

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 21st July 2021

Ward: Abbey

App No: 210349/FUL

Address: 115 Chatham Street, Reading, RG1 7JX

Proposal: Demolition of the existing buildings on site and erection of a 3 - 5 storey building to provide 54 residential units (Class C3). Provision of private and communal external amenity areas, car and cycle parking and refuse storage.

Applicant: Archel Homes Ltd

Received Date: 4 March 2021

13 Week Target Date: 18 Aug 2021 (Pending agreement)

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- i) **GRANT** full planning permission subject to
- ii) (1) no objection being raised by RBC's Ecology consultants to the satisfactory submission of a Bat Survey, and
- iii) (2) 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 consisting of 16 units (6x one-bedroom, 8x two-bedroom and 2x three-bedroom), of which 12 would be for Reading Affordable Rent and 4 shared ownership.
- In the event that an Affordable Housing provider is not secured. The developer to pay to the Council the 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. To be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation
- The developer to fund the provision of a car club bay on the surrounding highway network for a duration of 5 years.
- The provision of one car club vehicle should be provided on first occupation of the development.
- The car club usage should be reviewed on an annual basis to establish whether a second vehicle is required.
- A contribution of £5,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order to provide a car club bay, to be paid prior to commencement of the development.
- The applicant is required to enter into a S278 Agreement to provide the following:
 - Footpath access to the residential units and associated landscaping along the Chatham Street frontage

- Access to the parking area / service access to the rear of the site.
- Car club bay on Eaton Place to the south of the site
- Secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution (contribution as calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013)) - payable on commencement.

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 18 August 2021 (unless the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services Officers agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

Conditions:

1. THREE YEAR 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. SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (TO BE IMPLEMENTED)
7. LANDSCAPING LARGE SCALE (TO BE APPROVED)
8. HABITAT ENHANCEMENT SCHEME (TO BE APPROVED)
9. DEMOLITION (BATS)
10. DEM outside bird nesting season
11. SECURED BY DESIGN (TO BE APPROVED)
12. NOISE MITIGATION SCHEME AND TESTING (AS SPECIFIED)
13. NOISE ASSESSMENT & MITIGATION BUTLER PH (TO BE SUBMITTED)
14. CONTAMINATED LAND ASSESSMENT (TO BE SUBMITTED)
15. REMEDIATION SCHEME (TO BE SUBMITTED)
16. REMEDIATION SCHEME (IMPLEMENT AND VERIFICATION)
17. UNIDENTIFIED CONTAMINATION
18. HOURS OF CONSTRUCTION/DEMOLITION (STANDARD)
19. CONSTRUCTION METHOD STATEMENT (TO BE SUBMITTED)
20. NO BONFIRES
21. VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
22. VEHICULAR ACCESS (AS SPECIFIED)
23. REFUSE STORE (AS SPECIFIED)
24. CYCLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
25. SUDS (AS SPECIFIED)
26. PARKING PERMITS 1
27. PARKING PERMITS 2
28. EV CHARGING POINTS
29. ADAPTABLE UNITS
30. EXTERNAL LIGHTING (TO BE APPROVED, IF ANY IS PROPOSED)
31. PROVISION/RETENTION OF LIFTS

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. | Parking Permits |
| 13. | Ongoing information conditions |
| 14. | Access construction |
| 15. | Canopies and structures overhanging the highway |
| 16. | Noise mitigation measures available to reduce the risk of later complaints to adjoining venues |

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site for which this application relates is 0.42 hectares and fronts north onto Chatham Street and south on to Eaton Place. The site is occupied by two buildings and a large proportion of the site is given over to car parking. The first of the two buildings, an uninspiring two-storey office building, fronts directly onto Chatham Street. The second building, an older two-storey converted warehouse, is located to the rear of the office building and is largely obscured by the insensitive siting of the first building. At present, the remainder of the site is entirely covered by hardstanding.
- 1.2 The site is located within close vicinity to Reading town centre providing easy access to local amenities and is within short walking distance of two railway stations. The immediate area is characterised by a mix of large-scale modern residential developments (Chatham Place/Square, Weldale Street), traditional small scale retail (along Oxford Road), dated office and commercial uses (Eaton Place and Eaton Court), and finally a range of community uses such as the Chatham Street Surgery, The Butler PH, The Face Bar, The Reading Irish Centre and Church of the Holy Trinity, Oxford Road. Both Oxford Road and Chatham Street are busy arterial routes connecting West Reading with the IDR and across into the Town Centre. This gives the area a strong urban neighbourhood/town centre character as defined by the National Model Design Code (2021).
- 1.3 With reference to the adopted Local Plan, the application site is within the 'West Side Major Opportunity Area', and specifically within a site allocation known as 'CR12c'. CR12 includes Chatham Street, Eaton Place and parts of Oxford Road.
- 1.4 The site is not located within a Conservation Area, although the northern boundary of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area is located approximately 50 metres to the south. However, there are a number of listed buildings adjoining the site. These consist of the Grade II listed Butler PH directly adjacent to the site to the east (known as The Butler) and there are two Grade II listed buildings situated 50m to the south-west of the site (Trinity Church and 118 Oxford Road) and 65m to the southeast, the Royal Meteorological Society at 104 Oxford Road. There are also no locally-

listed buildings within or within close vicinity of the site. The site is also situated within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk).

