

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 2nd December 2020

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 201420/FUL

Address: 45 Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8JA

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 40 flats including provision of 30% of units as affordable housing with associated landscaping and parking

Applicant: Elstree Land Ltd & Swaythling Housing Society Ltd

13 Week Target Date: 25th January 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to:

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

The S106 to include the following heads of terms:

- Secure the agreed level of on-site affordable housing (6 x affordable rented units - 6 x 2-bed, 6 x shared ownership - 2 x 2-bed, 4 x 1-bed)
- £84,000 Open Space contribution to improve and extend facilities within the Thames Parks - payable before first occupation;
- £15,000 contribution toward provision of a car club within the locality - payable before first occupation;
- £5,000 contribution to amend the on-street parking bay and Traffic regulation order (TRO) along Great Knollys Street (payable before commencement)
- Offset the remaining tonnes of CO2 not being captured by the redevelopment as per the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019), estimated to be £50,400 (To be finalised based on a post completion review).
- Secure a construction phases Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution. As calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013).

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

Or;

- i) Refuse full planning permission if sustainability matters not resolved or the S106 agreement is not completed by 25th January 2021 (unless the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services Officers agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

Conditions:

1. TIME LIMIT (STANDARD)
2. APPROVED PLANS
3. DWELLING MIX (RESTRICTION)
4. MATERIALS (TO BE APPROVED)

5. SAP ASSESSMENT MAJOR - AS BUILT (TO BE APPROVED)
6. DETAILS OF PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAY(S) (TO BE APPROVED, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION)
7. SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (TO BE IMPLEMENTED)
8. FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES (AS SPECIFIED)
9. FINISHED FLOOR LEVELS (AS PROPOSED)
10. LANDSCAPING LARGE SCALE (TO BE APPROVED)
11. HABITAT ENHANCEMENT SCHEME (TO BE APPROVED)
12. DETAILS OF PRIVACY SCREENING (TO BE APPROVED)
13. SECURED BY DESIGN (TO BE APPROVED)
14. NOISE MITIGATION SCHEME (AS SPECIFIED)
15. AIR QUALITY MITIGATION (AS SPECIFIED)
16. REMEDIATION SCHEME (TO BE SUBMITTED)
17. REMEDIATION SCHEME (IMPLEMENT AND VERIFICATION)
18. UNIDENTIFIED CONTAMINATION
19. HOURS OF CONSTRUCTION/DEMOLITION
20. CONSTRUCTION METHOD STATEMENT (TO BE SUBMITTED)
21. NO BONFIRES
22. REFUSE AND RECYCLING (DETAILS TO BE APPROVED)
23. VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
24. VEHICULAR ACCESS (AS SPECIFIED)
25. CYCLE PARKING (TO BE APPROVED)
26. ACCESS CLOSURE WITH REINSTATEMENT
27. PARKING PERMITS 1
28. PARKING PERMITS 2
29. EV CHARGING POINTS
30. ADAPTABLE UNITS
31. EXTERNAL LIGHTING (TO BE APPROVED, IF ANY IS PROPOSED)

Informatives

1. Positive and Proactive Working - approval
2. Pre-commencement conditions
3. Highways
4. S106
5. Terms
6. Building Control
7. Complaints about construction
8. Encroachment
9. Contamination
10. Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building
11. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
12. Bats & works to roofs
13. Parking Permits
14. Ongoing information conditions
15. Access construction
16. Canopies and structures overhanging the highway

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site for which this application relates is 0.158 hectares located to the northwest of the town centre and west of the railway station. It occupies a prominent corner plot fronting the north/south Caversham Road, part of the town's Inner Distribution Road (IDR). Its north side elevation runs alongside the much quieter east/west Great Knollys Street. The site is directly opposite

“40rty” Caversham Road, and opposite the junction of Stanshawe Road. To the north, across Great Knollys Street, are a block of flats at Regent Court, a Grade II listed Victorian Terrace “Regent Place”. To the immediate south is an unlisted terrace (33-41 Caversham Road) and further South a pair of Grade II listed buildings (29 & 31 Caversham Road ca. 1847).

- 1.2 This application seeks to fulfil part of the requirement of strategic site allocation CR12b, West side major opportunity area, as set out in the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The predominantly hard surfaced site is a noteworthy break in the generally consistent 3 and 4-storey residential uses on the Western side of this portion of Caversham Road.

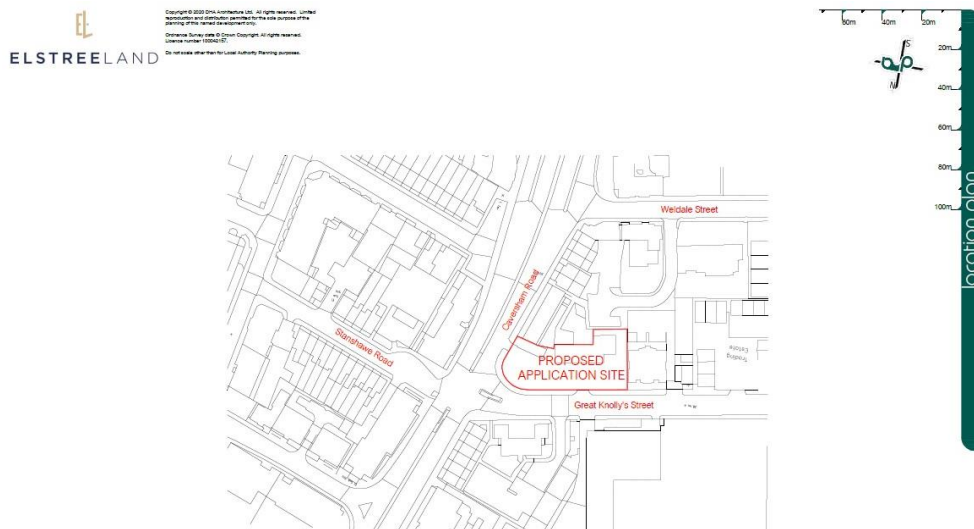


Figure 1 - Site location Plan



Figure 2 - Aerial (Google maps 2020)

