.

Bin storage has not been illustrated on submitted plans. This should be located no further than 15m from the access point. Bin storage should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Revised plans illustrating storage area and collection are required.

Before this application can be determined, please ask the applicant to address the points above via the submission of amended plans.

**Planning Officer note:** Following the submission of amended plans Transport confirmed no objection subject to conditions and informatives (as included in the recommendation above).

#### 4.3 Public

Nos. 3, 4, 5 The Mews, 4 no flats within 42 Bulmershe Road, 17 -21 (odd), and 36-44 (even) Bulmershe Road were consulted on the original submission.

A site notice was displayed. 4 no. objections were received and issues raised in objections are summarised as follows:

- Increased road usage, parking and highway safety - The current road space is not sufficient to take any further over-spill. Cars are often parked on pavements and I can only see this increasing due to the proposed development.
- Presence of Japanese Knotweed.
- The existing garage to be demolished I believe contains asbestos. I hope any demolition plans for this will contain appropriate safeguards for nearby residents.
- Construction equipment and vehicles hindering movement along Bulmershe Road.
- Negative effect on the overall character of the neighbourhood, including the impact to environment and the wildlife from the removal of part of a 'green lung' identified as a Green Link by the Council.
- Removal of green space and car parking too close to 'The Mews'.
- Drainage could be problematic for 'The Mews' including the old boundary walls.
- The increase in paved area for parking is excessive increasing from ca. 45% to 67% of the total area, with parking away from nos. 40 and 42. The Mews which will be the most affected by the

noise and pollution from the cars, especially as the bedrooms and living rooms are the closest.

- Proposal will take significant amounts of light from no. 38.
- Loss of privacy for no. 38.
- Overbearing impact on no. 38.
- A lower building without the second floor would reduce the impact significantly.
- Significant loss of existing and potential green amenity areas.
- Insufficient outside space, which is out of character with surrounding properties.
- Detrimental impacts of previous activities by the landlord and lack of confidence in any future works - lack of maintenance of the existing rear garden; removing healthy trees; burning household and building waste on site; previous permission was not implemented in accordance with approved plans.
- Decorative brickwork was not extended when the existing extension was built. If the scheme were granted approval this should be extended the full length of the north elevation.

**Planning Officer note:** Following re-consultation on amended plans in January 2020 the following further objection was received as a joint response from a number of residents (copied here):

- Although the proposed building will significantly reduce the light in and adversely affect the outlook of 5 rooms of no 38 and adversely affect the view from no 19 we do not oppose granting planning permission to this application, subject to the reservations expressed below. The reduction in the footprint of the building, the lack of windows overlooking no 38, and the rear communal garden make the revised plans more acceptable.
- As indicated above, there are still some features of the proposal which concern us significantly and that we consider must be addressed before planning permission is granted.
- 1) Demolition of the existing garage. The garage has an asbestos roof and we are very anxious that this should be demolished by professionals with appropriate qualifications for removing asbestos, in accordance with the law. We ask that an informative be added to the grant of permission to make it clear that the garage roof must be removed safely and legally.
- 2) Excavation of semi-basement in the new building. We ask that appropriate safeguards are required of the builders to ensure that there is no subsequent subsidence damage to our building or deleterious effects on the local water table.
- 3) Landscaping work for the new parking area and communal garden. The destruction of the vegetation in the plot in which the new building and parking area is to be constructed will remove an area attractive to wildlife (especially birds and small rodents). We ask that the landscaping requirements include planting of small shrubs along the wall adjoining no 38 and appropriate planting in the new communal garden area. In

addition, we ask that the surface used in the parking area is permeable to ensure appropriate water run-off.

- 4) Maintenance of the wall adjoining no 38. We ask that the boundaries of no 42 be maintained in good condition and in particular, that the wall between no 42 and no 38 should be protected from construction damage and brought back into good condition (for example, repointing).

## **5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

5.2 The Development Plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure

Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage

Policy H1: Provision of Housing

Policy H2: Density and Housing Mix

Policy H3: Affordable Housing

Policy H5: Standards for New Housing

Policy H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy TR1: Achieving The Transport Strategy

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are:

- Sustainable Design and Construction (April 2011)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)

- 5.4 Other relevant documents are:
- National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places (Oct 2019)

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design and effect on the character and appearance of the area
- Housing mix
- Residential amenity
- Transport
- Landscaping and Ecology
- Sustainability
- Environmental matters - Japanese Knotweed, Asbestos
- S106
- Other matters raised
- Equalities impact

### Principle of Development

- 6.1 The application site is within a wholly residential area and the provision of new housing will contribute to meeting the need for additional housing in the Borough as set out in Policy H1 of the RBLP.
- 6.2 It would bring a vacant parcel of land back into effective use which accords with the aims of sustainable development as set in national and local policy.
- 6.3 Subject to addressing other policy issues, and responding positively to the matters raised through previous refused applications and dismissed appeals, the principle of the use for residential is acceptable.

### Design and Effect on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 6.4 The NPPF (Para 124) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The recently published National Design Guide identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note are the characteristics of Context and Identity; *“well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones.”* *“Responding to local character and identity”*.
- 6.5 Policy CC7 requires all development to be *“of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”* The components of design



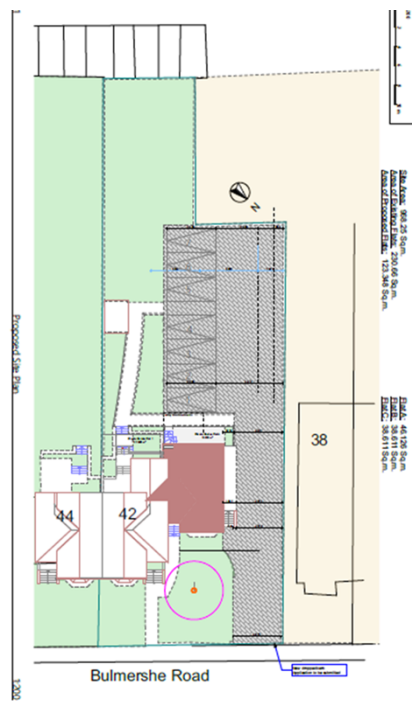
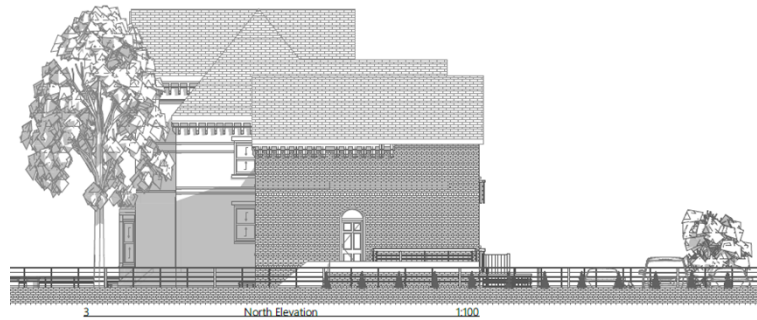
include: Layout: Urban structure and urban grain; Landscape; Density and mix; Scale: height and massing; and Architectural detail and materials.

6.6 The application site has been subject of a number of refused applications, two of which have been dismissed at appeal (as set out above). As part of the reasons for refusal, and among the issues addressed by the Inspector, were the overall design and scale of the proposals. These were all seeking permission for a detached building between no. 42 and no. 38 of varying heights, depths and design.

6.7 As set out in Section 3 above, officers raised issues with the original submission and sought an amended scheme. Several iterations were assessed by officers and discussed with the agent. The final amended design as presented (as shown below) includes the following amendments. This also required an amendment to the description, because of the reduction in the numbers of bedrooms of the flats and that the proposal would be considered as an extension, rather than a house, because of internal connections to the existing no. 42:

- Reduction in the width by 1.5m, to create greater subservience and increase the distance between the proposal and no. 38.
- The elevation to the front has been simplified to remove the bay windows.
- The rear projection beyond the building line of no. 42 has been reduced from 4.5m to 1.3m, which avoids breaching the 45-degree line when measured from the centre of the nearest habitable room of the existing flats.
- The roof form has been simplified.
- The internal layout has been amended.
- Rear balconies reduced to 'Juliette'.
- The garden area has increased.
- The parking layout has been amended.





6.8 The amended proposal is an extension of no. 42, due to the internal links between the existing and proposed. Although large, it is considered that through the combination of the set down and significant set-back, it would not be overly dominant with respect to the host dwelling or the overall character and appearance of the street. Its siting also ensures the retention of the TPO Scots Pine tree, which is a positive feature within the street.

- 6.9 The design includes elements to reflect the existing buildings including gable features, decorative brick banding, the rhythm of windows and styles, and roof pitches to match existing. It includes a more simplified front elevational form, without bay windows, which is considered to create a subservience to the host dwelling. However, its overall appearance would respect the distinctiveness of the street and it would therefore, maintain and enhance the character and appearance of Bulmershe Road.
- 6.10 As an extension, rather than as a detached building, it would retain a good separation and gap to no. 38 of 5.8 metres to the boundary and 7.2 metres to the side elevation of no.38, so that that property retains its setting, and this is consistent with other gaps between buildings in the vicinity of the application site. In this context, the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the road.
- 6.11 Objectors have highlighted that the existing extension does not continue the patterned brickwork banding and decorative detailing at the eaves. They have suggested that these features be carried along the proposed side (northern) elevation should this current proposal be approved. It is recommended that a condition be included requiring the submission of materials and a plan, which shows such detailing, to be submitted and approved.
- 6.12 The application site is located close to the South Park Conservation Area (area in purple in extract below - application site marked with red dot). Policy EN6 requires new development within the historic environment to contribute to the historic character of the area “*by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities.*” The supporting text, at para 4.2.23, also recognises the need for new development in the vicinity of historic assets or at the edges of conservation areas to be sympathetic. They should reflect the local historic environment which could include footprint sizes, setbacks, landscaping, window placement and size, prevailing building or architectural features. In this instance the application site is not immediately at the edge of the Conservation Area, and is separated from it by garages and the residential development of The Mews. There are public locations where you can glimpse distant views into the Hamilton Road part of the Conservation Area and likewise from the Conservation Area itself to the application site. The image below (Google streetview) shows the edge of the Conservation Area, as viewed from Bulmershe Road, at the background of the photo, showing that these are distant views. The proposal would leave a significant gap to no.38, and therefore such glimpses of the Conservation Area would be maintained. It is therefore not considered that this would have a significant detrimental effect on the Conservation Area.



6.13 The officer view is that the set back of the extension, and its simpler form, would enable the existing dominant symmetry of the pair of semis (no, 44 and 42) to be retained, whilst still achieving a sensitive design, with features that reflect the host dwelling. It is considered that the overall scheme would be a positive addition to the character and appearance of the area and would accord with policies CC7 and H9 and EN6.

### Housing Mix

6.14 Policy H2 addresses density and housing mix and states that this will be informed by character and mix of the area; accessibility; the need to achieve high quality design; maximise efficiency of land; need to minimise the environmental impacts including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers. The supporting text (para 4.4.7) states that, “*wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.*” It is however, accepted in para 4.4.13 that “*Inevitably,*

*even with this policy requirement in place, Reading is likely to provide a significantly greater proportion of smaller dwellings than its neighbours in the Western Berkshire HMA. This may mean that some rebalancing across the HMA is appropriate, with other authorities potentially providing a greater proportion of larger family accommodation”.*

- 6.15 This proposal would be for three 1-bedroom flats. Although this would not include any family sized units, consideration has been given to the other aspects of Policy H2. There is a mix of unit sizes within Bulmershe Road ranging from large family houses through to conversions and purpose- built flats of different sizes. Higher densities are encouraged in accessible locations and this is an accessible location with frequent bus services to Reading in close proximity to the application site. The mix of units also needs to be balanced with the need to achieve the right scale of development of a high-quality design, which provides a positive contribution to the street, without compromising residential amenity.
- 6.16 The reduction in the scale of the proposal from the originally submitted plans is considered to create an acceptable design, and still achieves a viable and sustainable scheme for the provision of good quality one - bedroom units, for which there is a need. The layout of the units, their overall stacking, integration with the existing building, access to a good level of amenity space and the separation to no. 38, whilst continuing to preserve the overall character and appearance of the area, is considered to provide an exceptional case to not meeting the requirement for family sized units in this instance. Additionally, it is not considered that three one bed units would not have a significant detrimental effect on the overall mix and balance of this area.

#### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.17 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.
- 6.18 In addition, Policy H5 sets out standards for new housing, which must be adhered to unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. Such standards include (relevant to this scale of proposal): “...a. All new build housing outside the Central Area.....will comply with the nationally-described space standard. b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations<sup>79</sup>. .... d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. e.

*All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2)<sup>1</sup> of the Building Regulations....”*

- 6.19 Policy H10 deals specifically with private and communal space and requires such space to allow for sitting out, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, drying space. *“The design of outdoor spaces will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity”*. Para 4.4.87 of the RBLP sets out that *“in the past, the Council has sought the following minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and they provide a useful guide for proposals: (b) Flats outside central Reading: 1 and 2-bedroom: 25 sq m per flat.....”*.
- 6.20 The reasons for refusal on previous schemes, which related to amenity issues, and as upheld by the appeal inspectors, were: outlook, loss of privacy for, and overbearing effect on no. 38, and overall lack of proposed amenity space to serve the new development.
- 6.21 No. 38 has the majority of its principal rooms with windows facing the site, and it was therefore important for any proposal to overcome previous amenity concerns. Following the initial submission, and objections from no. 38 and other residents, a site visit was undertaken, with councillors, including inside no. 38, to obtain a clear perspective on the relationship of this property to the application site.
- 6.22 Amendments have been made since the initial submission, as described above, which are considered to have addressed the concerns regarding the impact on no.38. These include reduction of the overall width, so that the new building would be further from no. 38; no side facing windows; and removal of rear balconies.
- 6.23 The amended plans have been consulted on with the owners of no. 38 and others, and although concerns are still raised that in their opinion the *“proposed building will significantly reduce the light in and adversely affect the outlook of 5 rooms of no. 38 and adversely affect the view from no 19 we do not oppose granting planning permission to this application..”* This is subject to reservations regarding asbestos, excavation, landscaping, and maintenance of walls (addressed below). *“The reduction in the footprint of the building, the lack of windows overlooking no 38, and the rear communal garden make the revised plans more acceptable.”* It is considered that the amended scheme overcomes the original principal concerns to an acceptable degree to enable a recommendation for approval.