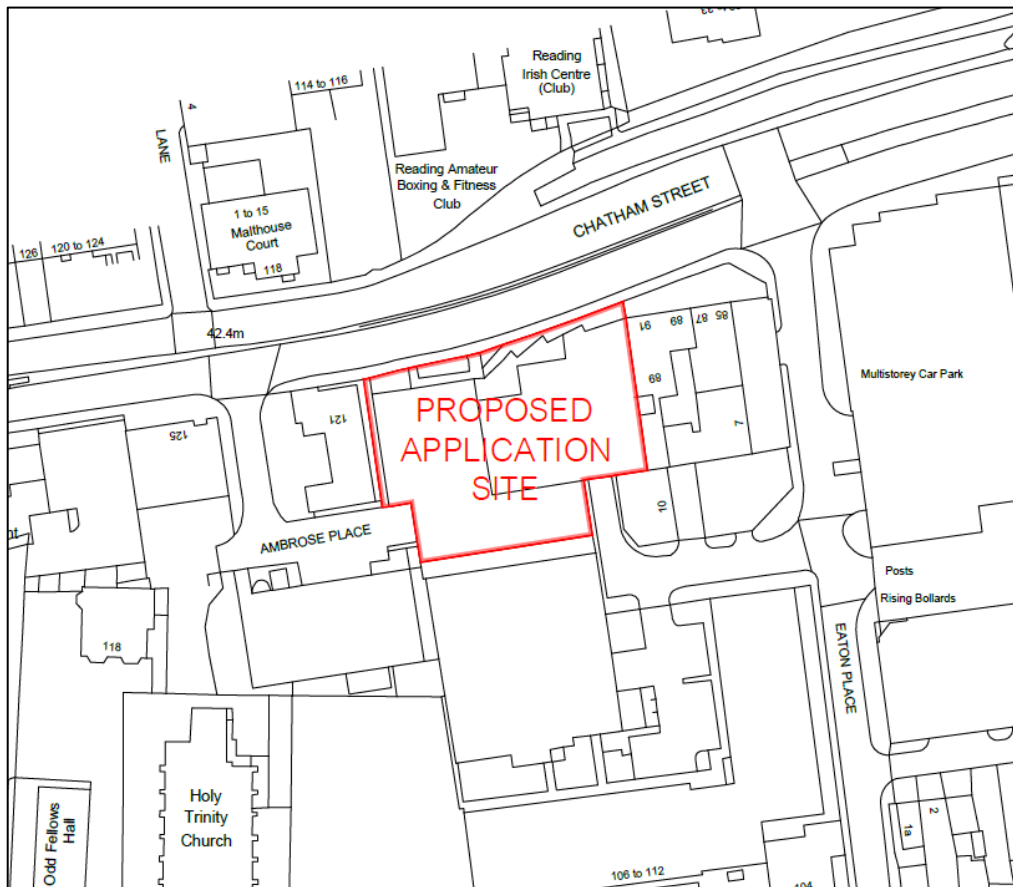


Figure 1 - Extract from site location Plan

- 1.5 Vehicular access is gained from the south off Eaton Place. The site can also be accessed by pedestrians from the south along Eaton Place, the west via Chatham Street. The site is accessible via public transport along Oxford Road, with frequent bus links into Reading town centre. Reading West Station is approximately 9 minutes' walk and Reading Station is an 11 minute walk.



Figure 2 - Aerial image looking south showing application site and buildings to be removed (Google maps 2021)

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the replacement with a new residential apartment block to accommodate 54 units together with car and cycle parking and private and communal amenity space. The development would provide a range of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments. Of the 54 units, 16 will be affordable (equating to 30%).
- 2.2 Vehicular access will be maintained to the rear via Eaton Place and pedestrian and cycle access will be from both Chatham Street and Eaton Place. A total of 15 vehicular spaces (including 2 disabled-accessible spaces) and 32 cycle parking spaces (within a secure part of the building) will be provided.
- 2.3 The proposal includes new areas of soft landscaping, including new tree and shrub planting in order to enhance the site's contribution within the immediate area. In addition, private 'winter gardens' and balconies for the apartments are proposed, along with a rear communal amenity area and an accessible roof terrace at third floor level.



Fig 3 - CGI visual of proposal (view south west across Chatham Street)

- 2.4 It should be noted that a suite of revised plans was received on the 18th June 2021.

In summary, the revisions consist of the following:

- Reduction in parking from 17 to 15 parking spaces (equating to 0.27 spaces per dwelling)
- Inclusion of obscure windows on the side elevation fronting The Butler Public House (as requested by Officers)
- Provision of additional landscaping details (as requested by our Natural Environment Team)
- New CGI (Illustrative View 6) showing how the proposal sits alongside both Eaton Court and Eaton Place developments (as requested by Officers and Cllrs).

- 2.5 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

Original proposed plans submitted with application:

022014-ARC-01	Presentation Planning Layout
022014-ARC-02	Supporting Planning Layout
022014-ARC-03	Location Plan
022014-ARC-04	Illustrative Block Plan
022014-ARC-PER01	Illustrative Perspective View 01
022014-ARC-PER02	Illustrative Perspective View 02
022014-ARC-PER03	Illustrative Perspective View 03
022014-ARC-PER04	Illustrative Perspective View 04
022014-ARC-PER05	Illustrative Perspective View 05
022014-ARC-SS	Streetscene
022014-ARC-E1	Apartment Block - Elevations
022014-ARC-E2	Apartment Block - Elevations
022014-ARC-P1	Apartment Block - Ground Floor Plan
022014-ARC-P2	Apartment Block - First & Second Floor Plan
022014-ARC-P3	Apartment Block - Third Floor Plan
022014-ARC-P4	Apartment Block - Fourth Floor Plan

Supporting statements:

Design and Access Statement DHA Architecture
Transport Statement and Travel Plan i-Transport
Daylight / Sunlight Assessment EB7
Phase I Desk Based Study ENZYGO
Archaeology and Heritage Statement EDP
Sustainability and Drainage SuDS Water Environment
Ecology Assessment Aspect Ecology
Landscape Plan Aspect Landscape
Energy and Sustainability Statement XCO2
Air Quality Assessment XCO2
Acoustic Assessment XCO2
Utilities Statement XCO2
Ventilation and Extract Statement XCO2
Open Space Assessment Boyer

2.6 Revised plans/documents received 17 June 2021

022014-ARC-03-REVB	Site Location Plan
022014-ARC-04-REVB	Proposed Block Plan
022014-ARC-01-REVB	Proposed Site Layout
022014-ARC02-REVB	Proposed Site Layout (in black and white)
022014-ARC-P1-REVA	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
022014-ARC-P2-REVA	Proposed First and Second Floor Plan
022014-ARC-P3-REVA	Proposed Third Floor Plan
022014-ARC-SS-REVA	Proposed Street Scene

2.7 Revised documents received 29 June 2021

Noise Technical Note

3. PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history associated with this proposal.

200748/PREAPP Pre-application Engagement - The applicant has engaged with in a collaborative way with the Council. This have involved four pre-application meetings, involving Planners, Heritage, Landscaping/Sustainability and Highways Officers. The Council's final pre-application advice was provided on 22 December 2020. This advice has directly informed this application submission.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 RBC Transport

No objection subject to conditions.

