

To: Members of the Planning Applications
Committee

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22 May 2023

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NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 31 MAY 2023

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 31 May 2023 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
<u>KEY TO CODING</u>			
1. MINUTES	-		7 - 14
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
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4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision	BOROUGHWIDE	15 - 18
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	19 - 22
6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	23 - 28
7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	29 - 38
8. OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER - CORNER OF GOSBROOK ROAD & GEORGE STREET, CAVERSHAM	Decision	CAVERSHAM	39 - 48
<u>PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED</u>			
9. 220189/FUL - 205-213 HENLEY ROAD, CAVERSHAM	Decision	EMMER GREEN	49 - 108

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Proposal Demolition of nos. 205-213 Henley Road and rear gardens of nos. 205-219 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks (C3 use-age restricted) including communal spaces with supporting car parking, open space landscaping and associated infrastructure. Access into the site from the adjacent development on Henley Road.
Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

10. 201138/FUL - 12-18 CROWN STREET Decision KATESGROVE 109 - 138

Proposal Change of use of building from 44 serviced apartments (Class C1) to 44 flats (C3) comprising of 4no studios, 27 x one bedroom and 13 x two bedroom units with associated parking
Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

11. 221130/FUL - 103 DEE ROAD, Decision NORCOT 139 - 166
TILEHURST

Proposal Redevelopment of former fire station to provide 54 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with associated access, parking, public open space and landscaping (Amended Description)
Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

12. 230241/FUL - LAND ADJACENT TO Decision TILEHURST 167 - 176
114-116 SCHOOL ROAD,
TILEHURST

Proposal Change of use of ground floor retail unit to a residential apartment
Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

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

1. There are many different types of applications processed by the Planning Service and the following codes are used to abbreviate the more common types 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. Officer reports often refer to a matter or situation as being “a material consideration”. The following list tries to explain what these might include:

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

There are also concerns that regulations or case law has established cannot be taken into account. These include:

- 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 changes to the Use Classes Order in England.

Changes of use within the same class are not development.

Use	Use Class up to 31 August 2020	Use Class from 1 September 2020
Shop - not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop	A1	F.2
Shop	A1	E
Financial & professional services (not medical)	A2	E
Café or restaurant	A3	E
Pub, wine bar or drinking establishment	A4	Sui generis
Takeaway	A5	Sui generis
Office other than a use within Class A2	B1a	E
Research & development of products or processes	B1b	E
For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)	B1c	E
Industrial	B2	B2
Storage or distribution	B8	B8
Hotels, boarding & guest houses	C1	C1
Residential institutions	C2	C2
Secure residential institutions	C2a	C2a
Dwelling houses	C3	C3
Small house in multiple occupation 3-6 residents	C4	C4
Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centre	D1	E
Schools, non-residential education & training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts	D1	F.1
Cinemas, theatres, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls	D2	Sui generis
Gymnasiums, indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	E
Hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community	D2	F.2
Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	F.2

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Carnell, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Hornsby-Smith, Moore, Page, Robinson, Rowland, Williams and Yeo

RESOLVED ITEMS

102. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

103. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rowland declared that she was predetermined for Item 111 and would take no part in the debate or decision.

104. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted 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 -

That the undermentioned application, together with any additional applications which the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of a site visit:

221130/FUL - 103 DEE ROAD

Redevelopment of former fire station to provide 54 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with associated access, parking, public open space and landscaping (Amended Description).

105. 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 two 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

There were no recently determined appeals.

(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions

There were no reports on appeal decisions.

Resolved -

That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

106. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of 11 prior approval applications received, and in Table 2 of eight applications for prior approval decided, between 16 February and 17 March 2023.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

107. 84 BROAD STREET - PROPOSAL TO ADD TO THE LIST OF LOCALLY-IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on a proposal to add 84 Broad Street to the list of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1: Location map
- Appendix 2: Relevant photos and images
- Appendix 3: Proposed Local List text
- Appendix 4: Nomination Form

The report set out the results of the consultation on the proposal and an assessment against the criteria in Appendix 2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, concluding with reasons why the building qualified for addition to the Local List.

At the meeting the Committee recorded their thanks to Bruce Edgar for his work as Reading's first full-time Conservation and Urban Design Officer which had included the listing of ten Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.

Resolved -

That 84 Broad Street be added to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.

108. CONSULTATION ON INCREASING PLANNING FEES AND PERFORMANCE

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report advising the Committee of a government consultation currently underway on

proposals to increase planning fees and to improve the performance of local planning authorities. A draft of officer responses was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the proposed officer responses be endorsed.

109. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT ORDER

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report advising the Committee of consultations currently underway on proposals by Government which would affect the planning service. A draft of officer responses was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

At the meeting a number of amendments to the officer responses were proposed and agreed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the proposed officer responses be endorsed subject to the amendments made at the meeting.

110. 220567/FUL - 109B OXFORD ROAD

Change of use from sui generis (betting shop) to A3 restaurant with ancillary A5 takeaway and replacement shopfront (Part retrospective).

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 set out information on external advertisements, litter management and additional information submitted by the applicant.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved -

That planning permission for application 220567/FUL be refused for the reason set out in the report, with the informatives as recommended.

(Councillor Rowland declared predetermination on this item. She made a statement to the Committee, left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision.)

111. 220957/REG3 - 26-90 READING BUS GARAGE, GREAT KNOLLYS STREET

Installation of solar PV panels and associated equipment at Reading Bus Depot. The PV panels will be situated on the existing roof of the main building at the Depot. It is proposed to install a maximum of 1402 solar PV panels with approximate dimension 1m x 1.75m.

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

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved -

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission for application 220957/REG3 be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report.

112. 221563/FUL - 1 EPPING CLOSE

Proposed demolition of 8 garages and construction of 2 x 3 bedroom residential units.

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 set out further information on the use of the garages with comments from the Transport Manager as well as correction of a typographical error in the original report.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Carl Thomas and Titus Halliwell, a planning consultant representing the residents and Management Committee of Epping Close, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

That planning permission be refused for application 221563/FUL for the reasons set out in the original report, with the informatives as recommended in the original report.

113. 221312/VAR - READING GOLF CLUB, 17 KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN

Outline planning application with matters reserved in respect of Appearance for demolition of clubhouse and erection of a new residential scheme (c3 use) including affordable housing and public open space at former reading golf club without complying with conditions 5 (Plans), 8&9 (Emissions) 10&11 (SuDS), 12 (Levels), 13 (Mix), 17 (AMS), 19 (Habitat Enhancement), 20 (CEMP), 22 (Biodiversity), 25&26 (Contamination), 29 (CMS), 34 (Cycle Parking), 35 (Refuse), 39 (Car Parking), 41 (Traffic Calming) & 44 (Archaeology) of outline permission 211843 for amendments including changes to layout, mix, parking, drainage, landscaping, open space and energy

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PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 29 MARCH 2023

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 set out a summary received from the applicant of their own public consultation and information on biodiversity. The report also made amendments to the application description and the recommended conditions relating to dwelling mix, boundary treatment, landscape management plan, a habitat enhancement scheme, Construction Method Statement, Security Strategy and Play Facilities and provided updated drawing and plan references.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

At the meeting an additional condition was recommended to require review of the energy capacity supply prior to any phases of the development where dwellings without an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) were currently proposed, and to require futureproofing of those dwellings where a review demonstrated that there was still insufficient capacity for ASHPs to be included.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission for application 221312/VAR, subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 12 April 2023 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the amendments set out in the update report and an additional condition to require that, prior to any phase of the development that included proposed dwelling(s) without an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), a review of the energy capacity supply for the development be submitted to the planning authority for review to establish whether an ASHP could be incorporated into the development at that stage, and that where it was demonstrated that there was not capacity details of the futureproofing of the dwelling(s) for installation of an ASHP be submitted for approval.

114. 220930/REM - READING GOLF CLUB, 17 KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN

Application for approval of reserved matters (appearance) submitted pursuant to outline planning application ref. 221312/VAR

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 set

out information received from the applicant on their own public consultations and provided updated drawing and plan references.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved -

That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant approval of appearance reserved matters under condition no. 3 of outline planning permission 221312/VAR (Minute 113 above refers), subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the original report.

115. 230024/APC - 17 KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 29 (Construction Method Statement) of planning permission ref. 211843

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 set out comments on natural environment, details of a further consultation response and a summary from the applicant of their own consultation. The report also amended some of the document/plan references referred to in the original report to reflect the latest versions of the relevant plans considered as part of the application.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

At the meeting it was agreed that a regular review process should be required for the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order that would be used to provide a passing location along Kidmore End Road.

Helen Lambert, representing Caversham and District Residents Association which had objected to the application, and Darren McArthur and Alice Davidson representing the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to approve the Construction Method Statement documents, as set out in the original report and amended in the update report, under condition no. 29 of outline planning permission ref. 211843/OUT, subject to the informatives set out in the original report;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services, in consultation with Ward Councillors, be authorised to agree and incorporate into the Construction Method Statement a review process for the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order that would be required to provide a passing location along Kidmore End Road;

- (3) That officers inform local residents' groups of the review process.

116. 220922/FUL - 71-73 CAVERSHAM ROAD

Partial demolition of former retail warehouse and erection of a mixed-use building comprising 29 residential units, retail floorspace (Use Class E(a)) at ground floor and associated car parking, cycle parking and landscaping (amended description).

Further to Minute 101 of the meeting held on 1 March 2023, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the above application, which had been deferred for further discussions with the applicant about the residential mix and the tenure split of the affordable housing provision. Attached to the report at Appendix A was information submitted by the applicant to justify the housing proposals including the amount and mix of affordable housing and overall housing size mix. Attached at Appendix B was the report submitted to the meeting held on 1 March 2023.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission for application 220922/FUL, subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 21 April 2023 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report submitted to the meeting held on 1 March 2023;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report submitted to the meeting held on 1 March 2023.

117. 221844/REG3 - 124 WHITLEY WOOD ROAD

To provide a hard-standing and crossover onto the highway from the front garden onto Whitley Wood Road.

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

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved -

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 29 MARCH 2023

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission for application 221844/REG3 be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.49 pm)

**Planning Applications
Committee
31 May 2023**



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Title	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note this report and confirm if the site(s) indicated on the appended list are to be visited by Councillors. 2. confirm if there are other sites Councillors wish to visit before reaching a decision on an application. 3. confirm if the site(s) agreed to be visited will be arranged and accompanied by officers or unaccompanied with a briefing note provided by the case officer.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To identify those sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit would be appropriate before the matter is presented at Committee and to confirm how the visit will be arranged. A list of potential sites is appended with a note added to say if recommended for a site visit or not.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

- 2.2. The themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining how we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

- 2.3. The Council's Corporate Plan and projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

3. Explanation

- 3.1. A site visit helps if a proposed development and context is difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material or to better understand concerns or questions raised by a proposal.
- 3.2. Appendix 1 of this report provides a list of applications received that may be presented to Committee for a decision in due course. Officers will try to indicate in advance if visiting a site to inform your decision making is recommended. Also, Councillors can request that a site is visited by Committee in advance of consideration of the proposal.
- 3.3. However, on occasion, it is only during consideration of a report on a planning application that it becomes apparent that Councillors would benefit from visiting a site to assist in reaching the correct decision. In these instances, Officers or Councillors may request a deferral to allow a visit to be carried out.
- 3.4. Accompanied site visits are appropriate when access to private land is necessary to appreciate matters raised. These visits will be arranged and attended by officers on the designated date and time. Applicants and objectors may observe the process and answer questions when asked but lobbying is discouraged. A site visit is an information gathering opportunity to inform decision making.
- 3.5. Unaccompanied site visits are appropriate when the site can be easily seen from public areas and allow Councillors to visit when convenient to them. In these instances, the case officer will provide a briefing note on the application and the main issues to assist when visiting the site.
- 3.6. It is also possible for officers to suggest, or Councillors to request, a visit to a completed development to assess its quality.
- 3.7. Appendix 2 sets out a list of application sites that have been agreed to be visited at previous committee meetings but are still to be arranged.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

- 4.1 The processing of planning applications contributes to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helping the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan in Section 2 of this report.

5. Environmental and climate implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1. Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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. It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

8. Legal implications

8.1. None arising from this report.

9. Financial implications

9.1. The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget and Councillor costs.

10. Background papers

10.1. None.

Appendices

1. Potential Site Visit List:

None.

2. Previously Agreed Site Visits with date requested:

- 220409 - Caversham Park – agreed by PAC 30.03.22 to be accompanied
- 221345 – Curzon Club, 362 Oxford Road – agreed by PAC 7.12.22 to be unaccompanied
- 221364 – Central Club, 36-42 London Street - agreed by PAC 11.01.23 to be accompanied
- 221130 - Fire Station 103 Dee Road – agreed by PAC 29.03.23 to be accompanied

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Planning Applications Committee

31 May 2023



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Title	PLANNING APPEALS
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

1. Executive summary

1.1. To advise Committee on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decision made and to provide summary reports on appeal decisions of interest the Planning Applications Committee.

2. Policy context

2.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

2.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

2.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

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 appeals decided since the last committee.

3.3 Please see Appendix 3 of this report for new Planning Officers reports on those appeal decisions of interest to this committee.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

4.1 Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to creating a sustainable environment with active communities and helping the economy within the Borough as identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan. See Section 2 of this report for more information.

5. Environmental & Climate implications

5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

5.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods.

6. Community engagement and information

6.1 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.

7. Equality impact assessment

7.1 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.

8. Legal implications

8.1 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.

9. Financial implications

9.1 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".

10. Background papers

10.1 Planning Appeal Forms and letters from the Planning Inspectorate.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals Lodged:

WARD: KENTWOOD
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3313424
CASE NO: 220637
ADDRESS: Scours Lane, Tilehurst, Reading
PROPOSAL: Proposed development a Drive-Through restaurant (Use Class E (a,b) and Sui Generis Hot Food Take Away, Car Parking, enhanced landscaping and Access Arrangements
CASE OFFICER: Ethne Humphreys
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 3rd May 2023

APPENDIX 2

Appeals Decided:

WARD: KATESGROVE
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3313234
CASE NO: 211614
ADDRESS: 9 Upper Crown Street, Reading
PROPOSAL; Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated reuse of frame with basement level used for car parking & servicing, erection of 4 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations & associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access.
CASE OFFICER: Tom Bradfield
METHOD: Informal Hearing
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 28th April 2023

WARD: NORCOT
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3309850
CASE NO: 211182
ADDRESS: 60 Beecham Road, Reading
PROPOSAL; Conversion of existing garage to Change the existing flat roof to a pitch roof, relocate windows and add a bay window on the front building.
CASE OFFICER: Beatrice Malama
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 27th April 2023

WARD: TILEHURST
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3301610
CASE NO: 210708
ADDRESS: Water Tower Store", 54-54A Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading
PROPOSAL: Conversion of existing Water Tower Store to a dwelling house
(Class C3) and insertion of new doors, windows and rooflights.
Associated soft landscaping and erection of brick wall and gate.
CASE OFFICER: Natalie Weekes
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 28th April 2023

WARD: ABBEY
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3303428
CASE NO: 211424
ADDRESS: 1a Eaton Place, Reading
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing commercial building (Class E) and erection
of residential block comprising of 2 x 1 bed flats (Class C3)
CASE OFFICER: David Brett
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: ALLOWED
DATE DETERMINED: 12.05.2023

APPENDIX 3

Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.

None available this time.

Planning Applications Committee

31 May 2023



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To advise Committee of the types of development that can be submitted for Prior Approval and to provide a summary of the applications received and decisions taken in accordance with the prior-approval process as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO 2015) as amended.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

- 2.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

3. Prior Approval

- 3.1 There are a range of development types and changes of use that can be carried out as permitted development but are subject to the developer first notifying the planning authority of the proposal, for it to confirm that "prior approval" is not needed before exercising the permitted development rights. The matters for prior approval vary depending on the type of development and these are set out in full in the relevant Parts

in Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order. A local planning authority cannot consider any other matters when determining a prior approval application.

- 3.2 If the decision is that approval is required, further information may be requested by the planning authority in order for it to determine whether approval should be given. The granting of prior approval can result in conditions being attached to the approval. Prior approval can also be refused, in which case an appeal can be made.
- 3.3 The statutory requirements relating to prior approval are much less prescriptive than those relating to planning applications. This is because seeking prior approval is designed to be a light-touch process given that the principle of the development has already been established in the General Permitted Development Order. The government is clear that a local planning authority should not impose unnecessarily onerous requirements on developers should not seek to replicate the planning application system.
- 3.4 However, this means that large development schemes, often involving changes of use to residential, can proceed without meeting many of the adopted planning policies; such as contributing towards affordable housing, and the application fees for these “light touch” applications are significantly less than the equivalent planning application fee.
- 3.5 For this reason, at the Planning Applications Committee meeting on 29 May 2013, it was agreed that a report be brought to future meetings to provide details of applications received for prior approval, those pending a decision and those applications which have been decided since the last Committee date. It was also requested that a rolling estimate be provided for the possible loss in planning fee income.

4 Types of Prior Approval Applications

- 4.1 The categories of development requiring prior approval appear in different parts of Schedule 2 of 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. Those that are of most relevance to Reading Borough are summarised as follows:

SCHEDULE 2 - Permitted development rights

PART 1 – Development within the curtilage of a dwelling house

- **Householder development – larger home extensions.** Part 2 Class A1.
- **Householder development – upwards extensions.** Part 2 Class AA.

PART 3 — Changes of use

- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office, pay day loan shop or casino to A3 restaurants and cafes.** Class C.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office or pay day loan shop to Class D2 assembly & leisure.** 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.** Class M
- **Change of use from an amusement arcade or a casino to C3 dwellinghouse & necessary works.** Class N
- **Change of use from B1 office to C3 dwellinghouse** Class O*.
- **Change of use from B8 storage or distribution to C3 dwellinghouse** Class P
- **Change of use from B1(c) light industrial use to C3 dwellinghouse** 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.** 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.** Class R.

- **Change of use from Agricultural buildings and land to state funded school or registered nursery D1.** 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.** Class T.

PART 4 - Temporary buildings and uses

- **Temporary use of buildings for film making for up to 9 months in any 27 month period.** Class E

PART 11 – Heritage & Demolition

- **Demolition of buildings.** Class B.

PART 16 - Communications

- **Development by telecommunications code system operators.** Class A
- GPDO Part 11.

PART 20 - Construction of New Dwellinghouses

- **New dwellinghouses on detached blocks of flats** Class A
- **Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place.** Class ZA

- 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. Estimates of the equivalent planning application fees are provided.
- 4.3 The planning considerations to be taken into account when deciding each of these types of application are specified in more detail in the GDPO. In some cases the LPA first needs 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 appeals on prior-approval decisions 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 contribute to the strategic aims of the Council.
- 5.2. However, the permitted development prior approval process allows the LPA to consider a limited range of matters in determination of the application. These are: transport and highways impacts of the development, contamination risks on the site, flooding risks on the site, impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development and the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses. Officers will refuse to grant approval or will seek conditions in those cases where a proposal fails to satisfy on these matters thereby contributing to the themes of the Corporate Plan (see Section 2 for more details).

6. Environmental and climate implications

- 6.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The Planning Service encourages developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. The Prior Approval process facilitates the re-use of existing buildings and in most cases the refurbishment will be required to comply with current building regulations which seek improved thermal performance of buildings.

7. Community engagement

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

8. Equality impact assessment

- 8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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.
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. None arising from this Report.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. Since the additional prior notifications were introduced in May 2013 in place of applications for full planning permission, the loss in fee income is now estimated to be £1,881,521.

(Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £1,699,346:

Householder Prior Approvals - £90,242:

Retail Prior Approvals - £16,840:

Demolition Prior Approval - £5,795:

Storage Prior Approvals - £5716:

Shop to Restaurant/Leisure Prior Approval - £6331;

Light Industrial to Residential - £20,022:

Dwellings on detached block of flats - £2048:

Additional storey on dwellings - £206:

New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings - £17,483.

Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling - £128;

Prior approval to mixed use including flats - £2484.

Figures since last report:

Householder Prior Approvals - £440;

Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £9412

- 10.2. However, it should be noted that the prior approval application assessment process is simpler than 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. Finally, it should not be assumed that if the prior approval process did not exist that planning applications for the proposed developments would come forward instead.

11. Background papers

- 11.1. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
- 11.2. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2016.

Appendices

Table 1 - Applications received since 17th March 2023 to 17th May 2023

Type:	How many received since last report:	Loss in possible fee income:
Householder Prior Approvals	4	£440
Class E Prior Approvals	2	£9412
Demolition Prior Approval	0	0
Solar Equipment Prior Approval	1	n/a
Prior Notification	1	n/a
Telecommunications Prior Approval	4	n/a
Dwellings on detached block of flats	0	0
Householder Additional Storey	0	0
New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings	0	0
Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling	0	0
Prior approval to mixed use including flats	0	0
TOTAL	12	£9852

Table 2 - Applications decided since 17th March 2023 to 17th May 2023

Type:	Approved	Refused	Not Required	Withdrawn	Non Determination
Householder Prior Approvals	0	1	8	0	0
Class E Prior Approvals	1	0	0	0	0
Demolition Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Solar Equipment Prior Approval	2	0	0	0	0
Prior Notification/ Other	0	0	0	0	0
Telecommunications Prior Approval	0	4	0	0	0
Dwellings on detached block of flats	0	0	0	0	0
Householder Additional Storey	0	0	0	0	0
New dwellings on terrace buildings or New dwellings on detached buildings	0	0	0	0	0
Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling	0	0	0	0	0
Prior approval to mixed use including flats	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	4	5	8	0	0

Planning Applications Committee

31 May 2023



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Title	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To advise Committee on the work and performance of the Planning Development Management team, the Planning Enforcement team, the Planning Policy team and Building Control team over the last year April 2022 to March 2023 with comparison to previous years.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
- Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:
- People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others
- 2.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

3. Planning Development Management team

3.1 The existing approach to measuring the performance of Local Planning Authorities (LPA.s), introduced by the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013, is based on an LPA.s performance on the speed of determining applications and the quality of their decisions. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) collates data from LPA.s to enable performance tables to be published on a quarterly basis. LPA.s are at risk of being designated as “underperforming” if targets are not met over the preceding 24 months. This would allow applicants to have the option of submitting their applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate (who act on behalf of the Secretary of State) for a decision.

3.2 The criteria for designation as “underperforming” are:

a. For applications for major development: less than **60 per cent** of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant;

b. For applications for non-major development: less than **70 per cent** of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant.

c. For applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is **10 per cent** of an authority’s total number of decisions on applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

Speed

3.3 Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal within the statutory time limits set by DLUHC unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant. The statutory time limits are normally 13 weeks for applications for major development (when an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment a 16 week limit applies) and 8 weeks for all other types of development.

3.4 However, local planning authorities can agree with the applicant to extend the time limit (sometimes with a Planning Performance Agreement or a simple extension of time) for all types of planning applications. Typically, this has been the route taken in Reading with officers and applicants preferring to negotiate a better outcome than simply refusing a planning application because the time is running out. This also deals with the concept of “the Planning Guarantee” which requires the planning application fee to be refunded to applicants where no decision has been made within 26 weeks, unless a longer period has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the local planning authority. (Regulation 9A of the 2012 Fees Regulations).

Quality

3.5 The quality of decisions made by local planning authorities is measured only by the proportion of all decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal. The threshold for designation on applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is 10 per cent of an authority’s total number of decisions on applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal. We had 9 appeals allowed out of 750 decisions meaning that only 1.2% were overturned at appeal.

Decisions Issued

3.6 The following Table 1 provides a breakdown on the decisions issued and how many were within the statutory timeframe or an agreed extended timeframe for the different types of planning applications handled. Data for preceding years provided for comparison.

Table 1: Application Performance in 2022/23 compared with previous years.

Description	DLUHC Target	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Number and Percentage of major applications decided within statutory 13 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	60%	22 100%	15 88%	25/29 86%	13/15 86%
Number and Percentage of all other minor applications decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	178 86%	150 78%	150/179 84%	145/196 74%
Number and Percentage of other applications (including householder applications) decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	528 90%	445 89%	471/554 85%	404/539 75%
Total decisions issued		728	610	762	750
Number and Percentage of householder applications (not for prior approval) decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	342 84%	297 88%	377/438 86%	287/386 74%

3.7 The number of applications decided in 2022/23 has dropped for all types of applications when compared to previous years. This was anticipated over the year with staff turnover and recruitment being a challenge in Q1 & Q2 but Table 1a below shows how performance has improved in the last two quarters of the year significantly to allow the team to stay above targets set for all categories of planning applications over the year. The team are confident that the high level of performance can be maintained into 2023/2024.

Table 1a: Application Performance by quarters in 2022/2023

Description	DLUHC Target	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sept	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar
Major	60%	0/1 0%	5/5 100%	3/4 75%	5/5 100%
Minor	70%	35/57 61%	35/50 70%	37/44 84%	38/45 84%
Other	70%	89/144 62%	60/111 54%	138/156 88%	117/128 91%
Householders	70%	65/108 60%	39/77 51%	102/114 89%	81/87 93%

Prior Approval Performance

3.8 Table 2 below sets out the number of Prior Approval applications processed and the DM team performance on this type of application for householder and office to residential developments. The high performance on this type of application reflects the fact that if prior approval applications are not decided within the prescribed 42 or 56 days approval is given by default.

Table 2: Prior Approval Performance

Indicator	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Number of (and performance on) all Prior Approval applications	60 96%	90 97%	99 92% in time	78 98% in time
Number of Householder Prior Approvals	34	40	44 84% in time	26 100% in time
Number of Office to residential Prior Approvals	14	17	30 97% in time	19 100% in time

Other types of applications received

3.9 The Council also receives requests for pre-application advice, for approval of details required to discharge of conditions attached to planning permissions and for approval of works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and in trees in Conservation Areas. Table 3 shows the number of each type of application received over the last 4 years.

TABLE 3: No. of applications received including those for miscellaneous development management advice or approval.

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
All types of applications	2005	1168	1320	1100
Miscellaneous				
Pre-application advice	166	166	134	151
Approval of details required by condition, ADJ, NMA, EIA SCO and SCR * See key below.	338	260	299	304
Works to TPO/CA trees	216	246	254	208
Total	2725	1840	2007	1763

ADJ - Adjacent Authority Consultation
 NMA – Non-Material Amendment
 EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment
 SCO – Scoping Opinion
 SCR - Screening Opinion
 TPO – Works to trees with Tree Preservation Orders
 CA – Works to trees in Conservation Areas

Comments

3.10 The start of 2022/2023 was a challenge with a new team restructure and recruitment of new staff impacting on performance. However, the new structure has now settled in with all staff, existing and new, pulling together well to make the improvements needed to allow the Planning Development Management team to perform better for our customers and meet DLUHC’s performance criteria.

Planning Appeals

3.11 The information on appeal performance measures (para 3.5 above) confirms that while appeal performance in terms of appeals dismissed (meaning the reasons for refusing permission were upheld) dropped to 66% in 2022/23 overall the allowed decisions as a percentage of all applications

decided remained below 10% so continued to be within target. The following table 4 provides further detail for the past 4 years.

- 3.12 When officers or Planning Applications Committee decide to refuse planning permission the reasons for doing so are scrutinised to ensure that reasons for refusal are substantiated by reference to Local Plan policies and other material planning considerations. Appeal statements are also checked to ensure that a robust defence of the decision is presented. However, we are at the whim of the Inspectorate after that.

TABLE 4: Section 78 Appeals against the refusal of planning permission

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
APPEALS LODGED	50	30	26	24
NUMBER OF APPEAL DECISIONS	47	31	19	29
APPEALS ALLOWED	11 (23%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (21%)	9 (31%)
APPEALS DISMISSED	35 (75%)	27 (87%)	15 (79%)	19 (66%)
SPLIT DECISIONS	0	0	0	0
APPEALS WITHDRAWN	1	0	0	1

4 Planning Enforcement

- 4.1 The Planning Enforcement Team are now part of the Public Protection service and with regular weekly meetings with senior planners and legal assistance they are starting to see an improvement in how enforcement enquiries are registered and how quickly and effectively the team can take appropriate action. It is anticipated that we will have the new Principal Planning Enforcement Officer appointed within the next 4 weeks. We have secured technical support for the team so that officers can focus on undertaking enforcement visits and investigations. There is further recruitment pending for the vacant Senior Planning enforcement and enforcement officer roles for the team.
- 4.2 Table 5 below provides detailed information on actionable cases received and enforcement activity during 2022/23 compared to previous years. Many more enforcement enquiries are received that do not require or justify action being taken. Table 6 sets out the number of enforcement cases open by ward.

TABLE 5: Planning Enforcement statistics

Range of work carried out	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
No. of enforcement cases received and under investigation	228	204	216	172
No. of cases closed	221	33	70	117
No. of cases on hand at end of year	200	367	501	554

Enforcement notices	8	1	0	0
Planning contravention notices	6	1	2	3
Breach of condition notices	0	0	0	1
Section 215 notices	4	0	0	0
Listed Building Enforcement notice	0	0	0	0
Temp Stop Notice	0	0	0	1
Stop Notice	0	0	0	0
Appeals against enforcement notices	3	2	5	0
New enforcement prosecutions	0	0	0	0

TABLE 6: Pending Planning Enforcement investigation cases by ward

Pending Enforcement Cases by Ward	Investigation cases 2022/23	Total Pending
Abbey	18	89
Battle	8	40
Caversham	13	33
Caversham Heights	10	23
Church	8	34
Coley	7	30
Emmer Green	2	26
Katesgrove	12	65
Kentwood	4	29
Norcot	3	23
Park	8	45
Redlands	18	61
Southcote	2	9
Thames	2	15
Tilehurst	5	13
Whitley	2	19
Total	122	554

8. Planning fee income

- 8.1 The following tables 7 & 8 show fee income to the planning service from Major, Minors and Other applications. The impact of uncertainty during the pandemic can be seen in 20/21 with a 21% drop in income when compared to the previous year. Year 21/22 saw some recovery, but this has not been sustained over the past year.
- 8.2 Officers are looking towards an increase in planning application fees to help improve income, as referred to in the report on fee increase proposals presented to PAC on 30 March 2023. As identified by the government's own research the planning application fee represents a small element of the overall cost of the majority of building projects, so it is hoped that developers are not deterred from putting forward applications should the fees be increased later this summer.

TABLE 7: planning fees from majors, minors and others showing % change for 22/23

	19/20 £	20/21 £	21/22 £	22/23 £	% change 21/22 - 22/23
April	86,650	31,290	94,786	18,384	-80%
May	68,090	55,834	37,998	23,352	-38%
June	73,898	73,320	75,131	147,460	96%
July	63,039	55,461	60,799	16,590	-72%
August	60,405	69,795	44,928	97,512	117%
September	45,627	71,376	78,327	105,194	34%
October	59,373	63,048	56,354	26,624	-52%
November	76,094	45,485	67,901	24,371	-64%
December	181,712	81,210	74,645	171,694	130%
January	72,341	38,380	34,439	15,674	-54%
February	95,841	77,794	67,207	21,578	-67%
March	37,581	63,280	122,649	65,270	-46%
Totals	920,651	726,273	815,164	733,703	-9%

TABLE 8: Income and applications for Major, Minor, Others submitted broken down by Quarters

19/20	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	228,638	9	75	170	254
Q2 July - September	169,071	7	71	153	231
Q3 October - December	317,179	11	69	142	222
Q4 January - March	205,763	5	67	155	227
Totals	920,651	32	282	620	934
20/21	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	160,444	3	53	117	173
Q2 July - September	196,632	7	50	145	202
Q3 October - December	189,743	15	65	161	241
Q4 January - March	179,454	8	69	162	239
Totals	726,273	33	237	585	855
21/22	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	207,915	6	52	150	206
Q2 July - September	184,054	10	54	170	234
Q3 October - December	198,900	5	38	129	172
Q4 January - March	224,295	7	35	105	147
Totals	815,164	28	179	554	759
22/23	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	189,196	7	55	147	209
Q2 July - September	219,296	13	44	154	211
Q3 October - December	222,689	7	46	148	201
Q4 January - March	102,522	5	52	127	184
Totals	733,703	32	197	576	805

9. Commitments monitoring

- 9.1 Although not amongst the government-set targets for performance of the Planning service, it is worth also reporting on the results of the annual commitments monitoring exercise, which will be published by the end of May. This monitors the progress of planning permissions for residential and non-residential development and forms the basis for returns on housing delivery to government. Table 9 provides the results of the latest exercise.
- 9.2 The headlines around residential development are that 2022-23 has seen strong figures for housing supply:
- A net gain of 888 homes have been completed, well above the Local Plan target of 689, and an increase from the already high level of 850 in 2021-22;
 - The number of homes under construction, 2,163, although reduced from 2021-22, is higher than any other recorded year prior to 2021;
 - The number of new permissions is significantly lower than 2021-22 and the majority of this is 80 Caversham Road, but last year's figures were unusually high and this is not considered to represent particular cause for concern.

TABLE 9: Results of Commitments Monitoring 2022-23

Type of development	Newly permitted 22-23	All permitted & not started at 31/03/23	Under construction at 31/03/23	Completed 22-23
Residential (net change)	802 homes	3,881 homes	2,163 homes	888 homes
Non-residential floorspace total (net change)	20,275 sq m	381,902 sq m	60,668 sq m	465 sq m
B2 (general industrial) (net change)	-4,181 sq m	29,579 sq m	0 sq m	-586 sq m
B8 (storage and distribution) (net change)	0 sq m	322 sq m	0 sq m	-3,213 sq m
C1 (hotel) (net change)	-259 sq m	60,074 sq m	692 sq m	-500 sq m
C2 (residential institution) (net change)	357 sq m	39,751 sq m	328 sq m	3,047 sq m
E (commercial, business and service) (net change)	18,740 sq m	161,932 sq m	21,077 sq m	-7,115 sq m
F1 (learning and non-residential institution) (net change)	11,980 sq m	4,636 sq m	16,487 sq m	-273 sq m
F2 (local community) (net change)	-692 sq m	45,905 sq m	6,432 sq m	3,570 sq m
Sui generis (net change)	-5,670 sq m	39,703 sq m	15,652 sq m	5,535 sq m

- 9.3 There are fewer clear headlines about non-residential development, which can vary significantly from year to year. In terms of completions, the overall net change in floorspace is very small, with losses of commercial (mainly offices) and storage and distribution uses and gains of residential institutions, local community and sui generis uses. Further detail can be provided on request.

10. Building Control

10.1 The team is served by 3 permanently employed technical support officers who are all studying for an LABC Level 3 Certificate in Technical Support for Building Control. There is also 1 permanently employed senior surveyor plus two part time agency contracted surveyors. Recruitment is currently taking place for a Building Control Team Leader and 2 trainee building control surveyors. The service has also engaged with LABC to take on a seconded trainee surveyor later this year. The aim is to develop the team to provide a competent and effective service providing expert support for corporate projects and private developers and to compete with Approved Inspectors (A.I.s) wherever we can.

10.2 Table 10 shows the case load as submitted for the relevant quarters for this year 22/23 and the totals for last year. Unlike planning permission, there are different ways to gain building regulation approval and external approved inspectors can also be used. The approval rates for applications within statutory timeframes has greatly improved compared to last year. The issuing of completion notices also increased over the last 2 quarters of the year. Fee income is holding steady compared to the previous year. The market share of applications with Approved Inspectors is concerning dropping from a 55(BC)/45(AI)% split in 2021/2022 to a 45(BC)/55(AI)% split this year.

TABLE 10: Building Control work.

Indicator	2021/2022	Q1 2022/ 2023	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022/2023
Dangerous structures attended Non fee work	26	5	4	7	11	27
Inspections carried out	1108					1629
Building Control applications submitted	442	97	92	140	64	393
Applications approved within 5 & 8 weeks Statutory limits	251/442 56%	85/97 96%	88/92 96%	137/140 98%	44/44 100%	354/373 95%
Number of completion certificates issued	245	24	13	89	108	234
Fee income	£281,866	£70,670	£62,044	£77,487	£69,597	£279,798
Non Fee Work - AI Initial Notices	323	131	65	124	43	363

11. Contribution to strategic aims

- 11.1 The processing of planning applications and associated work (trees, conservations areas and listed buildings) and building control activities contribute to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helps the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan in Section 2 of this report.

12. Community engagement

- 12.1 Statutory consultation takes place on most planning applications and appeals. The Council's website also allows the public to view information submitted and comments on planning applications and eventually the decision reached. There is also information on policy matters and the and this can influence the speed with which applications and appeals are decided. Information on development management performance is publicly available.

13. Equality impact assessment

- 13.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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.
- 13.2 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that the development management performance set out in this report has no adverse impacts.

14. Environmental and climate implications

- 14.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 14.2 The Planning & Building Control and Planning Policy Services play a key part in mitigating impacts and adapting building techniques using adopted policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly, making efficient use of land, using sustainable materials and building methods.

15. Legal implications

- 15.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators is a statutory requirement. In addition, a number of the work targets referred to in this report are mandatory requirements including the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the development plan.

16. Financial Implications

- 16.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report although we welcome the commitment in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to increase application fees which will help to better resource the planning service.

Planning Applications Committee

31 May 2023



Reading

Borough Council

Working better with you

Title	OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To confirm the Tree Preservation Order.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To report to Committee an objection to Tree Preservation Order No. 6/22 relating to Land on the corner of Gosbrook Road and George Street, Caversham, Reading (copy of TPO plan attached – Appendix 1).

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by “Our Foundations” explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

- 2.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the land being sold in 2022, tree works commenced on the site and an emergency Area TPO (ref 3/22) was served on the 8 June 2022 to protect all Poplar trees on site until discussions with the new owner could take place and the condition of the trees established.

- 2.2 Following service of that TPO, it was agreed that one of the Poplar trees could be felled under the 'dead / dangerous' exemption and permission was given to fell three Poplar trees due to their poor condition under tree works application 221187/TPO. Replacements are required for all four trees and are outstanding.
- 2.3 One Poplar tree remained and a new, individual TPO (6/22) was served on 7 December 2022 to protect that tree, with the Area TPO (3/22) being allowed to lapse, as of 8 December 2022.
- 2.4 The objection to the current TPO needs to be considered at this Planning Applications Committee as, if the decision is to confirm the TPO, this needs to be done by 8 June 2023.

3. Result of consultation

- 3.1 An objection to the Tree Preservation Order has been made by Mr Craddock of Danala Services (the new landowner), based on the Poplar being dangerous, however no evidence has been submitted to substantiate this despite promises of a report being forthcoming and officers giving the objector opportunity to submit this. Since the service of TPO 6/22 there has been an exchange of emails and information between Mr Craddock and Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer, with a final email on 27 March 2023 providing him with the opportunity to submit evidence to support his objection. This was requested to be received by 6 April 2023. No acknowledgement of that email or response has been received. Details of the exchange are provided in Appendix 3 and photographs provided by the objector are provided in Appendix 2.

4. Conclusion and recommendation

- 4.1 The new landowner has had since 7 December 2022 to submit evidence to support the concern raised that the tree is dangerous, however none has been forthcoming. Officers feel that the TPO is warranted to protect the one remaining tree on the land until such time as evidence is provided, if at all, to demonstrate that the tree warrants removal. The recommendation is therefore to confirm the TPO.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPO's are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 None.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1 None required.