1.4 The buildings on site are not Listed nor are they located within a Conservation Area.

1.5 Prior to the submission of this planning application, the applicant undertook extensive pre-application engagement with officers and the scheme was considered by the Design Review Panel.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide a total of 40 residential units (14 x 1-bed, 24 x 2-bed, and 2 x 3-bed flats). The joint applicants (Elstree Land, and Swaythling Housing Society Ltd) have a contractual agreement wherein the site will be acquired by Swaythling upon grant of permission, and Swaythling, as an affordable housing provider will obtain grant funding to provide all 40 units as affordable with a mix of affordable rent (70% market rent as per emerging SPD), and shared ownership. The development will take the form of a predominantly 4-storey building, with a three storey wing adjacent the terrace along Caversham Road, and includes a setback fifth floor behind a parapet wall. The existing buildings on the site are to be demolished. A total of 12 car parking spaces will serve future residents.

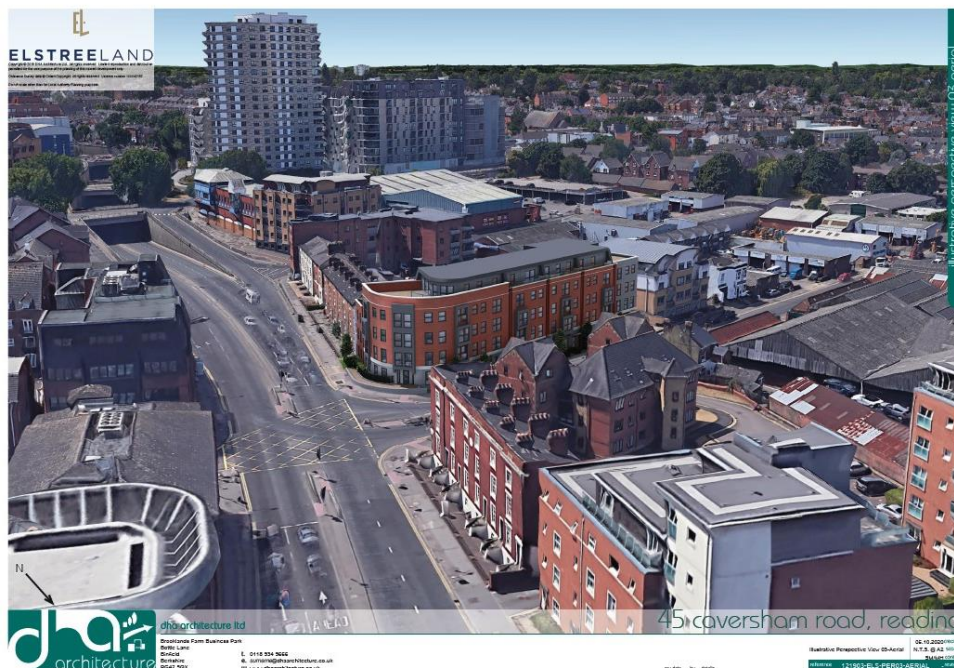


Fig 3 - CGI visual of proposal



Fig 4 - CGI visual of proposal

2.2 In addition, the proposal will provide 22 secure bicycle spaces. The development will provide the majority of the flats with south facing balconies/terraces and will provide an area of communal amenity space to the rear of the site. To the front elevation, the proposal will include ramped access, hedging, and provision of a tree toward the Northern end of the site. The landscaping to the Great Knollys Street frontage is proposed to include spaced trees, hedging, and shrub planting.

2.3 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

Original proposed plans submitted with application on 26 October 2019:

- 121903-ELS-01 Presentation Planning Layout
- 121903-ELS-02 Supporting Planning Layout
- 121903-ELS-03 Location Plan
- 121903-ELS-04 Block Plan
- 121903-ELS-PER01 Perspective 01
- 121903-ELS-PER02 Perspective 02
- 121903-ELS-PER03 Perspective 03
- 121903-ELS-PER04 Perspective 04
- 121903-ELS-PER05 Perspective 05
- 121903-ELS-PER06 Perspective 06
- 120903-ELS-PER01-AERIAL Aerial Perspective 01
- 120903-ELS-PER02-AERIAL Aerial Perspective 02
- 120903-ELS-PER03-AERIAL Aerial Perspective 03
- 121903-ELS-SS01 Street Scene 01
- 121903-ELS-SS02 Street Scene 01
- 121903-APT-E1 Apartment Block - Elevations
- 121903-APT-E2 Apartment Block - Elevations, Section
- 121903-APT-E3 Apartment Block - Elevations
- 121903-APT-P1 Apartment Block - Ground Floor Plan
- 121903-APT-P2 Apartment Block - First Floor Plan
- 121903-APT-P3 Apartment Block - Second Floor Plan

121903-APT-P4 Apartment Block - Third Floor Plan
121903-APT-P5 Apartment Block - Fourth Floor Plan
121903-TEN-P1 Section 106 Affordable Housing Tenure Plan
121903-ELS-CS01 Cycle Store 01 - Plans and Elevations

CIL Form
Application forms
Location plan
Block plan
Market Report
7221/LSP - Landscape strategy plan Rev D
Heritage and Archaeological assessment
Geo-environmental report
Flood risk assessment
Energy statement
Ecological report
Design and access statement (including previous design documents presented through pre-application stage as appendices)
Affordable housing statement
Air quality assessment
Utilities report and plans
Transport assessment
Sustainability report
Daylight/sunlight assessment
Planning statement
Noise assessment

2.4 Revised plans/documents received 12 November 2020

Revised Design and access statement

2.5 Revised plans/documents received 20 November 2020

20-184-SK001 Approach route layout
121903-APT-P1 A - Ground floor plan
121903-CIL-P1 - CIL plan
121903-ELS-01-A - Site plan
121903-ELS-02-A - Site layout
121903-ELS-04-A - Location plan
121903-ELS-05-A - Site plan showing rear walkway at 33-41 Caversham Road
121903-ELS-SS01-A Streetscene 01
7221-LSP-E - Landscape strategy