4.2 RBC Environmental Protection

No objections in relation to noise, air quality, contaminated land and construction and demolition phase subject to conditions see discussion below in Appraisal section.

4.3 RBC Ecology

No objection subject to receipt of a satisfactory bat survey which demonstrates no evidence of bats.

Officer comments - The bat survey is currently underway and results expected for inclusion in the update report. The recommendation reflects this outstanding information.

4.4 RBC Natural Environment Team (Landscape)

No objection. Further details are required of tree species and surface water observations.

4.5 RBC Housing Officer

Supports the on-site affordable housing offer and the policy compliant tenure split.

4.6 Crime Prevention Design Advisor

No comments received.

4.7 RBC Sustainability/Energy Officer

No comments received.

4.8 Thames Water

No objection.

4.9 Conservation and Urban Design Officer

No objection subject to conditions. Conservation Officer comments included below for completeness:

“The site 115 Chatham Road has a listed Grade II property on its eastern boundary.

I have been involved in two pre-app design evolution works for this site. During this process the proposed design has evolved and been amended to address the site of the historic Butlers Public house.

The current proposal is lower on the eastern side (3 storeys) adjacent to the listed building, but then the steps up to towards the west (5 storeys).

The context, scale and materials of the current proposal was discussed and considered quite carefully in relation to the historic Public House, during the two pre-app I attended. The final design has evolved and is supported.

The owner of the Listed building has raised the issue of whether the use of the Pub as a live music is an existing issue, that needs to be allowed for as a material consideration. So this should be considered as part of the consent, in addition to a standard materials condition to ensure the new development enhances the setting which includes the heritage building.

Conclusion

The scheme is considered appropriate and is supported, subject to the standard material condition and details allowing for sound attenuation for live music.”

4.10 Public representations

A site notice was displayed at the site viewable from the public realm for the requisite period. At the time of writing, five letters of representation have been received objecting to the development, including a letter from the owner of the Butler Pub. The letters raise the following summarised issues:

- Need to preserve our town’s vital nightlife venues. This application threatens the existence of an important venue in Reading’s limited array of live venues and entertainment spaces (The Face Bar). Considered a cornerstone of Reading’s music/gig heritage.
- Six of these flats are single aspect, north-facing only, overlooking a busy roadway. A further three have a second aspect looking directly at the neighbouring surgery building, which only looks to be a couple of metres away.
- RBC should not be accepting this percentage of north, single-facing units. North-facing glazing is poor for heating loss.
- Development is likely to be too close to Face Bar and the sound of the bar is likely to be complained about by the new residents and may well have an adverse effect on the renewal of their licence.
- The parking provision for this central location is too high and against ambitions for increasing active travel. Only disabled persons’ spaces and car club/drop off/loading spaces should be provided.

Letter from the owner of The Butler PH summarised as follows:

- Overlooking impact

There is no assessment as to how the provision for a 14 room boutique hotel (planning permission ref.180365/FUL) has been respected within the application 210349. This compromises the achieved permission 180365/FUL, as the design will allow overlooking into part of the approved proposals.

- Live music and cultural events

Without live music, the Butler would not be a financially viable establishment. It is important in accessing this application that these rights are both returned and even promoted and protected by Reading Borough Council.

- Current planning on the Butler site

As the Council is aware - through correspondence with your officers over the last 2 years - the adjoining owner of the Grade II listed building the 'Butler' has been and is currently working up a scheme for the adjoining site following receipt for approval of a 'boutique' hotel in 2019 (application 180365/FUL).

This relies on the ability to gain natural light coming from the west (ie from the direction of 115 Chatham Street). Whilst this application for 115 Chatham Street is unlikely to directly impact on the pre-application proposals submitted to Reading Borough Council, we would request that the concept of sourcing natural light from the westerly direction for future applications is not restricted due to permittance of east facing windows providing views for habitable rooms.

- Impact on the Listed Building

We feel that this application should include an assessment of any potential harm to the Listed Building caused by the application before determination can be made.

- Greater Pedestrian Permeability

We believe that there is a good opportunity to open up the eastern boundary of this application with the Butler and Eaton Place beyond through a co-ordinated approach in compliance with figure 5.4 of the Local Plan.

Officer comments - These comments are noted and are dealt with in the Appraisal section of this report below.

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 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.3 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.4 The following relevant planning policy and guidance is applicable to the assessment of this application.

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

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

CR12: WEST SIDE MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA
CR12c: CHATHAM STREET, EATON PLACE AND OXFORD ROAD

Supplementary Planning Documents

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

Other Reading Borough Council documents

Reading Tree Strategy (2020)
Reading Open Space Strategy Update Note (2018)
Reading Open Space Strategy (2007)
Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Reading Borough Council

Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (Updated 2021)
National Design Guide (2019)
National Model Design Code (2021)
Guidance Notes for Design Codes (2021)
Nationally described space standards (2015)
Section 66(1) of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Section 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)
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
Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice (BRE 209), P. Littlefair, 2011

6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are the following headings:

- 6.1 Principle of development
- 6.2 Heritage and design
- 6.3 Amenity
- 6.4 Natural environment
- 6.5 Health and wellbeing
- 6.6 Sustainability
- 6.7 Transport
- 6.8 S106/Community Infrastructure Levy
- 6.9 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. This 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, 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 Policy CC1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) 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 Framework (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 (Para. 117 NPPF).
- 6.1.4 A key Government objective is to significantly boost the supply of new homes (Section 5 of the NPPF), and the local housing requirement is set out within Policy H1 (of the Reading Borough Local Plan RBLP).
- 6.1.5 The wider principle of re-development is established under Local Plan housing allocation Policy CR12 and specifically sub area CR12c for which this land parcel sits. Specifically, CR12c states:

CR12c, CHATHAM STREET, EATON PLACE AND OXFORD ROAD:

Development of this area will be primarily for residential, with potential for community uses. There may also be some small scale retail and leisure uses on the Oxford Road frontage. This area is surrounded by heritage assets or low-rise residential, and inappropriate building scale at the fringes of the site will not be permitted. There is an opportunity to enhance the Oxford Road frontage, including with tree planting.