8. Contribution to strategic aims

- 8.1 The aim of the TPO's is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees have multiple environmental benefits creating cleaner, greener and more attractive places to live. This contributes to creating a healthy environment as identified as one of the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan. See Section 2 of this report for more information.

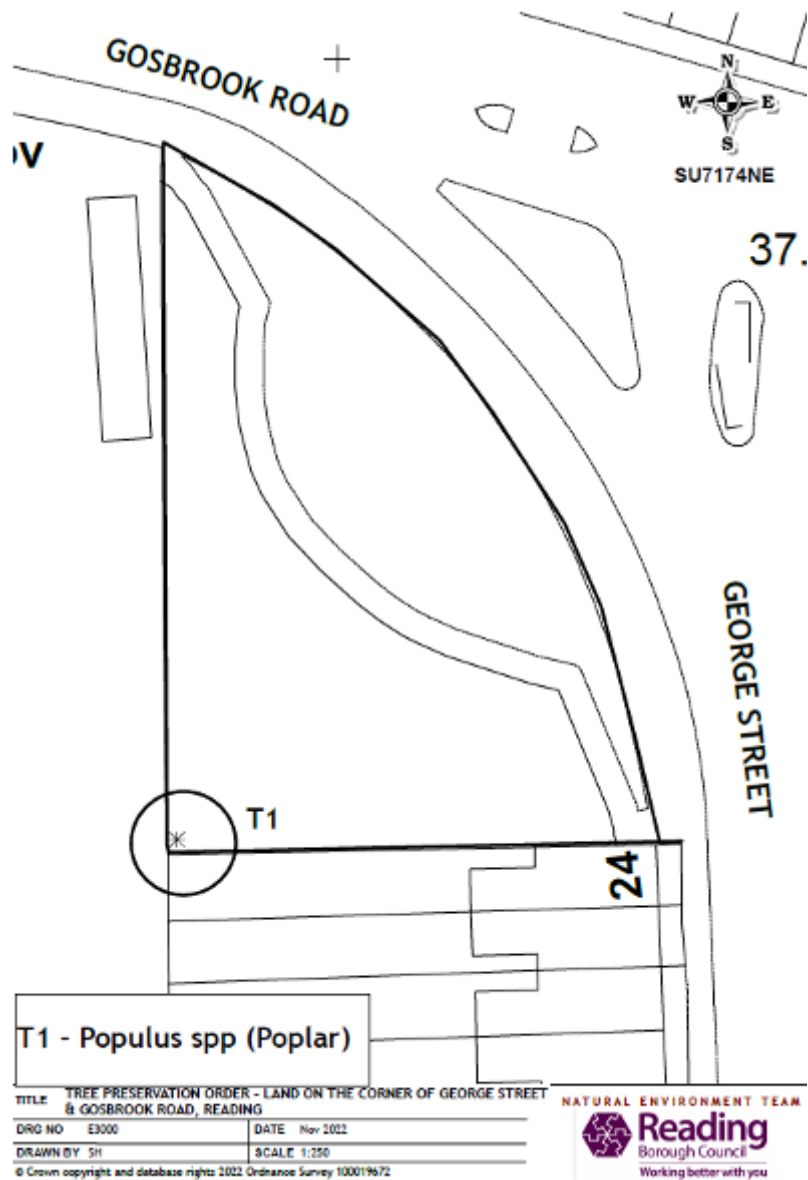
9. Environmental & Climate implications

- 9.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 9.2 Trees have multiple environmental benefits that include flood alleviation, wildlife benefits, air pollution mitigation and air cooling.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 Register of Tree Preservation Orders

Appendix 1 - TPO 6/22 (plan)



(officer photo - viewed from Gosbrook Road)

Appendix 2 - Photographs provided by objector on 10/12/22





Appendix 3 - Email exchange between Mr Craddock (AC) and Sarah Hanson (SH)

Email date	AC email (to SH unless otherwise stated)	SH response	Further comment
8/12/22	I object forthwith to this on danger grounds having alerted the council to this and put the council on notice	I have already responded to your claim about the tree being dangerous and the responsibility for that (ref our email exchange of 29 November – attached for reference)	SH email of 29/11/23 for ref: Tree owners have a duty of care under the Occupiers Liability Acts to ensure their trees do not pose an unacceptable risk to people or property. Whilst I appreciate you are a remote owner, this does not change your duty. You have dismissed the opinion of the arb consultant you employed to object to the TPO on the basis you don't believe his assessment and you have fired Ricky. There are many other tree professionals that work in Reading that you could employ to assist you. May I suggest you try someone else? Advice on finding a professional can be found on our website Trees - Reading Borough Council
8/12/22	The tree is dangerous Dependent on the surgeons findings tomorrow I will email you and if they say it is Dangerous it will be removed to save the expense of a third team on site		No comment from tree surgeons received
8/12/22	I'll let you know what the current team (RBC)		no comment received

	appraise of t1 tomorrow		
9/12/22	To Marcus: copy photos to her (SH) pls ref T1		Photos provided from AC 10/12/22 (see Appendix 2)
10/12/22 (X 2)	Photos of 'decay T1' sent (with no commentary)	12/12/22: Thank you for multiple pictures of the tree – is there any commentary to go with that other than 'showing decay'. Was the tree investigated / probed / tapped? What areas were of particular concern and why? Whilst I can pop by and have a look (and will aim to do so this week) – as I can only assess visually from the adjacent park, I won't necessarily be able to answer the above questions myself.	
12/12/22	the work men should be on site again today and will assess and send a report		<i>no report received</i>
20/12/22	Did you conduct your site visit. I am arranging the report you wish to receive.	Yes I did visit but could only view the tree from the adjacent Park – the site (and outside the site) was such a mess I couldn't get through all the part felled trees and tree debris to get close to the tree, otherwise I would have. I await your report from a tree professional.	AC acknowledgment 22/12/22 'noted' <i>No report received</i>
12/1/23	please note that a pending Appeal is still existing in relation to T1. I am in Asia and return in a week.	Yes – we are waiting for something from you to support your objection to the TPO, which I assume is forthcoming?	AC response 12/1/23: 'Yes when I return from Manilla' And 16/1/23: Sarah this will be forthcoming <i>No report received</i>

28/2/23	My Appeal against T1 TPO still remains.	1/3/23: I acknowledge that the objection (not appeal) against T1 remains open and will expect details of that objection to be submitted in the near future given the time that has passed since service of the TPO. I am aiming to take the objection to Planning Applications Committee on 26 April 2023 at the latest hence objection details must be received at the beginning of April in order to meet report deadlines. Please can whoever is responsible for dealing with this matter acknowledge this required timescale and confirm that the matter is in hand.	
1/3/23	Hi Sarah the Directors have 6 months from service to file any appeal An formal Appeal will be submitted before the TPO Expires. That is I believe in June 2023.	Following service of a TPO, there is a 28 days period in which you must register any objection. Whilst you indicated you wished to object within that period, you did not, and have not, provided any details. We have been flexible in allowing those details to come after the end of that 28 day period but it is now nearly 3 months since service, so I think it is reasonable for the detailed objection to have	From AC: Hi Sarah that is abundantly incorrect – photos showing decay were sent to you in December. You attended site and could not access due to debris that is now resolved and in the course of being resolved. Also the hoardings are being removed and the site has been made safe. Also I pointed out that T1 has lost part of its structure and also that this is a public danger. You have not

		<p>been submitted by now, or in the near future.</p> <p>If the TPO is to confirmed, it must be done before the end of the 6 month period following service. However, we must allow time within that period for the objection (not appeal) to be dealt with at a Committee and then for our Legal department to confirm it (if it is confirmed).</p> <p>Therefore we cannot wait until right at the end of the 6 month period to receive the objection details.</p> <p>I have outlined the timescale we are working to below and would be grateful if those dealing with it, which you have indicated is not you, could liaise with me to confirm this will be met.</p>	<p>acknowledged that risk. I consequentially put the Council on risk and that remains my position to date.</p> <p>So liability for risk falls directly on the Council at this time, as you have ignored all my reasonable requests to alert you to the dangers and insecurity of T1.</p> <p><i>No further input to Committee report received as of 27/3/23</i></p>
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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st May 2023

Ward: Emmer Green

Application No.: 220189/FUL

Address: 205-213 Henley Road & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 6LJ

Proposal: Demolition of nos. 205-213 Henley Road and rear gardens of nos. 205-219 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks (C3 use-age restricted) including communal spaces with supporting car parking, open space landscaping and associated infrastructure. Access into the site from the adjacent development on Henley Road.

Applicant: Henley Road Ltd

Date Valid: 17/05/2022

Application target decision date: Originally 16/08/2022, but an extension of time has been agreed until 14/06/2023

26 week date: 14/11/2022

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services (AD PTRS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by the 14th June 2023 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTRS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The Section 106 legal agreement to secure the following:

- Secure the **proposed residential units (Class C3) to be age-restricted**, specifically to only be occupied by persons aged 65 years and over, in perpetuity.
- Obligation whereby **no works above ground level for separate planning permission 190887** (which relates to land associated with part of the application site in this proposal) shall be undertaken/proceeded with if this application is permitted and implemented.
- A **payment-in-lieu commuted sum financial** contribution towards Affordable Housing of £75,000, payable prior to the first occupation of any residential unit.
- **Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism** calculation, NOT to take place before the sale or letting of 75% of all units (equating to 41 units in this case) with the following inputs fixed:
 - o Gross Development Value (GDV) determined as part of the assessment of viability at the time of planning permission to be granted: £23,370,000
 - o Total Build Costs determined as part of the assessment of viability at the time of planning permission to be granted: £13,765,000
 - o Developer profit as a % of GDV determined at the time of planning permission to be granted: 17.5%
 - o Deficit determined at the time of planning permission to be granted: £1,896,138
- Should the application site subsequently be extended/alterd to create further residential units then contributions towards **affordable housing would apply on a**

- **cumulative basis** also taking into account this application.
- **Employment, Skills and Training** - The production, implementation and monitoring of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phase of the development. Or, in the event that the developer chooses not to provide the ESP themselves, a financial contribution commuted sum, calculated to be £16,437.50 using the SPD formula will be secured in lieu of an ESP.
- **Zero Carbon Offset financial contribution**, as per the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019. If zero carbon is not achieved the scheme must instead achieve a minimum of a 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus provide a financial contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30-year period).
- Provision of an **off-site reptile relocation strategy**
- **Highway Works** to extend the existing foot/cycleways across the site frontage to promote travel by alternative modes (in accordance with drawing J32-5410-SK-011).
- To enter into a **Section 38 agreement** for a) the new residential road, and not create or retain any ransom strip along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the application site and b) to dedicate the sliver of land to the frontage of the site to provide the footway/cycleway scheme as illustrated on drawing J32-5410-SK-011
- To secure a **S142 licence** which permits the occupier or the owner of any premises adjoining the adopted highway to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, plants or grass on the highway until such time the road is extended.
- Contribution towards **monitoring costs** plus a separate commitment to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs in connection with the proposed S106 Agreement, to be payable whether or not the Agreement is completed.
- Any **unexpended contributions to be repaid** within ten years beginning with the start of the Financial Year after the final obligation payment for each obligation is received. In accordance with Policy CC9.
- **Indexation** - All financial contributions to be index-linked from date of permission unless expressly stated otherwise.

And the following conditions to include:

1. Time Limit – 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement (barring demolition works) details of all external materials to be submitted to the LPA (and sample details to be provided on site) and approved in writing with the LPA. Approved details to be retained on site until the work has been completed
4. * Pre-commencement Demolition and Construction Method Statement (including EP-based matters)
5. Compliance condition for provision of vehicle parking as shown prior to first occupation
6. Compliance condition for provision of vehicular access as shown prior to first occupation
7. Pre-occupation submission and approval of cycle parking details
8. Compliance condition for provision of refuse and recycling storage facilities as shown prior to first occupation
9. Pre-occupation submission and approval of refuse collection details
10. Compliance condition for provision of the road as shown prior to first occupation
11. Pre-occupation submission and approval of EV Charging Point Scheme details
12. Compliance condition for the glazing and ventilation to be installed in accordance with specifications stated within the Noise Assessment
13. * Pre-commencement (including demolition works hereby approved) contaminated land site characterisation assessment
14. * Pre-commencement (including demolition works hereby approved) contaminated land remediation scheme

15. Pre-construction above foundation level contaminated land validation report
16. Reporting of unexpected contamination at any time
17. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works
18. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site
19. Pre-occupation submission and approval of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores
20. Pre-commencement (barring demolition to ground level) archaeological work
21. Pre-occupation completion of water network upgrades or details of a Thames Water agreed development and infrastructure plan (in conjunction with Thames Water)
22. Compliance condition for the development to be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment and mitigation measures detailed within
23. Mix of units restricted to 17 x 1-bedroom and 38 x 2-bedroom units
24. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, SAP assessment (energy) – design stage – including feasibility study assessment for use of GSHP rather than ASHP
25. Pre-occupation of any residential unit SAP assessment (energy) – as built
26. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, details of proposed photovoltaics
27. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission and approval of fire statement / strategy measures.
28. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, Security Strategy details to be submitted and approved
29. Pre-occupation provision of all internal communal areas; retention thereafter & for these to be ancillary to the Class C3 use only
30. Pre-occupation submission and approval of privacy screen details at third floor level of Block A
31. Pre-occupation accessible and adaptable and 5% wheelchair user dwelling details
32. Pre-commencement, barring demolition works, submission and approval of Sustainable Drainage Strategy
33. Compliance condition for SuDS approved in condition above to be completed prior to first occupation and managed/maintained thereafter.
34. * Pre-demolition of existing buildings submission and approval of dusk and dawn bat surveys and licence from Natural England for development works affecting bats
35. * Pre-commencement construction environmental management plan (CEMP) to be submitted, approved and thereafter adhered to.
36. Ecological enhancements: a) Pre-commencement, barring demolition, biodiversity enhancement measures including at least 10 bird and/or bat boxes, bricks or tiles to be submitted and approved b) report evidencing the approved measures to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation, with measures retained and maintained thereafter
37. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, external lighting report demonstrating measures to protect wildlife and Berry Brook and separate requirements for the protection of amenity of occupiers to be submitted and approved and thereafter retained and maintained as such
38. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, Biodiversity Net Gain Plan demonstrating a minimum of a 10% uplift in biodiversity units using the DEFRA 3.1 Metric to be submitted, approved and thereafter implemented.
39. Pre-commencement, barring the demolition works hereby approved, submission and approval of all hard and soft landscaping details, specifically including green roof details, and thereafter carried out in accordance with approved details and replacement planting for first 5 years.
40. Pre-occupation submission and approval of boundary treatment details and thereafter implemented and maintained as such
41. Pre-commencement, barring the demolition works hereby approved, submission and approval of a landscape management plan and thereafter implemented and maintained for the period specified
42. Compliance condition for the development to be carried out in accordance with the arboricultural method statement in relation to the protection of existing trees

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Works affecting highways
3. S278 Agreements
4. S38 Agreements
5. S142 Agreement
6. Sound insulation
7. Section 106 Legal Agreement
8. Terms and conditions
9. Building Regulations approval required
10. Pre-commencement conditions (marked with an *)
11. Encroachment / Party Wall Act
12. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
13. Thames Water - Groundwater Risk Management Permit and other related informatives
14. Environmental permit (recommended by the Environment Agency)
15. In respect of condition 31, strong recommendation to exceed 5% wheelchair user dwelling requirements, given the nature of the proposed accommodation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site comprises an irregular shaped site, 0.62 hectares in size, on the south side of Henley Road within Emmer Green ward. At present, the site contains five dwellinghouses, namely No's 205, 207, 209, 211 and 213 Henley Road, the respective rear gardens of these dwellings (No's 209, 211 and 213 are circa. 85 metres in length) and also the southern-most part of the rear gardens of No's 215, 217 and 219 Henley Road (see figure 1 below). There is a significant change in land levels across the site, with the topography running from north to south with a circa. 11 metre drop. The site is also bound by Willow View, a recently completed access road to the west, associated with the care home development adjacent to the site, completed in 2022.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (not to scale)

- 1.2 The Environment Agency has confirmed that the site is within 8 metres of a main river, the Berry Brook (to the south) and as a consequence, the application site also lies within Flood Zone 2 and 3a (with Zone 3a solely within the southern-most part of the site), which is land defined by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as having a medium and high probability of flooding.
- 1.3 The overwhelming majority of the site is within an air quality management area (all except the southern edges of the site away from Henley Road). Henley Road is a 'treed corridor' (as defined in the RBC Tree Strategy), is subject to 3 tree preservation orders (TPOs) protecting 2 trees at No. 205, 3 trees at No. 213 and 4 trees to the rear of No. 219.
- 1.4 Immediately to the south of the site is a designated Major Landscape Feature (Thames Valley), as per Policy EN13, and an area of identified biodiversity interest under Policy EN12. Henley Road (see figure 2 below) is part of the classified highway network (Policy TR3) and a cycle route (Policy TR4). The borough boundary with South Oxfordshire, at its closest point, is 60 metres to the south of the site.



Figure 2: Site photograph from Henley Road looking west (June 2022)

- 1.5 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, but increasingly in recent times varying in character. The primary character derives from the early 20th Century detached/semi-detached dwellinghouses, to the east and north fronting onto Henley Road, with many of these properties benefitting from expansive rear gardens (e.g. some are circa. 85 metres in length on the south side of Henley Road). These properties have a degree of variation in the form and appearance, with many having been extended.
- 1.6 There is also a more contemporary character emerging from the early 2000's Ruskin development to the west, comprising an up to 5 storey block of dwellings adjacent to Henley Road and more densely arranged dwellinghouses and townhouses set back from the main road. Furthermore, the recently opened 'Signature' care home is immediately to the west of the application site and accessed via Willow View. The care home building is roughly 'C' shaped and is 4 storeys at the northern (Henley Road) end of the site, 2 storey within the mid-section and 3 storeys in the southern part of the site, providing 82 Class C2 care home units in total (see figure 3 below). The application site does not include any listed buildings and is located outside of any designated conservation areas.



Figure 3: Aerial view looking north (Signature care home to the west under construction at this time)

1.7 The application is being considered at Planning Applications Committee as it relates to a major application which is recommended for approval by officers.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 Full planning permission is firstly sought for the demolition of 5 existing dwellinghouses on the south side of Henley Road, at No's 205 – 213 (odd). The proposed site redevelopment, which also involves the rear garden areas of these properties and land to the rear of No's 215-219 (odd) Henley Road too, involves the erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks. These will provide 55 Class C3 use age restricted (65 years and over only) residential units in total, in a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments (17 x 1-bed and 38 x 2-bed). The proposals also include ancillary communal indoor spaces, car parking, open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure. Vehicular and pedestrian access into the site will be from the adjacent development (to the west) on Willow View, off Henley Road. These proposals follow on from a separate application submitted in 2021, which was withdrawn by the applicant following officer feedback (see relevant history section below).



Figure 4 – Aerial view of the application site with the neighbouring development layout outlined.

2.2 More specifically, Block A fronts onto Henley Road and would be part 3-storey (towards the eastern boundary), but predominantly 5 storeys in height, although the site topography means in practice it would appear as 2 storeys of accommodation in height from Henley Road (with no accommodation within the roofscape apparent from

the street). The southern elevation reveals the lower ground and upper ground levels, together with the first, second and roofspace third floor levels (5 storeys). 33 residential units are proposed in total within Block A, as per figure 5 below. At lower ground floor level a shared lounge, office, parking (33 vehicular spaces, including 2 accessible bays – partly under the footprint of the building and partly externally located – see figure 6 below), mechanical plant and a bin store is proposed, with accommodation on the upper ground floors and above. Pedestrian access to the building is possible via a bridge entry point at upper ground floor level from Henley Road.

Floor	1-bed	2-bed	Total
Upper ground	3	7	10
1 st	3	7	10
2 nd	3	6	9
3 rd	3	1	4
Totals	12	21	33

Figure 5 – The proposed mix of units within Block A

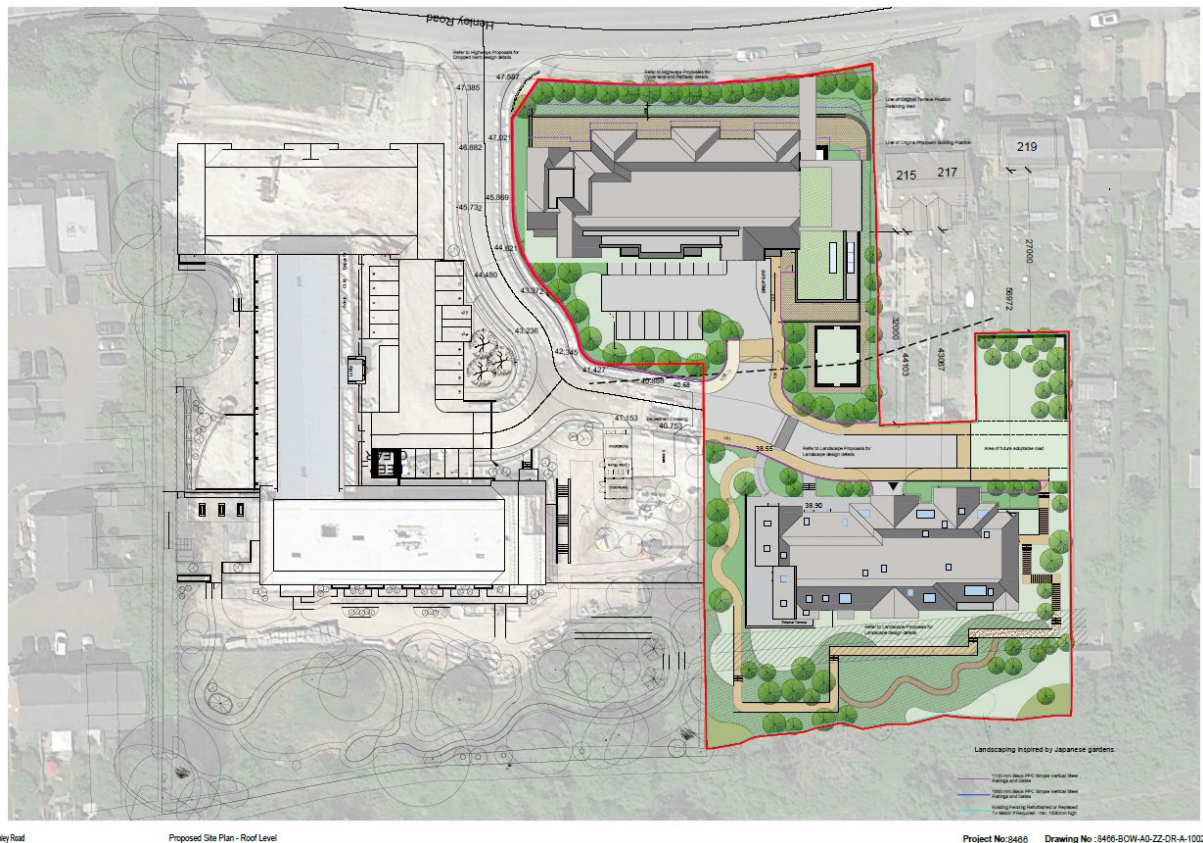


Figure 6 – Proposed roof level site plan (-1002 Rev P15 received 16/05/23)

2.3 Block B is located on the southern part of the site, as seen in figure 6 above, and is 4 storeys in height, although this includes a storey of accommodation in the roofspace. A total of 22 residential units are proposed in Block B, as per figure 7 below. At ground floor level a shared lounge, office, parking (13 spaces), mechanical plant, mobility scooter storage and a bin store is proposed, with accommodation on the first to third floors.

Floor	1-bed	2-bed	Total
1 st	2	6	8
2 nd	2	6	8

3 rd	1	5	6
Totals	5	17	22

Figure 7 – The proposed mix of units within Block B

- 2.4 It is relevant to note that an 82 unit care home building (C2 use class) with associated external structures, access from Henley Road, car parking and landscaping has recently been built immediately to the west of the application site (at 199-203 Henley Road and rear of 205-207 Henley Road), as a result of planning permission 190835 (see relevant history section below). That permission was supported by an adoption/highway extents plan, with the access road (Willow View) since adopted by the RBC Highway Authority. The new access road will be the primary access route to this proposed development, as shown in figure 6 above.
- 2.5 It is also relevant to note that the applicant has submitted information to indicate that works have commenced to implement a permission in relation to part of the application site. More specifically, this relates to land to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road) for the erection of 9 dwellings (Ref 190887 – see relevant history below).
- 2.6 The proposed development also seeks the removal of 21 trees, 12 shrub / hedgerow groups and 2 conifer groups. In addition, 6 trees are also proposed for removal due to their failing condition, cumulatively resulting in an overall removal of 47 trees. The proposal includes 90 new trees (so a net gain of 43) as well as shrub, hedgerow and wildflower meadow planting, as part of the soft landscaping scheme which also includes a nature garden (to the rear of No. 219), landscaping to the south of Block B and wildflower sedum green roofs (on Block A).
- 2.7 During the course of the application's consideration, a number of changes have been made to the scheme, including:
- Reduction in the overall number of residential units proposed, from 59 to 55.
 - Resultant changes in the mix of units proposed (originally 18x1-bed and 41x2-bed; now 17 x 1-bed and 38 x 2-bed).
 - Change in the minimum age of future occupants of the retirement living apartments, from 55 as originally sought to 65 and over as now proposed, with updated information submitted in support of this.
 - The removal of various rooflights in the north and eastern roofslopes of Block A (originally proposed to serve habitable rooms), and removal of accommodation (and windows/Juliet balconies) within the gables of Block A fronting Henley Road.
 - Fenestration and internal alterations to Block A to remove single aspect north facing units at upper ground floor level.
 - The setting back of Block A from Henley Road by 2 metres.
 - The setting in, back and down of the 3 storey element of Block A away from the neighbouring dwelling at No. 215 Henley Road.
 - Alterations to the dormers and rooflights proposed within the roofscape of Block B.
 - The submission of accurate existing floor plans and elevation plans for assessment.
 - Clarification regarding proposed access control measures to the proposed private, communal gardens.
 - The inclusion of a pedestrian pavement path on the north side of the access road, in the area to the rear of No's 215-219 Henley Road.
 - The omission of a path/steps along the eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to the boundary with No. 215 Henley Road.
 - Alterations to the proposed footway/cycleway on Henley Road.
 - Changes to the SuDS and drainage approach, including the incorporation of wildflower sedum green roofs.
 - Increases in the number of new on-site trees proposed as part of the landscaping (from 59 to 90) to assist achieving a biodiversity net gain at the site.

- Increase in the initial affordable housing offer, from nil to a payment in lieu of £75,000 plus a deferred contribution mechanism.
 - Various other revised and additional information and reports to address comments raised by consultees.
- 2.8 None of these changes to the scheme were considered to be of a nature or extent which warranted formal public re-consultation to occur.
- 2.9 In terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the applicant duly completed a CIL liability form as part of the submission of this application. Based solely on the information provided on the completed form (which will be required to be verified in due course), there would be a net increase of 5,606.21sqm residential floorspace across the site (6,575sqm new build proposed – 968.79sqm existing to be demolished – on the proviso that this all qualifies as being able to be deducted from the liability). Based on the 2023 CIL rate of £167.06 per sqm of residential accommodation, the CIL liability is likely to be £936,573.44.

2.10 Plans:

8466-BOW-A1-XX-DR-A-0003 Rev P0 – Topographical Survey
 8466-BOW-A0-XX-DR-A-0001 Rev / – Location Plan
 As received 25/03/2022

2200122/205 – Gross Internal Areas – 205 Henley Road
 2200122/207 – Gross Internal Areas – 207 Henley Road
 2200122/209 – Gross Internal Areas – 209 Henley Road
 2200122/211 – Gross Internal Areas – 211 Henley Road
 2200122/213 – Gross Internal Areas – 213 Henley Road
 As received 01/11/2022

8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3205 – Existing Elevations: No. 205
 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3207 – Existing Elevations: No. 207
 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3209 – Existing Elevations: No. 209 and 211
 8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3213 – Existing Elevations: No. 213
 As received 14/12/2022

8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3007 – Existing Site Elevations
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3008 – Existing Site Sections
 As received 25/03/2022

8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2002 Rev P11 – Block A Lower & Upper Ground Floor Plans
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2003 Rev P10 – Block A First & Second Floor Plan
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P6 – Block A Elevations
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3009 Rev P1 – Proposed Building Sections Block A
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-2001 Rev P7 – Block B Ground & First Floor Plans
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-3010 Rev P1 – Proposed Building Sections Block B
 As received 20/01/2023

8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-3002 Rev P6 – Site Sections
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2004 Rev P10 – Block A Third Floor & Roof Plan
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3011 Rev P3 – Sections showing link to 215
 8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-5002 Rev P5 – Block A – CIL Area Schedule
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P6 – Block B Proposed Elevations
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-2002 Rev P10 – Block B Second & Third Floor Plans
 8466-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-5002 Rev P5 – Block B – CIL Area Schedule
 As received 21/02/2023

8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P9 – Contextual Elevations
As received 08/03/2023

8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1001 Rev P17 – Proposed Site Plan – Carpark Level
8466-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1002 Rev P15 – Proposed Site Plan – Roof Level
As received 16/05/2023

2.11 Other plans and documents:

Noise Assessment by Suono Ref 2730.RP.1.4 Final // 1 February 2022
Travel Plan Statement by Mode Transport Planning Ref 220131 325410 TPSv1.1,
dated 01/02/2022
Transport Statement by Mode Transport Planning Ref 220131 325410 TSv1.1, dated
01/02/2022
Air quality assessment for the proposed development at 199 – 207 Henley Road,
Caversham, Reading by Aether Ref AQ_assessment/2016/199-207_Henley_Road
dated 19/09/2016
Update Statement to the Air quality assessment for the proposed development at
Henley Road, Caversham by Aether Ref325/2022/HenleyRd_Update, dated
01/02/2022
Design and Access Statement by Bowman Riley
Flood Risk Sequential Assessment by Turley dated February 2022
Planning Statement by Turley dated January 2022
Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Judwaa Revision 2 dated
31/01/2022
Addendum No. 1 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Judwaa dated
September 2021
Addendum No. 2 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by Judwaa dated
January 2022
Henley Road, Caversham M&E Utilities Report by Clancy Consulting Rev 01 dated
02/08/2021
As all received on 11/02/2022

Policy H5 Document by Bowman Riley Ref 8466-BOW-ZZ-XX-RP-0001_ Policy H5
Assessment Rev P1, dated 25/03/2022, as received 12/04/2022

Financial Viability Appraisal Executive Summary by S106 Management dated
13/04/2022, as received 17/05/2022

Daylight and Sunlight Impact Report by Planning for Sustainability Rev 03 dated July
2022, as received 12/07/2022

C2827-02 Rev B – Roof Level SuDS Layout Plan
As received 05/10/2022

J32-5410-001 – Vehicle Swept Path Analysis Refuse Collection
As received 05/10/2022

SUDS Report for 205-213 + rear gardens of 215-219 Henley Road, Caversham, RG4
6LJ by Nimbus Engineering Consultants Ref C2827-R1-REV-B dated October 2022
Geo-Environmental & Geotechnical Assessment (Ground Investigation) Report by
Jones Associates Ltd Rev V1.1 dated 02/05/2018
Desk Study / Preliminary Risk Assessment by Jones Associates Ltd Ref
P9413J811b/SRC Rev V1.1 dated 04/02/2020
As received 05/10/2022

8466-BOW-ZZ-ZZ-RP-A-0010-P0 Rev X Design Response by Bowman Riley dated 27/10/2022

Ecological Appraisal of 205-213 Henley Road by Crossman Associates Ref A1113.004 Issue Two, dated 15/07/2022
As received 01/11/2022

Sustainability & Energy Statement by Bluesky Unlimited, dated 18/10/2022
Response to the Hoare Lea review of the Sustainability and Energy Statement prepared by Bluesky Unlimited dated 1st February 2022, dated 18/10/2022
CIL form
As received 02/11/2022

8466 0010 Rev * Locality Plan, as received 10/11/2022
Email from Turley 'Henley Road', dated and received 10/11/2022

C3 Restricted Age Note by Turley, dated November 2022
As received 17/11/2022

Email from Nimbus Engineering Consultants 'RE: 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189) – SuDS', dated and received 31/01/2023

Email from S106 Management 'Fwd: 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)' dated and received 14/02/2023

8466-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-7010 Rev P1 – Visuals
J32-5410-SK-003 – Proposed Extension of the Foot/Cycleway
J32-5410-SK-004 – Proposed Extension of the Foot/Cycleway
Redacted version for public viewing of 'Financial Viability Appraisal by S106 Management dated 13/04/2022'
Redacted version for public viewing of '205-213 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 6LJ by S106 Management dated 22/08/2022'.
As all received on 21/02/2023

C2827-03 Rev C – Management & Maintenance Plan
Arboricultural Report Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement by Clever Tree Consultants Ref CTC220713-PD-11a dated February 2023
As all received on 08/03/2023

Henley Road: 1 in 100 year + 40% Climate Change Adoptable Road Area to Soakaway by Nimbus, dated 08/03/2023

Henley Road: 1 in 1 year + 40% Climate Change Adoptable Road Area to Soakaway by Nimbus, dated 13/03/2023

Henley Road: 1 in 30 year + 40% Climate Change Adoptable Road Area to Soakaway by Nimbus, dated 13/03/2023
As received 14/03/2023

Letter from Crossman Associates 'Henley Road, Caversham' Ref A1143.004_let1503023, dated 15/03/2023
Letter from Crossman Associates '205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)' Ref A1143.004_GS_let1503023, dated 15/03/2023
As all received on 15/03/2023

J32-5410-SK-011 – Proposed Footway/Cycleway on Henley Road - Site Frontage

As received on 19/04/2023

Bat survey plan Ref Figure 4

Email from Crossman Associates 'Re: 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)'

As received 21/04/2023

Photographs x 8

Site Inspection Report by Thames Building Control Ltd dated 22/03/2023

RBC Initial Notice acknowledgement letter to Thames Building Control Ltd, dated 13/03/2023

Email from Turley '205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading (220189)' dated 04/05/2023

As received 04/05/2023

C2827-01 Rev F – SuDS & Surface Water Drainage Layout Plan

J32-5410-SK-012 Rev A - Extent of Carriageway for Adoption

Biodiversity Metric 3.1 – Calculation Tool assessment – Henley Road Caversham by A Crossman

06-999-301 Rev P - Landscape Masterplan

As received 10/05/2023

Letter from Crossman Associates 'Reptile Relocation Strategy: Land at Henley Road, Caversham' Ref A1144.004_10052023

As received 17/05/2023

2.12 Information submitted on a private and confidential basis on grounds of it containing commercially sensitive information:

Financial Viability Appraisal by S106 Management dated 13/04/2022, as received 05/05/2022

S106 Management Schedules 1-5, as received 05/05/2022

205-213 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 6LJ by S106 Management dated 22/08/2022, as received 05/10/2022

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Application site only

- 3.1 210975 - Demolition of no.s 205 to 213 Henley Road and rear gardens of no.s 205-219 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartment blocks (C3 use) comprising a mixture of 60no. 1 & 2 bedrooms with several communal spaces such as lounges, terraces, external gardens and associated access from the adjacent development on Henley Road, car parking and landscaping. Withdrawn 20/09/2021.

Previous applications relating to part of the application site

205 – 219 Henley Road

- 3.2 071074 (07/00081/FUL) - Erection of a 60-bed care home and 60 dwellings including access, parking and landscaping. Refused 24/05/2007. Appeal (Ref APP/E0345/A/07/2048856/NW) dismissed 19/12/2007.

Land to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road

- 3.3 181102 - Erection of 9 dwellings to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road with access road and associated landscaping. Withdrawn 11/02/2019.
- 3.4 190887/FUL - Erection of 9 dwellings to the rear of 209-219 Henley Road with access road and associated landscaping. Granted following completion of Legal Agreement 25/03/2020 (see details in figure 8 below).



Figure 8 – Approved site plan, section & streetscene looking south as part of 190887

- 3.5 200618/APPCON - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (materials), 11 (cycle parking), 12, (electric vehicle charging), 14 (sustainability) and 19 (levels) of planning permission ref. 190887. Conditions discharged 12/08/2020.
- 3.6 201019/APPCON - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 6 (construction method statement), 7 (landscaping), 8 (biodiversity enhancements), 16 (construction and environmental management plan) and 17 (archaeology) of planning permission ref. 190887. Conditions discharged 11/11/2020.

Applications of relevance at nearby sites

199-203 Henley Road and land to rear of 205-207 Henley Road

- 3.7 161842/FUL - Demolition of no. s 199-203 Henley Road and erection of 60 dwellings at 199-203 Henley Road and to the rear of 205-207 Henley Road with associated access from Henley Road and landscaping. Refused 18/01/2017. Appeal lodged, but later withdrawn on 08/03/2018.
- 3.8 170959/FUL - Demolition of 199-203 Henley Road and erection of 42 dwellings at 199-203 Henley Road and to the rear of 205-207 Henley Road with associated access from Henley Road and landscaping. Granted following completion of legal agreement 06/06/2018.
- 3.9 180418/OUT - Outline application for the demolition of nos 199-203 Henley Road and erection of 42 dwellings at 199-203 Henley Road and to the rear of 205-207 Henley

Road with associated access from Henley Road (considering access, appearance, layout and scale). Granted following completion of legal agreement 07/01/2019.

- 3.10 190835/FUL - Demolition of 199-203 Henley Road and erection of part four, part three and part two storey 82-unit residential care home building (C2 use class) with associated external structures, access from Henley Road, car parking and landscaping. Granted following completion of legal agreement 19/12/2019 (see details in figure 9 below).



Figure 9 - Approved site plan and elevations as part of permission 190835

- 3.11 201382/NMA - Non-material amendment to planning permission ref. 190835 to correct the care home beds to be provided from 82 to 86. Agreed 30/11/2020.

98-102 Lower Henley Road and 177-197 Henley Road (Ruskin)

- 3.12 020859 (02/00657/FUL) - Proposed residential development comprising of 75 units including access roads and parking. Granted following completion of legal agreement 11/10/02.

4. CONSULTATIONS

i) Internal and External consultees

1) RBC Transport

- 4.1.1 Considering access matters first, Transport officers advise that the application site will be served from the recent access arrangements from Henley Road serving the neighbouring site to the west. The internal road layout conforms to Reading's adoptable standards with a 5.5m wide carriageway and 1.8m wide footways. The proposed development incorporates the continuation of the access up to the eastern boundary of the site to prevent future development being restricted by third party land ownership. The applicant has submitted a plan entitled, 'Extent of Carriageway for Adoption' (J32-5410-SK-012 Rev A – see below in figure 10) which shows the area of land to be adopted by the Highway Authority.