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<sup>1</sup> Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations is for accessible and adaptable dwellings, and relates to relatively straightforward design measures that can allow homes to be adaptable as the needs of the occupier change (similar to Lifetime Homes, although not identical).

- 6.24 The amended scheme reduced the proposed rear projection, which ensures that overbearing effects, and loss of light would not be created for the flats within the existing building at no.42.
- 6.25 The proposal includes for a private garden space for the lower ground floor flat, accessed from the kitchen and lounge, as well as a large rear garden space. This is considered to meet the requirements of Policy H10.
- 6.26 The size of the units meets the minimum standards within the national space standards (as replicated in Policy H5) with a relatively consistent layout/stacking of rooms across all floors.
- 6.27 Measures that would be incorporated to provide for adaptable units will be reported in an update.
- 6.28 The amended scheme is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies, which are CC8, H5 and H10.

#### Transport

- 6.29 The proposal includes a widened access, and suitable visibility splay (4.87m, narrowing to 4.7), between the extension and number 38. This would serve a parking area for 7 no. car parking spaces to be shared by the existing occupants of no. 42. and the proposed 3 units, at a ratio of 1 space per unit. In addition, there would be cycle storage to the rear and a segregated pathway for safe access to it.
- 6.30 This overcomes refusal reasons from previous applications, as upheld at appeals, and complies with relevant policies TR1, TR3, TR4, and TR5 as confirmed by RBC Transport Strategy. Cycle storage is indicated on the plans, however further details would be required and a condition is included for the submission and approval of this, as well as bin storage; provision and retention of parking spaces; no automatic entitlement to parking permits; provision of the widened access and a construction method statement.

#### Landscaping and Ecology

- 6.31 In terms of landscaping and the TPO tree, the amended proposal includes the retention of the protected Scot's Pine and a larger amenity space than the previously refused schemes.
- 6.32 The Natural Environment Team raised concerns over the arboricultural information submitted with the application, because it is a number of years old. However, in light of the previous appeal decisions, where inspectors accepted that tree protection measures could be conditioned to ensure the protection of the tree, no objection was raised by Natural Environment, subject to conditions.
- 6.33 The recommended condition for the submission and approval of a landscaping scheme is proposed to include the requirement for the retention and repair of existing boundary walls and the requirement

for a soft landscaping buffer to the boundaries of the site, especially adjacent to the access and parking areas, adjacent to no. 38.

- 6.34 The Ecology report concluded that the bat roost potential of the site is negligible. However, as the garage has the potential to support nesting birds, the Ecologist has recommended the inclusion of a condition regarding demolition to be limited to the period outside nesting season.
- 6.35 In addition, the proposed development represents an opportunity for habitat enhancement through an appropriate planting scheme and this will be addressed through the landscaping condition.
- 6.36 The garden area is part of a Green Link, which Policy EN12 states “*are areas with potential for biodiversity value*” and form part of the Green Network. The Policy seeks to protect, consolidate and enhance these. The inspector who considered the last appeal stated that “... *this could be achieved by means of a landscaping scheme to enhance biodiversity, which could be made subject to condition.*” the Policy specifically refers to: “□ *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable*”. It is recommended, therefore, that a condition be included which requires the submission and approval of such biodiversity enhancements.
- 6.37 Subject to conditions and informatives the proposal is considered to accord with relevant Policies, CC7, EN12 & EN14.

#### **Sustainability**

- 6.38 Adopted Local Plan Policy CC2 requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials by using designs and site layouts which use “*energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change*”.
- 6.39 The Policy specifically states that “*Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.*”
- 6.40 Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Supporting text in para 4.1.8 states that “*The design of developments therefore needs to more carefully consider matters such as shading, insulation and ventilation, surface water runoff and storage and the use of appropriate tree and other planting.*”
- 6.41 Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.



- 6.42 Policy H5 sets out the expectations for the performance of new build homes in terms of emission and this is addressed through recommended conditions above.
- 6.43 The submitted Sustainability Statement identifies a range of sustainable measures which could be implemented including:
- Insulation within floors, roofs and walls to exceed the minimum standards required under Part L1 of the Building Regulations;
  - Installation of high efficiency COMBI boiler;
  - Proposed water consumption 106.9 l/p/d (litres/per person/per day) (below 125 allowed under Building Regulations);
  - Potential installation of a grey-water harvesting system;
  - Rainwater harvesting butt;
  - Individual water meters;
  - Permeable paving and new soakaway to comply with Building Regulations;
  - Contractor Site Waste Management Plan;
  - External lights using energy efficient bulbs, daylight detectors and angling/capping to prevent unnecessary glare.
- 6.44 Such measures are considered to accord with Policies CC2, CC3 and H5 and a condition is recommended which requires the development to be undertaken in accordance with the principles identified within the Sustainability Statement, and that evidence is provided post-construction to demonstrate which measures have been undertaken.

#### **Environmental matters**

- 6.45 *Japanese Knotweed*: Neighbour consultation has raised concerns over the presence of Japanese Knotweed, also referred to within the submitted DAS, and are seeking a condition to ensure its safe removal prior to any construction works. An informative is included advising the applicant of web resources regarding the safe removal and disposal of it and the use of specialist contractors.
- 6.46 *Asbestos*: The existing garage is believed to have an asbestos roof. Objectors have requested that should permission be granted that the demolition of the garage is undertaken by specialist contractors and that an informative is included to this effect. The agent has confirmed that an asbestos survey would be undertaken before works commence. As the removal of asbestos is dealt with under Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 then it is recommended that an informative is included, which identifies that Notifiable Non-Licensed Work (NNLW) with asbestos, such as works to remove asbestos cement products (e.g. roof sheeting) be notified to the enforcing authority (HSE for residential).

#### **Section 106**

- 6.47 In addition to Community Infrastructure Levy, and in accordance with Policy CC9 and H3, the following S106 obligations would be sought:

- Affordable Housing provision within the Borough - figure to be confirmed in an update report
- 6.48 The Applicant has confirmed that they agree to a policy compliant affordable housing contribution. However, although independent valuations were provided with the original submission these related to larger units. Further valuations will be sought based on the current amended scheme and the agreed S106 contribution will be reported in an update.

#### **Other Matters**

- 6.49 Objectors have raised concerns regarding the excavation for the proposed semi-basement. They have requested that “*appropriate safeguards are required of the builders to ensure that there is no subsequent subsidence damage to our building [no. 38] or deleterious effects on the local water table.*” Ensuring that the construction is undertaken to correct standards is a Building Control matter and an informative is recommended. However, any future effect on surrounding buildings is a civil matter.

#### **Equalities Impact**

- 6.50 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and whether there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application.

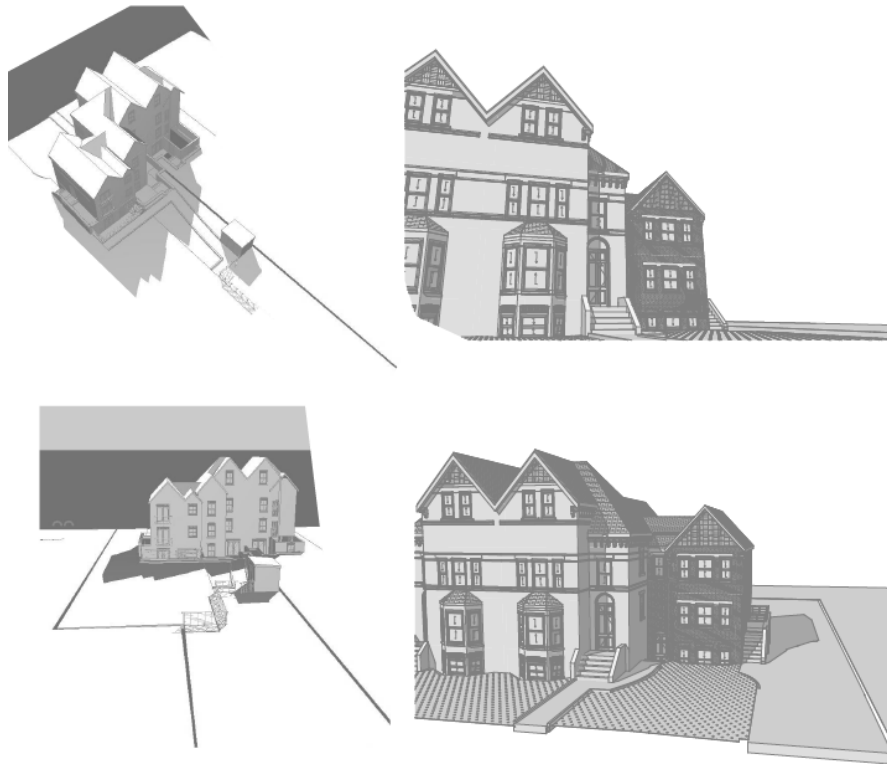
## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and previous planning history. With respect to housing mix the provision of three one bed flats would not be wholly policy compliant. However, this has been balanced against achieving a good quality design scheme, whilst meeting residential amenity concerns, effect on the overall character and appearance of the area, and it is considered that an exception to the policy is justified in this case. Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, and amendments have been secured, which are considered to satisfactorily address policy issues and previous shortcomings of earlier schemes, as set out in the above report, and overall officers consider this to be a supportable scheme. It is therefore, recommended for approval subject to conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement for the provision of a contribution towards affordable housing.