3. PLANNING HISTORY

90-00627-OUT (900189) - Office building, residential development and associated car parking WITHDRAWN

92-00251-FUL (920189) - Change of use from Builders' Merchants Yard to Vehicle Display and Sales; ancillary offices and storage, valeting, routine maintenance and parking APPROVED

94-00161-FUL (940403) - Single storey, fully glazed, car showroom APPROVED

95-00362-FUL (950065) - Change of use from vehicle display and sales, ancillary offices and workshop to the sales and fitting of tyres and exhausts and offices for car hire with ancillary parking. APPROVED

95-00509-FUL (950475) - Extension to end of existing building and installation of roller shutter doors in front elevation. APPROVED

95-00577-ADV (950558) - Non-illuminated fascia sign and pylon APPROVED

95-00262-FUL (950656) - Change of use from second hand car sales to servicing repairing and M.O.T. testing of motor vehicles and car hire. APPROVED

99-00768-ADV (991439) - Erection of individual non-illuminated lettering to cladded fascia areas. APPROVED

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Transport

No objection subject to conditions and s106 requirements as noted above.

4.2 Environmental Protection

Full comments received on 10th November 2020. These have been summarised as follows:

Noise impact on development

The noise assessment submitted shows that the recommended standard for internal noise can be met, if the recommendations from the assessment are incorporated into the design. It is recommended that a condition be attached to consent to ensure that the glazing (and ventilation) recommendations of the noise assessment (and air quality assessment, where relevant) will be followed, or that alternative but equally or more effective glazing and ventilation will be used.

Noise between flats

To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.

Air Quality - Increased exposure

The air quality assessment submitted with the applications concludes that mitigation measures will be needed due to high NO₂ levels at the lower floors of the Caversham Road façade - mechanical ventilation.

Air Quality - Increased emissions

The air quality assessment concludes that there will not be an impact on air quality as a result of the development therefore a mitigation scheme is not required.

Contaminated Land

Remediation is needed due to presence of ground gas, and lead and minor PAH contamination.

Construction and Demolition

Recommended conditions to control construction management as with any site of this nature.

Bin storage - rats

There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas e.g. flats and hotels there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste. I recommend the following condition.

4.3 RBC Ecology

Comments received on 20 November 2020. The ecological assessment and recommendations within are considered appropriate, and subject to a condition regarding ecological enhancements, no objection.

4.4 Natural Environment Team (Landscape)

Final comments received on 23rd November as92020:

Tree officers have indicated that they would object on the basis that there would be limited landscaping to the front, and the green wall would be provided to the rear of the site with “no benefit to the Caversham Road frontage”.

Officer Note: landscaping to frontages, and green wall are addressed in the planning assessment and form part of a balanced consideration.

4.5 RBC Access Officer

Generally in favour of accessible flats subject to suitable ramping from street level, and comments will be provided in any update report.

4.6 Environment Agency

No response has been received at the time of writing.

Officer note: a detailed flood risk assessment has been provided and includes details of Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) and finished floor levels which would be 300mm above the identified floor levels over the site.

4.7 RBC Leisure Team

No objection received at time of writing.

4.8 Thames Water

No objections.

Non-statutory

4.9 Public representations

No letters of representation have been received at the time of writing.

4.10 Crime prevention design advisor

No objection subject to conditions for crime prevention design considerations/conditions.

4.11 Berkshire Archaeology

No objection.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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

5.2 The following relevant planning policy and guidance is applicable to the assessment of this application.

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Feb 2019)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision-making
Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

5.4 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
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
H6: ACCOMMODATION FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING
CR6: LIVING IN CENTRAL READING

CR12: WEST SIDE MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

5.5. Supplementary Planning Documents

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

5.6 Other Reading Borough Council Corporate documents

Reading Tree Strategy (2010)
Reading Open Space Strategy Update Note (2018)
Reading Open Space Strategy (2007)
Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Reading Borough Council

5.7 Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (2020)
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)
Department for Transport Manual for Streets

Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2
Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment -
Berkshire Authorities and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise
Partnership, Final Report, February 2016, prepared by GL Hearn Ltd
Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard, DCLG,
2015
Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice (BR
209), P. Littlefair, 2011

6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- 6.1 Principle of development
- 6.2 Design & Heritage
- 6.3 Housing mix and density
- 6.4 Affordable housing
- 6.5 Residential amenity
- 6.6 Natural environment
- 6.7 Sustainability
- 6.8 Transport
- 6.9 S106/Community Infrastructure Levy
- 6.10 Other matters

6.1 Principle of development

6.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must have regard to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan for the area is the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) constitutes guidance which the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must have regard to. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making but constitutes a material consideration in any subsequent determination.

6.1.2 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development running through both plan-making and decision-taking. The three dimensions to achieving sustainable development are defined in the NPPF as: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 11 of the Framework indicates that, for decision taking, where Local Plan policies are up to date: development proposals that accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay. Both the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF require a positive approach to decision-taking to foster the delivery of sustainable development. These three dimensions of sustainable development are also central to the Council's Local Plan core policy CC1. This repeats the aims of the NPPF in approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan. How this proposal meets the three dimensions to achieving sustainable development will be concluded at the end of this report weighed against the level of Local Plan compliance.

Land use principles

6.1.3 The current existing use of the site is Sui Generis (Car hire, MOT centre and vehicle repairs) use. Policy CR12 states that: "*Development in the West Side*

Major Opportunity Area will ... i) Contribute towards providing a mix of uses including residential". The site is located within sub-area CR12b which states: "This area will be developed primarily for residential. Any development which would result in the loss of small business units should seek to replace as many of those units as possible, preferably on site. There should be a careful transition to the lower density residential areas to the west. Listed buildings and their settings in the area will be conserved and where possible enhanced."