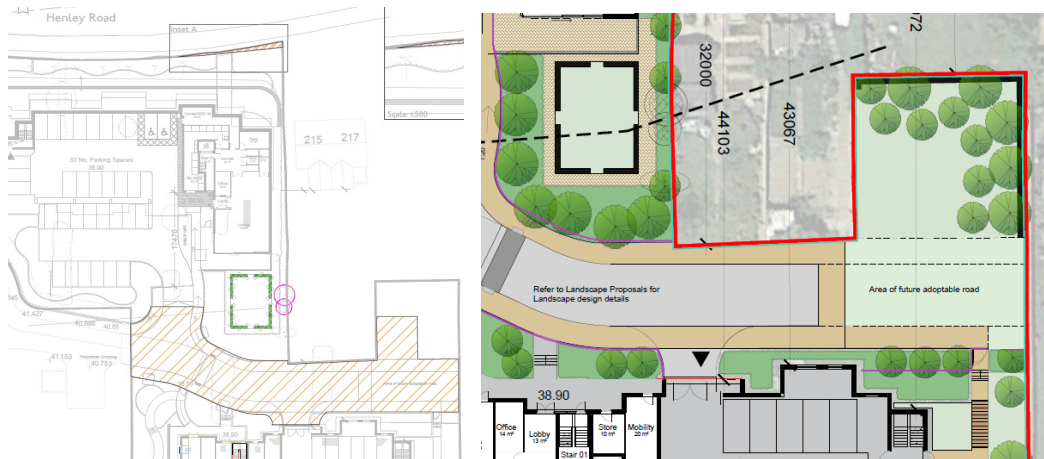


Figure 10 – Left: Extent of carriageway for adoption (left). Right: Extract of site plan until such time development comes forward to the east (if at all)

- 4.1.2 A footway along the northern side of the access road is provided to the site boundary (following revisions during the application), which would aid pedestrian access between Block A and the nature garden, and secure a future pedestrian footway into the adjacent land. Given that future development is unknown, the provision of the access road does not need to be constructed in full until such time development comes forward. This enables the area to be soft landscaped until access is required to the adjacent land, as shown above in figure 10.
- 4.1.3 The landscaping proposals will require a S142 licence, which permits the occupier or the owner of any premises adjoining the adopted highway to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, plants or grass on the highway until such time the road is extended.
- 4.1.4 Pedestrian connections will be provided connecting the site directly to Henley Road from the external terrace of Block A, predominantly via an accessible sky-bridge link suitable for mobility impaired residents, providing access to bus stops and nearby local amenities. Mobility impaired residents would be able to utilise the lifts provided within Block A to reach the accessible bridge link. The gradient of the pedestrian routes between Block A and Block B is acceptable being between 1:20 and 1:23.
- 4.1.5 Turning to parking considerations, the site is located within Zone 3, the Secondary Core Area of the Parking SPD. This requires the development to provide a parking provision of 1 space per unit & 1 space on-site for staff. 46 car parking spaces are proposed for the 55 units, which are split across two car parks, one serving Block A and the other serving Block B. The applicant has clarified that the exact number of staff are not known at this stage but that “*assisted living developments/ communities typically see residents living in their own apartments more independently than care homes*” and therefore minimal staff are required on site.
- 4.1.6 The proposed parking ratio for the site falls slightly below the maximum adopted parking standards providing a ratio 0.83 parking spaces per unit. It is stated that the age restricted living units inherently generate low levels of car ownership, and ownership also tends to diminish over time due to the age of the residents. To suitably justify a lower parking provision, comparisons in parking ratios have been made using the TRICS surveyed sites to equating to an average parking ratio of 0.7 across 9 independent sites.
- 4.1.7 Policy TR5 requires that communal car parks for residential development of at least 10 spaces should provide 10% of spaces with an active Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point. Therefore, the development will be provided with 6 EV spaces. Full

details will be covered by condition. Communal stores will be provided within both blocks which will provide space for buggies and 6 cycle spaces in each block. Full details will be covered by condition. Cycle measures along Henley Road are separately discussed below.

- 4.1.8 The vehicle parking layout is generally acceptable and provides adequate manoeuvring space. The SPD requires a minimum of 3 disabled spaces or 5% of total capacity is met, with 3 disabled parking bays across both residential blocks. All disabled spaces will be provided with EV charging capabilities.
- 4.1.9 A storage area for refuse and recycling will be provided in both Blocks A and B. The ground floor areas for both blocks have been redesigned to allow for larger bin stores and collection distances. These are acceptable from a transport perspective, although guidance from RBC Waste Services should be followed.
- 4.1.10 With specific regard to trip generation, part of the site has planning permission for 9 residential dwellings (Ref 190887 – see relevant history above). The consented development had the potential to generate 4 two-way vehicle movements during the AM peak hour (08:00-09:00) and 5 two-way movements during the PM peak hour (17:00-18:00). The proposals also comprise the demolition of 5 existing residential properties fronting Henley Road. Combined, the application site under existing and consented conditions could generate in the order of 7 two-way vehicle movements during the AM peak period, 8 two-way vehicle movements during the PM peak period and 63 two-way vehicle movements over a daily period.
- 4.1.11 The applicant states that age-restricted living units inherently generate low levels of car ownership, and ownership also tends to diminish over time due to the age of the residents. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the proposed age-restricted living accommodation would generate less vehicle movements than typical residential flats, especially during peak hours. To determine appropriate trip rates for the existing traffic generation potential of the site, the TRICS Database has been interrogated. Based on this the proposed units have the potential to generate 9 two-way total vehicle movements during the AM peak and 6 two-way vehicle movements during the PM peak period which is comparable to the combined vehicle movements of the existing and consented development. Over a daily period, the proposed units could generate an additional 51 two-way vehicle movements over the day, which is equivalent to an average of 4-5 vehicles per hour. This is not a material increase in traffic flow and as such would not have a severe impact on the Highway Network.
- 4.1.12 Turning to consider potential impacts during construction, it is acknowledged that there could be significant transport implications constructing the proposed development within the existing urban area of Reading. To ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others during construction, a condition will secure a Demolition & Construction Method Statement (DCMS). The DCMS will, amongst other matters, manage the number of HGV movements are demonstrate measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road network around the construction site.
- 4.1.13 In terms of S106 legal agreement matters, the applicant will firstly be required to secure the new residential road, including a provision not to create or retain any ransom strip along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the application site. This will also be secured via a Highways Section 38 agreement.
- 4.1.14 The development also proposes to provide an extension to the pedestrian/cycle infrastructure across the frontage of this site (adjacent to Henley Road) to promote travel by alternative modes. This would be an extension to the foot/cycleway scheme

quality and in terms of the exposure to poor air quality of the occupants. EP officers are satisfied in this regard.

4.2.3 Turning to contaminated land matters, the development involves the introduction of a large number of new sensitive receptors to land where there is the possibility of contamination. In the absence of site specific information which covers the whole site (some information was submitted during the application to seek to prevent the need for further submissions, but this did not encapsulate the entirety of the application site) the standard four-stage contaminated land condition is required to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

4.2.4 Conditions are also recommended in relation to external lighting (to protect the amenity of existing nearby occupiers), several construction stage measures (to manage airborne pollutants, noise and pest control; working hours; no bonfires) and to ensure bin stores are vermin proof. With these conditions secured the proposals are satisfactory from an Environmental Protection perspective.

3) RBC Planning Natural Environment

4.3.1 The careful consideration of trees and other natural features, the provision of sufficient landscaping (including tree planting on the frontage) and the retention of a buffer on the south portion of the site is required for any development in this location, given the characteristics identified at paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above.

4.3.2 As means of context, part of the application site is subject to planning approval 190887 for 9 dwellings (see paragraph 3.4. above). The approved layout at that time is shown below left, application stage tree protection plan below centre and landscaping approved under 201019/APC below right at figure 12:

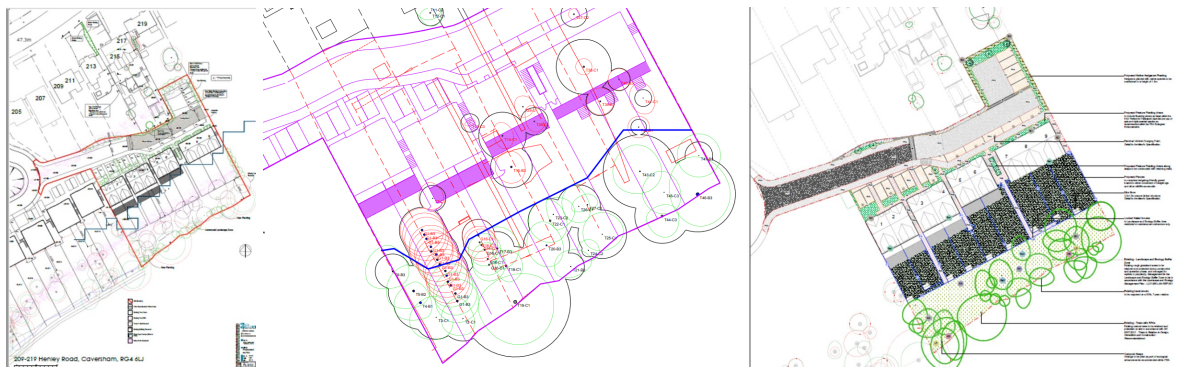


Figure 12 – Permission 190887 approved layout, tree protection plan & landscaping details.

4.3.3 The adjacent site to the west was completed in late 2022 following planning approval 190835, with tree elements amended by 210829/NMA (see paragraph 3.10 above). The approved Landscape Masterplan is shown below left and tree protection plan below right at figure 13:

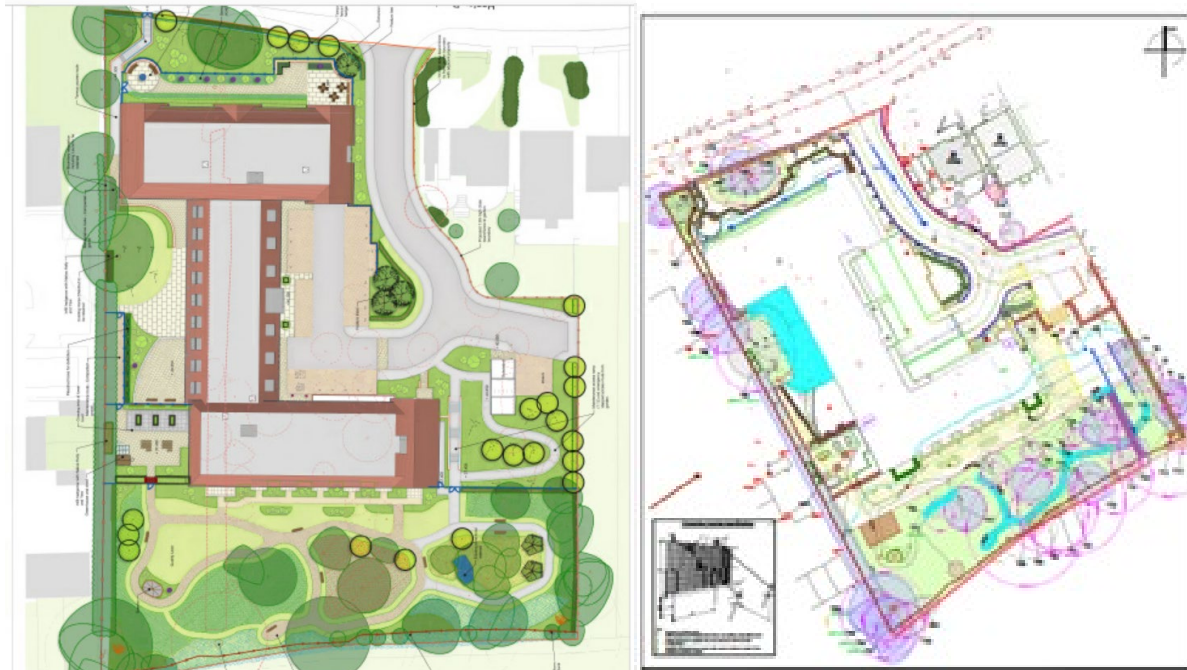


Figure 13 – 190835 approved landscape masterplan & tree protection plan (by 210829)

- 4.3.4 Based on the original information submitted with the application a series of concerns were raised. These ranged from the age and accuracy of the arboricultural impact assessment and tree survey, to the omission of information and a lack of reference to the Reading Tree Strategy within the originally proposed land. Further rounds of revised submissions and comments followed, with various comments continuing to arise as a result of changes incorporated in the proposals.
- 4.3.5 In overall terms in relation to trees at the site, the revised proposals indicate a net gain of 43 trees at the site, with 47 trees to be removed (plus shrubs and hedgerow), with 90 trees (plus other landscaping) to be planted.
- 4.3.6 More specifically, the tree removals include 4 TPO trees (3 Poplars & 1 Robinia / Cherry). Three are proposed to be removed due to their condition (2 are Category U trees [T33 & T43] and one is Category C2 [T44]). One Category B2 Poplar (T14) is proposed to be removed due to its limited amenity value, with paragraph 6.3 of the Arboricultural Report stating: *“the poplar tree T14 is not highly visible from the surrounding landscape and was noted to be of lower moderate amenity value, the categorisation owing to high growth potential and future amenity value”*. This acknowledges that it is a tree that should be retained as it is a Category B tree with good potential, and in reality it is to be removed only because the development design requires it (as confirmed in the submitted Tree works schedule). This Poplar, along with the two conifer groups (G45 & G47 – not subject to TPOs) are the only Category B trees to be removed, as shown below in the plan and photographs at figure 14. All the remaining trees to be removed are either Category C or Category U trees. It is considered that the loss of a B Category tree is unfortunate but the limited, current amenity value is agreed and this loss can/will be mitigated with new tree planting. In relation to the other TPO trees to be removed (the two Poplars and Robinia/Cherry), it is worth noting that the TPOs are from 2007, so are 16 years old, hence the change in tree condition (worthiness of retention) since serve of the TPOs is understandable and justified in this instance.

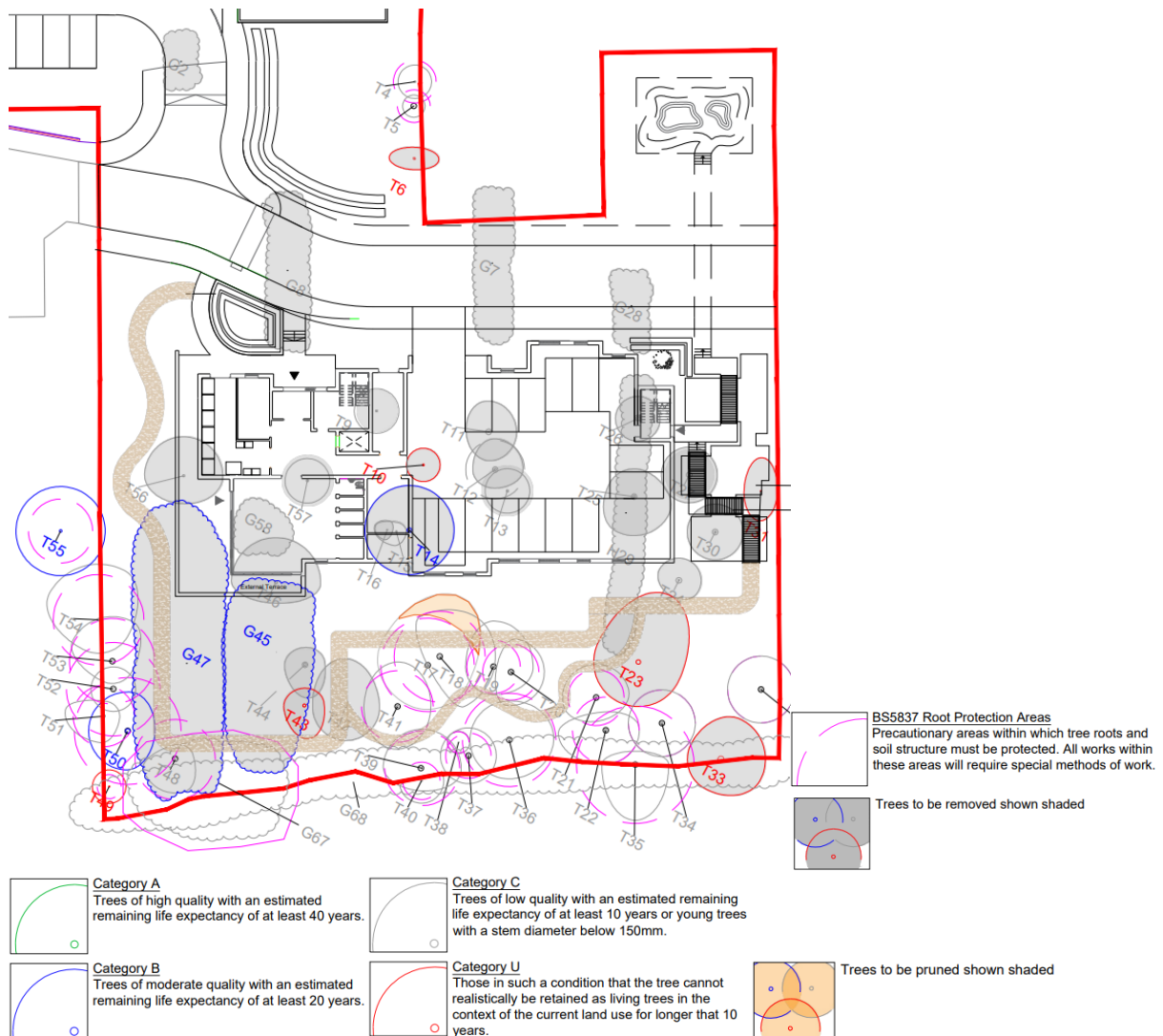


Photo 1: view of the poplar tree T14, distant view of poplar tree T44 and Leyland cypress groups G45 and G47.



Photo 5: crown failure within cypress groups G45 and G47 likely resulting from storms in February 2022.

Figure 14 – Extract of the proposed layout and tree removals plan, with photographs from the Arboricultural Report showing TPO trees T14 (Category B2) and T44 (Category C2) proposed to be removed. The photographs also show the Category B2 groups of G45 and G45, which are also proposed to be removed.

4.3.7 Within the submitted arboricultural report the applicant has demonstrated in full how retained trees will be protected during the construction stage, with the submitted details being secured via a compliance condition.

the edge of the Borough. As a combined unit and in association with the adjacent green space these gardens make an important contribution to biodiversity and form part of Reading's green network.

4.4.2 However, GS Ecology also recognise and appreciate that this is the exact same context in which developments to the west of the site at Ruskin and the Signature care home have ultimately been considered appropriate and come forward. In particular, the Signature care home scheme was approved under the current local plan (Ref 190835 – see paragraph 3.10 above). Moreover, the southern part of the application site also has permission for 9 dwellings under permission 190887, again approved under the current local plan (see paragraph 3.4 above). As such, it is for planning officers to weigh whether the benefits of these proposals outweigh the loss of the gardens. The remainder of the ecology advice is provided on a notwithstanding basis to the above.

4.4.3 So, notwithstanding the above, a series of concerns were also raised in relation to the originally submitted ecological appraisal and biodiversity offsetting information. In short, this related to the detail of the information provided and, in some areas, the proposed approach (e.g. the reptile survey identified reptiles on site and originally proposed to move these to a site in Somerset, which does not comply with guidelines on reptile translocations). As such, GS Ecology advised at the initial stage that the information submitted was not sufficient to determine the ecological impacts of the scheme or that the development will result in a net gain for biodiversity.

4.4.4 The applicant was provided with an opportunity to respond to the various shortcomings raised. This resulted in the submission of various amended and additional reports, which have involved a number of rounds of negotiation with GS Ecology to further clarify, confirm, amend and improve the revised information submitted. Based on these further discussions, GS Ecology advise the following, in summary:

- Reptiles – the further revised strategy is considered appropriate for the relocation of reptiles at the site. More specifically, reptiles will be relocated to an off-site out-of-borough location to the east of the site at nearby Playhatch, at land owned by Tarmac (a site of a former gravel quarry which consists of rough grassland, woodland, scrub, hedgerows and waterbodies). The receptor site will be improved with the installation of three reptile refugias, with the strategy for relocation specified. Given this relates to works outside of the red line boundary of the application site this component of the scheme should be secured via S106 Legal Agreement.
- Bats – Concerns continue to be raised with the validity of surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2021, owing to their age and the chance that conditions may have changed (the reports concluded that none of the buildings host roosting bats). Based on the applicant's position statement received on 21/04/2023 it is considered that further surveys and a licence from Natural England should be secured via condition in advance of the demolition of the existing buildings in order to resolve this matter.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – following a thorough assessment of the metric, which initially identified a habitat net loss (rather than the gain suggested by the applicant and required by Policy EN12), a revised metric and inter-linked landscaping strategy (significantly increasing the amount of proposed trees to 90) demonstrated under the 3.1 metric that the proposals will achieve the required 10% BNG in habitat and hedgerow units. However, as the landscape plan is not a final version and further landscaping details will be secured via condition, it correspondingly means full details of at least a 10% BNG should also be secured via condition too.

4.4.5 Ultimately, if the planning balance subsequent results in the application being approved, the reptile relocation strategy should be secured via S106 Legal Agreement and the following planning conditions should also be secured:

- Pre-demolition of existing buildings submission and approval of dusk and dawn bat surveys and licence from Natural England for development works affecting bats
- Pre-commencement construction environmental management plan to be submitted, approved and thereafter adhered to.
- Ecological enhancements: a) Pre-commencement, barring demolition, biodiversity enhancement measures including at least 10 bird and/or bat boxes, bricks or tiles to be submitted and approved b) report evidencing the approved measures to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation, with measures retained and maintained thereafter
- Pre-commencement, barring demolition, external lighting report demonstrating measures to protect wildlife and Berry Brook to be submitted and approved and thereafter retained and maintained as such
- Pre-commencement, barring demolition, Biodiversity Net Gain Plan demonstrating a minimum of a 10% uplift in biodiversity units using the DEFRA 3.1 Metric to be submitted, approved and thereafter implemented.

5) RBC Valuers / BPS Chartered Surveyors (RBC viability consultants)

4.5.1 RBC Valuers instructed BPS Chartered Surveyors to undertake an independent viability review of the financial viability assessment submitted with the application. The applicant's original submission concluded that the scheme shows a deficit of approximately £3.27m and therefore no affordable housing can viably be offered. BPS has assessed and tested the various input stipulated by the applicant in reaching their conclusion. Key elements such as the benchmark land value are not agreed, but other components such as the sales values and build costs are agreed as accurate. BPS's overall conclusion is that whilst the deficit is not as significant as that stated by the applicant, based on BPS's calculations the scheme would be in deficit. BPS conclude that *"the scheme returns a deficit of £590,000 and if considered in isolation as a standalone application would therefore not be able to viably support an Affordable Housing contribution"*.

4.5.2 However, BPS also notes that if either the gross development value (GDV) or building costs were to decrease by 5% together, or alternatively with a GDV growth of 5% this would erode the deficit and return a surplus position on the scheme. Therefore, mindful of the Council's aim to provide affordable housing on site, if a policy compliant contribution is not secured the scheme should be subject to future reviews (Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanisms). This is so the viability can be assessed over the lifetime of the development by reference to the actual costs and values it generates.

4.5.3 This feedback was provided to the applicant, together with suggested terms of a late stage review of the viability, with view to this being agreed between the parties. The applicant provided a response to the BPS review, seeking to alter its originally proposed methodology towards scheme viability (in relation to the benchmark land value and build costs – externals) and suggesting the scheme deficit has actually increased to £3.47m. Furthermore, amendments to the inputs for any late stage review were also put forward, whilst also questioning the necessity of a review given the size of the deficit.

4.5.4 In between the submission of this response and BPS's subsequent further review (as discussed below), planning officers liaised with the applicant and negotiated, notwithstanding the current viability position, that a payment-in-lieu commuted sum

financial contribution towards Affordable Housing of £75,000 would be secured. This is independent of any Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism.

- 4.5.5 BPS's further review of the scheme viability, based on the response by the applicant, counters a number of points raised (for example, the benchmark land value is not agreed). However, BPS's review has accepted that there has been an evidenced increase in build costs (although not as significant as the applicant has suggested) which results in the scheme being in deficit by £1,896,138. Whilst BPS agree the scheme is in deficit, the deficit is lower than the £3.47m put forward by the applicant. Based on a sensitivity analysis, BPS advise that the deficit is eroded if costs decrease by around 5% and values increase by a similar amount (RBC Valuers later verified this as precisely 5.8%). BPS therefore reiterate that a late stage review monitors the viability of the scheme over the lifetime of the project should be secured. BPS put forward alternative inputs for the late-stage review (based on BPS's calculated deficit and benchmark land value).
- 4.5.6 The applicant subsequently agreed to the fixed inputs put forward by BPS. These are reflected in the Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism referenced in the recommendation at the outset of this report, to be secured via S106 legal agreement.
- 4.5.7 RBC Valuers have overseen negotiations in respect of viability matters and consider in this specific instance the proposed offer of an upfront financial contribution of £75,000 and the agreed Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution Mechanism represents an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing. In this case, whilst the proposal does fall short of the Policy H3 target, this is as a result of viability considerations, which have been clearly demonstrated and tested to justify a lower affordable housing contribution in this case. Such instances are recognised within the wording of Policy H3.

6) RBC Access Officer

- 4.6.1 At the outset of the application a series of comments and queries were raised in relation to matters such as: the accessibility of EV Charging Points for disabled people; the number and location of disabled parking bays; and, whether the proposed balconies are wheelchair accessible. Most substantially, a query in relation to the accessibility of the outdoor landscaping for wheelchair users was raised, given the presence of steps throughout the landscaping.
- 4.6.2 The applicant provided responses to all of the initial comments and queries raised, satisfactorily providing responses in the vast majority of instances. With specific regard to the accessibility of the external landscaped areas, the applicant has explained that alternative ramp routes are provided to some of the landscaping and the steps are designed as Part M accessible and have been minimised. Ultimately, steps within the southern section of the site are unavoidable owing to site topography and the competing demand to retain areas of green within the site. The applicant also points out that the external balconies provide private outdoor space for residents. The Council's Access officer concedes that reasonable provision has been included and inherent constraints means access to all parts of the landscaping will not practically be possible on this occasion.

7) RBC Lead Local Flood Authority

- 4.7.1 Initial comments raised queries in relation to the outfall rates from the originally proposed cellular storage crates and the actual run off rates. Wider concerns were also raised in relation to the location of the crates being partly below the extended

road, which in due course would be designated as public highway. Owing to this the applicant was advised to relocate any crates to outside the area of the future public highway, as these would not be taken on as adopted infrastructure given that it is attenuation of private drainage.

4.7.2 The applicant subsequently amended the proposed strategy, splitting the proposed drainage strategy into three sections. In short, the northern area of the site will result in the collection of surface water into a soakaway tank as well as porous paving and an underground rainwater harvesting tank. Surface water within the central part of the site will drain into two separate attenuation tanks that will discharge into the Berry Brook to the south, in addition to a soakaway within the nature garden to the rear of No. 219 Henley Road. The southern area contains three bio-retention areas all of which are likely to result in a reduction in discharge in surface water from the site. This is indicated in the SuDS and surface water layout plan shown in figure 16 below. The submission of further additional information in respect of the infiltration and discharge rates has sought to address further officer comments raised, together with continued questions relating to the interaction between the drainage strategy and landscaping proposals. There remain some unanswered questions in relation to this latter point, meaning that conditions will be required to secure the final details of the drainage strategy. Based on the information submitted at application stage it is evident that a strategy can be advanced which meets the policy requirements, including reducing the risk of flooding on site or elsewhere, with this being particularly pertinent in this instance given the location and topography of the site. The level of information provided at application stage is considered to be reasonable, with the final fuller details secured via condition.

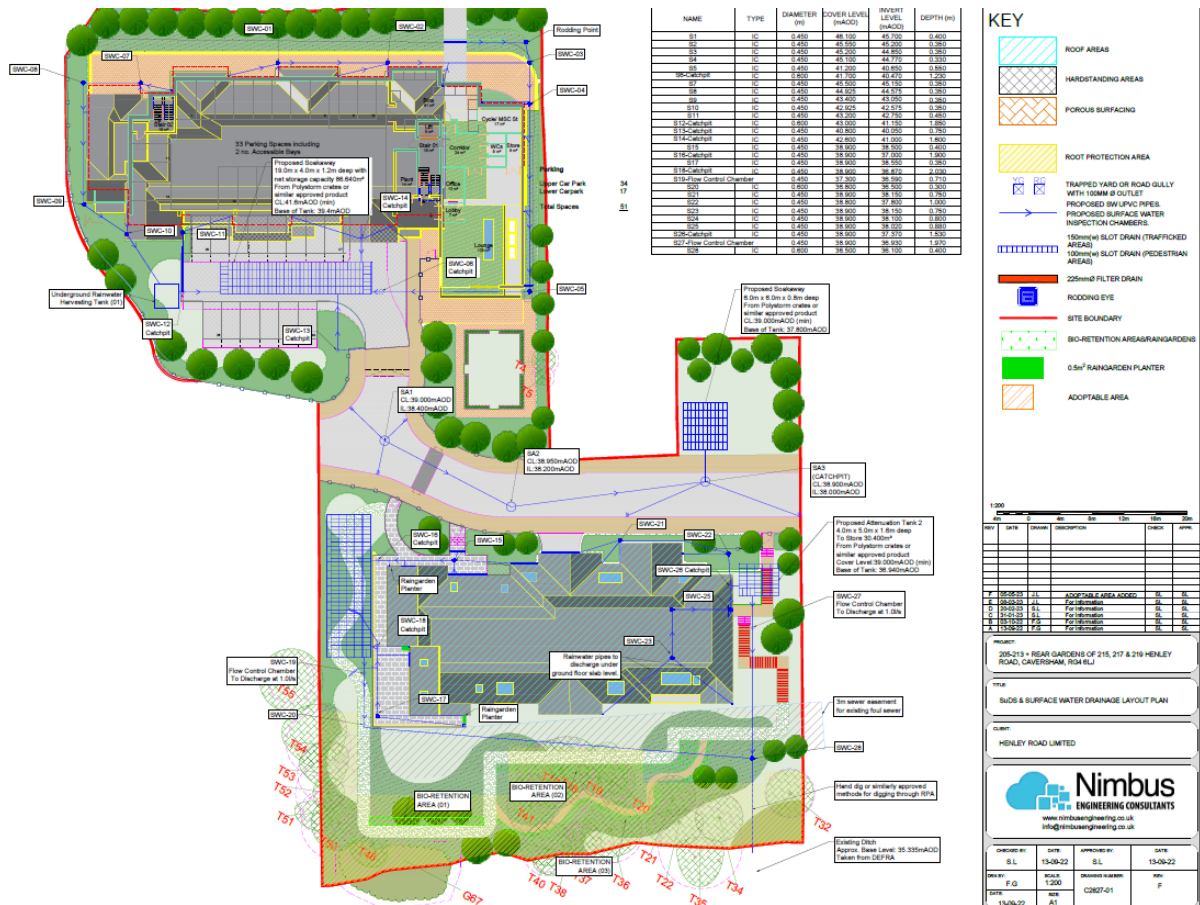


Figure 16 - SuDS & Surface water drainage layout plan

8) RBC Waste Services

- 4.8.1 Initial comments at the outset of the application advised that the bin stores for both Blocks A and B were not of sufficient size or capacity for the provision required. Further details were also sought in relation to the turning circle into Block A, to enable vehicles to access this proposed store.
- 4.8.2 Following revisions to the scheme, whilst issues regarding the provision and capacity were addressed, concerns were raised in relation to the distance between the vehicle and the stores not adhering to the maximum 10m distance. Accordingly, a management strategy will be required to be secured via condition to ascertain the details for the presentation of bins on collection days.

9) Delva Patman Redler Chartered Surveyors (DPR) (light consultants for RBC)

4.9.1 DPR undertook an independent review of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing components of the development (report by 'Planning for Sustainability' for the applicant) on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. DPR's initial review in June 2022 firstly confirmed, in the context of the application being submitted and validated prior to the updated version of the BRE guidance being published in June 2022, it was reasonable for the proposals to be assessed against the 2011 BRE guidance, rather than the June 2022 version. DPR's initial conclusions on the assessment by the applicant were:

- The scope of the report is considered acceptable.
- In terms of internal daylight and sunlight within the proposed development, the results indicate that all proposed dwellings within Blocks A and B will satisfy the BRE guidelines.
- The sunlight is expected to meet the BRE guidelines, although the technical results should be provided to clarify this.
- The proposed amenity spaces within the development will benefit from adequate levels of sunlight.
- In terms of the effects on existing surrounding properties, the results indicate that all neighbouring properties are expected to satisfy the BRE guidelines.

4.9.2 However, DPR caveated the above conclusions with four technical clarifications being required from the applicant. The applicant duly provided an updated report in July 2022, which DPR re-reviewed and confirmed satisfaction with three of the four technical matters. In relation to the original query concerning window location plans showing the neighbouring and proposed windows assessed, DPR confirmed that window location plans were provided for proposed Blocks A and B, but not the neighbouring properties.

4.9.3 DPR's follow up conclusions, were as follows:

- With the exception of the window location plan to the neighbouring residential properties, all main elements raised in the initial review have been addressed and the responses are appropriate.
- Overall, the results indicate that proposed Blocks A and B will satisfy the BRE guidelines in daylight and sunlight terms and are expected to benefit from good levels of daylight and sunlight.
- Based on the results documented in the report, all proposed dwellings are expected to be well-lit in the post development condition, and the neighbouring property will retain acceptable levels of light in the post development condition.

10) Hoare Lea (sustainability consultants for RBC)

4.10.1 Hoare Lea undertook an independent review of the sustainability and energy components of the development on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. In Hoare Lea's initial review, received in July 2022, a series of shortcomings and lack of information in relation to the various components required to be demonstrated in sustainability and energy strategies (as per the SPD checklists and the relevant policies of the SPD) were raised by Hoare Lea. This facilitated the submission of a revised strategy and response from the applicant in November 2022. Hoare Lea's subsequent review of the updated strategy, as provided in January 2023, outlined that there were still three remaining elements which remained outstanding in relation to demonstrating compliance with Policies CC3 and CC4. The applicant subsequently provided further information in respect of the outstanding areas. Hoare Lea subsequently reported to officers in February 2023 that there were no further elements that were outstanding from the applicant. More specific information in relation to these matters is discussed in section 6.7 of the report.

11) Berkshire Archaeology

4.11.1 Berkshire Archaeology recommends that a condition is attached, securing a scheme of archaeological works, should the proposal be permitted. This is on account of the archaeological potential at the site and the impacts of the proposal, including a large lower ground floor.

12) Environment Agency

4.12.1 No objection subject to a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment submitted and the following mitigation measures being implemented prior to occupation and retained/maintained thereafter:

- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 40.75 metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) for Block A and 38.90m AOD for Block B
- Compensatory storage shall be provided on a level for level basis as shown in Table 2-2: Fluvial Floodplain Compensation and Figures 2-1: Fluvial Floodplain Compensation Plan

4.12.2 This condition would ensure that the development complies with Policy EN18 and paragraph 167 of the NPPF. An informative in relation to the possible need for an environmental permit is also recommended.

13) Reading's Economy & Destination Agency (REDA)

4.13.1 No objection to the further development of the residential area on Henley Road, but would welcome the opportunity to develop a construction stage employment and skills plan for the site (via S106 legal agreement), assuming the requirements of the SPD of April 2013 will apply based on the scale of the new residential development.

14) Thames Water

4.14.1 In terms of foul waste, the scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such Thames Water have no objection. An informative is recommended in relation to a Groundwater Risk Management Permit being required from Thames Water.

4.14.2 With regard to surface water drainage, if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water Thames Water would have no objection. Prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required should surface water be proposed to discharge to the public sewer.

4.14.3 Thames Water has no objection based on the information provided with regard to waste water network and sewage treatment works.

4.14.4 In terms of water matters, an informative is recommended given the proposal is within 15m of Thames Waters' underground water assets. Thames Water has also identified an inability of the existing water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. This hasn't been addressed at present, so Thames Water recommends a condition to ensure all water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional demand to serve the development have been completed, or that a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with Thames Water. This is to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to accommodate additional demand anticipated from the new development. A series of other related informatives are also recommended.

15) Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police; RBC Education; South Oxfordshire District Council; SSE Power Distribution.

4.15.1 No responses have been received from these consultees. If any responses are subsequently received they will be set out in an update report.

ii) Public consultation

4.16.1 Notification letters were sent to nearby occupiers on 17/05/2022. A site notice was erected by the applicant on 23/05/2022, expiring on 12/06/2022. This was visible at the time of the officer site visit on 16/06/2022. A press notice was published on 28/07/2022, expiring on 18/08/2022. A total of 9 objections have been received from 8 separate addresses (6 from Henley Road and 1 each from Mayfield Drive and All Hallows Road). A summary of the issues raised are:

4.16.2 Height, massing and impact on character

- Height and size of the two blocks not in keeping with a residential location and will dwarf the surrounding housing.
- Block B too large in the context of the previous (more in keeping) 3-storey 9 houses. Block B even more 'slab like' than previous application 210975.
- The existing ground level at Block B is being built up, so the real effect is closer to a five-storey block in comparison with existing (see site section).
- Loss of view of Berry Brook (semi-rural location), with existing properties low lying and including gaps to enable views. Harmful to Henley Road residents and pedestrians.
- Adverse impact on the character of the area, when combined with the neighbouring development, decreasing views into the Thames Valley.
- Loss of beautiful 20th century Henley Road buildings.

4.16.3 Transport and related matters

- Insufficient parking will cause vehicle overspill on to the footpath on the south side of Henley Road and All Hallows Road, already problematic during neighbouring development construction.
- Further increase in pollution and traffic during and after completion of the buildings (recent significant increase since a quarry opening between Playhatch and Shiplake).
- Increased traffic from the proposed development itself; Henley Road delays and bottlenecks only worsening (neighbouring care home) and making crossing dangerous.
- Proximity of the site to a school represents a safety risk to children from increased car numbers.

4.16.4 Trees, wildlife and open space

- Moving reptiles found on site to the Mendips appears contrary to the Boroughwide nature conservation goal in the Local Plan to protect, enhance and increase biodiversity
- Page 47 of RBC's Climate Emergency Strategy details managing existing natural habitats and ensuring that new development delivers a 'net gain' for the environment. Fail to see how this proposed development could comply with the legal requirement to "restore or enhance a population or habitat"
- Significant loss of privately owned green space
- Loss of many well-established trees
- An area equivalent to the loss of existing is not even remotely replaced by the suggested landscaping.

4.16.5 Amenity impact on neighbours

- Overbearing impact on neighbouring properties.
- Loss of natural light to Henley Road, especially in winter.
- Loss of privacy to neighbouring properties/gardens to the east and properties on the north side of Henley Road opposite.
- Loss of amenity living near a construction site (for the neighbouring development) for 18 months.
- The existing neighbouring development has had a major impact on quality of life (implied this will be repeated): traffic disruption, inconsiderate parking, hazardous manoeuvres and flooding a local nursery with raw sewage.
- A number of the plans do not include 219 Henley Road and therefore do not correctly illustrate the impact of the proposals.

4.16.6 Flood risk / drainage

- The lower level of Block B is on or below the floodplain.
- Unacceptable to add any additional flood pressures to lower Caversham.
- Block B will interfere with Caversham Park Village sewer which could flood nearby gardens.