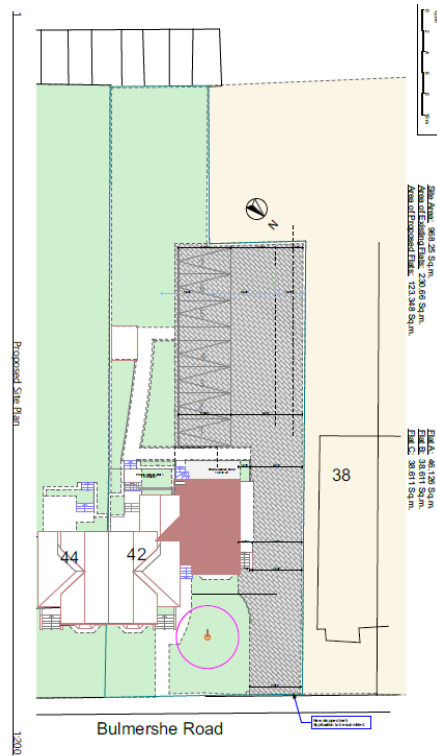
Case Officer: Alison Amoah

# APPENDIX 1: PLANS

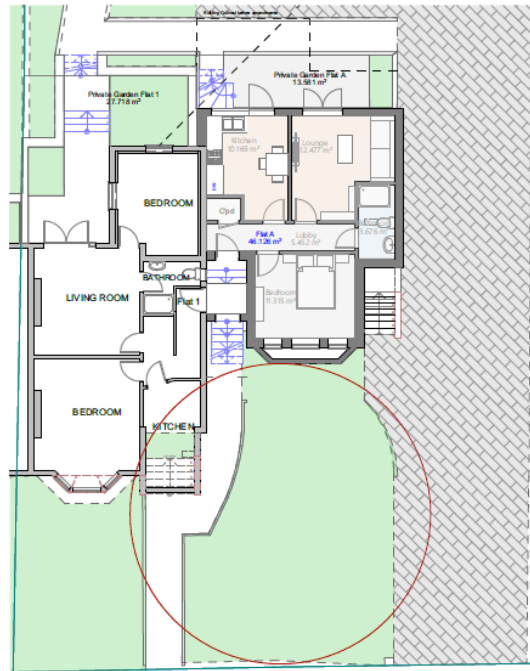
## 3d Views



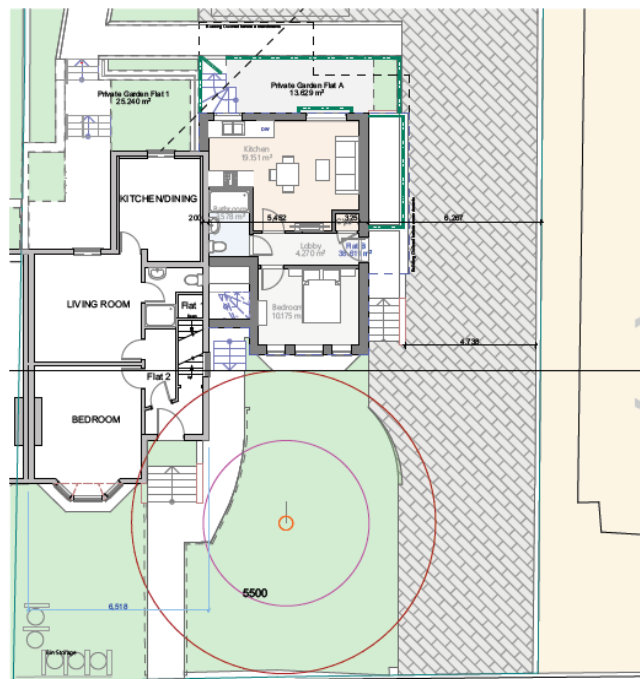
## Site Plan



### Lower Ground Floor Plan



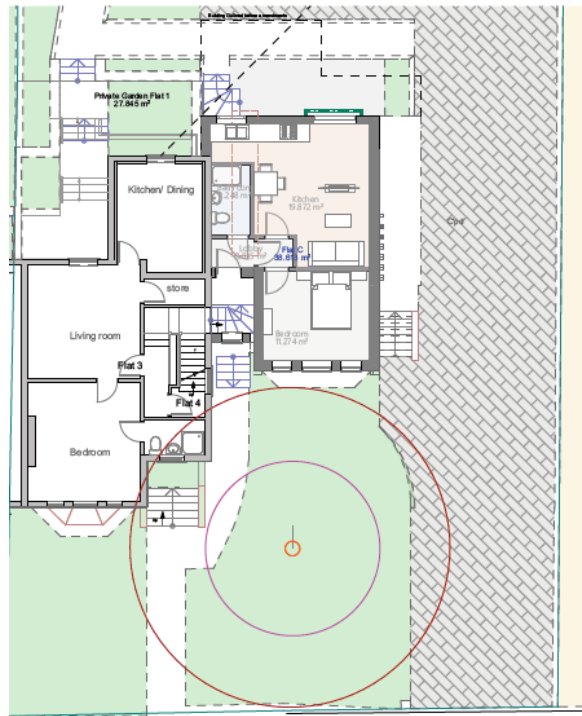
### Ground Floor Plan



1

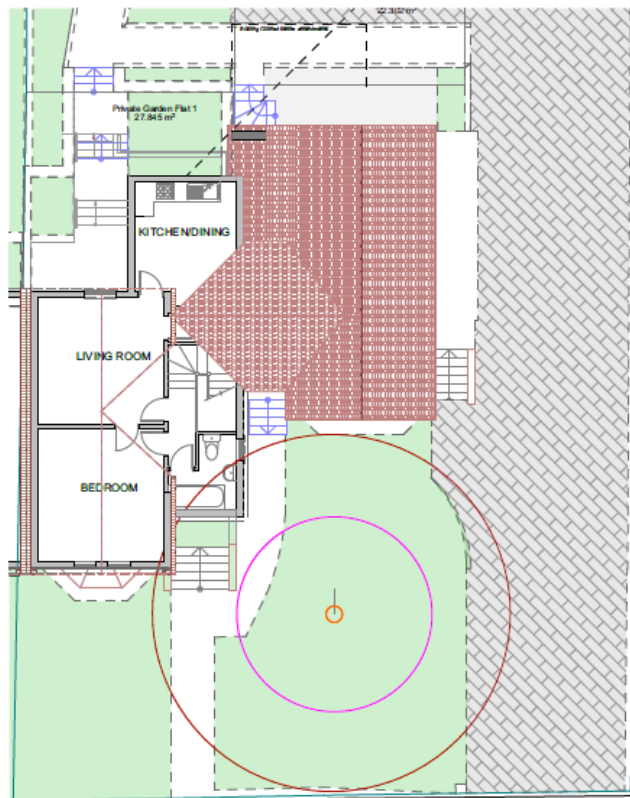
GF-Ground Floor

## First Floor Plan



01-First Floor

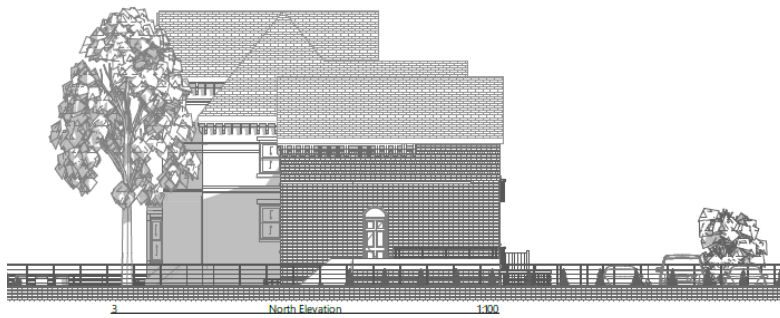
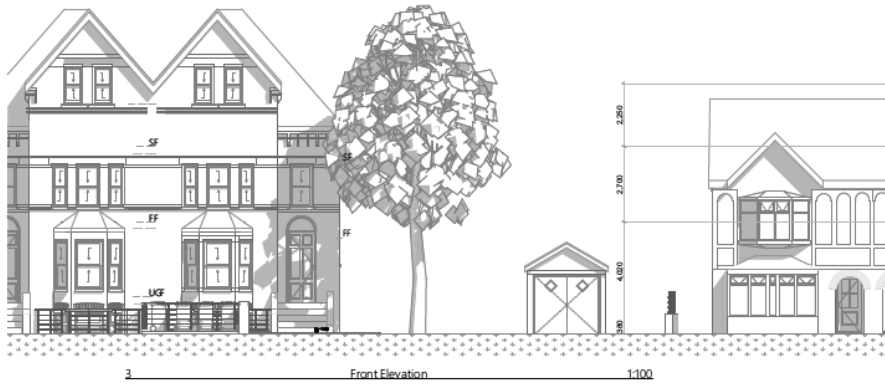
## Roof Plan



1

Roof Space

Elevations



## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 FEBRUARY 2020

**Ward:** Park

**App No.:** 191634

**Address:** Hamilton Centre, 135 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5SG

**Proposal:** Conversion of Hamilton Centre into 2 storey Special Educational Needs College for 11 - 18 yr olds. Project also includes a 500m2 new build extension, car parking, landscaping and multi use sports area.

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council

**Date received:** 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**Major Application PPA target decision date:** 14 February 2020

### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to **GRANT** planning permission by 7 February 2020 subject to a S106 legal agreement. If the S106 agreement is not signed by 30 May 2018, delegate to officers to REFUSE planning permission unless an extension of time is agreed as delegated by the HPDRS.

Outline of Heads of Terms [to be updated, as necessary]:

#### Community use provisions:

- (i) The provision for community use of the school hall, changing rooms and accessible toilet via an agreed Community Use Agreement (CUA) in accordance with the Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET) hire policy, no later than first occupation of the school (unless otherwise agreed) and any CUA to apply over the lifetime of the development.

#### Open space mitigation provisions

- (ii) Require playing pitch improvement works be undertaken to the value of **£25,000**. Notification of commencement and satisfactory completion of such works together with proof of undertaking to the value of **£25,000** will occur no later than first occupation of the school.

#### Employment and Skills Plan

- (iii) Commitment to provide a **Construction Phase Employment and Skills Plan (ESP)**; otherwise a payment towards such in accordance with the Council's adopted Employment, Skills and Training SPD.

An update to these Heads of Terms shall be provided in the Update Report, as required.

N.B. The above Heads of Terms are still be agreed by the various signatories to the application at the time of writing and any further discussion on these provisions are ongoing.

Conditions to include:

1. Std Three year time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Material samples
4. Existing and proposed ground levels plan
5. Hard and soft landscaping (Major scheme) - To include plans with full levels details, wildlife-friendly species and habitat creation, mixed-species hedging, permeable surfacing; details of new hard surfacing within RPAs; location of all utilities; all ancillary works including boundary fencing and their foundation details along with implementation, maintenance and aftercare.
6. Biodiversity Enhancements - to include integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings.
7. Arboricultural Method Statement
8. Full means of enclosure - to include new access gates and adherence to Secure by Design principles, to be installed prior to first occupation.
9. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
10. Construction/demolition hours of working (std)
11. No bonfires during construction
12. Vehicle parking (As specified)
13. Cycle parking (As specified)
14. Roads to be provided (As specified)
15. EV charging points
16. Car parking management plan
17. Travel Plan
18. Travel Plan annual review
19. Refuse, recycling and management arrangements - To include rat prevention measures.
20. BREEAM 'Excellent' to be achieved: Pre-assessment estimator
21. BREEAM 'Excellent' to be achieved: Post-Construction review
22. Details of surface water drainage scheme
23. No plant equipment to be installed until noise report submitted and approved
24. No ventilation/extraction to be installed until odour measures/mitigation submitted and approved
25. No installation/operation of external lighting before submission of lighting report, to include examination and mitigation of impacts on wildlife.
26. Reporting of any Unexpected Contamination

Informatives:

1. Positive and proactive working
2. Building Regulations approval required
3. S59 Highways Act
4. TRO/s38/s106/PROW informatives
5. Other permissions/consents may be required
6. This planning permission confers no right of access, nor does it infringe Civil rights
7. Landscaping ongoing works informative
8. Environmental Protection Act



## 1. INTRODUCTION

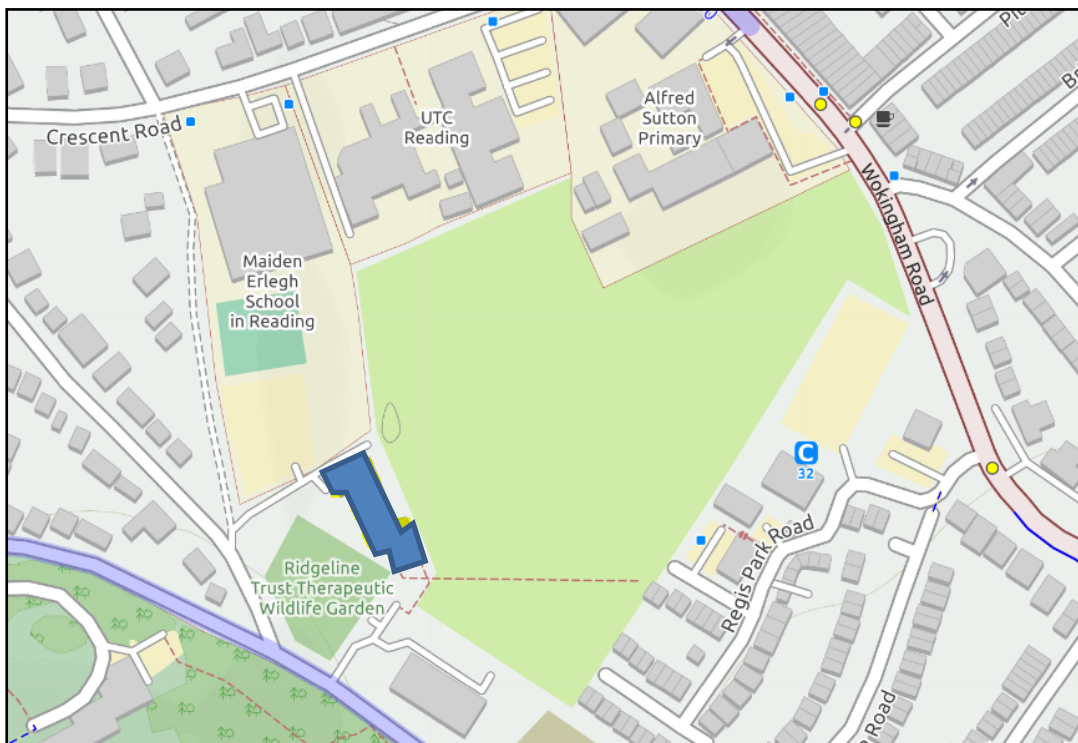
- 1.1 This Regulation 3 planning application is a result of a successful Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Priority Schools Building Programme Bid (PSBP2) made by Reading Borough Council. Planning Officers have worked closely with Hampshire County Council and the Council's Education Team at pre-application stage along with Sport England, Councillors and statutory consultees to ensure that this application is supported by relevant information and is clearly presented to members given the extensive and complex history of uses around the Alfred Sutton Playing Field in East Reading.
- 1.2 Officers can confirm that revised plans were received on 22 January 2020 making a series of changes to the proposal. Members will note that this application originally contained a proposal to convert the existing derelict tennis court into a tarmac Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for school and community use. However, this land had already been committed by the Council to mitigate against previous approved development adjoining the playing fields. Furthermore, the proposed unlit tarmac MUGA would not have satisfied Sport England requirements to accommodate greater all-year-round usage as compensation for any loss of the existing playing fields. For these reasons, this element of the proposal was withdrawn from this planning application.
- 1.3 Also of note as part of these revised plans are details of a new pedestrian access gate to the southern corner of the playing fields allowing access from Regis Park Road. This inclusion fulfils a past commitment of the Council to provide enhanced public access for nearby residents as a result of previously approved residential development. Whilst the wider use of the Alfred Sutton Playing Field by Maiden Erlegh Secondary School, University Technology College and Alfred Sutton Primary School remains unaffected by this application, enhanced public access is now included as part of this proposal and can be secured via condition to ensure implementation prior to first occupation of the development should members approve this scheme.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is an irregular shape, of approximately one hectare (although this shall be confirmed accurately in the Update report). A location plan is shown below.



2.1 The Hamilton Centre is an unoccupied community building situated on the south western corner of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields in the east of Reading Borough. The playing fields are also bounded by the annex to Maiden Erlegh (Secondary) School (MES), University Technology College (UTC) and Alfred Sutton Primary School (ASPS) to the north and northwest boundary. Wokingham Road runs along part of the eastern boundary whilst to the south east is the relatively new residential development off Regis Park Road. To the west are the residential streets of Bulmershe Road and Hamilton Road. Other buildings and uses in proximity to the playing fields are Lakeside Care Home, The Ridgeline Trust Therapeutic Wildlife Garden, Loddon House student accommodation (University of Reading) and Parkside Doctors Surgery. Figure 1 below shows the general Location of Hamilton Centre (highlighted) with surrounding uses.



*Figure 1 - General Location of Hamilton Centre (highlighted) with surrounding uses.*

- 2.2 The existing pedestrian and vehicular access to the site is gained from Bulmershe Road, close to the junction with Hamilton Road. This access leads to a car park shared with the staff of MESS. It should be noted that the Hamilton Centre and the wider playing fields are at a lower ground level that the access and car park, which are at the upper level of a steep bank. Fire escape/access from the Hamilton Centre is therefore currently provided by a bridge directly from the first floor of the building. A steep bank runs north/south separating the higher level of Bulmershe Road and the shared car park to the west with the lower level of the Hamilton Centre and the playing fields to the east. There is also a gentle fall in levels across the playing fields themselves from west to east. Mature trees line the perimeter of the playing fields to the south and west.
- 2.3 The existing playing pitches consist of five marked 7-side sports pitches and one occasional 11-side pitch, a grassed triangle to the southern corner and currently disused tennis courts in the far eastern corner. The surface is generally uneven and poorly draining due to the

compacted topsoil layer, especially in the southern corner used for sports. In addition to use by students at the adjoining primary, secondary and higher educational institutions, formal community use of the playing fields occurs at weekends by local youth football clubs. Use of the pitch is managed by the Crescent Road Playing Fields Joint Management Committee. This consists of Maiden Erlegh Trust, UTC, ASPS and Reading Borough Council. There are no designated public footpaths or rights of way within the site or the wider site area of the playing fields, however members of the public do benefit from access for informal dog walking and as a through-route from the Wokingham Road in the east. This is accessed by a path which runs along the southern perimeter from the Hamilton Centre on the western side to the disused tennis courts on the eastern side.



Figure 2 - Existing pitch layout

- 2.4 The Hamilton Centre itself was constructed in the 1970s and is a functional flat-roofed concrete and brick-clad building. The building was initially used as a Sixth form college for approximately 300 pupils, which ceased in the 1980s. Most recently the building was let as office space by Reading Borough Council to a number of institutions including Thames Valley University and WEA??. Part of the ground floor was converted into a Surestart children’s centre in 2010. The building has been vacant since October 2018.
- 2.5 The existing building is currently vacant and secured. At the time of Members’ site visit, the building appeared to be in a state of disrepair. The application site is not located within a Conservation Area, neither are there buildings of historic interest in the vicinity of the proposed development site.