- 6.1.4 Policy EM3 states: *"Within the Core Employment Areas, the overall level of employment land should be maintained."* The site is not located within a Core employment area, and the policy goes on to state: *"In other areas, the following matters will be considered when assessing proposals which would result in a loss of employment land: - (i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor? (ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable? (iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading? (iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area? (v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land? (vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?"*
- 6.1.5 The NPPF seeks to 'boost significantly the supply of housing' and deliver a wide range of homes, of different types and tenures. This Framework clearly identifies that planning should promote the efficient use and redevelopment of brownfield land.
- 6.1.6 The application seeks the redevelopment of a now vacant Sui Generis Car hire/MOT centre and vehicle repair use to provide 40 no. residential units.
- 6.1.7 The site is located within the 'Reading Central Area' and the 'Office Core' as defined by the Local Plan. As mentioned, it is also located on the edge of allocated site CR12b sub-area which within the policy states: *"Any development which would result in the loss of small business units should seek to replace as many of those units as possible, preferably on site."* The supporting text of the policy goes on to state: *"the balance of uses is weighted more strongly in favour of residential ..."*
- 6.1.8 In this particular instance, the proposed development would seek to provide a wholly residential scheme in lieu of re-providing a similar car-hire or commercial use at ground floor. The abovementioned policy (CR12b) seeks to **"replace as many of those units as possible"**, and must be read in conjunction with policy EM3 (above), which outlines a number of considerations for loss of employment land outside of core employment areas.
- 6.1.9 The applicant has provided a market report which includes reference to the preference of light industrial uses or uses similar to the car hire use favouring out of centre locations (such as retail parks which have much better accessibility for large vehicles).
- 6.1.10 As such, in addition to the market assessment prepared by the applicant, when assessing the proposal against policy EM3, the continued employment use of the site as a car hire use would result in a significant detrimental

impact on residents of the site and the wider area (including re-establishing the previously approved car servicing and repair use). The identified need for affordable housing (which is proposed) including 2-bed and 3-bed dwellings is stronger than the need to retain the existing commercial use. As such, having considered the context of policy CR12b and policy EM3, there is weight in favour of the proposed residential development in this case.

Residential use

- 6.1.11 The proposed development would deliver 40 new homes and therefore based on the proportion of floorspace proposed, would be a residential led scheme. Under core housing Policy H1, housing provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in the Borough up to the end of the Plan period (2036). Furthermore, because of the borough's overwhelmingly urban character, there is a heavy reliance on previously developed land meeting such needs.
- 6.1.12 The site is located approximately 320m from the South entrance of Reading Station, and approximately a 5mins walk from all main services and facilities offered by a central town location.
- 6.1.13 The proposal would therefore contribute to meeting the Borough's housing need through an uplift of 40 units in a highly sustainable location for new residential development. This accords with the aims of Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development) of the Local Plan and is afforded positive weight in the overall planning balance.

Flood risk and drainage

- 6.1.14 Policy EN18 (Flooding) seeks that development should not increase the risk of flooding and that major schemes should include provision of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs).
- 6.1.15 The site is located within Flood Zone 2. As a more vulnerable development in terms of flood risk classification any planning application is required to successfully demonstrate that it has passed the flood risk sequential test. The sequential test seeks to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.
- 6.1.16 The Council's latest 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' (May 2017) (HELAA) notes that 'there are not sufficient sites to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in Reading on sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2'.
- 6.1.17 The HELAA and the submitted Sequential Test are felt to adequately demonstrate that there are no reasonably available, sequentially preferable sites within the surrounding area which are at a lower probability of flooding and that would be suitable for the proposed development proposed. On this basis, it is considered that the Sequential Test has been satisfied.
- 6.1.18 A site specific Flood Risk Assessment has also been submitted with this application. All residential accommodation will be located above the modelled fluvial flood level. Flood resistance and resilience techniques are recommended to be incorporated at ground floor level and this can be secured via condition. Whilst safe access and egress is not available during a 1 in 100 year plus climate change event, it is recommended that site management and residents sign up to receive free flood warnings from the

EA. Officers recommend that a Flood Management Plan is prepared to detail the actions to be taken before, during and after a potential flood event.

- 6.1.19 Overall, it has been demonstrated that the development would be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and that a positive reduction in flood risk would be achieved through the inclusion of surface water attenuation techniques and constitute an improvement to the site's current drainage performance in accordance with Policy.
- 6.1.20 There have been no comments received from the EA but officers are satisfied that the site is located within an allocated site (as such a sequential test has already been passed), and the floor levels have been proposed to meet the EA guidance (being 300mm freeboard above the specified flood levels).

6.2 Design & Heritage

- 6.2.1 The application site's use/last use is as a car-hire business with a two-storey building immediately adjacent the terrace, and two single storey structures including a vehicle workshop building. The site is located opposite the Grade II listed terrace "Regent Place" which dates from 1847 and is a 3-storey and basement terrace block. Immediately adjacent to the site, is a later terrace (33-41 Caversham Road), which has seen significant alteration to be converted to flats (with major works to the rear), and further south is a Grade II listed pair of semi-detached dwellings (29 & 31 Caversham Road).
- 6.2.2 The surrounding area is mixed in terms of architectural styling and detail, although there is a strong line of 3-storey terraces existing between the newer development at the Corner of Weldale Street (4-storeys) and the application site. The wider area, including the opposite side of Caversham Road range from 4-storeys to 6-storeys. The general material used within the area is red brick, with mixtures of modern variations on newer building which reflect the character of the area, as well as defining the new buildings from the historic buildings. The properties fronting Caversham Road are characterised by shallow setbacks with cast iron railings, and minimal landscaping. In terms of plot coverage and ratios of built form within the area, the residential sites are predominantly covered by their building footprints with most of the space around buildings being converted to car parking/hardstanding.
- 6.2.3 The proposed development is for a curved part 4-storey building, with 5-storey portion along Great Knollys Street, also, a step down to 3-storeys where the site meets the adjacent terrace (33-41 Caversham Road). The overall bulk and scale of the proposal is currently proposed to be of a similar depth as the adjoining terrace of dwellings, and the adjoining Lion Court. The design would incorporate projecting oriel windows, which adds a modern element to a Georgian terrace inspired design. The design includes a grey brick finish at ground floor level, at the end where the proposal steps down to Lion Court, and grey panels for the recessed fifth floor. Along both frontages are recessed guttering sections which serve to break up the otherwise long façade along Great Knollys Street which gives this elevation the feeling of a terrace. The design proposes flat roofs for the building, with a large parapet well to the corner, and parapets along both frontages.
- 6.2.4 The proposed development would provide a 3.7m wide gap between the existing terrace and the proposed 3-storey portion, and a 15.4m gap to the 4-storey portion.