4.16.7 Impact on services

- Impact on overstressing local medical facilities (due to the proposed age of residents) e.g. GP services and dentists.
- This area of Caversham is unsuitable for such a large scale development. Lack of local services (15 minute walk to convenience shop / 30 minutes to Caversham centre where a dentist and doctor's surgery are), very limited public transport service and no green space within an easy walk other than the cemetery.

4.16.8 Need

- Questioning the need/desire for more flats in Reading and at the expense of family homes.
- Questioning the need for retirement apartments given brochures and leaflets trying to sell retirement apartments in Berkshire and Oxfordshire are received weekly.

4.16.9 Quality of accommodation

- The design of Block A would expose elderly residents to adverse noise levels, with noise amplified in wet weather (not accounted for in the noise report). Existing residents cannot open front windows due to the noise.

4.16.10 Other matters

- Some neighbours sold part of their back gardens on the understanding that a smaller, more sympathetic development was planned (for which planning permission has already been obtained). Indicated that neighbours would not have sold had this proposal been put forward initially.

- Land Registry Restrictive Covenants relate to the land required to build this development.
- The changes in comparison with withdrawn application 210975 are minimal and insignificant.
- Various complaints that plans do not show all elements (e.g. south context elevation not showing existing properties).

4.17 **iii) Local Groups**

4.17.1 Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA) have made two separate submissions. In August 2022 CADRA specified an objection to the scheme, as the scale of the two buildings, alongside the large adjacent development for the nursing home, would be overbearing and unduly dominate the area.

4.17.2 In March 2023 CADRA commented that the landscaping proposals "*seem to us to show a well thought-out approach, with suitable density and choice of planting and care in accommodating wildlife. Within that supportive view, we have some detailed comments*", summarised as follows:

- Mislabelled annotations on the landscape masterplan.
- The proposed LEAP is very welcomed, but with limited natural overlooking concerns regarding safeguarding and vandalism are raised.
- Suggestion that privet is an invasive species and should be replaced with native beech or hornbeam hedging, which are more characteristic of the area
- Street lighting should minimise light pollution within and beyond the site
- Support the proposed hedgehog routes, but ask for provision for crossings on the road
- Natural England are currently reviewing the AONB boundary, with the site within the search area.

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'.

5.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The application has been assessed against the following policies:

5.3 **National**

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

5.4 The relevant Reading Borough Local Plan policies are:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC4: Decentralised Energy
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
EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Historic Interest
EN9: Provision of Open Space
EN10: Access to Open Space
EN11: Waterspaces
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN13: Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
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
H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People
H7: Protecting the Housing Stock
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR2: Major Transport Projects
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
Section 8 Caversham and Emmer Green

5.5 **Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents**

Affordable Housing (March 2021)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

5.6 **Other particularly relevant documentation**

DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015)
Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A guide to good practice, 2nd edition (2011) / BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A guide to good practice (BR 209, 2022 edition)
Reading Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2017) (HEELA)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Land use considerations, including age-restricted accommodation, provision of affordable housing, flood risk and interaction with permission 190887
- ii) Demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets
- iii) Quality of accommodation for future occupiers
- iv) Amenity for nearby occupiers
- v) Transport and Highways
- vi) Trees, landscaping, ecology and SuDS
- vii) Sustainability and energy
- viii) Other matters – Archaeology, Thames Water, S106, Pre-commencement conditions & Equality

i) **Land use considerations**

Loss of existing use and principle of residential use

- 6.1.1 The proposals would result in the loss of 5 family sized dwellinghouses. From a purely land use perspective, this represents 5 residential units within the Class C3 use. Whilst the loss of family sized dwellings is acknowledged, the proposal would ultimately result in 55 Class C3 residential units, equating to a net increase in 50 Class C3 residential units at the site. Policy H1 recognises the pressing need for housing in the Borough, with an average annual requirement for 689 dwellings. There is no specific local policy protecting family sized dwellings in the context of a proposal which increases the total number of residential dwellings at a site, according with Policy H7. From purely a land use perspective the proposal would positively contribute to the required provision in the Borough, thereby not raising any in principle concerns.

Development of private residential gardens

- 6.1.2 Section 11 of the NPPF (Making effective use of land) states planning “*decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions*” (paragraph 119) and decisions should “*give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs*” (paragraph 120).
- 6.1.3 Set within this context, at the local level there is also a specific policy relating to the development of private residential gardens (Policy H11), applicable in this instance owing to the nature of the proposals, where a series of criteria are required to be met for the development to be considered acceptable. This ranges from the scheme making a positive contribution to the character of the area in a number of ways, to more specific matters including access, design, amenity and biodiversity amongst others. A number of the subsequent sections of this appraisal pick up on individual matters referenced in Policy H11. With specific reference to part 7) of the policy where proposals will be acceptable where the emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing, officers acknowledge that the proposed scheme would not provide this. Instead, the proposal seeks to provide specific age-restricted accommodation, with this justified in a separate section below. This justification is considered to

outweigh this specific component part of Policy H11. In summary, it is concluded that the proposals comply with the general thrust of Policy H11 and have been carefully advanced in order to demonstrate appropriate compliance with this overarching policy.

Principle of age restricted residential use

- 6.1.4 With the principle of residential use context in mind, it is also relevant to note that the proposal is actually seeking for the Class C3 accommodation to be age-restricted retirement living units. At the outset of the application the minimum age of future occupants was proposed as 55 year olds, but following officer feedback the now proposed minimum age is 65.
- 6.1.5 In support of the proposals the applicant has submitted evidence, updated during the application to reflect the altered minimum age restriction proposed, in order to seek to justify the proposals. Whilst the design of the scheme has fully considered future resident needs, for example including communal lounge areas, a series of outdoor amenity spaces, mobility storage areas and a support staff office, the mandatory level of care offered on site is not at a level which constitutes a Class C2 care / nursing home use. Instead, whilst age restricted to residents being aged 65 and over, the applicant outlines that the accommodation, “...enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly for older people and people with physical disabilities, whilst having opportunities for interaction with others and care support as required”.
- 6.1.6 The provision of accommodation that allows elderly people to continue to live independent lives is broadly in accordance with Policy H6, in particular in seeking to move away from institutional accommodation towards more independent living. The data provided by the applicant in relation to the number of older people who under-occupy homes in the Caversham area ably demonstrates that a considerable amount of family housing could be freed up in the local area (albeit also acknowledging that there would be a direct net loss of 5 family homes in this instance). The applicant’s submission also evidences an aging population within Caversham within the past decade. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (background evidence to the Local Plan) identified a need for 1,189 specialist homes for older people in Reading up to 2036, with the SHMA considering older people as being 65+ (which aligns with the proposed accommodation). As such, the proposal would assist in meeting this identified need.
- 6.1.7 Furthermore, the applicant has responded to the specific criteria referenced in Policy H6 within their supporting statement, suitably demonstrating that the proposals adhere to the criteria. Other sections of this assessment will discuss a number of these points in more detail; but in short components such as access, green space and aligning with the character of the area are considered to be met. Furthermore, there is scope for future operational linkages with the recently opened specialist care home at the neighbouring site to the west. Accordingly, the broad principle of this development catering for residents aged 65+ is considered to have been justified.
- 6.1.8 With the principle of age-restricted accommodation considered to be appropriate, it is important that this is secured as such as part of any planning permission, to avoid this in time becoming non-age-restricted accommodation (i.e. general Class C3 residential units), which is not the basis on which the proposals have been considered and assessed. In the circumstances it is considered necessary and reasonable for the age-restriction to be included as part of the S106 legal agreement, to ensure this is robustly secured in perpetuity.

Residential Mix

- 6.1.9 Turning to consider the residential mix of accommodation, the proposal seeks to create 17 x 1-bedroom and 38 x 2-bedroom Class C3 residential units. As per policy H2, in an out of central area and defined district and local centre location such as this, the normal requirement is for 50% of the dwellings to include 3-bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations. In this instance no 3-bedroom units are proposed. However, this is a result of the age-restricted nature of the accommodation proposed, meaning in practice the provision of larger units would not align with the type of accommodation proposed. Accordingly, the type of accommodation sought in this instance, as secured in perpetuity via legal agreement, means that officers consider it is not feasible, practical or realistic to insist on the provision of 3-bedroom accommodation in this instance. Accordingly, the non-provision of 3-bedroom accommodation is accepted on this specific occasion and the provision of 1 and 2-bedroom units, as proposed, aligns with the anticipated needs of the future residents. The larger proportion of 2-bedroom units (69%) proposed in this instance is welcomed in the context of the type of accommodation proposed and only assists the quality of the overall accommodation for future occupiers.

Density

- 6.1.10 In respect of residential density, the proposal seeks to create 88 dwellings per hectare (ha.) (55 dwellings on a 0.62ha. site), which is slightly above the indicative density range of 30-60 in suburban locations, as set out in the Local Plan. As Policy H2 however recognises, the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by a range of factors, with those factors possibly being a basis for justifying a different density to the indicative range. In this instance, the accessibility of the site close to public transport options and a cycle route (both on Henley Road), the need to maximise the efficiency of the land use and the character of the area (noting that the adjacent Signature care home has a comparable density of 79) means a deviation from the indicative density range is considered to be justified in this specific instance. Furthermore, the inclusion of solely 1&2-bed units (owing to the type of accommodation proposed) slightly increases the density figure..

Affordable Housing

- 6.1.11 Given the proposed Class C3 use class of the proposed units, there is a requirement for the development to provide affordable housing, as per Policy H3. The 30% on-site policy requirement equates to 16.5 on-site units in this case. The applicant, at the outset of the application, submitted a viability report seeking to evidence that the proposed development cannot viably provide any contribution towards affordable housing. The consideration of viability matters is fully recognised by Policy H3, with the onus on the applicant to clearly demonstrate the circumstances to justify a lower affordable housing contribution.
- 6.1.12 In this case the viability evidence has been independently reviewed on behalf of the Council by BPS Chartered Surveyors, with input, assistance and verification by RBC Valuers. As per section 4.5 above, it is advised that BPS concluded, with this confirmed by RBC Valuers, that the scheme is in deficit by £1.896m. However, noting that relatively small changes in build costs and/or values achieved could easily move the development into a profit, the need for a future late-stage reassessment of viability is particularly necessary in this case, with a need to secure a Deferred Affordable Housing Contribution.

- 6.1.13 Officers consider that the above context is clear, specifically that in this particular instance the scheme simply cannot viably afford to make a contribution to affordable housing at this juncture. Such instances are reflected in local policy and therefore the proposals in this context, with a deferred contribution mechanism being secured, are policy compliant. Officers are however also acutely aware of the critical need for Affordable Housing within Reading Borough and the associated need to provide for sustainable and inclusive mixed and balanced communities. On this basis, despite the viability context, the applicant was urged to improve its contribution towards affordable housing. This facilitated the applicant making an upfront £75,000 payment-in-lieu contribution, with this being in excess of what the scheme can viably support at this juncture, as independently verified. Accordingly, officers advise that the proposals are policy compliant in respect of affordable housing matters, owing to the viability evidence submitted and independently verified.
- 6.1.14 Both the payment-in-lieu and deferred contribution mechanism will be secured via the S106 legal agreement. A further affordable housing related clause is considered to be necessary in this case too. This involves the scenario that should the application site subsequently be extended/alterd to create further residential units (e.g. through the conversion of a 2-bed unit into 2 x 1-bed units, ancillary spaces being converted into units or either building being extended to create further units) then contributions towards affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis, rather than a standalone basis. This stems from Policy H3 requiring different levels of affordable housing depending on the number of units. The proposed approach therefore prevents this proposal being the first of a succession of applications, with the later applications having lesser requirements, or put another way, if all applications had been submitted collectively it would have generated a larger requirement. It is considered reasonable and necessary for this to be secured in this case so the site makes an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading Borough. This clause has been incorporated within a number of other permissions in the Borough in recent years, including being accepted at planning appeals.

Flood Risk

- 6.1.15 Given the application site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3a (albeit no built form is proposed within 3a), another principal land use consideration revolves around the suitability of the proposed development within this context.
- 6.1.16 In this regard the applicant has submitted both a sequential test assessment and a site specific flood risk assessment, in order to seek to demonstrate the appropriateness of the proposals against the established national and local policies. Considering first the sequential test, the submission by the applicant has considered reasonable available sites in areas with a lower risk of flooding within the Borough, as per a scope discussed in advance of submission. In short, the identified sites are either not available, for a variety of reasons, or are unsuitable (e.g. not comparable in size/capacity to the application site). Accordingly, the applicant's data concludes that the assessment suitably demonstrates that the application site is the most sequentially preferable.
- 6.1.17 Officers are mindful that the Borough is presently expecting to exceed housing needs over the plan period, so a site at higher risk of flooding is usually unlikely to pass the sequential test based on current figures. This is in contrast to the position at the point when previous sequential assessments have been considered at the site (in relation to 190887 at part of the application site) or the neighbouring site (e.g. 190835 – see relevant history section above). However, the proposal is for a specialist type of accommodation, in this instance retirement living apartments

(which as discussed separately above at section 6.1 will be secured as such via legal agreement). The SHMA identified a need for 1,189 specialist homes for older people in Reading up to 2036. This need has not yet been met, thereby assisting in justifying the proposals passing the sequential test in this instance, when supplemented alongside the information submitted by the applicant. As per PPG, the exceptions test is not relevant in this instance.

- 6.1.18 With the above established, it is acknowledged that a site-specific flood risk assessment (FRA) has been submitted in support of the proposed development. This has been assessed by the Environment Agency (EA), who as per section 4.12 above, are satisfied that with the mitigation measures secured (relating to finished floor levels and compensatory flood storage) via condition, the proposals are policy compliant. It is also noted in this regard that no residential units are proposed to be located in the lowest floors of either Blocks A and B, with the lowest levels given over to parking, servicing and the shared lounge areas. Accordingly, the proposals are considered to be appropriate in terms of Policy EN18, with the condition recommended within the EA response to be attached.

Consideration of permission 190887 at part of the application site

- 6.1.19 The permission for nine dwellings to the rear of No's 209-219 Henley Road (part of the application site – see paragraphs 3.3 to 3.6 above for details – ref 190887) is considered to be a material consideration in the determination of this application. This consideration follows the submission of information during the course of the application (Photographs x 8, Site Inspection Report and RBC Building Control Initial Notice acknowledgement letter) indicating that works have recently commenced (excavations for foundations for the houses having been undertaken) prior to the expiry (on 25/03/2023) of the three years for implementation. The applicant had previously confirmed on 08/03/2023 that the permission had not at that time been implemented.
- 6.1.20 This is an important point of clarification, as parts of the design justification, viability case and transport implications of the development (to name but three examples) are inter-connected with this permission. There are also possible separate CIL implications too.
- 6.1.21 By implementing permission 190887, as appears to be the case based on the information provided, this provides the opportunity for that permission to be built out at any time in the future, irrespective of the outcome of this separate application on a wider site. One potential concern with such an approach is the full implementation of the nine residential scheme and, should this current application be permitted too, the subsequent partial implementation of this scheme (e.g. Block A only and not Block B). Such a scenario would result in an unsatisfactory cumulative development in design terms and the inefficient use of land, together with a range of potential highway and amenity concerns and ambiguity. To prevent such complications, the applicant has proactively suggested the following:

We are in agreement for a clause to be included within the S106 agreement along the lines of: *“No works above ground level for permission 190887 shall be undertaken if permission 220189 is implemented.”*

- 6.1.22 Such a clause would prevent the unsatisfactory potential scenario envisaged above and is welcomed by officers in providing clarity in terms of the future development of the area where contrasting permissions could be in place simultaneously. Put another way, it means either permission 190887 will be implemented, or the current application will be, but not any substantial element of both. This obligation, secured

via S106 legal agreement, is therefore duly referenced within the Recommendation at the outset of this report.

6.1.23 Officers also consider that the implementation of permission 190887 does not unduly prejudice or compromise the overriding assessment of this application, which would deliver an overall significantly greater number of residential units than 190887, with the safeguard of the obligation being a necessary, reasonable and relevant one too.

6.1.24 Furthermore, it is also recognised that the legal agreement obligation could potentially result in the opportunity loss of 9 family sized dwellings (ref 190887) together with the 5 existing family sized dwellings fronting onto Henley Road. As per earlier sections of this appraisal, there is a pressing need for age-restricted residential accommodation, which the proposed scheme would help to meet, as part of an overall pressing need for housing in the Borough. There is also a need for family sized housing, but as outlined above part of the justification for the proposals is that it could free up a considerable amount of family housing in the area, thereby mitigating the 'loss' of family housing at the site.

ii) **Demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets**

Demolition

6.2.1 Considering first the demolition of the existing dwellings at the site, these are not considered to be of any particular or special architectural or historic importance to warrant their retention. Accordingly, providing the replacement development is of suitable design quality, the demolition of the existing structures is accepted.

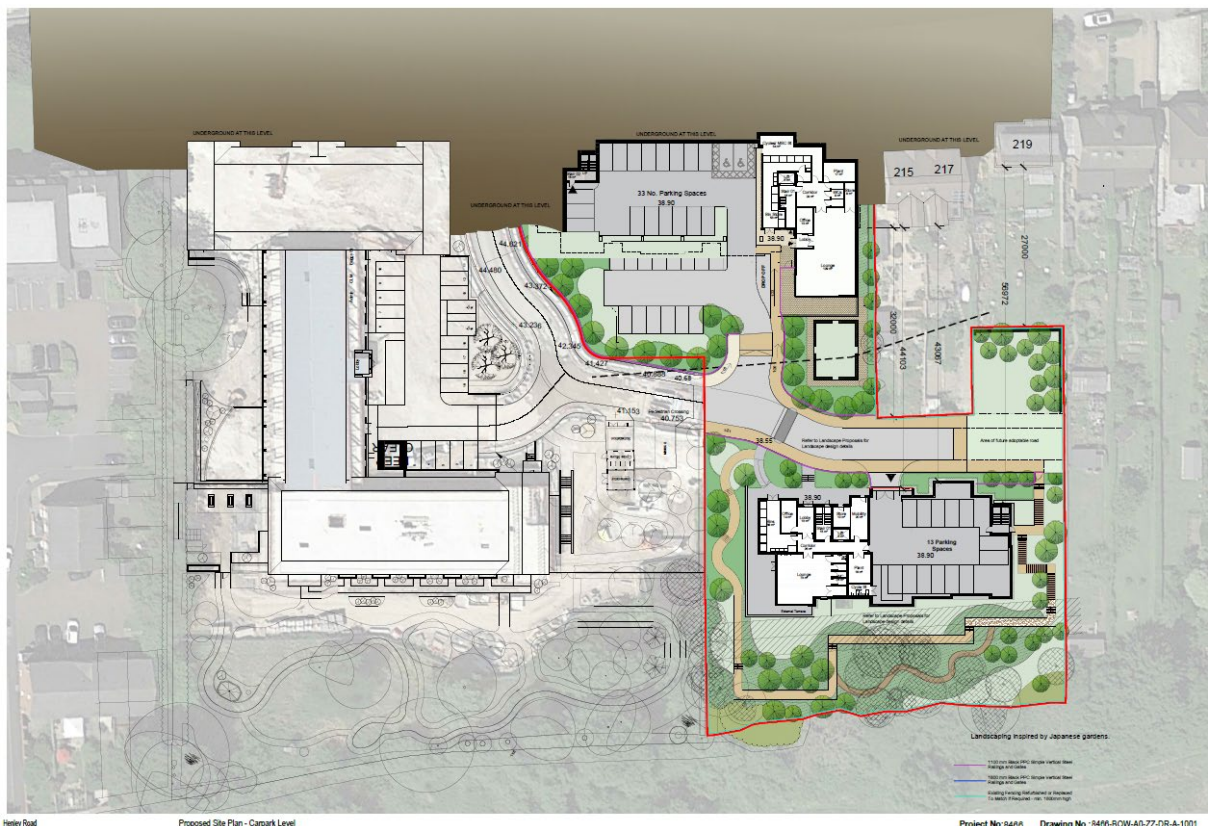


Figure 17 – The proposed site plan at car park level (Rev P17)

Layout

- 6.2.2 Moving onto the proposed development, the proposed development layout comprises two residential blocks, with Block A fronting Henley Road and Block B to the south, with a highway between the two (as seen above in figure 17 above). This layout integrates with the surrounding area by continuing the pattern of development started by the Ruskin development and continued by the Signature care home to the west, with the continuation of the access road acting as a guide to the pattern of development. The applicant has explained that incorporating the access route through the site is of strategic importance to assist the amenity of future occupiers in terms of accessibility (ensuring an accessible route for pedestrians), whilst also supporting the servicing arrangements, given the existing sewer and significant drainage requirements due to the site topography.
- 6.2.3 As such, the proposed layout reinforces the relatively recently created pattern along this part of Henley Road. This is acknowledged to differ from the historic character of mainly substantial single houses set in generous grounds along this part of Henley Road, but the Ruskin and Signature schemes demonstrate a further local context which the proposals respond to. In particular, attention has been paid to the building lines of both blocks. During the course of the application the front building line of Block A has been moved a further 2m back from Henley Road, to respond more positively and appropriately to the established building line of the blocks to the west and, moreover, the existing dwellings to the east. Block B broadly aligns with corresponding block at the neighbouring site to the west, thereby providing a degree of continuity at this point.

Scale and massing

- 6.2.4 In terms of the scale and massing, the proposals have taken cues from the surrounding area and have been respectful of the existing context. Furthermore, the site topography is particularly pertinent in this regard too, with there being a significant 11m drop from north to south from Henley Road. The changes in land levels have been utilised to reduce the proposed scale of Block A when viewed from Henley Road. Whilst the building is up to 5 storeys in height in total, it would appear as 2 storeys when approaching from Henley Road, owing to the change in land levels and the proposals being cut into the site in order to create a basement (at Henley Road) car park, which owing to the changes in land levels would be at ground floor level when accessed via a vehicle.
- 6.2.5 The existing and proposed street elevations (see figure 18 below) demonstrate that the proposed height of Block A is only marginally greater than the existing properties at the site and would be comparable with the height of the Signature care home to the west. In addition, the proposed building intentionally reduces in scale on the boundary with the existing single dwellings to the east, with the step down respecting the existing prevailing scale of development at this point. There is also a reduction in scale at the western end of Block A, to ensure the scale of the building does not compete with the care home and also adds variety in the overall streetscape. Both in streetscene and full elevation terms the proposed height of Block A is evidently (as per figure 18 below) in line with the prevailing character along the south side of Henley Road at this point.

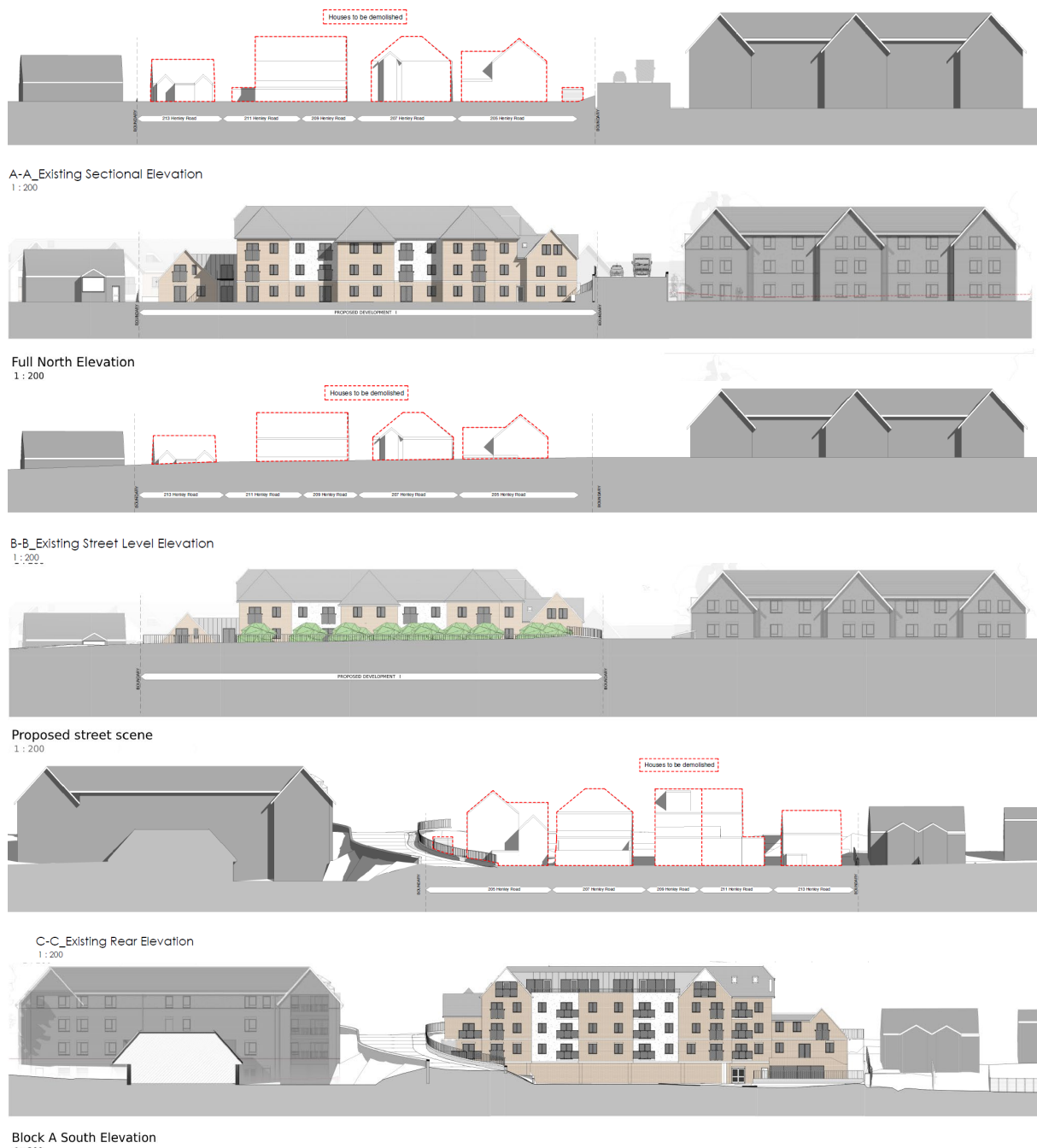


Figure 18 – Existing and proposed front and rear full elevations and streetscenes (taking account of topography) within the context of neighbouring buildings

6.2.6 Whilst it is acknowledged that the overall massing of Block A would represent a change in the streetscene (with the series of existing buildings breaking up the massing and enabling glimpses through to the south), set within the context of the Ruskin and Signature care home schemes, it is considered difficult to resist the proposals on this basis alone. Furthermore, gaps on the boundary of the site (naturally created through the access road into the site to the west) and the reduction in massing at either end of the building assist in maintaining some, albeit reduced, glimpses through to the south from Henley Road.

6.2.7 In terms of the scale and massing of Block B, this will be 4 storeys in total, with the upper-most floor incorporating accommodation in the roofscape. Whilst slightly taller than the corresponding block on the Signature care home to the west, based on the full southern elevation submitted (see figure 19 below) this is not considered

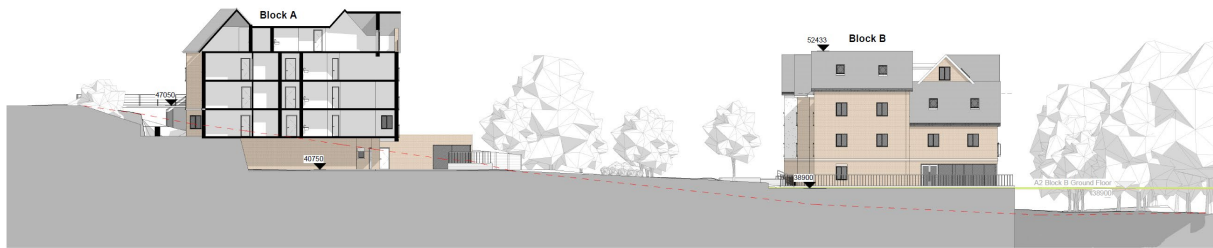
harmfully taller within this setting and, on its own merits, is considered suitable given the spaciousness of the site at this point, without built form in close proximity in any direction (including existing Henley Road dwellings to the east). It is also relevant that the 9 dwellings approved at this part of the site under permission 190887 broadly follow the front (north) elevation building line of the proposal, with the proposed accommodation within the roofscope representing the only increase in height in comparison with that scheme. Accordingly, the proposed scale and massing of Block B is considered appropriate.



South Full Elevation
1 : 200

Figure 19 – South elevation of Block B, in the context of the neighbouring Signature care home block (left) and the corresponding blocks fronting Henley Road (in the background)

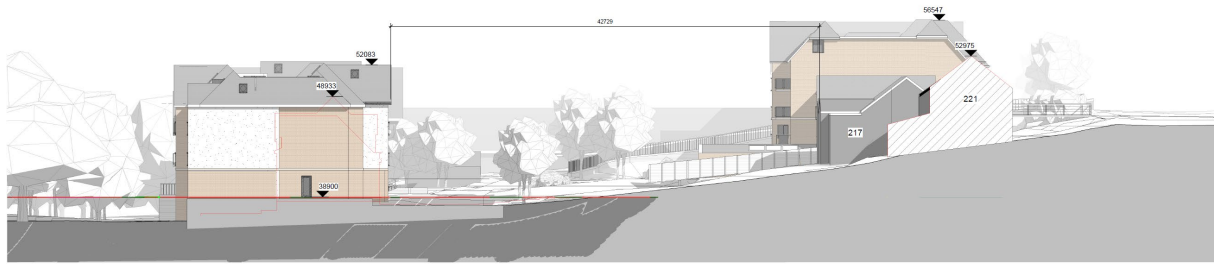
6.2.8 The applicant has also explained that Block B is proposed to be at a slightly higher level than the existing ground level at this part of the site. This has been necessary to assist in creating an accessible route up to Henley Road for future residents (with a reduction of the gradient aligning with the age restricted accommodation proposed) and will also be favourable in respect of separate flood risk matters. Moreover, to assist the sustainability benefits of the scheme, the supporting documentation specifies the build-up in the land levels for Block B will be constructed using the fill material obtained from Block A (where excavation is proposed to create the lowest floor) to reduce the need to remove material from the site. The existing ground level is shown by a hatched line in figure 20 below, showing how the proposal will increase the land level in respect of Block B, but reduce it for Block A.



Site Section

Figure 20 – Site section north to south (also showing existing ground levels)

6.2.9 In terms of the interaction between Blocks A and B at the application site, there is a linear relationship between the blocks akin to that which exists at sites to the west. There is a considerable 40m+ distance between the blocks, they are off-set from one another and there is a change in land levels (as seen in figure 21 below), so as to ensure that the buildings appear as separate entities and do not seek to compete with one another or merge into a single massing. There are also similarities, such as the general design approach and choice of materials to evidently demonstrate in time that they are being brought forward as a single development. It is not considered that the proposals represent an unacceptable form of tandem development for the reasons outlined above.



Section E-E Location

Outline of approved planning application profile

Figure 21 – Section showing Block B (left) and A (right) – outline of 190887 massing faintly shown in red at Block B.

Appearance

6.2.10 Turning to consider detailed design components, the proposals are predominantly red-brick buildings, with secondary recessed elements of the frontages including a white render to add variety and visual interest. The choice of these materials reflects the prevailing character in the area, therefore reinforcing the local vernacular as Policy CC7 promotes. Along the street, the simple limited palette of materials compliments the pattern of development to the west, thereby providing a suitable addition to the streetscene which is intentionally modest in its detailed design. On the rear elevation of Block A a further contrasting material is proposed, with the roof level comprising red zinc which adds a layer of distinctiveness to this elevation, as shown in the visualisation shown below at figure 22. A stone banding is proposed between the ground and first floors to differentiate the ‘base’ and ‘middles’ of the buildings.

6.2.11 The architectural language continues at Block B, in order to align the character of the two blocks at the application site. The accommodation in the roofslope, with Juliet balconies and small terrace areas with contrasting fenestration, adds a subtle difference in the finished appearance in comparison with Block A. Beyond the buildings themselves, the surrounding built form will include boundary walls and railings which appear to align with the character and finished appearance of the buildings (see the design intention in figure 22 below). In order to ensure the design quality of the proposed scheme, all material details will be secured in full via condition, including samples being erected on site for inspection as part of the future approval of these details. With this condition secured it is considered that the appearance of the proposed development complies with Policy CC7.



1. View showing level change from Henley Road

Figure 22 – Visualisation of the rear (south) elevation of Block A and access road towards Henley Road

6.2.12 Linking back specifically to Policy H11 9) the proposed development would not prejudice the development of the wider area, evidenced by the proposed road layout 'futureproofing' any potential development to the rear gardens of the Henley Road properties to the east, should this come forward in the future. As per the Transport comments, a S106 obligation will prevent the creation or retention of any ransom strip along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the application site. Overall, the proposals are considered to comply with design-based Policy CC7, whilst also being cognisant of related policies such as H11, EN12 and EN13.

6.2.13 In terms of the impact of the proposals on designated heritage assets, the site is located outside of a conservation area and there are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the site. In respect of the protection of significant views within the borough with heritage interest, as per Policy EN5, it is acknowledged that the site is within two of the views which merit special protection. More specifically, this relates to the view over Alexandra Road Conservation Area towards the Chilterns escarpment (view 5) and the view towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M), railway and surrounding streets (view 8). In these regards, owing to the scale of development set against the existing context and the site topography, whilst it is acknowledged that the development would potentially be visible, it is not considered to be visible in a harmful manner.

iii) **Quality of accommodation for future occupiers**

6.3.1 At the outset of the application a series of concerns were raised with the applicant in relation to the quality of the accommodation proposed, ranging from habitable rooms initially only being served by rooflights rather than conventional windows, to insufficient waste storage areas being provided. This has resulted in a number of changes to the scheme, reducing the number of units proposed from 59 to 55 during the application. Following revisions, the proposals are considered to provide a suitable standard of accommodation for future occupiers, with a number of specific matters being subject to conditions to secure the precise details.

6.3.2 More specifically, each of the 55 units proposed are regular in size and shape, complying with the various nationally-described space standards in terms of overall flat sizes, bedroom sizes and the other technical requirements. Single-aspect north-facing units have been minimised, including being removed at upper ground floor level of Block A. A total of 12 single-aspect north-facing units do remain, although these are all at either first or second floor level.

6.3.3 Furthermore, given the age-restricted nature of the proposals, the layout also indicates some additional ancillary spaces within each building. Most prominently, a south-facing shared lounge for each building is proposed, together with mobility scooter storage and an office room within each block. Whilst no form of specialised care or supported living is proposed in this instance (hence the Class C3 use proposed, rather than Class C2), in practice these ancillary spaces and functions are welcomed and supported in light of the nature of the age-restricted accommodation. In this regard, it is considered necessary to secure a condition for the pre-occupation provision of all internal communal areas and retention thereafter, together with the stipulation that they are used ancillary to the Class C3 use, rather than becoming separate planning units. These facilities are all in addition to the usual supporting functions such as parking (both vehicular and cycles) and waste storage, as discussed within the Transport consultation response.

6.3.4 In terms of amenity space, all bar one of the 55 units will either include an individual protruding balcony (18 units), an inset balcony within the roofslope (6 units within Block B) or a Juliet balcony (30 units). The protruding balconies are proposed on the

south-facing elevations, with the Juliet balconies predominantly serving the north-facing units. In addition, occupiers will have access to the communal on-site hard and soft landscaping areas, most substantially the area along the southern edge of the site, but also including areas to the south of No. 219 Henley Road (a 'nature garden' including trees and a lawn area) and to the south of the Block A lounge. Collectively this provision is welcomed for the benefit of future occupiers, providing adequate on-site provision for future occupiers to use.

- 6.3.5 Linked to this, it is noted that under Policy EN9, as the proposals are for over 50 dwellings, new provision of open space will be sought. In this instance, based on the latest landscape plan, the only open space on site which will be fully publicly accessible will be the nature garden to the rear of No. 219 Henley Road. This is welcomed in principle, although in practice it is unlikely to be used by the wider public. The remaining spaces are all enclosed by railings and gates (owing to site safety and security reasons for future and neighbouring occupiers, as per Policy CC8, as recognised by Policy H10). In this instance it is considered that an appropriate level of private and communal open space for the new development has been incorporated within the proposals.
- 6.3.6 With specific regard to the Policy H5 requirements, beyond the space standards referenced above, it is confirmed that the water and energy components are incorporated within the sustainability and energy section of the report below. In terms of the accessible/adaptable/wheelchair user elements, at the outset of the application the applicant specified that all of the units have been designed to comply with Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. However, the submission lacks specific commentary and explicit plans to evidence this. In terms of the 5% wheelchair user dwelling requirement in line with Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations, at the outset of the application the applicant outlined that units 02, 05, 08 and 11 at upper ground floor level of Block A are designed to be fully compliant (at that time 4/59 units equated to 6.8% provision – wheelchair units within Block B are not possible given all accommodation is at first floor level and above, owing to site topography and flood risk factors). However, in the context of the various revisions to the scheme during the course of the application the layout of units have changed at the site as a whole, so it is unclear which units would now be the specified wheelchair user dwellings (and the numbering of units has altered too, with no unit 11 at upper ground floor level for example). Set within this context a pre-occupation condition is recommended to secure details of evidence of all units complying with Part M4(2) and at least 5% of the units complying with Part M4(3) too. This will adhere with the policy requirements, but noting the age-restricted nature of the accommodation, an informative will be included too. This will strongly encourage the applicant to exceed the minimum 5% wheelchair user requirement, to assist the quality of accommodation and anticipated needs for future occupiers.
- 6.3.7 With regard to Policy CC8, where it is required to provide acceptable living conditions for new residential properties, it is considered that the layout has been designed with suitable residents' amenity in mind. In terms of privacy and overlooking, the footprint and orientation of units are such that no significant harm would occur for future occupiers, either in terms of from existing occupiers or fellow new residents within the development (e.g. there is a suitable distance between Blocks A and B). It is noted that no details have been submitted regarding the boundary treatment (likely privacy screens) between the external terrace area at third floor level of Block A, so a condition will secure details to protect the privacy of units 31, 32 and 33.
- 6.3.8 In relation to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing matters for future occupiers, the independent review by DPR (see section 4.9 above) confirms that future occupiers

are expected to benefit from good levels of daylight and sunlight. Furthermore, the proposed amenity spaces within the development will benefit from adequate levels of sunlight. More specifically, all three of the amenity spaces will 100% comply with the BRE requirement of providing at least 2 hours of sunlight at the Spring equinox, due to the relative openness of the site.