Site size: 1.15 ha Indicative potential: 180-260 dwellings.

6.1.6 The local plan is clear that development of this sub-area will be primarily for residential, with potential for community uses. There may also be some small-scale retail and leisure uses on the Oxford Road frontage. The wider allocation recognises the site is surrounded by Heritage Assets or low-rise residential, and importantly establishes the guiding principle that inappropriately scaled buildings at the fringes of the site will not be permitted. This policy also recognises the opportunity to enhance key frontages including via appropriate tree planting. This site is recognised as being on the fringe of the allocation site and a key frontage onto Chatham Street. The parameters set by this policy are applied in tandem with wider in-principle policies securing appropriate densities, appropriate design, affordable housing provision and mixes of new residential development. See below policy map extract (Fig 4).

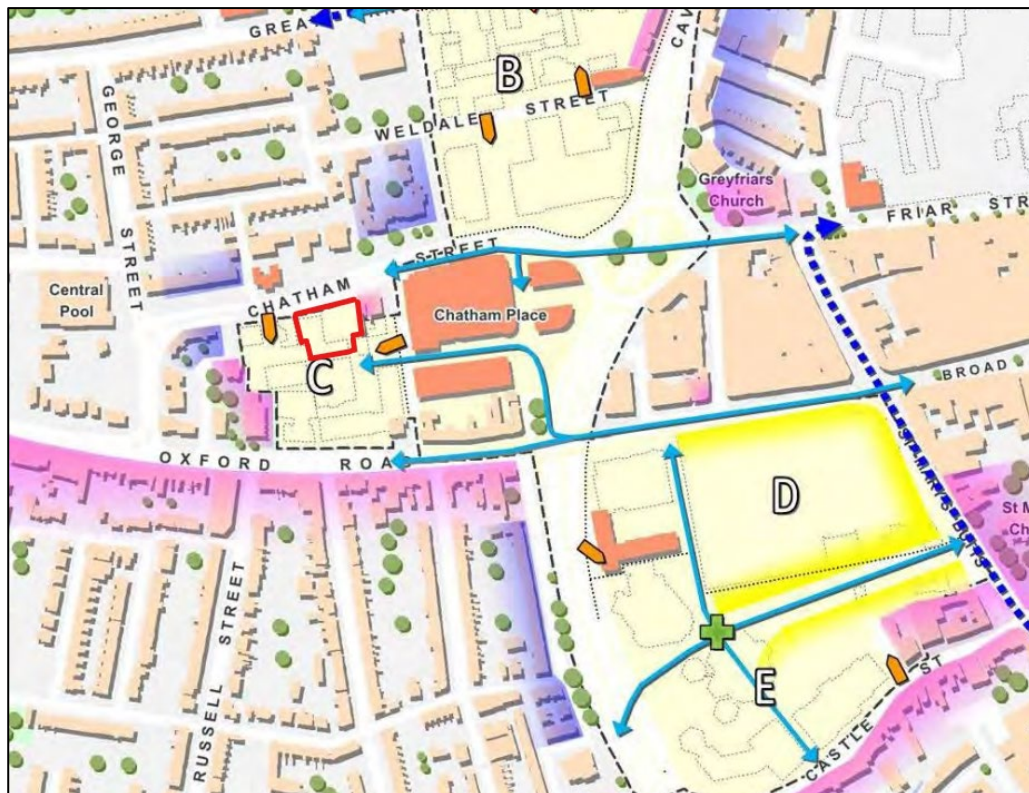


Fig 4 - Local Plan Extract - Policy CR12c (Development site highlighted in red)

6.1.7 With regard to the loss of commercial floorspace, the site is not located within a defined employment area, primary retail frontage or covered by any policies that seek to protect the existing vacant commercial units. The existing use of either building could, via current permitted development rights, be converted into a range of other uses including residential via the prior approval process, thereby resulting in the loss of all employment-generating uses on site. Furthermore, it should be noted that from 1st September 2020, the permitted use of either building changed to Class E (flexible commercial use) which encompasses a much broader category of residential compatible *'commercial, business and service'* uses.

6.1.8 Paragraph 121 of the NPPF advises Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, LPAs should be supporting proposals which, *"use retail and employment land for*

homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres". Local Plan Policy RL1 relates to the network and hierarchy of centres and identifies Reading as the regional centre within the area. This policy highlights the need for new development to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres. This has become of increased importance following Covid19 which has introduced increased levels of uncertainty in commercial property market in the borough and across the region.

- 6.1.9 The site allocation policy makes logical reference to non-residential uses being located to the Oxford Road frontage. As there is no explicit requirement for retail or community uses in the northern part of the allocation, nor reference to the requirements of each landowner within the allocation, a residential-only scheme on this part of CR12c allocation would not be inconsistent with the overarching spatial strategy for the site as set by the Local Plan. In its broadest sense, the Local Plan (through its allocation) recognise that the low-density buildings and car park which occupy it, constitute a valuable development opportunity which can positively contribute to meeting the borough's ongoing housing need and the regeneration of this part of town.