- 6.2.5 Although not within close proximity to the listed buildings the proposed design is required to meet the requirements of policy CC7 and CR2 in design terms, which among other things requires all development be of a high quality which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.2.6 The proposed curved brick building follows the unique line formed by the junction of Great Knollys Street and Caversham Road, and is built to the building line of the remainder of the terraces along Caversham Road (including the listed semi-detached properties).
- 6.2.7 The proposed development, by virtue of its plot coverage, plot depth and setback to the footway, would have a layout which is commensurate of its town centre location, and would sit well within the area it is located. The design, would have a massing, including window orientation, location, and hierarchy which would respond to the historic character of Caversham Road, including an overall height which respects and responds to the area in which it is located, and provides a prominent corner design which bookends the properties between the site and Weldale Street. The design is therefore considered to be of sufficiently high quality which would maintain and enhance the area in which it is located, and remove a noteworthy void from the streetscene which is even more noticeable now the site has been vacated by Avis. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of policies CC7, EN1 and CR2.

6.3 Housing mix and density

Housing mix

- 6.3.1 The NPPF seeks to ‘boost significantly the supply of housing’ and deliver a wide range of homes, of different types and tenures. In terms of housing mix, Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) supports this and further seeks that residential developments within the town centre area should incorporate as a guide, a maximum of 40% of 1-bedroom units and a minimum of 5% of 3-bedroom units.
- 6.3.2 A total of 40 new flats are proposed with the following mix:
- 1 bedroom (2 Person): 14no. (typical size 51-54m²)
 - 2 bedroom (3 Person): 19no. (typical size 61m² including 2 x 2 bedroom (accessible flats)(typical size 65m²))
 - 2 bedroom (4 person): 5no. (typical size 71m²)
 - 3 bedroom (4 person): 2no. (typical size 75m²)
- 6.3.4 When considered against the requirements of Policy CR6, the following proportions are calculated:
- 1 bedroom units 17 no. = 35%
 - 2 bedroom units 24 no. = 60 %
 - 3 bedroom units 3 no. = 5%
- 6.3.5 The proposal is therefore compliant in provision of 1-bedroom units (35% compared to the policy guide for a maximum of 40%), and the provides 2 3-bedroom units which meets the 5% policy guidance. Furthermore, the provision of 2-bedroom units is composed of two sizes, 3 or 4 person (19 x 3-

person, 5 x 4 person) occupancy, which includes 2 accessible units in accordance with Building Regulations M4(3). Based on the characteristics of the site and the appropriateness for range of units in such an arrangement, the overall dwelling mix proposed by the development is considered acceptable and in accordance with the requirements of Policy CR6 of the Local Plan.

Density

- 6.3.6 Achieving an efficient use of the land within the context of any central and sustainably 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, as this is beneficial in terms of:
- ensuring efficient use of land
 - preventing urban sprawl
 - supporting a range of uses
 - increasing the viability and hence availability of public transport
 - encouraging social interaction.
- 6.3.7 The spatial strategy for Reading identifies Central Reading as the focus for meeting much of the identified development needs at a medium and high density. The Local Plan identifies the fact that there are considerable areas of underused land around the edge of the centre like those existing plots which front onto Caversham Road that offer an opportunity to accommodate a considerable amount of development at higher densities.
- 6.3.8 Policy CC6 ‘Accessibility and the intensity of development’ makes the important link between the scale and density of development and its inherent level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. This does not override other considerations but is an important element of meeting the borough’s development needs in the most sustainable way. Policy H2 which specifically considers density and mix, requires that the appropriate density of residential development is informed by amongst other things:
- the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located (including nearby heritage assets);
 - its current and future level of accessibility; and
 - the need to achieve high quality design and the need to maximise the efficiency of land use.
- 6.3.9 Within the Local Plan, indicative densities for different areas are set out in Local Plan extract Figure 4.5 (Below). This indicates such a site located within the Town Centre and in such close proximity to the station, would have an indicative density of above 100 dwellings per hectare. It is important to note, no upper limit is provided for the Town Centre, as each application would be considered on a case by case basis and informed in conjunction with other factors.

Figure 4.5: Indicative density ranges (dwellings per hectare)

Town Centre	Urban	Suburban
Above 100	60-120	30-60

6.3.10 The supporting text goes on to acknowledge that the criteria discussed above may indicate that different densities are appropriate, despite the indicative density range indicating otherwise.

6.3.11 Regarding the proposal in question, a density of 280-510 dwellings per hectare is calculated across the site (indicatively). Whilst this is considered high-density in comparison to the much lower neighbouring commercial sites to the north and south within the Caversham Road transition zone, the plan recognises the opportunities available to increase density to help to meet identified needs in highly sustainable locations like this. Given the proposed format of development such density (266dph) does not represent any significant conflict with policy or departure from the prevailing density of other existing or recently approved developments fronting onto the IDR to the south.

6.4 Affordable housing

6.4.1 Affordable Housing is a key priority within the borough. Policy H3 of the Local Plan (Affordable Housing) seeks to ensure that development proposals of more than 10 dwellings should provide the equivalent of 30% on-site provision of affordable housing.

6.4.2 The Council's current Affordable Housing SPD (2013) 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. This is reflected in the current SPD which identifies a tenure mix of 50% social rent and 50% shared ownership/intermediate housing.

6.4.3 The application was supported by an affordable housing statement which outlines that 6 x 2-bed dwellings will be secured by s106 to be affordable rented (at a maximum of 70% market rent), and 6 flats (2 x 2-bed, 4 x 1-bed) will be shared ownership. As such, the offer would comply with the abovementioned policies.

6.4.4 In addition to the above, the applicants are partnered with a registered provider who intends to bring the site forward with 100% of the flats to be affordable housing, subject to grant funding, which will be included as a caveat within the section 106 agreement.