- 6.3.9 This assessment was undertaken at the outset of the application and it is acknowledged that the proposals have been altered since this point in time. However, officers consider that the proposals have not altered to such an extent which would lead to a different overall conclusion being reached by DPR, with in many instances the changes to the scheme only helping to increase day/sunlight levels (e.g. omitting single aspect north-facing units on the upper ground floor of Block A). Officers are satisfied that the proposals are acceptable in terms of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing for future occupiers.
- 6.3.10 In terms of visual dominance and overbearing impacts, it is not considered that Block A would dominate or overbear Block B, or vice-versa, given the suitable 40m distance between the blocks. The neighbouring care-home and the other surrounding existing buildings are not considered to dominate or overbear future occupiers either. In terms of outlook, all future occupiers are considered to benefit from good levels of outlook from all habitable rooms proposed.
- 6.3.11 Turning to consider crime and safety matters, the DAS submitted with the application specifies that the proposals will conform to Part Q of the Building Regulations, with windows and doors meeting British Standards. No consultation response has been received from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police, and officers consider that the level of detail included within the submission is fairly limited, lacking robust detail in relation to entry into and through the building for example. In the circumstances it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure a full security strategy via condition.
- 6.3.12 With regard to fire safety, the proposals do not include 'gateway 1 buildings', with both buildings below 18m in height (Block A is 15.8m and Block B is 13.2m). Hence, no fire statement was required to accompany the application, or consultation with the Health & Safety Executive. Despite this, given the obvious sensitivities around this matter and the need to protect the future safety of occupiers (and the general area), a pre-commencement (barring demolition) condition is recommended. The plans show that both buildings include two separate stair cores as part of the proposed layout. In practice the condition will secure an appropriate fire strategy, to be provided prior to first occupation and then maintained as such thereafter.

iv) **Amenity for nearby occupiers**

- 6.4.1 It is noted that a number of public consultation responses have raised concerns about the impact of the proposals on the living environment of existing residential properties, as per section 4.16 above. Accordingly, the proposals have been carefully considered with Policy CC8 particularly in mind.
- 6.4.2 In relation to privacy and overlooking matters, the impact on the neighbouring property to the east, No. 215 Henley Road, has been accounted for in the proposed design. The three storey element of Block A, adjacent to No. 215, includes no windows on the east side elevation facing the neighbouring property, ruling out overlooking at this point. It is acknowledged that the set-in five storey component of Block A includes a single window at upper ground floor level (towards the front of the site) and a single window at third floor level, which are 12m from the boundary with No. 215 and 16m from the outrigger at No. 215, with this existing property including

an external terrace at this point based on the officer site visit on 16/06/22 (see photographs below at figure 23 and visualization at figure 24). The closest proposed external terrace on Block A is 16m from the boundary with No. 215 and 20m from the outrigger. Furthermore, the walkway off Henley Road leading to the upper ground floor entrance at the front of the site is 8m from the boundary with No. 215, where significant vegetation presently exists (see photographs below at figure 23). In overall terms it is considered that the proposals have included a range of measures to reduce overlooking to this neighbouring property, with none considered to result in a loss of privacy sufficient to resist the proposals on this basis.



Figure 23 - The relationship with No. 215, from No. 213 (officer photographs 16/06/22)



2. View showing boundary between proposed development and 215 Henley Road

Figure 24 – Visualisation of the proposed scheme looking north at relationship with No. 215 Henley Road

6.4.3 In relation to privacy and overlooking to other nearby occupiers, the proposals are considered too distant from the properties on the north side of Henley Road or the care home to the west for there to be a detrimental impact. In terms of the impact of Block B overlooking the rear of properties at No. 215 and onwards to the east, the back-to-back distances between buildings are 44m (to No. 215), 43m (to No. 217) and almost 57m (to No. 219). These are all comfortably in excess of the 20m back-to-back distance referenced in Policy CC8. The distance of windows at Block B to

the rear boundary of the neighbouring gardens are 12m (to No. 215), 10m (to No. 217) and 30m (to No. 219) respectively. Accordingly, whilst the proposals would introduce possibilities for overlooking towards the rear of the Henley Road properties to the east which do not exist at present, such overlooking would not be of a harmful nature, given the significant back-to-back distances involved.

- 6.4.4 Turning to consider daylight and sunlight impacts on neighbouring and nearby properties, DPR undertook an independent review on behalf of the local planning authority. As per section 4.9 above it was firstly confirmed that the scope of the assessment was considered appropriate. This verifies the approach of the applicant to assess only No. 215 Henley Road to the east and the care home to the west. In this regard, other properties, such as those on the north side of Henley Road, are too distant from the proposed development for there to be any harmful day/sunlight or overshadowing impact. DPR report that the impact on the care home will be negligible, while for No. 215 all four flank windows will satisfy the BRE guidelines, although a location plan specifying the exact locations was not provided. On the basis of the officer site visit, together with subsequent alterations to the scheme to reduce the bulk of the proposed scheme closest to the boundary with No. 215, it is considered by officers that the daylight/sunlight impacts of the proposed development on these occupiers will not cause a significant detrimental impact. Accordingly, in line with the DPR advice, officers are also satisfied in terms of the day/sunlight impacts of the proposed development.
- 6.4.5 In relation to outlook, visual dominance and the overbearing effects of a development, it is fully acknowledged that the proposed development will introduce a new relationship for existing nearby occupiers when compared with the existing context of the five current dwellings and expansive rear gardens. In some respects the site topography means such impacts will be particularly noticeable. However, when considered within the context of the existing neighbouring developments to the west (including the recently completed care home) it is considered that there are no sustainable grounds to resist the proposals in these regards. Furthermore, the reduction of height and scale proposed away from No. 215, and the revisions to the massing and footprint of Block A during the application, also assist in reaching an overall conclusion that the development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties to an extent to resist the proposals on.
- 6.4.6 With regard to noise and disturbance matters, including vibration and dust, fumes and smells, a specific concern has been raised in the consultation responses relating to the construction stage of the development, borne out of recent experiences with the neighbouring development. As per the Transport (section 4.1) and Environmental Protection (section 4.2) comments, a demolition and construction method statement would be secured via pre-commencement condition, in order to seek to protect nearby amenity in such regards. The hours of construction and preventing the burning of materials or green waste on site are separately recommended conditions too. With these conditions secured, such impacts will be managed. A series of other conditions would also assist in these regards in the longer term, such as the refuse collection details.
- 6.4.7 In terms of the impacts from artificial lighting, external lighting details are recommended to be secured via condition (also required for ecological reasons). With regard to crime and safety matters, although no comments have been received from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police, it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure details of a robust security strategy via condition, for the benefit of existing nearby occupiers as well as future occupiers too. Hence, in overall terms, it is considered that the proposals will comply in full with Policy CC8, subject to the recommended conditions being secured.

v) **Transport and Highways**

- 6.5.1 As per the observations at section 4.1 of this report, the proposals are considered acceptable from a transport perspective, subject to a series of conditions and S106 obligations. This conclusion has been reached following the submission of various further information submitted during the application, to address a series of initial comments raised by RBC Transport.
- 6.5.2 In particular, it is noted that the vehicular access would continue the adopted highway created by the Signature development to the west, albeit until such time any development further the east comes forward, soft landscaping will terminate the road, with a footway for pedestrians on both sides. Whilst the parking provision is below that required in this location, this has been justified and evidenced by the applicant and is accepted. The proposed development itself is not considered to result in a material increase in traffic flow and consequently no severe impact on the highway network is anticipated. On Henley Road it is proposed to extend the foot/cycleway scheme delivered by the Signature development, which is welcomed in promoting travel by alternative modes. These works will be secured via legal agreement, together with other specific highways related works and conditions.

vi) **Trees, landscaping, ecology and SuDS**

- 6.6.1 There are a number of interconnected considerations in respect of these elements of the proposals. As such, the relevant specialist officers have worked closely together to ensure a joined-up approach has been taken. Considering first the tree and landscaping elements of the proposals, as section 4.3 above details, the Natural Environment officer is in overall terms satisfied with the proposals subject to a number of conditions. It is fully acknowledged that four protected trees will be removed as part of the proposed development, with three justifiably removed owing to their condition and one poplar being required to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. This is a Category B tree, with the only other Category B trees to be removed being two groups of conifers. All other trees to be removed, with the total number being 47, are low quality Category C or no value Category U trees. The Natural Environment officer considers the loss of the TPO Category B tree to be regrettable, but concurs with the applicant that its amenity value is limited and its loss can be mitigated through new tree planting. Furthermore, it is also relevant that it has previously been accepted under permission 190887 for the Category B trees to be removed as part of that separate scheme (see figure 12 above); as such, there is considered to be limited means to sustainably resist these proposals in light of that recent context.
- 6.6.2 In terms of the proposed landscaping strategy, this importantly maintains a significant buffer on the south side of the site (minimum 18m in depth across the full width of the site), which assists in maintaining a screen to Berry Brook and the Major Landscape Feature. A combination of retained trees and vegetation, together with the proposed new trees within this area will assist in this regard. Along the Henley Road frontage it is considered positive that this will be tree-lined along the entire width of the site, barring the space required for the pedestrian access to Block A. The nature garden is another welcomed element of the proposal, providing another suitable space for the benefit of future occupiers. In total, 90 newly planted trees are proposed, equating to a net gain across the site of 43. The proposals also incorporate significant areas of sedum green roofs on Block A, which is a benefit of the proposals. Further details of these, together with the landscaping proposals as a whole will be secured as part of a series of Natural Environment based recommended conditions, with the proposals considered to comply with Policy EN14 in overall terms.

- 6.6.3 In terms of ecology matters, as per section 4.4 above, it is acknowledged that there are significant concerns raised by RBC's Ecology consultants GS Ecology. This is associated with the principle of development within the rear gardens of the site, owing to the likely considerable ecological value of the site and location next to a designated Major Landscape Feature, meaning the site is sensitively located and forms part of Reading's green network. Policy EN13 guards against development which detracts from the character and appearance of a Major Landscape Feature, while Policy EN12 states the green network shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. This is also backed up by Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens). By the very nature of the proposals there are acknowledged to be inherent difficulties in meeting all elements of these policies.
- 6.6.4 However, the positioning of Block B has been set back a minimum distance of 18m from the site boundary and Berry Brook to the south. This maintains what is considered to be a reasonable and suitable buffer between the built form and the site boundary, with this space scheduled to include a variety of soft landscaping forms including lawn areas and wildflower grassland planting. Furthermore, areas of soft landscaping are also proposed in other parts of the site too, meaning the ratio of soft landscaping to built form is relatively generous when compared with developments to the west. Other mitigating factors include that existing reptiles already evidenced at the site will be protected through the relocation strategy to be secured via S106 Legal Agreement, the proposals seek to increase the number of trees at the site, and biodiversity enhancement measures (including at least 10 bird/bat boxes) being secured via condition and the anticipated overall biodiversity net gain (BNG) at the site. The BNG has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of GS Ecology, following a series of revisions during the course of the application. As per section 4.4 above, the final details will be secured via condition.
- 6.6.5 In addition, the applicant's supporting ecological appraisal considers the site to be of local (i.e. Caversham) overall ecological value, rather than being of Boroughwide or regional/national significance. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that development has recently been permitted in the southern half of the application site (Ref 190887 for 9 dwellings), together with separate developments to the west at Ruskin and the neighbouring newly completed Signature care home. Taking all factors into account, the previous permissions and mitigation measures combine to form a reasonable case that the shortfalls of the proposals in these regards advised by GS Ecology need to be considered further in the overall planning balance. This matter is therefore returned to within the planning balance conclusion at the end of this appraisal.
- 6.6.6 Turning to the separate but related matter of SuDS, the proposed strategy has altered during the course of the application to address initial comments raised by RBC Lead Local Flood Authority. In light of the location and topography at the site, together with the nature of the proposals, this is a complex site from a SuDS perspective. A series of soakaways, attenuation tanks and bio-retention areas are shown to be proposed, which following the submission of further information during the course of the application is considered, as per the comments at section 4.7 above, to demonstrate that a policy compliant proposal can be achieved. The final details are yet to be submitted at application stage, so in the circumstances details will be secured via condition, with the expectation for details to build on the considerable information submitted at application stage. With the conditions secured, which will be required to align in full with the landscaping proposals being advanced (which themselves link into the BNG strategy), this will ensure the

drainage proposals are satisfactory and will reduce the risk of flooding at the site and in the wider area.

vii) **Sustainability and energy**

6.7.1 The sustainability and energy statement submitted by the applicant can be summarised as follows:

- Installation of a communal air source heat system within the buildings. Each block will have its own common chiller unit, which will serve a medium temperature loop and each apartment will have its own internal unit.
- Installation of a total of 81 x 400W photovoltaic panels on the roofs of the two blocks (54 to Block A and 27 to Block B, inclined at circa 20 degrees and orientated toward due south).
- A series of passive design measures, such as allowing for natural ventilation and exposed thermal mass, together with high levels of insulation, air tightness and the control of solar gain.
- A combination of active design measures, such as efficient lighting and controls and space heating and hot water.
- Overall, the applicant outlines that the proposals are anticipated to result in a 73.85% reduction in emissions over the 2013 Building Regulations, when all factors are taken into account.

6.7.2 The proposed strategy has been independently reviewed by Hoare Lea on behalf of the local planning authority, as outlined at section 4.10 above. In short, following two re-reviews of the original information submitted (to address various concerns raised), Hoare Lea confirmed that there were no further elements that were outstanding. Officers therefore conclude that Hoare Lea are satisfied that the proposals are policy compliant, subject to a legal agreement obligation and conditions being secured.

6.7.3 More specifically, whilst the proposals would not achieve zero carbon homes, the residential units are anticipated to achieve a 73.85% reduction in carbon emissions. It is noted that this is significantly above the SPD referenced minimum 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, where homes are not designed to be carbon neutral (as is the case here). The shortfall based on zero carbon attracts a carbon off-setting financial contribution (to be secured via S106 legal agreement), which the applicant has estimated to amount to £29,506 using the SPD formula. However, the S106 will not specify a figure, with the amount ascertained as part of the finally proposed energy strategy (which may differ to the approach currently proposed), as secured via the usual two-stage energy condition approach recommended. The subsequent carbon offsetting financial contribution will be secured via the legal agreement.

6.7.4 In terms of decentralised energy, an air source heat pump (ASHP) system is proposed. Hoare Lea (for the LPA) raised an issue with the submission in that technical analysis to justify ASHP over the SPD preferred ground-source heat pumps (GSHP) was not provided. The applicant chose not to provide further justification at this stage, but advised that GSHP could be further considered at detailed working drawing stage. Hoare Lea therefore recommends that a feasibility study in relation to the use of GSHP, as suggested by the applicant, is welcomed to ensure all of the opportunities for decentralised energy have been explored. Therefore, in practice, the first of the two energy strategy conditions will include a specific requirement for a feasibility study for inclusion of GSHP over ASHP be included, so that this can be further explored with view to potentially being included as part of the proposed energy strategy.

6.7.5 With specific regard to the photovoltaics (PV), whilst these are welcomed in principle, it is noted that these are shown as proposed in the energy strategy, but have not been indicated on the planning drawings submitted. Given the roof profiles of the two blocks – see figure 25 below, there is considered to be scope within the flat roof sections of the roofscapes for PV to be installed without causing any significant visual harm. Nevertheless, given PV are a fundamental element of the energy strategy but plans haven't specified the exact details of these, a planning condition will secure details to ensure that PV is appropriately designed and actually provided in the scheme.



Figure 25 – Sections of Block A (left) and B (right) showing scope for PV panels on flat roof areas set behind roof profiles.

6.7.6 In summary, it is concluded that the proposals have been independently verified as being appropriate and policy compliant, subject to the recommended conditions and obligation relating to carbon offsetting.

viii) **Other matters**

6.8.1 Archaeology: As per section 4.11 of this report a condition to secure a scheme of archaeological works is recommended by Berkshire Archaeology. This will be accordingly secured, to ensure the development complies with Policy EN2.

6.8.2 Thames Water: As per the consultation response at section 4.14, Thames Water has recommended a condition to ensure the local water supply has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional demand anticipated from the new development. Thames Water has also recommended a series of informatives. Both the condition and informative are to be secured, as per the recommendation at the beginning of this report, for the reasons explained by Thames Water. When details are submitted in due course Thames Water will be engaged to provide input.

6.8.3 S106 Legal Agreement: Various components of the required S106 Legal Agreement have been referenced within previous sections of this report. One matter not specifically focussed upon is the requirement for a construction phase Employment and Skills Plan (ESP). The REDA response at section 4.13 above identifies this, with it presently unclear whether this will be a contractor-led ESP or an equivalent financial contribution payment. As per the ESP SPD formula, any financial contribution would amount to £16,437.50. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.

6.8.4 All of the obligations referenced within this report would comply with the NPPF and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that they would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. A S106

Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure these obligations, in the event of a positive resolution at the Planning Applications Committee meeting.

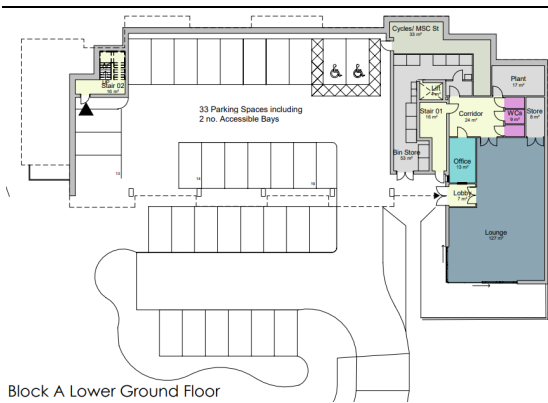
- 6.8.5 Pre-commencement conditions: the number of pre-commencement (any development, including demolition) has been limited, in line with national guidance. The detailed wording of the pre-commencement conditions, in relation to the demolition and construction method statement and contaminated land have been agreed in writing with the agent of the applicant (on 14/03/2023) in line with the requirements of section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act. At the time of writing officers are awaiting a response from the applicant in terms of the ecology based pre-commencement conditions (fed into the applicant on 15/05/2023).
- 6.8.6 Equality: In determining this application the Council 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. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

7. CONCLUSION, INCLUDING THE OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE

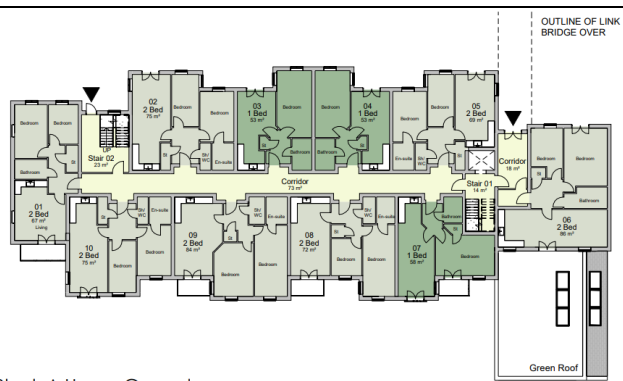
- 7.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 7.2 The harmful impacts of the proposed development are therefore required to be weighed against the benefits. On the basis of the assessment above, shortcomings of the proposals are considered to include the loss of garden areas to the rear of the site (in the context of the local policies associated with the major landscape feature and green corridor to the south) and some existing Category B trees, the change in context along the Henley Road streetscene (such as the reduction in glimpsed views through to land to the south of the site) and the loss of existing family sized dwellings.
- 7.3 As already referenced above, the identified harmful impacts are required to be weighed against the benefits of the proposals. The appraisal above has outlined a series of planning benefits which would arise from the proposed development, with those of particular note summarised as follows:
- The provision of 55 retirement living units – complying with a need identified in the Borough and by Policy H6, which could also assist in freeing up family sized accommodation elsewhere in the north of the Borough
 - An application stage financial contribution towards affordable housing, with this being in excess of what the scheme can viably support at this juncture, as independently verified.
 - The sustainability credentials of the proposals, with the residential units anticipated to achieve a 73.85% reduction in carbon emissions, significantly above the SPD referenced minimum 35% improvement.
 - The inclusion of appropriate flood mitigation measures, as supported by the EA
 - The scale, massing and detailed design quality of the scheme being suitable and maintaining the character of the area
 - The quality of the accommodation being provided for future occupiers, with the inclusion of suitable private and communal amenity spaces internally and externally, together with ancillary facilities and services required to support independent living

- The extension to the pedestrian/cycle scheme across the frontage of the site (adjacent to Henley Road) to promote travel by alternative modes.
 - Not prejudicing the development of the wider area, for example the road layout being futureproofed to the east, whilst simultaneously maximising soft landscaping close to the boundary at this point until such time any neighbouring development comes forward.
 - Delivery of a community infrastructure levy, estimated to be £936,573.44.
- 7.4 When weighing up the benefits and shortfalls of the proposals, officers consider that cumulatively the benefits specified above ultimately outweigh all of the shortfalls, most notably the loss of the garden spaces to the rear of the site, when balancing competing factors. Therefore, officers advise that the conflicts with the development plan are considered to be outweighed by the benefits of the proposals in this particular case. It is considered that officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion.
- 7.5 Accordingly, in overall terms the proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement, the Heads of Terms for which are summarised at the beginning of this report.

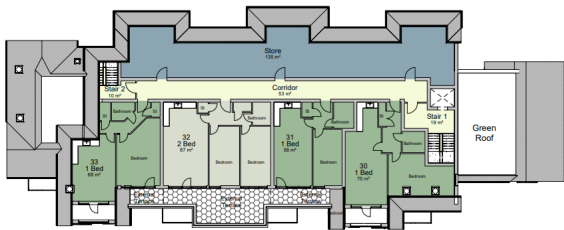
Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell



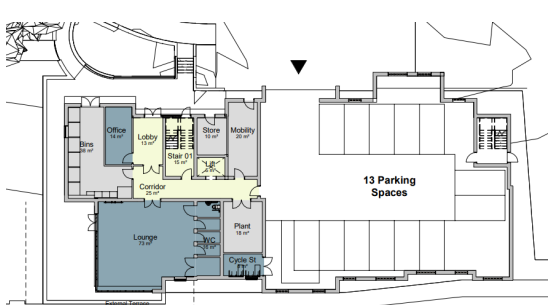
Block A Lower Ground Floor



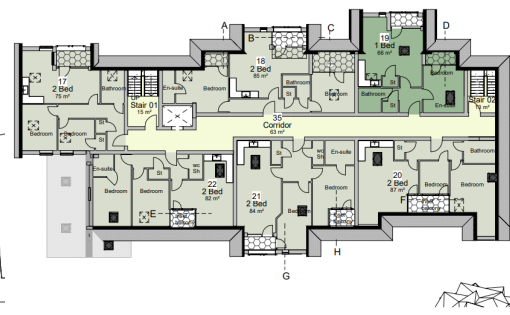
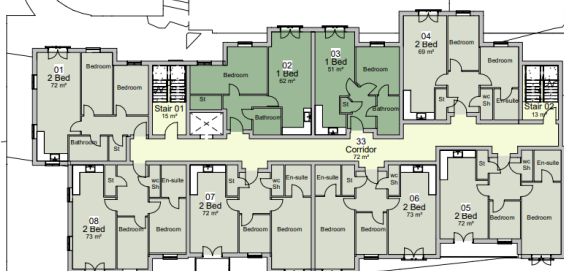
Block A Upper Ground



Block A floor plans – lower ground to third floor



A2 02 Second Floor

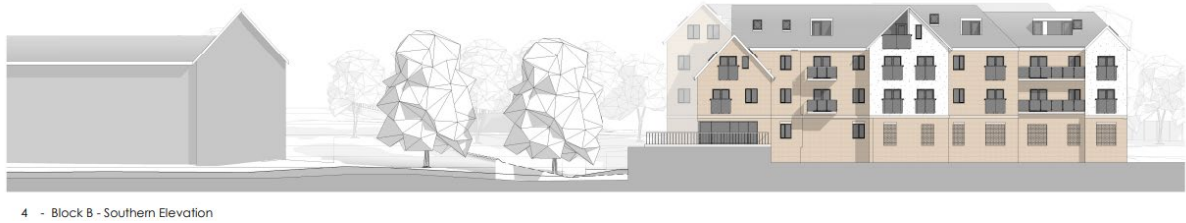


A2 03 Third Floor

Block B floor plans ground to third floor



Block B elevations – north (above) and south (below) showing the context of the Signature Care Home



The setback from Henley Road of neighbouring blocks - Signature (23/03/23) left, Ruskin (16/06/22) right and the application site as existing (below)





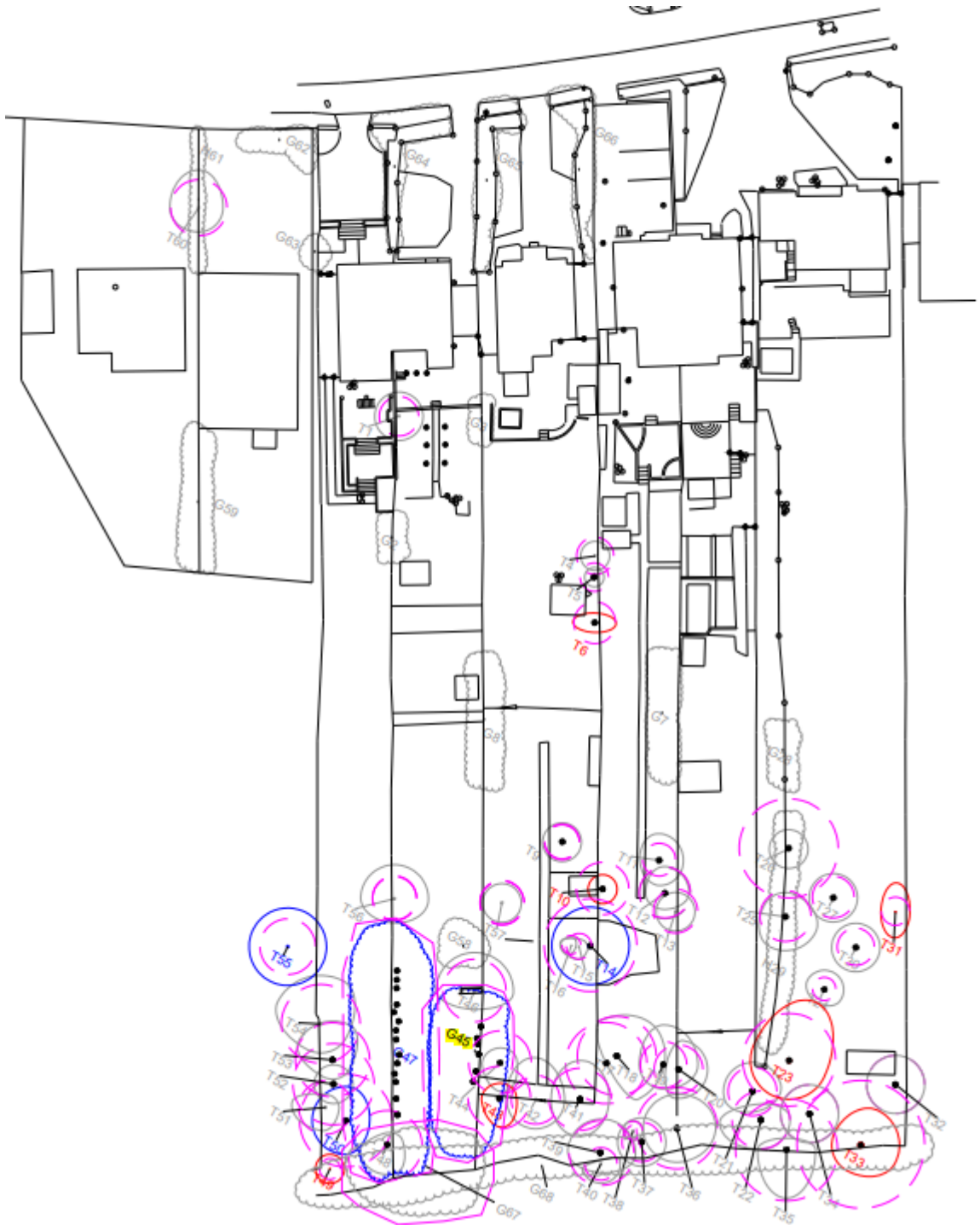
Officer site photos from rear of No. 207 on 16/06/22 (above) & 23/03/23 (below)



Willow View looking south from Henley Road



Officer photograph 23/03/2023 – recently installed pedestrian/cycleway to west



Existing Tree Survey

BS 5837:2012 TREE RETENTION CATEGORIES



Category A
Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.



Category B
Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years.



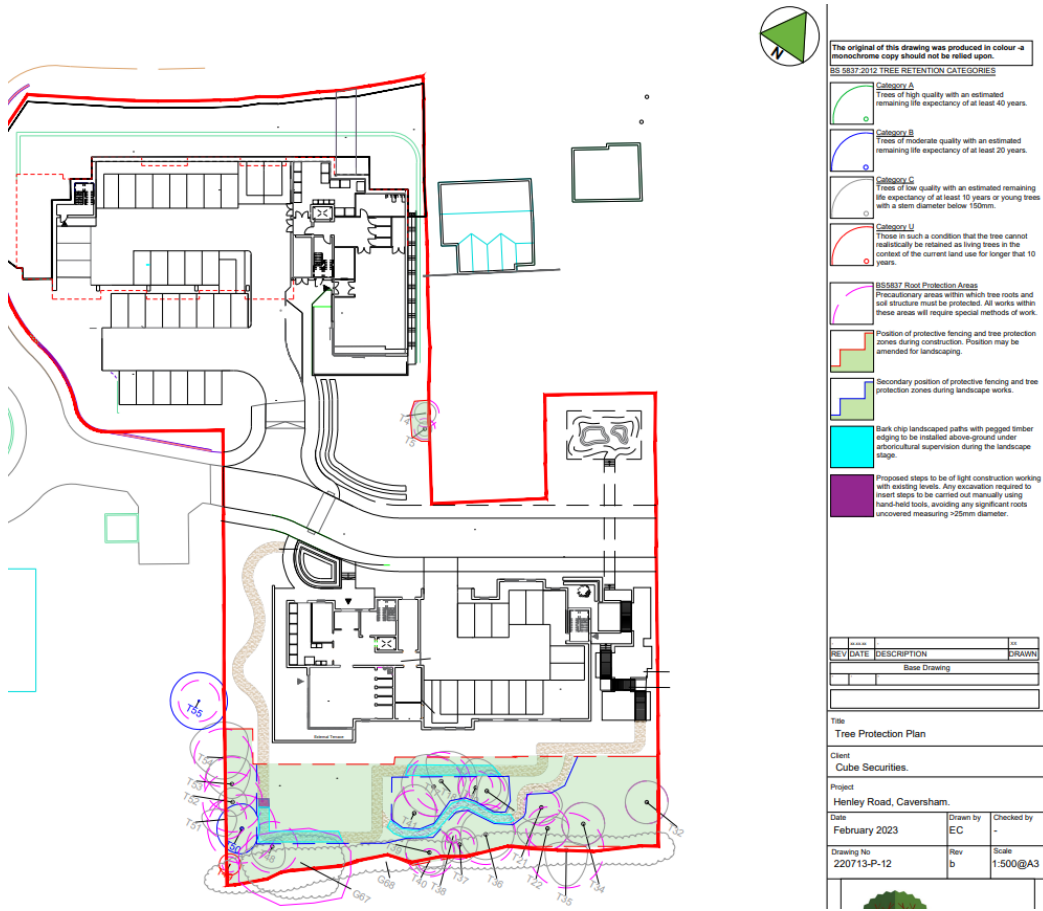
Category C
Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm.



Category U
Those in such a condition that the tree cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years.



BS5837 Root Protection Areas
Precautionary areas within which tree roots and soil structure must be protected. All works within these areas will require special methods of work.



Proposed Tree Protection Plan



Photo 3: view of the dead cherry tree T33 believe to be covered by TPO 165-07.



Photo 5: crown failure within cypress groups G45 and G47 likely resulting from storms in February 2022.



Photo 4: mature southern boundary vegetation.



Photo 6: typical site frontage vegetation.

Extracts of further photographs included within the Arboricultural Report



Further aerial views via Google





Further aerial views via Google





Further aerial views via Google



COMMITTEE REPORT

**BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st May 2023**

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 201138/FUL

Address: 12-18 Crown Street, Reading

Proposal: Change of use of building from 44 serviced apartments (Class C1) to 44 flats (C3) comprising of 4no studios, 27 x one bedroom and 13 x two bedroom units with associated parking

Applicant: Shall Do Crown Street Limited

Major Application: 13 week target decision date: 14th October 2020

Extended Deadline: 30th June 2023

Planning Guarantee 26-week target: 13th January 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) 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 30th June 2023 (unless officers, on behalf of AD PTPPS, agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

Affordable Housing (amended – see in bold)

To secure an off-site affordable housing contribution of £88,000 to be used for affordable housing within the Borough. Payable prior to first occupation as C3 residential units and index-linked from the date of permission.

Late Stage Deferred Payment Review Contribution mechanism to be triggered when 75% of all the flats (i.e. 33 units) have been sold or let to cover the remaining shortfall to include 60%/40% profit share (in favour of the Council) on all profits over 10% profit on GDV up to a policy compliant cap equivalent to 30% provision.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE (additional recommended conditions included in bold):

1. TL1 - Full - time limit - three years;
2. Approved Plans;
3. Construction Method Statement (pre-commencement)
4. Parking Permits 1 (notification to LPA);
5. Parking Permits 2 (notification to occupants);
6. Cycle Parking (as specified);
7. Landscaping (to be submitted);
8. Noise Assessment & Mitigation (pre-commencement);
9. Air Quality Assessment & Mitigation (pre-commencement);
10. Unidentified contamination;
11. Hours of construction/demolition;
12. No burning on site;
13. Details of bin stores (to be submitted);
14. External lighting (if proposed, details to be submitted); and
15. Conversion to comply with Energy and Sustainability Statement regarding sustainability (in accordance with).
- 16. A scheme for sound insulation between units to be submitted to and approved by the LPA and installed in accordance with the approved details.**

17. Details of a brown or green roof to be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to installation and installed in accordance with the approved details.

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- Positive and Proactive;
- Pre-commencement conditions agreed by agent;
- S106;
- Terms and Conditions;
- Building Regulations;
- Complaints about construction;
- Contamination;
- Noise between residential properties;
- CIL; and
- No entitlement to parking permits.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This application was deferred from the September 2022 Planning Applications Committee (Committee Report at Appendix 1 below) further to a request for additional information on a number of matters including an improved affordable housing offer. Officers have liaised with the applicant and the following is the position having explored matters further.

2.0 Affordable Housing

- 2.1 The applicant has responded with an affordable housing offer of an off-site contribution of £88,000 (£2,000 per dwelling). RBC Valuers have confirmed that this is a reasonable offer within the context of this non-viable scheme. The supporting text to Policy H3 at para 4.4.24 explains that the Local Planning Authority will be sensitive to exceptional costs of bringing a site to market such as for reasons of expensive reclamation, or infrastructure costs, or high existing use values. In this instance the Existing Use Value (EUV) of the building in use as serviced apartments is relatively high, the proposal is to re-configure the existing building internally with no new floorspace proposed and the high existing values therefore suppress the viability as confirmed by the Council's Valuer. Valuers also note that the viability will have worsened since the submission of the original viability assessment due to increasing build costs, increased costs of borrowing and the fall in house prices; however these aspects should be given little weight in the decision as they relate to market fluctuations which form part of normal developer risk. This obligation has been included in bold in an amended Heads of Terms in the Recommendation box above.

3.0 Mix/ Size of Units

- 3.1 The Committee requested an improved mix/ size of units. The proposal presented to Committee in September proposed 70% 1 bed/studios whereas policy guidance in Policy CR6 seeks a maximum of 40%. The applicant has explored including further larger units in place of some of the studios, but this would have a further negative impact on viability, shown within further submitted viability information. This proposal is similar to that granted on appeal nearby at 23-27 London Road, as referred to by officers within the original committee report (paragraph 6.3.3, Appendix 1 below). This appeal allowed for a change of use from serviced apartments to C3 dwellings with a mix which did not achieve the Policy CR6 guidance mix. The Inspector was clear that the policy allows for flexibility in applying mix and that viability is a material consideration. Officers consider this appeal decision to be a relevant material

consideration in this current application due to the similarities, proximity and the recentness of that decision.

4.0 Outdoor Amenity Space

4.1 Concern was raised by Committee about the lack of private amenity space and the proximity of existing public open space provision. Policy H10 requires residential development to provide functional private or communal open space and does apply to conversions. The supporting paragraph to 4.4.83, however, does not require the same amount of outdoor space within Central Reading, where sites are usually more constrained, and the provision of private amenity space will need to be considered in the context of the nature of the area, and the type of amenity spaces provided for similar developments.

4.2 There is no space within the site to create any meaningful private/ communal amenity space and any contribution towards open space would further negatively impact the scheme's viability. Forbury Gardens and Coley Meadows are within an estimated 10-minute walk (ca 0.5 miles/ 800m) which is within the guidance distance set out within the nationally recognised, "Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard England" (by Fields in Trust, Formerly the National Playing Fields Association). Paragraph 4.4.83 recognises that "*Flats in central Reading are less likely to attract families and the ability to walk to public open space nearby reduces the need for private open space.*"

5.0 Parking

5.1 Councillors raised concern over the parking deficiency compared to the Council's adopted parking standards. RBC Transport officers had no objection to the proposed provision and have reconfirmed this position to officers, given the restrictions in the area and proximity to the town centre and the availability of alternative modes.

6.0 Biodiverse Brown/Green Roof

6.1 Reference was made by Councillors to the lack of proposed green or brown roof. The applicant has now confirmed their agreement to the inclusion of a condition requiring details of a brown or green roof be submitted for approval prior to installation, and that this would likely be on an element of roof not previously extended. An additional condition is included above.

7.0 Noise

7.1 An issue was raised regarding the potential for noise between units. Although sound insulation between dwellings is a matter to be addressed under Building Regulations, the applicant has confirmed agreement to the inclusion of a condition requiring the provision of such. This is included in the Recommendation above.

8.0 Community Infrastructure Levy

8.1 Councillors requested confirmation of the total CIL liability figure. In this instance the CIL would be zero as the building is in continuous use and the proposal does not include an increase in the floor area.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 Officers continue to recommend approval for the scheme subject to two additional conditions and amended S106 heads of terms as shown in bold in the Recommendation above.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: 7TH SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7 September 2022

ITEM NO.

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 201138/FUL

Address: 12-18 Crown Street, Reading

Proposal: Change of use of building from 44 serviced apartments (Class C1) to 44 flats (C3) comprising of 4no studios, 27 x one bedroom and 13 x two bedroom units with associated parking

Applicant: Shall Do Crown Street Limited

Major Application: 13 week target decision date: 14th October 2020

Extended of time date: 28th September 2022

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) 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 28th September 2022 (unless officers, on behalf of AD PTPPS, agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

Affordable Housing

Late Stage Deferred Payment Review Contribution mechanism to be triggered when 75% of all the flats (i.e. 33 units) have been sold or let to cover the remaining shortfall to include 60%/40% profit share (in favour of the Council) on all profits over 10% profit on GDV up to a policy compliant cap equivalent to 30% provision.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

18. TL1 - Full - time limit - three years;
19. Approved Plans;
20. Construction Method Statement (pre-commencement)
21. Parking Permits 1 (notification to LPA);
22. Parking Permits 2 (notification to occupants);
23. Cycle Parking (as specified);
24. Landscaping (to be submitted);
25. Noise Assessment & Mitigation (pre-commencement);
26. Air Quality Assessment & Mitigation (pre-commencement);
27. Unidentified contamination;
28. Hours of construction/demolition;
29. No burning on site;
30. Details of bin stores (to be submitted);
31. External lighting (if proposed, details to be submitted); and
32. Conversion to comply with Energy and Sustainability Statement regarding sustainability (in accordance with).