*Figure 3 - Aerial view of Hamilton Centre (looking Northwest)*

### **3. PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for the refurbishment and extension of the Hamilton Centre to allow it to accommodate the relocation of the Phoenix College SEMH from its existing smaller site at Christchurch Road. The refurbished and extended building would provide general and specialist teaching accommodation for the relocated Phoenix College whilst an enclosed curtilage would provide outdoor play, circulation and green space for the pupils.
- 3.2 Phoenix College is a specialist education unit which accommodates 64 pupils with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) issues, for age range 11 - 18. The College's existing accommodation comprises of a converted Victorian town house which has been extended twice plus two modular single storey units to the rear. The college's existing site has been confirmed as not able to meet basic design and space standards required by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) output specification. The accommodation falls short of the space standards for a school of this size and type by over 50%. Furthermore, the quality and nature of the provision is very unsuited to the needs of a special school with a lack of sanitary facilities meaning that the College can only accept male pupils, despite there being local demand for female pupil places.
- 3.3 The provision of SEMH facilities is a specialised sector and fundamental in allowing the Council to fulfil its duty to provide education and care for its most vulnerable young people and purpose-built accommodation is necessary.
- 3.4 The ESFA (now Department for Education (DfE)) and RBC Education agreed that the existing Christchurch Road site and accommodation were unsuitable for development both in terms of meeting basic need and representing value for money. Agreement was reached to allow RBC as the Responsible Body to develop another more suitable site using a funding contribution from the DfE. This proposal is as a result of a detailed site options appraisal completed in April 2018 and subsequent feasibility study.

3.5 Specifically as part of this planning application, the proposed works associated in connection with the conversion of the Hamilton Centre in order to accommodate the relocated Phoenix College include:

- The recladding, re-roofing and re-glazing of the existing building;
- The construction of an extension to the northern side of the existing building. This would comprise of new main entrance, dining room, kitchen and changing rooms and a double height sports / assembly hall (hall, changing rooms, and accessible toilet available for community use);
- A purpose-built car park extension to the northern part of the site accessed through the existing shared car park;
- Creation of an enclosed external play area running parallel to the eastern façade of the building;
- Incorporating a triangular area of land to the southeast corner of the playing field bordering Lakeside Care Home and Regis Park Road to create a multi-use games area (tarmac MUGA) and provision of an orchard/wildlife area.
- Installation of a new gate to the southern boundary with Regis Park Road to allow enhanced public access from Regis Park Road to the wider playing fields.
- Financial contribution of £25,000 towards further improvement of the existing Alfred Sutton Playing Fields to correct drainage issues.

3.6 Fig 4 below identified the constitute parts of the proposal:

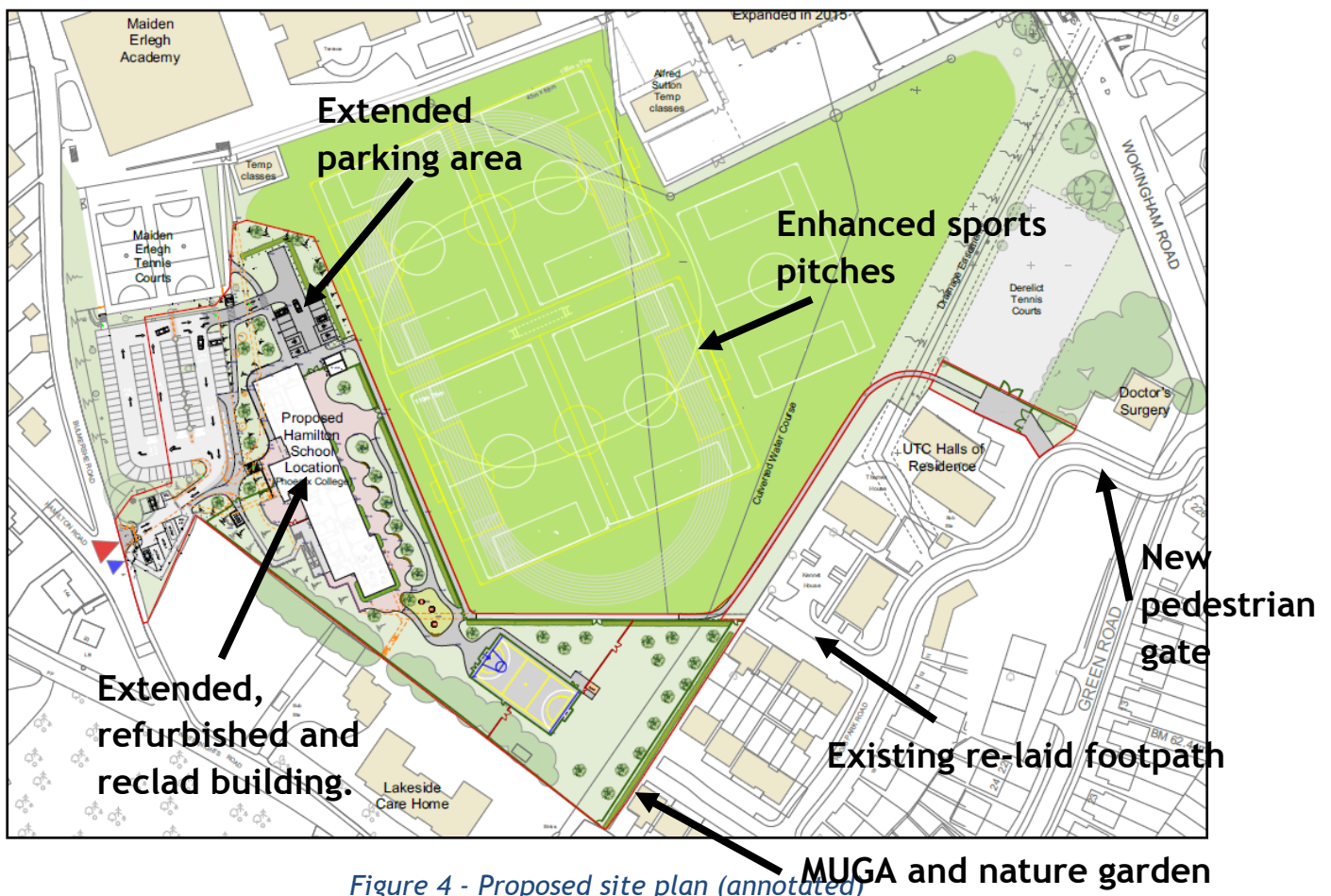


Figure 4 - Proposed site plan (annotated)

### 3 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

3.1 It should be noted that amended plans were received from the agent responding to a number of observations made by Officers, consultees, Elected Members and third parties.

Amended plans received in December and January consisted of the following:

- Removal of artificial grass pitch from disused tennis courts at Green Road;
- A supplementary Planning Statement for Sport England;
- Transport and parking amendments;
- Planting plan showing species and locations;
- Demolition and full Tree Protection Plan;
- Details of new perimeter path and pedestrian gate to southern boundary with Regis Park Road;
- Confirmation on the plans that the new changing room, accessible toilets and sport hall will be available for community use and bookings;

3.2 The CIL requirement for schools is nil under the Council's adopted CIL Charging Schedule.

3.3 Given the nature of the site and public access to the playing fields, Councillors were invited to undertake an unaccompanied site visit to the site. As both an RBC scheme and a Major planning application, it is being reported to Planning Applications Committee.

### 4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Relevant planning history is as follows:

10/00891/REG3	Refurbishment of vacant rooms at Hamilton Centre to provide a sure start children's centre, children's action team and health office accommodation and a new entrance shared with existing reading borough council youth integration provision, plus associated external works including a new footpath, a new entrance canopy, ramp and steps and new external play area.	Approved on 24 June, 2010
10/02198/APPCON	Discharge of condition 3 of planning permission 10/00891/reg3	Discharged 31 January, 2011
11/00063/APPCON	Discharge of conditions 2 and 4 of planning consent 10/000891/reg3	Discharged 03 March, 2011
12/00102/REG3	Installation of roof mounted solar photovoltaic (pv) panels	Permission 10 February, 2012

### 5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Sport England - No objection.

*“Thank you for re-consulting Sport England on the above application with additional information.*

*It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.*

*Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 97) and against its own playing fields policy, which states:*

*‘Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:*

- all or any part of a playing field, or*
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or*
- land allocated for use as a playing field*

*unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.’*

*Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can be viewed via the below link:*

[www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy](http://www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy)

*I have reviewed the additional information in light of my holding objection dated 6th December. The applicants are content that the proposal meets our planning policy exception E3. Having reconsulted with FA, I am minded to accept this statement.*

*The FA again have advised that they would be willing to work with the applicants on the delivery of a full size 3G sports lit Artificial Grass Pitch...*

*...We also welcome the applicants’ commitment to improve the drainage on the existing playing field.*

*Conclusion*

*Having assessed the application, Sport England is satisfied that the proposed development meets Exception 3 of our playing fields policy, in that:*

*‘The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:*

- reduce the size of any playing pitch*

- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.'

*This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application”.*

5.2 RBC Transport Strategy- No objection subject to conditions following receipt of revised plans and additional information.

*“The proposed application includes the refurbishment of the existing Hamilton Road Centre to provide general and specialist teaching accommodation, ancillary and support spaces including recladding, re-roofing and re-glazing of existing building. The proposals also include the construction of a single-storey block comprising main entrance, dining room, kitchen and changing rooms and a double height sports / assembly hall. These works are to facilitate the relocation of the Phoenix Special Educational Needs (SEN) College to the Hamilton Road Centre.*

*The School provides SEN education to pupils with Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs), providing support for social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. The existing site currently caters for male secondary aged pupils (11 to 18 years).*

*The School has capacity for 64 pupils, however only 43 pupils are currently on roll at the current site and this capacity is to be retained at the proposed application site.*

*The new build construction, on the application site, will be designed to cater for a future expansion in pupil numbers, up to 96 spaces. However, as this is yet to be confirmed by RBC, this application only focuses on the current school’s capacity of 64 pupils, as per the current site.*

*The current SEN School has a total of 24 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. This comprises of 16 teaching and support staff, 3 admin staff and 5 therapeutic support staff. If the School should be expanded in future to admit 96 students the staffing numbers would increase by four teaching and support staff, taking the total number to 28 FTE Staff. To future-proof this requirement, any parking standards for the new site will be based against 28 FTE staff.*

*The vacant building, on the new site, was once a Sixth form college with its last use being the Hamilton Children’s Centre. This closed in 2017 following a review by RBC of children’s centres across the borough. The building has remained vacant since then.*

*The application has been accompanied by a Transport Statement and I comment on this as follows:*

Location and Access

*The site is bordered by a residential care home (Lakeside) to the south, Hamilton Road and Bulmershe Road to the west, and the Maiden Erlegh Secondary School site to the North. A large playing field area (Alfred Sutton Playing Fields) is adjacent to the east (rear) of the new site location.*



*The only main public vehicular access to the new site is off Hamilton Road. This is the same access used, when it was a Children's Centre and also offers access to the Maiden Erlegh secondary school staff car park. There is an existing secondary vehicular entrance (gated) to the former tennis courts from Regis Park Road; this will be retained and used for maintenance access only.*

*The new school site is located on Hamilton Road, which offers the only vehicular access entrance to the site. It is a residential single carriageway road, street lit and subject to a 20mph speed limit (20mph roundels present on the carriageway). Speed cushions are present across sections of Hamilton Road, within the vicinity of the site's entrance junction.*

*There are no parking restrictions on Hamilton Road within the immediate vicinity of the site entrance. Some local residential properties have off street driveway parking while others do not, and so on street parking is evident. Double yellow lines are present around the junction of Hamilton Road and Whiteknights Road.*

*Footways are present along the western side of Hamilton Road, in the vicinity of the School entrance junction. A footway is present on the eastern side of Hamilton Road but ends just north of this entrance junction. No formalised pedestrian crossing facilities are present within the area.*

*Bulmershe Road is directly to the north of the main site access and shares the same entrance junction off Hamilton Road. Bulmershe Road is a private road and has an unmade surface. A 'No Entry' road sign is located to the right of its entrance with 'Private Road Access Only' presented underneath. Bulmershe Road does not have any street lighting.*

*The closest bus stops are on Whiteknights Road, close to the southern end of Hamilton Road, approx. 80m from the site entrance. These stops cater for the number 19a, b and c services which link the western suburban areas of Woodley and Earley with stops at the University of Reading Whiteknights campus, Royal Berkshire Hospital and the Town Centre, including outside the mainline rail station.*

*The number 17 bus service runs between Earley in the east of Reading borough to Tilehurst in the west, via the town centre and railway station. This is a route with services running 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. From Monday to Friday there is a high frequency service (every 8 mins) between the hours of 08:00am to 06:20pm. There are several stops for this service along the Wokingham Road (A329). The closest stop to the School for this service, is located on the Wokingham Road, to the rear of the playing field area, approx. 600m to the school's main entrance.*

*The primary vehicular access point for the new school will remain off Hamilton Road, and it is stated that it will be remodelled (including the entrance into the existing staff car park for Maiden Erlegh school) to facilitate two-way traffic flow movement in and out of the site. The submitted plans now identify a widening to 4.3m that would facilitate this and this has been deemed acceptable.*

*A drop off layby will be constructed, close to the school's entrance point. The drop off layby will help ensure that pupils are delivered safely to the school site, by their respective transport.*

*As the drop off layby will be on the right hand side of the car park, a movement strategy will be adopted for users of the car park, to ensure that all school related vehicles can drop pupils off on the left hand passenger side safely.*

*This will involve a one-way system around the car park to ensure that school related traffic can achieve this position within the layby area. In principle this proposal is acceptable however following the introduction of the circulatory route it is noted that the separation of the Maiden Erlegh School car park and the Hamilton Centre car park has been lost, it would therefore need to be confirmed how the parking will be managed to ensure that overspill parking does not occur into each car park. A car park strategy plan has been submitted which identifies the car parking spaces allocated to each use but this still does not specify how the spaces will be managed between the two uses. I am however happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.*

*Trip Generation*

*In order to understand the scope of anticipated site trip generation, at peak AM and PM times, pupil travel to school data (provided by Phoenix College) had been utilised to provide a baseline percentage. However this did not include any information on staff travel, the transport addendum for the school has reviewed the travel to work data but this is an inaccurate assessment as this takes data from residents of the area specified and not data of employees. This assessment is therefore unacceptable. I have however undertaken my own assessment for the school as a whole and this is as follows:*

*Table 1 - School Vehicle Trip Rate*

	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>0.128</i>	<i>0.131</i>	<i>0.259</i>
<i>PM</i>	<i>0.042</i>	<i>0.026</i>	<i>0.068</i>

*Table 2 - Actual School Number of Vehicle Trips*

	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>PM</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>

*This is an acceptable assessment and identifies that staff would travel to and from the school mainly outside of the peak periods.*