6.4.5 The registered provider has identified from a management perspective that 40 flats would be considered a viable scheme to implement in this way, and is a minimum number for the scheme, which has informed the choice of unit size and mix (although remaining a policy compliant level).

6.5 Residential amenity

6.5.1 Policies CC8 and CR6 require that all development does not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties nor create unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

- 6.5.2 The site is located on the Inner Distribution Road (Caversham Road) (IDR) and as such, noise pollution, and air pollution are of particular concern when introducing residential uses. As noted in policy CR6, *“proposals for new residential development within the central area will be required to demonstrate how the issue of potential noise disturbance from neighbouring land uses and other sources, and air quality implications of residential development, have been considered and if necessary, mitigated.”*
- 6.5.3 In support of the application, the applicant has provided a detailed air quality assessment, and acoustic assessment. The findings of such report detail methods for mitigation, including mechanical ventilation for flats fronting Caversham Road, and specifications for windows including air tightness. As above, the Council’s environmental protection officers have reviewed and are satisfied that conditions securing implementation in line with these reports would be acceptable and ensure appropriate noise/air quality for the proposed development. Construction hours, control of noise and dust during construction will also be conditioned.

Privacy

- 6.5.4 The site is within a relatively densely built up area with predominantly flatted development (including adjacent terrace and Lion Court). The proposal, by virtue of the shape of the site (being greater than 90° to Caversham Road) would introduce rear facing windows and balconies for flats which would face the rear of the adjoining terrace. To the rear of 33-41 Caversham Road, through the conversion of the terrace to flats, an extension to these flats has been attached to create walkways along the entire rear of the building. Meaning, the rear is predominantly access with front doors, and secondary windows with most front habitable windows to Caversham Road.
- 6.5.5 Due to the orientation of the site, the closest rear facing balcony would be approximately 5.5m from the rear walkway of these flats. This would be an oblique view from both the proposed flats, and the existing flats, and due to the lack of habitable rooms on the existing flats would be unlikely to result in significant privacy concerns in this regard. For the proposed development, particularly the two rear facing balconies closest to these shared access walkways could need additional measures to protect privacy. As such, it is considered necessary to secure by condition, a plan demonstrating provision of some form of privacy screening to these proposed flats. Subject to this condition being met, the scheme would not result in an unacceptable level of privacy concern, with the remainder of the flats having a common relationship compared to a dense town centre location.

Daylight and sunlight

- 6.5.6 The applicant has provided a daylight/sunlight assessment with the application. The report shows that the scheme would not have a significant detrimental impact upon adjoining properties in terms of access to daylight/sunlight. In addition, the proposed development would provide all but 1 bedroom with sufficient daylight/sunlight (with the one bedroom being 0.3% below the specified target for the type of room). In this instance as a secondary room, a bedroom having slightly reduced daylight/sunlight, would not have a significant effect upon future occupants and as such the scheme would be acceptable despite this minor shortfall in this regard.

Private and communal outdoor space

6.5.7 Policy H10 states that “... flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens”. In this instance, the proposed development would provide 29 flats with private balconies or terraces, and an on-site communal outdoor space of 80m². A number of flats which do not have private terraces/balconies are located on the Caversham Road frontage, and due to the noise/air quality concerns, further balconies would not be acceptable. The site is well located with access to Victoria Park, and other Thameside parks. The proposal would provide a reasonable amount of private and communal outdoor space for future occupants, however, occupants would be reliant on public open spaces for recreation. As such, it is considered appropriate to seek a contribution of £84,000 for improvement and extension of existing facilities within the Parks which are in close proximity to the development.

Dwelling size

6.5.8 All dwellings have been proposed to meet or exceed the nationally described space standard (as outlined in policy H5) for the type of dwelling/number of bedrooms. As such, all flats are considered acceptable in this regard.

Accessibility and lifetime homes

6.5.9 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’.

6.5.10 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.

6.5.11 By providing Reading’s residents, particularly those in most need, with access to high quality housing that meets their requirements and safeguards their quality of life, the overall quality and standard of accommodation strongly supports the requirements of Policy H5. Accordingly, the quality of the accommodation provided is a key tangible planning benefit in the overall planning balance of considerations for this proposal.

Crime prevention design

6.5.12 A number of suggestions have been received from the Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor relating to security on the site. These elements are considered necessary and reasonable and could be covered by the recommended condition.

6.6 Natural environment

6.6.1 The Local Plan recognises the importance of natural features, the valuable contribution they can make to a place and to people’s quality of life, especially in a developed urban area like Reading. There is a need for development in such locations to take all opportunities realistically available to integrated additional natural features into the overall design. These include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting etc. This is a key aspect in

demonstrating the Council's ambition and commitment to tackling climate change and supported through the Council's Tree Strategy.

- 6.6.2 The current site is occupied by vacant commercial buildings and hard standing. The site contains no soft landscaping or natural vegetation. Considering the site's size and proximity to the IDR, the opportunities for significantly enhanced greening are currently limited. Whilst acknowledging the absence of any ecological and environmental contribution, there is the need to consider how the site's natural environmental role can be substantially enhanced as part of the development.
- 6.6.3 As described above, as a result of engagement with Officers, tree officers have commented that due to limited opportunity for additional tree planting alternative green wall options should be considered. The applicant has provided an amended plan with provision of a green wall to the rear of the site. Due to the limited space to the front of the property, it is considered in this particular instance that provision of additional green infrastructure on the site would broadly meet, and improve the green coverage of the area, and officers are satisfied that this would meet policy EN14. Tree officers have also expressed concerns that the planting would be limited within the frontage, and that trees would have the possibility to conflict with the building resulting in pressure to prune. The full details of trees will form a condition and all care will be given to ensure that there would be no conflict between landscaping and the proposed building.
- 6.6.4 In considering the level of 'greening' that can be realistically secured on a previously developed site in a central urban location, Officers are now of the view that from a natural environment perspective, the development provides a meaningful contribution to the town's environment and performs a considerably greater role than the existing vacant commercial unit does. The green wall, tree planting and soft landscaping is an innovative and considered package to enhance green infrastructure on this brownfield site in a prominent location on a busy road frontage. This positive contribution is afforded significant weight in the overall balance.