Housing mix and density

- 6.1.10 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 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 on such sites.
- 6.1.11 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 opportunities for increased density taking place in the most accessible locations. This does not override other planning 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 the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located and its current and future level of accessibility.
- 6.1.12 Within the Local Plan, indicative densities for different areas are set out in Local Plan extract Figure 4.5. The supporting text goes on to acknowledge that the criteria discussed above may indicate that a different density may be appropriate based on the individual site characteristics.
- 6.1.13 The proposed development seeks 54 units. This would equate to a density of approximately 370 dwellings per hectare (dph). When considered against the Local Plan allocation (Indicative total potential: 180-260 dwellings), which itself is significantly higher than the indicative density range for the location as defined in Figure 4.5, the site allocation would be expected to deliver a greater number of dwellings than the site's indicative local plan capacity. Whilst density is recognised as a useful indicator in seeking to meet housing

targets, it is not generally a good indicator of the likely form, quality or appropriateness of any scheme, and as such these factors must be looked at in more detail later in this report.

6.1.14 On the whole, the site is highly accessible by public transport as well as by walking and cycling, and the Local Plan recognises the opportunities available to increase density to help to meet identified needs. Therefore, it is considered that such density range is not precluded yet must be considered in tandem with all other policy criteria which consider the existing character of the area and issues such as heritage, which will be covered separately in this response.

6.1.15 With regard to dwelling mix, Policy H2 states that:

“Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.”

Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) goes on to specify that residential developments within the town centre area (for which this area lies) should incorporate a maximum of 40% of 1-bedroom units and a minimum of 5% of 3 bedroom units.

The submission identifies the following mix of units:

Dwelling Size	Affordable	Market	Total	Percentage
1 bedroom apartment	6	20	25	47%
2 bedroom apartment	8	18	26	49%
3 bedroom apartment	2	0	2	4%
Total	16	38	54	100%

Figure 5 - Proposed unit mix

6.1.16 The proposal therefore provides a slightly higher proportion of 1-bedroom and slightly lower proportion of 3-bedroom units. The Local Plan at 4.4.13 recognises that Reading is likely to provide a significantly greater proportion of smaller dwellings than its neighbours in the Western Berkshire HMA. Furthermore, given the site’s central location, adjoining a series of busy arterial routes, it is not considered the site would be the most desirable location for which to prescriptively apply the Local Plan housing mix.

6.1.17 Therefore, based on individual site characteristics and the appropriateness and range of units proposed, the proposal is not considered to wholly conflict with the requirement of Policies H2 and CR6 nor weigh heavily against the scheme.

Affordable housing

6.1.18 Affordable Housing is a key identified 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.

- 6.1.19 The Council's currently adopted Affordable Housing SPD (2020) 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 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 including service charges is required to meet the borough's most pressing needs.
- 6.1.20 More recently in May 2021, the Housing Minister made a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament which sets out the implementation of the First Homes policy. It comes into effect from 28th June 2021 with a 6-month transition period (to 28th December 2021). First Homes must make up 25% of the affordable housing requirement on a site. After this 25% has been identified, the remaining balance of affordable housing is split in accordance with local policy. For RBC this is as set out in paragraph 6.1.19.
- 6.1.21 It should be noted that planning consents secured before 28th December 2021 or 28 March 2022 (if "significant" pre-app undertaken) are not be required to secure First Homes. As such Officers can confirm that First Homes are not required to be secured on this site.
- 6.1.22 The proposed development would provide 16 affordable housing units on site, the mix of which is set out in Figure 5 above. In order to meet the Council's desired tenure mix, 10 of the units would need to be for affordable rent, with the remaining 6 in shared ownership. Through negotiation your officers, the proposed affordable housing tenure has been amended to provide 12 units at affordable rent (75%) and 4 units at shared ownership (25%). The alteration to the tenure mix provides the LPA with an above policy compliant provision of affordable rented units (most in demand) which would respond to the borough's most pressing housing needs. Overall, the affordable housing provision remains at a policy compliant 30%, however, of added benefit is the fact the Applicant has advised agreement of this quantum and tenure mix with ABRI, a local registered affordable housing provider (RP).
- 6.1.23 In the unlikely event that following an approval, an Affordable Housing provider is not secured, a clause will be inserted into the Legal Agreement requiring the developer to pay to the Council a sum equivalent to 15% of the Gross Development Value of the 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 (2020).
- 6.1.24 A policy compliant quantum and above policy compliant tenure split along with the agreement of a Registered housing provider is considered to be a significant public benefit of the proposal and provides a welcome contribution to addressing local affordable housing needs in the borough. This would be secured via S106 agreement and be considered as part of the overall planning balance for the scheme in a later section of this report.

6.2 Heritage and design

- 6.2.1 Section 12 of the NPPF 'Achieving well-designed places', reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring

the creation of inclusive and high-quality places. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF includes the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

- 6.2.2 Policy CC7 'Design and the Public Realm' sets out local top-level requirements to design. It requires that all developments must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. In the absence of local design guidance, LPAs will be expected to defer to the National Design Guide 2019 (NDG) and National Model Design Code (2021) which can be used as material considerations in planning decisions.
- 6.2.3 The NDG is clear that well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places. The NDG identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of 'Context'. This 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' of such sites.
- 6.2.4 Any decision made affecting listed buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas must satisfy the statutory tests of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as the relevant policies within the NPPF and the Council's Local Plan.
- 6.2.5 Para 94 of the NPPF states that "*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.*" Para 196 goes on to state "*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal...*"
- 6.2.6 Policy EN1 of the Local Plan requires that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special character or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings. Reference is made within the submission to Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b), in considering the development in relation to the historic Public House to the east.
- 6.2.7 Policy EN6 requires that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development and that new development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.

- 6.2.8 Any proposal will be considered carefully against the above local and national policy objectives, under the following sub-headings.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 6.2.9 Earlier sections of this report have identified that the development is within close proximity and has the potential to affect the significance of the Grade II listed Butler PH. The significance of this building is discussed below prior to an impact assessment of the development under various headings.