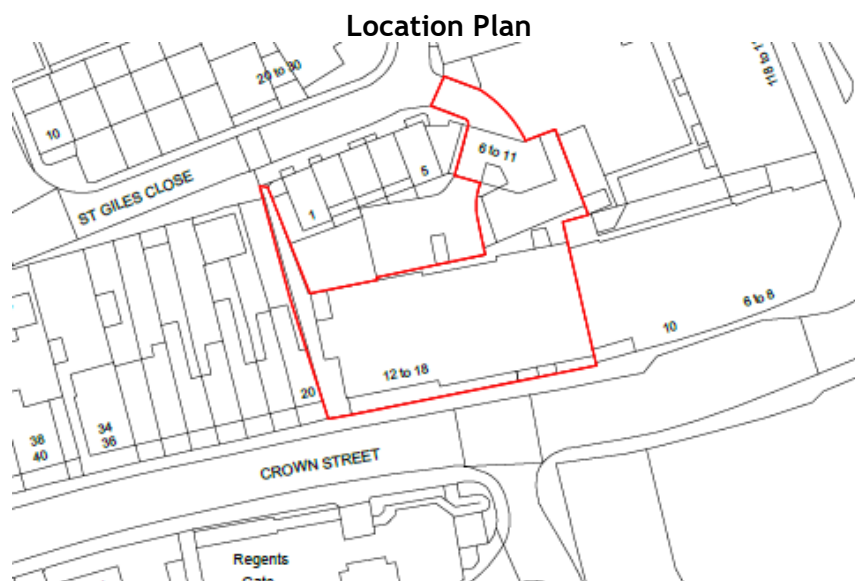
INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- Positive and Proactive;
- Pre-commencement conditions agreed by agent;

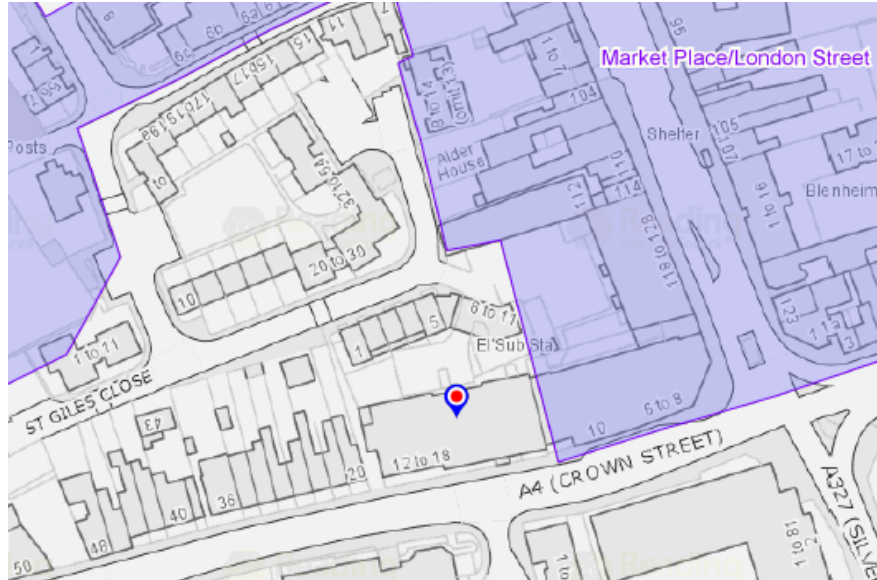
- S106;
- Terms and Conditions;
- Building Regulations;
- Complaints about construction;
- Contamination;
- Noise between residential properties;
- CIL; and
- No entitlement to parking permits.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site was originally an office block but was granted planning permission for its current use as a part 4, part 5 storey building for 44 one and two bedroom serviced apartments. The building has been extended upwards to create additional accommodation (see planning history below). There are 8 car parking spaces (including 2 disabled parking bays) to the rear accessed from St Giles Close. The building currently provides 10 covered and secure parking spaces within a store at ground floor level. As part of the original permission for the serviced apartments a coffee lounge is at ground floor level.
- 1.2 The site is located on the busy Crown Street with residential properties to the north on St Giles Close (Nelson Mews) and to the south and west on Crown Street. Student accommodation is attached in a separate building to the east.
- 1.3 The site borders the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area as shown on the plan below and the surrounding area is a mixture of residential, commercial and retail. The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.4 The application is brought to Planning Applications Committee as it is a major scheme.



Location in relation to Market Place/London Street Conservation Area



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal is for the change of use of the 44 apart-hotel/serviced apartments (C1 use) to 44 residential flats (C3 use). Internally only minor modifications are proposed, in particular the 4th floor level to ensure the flats achieve minimum space standards. Reconfiguration of the common areas at ground floor are also proposed to facilitate an enlarged cycle store in order to accommodate 44 bicycles.
- 2.2 No external changes are proposed and car parking will remain as existing. Refuse collection will continue to be undertaken by a private company as the undercroft restricts the height to the rear of the building which means standard bin lorries would not be able to enter the site.
- 2.3 The following plans and supporting documents were submitted on 15th October 2020:

Drawing No: E19-029/-SIT001 - Site Plan

Drawing No: E19-029/-SIT002 - Location Plan

Drawing No: E19-029/-EXP000 - Ground Floor Existing Drawings

Drawing No: E19-029/-EXP001 - First Floor Existing Drawings

Drawing No: E19-029/-EXP002 - Second Floor Existing Drawings

Drawing No: E19-029/-EXP003 - Third Floor Existing Drawings

Drawing No: E19-029/-EXP004 - Fourth Floor Existing Drawings

Drawing No: E19-029/-EXA001 - Area Schedule Existing

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRA001 - Area Schedule Change of Use Scheme

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP000 - Ground Floor Change of Use Scheme

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP001 - First Floor Change of Use Scheme

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP002 - Second Floor Change of Use Scheme

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP003 - Third Floor Change of Use Scheme

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP004 - Fourth Floor Change of Use Scheme

Planning Statement incorporating a Design & Access Statement

Transport Note

Energy and Sustainability Statement

Environmental Noise Survey and Acoustic Design Statement Report

The following amended plans were submitted on 13th May 2020:

Drawing No: E19-029/SIT001 Rev A - Site Plan
Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP004 Rev A - Fourth Floor

The following amended plans were submitted on 30th June 2022:

Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP000 Rev A - Ground Floor
Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP001 Rev A - First Floor
Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP002 Rev A - Second Floor
Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP003 Rev A - Third Floor
Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP004 Rev B - Fourth Floor

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

04/00097/FUL (Civica Ref: 040727) - 3,4 and 5 storey building providing 11 no. residential units (comprising a mix of flats and townhouses and 2 no.1 bed, 6 no.2 bed and 3 no.3 bed) with associated parking, amenity space and retention of office parking for 9 vehicles. Permitted 28/04/2004.

05/00776/FUL (Civica Ref: 051137) - Change of use from Offices (B1) to 34 serviced apartments as part of a n Apart-Hotel (Use class C1) comprising 22 x 1 bedroom units and 12 x 2 bedroom units with associated parking. Permitted 24/10/2005.

05/00777/FUL (Civica Ref: 051138) - Change of use from Offices (B1) to 28 residential units comprising 19 x 1 bedroom flats, 4 x 2 bedroom flats, 5 x 3 bedroom flats, associated parking and landscaping. Permitted 24/10/2005.

06/01116/FUL (Civica Ref: 060409) - Roof extension to provide an additional 10 serviced apartments. Permitted 20/12/2006.

211742/FUL - Change of use of cafe used by existing C1 serviced apartment residents to Class E(b) sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises (no cooking proposed) by members of the public. Refused 23/08/2022.

(This application refers to the existing coffee lounge on the ground floor associated with the existing serviced apartments and this area is not included within the application being brought to committee).

211743/ADV - Projecting sign. Refused 23/08/2022.

Other Relevant Planning History at 23-27 London Road

201221/FUL - Change of use of The Faculty from 16 serviced apartments (Use Class C1) to 15 residential flats (Use Class C3). Refused 02/03/2021 and allowed at appeal on 09/12/2021.

23-27 London Road is to the east of 12-18 Crown Street and was for a similar scheme. Officers refused this scheme for a number of reasons namely 1) lack of affordable housing (no viability submitted during the course of the application); housing mix (proposal dominated by one bedroom units); internal layout (a number of units were below the nationally described space standards); and failure to demonstrate an adequate parking layout. The Planning Inspectors decision is appended to this report for reference.

This appeal decision is relevant to the application brought to planning applications committee as some of the matters raised are similar to those at 23-27 London Road and which will be highlighted through the assessment of the application below.

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory

4.1 None.

(ii) Non-statutory

Transport

No objection subject to conditions and informatives, discussed further below.

Environmental Protection

A noise assessment has been submitted but the detail of the window specification has not been provided, and in addition the ventilation strategy is not compliant with our requirements. The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area that has been identified as being a pollution hotspot (likely to breach the EU limit value for NO₂) and introduces new exposure / receptors. An assessment and/or mitigation measures should be provided as part of the application. These matters can be dealt with by way of conditions relating to the submission of a Noise Assessment, an Air Quality Assessment along with other conditions and informatives as detailed in the recommendation above.

Natural Environment Trees

The site sits within the AQMA, within a low canopy cover ward (ref Tree Strategy) and directly adjacent to the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, with a small part of the site being within the conservation area. As such, the need for 'greening' as part of development proposals is very important to meet both policy aims and those of our adopted Tree Strategy.

However given the nature of the application - a change of use - I suspect that opportunities for securing greening will be limited.

The small soft landscape strip along the Crown Street frontage has always looked poor - mostly weeds - hence provided little benefit / softening to the frontage. There is scope to improve this through planting. However I noted when passing the site recently that seating pods had been placed on this strip which would prevent soft landscaping being implemented. It does not seem that this strip is a desirable 'amenity' space for residents given the stationary traffic often directly adjacent to it, and indeed they may be no requirement to provide amenity space on this site. If it is required to be deemed as such, seating would, I assume, take priority over planting. However, planting would have a wider benefit and help the development meet the green policy aims, in particular in providing pollution filtration through planting, given the site's location in the AQMA.

It is worth noting that planning approval 05/00776 (051137) required, via condition 6, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping to be submitted and specifically mentions the frontage. The DAS submitted for that application

specifically mentions provision of a landscape strip along the frontage to ‘add visual interest’, with the proposed layout showing planting.

The request to reinstate this is therefore wholly reasonable and should be secured by L1.

(iii) **Public/ local consultation and comments received**

4.7 Nelson Mews 1-11 (all) and Crown Street 6-8 and 20 were notified of the application by letter. A site notice was also displayed at the application site.

4.8 No neighbour letters of representation have been received.

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.

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.

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”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 4 - Decision Making

Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

National Planning Practice Guidance

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)

EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)

EN9 (Provision of Open Space)

EN15 (Air Quality)

EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)

H1 (Provision of Housing)

H2 (Density and Mix)

H3 (Affordable Housing)

H5 (Standards for New Housing)

H8 (Residential Conversions)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
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)

Supplementary Planning Document
Affordable Housing (July 2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (Oct 2011)
Planning Obligations under S106 (April 2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (Dec 2019)
Tree Strategy (March 2021)

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) The principle of development;
- ii) Affordable Housing;
- iii) Housing Density & Mix;
- iv) Impact on living environment for future residents and amenity of neighbouring properties;
- v) Traffic generation and parking;
- vi) Landscaping; and
- vii) Other Matters

i) Principle of development

- 6.1 The NPPF states (para. 10) that *“at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*. The overarching objectives are economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states *“the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development planning permission should not usually be granted.”*
- 6.1.1 Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states *“applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise....Proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*
- 6.1.2 The proposal is for the change of use of serviced apartments to 44 residential flats. There are no specific policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan which protect apart-hotel/serviced apartments and therefore there is no in-principle policy conflict with the loss of these units. Provision of housing is welcomed, providing the development is suitable in terms of other material considerations discussed below.
- 6.1.3 Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states *“Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes in Reading Borough for the period of 2103-2036.”* This is in line with the NPPF section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes. The provision of housing would

contribute to meeting the need for additional housing within the Borough in accordance with Policy H1.

ii) Affordable Housing

6.2 Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) states that residential development will make an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading:

- On sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing.

6.2.1 The policy continues that for sites of 10 or more dwellings, provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate.

6.2.2 In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.

6.2.3 Policy H3 also states that priority needs are currently for housing with two or more bedrooms that can house families and the following types of residential development will be exempt from the requirement to provide affordable housing:

- Replacement of a single dwelling with another single dwelling; and
- Conversion of a dwelling to self-contained flats where there is no new floorspace.

6.2.4 Paragraph 5.3.27 of Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) states that “Reading has seen a marked increase in proposals for serviced apartments, particularly in the centre. These uses fall halfway between hotels and housing, providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living but also the amenities of a hotel.....However, these uses should not be seen as a way of introducing flats by the back door and therefore avoiding the need to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing”.

6.2.5 There is nothing in Policy H3 that exempts the change of use of C1 serviced apart-hotels to C3 residential from contributing towards affordable housing and the proposal would be required to make an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing unless it can be demonstrated that this would make the scheme unviable.

6.2.6 The applicant has submitted a Viability Assessment which has been reviewed by the Council’s Valuers. The Council’s Valuers have concluded that the scheme cannot afford to deliver any affordable housing. The Council’s policy is that an appropriate contribution to affordable housing will be made. It is therefore considered that a mechanism be included within a S106 Agreement that ensures that a proportion of increased profits are secured for affordable housing. This is referred to as a planning deferred contributions mechanism.

6.2.7 There are a number of options for the form of such a mechanism but the standard approach is the ‘profit share’. This is based on an Open Book assessment at a key stage of delivery (usually when 75% of the units have

been sold or let) whereby all scheme costs including land value and agreed profit are deducted from the GDV and any surplus shared between the Developer and the Council on an equal basis.

- 6.2.8 The Council's Valuers have applied the formula set out in Appendix 4 of the SPD and this will be used at the point that 75% of the units are sold or let.

iii) Housing Density & Mix

- 6.3 The application site is located within the boundary of the Reading Central Area and Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) of the Reading Borough Local Plan is applicable. Policy CR6 states that *“all proposals for residential development within the central area will be required to contribute towards a mix of different sized units within the development. This will be measured by the number of bedrooms provided within individual units. Ideally, a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units should be provided. As a guide, in developments of 15 dwellings or more, a maximum of 40% should be 1 bed/studios, and a minimum of 5% of units should be at least 3 bed, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable.”*

- 6.3.1 The scheme proposes:

4 x studio apartments
18 x 1 bedroom / 1 person apartments
9 x 1 bedroom / 2 person apartments
4 x 2 bedroom / 3 person apartments
9 x 2 bedroom / 4 person apartments

- 6.3.2 31 x 1 bedroom/studio flats are therefore proposed which equates to 70.45% which significantly exceeds the maximum of 40% in policy CR6. The Planning Statement submitted by the applicant states that more substantial changes to the existing layout than those already proposed (to ensure space standards can be met) would make the scheme unviable. A Viability Assessment has been undertaken (see Affordable Housing section ii) above) and the conclusion is the scheme is not viable.

- 6.3.3 In a recent appeal decision (dated 9th December 2021) at 23-27 London Road (application ref: 201221 - for the change of use from 16 serviced apartments to 15 residential flats) the Inspector stated:

In this case, the scheme is not a new build or a conversion where there is readily a scope for the provision or reconfiguration of the floorspace to provide a new layout with a different mix of bedroomed units. The scheme combines a studio and a one bedroom flat on the ground floor to provide a 2 bedroom unit and in the other cases the units are already laid out and operational with each unit having a kitchen/lounge area, bathroom(s) and bedroom(s). The scheme with the proposed number of units has already been shown to be unviable to deliver affordable housing and seeking to alter the layout with the movement of some walls, doorways and provision of combined units would add cost, reduce the number of units on the site and, it seems to me based on the information available, render the scheme unviable.....

Furthermore, the policy states that ideally (my emphasis added) there should be a mix of one, two and three bed units. In this case, while it may

be ideal, it would not be reasonable given the existing layout which, with the exception on the ground floor, is not intended to or could easily be changed.....

In summary, Policy CR6 of the Local Plan allows for some flexibility in the mix of the units in schemes and for the viability of a scheme to be taken into account. In the circumstances of this case, I conclude that the scheme would provide a satisfactory mix of unit sizes. Accordingly, the development would comply with Policy CR6 and H2 of the Local Plan which seek amongst other things, to provide an appropriate density of residential development having regard to the need to maximise the efficiency of land.

6.3.4 23-27 London Road is just to the east of 12-18 Crown Street and taking the above comments from the Inspector into consideration, although the proposed scheme is dominated by one bedroom flats, the findings of the Inspector and the fact the scheme is not viable are material considerations. As such, in this instance, and on balance, the proposed mix is considered satisfactory and complies with Policies CR6 and H2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

iv) Impact on living environment for future residents and amenity of neighbouring properties

6.4 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that:

Development will not cause a significant 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 daylight and sunlight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; and
- Wind where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

6.4.1 There is likely to be some noise and disturbance from the internal works proposed however this would be short term whilst the development was being undertaken and there are no external changes proposed. There are residential properties directly to the rear at Nelson Mews which are between approximately 10-16m from the rear of 12-18 Crown Street which is below the 20m back-to-back distance stated in Policy CC8. However, a residential use is not dissimilar to the use as an apart-hotel and therefore the impact of a residential use should not be any greater in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy and this situation has been established since the granting of planning

permission for the use as an apart-hotel in 2005. As such the proposal is not considered harmful to the living environment of neighbouring properties.

Amenity of proposed flats

- 6.4.2 Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires flats to be provided with outdoor space such as communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens. Paragraph 4.4.83 of this policy however states that “flats in central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor space as houses in other parts of Reading, and the sites are usually constrained in any case.” The proposed scheme does not introduce any communal outdoor space however there is none existing and due to its central location it is not considered that the provision of outdoor space is necessary in this instance. There are a number of local parks and Forbury Gardens which are easily accessible.
- 6.4.3 Although Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) is not applicable for new dwellings in the town centre, developments in the town centre would still be expected to achieve the nationally-described space standards (NDSS) (or at least close to these) as part of achieving good design and standards of amenity. A schedule of room sizes has been provided and the proposed flats meet or exceed the nationally-described space standards.
- 6.4.4 The internal layouts and stacking are acceptable with good circulation space. All habitable rooms have windows with some rooms being dual aspect and a studio unit on the fourth floor having triple aspect, there is adequate space for a combined lounge, dining and kitchen area and each unit has a separate and reasonably sized bathroom/shower room.
- 6.4.5 A noise assessment has been submitted but the detail of the window specification has not been provided and in addition the ventilation strategy is not compliant with the Council’s requirements. Policy CC8 requires that there should be no unacceptable impact on living conditions for new residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance. The proposal would introduce permanent residential accommodation and some of the flats have their windows facing the busy Crown Street. Therefore, a condition requiring the submission of a noise assessment is recommended to ensure the windows provide sufficient sound proofing and that if required to be open the internal noise levels would be satisfactory.
- 6.4.6 The site lies close to Crown Street and is within an Air Quality Management Area. Policy EN15 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure the effects of any poor air quality are mitigated. An Air Quality Assessment and any mitigation required to address any identified poor air quality is necessary to accord with Policy EN15 and in the interests of the living conditions of future permanent residents of the development. This can be secured by way of a condition requiring the submission of an Air Quality Assessment.
- 6.4.7 Officers are satisfied that the proposal provides acceptable living accommodation for permanent occupation within a Central Reading location and the proposal is in accordance with Policies CC8, H5 and H8.

v) Traffic generation and parking

- 6.5 In terms of parking standards, the site is located within the Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of Zone 1, the central core area, which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs. The site is well connected and is within walking distance to the town centre and the Oracle shopping centre. There is good access to public transport accessibility to public car parks.
- 6.5.1 In accordance with the Parking Standards and Design SPD, 1 parking space for each of the units and visitor spaces at a ratio of 1 space per 10 units would normally be required (i.e. 48 spaces in total) however, there are 8 existing car parking spaces which includes 2 disabled spaces and these are proposed to be retained for residents of the development.
- 6.5.2 No additional parking is proposed however, Crown Street and Southampton Street and the surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. Given the site's location to the town centre and the ability to monitor unauthorised on street parking via the parking restrictions and CPZ that operates in the area, a lower provision is considered acceptable in this instance and appropriate conditions and informatives are recommended to prevent any future occupants of the new flats from obtaining residents or visitor permits for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure.
- 6.5.3 In accordance with the Councils current cycle parking standards 1 storage space for each unit should be provided. The submitted Ground Floor Plan Drawing No: E19-029/-PRP000 Rev A identifies 2 storage areas, one to the east and one to the west of the building, one utilizing a 2 tier Josta style stand for 12 cycles and 16 Sheffield type stands providing storage for a further 32 cycles. The submitted plan shows doors opening outwards which is acceptable as the doors do not open on to the public highway however the cycle store to the west is next to the bin storage and it would be important that the bin store does not block the entrance to the cycle store. A condition requiring details of the bin store is recommended and this will include ensuring that the bin storage does not block the entrance to the cycle store.
- 6.5.4 The submitted Transport Note and Planning Statement state that the existing use is serviced by a private refuse collection company utilizing smaller vehicles that are able to access the site, it is proposed that a similar arrangement will serve the residential development which is considered acceptable.
- 6.5.5 Given the location and size of the development a construction method statement will be required.
- 6.5.6 As such, in transport terms the proposal is considered in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) subject to the recommended conditions above.

vi) Landscaping

- 6.6 The site is within an Air Quality Management Area, within a 'low tree canopy cover ward' and directly adjacent to the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. There is limited availability on site for any meaningful

planting however there is a small soft landscape strip along the Crown Street frontage which is currently mostly weeds and this could be improved through planting. Given the stationary traffic often directly adjacent to this strip of land it is not considered desirable amenity space for future residents and planting would have a wider benefit and help the development meet the green policy aims, in particular in providing pollution filtration through planting, given the site's location in the AQMA.

- 6.6.1 A previous planning approval 05/00776 (051137) required, via condition 6, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping to be submitted and specifically mentions the frontage. It is therefore not unreasonable to provide planting along the site frontage and this can be secured by way of condition.

vii) Other Matters

Sustainability

- 6.7 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires all major non-residential developments or conversions to residential to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards and this would normally be dealt with by way of conditions.

- 6.7.1 The submitted Planning Statement highlights that the proposal is for a change of use only with minimal changes to the layout which is inherently sustainable in that it minimises the potential for construction waste. An Energy and Sustainability Statement has been submitted which demonstrates the measures incorporated into the scheme. The energy statement has been developed by following the national energy hierarchy and the inclusion of energy efficiency measures has been discussed to minimise on-site energy use compared to a building regulation compliant design, including high efficiency gas heating, efficient lighting and efficient water fittings.

- 6.7.2 It should also be noted that the Inspector on the appeal at 23-27 London Road stated:

Policy CC2 of the Local Plan sets out the approach to the sustainable design and construction of new development and includes that conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM "excellent" standards, where possible. In this case, however, the development is fairly recently built, and appears to be constructed to a high standard and would not be a conversion but a change of use because of the very limited physical changes to the fabric. In these circumstances, I am not persuaded that the evidence demonstrates that the policy should apply to this scheme and therefore that it is necessary or appropriate to apply the requirements of the BREEAM approach in this case.

- 6.7.3 With the Inspectors comments in mind and the findings within the Energy and Sustainability Statement Officers are satisfied that in this specific instance and with regard to the site context and nature of the scheme, that the proposal will allow the building to perform in an improved way to meet current sustainability policy expectations and the improvements will be secured by condition. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies CC2 and CC3.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.7.4 The proposed development would be CIL liable.

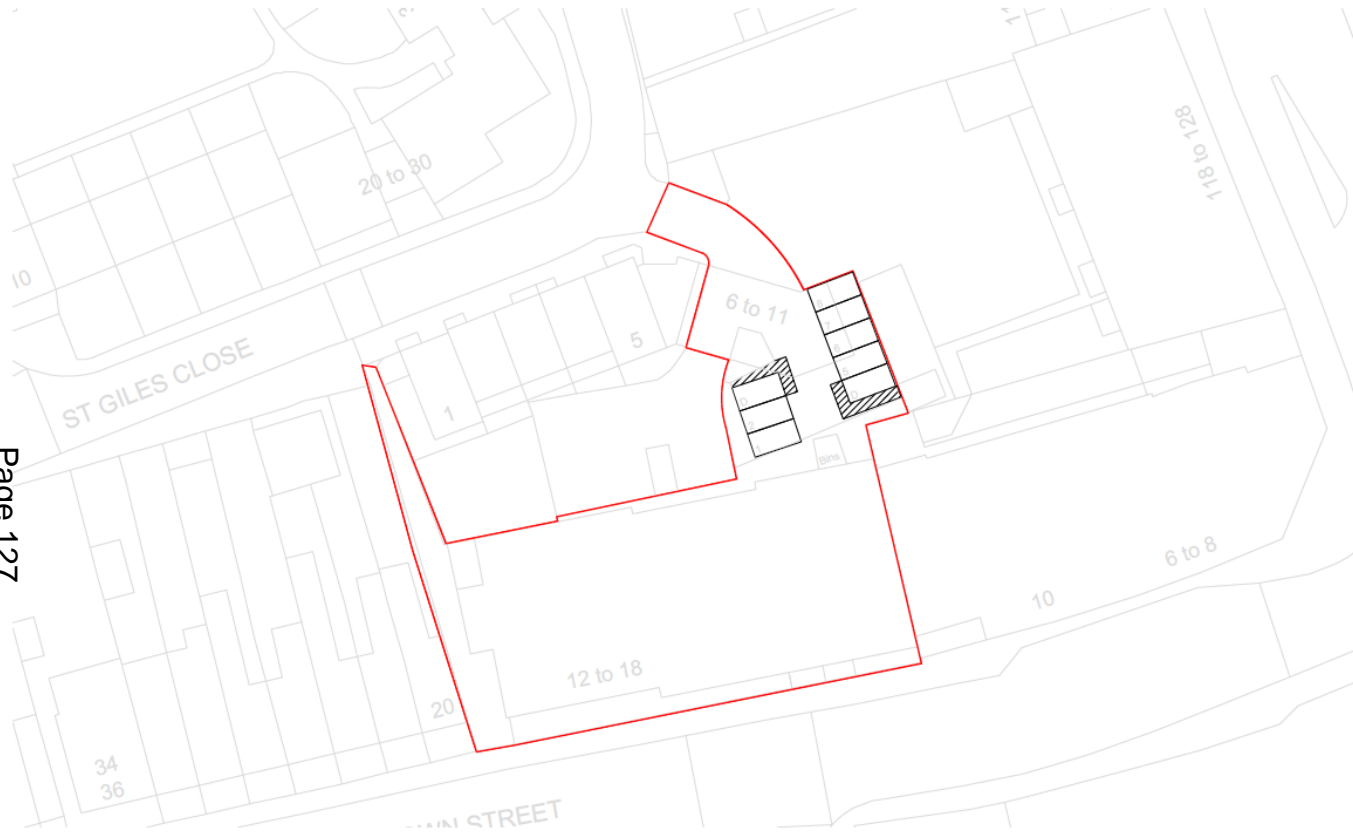
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- 6.7.5 With no external alterations, there is no change in surface water run-off and no issues to attend to or other mitigation required.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal has been considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 7.2 The proposal to change the use of the building from 44 serviced apartments to 44 flats is considered acceptable, the proposal will not have any detrimental impact on the amenity of future residents or existing residents of nearby properties and it is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions and informatives as set out above.

Case Officer: Claire Ringwood



UNIT KEY

- 1B 1P
- 1B 2P
- 2B 3P
- 2B 4P
- Studio

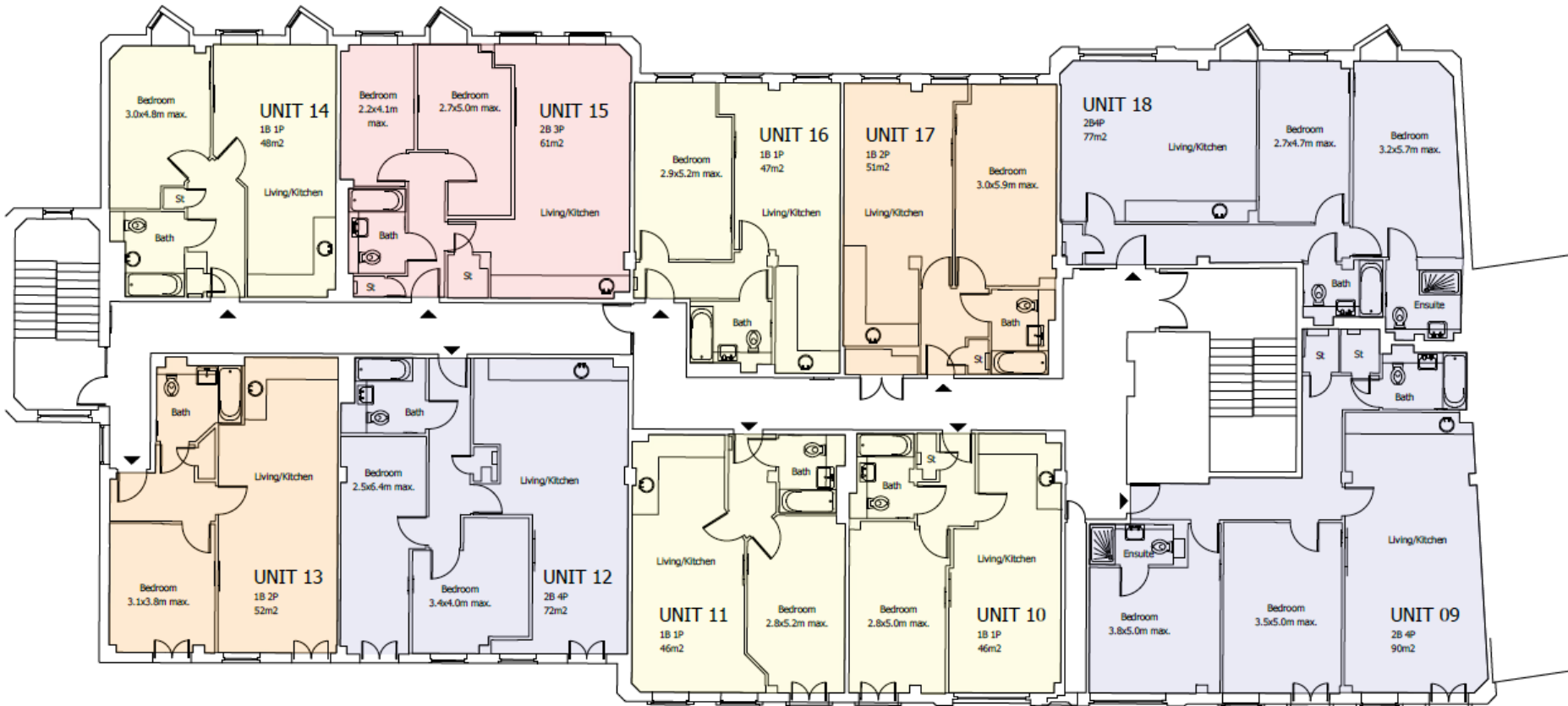
TOTAL UNITS

18no	1B 1P
9no	1B 2P
4no	2B 3P
9no	2B 4P
4no	Studio
44no	TOTAL

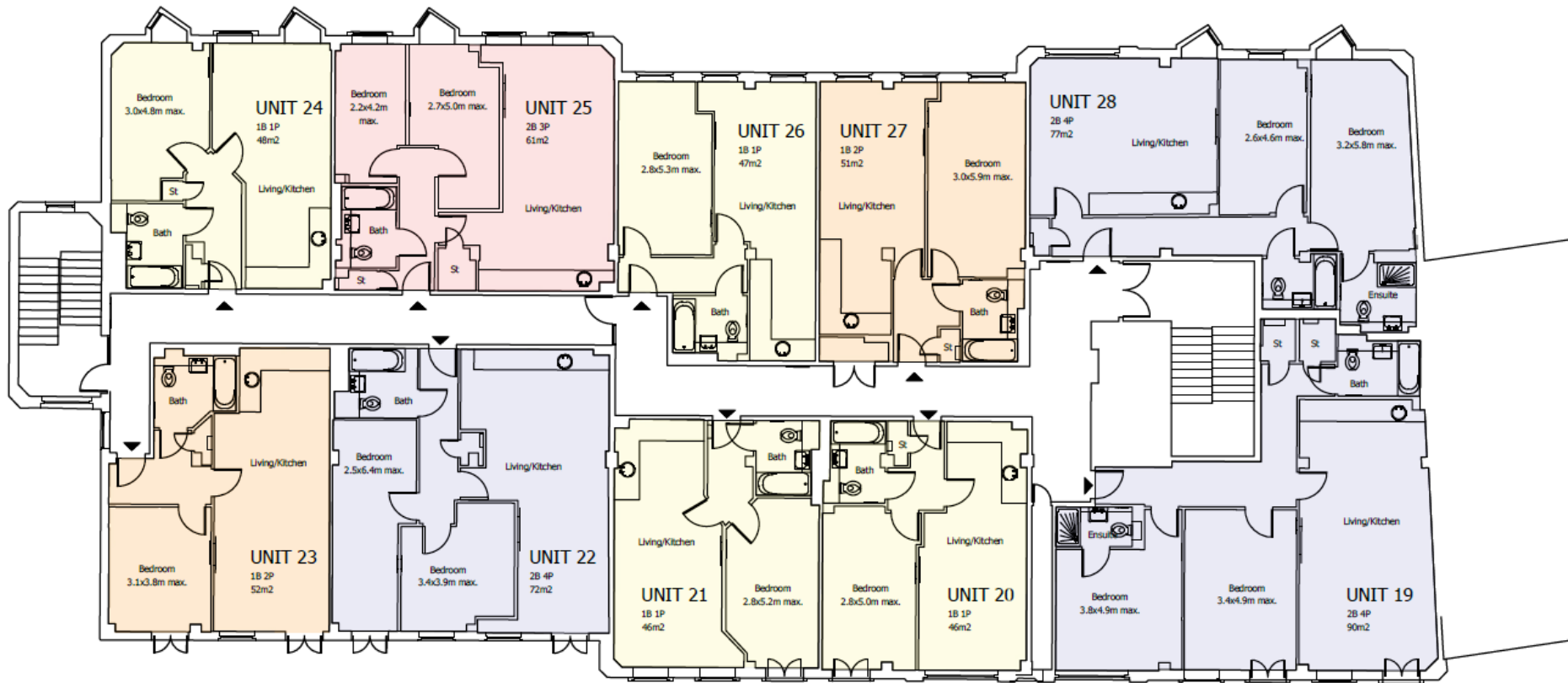
FOR INFORMATION



01 Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1:200

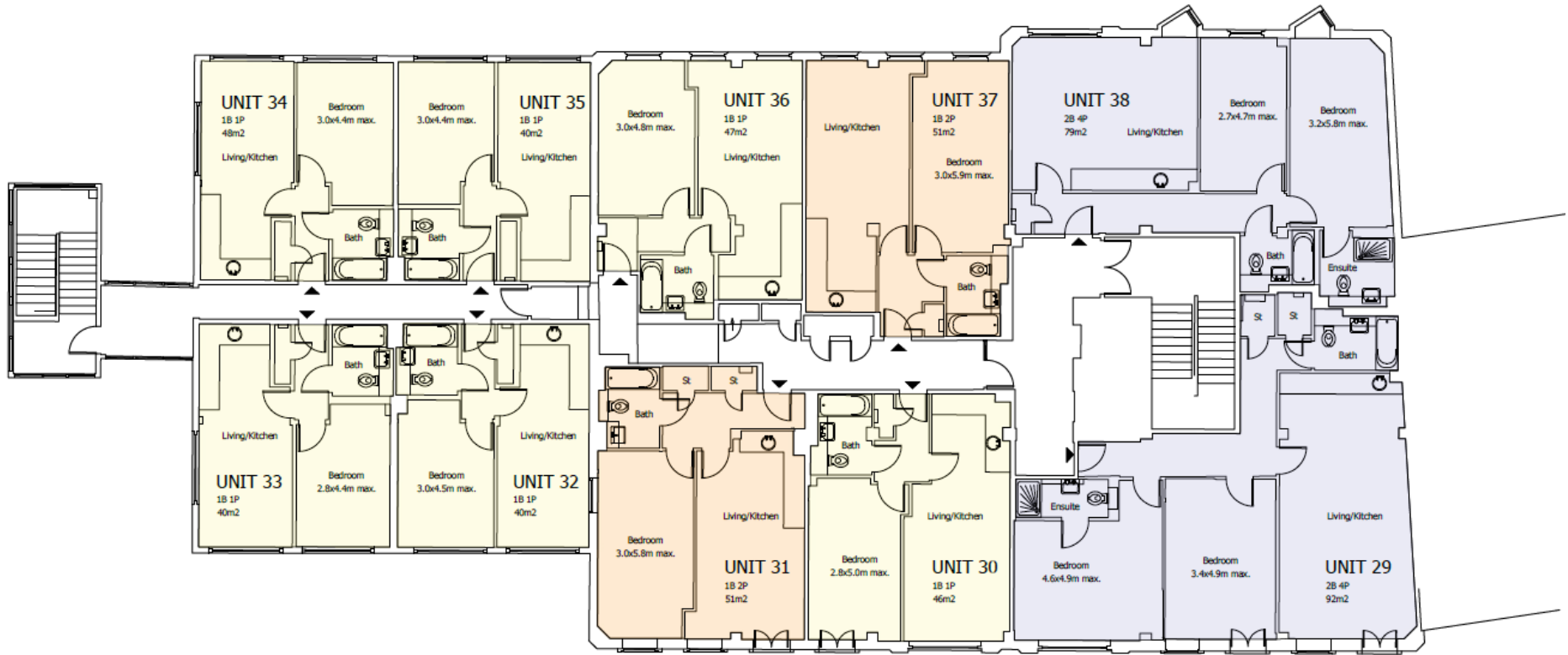


01 First Floor Plan
Scale 1:200

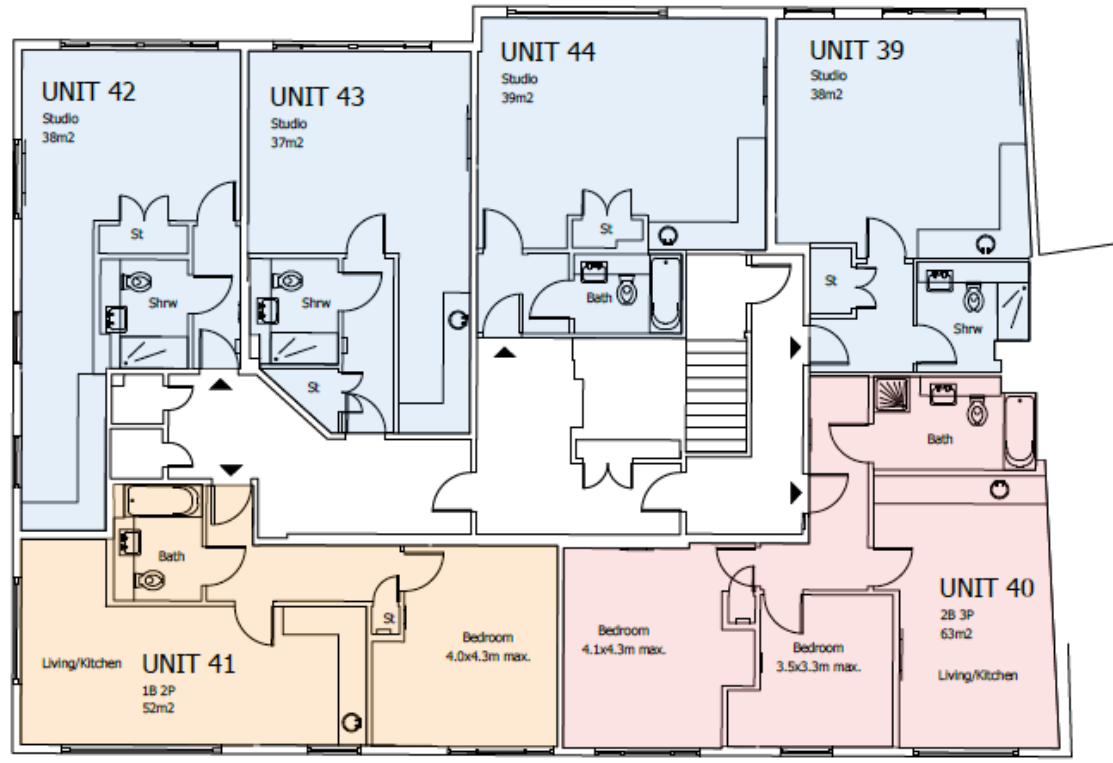


01 Second Floor Plan

Scale 1:200



01 Third Floor Plan
Scale 1:200



01 Fourth Floor Plan
Scale 1:200



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 November 2021

by **David Wyborn BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3277248

The Faculty, 23-27 London Road, Reading RG1 5BJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by The Faculty Ltd against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 201221, dated 26 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of The Faculty from 16 serviced apartments (Use Class C1) to 15 residential flats (Use Class C3).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of The Faculty from 16 serviced apartments (Use Class C1) to 15 residential flats (Use Class C3) at The Faculty, 23-27 London Road, Reading RG1 5BJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 201221, dated 26 August 2020, and subject to the following conditions in the attached schedule.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs has been made by Reading Borough Council against The Faculty Ltd. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The application was refused for four reasons. The Council has confirmed in its appeal statement, following the further information on parking provision and cycle storage, that this matter could be addressed by conditions in any approval and it does not wish to maintain the fourth reason for refusal. I have found no reason to disagree with the Council on this matter.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether or not:
 - a contribution is necessary to provide affordable housing in the area,
 - the scheme would provide a satisfactory mix of unit sizes, and
 - the internal layout and overall space within Flats 13, 15 and 16 would provide adequate living conditions for future occupants.