*In addition, as identified at the pre-application stage, no assessment has been undertaken on the existing use of the site to identify how this would differ from the proposed use. I appreciate the Planning Statement states that the building was initially used as a Sixth form for approximately 300 pupils and has most recently been let as office space with part of the ground floor converted into a Surestart Children’s centre in 2010 and this may have resulted in higher trip generation but this must be confirmed through a detailed assessment.*

*The Transport Addendum has been submitted and this has provided further analysis between the existing and proposed uses. I have reviewed the submitted TRICS data for the existing use and it is noted that the site has included sites that are not comparable to the application site as they are not located in similar locations.*

*I have undertaken my own assessment of the trip rates for the existing use and I include acceptable trip rates and subsequent number of trips in the tables below.*

*Table 3 - Office Vehicle Trip Rate*

	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>0.528</i>	<i>0.043</i>	<i>0.571</i>
<i>PM</i>	<i>0.071</i>	<i>0.563</i>	<i>0.634</i>

*Table 4 - Actual Office Number of Vehicle Trips*

	Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	23	2	25
PM	3	24	27

*Table 5 - Children Centre Vehicle Trip Rates*

	Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	0.400	0.133	0.533
PM	0.429	0.714	1.143

*\*It should be noted that due to no trip rate being available for a children centre trip rates for a community centre have been used.*

*Table 6 - Actual Children Centre Number of Vehicle Trips*

	Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	1	1	2
PM	1	2	3

*Table 7 - Total Vehicle Trips Generated by the Development*

	Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	24	3	27
PM	4	26	30

*Overall the proposal results in a reduction in trips from the existing use and therefore has been deemed acceptable in principle.*

#### Parking

*It has been stated that the current SEN School has a total of 24 full time equivalent (FTE) staff but should the school be expanded in future to admit 96 students the staffing numbers would increase by four teaching and support staff, taking the total number to 28 FTE Staff. The parking demand has been assessed based on the larger demand and this has been deemed acceptable.*

*It has been stated that the parking requirements have been calculated in line with RBC's Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011), which stipulates a maximum requirement of 1 space per FTE\* staff. This equates to a provision of 28 spaces, and revised drawings have been submitted that identify this provision and is therefore acceptable.*

*Within this provision 4 disabled bays have been retained and is acceptable. These bays have been relocated to within the new car parking area and this makes access to the building more accessible than the existing situation.*

*In line with the adopted Local Plan the proposal should include a provision of 10% electric charging points which equates to 4 spaces. The revised plans have identified that this provision will be provided but the plans do not specify the location of the charging points. I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.*

*The new car park is provided with 3 minibus bays to facilitate travel of pupils to and from the school and this is acceptable. Three powered two-wheeler spaces have also been provided and this is acceptable. The car park layout has been reviewed and now retains a provision of 63 spaces for Maiden Erlegh School in the rear car park and is acceptable.*

*Ten cycle spaces are proposed for both staff and pupils use which complies with Policy, this is a retained existing facility and complies with policy.*

#### Internal Design

To ensure there would be sufficient space within the site to accommodate the anticipated 10 vehicles at the peak drop-off and pick-up times as well as service and emergency vehicles tracking has been undertaken. This has been reviewed and been deemed acceptable.

In the circumstances there are no transport objections to the proposal subject to the following conditions.

- C2 Construction method statement (to be submitted)
- DC1 Vehicle parking (as specified)
- DC5 Cycle parking (as specified)
- DC12 Roads to be provided (as specified)
- DC24 EV charging points
- DC17 Car parking management plan

I am happy with the framework travel plan subject to the following conditions.

- DC18 TRAVEL PLAN
- DC19 ANNUAL REVIEW OF TRAVEL PLAN

5.3 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions. Comments below summarised as follows:

#### *Environmental Protection concerns*

- Noise arising from development - mechanical plant and sports facilities
- Air quality impact
- Light - external / floodlighting
- Odour and noise - kitchen extraction
- Construction and demolition phase
- Bin storage - rats

#### Noise generating development

*Mechanical plant - Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. A preliminary noise assessment has been submitted as the plant has not been designed yet. The noise assessment submitted has been carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 and the methodology has been correctly applied, however the assessment proposes that the noise rating level of the proposed plant will be less than -10dB below the background noise so there may be some adverse impact on the local noise climate. The noise source specific noise level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor and the rating level should not exceed the background level (as measured in accordance with BS4142:2014). Within Reading there is strong justification for requiring the plant specific noise level to be at least -10dB below the measured background level. Specifically to prevent cumulative impact from addition of plant over time which could result in background creeping up to levels which might cause adverse health impact, which is more likely in a densely occupied town such as Reading. Levels of -10dB ensure that the background level is not increased and nuisance is unlikely.*

*Ideally a full noise assessment with plant details should be submitted at application stage in case the plant requires significant redesign in order to meet the required noise criteria. If this is not possible then the following condition is recommended.*

*Recommended Condition - BS4142 Noise assessment to be submitted*

*Sports facilities*

*Noise from the sports pitches are likely to impact on the amenity of surrounding residents. It is acknowledged that the grass pitches are already in existence and the redesign is unlikely to significantly impact on the noise experienced by residents, unless the hours of use will change. Further information is requested regarding existing and proposed hours of use of the grass pitches. The artificial turf pitch is located in close proximity to residents and it is replacing a derelict tennis court therefore the impact of increased noise may be significant. A noise assessment is recommended for this part of the development which should be ideally prior to consent being issued.*

*Kitchen Extraction - odour*

*In addition to concerns about noise (as discussed above), cooking odour is often a significant problem in commercial kitchens and therefore the applicants must provide an assessment of the likelihood of odours based on the proposed cuisine and a statement of how the proposals will ensure that odour nuisance will be prevented. Reference must be made to the Defra Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (January 2005).*

*The following condition could be attached to consent, however it is possible that the criteria cannot be met with the plant specifications proposed in this application and a new application may need to be made at a later date for alternative plant / location.*

*Condition - Odour assessment*

*Air Quality - Increased emissions*

*As the school is relocating from another nearby site (although it will be expanding), and there is a sustainable travel plan in place, I recommend that an air quality assessment is not required for this development.*

*Contaminated Land*

*You are advised that the development lies on the site of an historic brick works. The site investigation has not identified any contaminants of concern on the section of the site that is being redeveloped, however, the following condition is recommended.*

*Recommended condition - Reporting of Unexpected Contamination*

*Light*

*I have concerns about any proposed flood-lighting of the redesigned playing fields and/or all-weather pitch resulting in loss of amenity to nearby residents.*

*If flood lighting is proposed then the application should be refused until more details have been submitted; this information should include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type; mounting height; aiming angles and luminaire profiles) and an isolux contour map to show light spill levels (down to 2 lux if operating between 23:00 and 07:00, or down to 10 lux if operating only between 07:00 and 23:00). The plans should show neighbouring buildings so that the predicted impact on them can be assessed. The applicants should demonstrate that light levels will not exceed the*

relevant guidance lux levels specified in the table below. Information should also show how glare will be controlled.

#### Construction and demolition phases

*We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).*

*Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site would be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.*

#### *Recommended conditions*

*Control of Noise and Dust - CMS to be submitted  
Hours of Working - construction and demolition phase  
Bonfires  
Bin storage - rats  
Details of bin stores'*

5.4 RBC Education and Children's Services - No comments received as a Reg 3 application made on their behalf

5.5 RBC Planning Natural Environment Team - No objection subject to conditions.

*"Whilst I appreciate that not all details will be resolved prior to a decision (but secured by condition instead), the response to the points in my email of 7/11/19 is disappointing. The request for maximising the opportunity for large canopy trees has not been achieved with only 2 trees over the whole site (Quercus rubra) falling in this category. The variety of Acer saccharinum and Acer platanoides proposed are both more narrow in form than the species.*

*The request for predominantly native trees and non-native to be wildlife friendly has not been met - 6 species are proposed; 3 of which are non-native, albeit one (Pyrus) has noted wildlife value (bee friendly); one of the natives is a 'naturalised' species. It would have been helpful to have an explanation with the landscaping to try and understand that proposed. I note the inclusion of 'Apple Discovery' (taken to be 'Malus Discovery') on the eastern side and a native hedge around the perimeter with the field and eastern boundary, which is positive.*

*I understand that GS Ecology have requested ecological enhancements, over and above wildlife friendly planting, which have not been indicated on the landscape plan but could be secured via condition.*

*In relation to tree retention and removal, the drawing proposed doesn't cover the whole site, which would be expected. Whilst it shows which trees are to be removed by location, no details are given about the trees, i.e. a tree survey, hence the tree numbers and species is not given, as would be expected. The drawing shows an indicative line of tree protective fencing but does not give the specifications of this and as it does not cover the eastern part of the site (including the TPO trees at the Lakeside Care Home, whose RPAs should be used to determine the location of fencing) therefore it would not be an acceptable plan for tree protection purposes. In addition, it does not give a detailed method for fencing installation within the RPAs of the TPO Lime trees at the Care Home as requested.*

*I note that Proposed Sports Pitch Layout drawing E03700-L-7103 P4 indicates some level changes in the eastern area. It will be important to clarify these given that the mature trees on the boundary (within Lakeside Care Home) are protected. I assume you are happy to agree the boundary treatment via condition as no final details of this appear to have been given. I note that field drainage work is to take place to assist the very wet conditions.*

*I assume you are at the stage of recommending approval in your PAC report and whilst most matters can be secured via condition, i.e. the principle of development is acceptable in tree and landscape terms, I would suggest it is appropriate to request that the total number of trees to be felled (included species) be provided along with the total number to be planted in order to confirm a net gain for PAC - it would be best for this to be supported by a 'Tree Removal and Retention' plan for the whole site, which could then be an approved document.*

*The following standard conditions would then be appropriate:*

*L2 (hard & soft landscaping etc) - all parts required; please move 'tree pit specifications' from part e to part c*

*L3 (boundary treatment)*

*L7 (Arb Method Statement)*

*There now does not appear to be a standard condition which includes ecological enhancements so please can you add an additional point to L2 in line with Giles' request, i.e.: Biodiversity enhancements, including integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings."*

5.6 Berkshire Archaeology - No objections.

5.7 RBC Access Officer - No objections.

5.8 RBC Ecology Consultant - No objection subject to the following conditions.

*Details of external lighting*

*Hard and soft landscaping*

5.9 Crime Prevention Design Advisor - No comment received.

5.10 RBC Leisure and Recreation Service - No comments received

#### ***Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)***

5.11 The applicant's SCI report summarises public engagement before submission of this planning application as follows:

- Design Proposals Public Consultation 12.09.19
- Meeting with Maiden Erlegh Secondary School - 25.01.19 and 16.09.19
- Meeting with University Technology College - 24.01.19
- Councillor Consultations - 12.09.19

#### ***Public consultation***

5.12 Neighbour notification was undertaken on 17th October 2019. A site notice was displayed at the entrance to the site publicly visible from Bulmershe Road for the requisite period.

13 letters of representation received (11) objecting to the proposal (1) observation and (2) from individuals in their capacity as Ward Councillors. The neighbour representations are summarised below.

- Concern regarding additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic at peak times. Additional traffic will lead to tailbacks and unsafe crossing conditions. The level of traffic will also pose a risk to the potential students.
- White knights Road has no crossing but is used by large numbers of pedestrians, including school children.
- Request assurance that adequate parking for parents collecting students at the end of the day and cars will not be parked in Crescent Rd.
- This part of Bulmershe Road is unadopted and we would want to keep it as access only for the private properties during the construction process and when the school is open.
- Object to the public access to the playing fields being stopped.
- Welcome the development of the site for Phoenix College however I am concerned over the expansion into Local Green Space.
- The plans indicate a total exclusion of public access to a green space originally donated to the community.
- Concern over the function of the enclosed pieces of grass field.
- The proposed playground is too close to our property/fence, we understand that this school is for special needs students, in this case, ideally, the playground needs close to its school buildings as possible.
- Will additional trees be planted in the area and if so, will they have any height and density indications?
- Current pitches already used to capacity and overcrowded.
- Inaccuracies in the plans to do with the location and extent of embankment.
- Continued and convenient public access to the green space is essential as this is community land.
- This is the third time this green space will have been eroded with justification being that it is for the provision of school facilities. Agree that school provision is essential but so is the protection of green space and community access to it. It is hoped the plans can be amended to allow for the school development with these rights in mind.
- Whilst the need to relocate the college is understood, a better alternative might be to split the sites into 1) autistic children requiring sensory and rehabilitant the existing building on its current footprint 2) retaining the existing site for current use.
- The playing field gets waterlogged and boggy to the degree that areas are regularly unusable for many weeks at a time.
- The proposed built areas of the car park, gym building, hardcourt, and related play space in front of the buildings, are all necessary BUT displace green areas which are to varying degrees essential to the life of the field.
- The plans will compress the played areas on which three existing schools rely and will make for a greater footfall on this compressed area which is already vulnerable.
- Unacceptable that the derelict tennis courts remain derelict in this new and more challenging context and there must be a firm commitment to take this forward with interested parties in the community. These might include the Lawn Tennis Association and the Football Federation.

Cllr Pearce



*“As the lead Councillor for Education in Reading, I would like to stress my wholehearted support for this application. Phoenix College is a Special School for young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) issues who have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Many of our students here have complex needs, difficult backgrounds and lots are entitled to pupil premium funding, with Phoenix taking them after they have struggled in mainstream schooling. It takes in boys aged 11-18, largely from the local Reading area but not exclusively, and currently has capacity for 64 students with around 50 currently on roll. Its current location is an old house on Christchurch Road in Redlands Ward. The building is not fit for purpose for education and has recently had some emergency repairs to make it usable for students in the short term, but it cannot be home to some of our most vulnerable young people going forward.*

*Funding from the DfE has been secured to fund a new site. The chosen site is on Hamilton Road, which would see it located next to Maiden Erlegh Reading, the UTC and Alfred Sutton-a small hub of schools that can help and support each other. With a recent disappointing Ofsted result, the school has recently become an academy, and with this new site, with new oversight of the School, we have a great opportunity to make Phoenix the education setting that these young people deserve. The Hamilton Centre will need some internal renovations outlined in the report, but this is not a new build, and will be built with the potential in future to also school females to extend the total numbers to 90. Potentially an excellent and much needed educational resource in Reading.*

*The loss of green space is minimal, there is a large field behind these schools that the schools agree to share (times of day for PE and break/lunch times) and current designs see a path and a small corner used. The site/field is open to the public but not often used and discussion between schools about sharing the land is ongoing. In terms of the parking, the school involves only a small number of students, and many travel by bus, but this will need further investigation of the student cohort when the school is ready to move and will be detailed in the school's travel plan. With the school helping 50 of Reading's most vulnerable students, this planning application must pass to ensure that the site is fit for purpose and that these students get the support they deserve.”*

Cllr White and Cllr McGonigle

*“Residents have contacted us to express their views, which you may also see logged through the planning system.*

*We warmly welcome Phoenix College to the Hamilton Road site. They are a fantastic educational establishment doing a critical job and they and their pupils deserve a great school building and surroundings.*

*The application intends to take Local Green Space (LGS) from the Alfred Sutton playing fields (or Crescent Road Playing Fields) and re-assign it for educational use. We understood the LGS to have the same protection as 'Green Belt' land, and only to be developed in very exceptional circumstances. Is the use of LGS for an expanded car park justified by exceptional circumstances?*

*The application intends to partially mitigate for the loss of LGS by developing the old tennis courts / Mosque site on the Regis Park Road side. Community use areas are always welcome. However, this land was already used as mitigation for the Alfred Sutton School expansion.*

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/Data/Policy%20Committee/20150720/Agenda/item14.pdf> This was done to alleviate Sport England's concerns over previous school expansion onto playing fields, and we are worried that this is now 'double-counting', and using the same piece of land to mitigate against multiple expansions into local green space.