Grade II listed Butler's Wine Vaults

- 6.2.10 In terms of significance, based on an assessment of the information provided within this application and available through existing records, this listed building is identified as deriving the majority of its heritage significance from its historic and architectural interests. It is an example of an early 19th Century public house, with decorative embellishments including fruit and flower carvings and the artistic advertisement for whisky. Similarly, it also derives artistic interest from these decorative embellishments, particularly concentrated on the street-facing northern elevation.
- 6.2.11 In terms of its setting, early maps show a continuous built-up street frontage, aligned east to west, along the southern side of Chatham Street. Towards the turn of the 20th Century, the Pub is shown as contained within a rectangular plot with a divided rear gardens/yard. This arrangement has broadly continued to the present day where the listed building is still experienced in its rectangular plot with outbuildings to the rear - albeit alterations. Otherwise, it is the only surviving building of the original terrace to the southern side of Chatham Street, as depicted on the historic maps. Clearance and redevelopment in the late 20th Century and early 2000s has converted the land immediately to the west into car parks and to the east into an extension of Eaton Place.
- 6.2.12 Modern buildings dominant its setting, including a nine-storey car park to the east, the modern office block within the Site to the west and a four-storey block of flats further to the north west. Chatham Street has also been converted to a dual carriageway and a traffic signal-controlled junction installed immediately to the north of the listed building. In these terms, the surviving pub plot and outbuildings positively contribute to the significance of the listed building, through historic and still extant functional connections. Its position on the Chatham Street frontage on also contributes to its significance, as well as providing a publicly accessible location from which to experience the building's principal elevation. Otherwise, its setting is predominantly the result of more recent development that bears no relation to the former setting of the listed building or terraced which once existed.
- 6.2.13 The car park and office building to the west are considered to make no positive contribution to the listed building's significance. The late Victorian warehouse-type building in the south of the site post-dates the Georgian Pub and was a later addition to the wider built environment and was never part of the Chatham Street frontage. According to the information provided with the application, this warehouse has no known historic or functional links with the listed building and is not considered to contribute to its significance.

- 6.2.14 Therefore, whilst officers acknowledge that the ‘openness’ of the carpark within the application site does allow for views of the western gable end of the pub and the plot boundary wall’s western elevation, these are elements which do not express any of the significance identified above (in terms of historic, archaeological, artistic or architectural interest), other than partial appreciation of its location within its historic, delineated and rectangular plot.
- 6.2.15 This element can be experienced from the east at the junction with Eaton Place, so is not considered a unique view into and across the site. Officers are also mindful that this view is only possible due to the demolition of the former terraced housing within the site, and there is no evidence that it was a designed or intended to be part of an enhancement of the listed building. Indeed, the applicant’s Heritage Assessment makes note of the fact that all of the artistic and architectural embellishments of the Pub are located on the primary north/street facing elevation.
- 6.2.16 Historically the Pub was once part of a domestic street, either side and opposite which were arranged dwellings, little doubt from which it drew most of its custom and for whom it would have formed a social hub for the local community, in a similar way it would function today if located in its original setting. The widespread demolition of the traditional urban fabric which surrounded the pub and depopulation of the immediate area, have weakened any past functional links and understanding of its purpose and role and have not contributed to the building’s significance of in any way.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 6.2.17 The development would result in the removal of an industrial warehouse building reportedly first shown on the 1899 Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map. This two-storey white-painted brick building is located to the back of the site behind the car park and the existing office building. The building does not benefit from any form of legal status or statutory protection, but given its age, the officers must consider it as a non-designated heritage asset in the consideration of this planning application. Due to its compromised setting, altered condition and absence of any reference for retention within the Local Plan allocation CR12c, there is no evidence to demonstrate it has any great level of local significance. If approved, a Level 1 Recording would be required to record the building details for historic records. This will be considered in the overall planning balance.

Layout

- 6.2.18 The existing low-quality office building, warehouse to the rear and associated car park would be replaced with a new residential block fronting onto Chatham Street. As described, the historic pattern of built form to the southern side of Chatham Street was almost entirely cleared during the last century in favour of isolated low-density commercial developments and car parking, which now characterised this part of Chatham Street. This left the Butler PH as the only building occupying an unchanged relationship to the street.

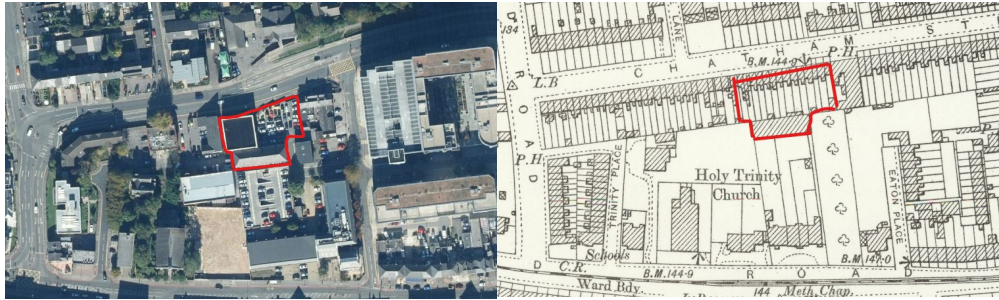


Fig 6 - Site approximate location (red) compared with OS 25 Inch 1892-1914 (Source maps.nls.uk 2020)

6.2.19 Whilst Chatham Street has been significantly altered from its former historic arrangement and built composition, the proposed development would effectively reinstate part of the historic pattern of built form along the frontage, albeit at a more modern scale commensurate with its location and relationship to other recent approved and built residential redevelopment schemes (Chatham Place, Weldale Street and 114 Oxford Road).

6.2.20 The proposed building line will reflect the existing gentle northwards curve in the road, seeking to maintain the primacy of the Butler PH (See Fig 7 below) by allowing part of its gable wall to be visible from the west. To the rear of the site, a setback will provide separation with the pending application live application for the adjoining development at Eaton Court (112 Oxford 200752).