Ecology and trees

- 6.6.5 The Council's Ecologist has raised no objection to the proposal subject to conditions ensuring habitat enhancement measures be secured. Tree planting to the front of the site has been carefully considered, and including a limited amount of tree planting (due to services, functional aspects, and depth of setback) within tree pits to ensure services are not affected. The species selected are also able to grow without any potential for conflict with the building. In line with the forthcoming revised Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Action plan, tree planting can be secured as wildlife friendly (in line with an appropriately worded condition) to achieve compliance with policies.

6.7 Sustainability

- 6.7.1 Local Plan Policy H5 'Standards for New Housing' seeks that all new-build housing is built to high design standards. In particular, new housing should adhere to national prescribed space standards, water efficiency standards in excess of the Building Regulations, zero carbon homes standards (for major schemes), and provide at least 5% of dwellings as wheelchair user units. 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.

- 6.7.2 The applicant has submitted a sustainability and energy 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'.
- 6.7.3 The information submitted as part of the application demonstrates that through the measures outlined in the energy strategy, it is anticipated that a 35% improvement above Building Regulations Part L compliant baseline. In line with the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019), a S106 contribution will be provided to offset the remaining tonnes of CO₂. This is calculated as £50,400, and will be informed by a post completion review, to determine the actual performance of the building, and therefore an appropriate contribution.
- 6.7.4 In terms of decentralised energy, roof mounted Photo Voltaic cells have been determined to be a suitable technology to support the development in achieving a Zero Carbon strategy.
- 6.7.5 As described, a sustainable drainage strategy (SuDs) has also been submitted as part of the application. No objection is raised by the Local Flood Authority (RBC Transport), subject to conditions to secure a timetable for its implementation and details of management and maintenance of the scheme and its implementation in accordance with the approved details.
- 6.7.6 Officers are satisfied that the proposals demonstrate a good standard of sustainability and in particular the requirement adhering to zero carbon homes standards and therefore the development is policy compliant in this regard.

6.8 Transport

- 6.8.1 Vehicle access to the site is currently provided via Grear Knollys Street. Caversham Road and the surrounding road network all have extensive parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. The development proposes to move the existing vehicular accesses to the end of the site closest to Lion Court.
- 6.8.2 The site is located within Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per unit and 1 space per 10 units for visitor parking. There are 12 parking spaces proposed within the gated car park. The revised proposal indicates that 2 accessible parking will be provided for the proposed residential element of the development.
- 6.8.3 The proposed parking provision is recognised by the Transport Team as being below the Council's requirements. However, given the site's close proximity to the centre of Reading, and its easy access to public transport connections and the facilities within the town centre, a lower parking provision can be

supported in this location and is consistent with meeting the Council's Climate Change obligations. The surrounding road network all has parking restrictions preventing on-street parking, therefore, a reduction in the parking provision will also not lead to on street parking being detrimental to road safety. Parking permit restriction conditions would be applied.

- 6.8.4 The Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD states that developments of more than 10 residential units in the town centre should provide or support a car club on the site or demonstrate that the development will have access to and the use of a car club on a nearby site. Agreement has been reached for provision or access to a nearby car club to be secured via the S106 agreement.
- 6.8.5 Policy TR5 of the Local Plan states that "*Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.*" In view of this, the development must provide at least 1no. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point to promote the use of renewable electric vehicles at time of build. The proposals include the provision of 2no electric vehicle charging points and this could be secured via condition.
- 6.8.6 All the proposed cycle parking will be secure and accessible via pin pad-controlled entry points.
- 6.8.7 Finally, with regard to refuse and waste, the proposed bin store is considered to be conveniently located on the ground floor of the site which will provide easy access for refuse collection from Great Knollys Street, although details of storage of the 1100L bins within 10m of the collection point is yet to be demonstrated, and a condition will cover this. Therefore, from a transport perspective, no objections are raised to the highway safety, access or parking elements of the scheme.

6.9 S106/Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.9.1 The proposals would be liable for CIL and the liability is projected to be £518,839. Albeit this may decrease in practice as the applicant could apply for relief on the on-site affordable housing units and or deferral of payment as permitted under new legislation enacted because of Covid19.
- 6.9.2 A construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan would also be secured via the section 106 legal agreement as per the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD. This could be in the form of a site-specific plan or equivalent a financial contribution. As such, the S106 will secure this in a flexible manner covering both options.
- 6.9.3 With regard to a planning obligation, a Section 106 Agreement would be required to secure the following heads of terms as described in this report:
- Secure the agreed level of onsite affordable housing (6 x affordable rent, and 6 x shared ownership);
 - £84,000 Open Space contribution to improve and extend facilities within the nearby parks;
 - Secure resident access to a car club on the site or demonstrate that the development will have access to and the use of a car club on a nearby site.

- Offset the remaining tonnes of CO2 not being captured by the redevelopment as per the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019), estimated to be £50,400 (To be reviewed based on a post completion certification).
- Secure a construction phases Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution. As calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013).

6.9.4 Policies CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) allow for necessary contributions to be secured to ensure that the impacts of a scheme are properly mitigated. It is considered that each of the obligations referred to above would comply with the NPPF 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.

6.10 Other matters

Equalities Impact

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

Representations

6.10.2 No letters of representation have been received at the time of writing.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), an assessment to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations (which include the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

7.2 The proposed development would see the loss of an employment use outside of a designated core employment area. As above, policy CR12b seeks to ensure that 'where possible' employment uses are re-provided on site, the now vacant commercial unit, is not highly accessible allowing for deliveries from the strategic road network, the potential conflict between continued commercial/industrial use on the site and residential uses, and the significant demand for affordable housing as proposed would weigh heavily in favour of the loss of the employment use and would outweigh the requirements of policy CR12b.