Reasons

5. The Faculty is a four storey building, including accommodation in the roof, which is used as an apart-hotel. It consists of 16 serviced apartments with a courtyard parking area. The building was originally permitted in 2000 as a new

<https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate>

build development of residential flats. In 2009, an application was approved for the existing building to be used as serviced apartments. A subsequent approval allowed the reconfiguration of the ground floor to provide an additional studio flat. The present proposal seeks to change the use of the building back to residential flats and reconfigure the ground floor to incorporate the studio flat into the adjoining unit. Effectively the use and layout would revert to a flatted development on along the lines of the scheme approved in 2000, although that layout provided 3No 3 bedroom flats.

6. Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) (the Local Plan) sets out the policy requirements for the provision of affordable housing in development schemes. The policy explains that for a proposal of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing. In those cases which would fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open book approach will be undertaken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.
7. Notwithstanding the history of the site, as 15 new residential flats would be provided from a building used within a different use, I am satisfied that Policy H3 of the Local Plan applies and that there is a need to provide the required affordable housing contribution unless viability demonstrates otherwise. The Reading Borough Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (adopted March 2021)¹ provides background to the provision of affordable housing and the approach to viability assessments. I attribute this document substantial weight. I have also had regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance, especially the sections on viability and decision taking.
8. At the appeal stage, the appellant has submitted a detailed Viability Assessment from an appropriately qualified practitioner. The Assessment is comprehensive and I attach this information substantial weight. After calculating the Benchmark Land Value of the site, even taking into account a sensitivity analysis for the effects of the covid pandemic, the Assessment leads to the clear conclusion that a scheme which sought an affordable housing contribution would not be viable. The existing development is a modern building provided to a high standard, in an accessible location with on-site car parking and with a lease that sets a return on the present investment. I can therefore understand why the Benchmark Land Value has been found to be at a relatively high level and this effectively precludes the provision of an affordable housing contribution.
9. The Council has engaged consultants at the appeal stage to examine this Assessment. The Council has not sought to introduce substantial further evidence at the appeal stage to comply with the Procedural Guidance². I note that the comment in the Council's appeal statement that the scheme's viability is particularly limited by the Benchmark Land Value of the site, taking into account the existing lease. Nevertheless, following the Council's consultants involvement an agreement was reached between the main parties for a contribution of £25,000 to be made by the appellant towards affordable housing, subject to the Council withdrawing all the reasons for refusal.

¹ The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013 was extant at the time of the decision and referenced in the first reason for refusal.

² Procedural Guide: Planning appeals – England

Ultimately, a planning agreement was not signed to provide this contribution. These discussions were without prejudice to the case made by both parties. While I have had regard to this background, I have little substantive information which demonstrates the requirement for such a payment when considering the analysis and conclusions of the Viability Assessment.

10. Drawing these matters together, the findings of the appellant's Viability Assessment is clear and no detailed and persuasive criticism has been made of any substantive element of the Assessment to cast material doubt on its findings. I therefore conclude that the appellant has discharged the policy duty to demonstrate the circumstances which justify that no affordable housing contribution should be made.
11. Accordingly, I conclude, for the reasons explained above, the case has been demonstrated why a contribution is not necessary to provide affordable housing and thereby the scheme would accord with Policy H3 of the Local Plan which sets out the approach to affordable housing across the plan area.

Housing mix

12. At my site visit I visited Flat 16 and saw all the rooms in this unit, including the smaller second bedroom. This room accommodated a single bed and I am satisfied that there is also room for some furniture and circulation space. I therefore consider that Flat 16 can be considered a two bedroom flat. The scheme would, therefore, provide 10 No one bedroom flats and 5 No 2 bedroom flats.
13. Policy CR6 of the Local Plan establishes the approach for residential development in Central Reading, in which the appeal site is located. This policy, as a guide, requires that residential development contributes to a mix of different sized units with including a maximum of 40% one bedroom units, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable.
14. In this case, the scheme is not a new build or a conversion where there is readily a scope for the provision or reconfiguration of the floorspace to provide a new layout with a different mix of bedroomed units. The scheme combines a studio and a one bedroom flat on the ground floor to provide a 2 bedroom unit and in the other cases the units are already laid out and operational with each unit having a kitchen/lounge area, bathroom(s) and bedroom(s). The scheme with the proposed number of units has already been shown to be unviable to deliver affordable housing and seeking to alter the layout with the movement of some walls, doorways and provision of combined units would add cost, reduce the number of units on the site and, it seems to me based on the information available, render the scheme unviable.
15. Furthermore, the policy states that *ideally* (my emphasis added) there should be a mix of one, two and three bed units. In this case, while it may be ideal, it would not be reasonable given the existing layout which, with the exception on the ground floor, is not intended to or could easily be changed. The Council accept that the provision of three bedroom units is not required to be sought and the mix of one and two bedroom units, based on the existing and largely unchanged layout, would provide a reasonable mix of accommodation in a sustainable location close to the town centre.

16. In summary, Policy CR6 of the Local Plan allows for some flexibility in the mix of the units in schemes and for the viability of a scheme to be taken into account. In the circumstances of this case, I conclude that the scheme would provide a satisfactory mix of unit sizes. Accordingly, the development would comply with Policy CR6 and H2 of the Local Plan which seek amongst other things, to provide an appropriate density of residential development having regard to the need to maximise the efficiency of land.

Living conditions

17. The Council is concerned with the internal layout and overall space within Flats 13, 15 and 16 and identifies conflict with two development plan policies, CC8 and H5 of the Local Plan. Policy CC8 lists amenity issues which are to be examined and met by development. However, space standards for the units is not one of the amenity issues that is referenced. In these circumstances, I am not persuaded by the evidence that the policy would be breached in this respect.

18. In the case of Policy H5 of the Local Plan, this concerns new build housing. The appeal scheme is predominantly the change of use of a building and not new build housing. In any case, criterion (a) of the policy says that it is only (new build) housing outside the Central Area which is required to comply with the nationally-described space standards and the appeal site is within this Central Area. Indeed, the Planning Report confirms that Policy H5 of the Local Plan is not applicable to the appeal development and therefore for these reasons the proposal would not conflict with this policy.

19. Nevertheless, paragraph 4.4.42 of the Local Plan explains that, even where the space standards do not apply, they provide a useful point of reference and the Framework requires that all development creates places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Furthermore, while not referenced in the reason for refusal, attention has been drawn to Policy H8 of the Local Plan which requires residential conversions should provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.

20. At my site visit I was able to enter a number of the units, including Flats 13, 15 and 16. I consider that the size and circulation space of these units are not unduly affected by being located in the roof space. This is because the angle of outside walls are quite steep and it is only about the upper half of the walls in these flats that are sloping. Accordingly, the headroom available is not especially an issue that materially affects the living conditions for occupants, either at the present time or in the future if the flats were to be used as permanent accommodation.

21. The flats are well laid out with good natural light. They have adequate space for a combined lounge, dining and kitchen area and each unit has a separate and reasonably sizeable bathroom in each case. The bedrooms for the two one-bedroom flats provided a decent sized double room with space for furniture. Flat 16 has a good sized double bedroom and a small single. As I have commented above, while this second bedroom is small, it is adequate to operate as a bedroom and provides, in conjunction with the rest of the flat, a satisfactory standard of accommodation.

22. These three units may fall below the space standards but having undertaken an internal viewing and considered all the evidence, I am satisfied that they would

provide acceptable living conditions for permanent occupation within a Central Reading location. I note the commentary in paragraph 4.4.41 of the Local Plan which explains that the expectations of those choosing to live in the centre of Reading, in terms of both internal and external space, as well as issues such as noise, tend to be different to those in other parts of the Borough. I therefore conclude that the internal layout and overall space within Flats 13, 15 and 16 would provide adequate living conditions on a permanent basis for future occupants. The scheme would not conflict with Policies CC8, H5 and H8 of the Local Plan and the Framework which seek, amongst other things, adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.

Conditions

23. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. I have amended the wording where necessary in the interests of clarity or to meet the six tests in the Guidance. The statutory time limit is required and a condition specifying the approved plans is necessary in the interests of certainty.
24. A condition is necessary to ensure that the car parking spaces are provided and thereafter maintained in the interests of the amenities of residents and highway safety. A condition is necessary for details to be submitted, approved and then implemented for cycle parking in the interests of providing sustainable transport opportunities.
25. A condition requiring the details of the refuse and recycling store to be agreed and implemented is necessary in the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area.
26. The Council has recommended two conditions which seek to restrict the ability of residents to apply for on-street car parking permits. However, the policies in justification of this approach, which the Council has brought to my attention, do not directly require such a restriction. Furthermore, the analysis from the appellant's highway consultant explains why the provision of the seven car parking spaces on the site would be adequate to serve the development without displacing car parking elsewhere. With this evidence and the site located within walking distance of the town centre and other local services and facilities, including bus routes, the information before me does not demonstrate a necessity for the recommended conditions regarding parking permits or that without such conditions the development would be contrary to the development plan.
27. Policy CC8 of the Local Plan requires that there should be no unacceptable impact on living conditions for new residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance. The proposal would introduce permanent residential accommodation and some of the flats have their windows facing the busy London Road. I appreciate that windows are triple glazed, nevertheless, without confirmation that they provide sufficient sound proofing, and that if required to be open the internal noise levels would be satisfactory, there is the potential that future permanent occupants could be unduly disturbed by the wider noise environment. A condition is therefore necessary for noise levels to be assessed and appropriate action taken as required.
28. Policy EN15 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure the effects of any poor air quality are mitigated. The site lies close to London Road and details through an Air

Quality Assessment and any mitigation required to address any identified poor air quality is necessary to accord with Policy EN15 of the Local Plan and in the interests of the living conditions of future permanent residents of the development.

29. Policy CC2 of the Local Plan sets out the approach to the sustainable design and construction of new development and includes that conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM "excellent" standards, where possible. In this case, however, the development is fairly recently built, and appears to be constructed to a high standard and would not be a conversion but a change of use because of the very limited physical changes to the fabric. In these circumstances, I am not persuaded that the evidence demonstrates that the policy should apply to this scheme and therefore that it is necessary or appropriate to apply the requirements of the BREEAM approach in this case.
30. Conditions regarding the noise and air quality requirements are necessary as pre-commencement conditions because they may require some information and design alterations that are required to be undertaken from the outset and could be impractical to consider at a later stage.

Conclusion

31. For the reasons given above, the scheme would comply with the development plan when considered as a whole and other material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, and taking all other matters into account, I conclude that subject to the specified conditions, the appeal should be allowed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st May 2023

Ward: Norcot

Application No.: 221130/FUL

Address: 103 Dee Road, Reading, RG30 4FS

Proposal: Redevelopment of former fire station to provide 54 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with associated access, parking, public open space and landscaping (amended description)

Applicant: Bellway Homes Limited (Thames Valley)

Application target decision date: Originally 10/11/2022; a formal extension of time for the determination of the application to be agreed to complete legal agreement

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to

- i) **GRANT** full planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of the Section 106 agreement;

The Section 106 legal agreement to secure a minimum of the following:

Affordable Housing

- Secure 30% on-site affordable housing consisting of 16 units (4x one-bedroom, 4x two-bedroom and 6x three-bedroom), of which 10 would be for Reading Affordable Rent and 6 shared ownership. Of these, 1 of the three bedroom houses, 4 two bed flats and 5 one bed flats to be let at Reading Affordable Rent tenure. The remaining units (5 three bed houses and 1 one bed flat to be Shared Ownership).
- In the event that a Registered Provider is not secured for the provision of the Affordable Housing on site, the units to be offered to the Council to be provided by the Council as Affordable Housing. In the event that neither a Registered Provider or the Council are to provide Affordable Housing on-site, the developer to pay to the Council a default sum equivalent to 15% of the Gross Development Value of the development for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough. To be calculated (the mean average) from two independent RICS valuations to be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to first occupation of any market housing unit. In this event, the sum to be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation.

Highways Works

- Contribution of £70,000 towards the provision of a controlled crossing on Spey Road (to north west of application site) or the applicant to deliver the scheme through a S728 Agreement.
- Enter into a S278/38 Agreement to facilitate the alteration to accesses located around the site, the provision of a new adoptable footway around the existing substation, relocation of speed cushions, relocation of a bus stop and any other ancillary Highway Works.
- S142 licence for landscaping proposals contained within the highway. Provision prior to

first occupation – or timetable to be agreed.

Zero Carbon Offset

- Zero Carbon Offset as per SPD 2019 a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated Emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a Section 106 contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30-year period).

Employment Skills and Training

- Secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution. As calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) – payable on commencement.

Open Space

- Provision of all open space to be provided prior to first occupation or alternative timetable to be agreed.
- Public access to be permitted at all times.
- Management and future maintenance by the owner in accordance with plan to be submitted for approval prior to first occupation.

Public Realm Access

- To allow public access to all public areas at all times and to maintain the public areas to the standards reasonably required by the Council.

All financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission.

Or;

- ii) Refuse full planning permission if the S106 agreement is not completed by 30th June 2022 (unless the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

And the following conditions to include:

1. *Time Limit – 3 years*
2. *Approved plans*
3. Pre-commencement, barring partial demolition works hereby approved, details of all external materials to be submitted to the LPA (and sample details to be provided on site) and approved in writing with the LPA.
4. Pre-commencement Demolition and Construction Method Statement (including EP-based matters)
5. Provision of vehicle parking as shown prior to first occupation
6. Provision of vehicular access as shown prior to first occupation
7. Provision of cycle parking as shown prior to first occupation
8. Provision of roads and paths to be provided as shown prior to first occupation
9. Pre-commencement submission of details of physical measures to prevent vehicles encroaching onto footways.
10. Visibility splays as specified prior to first occupation
11. Provision of refuse and recycling storage facilities as shown prior to first occupation
12. Existing accesses to be stopped up after new access is in use
13. Pre-occupation submission and approval of EV Charging Point Scheme details
14. Submission and approval of contaminated land remediation scheme (pre-commencement including demolition)
15. Pre-construction above foundation level contaminated land validation report

16. Reporting of unexpected contamination at any time
17. Pre-commencement including demolition submission and approval of land gas risk assessment
18. Pre-occupation submission and approval of gas risk validation remediation report
19. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works
20. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site
21. Pre-occupation submission and approval of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores
22. Pre-commencement barring demolition submission and approval of noise mitigation scheme
23. Pre-commencement including demolition submission of arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan
24. Pre-commencement, barring the partial demolition works hereby approved, submission and approval of all hard and soft landscaping details, specifically including green roof details and garden areas
25. Compliance condition for hard and soft landscaping and management and maintenance to be carried out in accordance with approved plans
26. Pre-occupation submission and approval of boundary treatment details
27. Pre-commencement, barring the partial demolition works hereby approved, submission of and approval of habitat enhancement measures
28. Pre-commencement including demolition requiring licence for works affecting bats to be obtained from Natural England. Mitigation measures approved maintained thereafter
29. Pre-commencement requiring submission and approval of scheme to protect badgers
30. Compliance condition relating to protecting nesting birds
31. Pre-commencement, barring partial demolition works hereby approved, submission and approval of Sustainable Drainage Strategy to integrate with tree planting and other landscaping.
32. Compliance condition for SuDS approved in condition above to be completed prior to first occupation of any part of the development and managed/maintained thereafter.
33. Dwelling Mix restricted to 13 x 1-bed flats, 7 x 2-bed flats, 3 x 3-bed flats, 23 x 3-bed houses and 8 x 4-bed houses
34. Pre-occupation accessible and adaptable dwellings including 5% wheelchair user accessible - details to be submitted.
35. Flat roof areas not to be used as roof terraces unless where specified on the approved plans
36. Pre-commencement submission and approval of external lighting details – no other lighting other than approved.
37. Pre-commencement, barring partial demolition, Security Strategy details to be submitted and approved
38. SAP Assessment – Major – Design Stage
39. SAP Assessment – Major – As Built

Delegate to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services to make such changes or additions to the conditions and obligations as may reasonably be required in order to complete/issue any of the above permissions/approvals.

Informatives to include

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Positive and Proactive Working
3. Pre-commencement Conditions
4. Works Affecting Highways
5. S278 Agreements
6. S38 Agreements
7. Building Control

- | |
|--|
| 8. Section 106 Legal Agreement
9. CIL
10. Thames Water
11. Noise between residential properties |
|--|

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises the former Berkshire Fire Station, which includes a number of buildings previously used by The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, along with associated parking.
- 1.2 The site is bounded by Leven Street to the north west, Spey road to the north east and Dee Road to the south east. Gairn Close, a pedestrian path fronted by houses, runs to the south west of the site. The main frontage to the site is on Dee Road whilst Spey Road which runs along the north eastern boundary of the site gives access to the on-site car parks and service areas associated with the fire station.
- 1.3 The immediate surrounding area comprises of rows of terraced houses along Leven Street, Spey Road, Dee Road and Gairn Close. On the opposite side of Leven Street, lies the Montague House block flats. The site is located on the edge of the Dee Park Estate.
- 1.4 The wider site is allocated under Policy WR1: Dee Park of the Local Plan 2019, which states that:

“The Dee Park area, as identified on the Proposals Map, will continue to be regenerated to provide a sustainable community including the following:

- *New and improved housing, which increases the overall density of the site, and provides a greater mix of size, type and tenure, including a higher proportion of family housing than at the outset of regeneration;*
- *A new Local Centre including a range of facilities, integrated with housing development;*
- *Improved community facilities, which would be multi-functional and serve a range of groups, and may include sports facilities; and*
- *Improved quality of open space provision, including greater usability of recreational space, and an area of public realm in the centre.*

Development will be integrated with surrounding areas, provide a safe and secure environment, and enhance transport links to and from the estate. Development will take account of potential surface water flooding.

Development will maintain and enhance the role of Ranikhet Primary School in serving the local and wider community.”

- 1.5 The specific site itself is allocated in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 under Policy WR3m: Dee Road, which states:

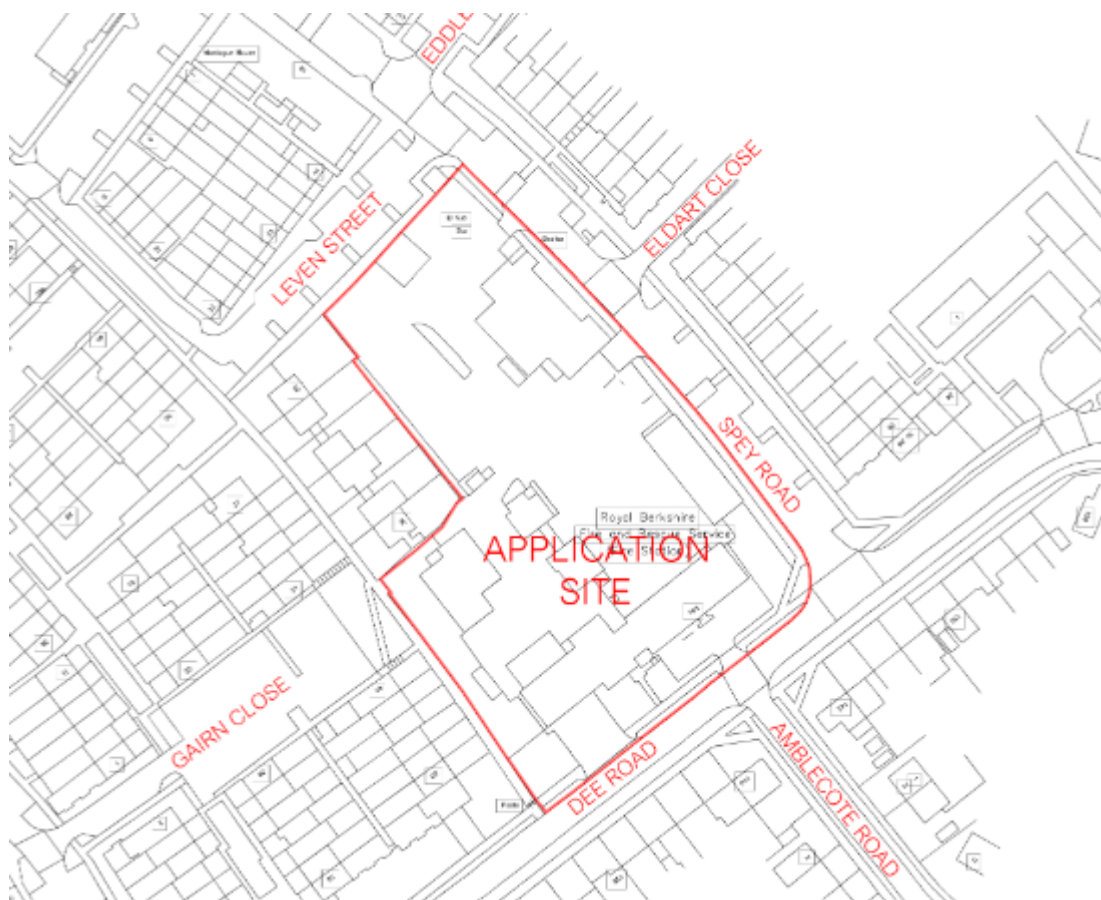
“Development for residential subject to the fire station being surplus to requirements. Development should:

- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.85 ha 34-50 dwellings”

- 1.6 The application is brought to the Planning Applications Committee as it is a major scheme.

- 1.7 The site in relation to the wider urban area is shown below, together with a site photograph and an aerial view.



Site Location Plan (not to scale)



Aerial view

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of the fire station to provide dwellings following demolition of existing fire station and associated buildings.
- 2.2 The scheme comprises 31 houses and 23 flats. Each house would have its own private garden space and would take the form of 2 storey semi-detached properties and 3 storey townhouses. The flats would be located within a 3 storey block at the northern end of the site, split into 2 sections.
- 2.3 The scheme proposes 30% on site affordable housing and 62% of the units would have 3+ bedrooms:

1 Bedroom Flats	13
2 Bedroom Flats	7
3 Bedroom Flats	3
3 Bedroom House	23
4 Bedroom House	8
TOTAL	54 Units

- 2.4 A formal area of public open space is proposed at the front of the site adjacent Spey Road, and soft landscaping and tree planting is proposed throughout the site.
- 2.5 The scheme proposes parking provision of 2 spaces per 3 and 4 bed houses, with the remaining 23 flats provided with 25 spaces including visitor parking.
- 2.5 In terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the applicant duly completed a CIL liability form as part of the submission of this application. Based solely on the information provided on the completed form (which will be required to be verified in due course), there would be a net increase of 6,315.2sqm residential floorspace across the site.
- 2.6 Drawings received 19th May 2023:

Site Location Plan	092102-BEL-TV-06
Presentation Planning Layout	092102-BEL-TV-01 Rev E
Supporting Planning Layout	092102-BEL-TV-01 Rev E
Storey Heights Plan	092102-BEL-TV-01 Rev E
Tenure Layout	092102-BEL-TV-01 Rev E
Perspective View 01	092102-PER01 Rev C
Perspective View 02	092102-PER01 Rev D
Street Scene 01	092102-SS01 Rev D

Street Scene 02	092102-SS02 Rev C
Street Scene 03	092102-SS03 Rev C
The Coppersmith – Elevations (plots 3, 4, 7, 8, 18, 19, 22, 23)	CS-3B-2S-TC-E1
The Coppersmith – Floorplans	CS-3B-2S-P2
The Fisher – Elevations (plots 26, 31)	FI-3B-25S-TC-E1
The Fisher – Floorplans	FI-3B-25S-P1
The Lardner – Elevations (plots 11, 12, 14, 15)	LD-3B-3S-TC-E1 Rev A
The Lardner – Floorplans	LD-3B-3S-P1 Rev A
The Lardner – Elevations (plots 10, 13, 16, 28, 29)	LD-3B-3S-TC-E2
The Lardner – Elevations (plots 27, 30)	LD-3B-3S-TC-E3
The Lardner – Floorplans	LD-3B-3S-P2
The Lardner – Elevations (plot 17)	LD-3B-3S-TC-E4
The Lardner – Floorplans	LD-3B-3S-P3
The Walker – Elevations (plot 9)	WL-3B-3S-TC-E1
The Walker – Floorplans	WL-3B-3S-P1
The Reedmaker – Elevations (plots 2, 5, 6, 20, 21, 24)	RE-4B-2S-TC-E1
The Reedmaker – Floorplans	RE-4B-2S-P2
The Reedmaker – Elevations (plots 1, 25)	RE-4B-2S-TC-E2
The Reedmaker – Floorplans	RE-4B-2S-P3
Tompion Court – Town Vernacular – Elevations (plots 32 – 54)	TOA-3S-TC01-E1
Tompion Court – Town Vernacular – Elevations	TOA-3S-TC01-E2
Tompion Court – Floorplans	TOA-TC01-P1
Tompion Court – Floorplans	TOA-TC01-P2
Tompion Court – Floorplans	TOA-TC01-P3

Cycle Shed 01 – Floorplans and Elevations	092102-CS01
Landscape Strategy Plan	7881.ASP4.LSP_K
Hard Landscape Plan 1 of 2	7881.HSP.6.1 H
Hard Landscape Plan 2 of 2	7881.HSP.6.2 H
Landscape Maintenance Plan	7881.LMP.8.0 E
Planting Plan Overview	7881.PP.5.0 I
Planting Plan 1 of 2	7881.PP.5.1 I
Planting Plan 2 of 2	7881.PP.5.2 I
Tree Pit Detail 1 of 3	7881.TPD.7.0B
Tree Pit Detail 2 of 3	7881.TPD.7.1 B
Tree Pit Detail 3 of 3	7881.TPD.7.2 B
Dee Road access visibility splays	ITB17485-GA-001B
Spey Road access visibility splays	ITB17485-GA-002B
Spey Road access	ITB17485-GA-004C

3. **PLANNING HISTORY**

100126/EXT Application for an extension of time limit for implementation of permission 070728/OUT. Approved, not implemented.

070728/OUT Outline application for a residential development comprising 42 units (all matters reserved). Approved, not implemented.

060538/OUT Outline application for residential development (all matters reserved). Refused.

051232/OUT Outline application for residential development (access only). Appeal dismissed.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

RBC Transport

4.1 Further to revised plans and additional information, no objection subject to conditions relating to vehicle and cycle parking, vehicle access and roads to be as specified and obligations to include:

- S142 licence required to maintain the landscaped area along Spey Road

- Contribution of £70,000 or the developer to enter into a S278/38 Agreement to provide a zebra crossing on Spey Road.
- Enter into a S278/38 Agreement to facilitate the alteration to accesses located around the site, the provision of a new adoptable footway around the existing substation, relocation of speed cushions, relocation of a bus stop and any other ancillary Highway Works.

RBC Natural Environment

- 4.2 Following receipt of revised plans and information, no objection subject to securing Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, landscaping, boundary treatments and SuDS details via condition.

RBC Ecology Consultant

- 4.3 Following receipt of additional bat surveys, no objection subject to conditions relating to bird nesting season, the need for a bat licence from Natural England, safety to badgers, lighting and ecological enhancements.

Berkshire Archaeology

- 4.4 No objection and no further archaeological information required.

RBC Environmental Health – Environmental Protection (EP)

- 4.5 No objection subject to conditions relating to noise mitigation, contaminated land, noise and dust and pest control.

RBC Housing

- 4.6 Numbers proposed are acceptable; however, there is a need to secure 30% of all of the property types proposed, 3 bed houses and larger are the biggest need in Reading for Affordable Housing.

RBC Waste Services

- 4.7 Appropriate levels of bin storage have been provided in acceptable locations which would allow for collection. The turning head allows for waste and recycling vehicles to enter and exit the site in forward gear.

RBC Lead Local Flood Authority

- 4.8 The proposed drainage scheme significantly reduces surface water run-off. As such, there are no SuDS based objections subject to planning conditions. The first condition would be pre-commencement, securing a fully detailed SuDS strategy. The second condition would ensure the details in the first condition are completed prior to first occupation.

Environment Agency (EA)

- 4.9 The EA replied advising that the planning application is for development the EA does not wish to be consulted on.

Thames Water

- 4.10 No objection.

Public consultation

- 4.11 Notification letters were sent to nearby occupiers on 31/08/22. Site notices were displayed at the site and a press notice was published on 05/09/2022.

- 4.12 Three letters of representation received, with the issues raised being summarised as follows:

- Overlooking
- Loss of light
- Loss of views (officer note: not a material consideration)
- Loss of security
- Noise levels during development
- Noise levels from future occupiers
- Building dust
- Insufficient parking
- Construction works disturbance

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', which means 'approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay' (NPPF paragraph 11).

For this Local Planning Authority, the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). The relevant national / local policies / guidance are:

National

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

2. Achieving sustainable development
4. Decision-making
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
6. Building a strong, competitive economy
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places
14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) policies are:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
 CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
 CC4: Decentralised Energy
 CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
 CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
 CC7: Design and the Public Realm
 CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
 CC9: Securing Infrastructure
 EN9: Provision of Open Space
 EN10: Access to Open Space
 EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
 EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
 EN15: Air Quality
 EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
 EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
 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
 H14: Suburban Renewal and Regeneration
 OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities
 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
 WR1: Dee Park
 WR3m: 103 Dee Road

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)
 Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
 Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
 Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
 Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Other relevant documentation

Dee Park Planning Brief (2008)
 Reading Tree Strategy (2021)
 Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)
 The National Design Guide (2019)
 The National Model Design Code (July 2021)

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues are considered to be:

- Land use Considerations
- Density and Housing Mix
- Provision of Affordable Housing
- Design Considerations – Demolition, Layout, Scale and Appearance
- Residential Amenity – Existing and Proposed
- Environmental Protection Matters
- Transport and Highways

- Natural Environment – Trees and Landscaping
- Ecology
- Sustainability and Energy
- SuDS
- Archaeology
- S106 and Cil
- Other Matters

Land Use Considerations

- 6.1 Policy CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy (NPPF). To achieve sustainable development a proposal needs to meet economic, social and environmental objectives. It is considered that a proposal for new housing would contribute to providing sufficient land for housing, a range of homes and would make effective use of land.
- 6.2 A key Government objective is to significantly boost the supply of new homes (Section 5 of the NPPF) and the local housing requirement as set out within Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) which confirms that there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area.
- 6.3 The wider principle of re-development of this site is established under Local Plan housing allocation Policy WR1 Dee Road and specifically WR3m (103 Dee Road) which allocates the site for residential development as follows:
- 6.4 *Development for residential subject to the fire station being surplus to requirements. Development should:*
- *Address any contamination on site; and*
 - *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*
- Site size: 0.85 ha 34-50 dwellings*
- 6.5 *Loss of existing use*
The former fire station (and associated buildings) has been vacant since November 2021 and a new community fire station has been built in Theale. The former fire station is no longer required and as such the proposals are in accordance with the site allocation in Policy WR1.
- 6.6 *Principle of housing*
The proposed development, providing 54 residential units on previously development land, would contribute towards meeting the Council's housing need requirements in accordance with Policy H1. The wider regeneration of Dee Park is a key element of the wider Spatial Strategy for Reading as set out in the Local Plan 2019. As set out in Policy H14 (Suburban Renewal and Regeneration), the area is identified as a priority area for suburban renewal, making specific reference to '*regeneration that can address existing problems within an area at the same time as delivering new homes*'. Policy WR1: Dee Park expands upon this, stating that '*The Dee Park area...will continued to be regenerated to provide ...new and improved housing, which increased the overall density of the site, and provides a greater mix of size, type and tenure, including a higher proportion of family housing than at the outset of regeneration*'. The subtext of Policy WR1: Dee Park at para 7.3.2 confirms that '*Regeneration of the area is therefore essential, and a key priority for the Council.*'

6.7 Further to the above, the Fire Station is included in the Dee Park Planning Brief (2008) which established a core set of aims which the regeneration should address, such as:

- To foster a positive sense of place;
- Integration of Dee Park with the surrounding area and improved transport links; and
- An increase in housing density and improvements in the housing mix in terms of types, sizes and tenures, creating a balanced mixed community

6.8 Given the above, the principle of providing residential accommodation at the site is supported by the site allocation and wider Dee Park Planning Brief. The proposal is considered to represent a valuable development opportunity which can positively contribute to meeting the Borough's ongoing housing need and the regeneration of this part of the Dee Road estate.

Density and Housing Mix

6.9 The NPPF seeks to '*boost significantly the supply of housing*' and deliver a wide range of homes, of different types and tenures. Achieving an efficient use of the land within the context of any central and sustainability located site is a key priority both at a national and local level. The NPPF states that LPAs should actively "*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*". In general terms, officers support those urban design principles which encourage an ambitious approach to density on such sites.

6.10 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) specifically considers density and mix and requires that an appropriate density of residential development is informed by the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located and its current and future level of accessibility.

Density

6.11 The proposed development is for 54 dwellings. This equates to 63 dwellings per hectare (ha) (54 dwellings on a 0.85 site). This is slightly above the indicative density range of 30-60 in suburban locations, set out in figure 4.5 of the Local Plan. The proposed 54 dwellings is also slightly higher than the figure envisaged by the Site Allocation (30-54 dwellings). However, as Policy H2 recognises, the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by a range of factors, including the character and mix of uses of the area, the housing mix, the need to achieve high quality design, site accessibility, and the need to minimise environmental impacts. As such, density should not be considered in isolation - it is a useful indicator in seeking to meeting housing targets, but not necessarily as good an indicator of the likely form, quality, or appropriateness of a scheme. Furthermore, the Dee Park Planning Brief notes that with regard to densities, '*it is likely that regeneration proposals will increase this in accordance with the objective of making more efficient use of land and other design improvements*'. Taking this advice into account, and the character of the regeneration area, suggests a higher density would be acceptable in this specific instance.

Housing Mix

6.12 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) identifies that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting identified needs in respect of housing mix, and in particular, for family homes of 3 or more bedrooms. The Policy seeks that at least 50% of the homes outside centres will be 3 bed or larger.

6.13 The proposals include thirty-four 3+ bedroom dwellings, equating to 62% of the overall mix and is therefore in accordance with Policy H2 in this regard. The overall mix would provide a variety of unit sizes and types which would address the need for housing across Reading. This is considered to be a key benefit of the proposed development - providing family sized housing to meet identified housing needs. The proposed mix of dwellings will be secured by way of condition.

Provision of Affordable Housing

6.14 Affordable Housing is a key identified priority within the Borough. Policy H3 (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.

6.15 The Council’s updated Affordable Housing SPD (2021) requires that new development should include a range and mix of tenures of affordable housing (as appropriate depending on site size) to reflect local needs. Specifically, the SPD identifies a tenure mix of 38% shared ownership and 62% rented, with rented allowed to be Affordable rent but capped at 70% of Market Rent (‘Reading Affordable Rent’) is required to meet the Borough’s most pressing needs.

6.16 The proposed development would provide 16 affordable housing units, which equates to 30% of the total dwellings on-site designated Affordable Housing, the mix of which is set out in Figure 1 below.

Units size	Number of units
1 bed apartment	6
2 bed, apartment	4
3 bed house	6
Total	16

Figure 1 - Affordable unit mix

6.17 Of the sixteen Affordable Housing units, ten would be of 2 or more bedrooms, supporting current priority needs for these types of units outlined in Policy H3.

6.18 Through Officer negotiations, 62% of Affordable Housing are to be designated as Affordable Rent and 38% Shared Ownership, which complies with the Affordable Housing SPD in terms of tenure split. Furthermore, the mix of Affordable Housing sizes has been amended to better reflect the overall housing mix, with six 3-bed houses designated Affordable Housing (of which one would be Reading Affordable Rent

6.19 The proposed S106 legal agreement would make provision that, in the unlikely event that an Affordable Housing provider is not secured (either a Registered provider or the Council), the developer would be required to pay to the Council a sum equivalent to 15% of the Gross Development Value of the whole development for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough. This would be calculated (the mean average) from two independent valuations to be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to first occupation of any market housing units. This would be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation. This is based upon the formula contained within the Council’s Affordable Housing SPD (2021).

6.20 It is considered that the amount and tenure of affordable housing provides an appropriate contribution to local Affordable Housing needs in the Borough in

accordance with Policy H3. Provision of the proposed on-site affordable housing would be secured via S106 legal agreement, as set out in the recommendation above.