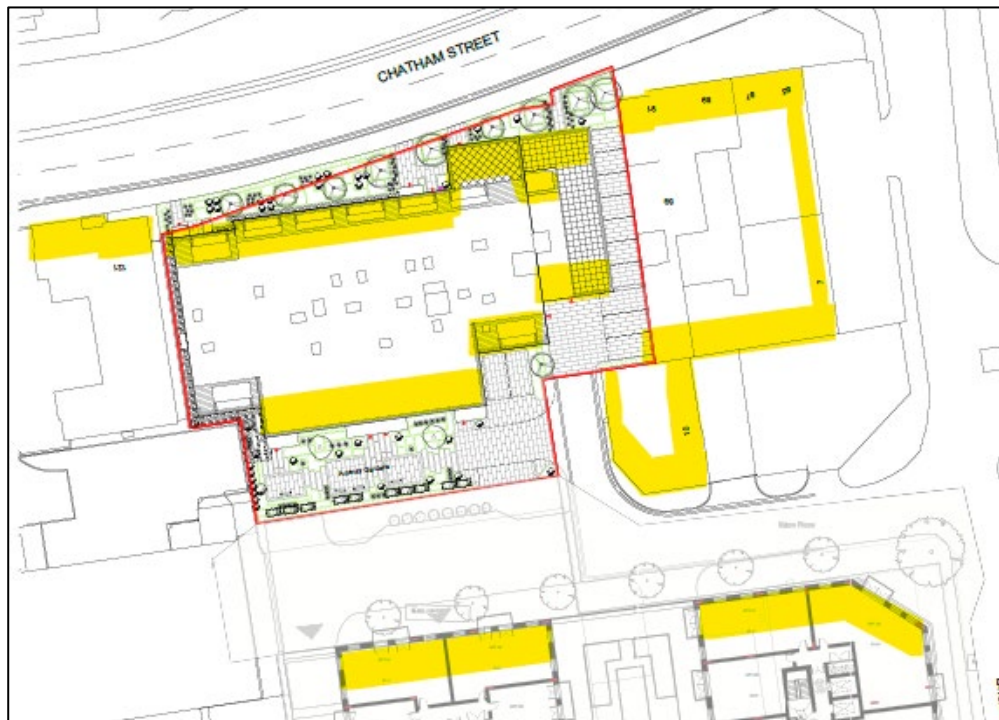


Fig 7 - Proposed frontages in relation to Chatham Street (north) and Eaton Place (south). Proposed 112 Oxford Road shown to the south.

6.2.21 The proposed development is considered to build on and respect the existing layout of surrounding development, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between the building and spaces in front of it and behind. The proposed footprint and frontages successfully aligns with the historic Butler PH and more modern Chatham Street Surgery to the

west. Furthermore, the proposed layout is not considered to prevent any wider development being brought forward on the CR12c site allocation.

6.2.22 The reinstatement of a building along Chatham Street is considered to be a logical and appropriate design response and contributes to fulfilling the aspirations of the strategic site allocation within the Local Plan, whilst reinforcing a traditional side-to-side arrangement of built form. Therefore, in this respect, the layout is considered to respond positively to its local context and reinforce the existing structure which exists at this part of town as required by Policy CC7, CR12c the NDG and NPPF.

Scale

6.2.23 As defined within the NDG, establishing an appropriate scale of built form is reliant upon establishing an appropriate relationship with the pattern, sizes and proportions of existing streets in the local area. Along Chatham Street there exists 3-storey apartments further west of the site, previously approved and pending applications for 4-storey apartments to the immediate west of the site (125 Chatham Street, reference 200752), and the very large-scale new developments to the east (Chatham Place). To the rear lies Eaton Place and 104-112 Oxford Road which both have applications pending for large scale redevelopments (reference 201104 and 210639). Many of the present rather dated office buildings along Oxford Road and Chatham Street are very much of their time, like the former Bottomline Technology building which sits on the site.



Fig 8 - Aerial view looking west along Chatham Street showing modern development to the west (Source Google Maps 2021).

6.2.24 When considering the scale of proposed development, it is necessary to acknowledge the degree to which Chatham Street and the Butler PH are themselves dominated by the overwhelming scale of Chatham Place and the multi-storey car park (see below). In particular, the physical form, scale and relatively limited articulation of the car park is already considered to compromise the setting and visibility of the listed building quite significantly. This does not inherently make any proposal on land to the west of the pub acceptable or remove the need for the Council to discharge its obligations under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)

Act 1990, however this context constitutes an important material consideration in the assessment of the street scene and arriving at an acceptable scale.

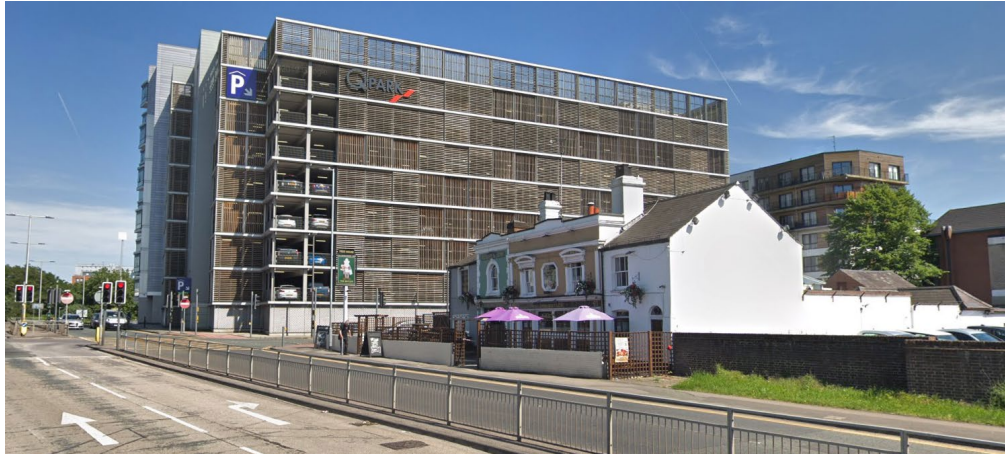


Fig 9 - View looking east towards Chatham Street Car Park (Source Google Maps 2021)