The application intends some mitigation by developing the old tennis courts as "community use". However, residents have raised concerns that the previous Alfred Sutton School application (140968) also sought to use community use sports pitches as mitigation for loss of green space - which we don't think ever happened. Residents are concerned that the Council as applicant cannot be trusted to carry through its mitigation measures, without which the loss of open space has not been mitigated.

The application doesn't seem to allow for access to the playing fields from the Regis Park Road end, which was a condition of the application which originally developed Regis Park Road (application 071612). This condition doesn't seem to have ever been met, and it was our understanding that the developer had passed that condition back to the Council with a sum of money, and that the Council would seek to meet it as soon as it carried out any further development work. This application is that development work, but appears to be missing this access to the fields.

Residents have also raised concerns about increased traffic, parking and school transport in an already difficult area.

Finally, residents have raised concerns regarding any work on the playing fields, and especially additional drainage work, that might affect the culvert stream that runs from the Whiteknights lake underneath the playing fields. Please can we be assured that this will be properly taken into account?"

## 6. PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### 6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 4 - Decision-making

Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport

Section 11 - Making effective use of land

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### 6.2 Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CC2: Sustainable design and construction

CC3: Adaptation to climate change

CC5: Waste minimisation and storage

CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development

CC7: Design and the public realm

CC8: Safeguarding amenity

CC9: Securing infrastructure

EN2: Areas of archaeological significance

EN7: Local green space and public open space  
EN12: Biodiversity and the green network  
EN14: Trees, hedges and woodland  
EN15: Air quality  
EN16: Pollution and water resources  
EN18: Flooding and drainage  
TR1: Achieving the transport strategy  
TR3: Access, traffic and highway-related matters  
TR5: Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging  
OU1: New and existing community facilities  
ER1: Sites for development in East Reading

### 6.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)  
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)  
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)  
Planning Obligations under S.106 (2015)

### 6.4 Other Reading Borough Council Corporate documents

Reading Open Space Strategy (2007)  
Reading Open Space Strategy Update Note (2018)  
Reading Tree Strategy (2010)  
Reading Draft Playing Pitches Strategy

### 6.5 Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)  
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)  
Department for Transport Manual for Streets  
Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2  
Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Reading Borough Council

## 7. **APPRAISAL**

The main considerations in the consideration of this planning application are:

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance of the area
- Amenity and public access
- Natural Environment
- Parking and access
- Environmental Protection
- Other matters

### 7.1 Principle of development

7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the area is the newly adopted Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019 which contains up-to-date policies relevant for the determination of this application. A key material consideration remains the National

Planning Policy Framework (2019), which contains equally up-to-date national guidance an LPA must have regard to. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making but is an important material consideration in any subsequent determination.

7.1.2 In considering the principle of such development it is considered helpful to identify the two principal components which constitute this proposal. These are:

- 1) The physical reuse, refurbishment and extension of the Hamilton Centre to accommodate an alternative community use; and
- 2) The loss of existing open space which would come about because of (1).

### ***Reading Borough Local Plan***

7.1.3 In firstly considering the Development Plan as the starting point, Policy CC1 outlines the positive and proactive approach to new development which directly reflects the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy CC1 is clear that any proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The local plan polices considered relevant to the assessment of both principle component are as follows and will be considered in turn:

7.1.4 In firstly considering component 1 for the reuse of the Hamilton Centre, the new Local Plan identifies the building and its access from Bulmershe Road as a housing allocation for 13-19 dwellings under Policy ER1f. Overarching Policy ER1 outlines the Council's strategy for development in East Reading and consists of 8 sites meeting a commitment of 'up to' 67 dwellings and a range of student accommodation and non-residential needs. Policy ER1f states that this site, at 0.35 ha, is anticipated to accommodate between 13-19 dwellings, address any contamination on site, avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets and justify the loss of existing community provision. See extract from the Local Plan proposal map below (Figure 4).

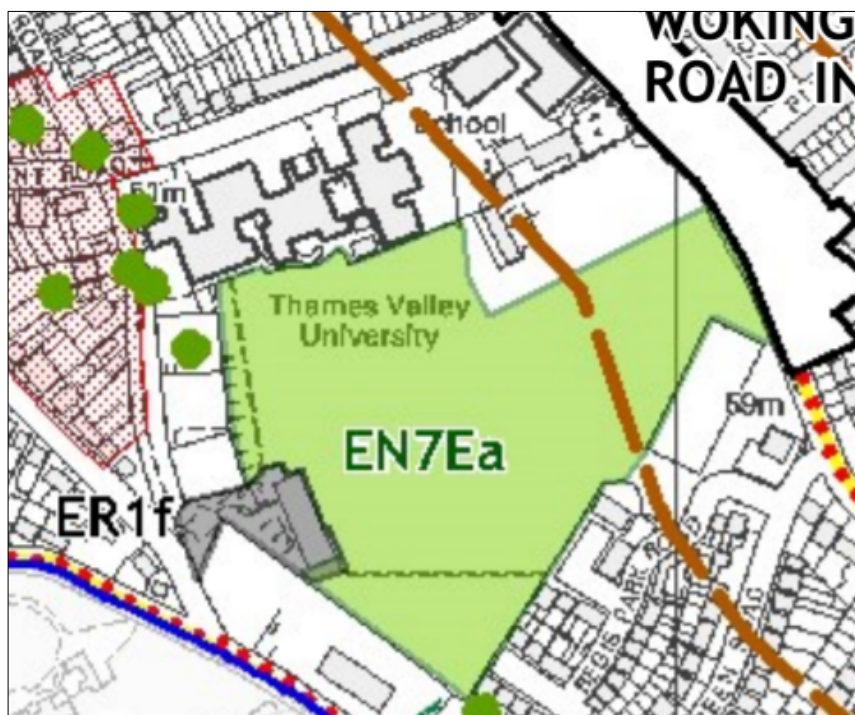


Figure 5 - Extract from Local Plan Proposal Map F (Not to scale)

- 7.1.5 The supporting text to Policy ER1 does however recognise that some of the sites identified for housing under Policy ER1 have the potential for community uses such as education uses not anticipated by the plan. The plan accepts that this would reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on such sites and as such, alternative uses could be appropriate provided that they do not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in the Local Plan.
- 7.1.6 As the Local Plan has recently been adopted, many of the sites identified through Policy ER1 (and wider strategic housing allocations contained within the plan) remain available to be brought forward for residential use through the planning process. As such, officers advise that there is no clear concern at this stage to demonstrate that the removal of this modest allocation site (of between 13-19 dwellings) from the overall housing land supply in place of a new community use to meet a identified SEMH need (not anticipated by the plan) would prejudice the Plan's overall strategy for meeting its housing need. Therefore, the in-principle retention and reuse of the Hamilton Centre for a new community use (SEMH school) is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.1.7 Policy CC9 'Securing Infrastructure' recognises the need for development within the Borough to be supported by the appropriate provision of services and infrastructure. Relevant to this proposal, Policy CC9 identifies both education and open space as particular aspects of infrastructure in which the highest priority must be given in the planning process.
- 7.1.8 The Hamilton Centre was originally constructed and used for educational purposes and therefore this its existing use is considered to be D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) in planning use terms. As the site now lies vacant, its refurbishment and reuse for much-needed community purposes (component 1) is supported in principle by Policy CC9 and would constitute an efficient use of an existing previously developed land within the Borough.
- 7.1.9 Finally, Policy OU1 'New and Existing Community Facilities' supports proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities. The policy recognises such development can include on-site intensification of important facilities such as schools. This proposal would result in an existing community facility being refurbished, extended, with additional car parking and curtilage being provided to facilitate its new use as a SEMH school. The Policy goes on to confirm that where a proposal for a new school meets a clear need, and it would otherwise accord with national and local policy, it will be acceptable on sites identified for residential or other development. This reinforces your officers' position that the current identified need outweighs the non-provision of the residential allocation contained within Policy ER1.
- 7.1.10 In moving on to consider component 2 as described in 7.1.2, a direct result of relocating an existing community facility to this site would be the need to physically extend the existing building, creation of a new car park and enclosed curtilage to create the require amount of playground, MUGA and nature garden for pupils. Therefore, the loss of peripheral parts of The Alfred Sutton Playing Field must be carefully considered.
- 7.1.11 Policy EN7 affords protection to both Local Green Space (LGS) and Public Open Space (POS) from inappropriate development. The Alfred Sutton Playing Fields is specifically identified within this policy as 4.9ha of LGS (Policy EN7Ea). This LGS has an area of useable playing fields of 3.4ha. The policy states that proposals which would result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development, or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted.
- 7.1.12 The Local Plan and specifically Policy EN7 recognise that access to high quality open spaces, sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of

communities. This policy supports the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2020) and has been informed by the Council's Open Spaces Strategy where the protection of publicly accessible recreational open space is considered to be of great importance.

- 7.1.13 As a result of its specific location, form and current use, the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields provide both a valuable resource for those educational institutions which adjoin it and continues to provide albeit limited opportunities for informal public recreation to members of the local community.
- 7.1.14 Policy EN7 is specifically applicable to those areas of open space which can be accessed by the public. The policy makes the important distinction between those areas with unrestricted public access, like a park, and those with restricted public access, such as school playing fields, which are not covered by the policy. It is therefore important to understand how the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are currently utilised and therefore what weight can be afforded to this policy.
- 7.1.15 The Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are primarily utilised as school playing fields with playing pitches taking up much of the available space. This is reflected by its name within the Local Plan and the fact it has been identified for future playing pitch use within the Council's draft Playing Pitches Strategy. However, notwithstanding any intended future use arrangements which are outside the control of this application, the land has been historically and continues to be accessible and used by members of the public. Pedestrians and dog walkers do enter the site and make use the perimeter path surrounding the pitches.
- 7.1.16 The amount of space now accessible and permitted for informal enjoyment by the public is limited and as described above is constrained by the heavy reliance and utilisation of the pitches by the four existing education establishments, especially during term time. This is supplemented by community football use on weekends which limits opportunities for informal public use. The pitches are managed by the Crescent Road Playing Fields Joint Management Committee. Given the recognised operational needs for educational use, officers consider that the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields functionally operate as formal school playing fields with restricted public access; rather than as a public park providing opportunities for unrestricted informal play and recreation by the general public.
- 7.1.17 Whilst this application does not affect the overall way in which the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are used, the proposal would result in the loss of approximately 0.87ha of LGS i.e. useable playing field plus total marginal land (excluding Hamilton Centre and curtilage).
- 7.1.18 The wording of the policy makes it necessary to distinguish between land used primarily for informal recreation, like a public park, and land used primarily for managed playing pitches (as in this case). In considering specifically the identified areas of LGS which would be lost, it would mainly include land immediately surrounding the Hamilton Centre, the embankment adjoining the car park and leftover land to the south between the main building and the perimeter 'run-off' areas of the eastern pitches. There would not be any loss of public footpaths, nor would the ability be restricted for members of the public to continue to travel through or around the pitches as they currently do. Nonetheless, it is recognised that the development as proposed would clearly result in the loss of a part of the designated LGS and possibly alter the way the public access and experience the site.
- 7.1.19 Whilst accepting that there will be a degree of conflict with Policy EN7, applying the full weight to the criteria and protections afforded by this policy to such land identified in 7.1.18 in light of the policy's overall intention (to prevent loss or jeopardise the use or enjoyment of such land by the public) is considered inappropriate in this instance. Other specific policies within the Local Plan consider whether the proposals would result in any loss or

erode the 'quality' of this land (as playing fields) and therefore must also be considered in this section.

7.1.20 Policy OU1 'New and Existing Community Facilities' is clear in its support for new, extended or improved community facilities. Importantly for this proposal, this policy recognises that the on-site intensification of some facilities (particularly schools) may result in the loss of some open areas. It acknowledges this may be acceptable where the following criteria are met:

1. The impact on open areas is minimised, and the area has no specific use, or
2. Where that use can satisfactorily be accommodated elsewhere on the site.

7.1.21 However, similar to Policy EN7, these criteria do not include loss of sports pitches and playing fields. This policy goes on to state that sports pitches and playing fields in particular, "*should only be developed where either one of the following exceptions can be met:*

- a) an assessment clearly shows the area to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss."*

7.1.22 As described above, this proposal is considered to result in the loss of part of the existing Alfred Sutton Playing Fields, with due regard to its primary existing use as sports and playing fields, it is necessary to consider whether any of the exceptions (a-c) of Policy OU1 are able to be met.

7.1.23 Firstly, regarding exception a), officers recognise that the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are over-utilised by the existing schools which surround the site during the week and local football clubs on weekends. This is confirmed by an existing RBC commitment to put the disused tennis courts (referred to as the 'Green Road site') back into use as recreational open-space for use by the schools and community. This commitment was approved by the Council's Policy Committee on 20 July 2015 and constituted appropriate mitigation (amongst other measures) in response to the historic expansion and encroachment of MES and ASPS onto the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields. The proposal would therefore fail exception a) of Policy OU1 as there is no evidence to show that any areas of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields to be lost would be surplus to requirements.

7.1.24 With regard to exception b), the proposal would result in the loss of part of the earth embankment, part of the edge of the existing playing field along the length of the new building and enclose a larger triangle of land not able to be used for sport pitches to the south. The submitted plans show that an equivalent number of marked playing pitches can be provided following these works (a total of 5 pitches as a minimum). In turn, the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Hamilton Centre would provide new designated outdoor play space, a MUGA and a nature garden specifically for use by pupils of the relocated Phoenix College.