Design Considerations – Demolition, Layout, Scale and Appearance

- 6.21 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. The policy places importance on the layout of the urban structure and urban grain, stipulating that development should respond positively to the local context and create safe and accessible environments. The policy requires a “high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located”.
- 6.23 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.
- 6.24 The National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of ‘Context’ and it states that “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.” Additionally, there is specific reference to ‘views inwards and outwards’.
- 6.25 *Demolition*
In relation to the demolition of the existing buildings at the site, these are not considered to be of any architectural merit to warrant their retention either individually or cumulatively. Their loss would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area, providing they are replaced with buildings of high quality design. Demolition is, therefore, considered acceptable subject to the proposed replacement buildings being suitable in design and related matters detailed below.
- 6.26 *Layout and Scale*
The scale and layout of the proposal is the result of detailed discussions at application stage. The proposal as originally submitted was for 63 dwellings. During the course of the application, this has been reduced to 54 dwellings. The reduction in number of units was considered necessary to allow for better quality open space to be provided, to reduce dead frontages, to introduce a better arrangement of streets and spaces, and improve soft landscaping (including more tree planting along the Spey Road frontage), as well as achieving a less cramped and stark appearance overall.

Original Proposed Layout

Revised Proposed Layout



- 6.27 The immediate surrounding area largely comprises 2 storey rows of terrace houses on Leven Street and Spey Road and two storey semi-detached houses of Dee Road. There is a 4 storey block of flats (with ground floor supermarket) on the north side of Leven Street, on the corner with Spey Road.
- 6.28 The proposals originally comprised a part three, part four storey block of flats adjacent Leven Street, on the corner with Spey Road. However, during the course of the application this was reduced to a three storey height and the massing adjusted. This would be the largest building and whilst would have a relatively large footprint this would be broken up by the lower two storey flat roof central section fronting Leven Street that would minimise the bulk and create a visual separation between the two more prominent facades fronting Leven Street and Spey Road. It is considered that the building would not appear excessively large in this context; moreover, this approach is considered to suitably address the transition in scale from the predominantly two-to-three storey townhouses at the southern end to the aforementioned block of flats at the northern end fronting Leven Street.
- 6.29 The townhouses fronting Spey Road would be of 3 storey height. It is considered that the mass of the buildings is sufficiently set back from the Spey Road frontage to provide sufficient relief to the scale of the buildings. Again, this is considered an appropriate transition from the two storey semi-detached properties of Dee Road.
- 6.30 The remainder of the development is proposed to take the form of 2 storey semi-detached houses across the remainder of the site to the south, replicating the scale and form of the surrounding two storey semi-detached properties of Dee Road.
- 6.31 The reduction in number of units, has enabled Plots 25 to 31 to sit back further into the site. In turn, this allows for an area of open space to the front of the site adjacent Spey Road which provides a visually attractive 'entrance' to the site as indicated in the street scene perspective drawing below:



- 6.32 It is considered that the proposed layout has successfully maximised the use of the site, whilst ensuring that the proposal includes sufficient distances between buildings and that the areas between buildings have been suitably designed to integrate vehicle parking whilst maintaining a pleasant residential environment. Furthermore, it is considered that parking areas will be appropriately landscaped and suitably overlooked by dwellings and would not result in unacceptable 'dead spaces' within

the development. The proposed dwellings, when seen from all nearby vantage points, are considered to acceptably respond to its context and the constraints of the site in terms of their scale and appearance. The overall design of the development is considered to create a pleasant, unified scheme, with the proposal considered to provide a good balance between site density and an appropriate layout and landscaping.

Appearance

- 6.33 The design of the houses has been amended during the course of the application. The building line of the pairs of semi-detached houses to the south of the site (Dee Road frontage) has been stepped and staggered, as well as the introduction of wider and deeper buildings to avoid a regimented form. The houses would be largely finished in red brick, in keeping with the prevailing character of the area. Elements of grey brick are proposed, and these would complement the main brick, providing a slightly more contemporary approach and adding a richness to the finished appearance.
- 6.34 During the course of the application the design of the flats was amended to reduce the apparent bulk of the building. The unsightly undercroft feature has been removed and the façade detailing amended to give impression of being vertically split into individual terraced houses. The building includes a lower central section to break up the massing and the three storey height further replicates the townhouse appearance, to assist in assimilating with the remainder of the site, with the flats reflecting the overall character, including the use of the same brick choices.
- 6.35 As discussed further below, the proposals include soft landscaping and tree planting which is considered to significantly improve the overall character of the site and would help to improve the visual amenities of the site itself and wider area.
- 6.36 In overall terms, the proposed scheme is considered to represent good quality design that will enhance the character and appearance of the area and which will successfully integrate into the surrounding area. The proposed scale of the new buildings at 2 and 3 storeys would sit comfortably within the surrounding context and the palette of materials would be appropriate. However, to ensure the design quality, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to secure further details of all external materials will be secured via condition, including the provision of sample panel on site prior to commencement, to guarantee the design quality of the scheme. In accordance with Policy CC7.

Residential Amenity

- 6.37 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 6.38 The proposed block of flats as originally proposed was considered to result in overbearing effects to occupiers of 26-28 Gairn Close to the south west. This was due to the proximity, depth and 3 storey height close to the common boundary with these properties. During the course of the application the depth of this block of flats has been reduced to draw it away from the boundary with these neighbouring dwellings and the roof hipped away to further minimise the impact. This relationship is now considered acceptable. No upper floor windows are proposed on the elevations closest to the common boundary and where upper floor windows are proposed they are more than twenty metres away from the boundary, which complies with Policy CC8 in this respect.

6.39 The layout, separating distances and orientation of the remainder of the proposed buildings within the site would avoid overbearing effects or loss of privacy to properties surrounding the site.

6.40 In overall terms, the scale and position of the proposed buildings would also ensure that there would be no increased sense of overbearing or enclosure. Furthermore, the applicant has provided a daylight/sunlight report with the application. The report demonstrates that the scheme would not have a significant detrimental impact upon adjoining properties in terms of daylight/sunlight. The proposals would have no unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbours in accordance with Policy CC8.

Amenity of future occupiers

6.41 In addition to Policy CC8 above, Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) and H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) also apply. Policy H5 states that new build housing will need to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. Policy H10 sets out that *“Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.”*

6.42 All dwellings would meet the nationally described space standards (as outlined in Policy H5) for the type of dwelling/number of bedrooms and the internal layout of the proposed units are arranged so as to create a suitable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers. It is considered that all dwellings would have good levels of outlook.

6.43 All units are considered to be provided with adequate levels of privacy. The proposed dwellings fronting Dee Road would have a twenty metre back-to-back separation distance from those within the site to the rear which is considered adequate to prevent any undue overlooking within the development.

6.44 All the proposed houses would have their own private outdoor garden amenity space of reasonable size which would offer a good standard of amenity for future occupiers – as well as providing welcome greenery within the site – each garden is of a size and layout which is comparable with other properties within the wider regeneration area. The flats would have access to communal outdoor space to the rear of the flats, as well as the landscaped public open space to the front of the site.

Sunlight/Daylight

6.45 The applicant’s daylight/sunlight report demonstrates that the proposal has a very high level of compliance across the site with 2020 BRE guidelines and, overall, it is considered that the proposals would receive adequate levels of daylight and sunlight.

Accessibility

6.46 Policy H5(f) requires that on all developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be ‘wheelchair adaptable’ as defined in Part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be ‘wheelchair accessible’.

6.47 The development includes this provision and officers are satisfied that the accessibility/adaptability of the units can meet these requirements. To ensure these

units are provided and maintained as such, a compliance condition is recommended to state that a policy compliant proportion of wheelchair user dwellings are ready prior to first occupation and are retained as such thereafter.

Crime and Safety

- 6.48 It is considered reasonable and necessary to secure details of a robust security strategy via condition, for the benefit of existing nearby occupiers as well as future occupiers.

Environmental Protection matters

Air Quality

- 6.49 Policy EN15 (Air Quality) requires developments to have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.
- 6.50 The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and an Air Quality Assessment has been submitted. This has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Protection Officer who agrees with the conclusions that pollutant levels will not be above the limit values and therefore no mitigation is required. The assessment also concludes that traffic generation is unlikely to lead to increased pollutants which the Environmental Protection Officer also agrees with, confirming no mitigation is required.

Noise

- 6.51 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) states that proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution.
- 6.42 A Noise Assessment has been submitted with the application. This concludes that for some of the properties fronting Dee Road, the levels of noise will be higher than the guidance levels. As such, it is proposed to install suitably performing glazing and trickle ventilations as an alternative to needing to open windows. It is not considered that trickle vents provide sufficient ventilation to opening windows and additional ventilation will need to be considered. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer is satisfied that this can be dealt with via a suitably worded condition.

Contaminated Land

- 6.43 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that developments on land affected by contamination can be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use.
- 6.44 A Contaminated Land Investigation Report has been submitted with the application. This concludes that remediation will be needed due to the presence of some contaminants above guideline levels. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer is satisfied that this can be dealt with via suitably worded conditions. A ground gas risk assessment will also be conditioned.
- 6.45 Conditions are also recommended to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement to ensure existing occupiers are not adversely impact upon by construction noise and dust, while further conditions are proposed to control construction hours and to prevent burning of construction waste on site.

Transport and highways

- 6.46 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to

development. The Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD sets out guidance in respect of parking provision.

Parking

- 6.47 The site is located within the Zone 2, primary core area of the Parking SPD but close to 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.
- 6.48 Following the reduction in the number of units proposed, there has also been an associated reduction in the number of car parking spaces proposed, from 106 to 87. Out of these parking spaces, 62 are proposed for the 31 houses which would be allocated and 25 for the 23 flats (including visitor parking), which would be unallocated. Provision also includes 2 disabled parking bays. This provision complies with the Parking Standards and Design SPD and is acceptable.
- 6.49 Concern was originally raised by the Council's Transport Officer that the parking spaces for units 9-17 fronting Spey Road would allow for tandem parking resulting in the footway being obstructed, which would not be acceptable. Parking was consequently reconfigured such that parking spaces are now proposed to be parallel to the highway in a series of small, landscaped, parking areas. Overall parking numbers are retained with a visitor parking space being relocated adjacent to the public open space. It is also confirmed that there is safe access for pedestrians from the flats to Spey Road, via a path through the public open space. Furthermore, paths have been added to the gardens of units 30 and 31 to demonstrate access to parking from these properties. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that the amount and arrangement of parking spaces proposed is acceptable.
- 6.50 As currently designed, there is a risk that parked cars may encroach onto footways due to low curbs. A condition is recommended to secure appropriate physical measures e.g. low rails to prevent this.
- 6.51 To meet the Policy TR5 requirements, electric vehicle charging points are proposed for each house and 22 of the 25 unallocated parking bays serving the flats will have access to an electric vehicle charging point which is acceptable and will be secured by condition.

Trip Generation

- 6.52 TRICS data has been provided which indicates that the impact on the network would be negligible in terms of vehicle increase. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable.
- 6.53 The proposed development would generate in the region of 100 pedestrian movements a day, as well as an increase of 132 vehicle trips through the day. With this in mind, Transport Officers consider that the applicant should contribute £70,000 towards the provision of a controlled crossing on Spey Road to the north west of the site to provide a safe route to and from Ranikhet Primary School, the Lyon Square Play Area and the Community Centre. The applicant has agreed to this but also indicated that they may wish to undertake the works as part of a S278/38 Agreement. Transport Officers have confirmed that this is acceptable and this will be secured as part of the S106 legal agreement as set out in the Recommendation above.

Access

- 6.54 Three vehicular accesses are proposed from Dee Road serving the proposed houses. The accesses will move further away from the junction with Spey Road and

be slightly off set from Amblecote Road. Transport Officers have confirmed that the layout is acceptable in principle, with revised drawings illustrating an indicative location for a relocated lamp column. The exact location for any lamp column would be determined as part of a S278/38 Agreement should permission be granted and this will be secured as part of the S106 legal agreement as set out in the Recommendation box above.

- 6.55 Transport Officers have confirmed that the accesses onto Spey Road comply with the required design standards and are acceptable.
- 6.56 It is considered that the internal road network is sufficient to accommodate the anticipated level of traffic as well as allowing sufficient turning for refuse and delivery vehicles.
- 6.57 At the north east corner of the site a new adoptable footway is to be provided that links Leven Street to Spey Road around the existing substation. The current footway is not sufficient in width as a result of the substation and therefore this proposed footway will improve pedestrian links around the site. The applicant has been reviewing gradients of this path and it is noted that compliant gradients can be provided. A revised drawing illustrating this is required, and this will be secured via condition.
- 6.58 During the course of the application, Transport Officers requested that the applicant provide a review of the gradients across the site to establish whether improvements could be made to reduce steepness. This has been provided and it confirms that any improvements to be made in terms of the levels would necessitate the undesirable inclusion of steps elsewhere on the site and the provision of taller retaining walls at the south east corner of the site. The levels are largely due to the topography of the site and Transport Officers have confirmed that the gradients as proposed would not be excessive. As such, the layout proposed is considered acceptable. Any residual harm should be weighed against the wider benefits of the scheme in the wider planning balance.

Visibility Splays

- 6.59 Visibility Splays have been illustrated on plans and turning heads have been provided for the refuse vehicle on site which Transport Officers have confirmed is acceptable.
- 6.60 It is proposed to relocate the existing bus stop on Spey Road. Transport Officers have confirmed that in principle there are no concerns; however, details of where the recycle bins located on the grass verge (which is part of the public highway on Spey Road) have not been provided. These recycle bins will need to be relocated along the existing frontage or elsewhere in the vicinity and it is considered this can be dealt with via condition.

Cycle Storage

- 6.61 Proposed plans show that parking will be provided across the site in accordance with the adopted RBC standards. The houses will have storage within their private gardens which is acceptable. Three communal cycle stores are proposed for future occupiers of the flats, providing a total of 30 cycle parking spaces. This equates to one cycle parking space per flat. This provision is in excess of the current adopted standards and is acceptable as it encourages the use of sustainable modes.

Refuse

- 6.62 Bin storage has been illustrated on plans which is considered acceptable. Subject to the submission of an amended plan in relation to the adoptable footway linking Leven

Street and Spey Road, Transport Officer have confirmed no objections to the development.

Construction

- 6.61 A condition requiring a Construction Method Statement (CMS) will be attached to any approval, requiring submission and approval before any works commence on-site to regulate the amenity effects of construction. As well as demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the number of HGV movements are managed and controlled, the CMS must demonstrate that appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road network around the construction site.

Natural Environment - Trees and Landscaping

- 6.62 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposal should include appropriate landscaping. Proposals should demonstrate an appropriate level of greening and/or net gain in the tree number.
- 6.63 With regard to trees shown to be retained, the Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that there are no concerns about the impact of the development to existing trees, subject to securing an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement via condition.
- 6.64 A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application. This confirms the removal of 2 individual trees and 3 groups. However, the groups consist largely of shrub species and the Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that none are specimen trees worthy of a TPO. The greatest impact would be the loss of a row of Leylandii but these are also not considered to be suitable for inclusion in a TPO. The loss of these trees is considered acceptable subject to appropriate mitigation through the provision of tree planting.
- 6.65 Further to the above, a landscape masterplan has been submitted with the application. This includes the provision of 51 new trees. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the principles of landscape layout and planting, particularly trees, are considered acceptable. During the course of the application the tree species proposed were amended for diversity and to comply with the biodiversity aims of the Council's Tree Strategy. Further to revisions, proposed tree species and diversity are considered acceptable. The proposals have incorporated tree planting within the proposed public open space as well as provision within parking areas. Other hedging and ground cover vegetation is provided throughout the site and as discussed elsewhere in this report, the provision of garden spaces within the site is welcomed. The biodiversity net gain achieved by the proposals is also acceptable.
- 6.66 A pre-commencement landscaping condition is recommended which will secure tree protection measures and planting details to include the species, maintenance and management schedule in accordance with EN14.

Ecology

- 6.67 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable.

- 6.68 The site comprises mostly hardstanding and buildings with some areas of amenity grassland and planting, scattered trees and scrub. The site close to Lousehill Copse Local Wildlife Site and there are a number of bat roosts in nearby properties. An Ecology report has been submitted with the application, which the Council's Ecologist has confirmed has been undertaken to an appropriate standard.

Bats

- 6.69 All the buildings on site were assessed as having potential to host roosting bats. As such, further bat emergence surveys were undertaken, concluding that one of the buildings is in use by one soprano pipistrelle bat and that it is a small day roost of low conservation status. This will be lost when the buildings are demolished. As such, the Ecologist has confirmed that a licence for development works affecting bats will need to be obtained from Natural England before works which could impact upon the roost can commence. This will be secured via suitably worded condition. The report provides a mitigation plan that if implemented will ensure that bats are not harmed, that roosting sites are provided and that the favorable conservation status of bats will be maintained. This will be secured via suitably worded conditions.

Badgers

- 6.70 The report states that there are no badger setts on site and that there are negligible opportunities for badgers. The Ecologist has confirmed that given the proximity of the site to a number of known badger setts, the site is likely to be traversed by badgers. A suitably worded condition will be attached to ensure no harm to foraging badgers during construction.

Habitats

- 6.71 With regard to Habitats on site, the Ecologist has confirmed their loss is acceptable. Nevertheless, the vegetation on site is likely to be used by nesting birds and pigeons were recorded nesting within one of the buildings. As such works could potentially affect nesting birds and a condition is recommended to ensure that demolition takes place outside of the bird nesting season.

Biodiversity Enhancements

- 6.72 The Ecology report includes a number of ecological enhancements including wildlife friendly planting, bat and bird boxes and mammal gaps. Full specifications of bird and bat boxes showing the locations and elevations will be secured via suitably worded conditions. A green roof is also proposed which is welcomed, and full details including planting and ongoing maintenance will be secured via suitably worded conditions.

- 6.73 A condition will also be attached to ensure that a wildlife friendly lighting scheme is provided so that excessive or poorly designed lighting does not affect bats.

Sustainability and Energy

- 6.74 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that development proposals incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) seeks that developments of more than 20 dwellings should consider the inclusion of combined heat and power plant (CHP) or other form of decentralised energy provision.

- 6.75 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, with financial contribution required to off-set any remaining carbon emissions to zero.

- 6.76 The applicant has submitted an energy and sustainability report as part of the application which follows the relevant policies and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD guidance applying the recognised energy hierarchy of 'be lean', 'be clean' and 'be green'.
- 6.77 The information submitted demonstrates that through the measures outlined in the energy strategy, it is anticipated that a 55% improvement above Building Regulations Part L compliant baseline is achievable. In terms of decentralised energy, there are no heat networks which extend near the site however, roof mounted Photo Voltaic cells are included, as well as air source heat pumps and positively support the development in achieving the above energy improvement below Building Regulations. Details of these additions are to be secured by way of conditions.
- 6.78 The remaining 45% to achieve zero carbon performance would be offset by a financial contribution in accordance with the methodology outline in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD to be secured by way of S106 legal agreement. This money would be ring-fenced for carbon saving, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in Reading.
- 6.79 Officers are satisfied that the proposals demonstrate a good standard of energy sustainability and, subject to conditions, the development accords with relevant policy in this regard.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 6.80 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site.
- 6.81 A sustainable drainage scheme has been submitted with the application. Through officer discussions, the scheme has been revised to ensure that drainage is designed in conjunction with soft landscaping – connecting tree planting pits with the proposed soakaways so that the trees and smaller plants can filter surface water within the site. Furthermore, the scheme shows a significant reduction in run off when compared to the existing run off from the site and as such is acceptable in principle. However, the final details of all elements of the strategy are recommended to be secured via condition. Conditions will also secure a timetable for implementation and details of management and maintenance of the scheme.

Archaeology

- 6.82 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) seeks to protect areas of archaeological importance.
- 6.83 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been submitted as part of the application. Berkshire Archaeology have reviewed the submitted assessment and concur with the conclusions that the likelihood of buried archaeological remains within the site is, at best, low, and likely to be negligible. On this basis, they advise that further archaeological investigation of the site would not be proportionate and therefore no further action is required in this respect.

Section 106 Legal Agreement

- 6.84 The vast majority of elements to be secured via s106 legal agreement, as per the Recommendation at the outset of this report, have already been detailed in earlier sections of this report. One matter not explicitly referenced is the requirement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phases of the

development. This is required in line with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. It is not yet known whether this will take the form of an actual ESP to be progressed by them on site, or payment of an equivalent financial contribution, as per the SPD formula. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.

- 6.85 It is considered that the obligations referred to in the Recommendation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These Head of Terms has been agreed by the applicant and a S106 Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure this contribution.

Other matters

Equality

- 6.86 In determining this application, the Council 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. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

Representations

- 6.87 Objections received refer to loss of and impact on views – but these are not material considerations and should not affect the decision. Other relevant matters including loss of light, privacy and impact on outlook have been considered above.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal would provide a residential scheme on land allocated for housing within the Local Plan. The loss of the former fire station is acceptable due to it having been re-provided elsewhere. The proposal would contribute to meeting the Borough's identified housing need and in particular the proposed 30% on-site Affordable Housing. The proposed mix of housing includes an appropriate amount of larger sized units.
- 7.2 In design terms, the proposal is considered to positively improve the character and appearance of the site and wider area creating new streets and areas of public open space. On-site tree planting, biodiversity measures and landscaped amenity areas will provide visual and environmental benefits to the immediate area, improving the ecology of the site. The proposal is considered to make an effective and efficient use of the land in a relatively sustainable location.
- 7.3 The proposal provides appropriate routes and spaces, creating new routes with appropriate levels of parking and access, all of which would be accessed safely.
- 7.4 Overall, the proposals would be a positive addition to the regeneration of the wider Dee Park area. The proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement.



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NOTES
Levels and finished floor levels are indicative only and subject to engineering detailed design.



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dee road fire station, reading

Street Scene 01
13.06.2022
1:000 @ A3 (Scale)
100% (100%)
800 102 444 444 (Scale) 1:1000

street scene 01

Proposed Spey Road Streetscene



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NOTE
Levels and finished floor levels are indicative only and subject to engineers' detailed design.



The Washwater Plot 1 The Washwater Plot 2 The Coppenth Plot 3 The Coppenth Plot 4 The Washwater Plot 5 The Washwater Plot 6 The Coppenth Plot 7 The Coppenth Plot 8



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dee road fire station, reading

Street Scene 02
13.06.2022
1:000 @ A3 (Scale)
100% (100%)
800 102 444 444 (Scale) 1:1000

street scene 02

Proposed Dee Road Streetscene

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The images contained in this site plan are not intended to be used for any other purpose. The default position will be that such of those which is included herein shall be subject to the appropriate copyright and/or other applicable laws.

The location of the proposed development is illustrative only. The detailed engineering team will determine the precise location of the development, and the specific details.

Elevations Correspond to Floor Plan Drawing:
TOA-TC01-P1 to P3



Front Elevation



Side Elevation



Proposed Flats – Spey Rd Elevation (above) – Leven Street Elevation (below)

COMMITTEE REPORT

**BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31 May 2023**

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: 230241/FUL

Address: Land adjacent 114-116 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX

Proposals: Change of use of ground floor retail unit to a residential apartment including fenestration alterations.

Applicant: Chesters Place Ltd

Date received (valid from): 27 February 2023

Extended Target Decision date: 02 June 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) 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 2 June 2023 (unless officers, on behalf of the AD PTPPS, agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

An off-site financial contribution of £10,750 in relation to affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough, payable prior to first occupation of the dwelling, in accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's adopted SPD, Affordable Housing.

Conditions to include:

- 1 TL1 Time Limit (Standard)
- 2 AP1 Approved Plans
- 3 M1 Materials to match/as shown on approved plans
- 4 Restriction on storage of plant and materials
- 5 N10 Noise Mitigation Scheme (as specified)
- 6 DC1 Vehicle Parking (as specified)
- 7 DC5 Cycle Parking (as specified)
- 8 DC3 Vehicular Access (as specified)
- 9 DC8 Refuse and Recycling (as specified)
- 10 C1 Hours of Construction/Demolition (standard)
- 11 C4 No bonfires

Informatives:

- IF3 Highways
- I29 Access construction
- Schools Street Initiative in operation

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site lies on a corner plot at the junction of School Road and Downing Road and comprises a recent 2.5 storey building containing space for a retail unit and parking on the ground floor with residential dwellings above. The planning history and a site visit shows that permission 220086 has been implemented and at the time of the site visit (05/04/2023), the majority of the external fabric of the building had been completed with the exception of the retail unit which did not have windows fitted.
- 1.2 The surrounding area is a mixture of uses, mainly commercial (retail), residential (for example Downing Road, with the Park Lane Primary Junior Annexe building close by), with Park Lane Primary School opposite and the Prince of Wales pub on the opposite side of School Road. The site is located adjacent to the Tilehurst Triangle District Centre, as defined by Policy RL1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 1.3 Downing Road is also a designated 'School Street' which means the road closes at certain times of the day for the benefit of the safety of pupils of Park Lane Primary School.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission to change the use of the existing ground floor retail unit to 1no. dwelling. The dwelling will comprise 2 bedrooms, living and kitchen areas. The window openings associated with the retail unit will be replaced with residential style windows and brick infill to match the appearance of the existing building.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 211276: Erection of building to provide ground floor retail unit (Class E) with 4 residential flats above (Class C3). Allowed on appeal – 21/09/2022

220086: Erection of building to provide ground floor retail unit with 4 no. residential flats above. Granted – 26/05/2022 (Officers consider this permission has been implemented)

220857: Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3, 4, 9, 10, 15 and 18 of application 220086. Approved – 25/07/2022

230025: Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 17 (Strategy for litter collection) and 8 (Hard and Soft landscaping) of application 220086. Deemed Discharged - 21/04/2023

230026: Non-Material amendment to planning permission 220086 to increase the parking from 2 to 3 bays, relocation of the front door to the apartments, remove the stallrisers to the retail unit, opening of the Tax window on the School Road elevation and an additional velux roof light to Apartment 4 on the Downing Road elevation - Approved 15/02/2023

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 A site notice was displayed at the site and the following addresses were consulted by letter:

25 Appleby End, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2NR
19 Downing Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5BA
4 Tree Close, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4TG
29 Elvaston Way, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4LX
59 Denby Way, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6HX
13 Beechwood Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5BJ
112 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5AX
2 Lambourne Close, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5BE
Llandaff, Beechwood Avenue, Reading, Berks
103 Oak Tree Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 6LA

4.2 8 letters of representation have been received. The main points raised in the 7 letters of objections are summarised below (any direct comments from officers are in *italics below*):

- Objected to the initial plan to convert the open green space into a retail unit and 4 residential units with only 3 parking spaces. The proposed change of use is outrageous and reeks of duplicity. *Officer comment: there is no objection able to be responded to here*
- Suspicious that the change of use is being proposed before the builders have left the site. *Officer comment: there is no objection able to be responded to here*
- High chance this change of use was always intended by the developer as it will generate a higher income. *Officer comment: this is not a relevant planning matter*
- Considers parking levels at the development would continue to be insufficient
- The application throughout its life has changed considerably. An extra parking space has been gained in a covered area that is barely big enough for 3 cars and traverses the footpath outside a school.
- Insufficient parking infrastructure for residents to park in Downing Road anywhere near their houses already and the proposal will worsen the situation
- Having an apartment instead of a shop will add to the imbalance of not enough parking for these properties.
- There will be additional parking and refuse collection needs of possibly 2 additional cars in a residential street with reduced daytime parking due to school access.
- Concerns regarding construction traffic for the original proposal are now more severe for this proposal
- The front downstairs elevations differ from the first floor elevations and the building appears 'unbalanced'.
- Questions building flats with a large balcony overlooking a primary school playground.

The main points raised in the letter of support are summarised below:

- I welcome the change. There is limited off road parking in Downing Road and I think a retail unit would cause further parking pressure. I would like to see if parking permits can be considered again for Downing Road.

4.3 Internal Consultees:

RBC Transport Development Control – Initial request for additional information. No objection in updated response.

RBC Environmental Health Officer – No objection subject to condition, informative advised.

Equality Act 2010:

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

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
H1: Provision of Housing
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
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
RL3: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

SPDs

Affordable Housing (2021)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations under S106 (2015)

6. APPRAISAL

This application raises the following planning issues:

Principle of Development and Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres
Design
Residential Amenity
Transport and Parking
Affordable Housing/S106

Principle of Development and Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

- 6.1 Local Plan Policy RL3 seeks to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of smaller centres. Criterion C of the policy states all new development within or adjacent to District Centres should provide some 'centre uses' at the ground floor, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would not be possible or appropriate.
- 6.2 Whilst national and local planning policies encourage mixed uses, it is recognised that these need to be realistic and appropriate to their locations to be sustained. The site is outside the District Centre, but adjacent to it. It is therefore at the (south-) western extremity of the District Centre, on a corner plot at the junction of a commercial road (School Road) and a quieter residential road (Downing Road). Its use could therefore be suitable for a range of uses.
- 6.3 Officers have surveyed the District Centre and note that there are currently three commercial units vacant, these being No. 70 and 100 School Road and No. 5 The Triangle. In addition, the unit located at No. 74 School Road (currently a bank) is due to close in June 2023. Whilst not a severe level of vacancies, it does suggest that there are difficulties in sustaining uses within the centre. The application retail unit is located at the very western end of the District Centre, separated from the designated Primary Shopping Frontages and does not benefit from any parking either on site or in close proximity. In this respect, officers do not consider it would provide any significant further benefit towards the range of types of units available to prospective occupiers, above those which are already located more centrally within the District Centre, including the highlighted vacant units. Further, this unit has never operated as a retail unit, so there is no physical loss and it is not clear if it had been provided whether it would have been viable. As such, and on balance, officers do not consider the retail unit would provide any significant benefit to maintaining or enhancing the vitality and viability of the district centre and therefore its non-provision would not be clearly harmful to the centre..
- 6.4 Paragraph 86(f) of the NPPF recognises the role that residential development plays in maintaining the vitality of centres and also encourages residential development where appropriate. Local Plan Policy CC6 also encourages development to be at appropriate densities relative to their accessibility and officers advise that increasing residential densities to consolidate the viability of Centres is appropriate. As discussed in paragraph 6.3, officers have noted the limited value the retail unit is considered to provide towards the District Centre and consider the benefits to vitality of the centre through the economic benefits of increasing the number of potential users of the district centre are more significant than the any benefits from retaining the retail unit.

- 6.5 Therefore, in this instance, officers consider that it has been sufficiently demonstrated that the loss/non-provision of the retail unit would not be harmful to the character and vitality of the District Centre and residential would be appropriate in principle and therefore the proposal complies with policies RL3 and CC6.

Design

- 6.6 Policy CC7 requires all new development to be of high-quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. The development will involve alterations to the ground floor elevations involving the replacement of the approved retail unit windows with smaller residential windows along the elevations with School Road and Downing Road. The windows and surrounding infill brickwork are considered to match those on the existing building. The development will thus harmonise with the appearance of the building and in this respect, will have no materially harmful impact on the streetscene or wider character of the area. Officers therefore consider the development to achieve a high quality of design which complies with Policy CC7.

Residential Amenity

- 6.7 Policy CC8 seeks to safeguard residential amenity by ensuring development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties whilst Policy H5 sets standards for new housing. The proposed dwelling will be dual-aspect with south and west facing windows which will provide an acceptable level of outlook and daylight for future occupiers of the flat. The dwelling will have a floor area of approximately 66sqm which exceeds the nationally described space standards for a two-bed, three-person single storey dwelling. The dwelling is also within walking distance of the shops and amenities in the Tilehurst Triangle District Centre, as well as Blagrove Recreation Ground. As with the rest of the development, no on-site open space is provided and again, none is considered to be appropriate given the nature of the block.
- 6.8 The dwelling will be located adjacent to School Road with habitable room windows at the back of the footway. This is clearly not an ideal situation in terms of 'defensible space' and privacy, although ultimately it will be up to the eventual occupier how they wish to respond to this. A noise report has been submitted with the application. The Council's Environmental Protection Team were consulted on the application and raised no objection. The noise assessment is the same as that approved under application 220857/APPCON in respect of Condition 10 of the implemented development approved under permission 220086. The noise assessment includes ventilation and mitigation measures to ensure the existing dwellings will be protected from noise from the adjacent road and officers consider these mitigation measures are again suitable for the additional dwelling and a condition has been recommended to secure these. Officers therefore consider that the development would provide an acceptable level of residential amenity for the future occupiers of the dwelling and would have no materially harmful impact on the amenities of any other properties and therefore complies with Policies CC8 and H5.

Transport and Parking

- 6.9 Local Plan Policy TR1 seeks to ensure that development contributes to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan. Policy TR3 requires consideration of the impacts of development on the safety, congestion and environment of the local transport network whilst Policies TR4 and TR5 seek to ensure development improves access to cycling and provides sufficient vehicle parking, respectively. Downing Road is a narrow 2-way road that provides access to dwellings north along the road as well as Park Lane Primary School which comprises buildings located on both sides of the road, the British Legion and access to Lambourne Close. Given the width of the road and congestion/traffic conflict at school admission and closing times, the road has been designated as a School Street by the Council. Outside of this, there are no specific parking controls in place along the road. Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) are typically limited to the roads closer to Central Reading.
- 6.10 Initial comments were received from the Council's Transport Development Control Team who raised no in principle objection to the change of use, noting the replacement of the retail unit with a residential unit would be an improvement on the consented scheme (ie. retail) with regards to trip rates and the overall parking for the residential units would be a similar ratio to what has already been agreed. In this instance, the site is located in a sustainable location, close to the services and amenities of Tilehurst and served by frequent bus services along School Road which provide access to the wider areas of Reading. Previous permissions on site have accepted the provision of reduced parking on site on this basis and given the modest increase of one dwelling, officers again consider this appropriate.
- 6.11 It was noted in the Transport comments received that the additional unit will require an additional cycle space and a scaled down Construction Method Statement (CMS) was also requested. The applicant subsequently submitted an amended ground floor plan showing the additional cycle space, as well as a CMS. The Transport team subsequently provided updated comments noting the proposed cycle storage is acceptable. It was also noted that the detail provided in the CMS is satisfactory with the exception of details regarding the location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development which were not shown within the CMS. However, it is considered that this can be dealt with via a condition prohibiting the storage of materials or plant on the public highway and site access. As the building is still under construction, it is necessary to secure cycle spaces, vehicle parking and vehicle access as detailed prior to occupation of the residential unit. Subject to these conditions, officers consider the development will have an acceptable impact on the local highway network, in compliance with Policies TR1 and TR3-TR5 and CC6.
- 6.12 An informative has been included to advise the applicant of the Schools Street initiative that operates in the area, in line with the updated comments from the Transport team.

Affordable Housing/S106

- 6.13 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for one residential unit, would be liable for an off-site affordable housing contribution.

- 6.14 The applicant has stated they agree in principle to enter into a legal agreement to secure a financial contribution. A contribution of £10,750 has been agreed based on 2 independent valuations of the proposed development. Subject to the satisfactory completion of this S106 agreement, the proposal will provide policy compliant affordable housing contribution in line with Policy H3 and the Affordable Housing SPD 2021.
- 6.15 Officers consider it appropriate for the financial contribution to be made payable prior to occupation of the dwelling as the applicant may choose not to implement the change of use and instead, continue to implement the development approved under application 220086/FUL.

Other Matters

- 6.16 Details of bin storage have been secured through the previous approvals and the submitted plans show storage will be provided in accordance with these details. A condition has been recommended to ensure bin storage is provided prior to occupation in order to comply with Policy CC5.
- 6.17 The previous permissions approving the construction of the existing building have approved matters regarding landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and sustainability measures therefore it is not considered necessary or reasonable to impose these conditions again, as these matters are considered to be unaffected by this current application.
- 6.18 In responding to any other objection issues where necessary, officers advise as follows. Several objectors question the motives of the developer in bringing this proposal forward so soon after gaining planning permission for the development. Whether or not the developer ever intended to provide a retail unit in the first place is not a relevant material consideration to this application, which has been considered on its own individual planning merits.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Officers do not consider 'retaining' the originally-proposed retail unit will materially maintain or enhance the vitality and viability of the Tilehurst Triangle District Centre and accept the principle of the change to residential use. The development is considered visually acceptable and the new dwelling will provide an acceptable standard of residential amenity for future occupiers of the unit. The development will not prejudice highway safety and will have an acceptable impact on the surrounding highway network. The applicant has agreed to provide a policy compliant affordable housing contribution therefore, subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 agreement to secure this contribution, Officers consider the development complies with Policies CC1, CC5, CC6, CC7, CC8, H1, H3, H5, TR1, TR3-TR5 and RL3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Case Officer: Joel Grist

Plans and documents considered:

Genesis Town Planning letter dated 15/05/2023 – received 16/05/2023

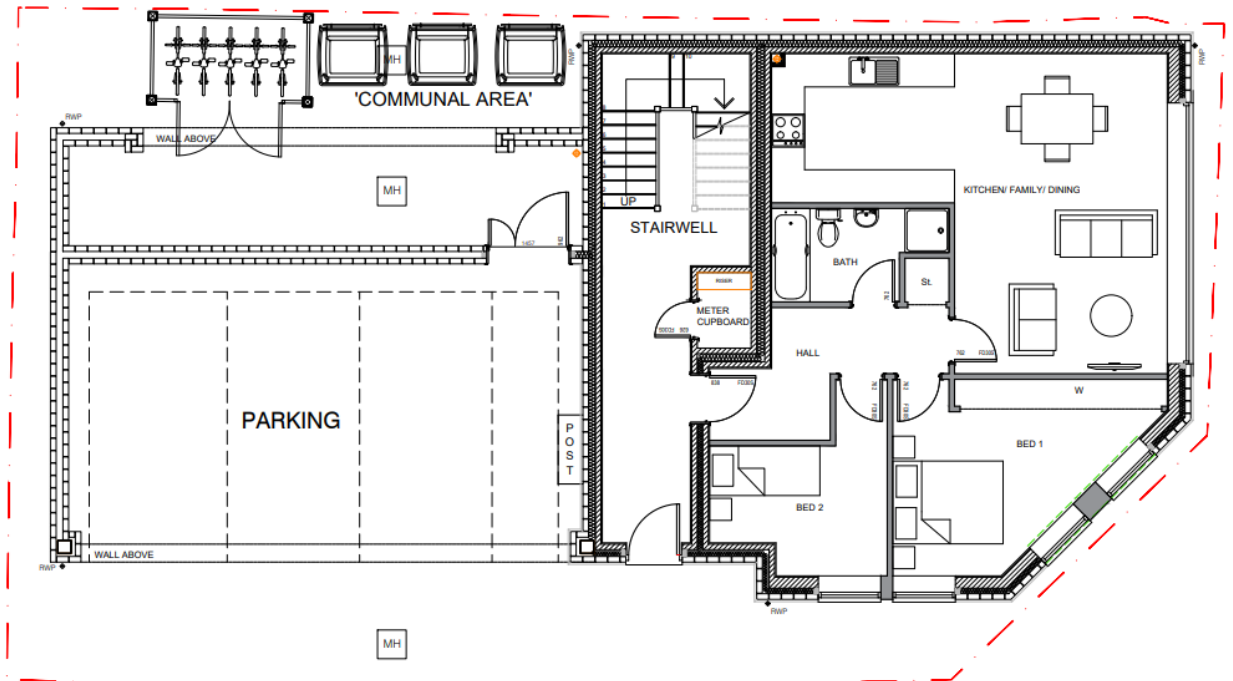
Construction Method Statement and Method Statement v1 dated 17/04/2023 – received 18/04/2023

P104 RevB – received 04/04/2023

22.993 P.103; P.102; L.101; B.101; P.105; P.101 – Received 28/02/2023



EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION (SOUTH WEST)



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION (SOUTH WEST)



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION (SOUTH EAST)

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