7.3 The site currently appears as a notable gap within the street scene. The proposed design, and redevelopment of this brownfield site with a high quality modern design is considered to positively reflect the character and appearance of the area, and will enhance the appearance of the street with the inclusion of landscaping, and activation of this area without harming the setting of nearby local listed buildings. The proposal would provide a boost

to the housing supply of the borough in a highly sustainable and accessible location.

- 7.4 Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations presented, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions, completion of a S106 Legal Agreement as set out in this report.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

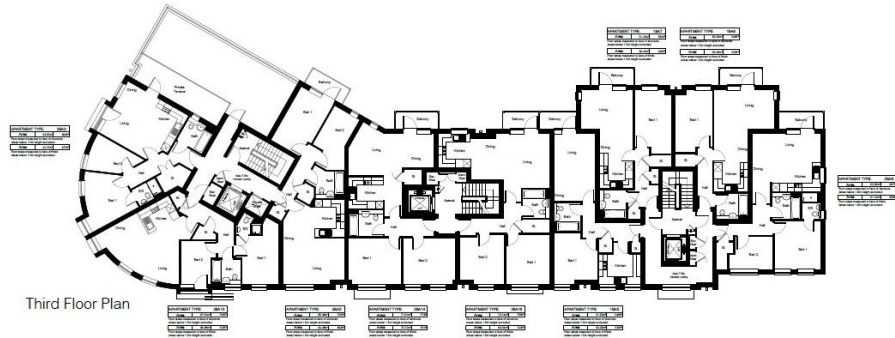
8. Plans



Site Plan



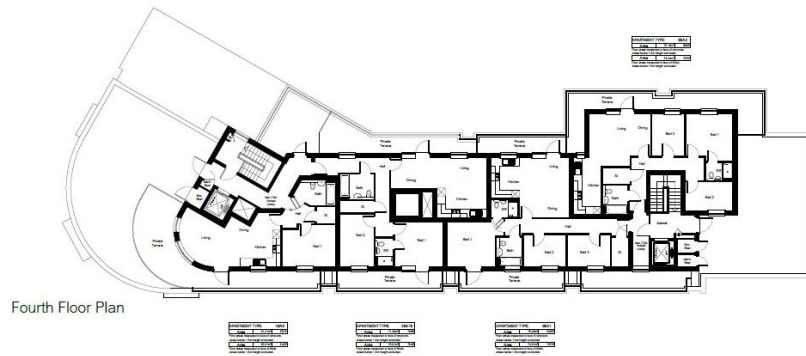
Typical floor plan (ground to third floor)



Third Floor Plan

apartment block third floor plan

Fourth floor plan



Fourth Floor Plan

apartment block fourth floor plan

Fifth floor plan



Great Knollys Streetscene



Great Knollys Street Elevation



Great Knollys Street Elevation



Rear Elevation



Rear Elevation



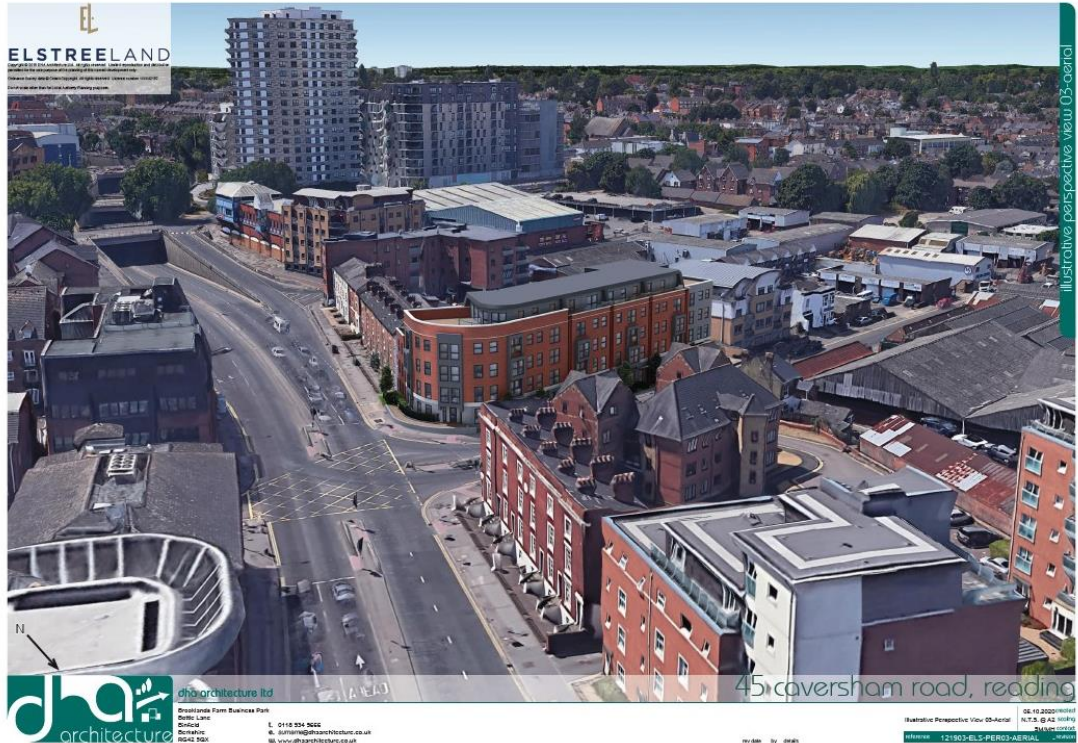
Rear elevation





 dha architecture ltd
 Bishopslands Farm Business Park
 Bode Lane
 Oxford
 Berkshire
 RG42 5GR

45 caversham road, reading
 Apartment Block Elevations
 22.10.2020/rev01
 1:100 @ A1 scaling
 SPR/MS/MS
 121103-APT-E2

Caversham Road Elevation and side elevation




 dha architecture ltd
 Bishopslands Farm Business Park
 Bode Lane
 Oxford
 Berkshire
 RG42 5GR

45 caversham road, reading
 Illustrative Perspective View 05-Aerial
 04.10.2020/rev01
 A1:1:25 @ A4 scaling
 SPR/MS/MS
 121103-ELS-PERC-AERIAL

Aerial perspective