7.1.25 At present, any open space requirements generated by the existing educational use of the Hamilton Centre would rely upon the existing formalised shared management arrangements of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields. In meeting the specific open space needs of SEMH pupils at the Hamilton Centre, the proposal would no longer solely require the utilisation of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields (as would otherwise be the case if the building remained in use as a Sixth form college), thereby reducing the overall number of separate institutions which solely rely on the existing marked pitches' space. With regard to level of facilities being

provided for an existing community facility, this proposal could reasonably be considered to provide a more appropriate provision of facilities in terms of quantity and quality than the peripheral part of the playing pitch actually being lost. Whilst secondary to the existing formal use of the pitches, public access to the site would not be reduced, but in fact be improved through delivery of a new public access gate to the southern boundary with the Regis Park development and upgraded perimeter footpath. The proposal could therefore be considered to meet exception b) of Policy OU1. However, in establishing accurately the value of those 'peripheral parts' of the playing pitch being lost and any equivalence of re-provision, input from Sport England as a Statutory consultee is required on any such proposal. This will be considered in detail below.

7.1.26 Finally in considering exception c) of Policy OU1, it is recognised that a large part of the playing pitch periphery being lost would be to provide the outdoor play areas, MUGA and nature garden required by the relocated Phoenix College. These facilities are themselves alternative sports and recreational provision for users of the existing building; the needs for which could be argued to outweigh the peripheral loss of the pitch. However, areas lost to the north to facilitate the new car park and new school extension are not for alternative sports and recreational provision. Furthermore, such provision would not benefit from the same public accessibility as the space lost. Therefore, the proposal is only able to partially meet exception c) of Policy OU1.

7.1.27 In considering the loss of playing pitches as required by exception b) and c) of Policy OU1 and as described above, due regard should be had to any comments received from Sport England as a Statutory consultee Sport England specifically comments on any proposal which result in the loss of any playing pitch and through Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can provide an assessment as to whether the proposal would meet any of Sport England's five specific exceptions.

7.1.28 Sport England has considered this application against the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 97) and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

*Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:*

- *all or any part of a playing field, or*
- *land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or*
- *land allocated for use as a playing field*

*unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions contained within Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document'.*

7.1.29 Based on information provided by the applicant and in consultation with The Football Association (FA), Sport England are content that the proposal meets Planning Policy Exception E3. This exception criteria states:

*The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:*

- *reduce the size of any playing pitch;*
- *result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);*



- *reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;*
- *result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or*
- *prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.*

7.1.30 Sport England also welcomes the applicant's commitment to improve the drainage on the existing playing field through a planning obligation. This can be secured via a s106 legal agreement and supports several concerns raised by third parties. With such an obligation secured, Sport England does not object to this application.

7.1.31 Therefore, to summarise the overall policy situation, the principle of a reuse, refurbishment and extension of the Hamilton Centre to accommodate an alternative community use (component 1) is considered compliant with both Policy ER1 'Sites for Development in East Reading' and the specific housing allocation policy for the site (Policy ER1f). The proposal is also in broad compliance with Policy CC9 'Securing Infrastructure' and Policy OU1 'New and Existing Community Facilities' in meeting an existing educational need through a new community facility.

7.1.32 However, the loss of peripheral areas of existing open space which would come about as a result of the works associated with the reuse of the Hamilton centre (component 2) are considered contrary to the protections afforded by Policy EN7 'Local Green Space', yet compliant with those other policies which specifically seek to protect and enhance existing playing pitches like exception b) and c) of Policy OU1 and Exception E3 of Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy. With less weight afforded to Policy EN7 for the reason set in 7.1.18, the proposal is largely considered to adhere to the majority of applicable local plan policies.

7.1.33 As officers acknowledge there is not the conflicts with the Development Plan above, it is necessary to return to Policy CC1 which states that, "*any proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise*". In this case it is even more critical to consider guidance within the NPPF as an important material consideration in any assessment.

#### ***Other material considerations***

7.1.34 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development are defined as economic, social and environmental. The economic role requires proposals to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The social role requires planning to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and a high-quality built environment. Whilst the environmental role requires the natural, built and historic environment to be protected and enhanced and importantly the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

7.1.35 In terms of an economic role, the proposed development would contribute to and encourage associated economic activity within the Borough through both the construction works and ongoing operation and management of the school, including additional opportunities for the creation of specialist employment required in association with an enlarged SEMH school.

7.1.36 In terms of the social role, the Borough-wide need for a SEMH school places is acute. Paragraph 94 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of a Local Authority having a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing communities. It goes on to say that, "*Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education*". In

particular LPAs should give ‘great weight’ to the need to create, expand or alter schools through planning applications. Paragraph 121 supports the needs for LPAs to make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

- 7.1.37 There is currently pupil demand for 74 spaces at Key Stage 3 (KS) level, 55 spaces at KS4 and 75 spaces post age 16, totalling 204 spaces. The existing Phoenix College is the Borough’s only dedicated SEMH facility with capacity for only 64 spaces. Of all Special Educational Needs of which SEMH is a part, 178 pupils are currently taught out of Reading Borough due to lack of school places.
- 7.1.38 Therefore the provision of an enlarged, enhanced and purpose-built facility through reuse of an existing vacant facility to provides a critical piece of social infrastructure that will allow the Council to meet the current and future needs of some of its most vulnerable young people. The provision of such an enhanced facility is also consistent with the Government’s key objective within the NPPF to promote healthy and sustainable communities. However, as acknowledged, the development would result in the partial loss of an existing area of designated LGS. As advised above, the quality and quantity of playing pitch removed is not considered substantial or of high value, and in fact largely enabling the provision of enhanced specialist outdoor facilities for the school.
- 7.1.39 The proposed new school hall, changing room and toilet facilities will be available for community use and hire. It should be noted that the junior football clubs who use the field currently have no access to either changing facilities or toilets. These new facilities would be located adjacent to the existing car park affording easy access for their use on weekends. This enhanced facility for wider community use is a clear public benefit of the scheme which would be secured through a Community Use Agreement (CUA). These facilities will reinforce the overall usability of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields as valued LGS.
- 7.1.40 In addition to the above, there is a commitment to undertake pitch improvement works up to the value of £25,000 in order to provide drainage enhancements. This will be undertaken as part of the overall implementation of the Hamilton Centre development work, and secured and monitored alongside the CUA within a S106 legal agreement. Finally, the proposal includes the creation of a new pedestrian access gate, linking with Regis Park Road in order to allow easier public access from Regis Park Road. The provision of this access is now designing in this facility, and therefore fulfils a past commitment to improve access as result of previous development as approved (via a s106 obligation). This will be secured via means of an enclosure condition and implemented in tandem with all boundary treatments prior to first occupation of the school. These additional community benefits would ensure the continued sustainable use of the land by both the schools as playing pitches and the local community as LGS.
- 7.1.41 When balanced against the value of the peripheral LGS lost, the need for adequate SEMH school provision, new community use facilities, pitch improvements and enhanced public access are considered substantial benefits which outweigh the identified harm caused. The development is therefore able to perform a positive social role as required by the NPPF.
- 7.1.42 Finally, but of increasing importance is the environmental role of this development. The refurbishment and extension of the existing Hamilton Centre would demonstrate a far greater and enhanced level of sustainability through compliance with the Council’s updated energy efficiency and sustainability standards contained within the Local Plan and required by current Building Regulations standards. Furthermore, the principle of utilising what is largely an existing building is supportive of the NPPF aim to encourage an efficient use of land.

- 7.1.43 The parts of the existing playing pitch being lost/enclosed are recognised as currently having little environmental value in terms of biodiversity. Through the comprehensive landscape strategy, management plan and biodiversity enhancements proposed (nature garden and planted orchard - details of which are to be secured), the development can perform a more active and positive environmental role within the Borough than it does at present. In addition, the re-location of the Phoenix College itself to another site within the Borough that is served by main arterial bus routes and the Borough cycle network positively contributes to reducing the need for staff to travel by private vehicle. The pitch improvement works are also considered an environmental improvement by assisting drainage: a concern raised by third parties.
- 7.1.44 Issues of landscape character, visual amenity, biodiversity, trees, flooding and drainage are considered in further detail later in this report.
- 7.1.45 Therefore, in summary, on this basis of the individual particulars of this proposal and with due regard to all the material planning considerations detailed above, the benefits (when taken as a whole) are considered to outweigh the identified conflict with Policy EN7 and the peripheral loss of an area of the LGS. The development is considered to represent a sustainable form of development which would result in the appropriate reuse of an existing building for an essential community facility. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable and supported by officers.

## 7.2 Character and appearance of the area

### *Design and layout*

- 7.2.1 The existing building is a rectangular two-storey educational building of 1970s appearance. Existing windows are single-glazed steel Crittal type and the building is considered to have little architectural merit both internally and externally (See fig 6 below)



*Figure 6 - View across pitches towards existing building*

- 7.2.2 The new extension to the existing building which will accommodate the school hall, dining room, kitchen and changing rooms would result in the building being extended along the same orientation as the existing building (northwards) making the most efficient use of the existing site. The structural grid and proportions of the existing building to the south lend this part of building towards accommodating the classrooms and teaching accommodation, leaving the extension to provide the larger volume spaces of hall, dining room and kitchen.

The extension is composed of two rectangular forms; a larger 9m high part for the main hall and a lower single-storey volume accommodating main entrance, dining hall, kitchen and changing rooms. The hall block is approximately 2.5m higher than the existing retained part of the Hamilton Centre. The main teaching spaces are located on the east side of the refurbished building with the larger specialist spaces located at the far end. The external treatment will consist of face brickwork to match existing and more contemporary vertical cladding of which the particular specification can be agreed via condition.

7.2.3 From a design perspective, the refurbished and extended building would retain similar proportions to the existing building in both plan and section, with it appearing as a rectangular elongated block when viewed from Wokingham Road or across the playing pitches to the east. The overall scale and proportions of the building are considered to remain in-keeping with both the recent two-storey development at MES and the buildings of UTC. All such all buildings surrounding the Alfred Sutton Playing fields will continue to display a strong functional and educational character and appearance. This proposal will be no exception.

7.2.4 The visual impact of the extension is mitigated by its location at the base of the existing earth bank and location to the perimeter of the playing pitches. Public views into and through the site are possible but given the presence of the existing Hamilton Centre already, there would be no discernible change or harm caused to any views of high amenity value.

#### ***Openness of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields***

7.2.5 It is accepted that the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are of high environmental and amenity value. The section below will discuss to what extent these are affected by the proposal.

7.2.6 In terms of the overall openness and the experience of users of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields, the siting, scale and design of the proposal is considered to have a comparatively limited effect on the openness of this land. Whilst the land on which the Hamilton Centre is located marginally higher than the rest of the playing fields, it is relatively secluded, being located in the North-West corner of the fields and set against the rising backdrop of the existing earth bund, car park and mature landscape perimeter of the pitches. 7.2.7 The curtilage created for the relocated school involves a small proportion of the whole area of open space available. As a combination of the above, the siting/visual impact of the proposal would not visually intrude onto the main open area of playing pitches. Although there will be a visual change for localised views, the proposed development would not cause any significant visual impact on the openness of the playing pitches.

### **7.3 Landscape, Trees and Ecology**

7.3.1 The Council's Natural Environment Officer has visited the site and considered carefully the overall site strategy for soft landscaping and trees. The proposal will affect several trees recently planted as part of the previous MES development on the bank to the playing fields. In light of this and the need to ensure that as many trees are retained as part of the works as possible, additional information was secured confirming which trees are to be retained and which require removal. The applicant has advised that any tree loss as part of these proposals is to be mitigated with an overall net gain in tree planting. The submitted plans indicatively show extensive tree planting and full details can be secured via condition.

7.3.2 An Arboricultural Method Statement will need to be secured to deal with physical protection of retained trees and fence installation on the southern boundary with Lakeside Care Home, as the mature Lime trees close to the boundary (within the care home site) are subject to a group TPO. It is also noted that the proposal is likely to result in some level changes in the

eastern area. As such it will be important for officers to secure details of existing and proposed ground levels through relevant level and boundary treatment conditions in order to ensure that those mature trees on the boundary within Lakeside Care Home are adequately protected.

7.3.4 The landscaping conditions proposed would ensure that any planting is predominantly native (but can include non-natives for stock resistance), are wildlife-friendly and ensure the inclusion of mammal gaps where appropriate. The Council’s Ecologist has requested ecological enhancements, over and above wildlife-friendly planting, and the need to include integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings. Whilst these have not been indicated on the landscape plan, they can reasonably be secured via a specific ecological enhancement condition, as supported by the NPPF and the Reading Local Plan 2019.

**7.4 Impact on residential amenity**

7.4.1 The nearest residential properties to the Hamilton Centre itself are a series of detached properties located directly opposite Hamilton Road to the east and to the south east at Regis Park Road. Directly to the south lies Lakeside Care Home, beyond the southern perimeter of the playing fields. Please see Fig 7 below showing comparative distances to neighbouring properties and their relationship to the existing building.

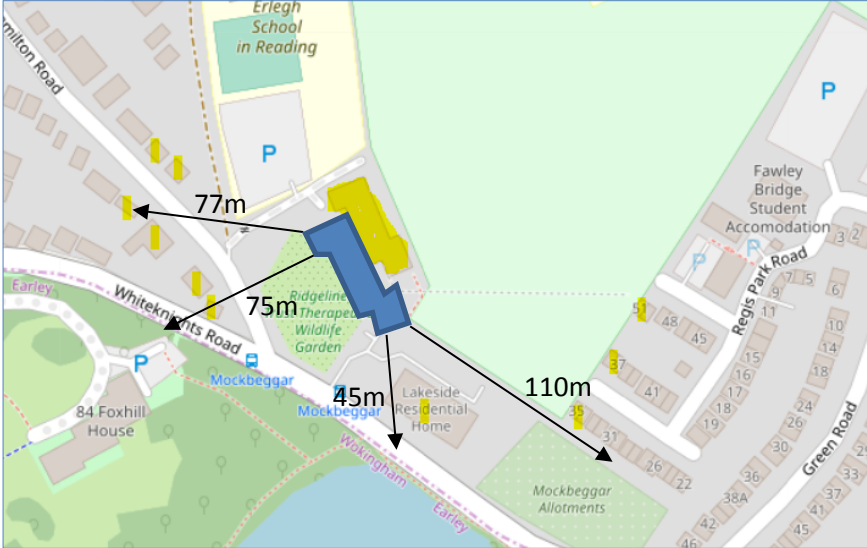


Figure 7: Neighbouring properties highlighted and their proximity to the existing building.

7.4.2 Various third-party representations consider that the development will adversely affect their residential amenity through vehicle movements, the reuse of the building, and the proximity outdoor play areas for pupils to their back gardens. Concern has also been expressed as to the consequence of mixing several schools on the same site, the possible traffic congestion that could be caused to several roads leading to the site, and the management of pupils across all sites at morning and evening peaks. Matters concerning transport, access and the impact on the highway network are considered in later sections in more detail, but officers note the original building accommodated 300 Sixth form pupil during its use as such during the 1980s.

7.4.3 Local Plan Policy CC8 sets out the need to ensure such proposals respect and protect the amenity of nearby residents. The following aspects of the scheme have been considered in this regard.

### ***Noise/vibration and disturbance***

7.4.4 The Hamilton Centre, in accommodating the Phoenix College as a SEMH school will benefit from its own parking areas and private outdoor play areas which would be used in good weather during term-time. Whilst not specified, school hours are generally matters more appropriately controlled outside of the planning system. However, given the limited size and specific nature of the school, any audible noise levels heard from nearby residential properties would be for short periods of the day (during break times) and be no worse than what would have ordinarily occurred in past when the building was occupied by a significantly more pupils. Furthermore, any usage of outdoor areas would be commensurate with the current use of the playing pitches by the existing schools and is considered to apply to any residential address which already back onto this open space. With regard to more prolonged mechanical noise that may be generated, the Council's Environmental Protection (EP) Team advises controls to ensure that no mechanical plant be installed until a noise assessment (in relation to prevailing background noise levels) has been submitted and approved.

### ***Artificial lighting***

7.4.5 Whilst the existing building is fully expected to have external lighting, this is unlikely to be any more intensive than would have been in use as either a sixth form college or Surestart centre. Whilst no details have been supplied, more energy efficient and sensitive lighting technology means the level of light spillage is expected to be comparatively less than in the past. Furthermore, a specifically worded planning condition can ensure that a fully-developed external lighting scheme (including lux level contours) is submitted to and approved in writing before first occupation. Observations were made by the Council's EP Team as to the requirement for floodlighting of any Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) on the reused tennis courts. As this part of the proposal is no longer being pursued for the reasons given earlier in this report, there is no requirement to secure AGP floodlighting details in advance of this report.

### ***Air quality, dust and odour***

7.4.6 Although expanding, the school is relocating from another nearby site and as a travel plan is already in place, the Council's EP Team do not require an air quality assessment to be submitted as part of this development.

7.4.7 The Council's EP Team also identifies odour as a risk from commercial kitchens and therefore requires the applicants to provide an assessment of the likelihood of odours based on the proposed cuisine and a statement of how the proposals will ensure that odour nuisance will be prevented. This can be secure via a standard odour management condition.

### ***Traffic movements, deliveries, servicing***

7.4.8 Whilst properties in the vicinity will notice an increase in activity at the site through general traffic movements and noise given the site has been vacant for a number of years, there is no indication that these impacts would be any worse than when the site was previously in educational use, or produce any significant level of harm to residential amenity. Refuse and recycling facilities along with appropriate collection arrangements are matters that can be adequately dealt with via condition also.

### ***Construction phase***

7.4.9 Full details of the construction phase along with matters such as dust management will be secured through a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan condition (CEMP). At this early stage, construction access is likely to require use of the main vehicular entrance from Bulmershe Road, however this is yet to be agreed formally. A detailed site compound plan and method statement is currently being developed by the applicant's contractor. Therefore, through careful management, construction of this scheme is not considered to generate any unacceptable harm or disturbance which cannot be adequately controlled through the requirements of the CEMP and through existing health and safety and site construction controls. The following matters are also appropriate to manage via condition:

- Hours of Working - construction and demolition phase
- Bonfires
- Bin storage - rats
- Details of bin stores'

### ***Contaminated Land***

7.4.10 The development lies on the site of an historic brick works. Whilst the site investigation has not identified any contaminants of concern on the section of the site that is being redeveloped, as a precautionary approach, a condition is recommended to ensure the reporting of any unexpected contamination and remediation, if such is required.

### ***Security issues***

7.4.11 In the absence of any comments from the Crime Prevention Design Adviser (CPDA), the specification of fencing and pedestrian access gate can be controlled via suitably worded conditions and the design of the new access gate along with other aspects of the scheme can be aligned with key principles contained within 'Secured by Design' (SBD) guidance. If a response is received, it will be reported to your meeting.

## **7.5 Sustainability/energy**

7.5.1 This application proposes not to seek BREEAM accreditation but pursue an alternative approach to show how the design complies with the subject headings under the BREEAM accreditation system. The reason contained within the submission is that the brief for this building requires an in-use Display Energy Certificate (DEC) which is claimed is a more robust performance target than that demanded currently by BREEAM (based upon theoretical performance rather than actual energy consumed).

7.5.2 Based on newly-adopted Local Plan policy, all major non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards, where possible. Whilst the refurbished and extended building would inherently be more energy efficient, would make use of modern construction practices and need to meet updated Building Regulations requirements, there remains the need to secure compliance with Policy CC2 of the Local Plan. In this regard, provided that the required pre- and post- BREEAM energy efficiency conditions are attached to achieve the anticipated level of compliance, officers are satisfied that the requirements of the policy can be achieved.

## **7.6 Transport and access**

- 7.6.1 The Council's Transport Officer has considered this proposal and amended information in detail. With regard to the site's existing location and proposed access, the primary vehicular access will remain unchanged from Hamilton Road, but will be remodelled (including the entrance into the existing staff car park for Maiden Erleigh school) to allow two-way traffic flow movement in and out of the site. The submitted plans now show a widening to 4.3m which is considered acceptable by the Transport Officer. A new drop-off layby will be constructed close to the school's entrance. A one-way system around the car park will ensure that school-related traffic makes use of the layby. A car park strategy plan has been submitted which identifies the car parking spaces allocated to each respective school, but this still does not specify how the spaces will be managed between the two uses. This can be dealt with by way of a condition.
- 7.6.2 In terms of vehicle movements/trip generation, the information provided with this application is considered acceptable and identifies that staff would travel to and from the school mainly outside of the peak periods. The updated Transport Addendum provides further analysis between the existing and proposed uses. The Transport Officer has reviewed the submitted TRICS data for the existing use and it is noted that the site has included sites that are not comparable to the application site as they are not located in similar locations.
- 7.6.3 In light of this discrepancy, the Council's Transport Officer has undertaken his own assessment of the trip rates for the existing use and concluded that the proposal results in a reduction in trips from the existing permitted use and is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 7.6.4 In terms of parking, it has been stated that the parking requirements have been calculated in line with RBC's Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) which stipulates a maximum requirement of 1 space per FTE\* staff. This equates to a provision of 28 spaces, and revised drawings have been submitted that identify this provision and is therefore acceptable. Within this provision, 4 disabled bays have been retained and are relocated to within the new car parking area, making disabled persons' access to the building more accessible than the existing situation.
- 7.6.5 The proposed car park layout retains a provision of 63 spaces for Maiden Erleigh School in the rear car park and this is also considered acceptable. Finally, 10 cycle spaces are proposed for both staff and pupils use which complies with policy.
- 7.6.6 To ensure there would be enough space within the site to accommodate the anticipated 10 vehicles at the peak drop-off and pick-up times as well as service and emergency vehicles, vehicle tracking diagrams have been submitted and are acceptable to RBC Transport.
- 7.6.7 Therefore, in summary, the Council's Transport Team raises no objections to the proposal subject to the recommended conditions.

## **7.7 Other matters**

### ***Flood risk and drainage***

- 7.7.1 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the application, as required for all Major planning applications. The site is within Flood Zone 1, with a low risk of flooding. The submitted FRA deals with on-site flood risk (within the red line). As localised surface water drainage issues are already known to occur on the playing fields, details of any hard-surfaced areas will need to ensure permeability along with the requirements of a



surface water management plan condition to ensure the proposed development does not cause any unmanaged runoff onto the adjoining pitches or a worsening of the current situation. The Update report will clarify whether this approach also satisfies SUDS considerations, if relevant to this application.

- 7.7.2 A construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan would be secured which identifies and promotes employment opportunities generated by the proposed development, or other developments within Reading, for the construction phase of the proposed development. Sometimes this requires a payment to Reading UK CiC, the Council's partner, to prepare the plan usually payable at least 1 month prior to implementation and index linked from the date of issue of planning permission. As such, the S106 will secure this in a flexible manner covering both options.

### ***Equality Act***

- 7.7.3 In determining this application, the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the planning application under consideration. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

### ***Third Party comments***

- 7.7.4 The complex nature of this proposal and the fact it affects a valued area of public open space has resulted in the receipt of a wide range of third-party objections. The relevant sections of this report cover all material planning issues raised. However, should any additional planning matters be raised between now and your meeting, the Update report will provide comments on any additional points of clarification.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 In first establishing the principle of development, the benefits of the scheme (when taken as a whole) are considered to sufficiently outweigh the limited identified conflict with Policy EN7 of the Local Plan and the peripheral loss of LGS on site. As described in section 7.1, the development is considered to represent a sustainable form of development which would result in the appropriate reuse of an existing building for an essential community facility. In supporting the principle of development, great weight has been attached to the fact this scheme meets the identified need of SEMH school provision and fulfils the general requirement for Local Planning Authorities to secure enhanced community facilities for the benefit of the whole community.
- 8.2 It has been demonstrated to officers' satisfaction that the design and visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and that no significant visual impact would be caused to the openness of the existing playing pitches. Landscaping, ecological and arboricultural enhancements can be secured via conditions, whilst for the reasons given in this report, the level of amenity enjoyed by nearby residents is able to be adequately protected in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC8.

- 8.3 It is recognised that the proposal seeks to pursue an alternative approach to energy efficiency than BREEAM accreditation. The applicant is aware that their approach will need to be subject to the required pre-and-post BREEAM energy efficiency conditions with a bespoke timescale allow the greatest opportunity for compliance.
- 8.4 Finally, following the receipt of additional information, the Transport Officer raises no objections subject to a range of specific and standard planning conditions ensuring the scheme provides safe access, adequate parking, sufficient space to manoeuvre, and does not cause any wider impact on the highway network.
- 8.5 In conclusion, officers fully recognise that a proposal of this nature requires the Committee to consider a range of difficult and of competing issues. Having had regard to all matters raised, it is considered that the over-riding public benefits of this proposal and compliance with the main themes of local and national policy outweigh the limited on-site harm associated with the development. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement as set out in the Recommendation at the start of this report.

**Case officer:** Brian Conlon

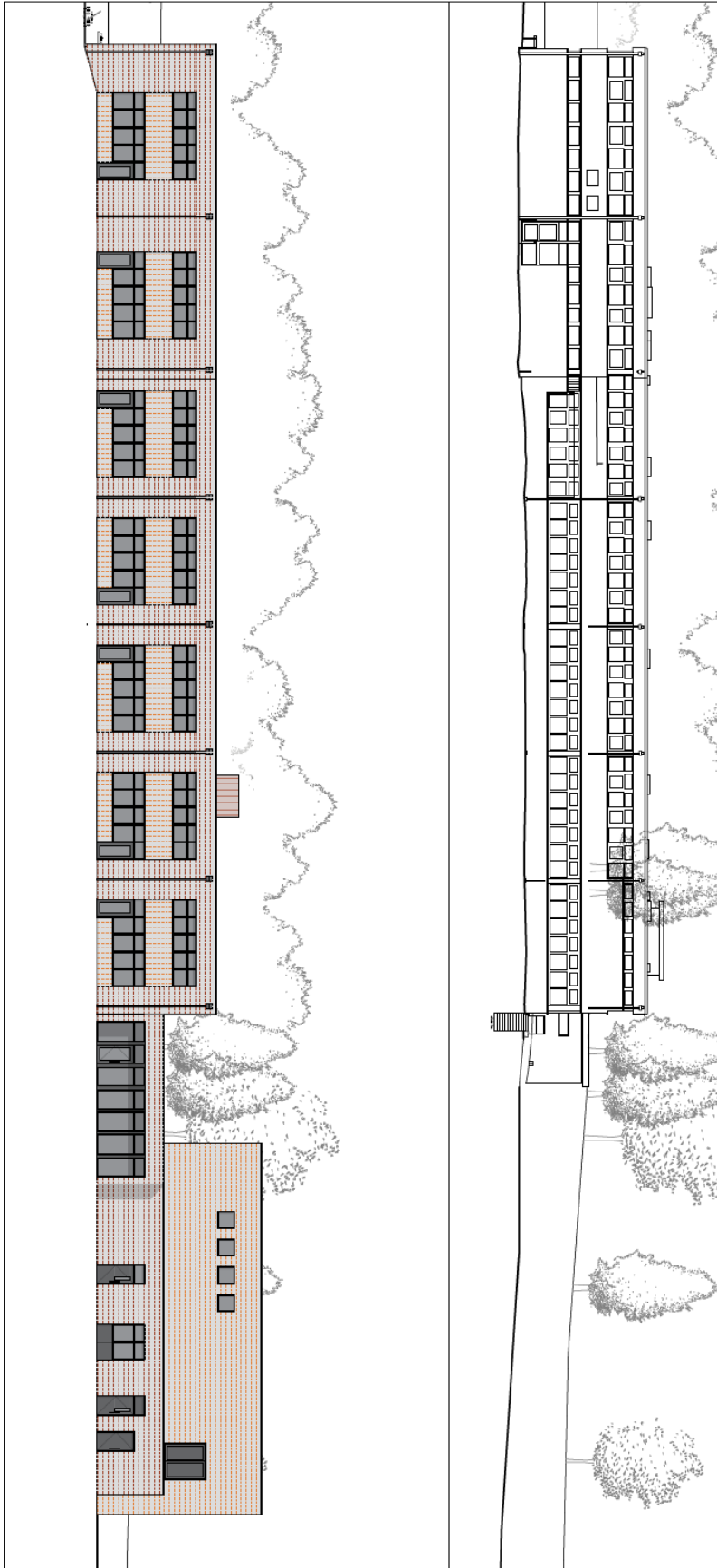
**Plans:** TBC in Update report





Existing pitch layout (not to scale)





Proposed East Elevation (Not to scale)



Perspective showing main entrance from Bulmershe Road

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