- 6.2.25 As described above, the pub did not always stand in proud isolation, however the current more recent context is that the building does now exist in isolation, and is the only building of its type, scale and age in the immediate vicinity. As in this case, where the scale of new development is very different to the existing historic scale, the NDG confirms it may be more appropriate to create a new identity rather than to scale up the character of an existing place (like the pub) in its former context.
- 6.2.26 The proposal development ranges from 3 to 5 storeys. This follows extensive pre-application engagement with officers, former Heritage Consultant, in-house Conservation and Urban Design Officer, and an independent design review (the Reading Design Review Panel (the DRP)). Through negotiation, the form and massing of the proposal has evolved over four iterations to address concerns raised.
- 6.2.27 The overall scale and massing of the proposed building recognises the established stepping-up in scale and form from existing buildings west to east and increase in scale towards the centre of the site allocation to the south. On this basis, the main part of the building appears four storeys in height, with a setback upper fifth storey. This is visually recessive in its detailed design. The scale of the eastern wing of the building alongside the pub is moderated to three storeys in order to transition and create a respectful relationship with the pub. This is considered to balance the substantial scale of the surrounding built character, whilst maintaining the distinctiveness of the Listed building.



Fig 10 - Street scene elevation showing transition in scale from east to west (Top) and transition between development and Butler Pub (bottom).

6.2.28 Following discussions with the Council’s Design Review Panel, the flank walls of the upper storey were reintroduced in order to create a much simpler and contemporary roof detail. This replaces the earlier proposed pitched roof which detracted from the character and style of the building and the adjoining listed building. The Panel also supported accommodating the fifth floor of accommodation to the rear of the building. They considered that the additional height would not adversely impact upon the Listed building as the increased massing would not be fully seen from Chatham Street, especially at street level. The scheme now includes a clearly defined parapet wall beyond the third-floor window head height with the pitched roof and dormers behind this feature. Officers agree that the parapet wall has the benefit of almost hiding the upper floor completely from view when seen from street level (See below).



Fig 11 - View across Chatham Street

6.2.29 In order to prevent views of the pub being entirely obscured when approaching west along Chatham Street, the proposed footprint was reduced

in order to set back the building from the frontage and increase the amount of meaningful soft landscaping that will be provided to the street frontage. This soft landscaping has the added benefit of providing much needed defensible space and privacy to occupant. The proposed building is now set back to align better with the pub, providing more visibility of the gable end in the street scene. The Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer is comfortable with the transition now proposed.

6.2.30 Despite the above design evolution and measures taken, it is recognised that the development of a multi-storey residential block to the west of the Listed Building would undoubtedly add to the cumulative negative impact on the setting of this Listed Building. Any introduction of a building of this scale and mass on 'undeveloped land' (a former car park) immediately to the west of the Butler PH, would introduce new built form which would alter views to/from the pub along Chatham Street and therefore cause harm to the setting of the Listed Building.

6.2.31 In summary, the building's height and massing is considered actively maintain a visual gap and transition to the adjoining Grade II listed Butler's Wine Vaults, yet respond likewise to the far greater scale of more modern development either constructed or planned in the immediate vicinity. Whilst juxtaposing with the modest scaled listed building, the scale is considered appropriate in such a central location within a defined opportunity area, and makes the most of the opportunities presented by the disparate scale and uses of surrounding buildings. As supported by the NDG, the proposal creates a new standalone identity rather than seeking to directly replicate or compete with the scale of the more modest listed building, however there ultimately remains an impact upon the setting of the listed building simply through the introduction of built form where none exists at present.

Design

6.2.32 Much of the site is presently dominated by car parking, and the buildings on site currently 'turn their back' on both Chatham Street and Eaton Place, which serves to create opportunities for antisocial behaviour through lack of surveillance to the street. The existing office building fronting onto Chatham Street is clad in vertical white plastic weatherboarding, has a flat roof, limited setback and no active surveillance or windows addressing the street. Such a building would nowadays be considered wholly inappropriate and unsympathetic to both its more historic neighbours and the aspiration for creating a more pleasant people-orientated street. The design of any redevelopment offers a valuable opportunity to not only provide more activity to Chatham Street, but enhance the setting of the adjoining Butler Wine Vaults as required by the statutory obligations contained under the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990 and Policy EN1 of the Local Plan.

6.2.33 The proposal's appearance, using a mixture of flat and parapet- cambered roofs with dormer windows, is designed to reflect the wider historic built environment in Reading, whilst maintaining a distinctly contemporary appearance. As mentioned, the stepped frontage is welcomed, along with individual private entrances and a communal entrance towards the northern Chatham Street frontage (See below).



Fig 12 - Individual private entrances and a communal entrance.

- 6.2.34 With regard to materials officers have encouraged a more contrasting, simpler materials palette on the three-storey section closest to the pub in order to ensure the pub remains a focal point and that the development does not compete with the ornateness and detail contained on that building. The proposal makes use of bricks to the façades, with more ornate brick detailing and a second, contrasting lighter grey brick is proposed to provide consistency and articulation. The lighter grey brick is considered particularly important in ensuring the proposal sits comfortably alongside the white and coloured rendered Pub without replicating it. The feature bay windows are detailed with projecting brickwork with an ornate “chequerboard” pulled header patterns. In addition, the building’s design employs bay elements that establish a rhythm, whilst emphasising verticality to ensure the proposed mass is visually broken down at street level.
- 6.2.35 Officers consider the appearance of the development and the proposed materials reflect the style and materials traditionally used within the local area but employ a much more contemporary and robust style when compared to late 20th Century cladding and rendered blocks of flats within the vicinity. The rear southern elevation contains projecting balconies, winter gardens, recessed brick detailing, yet less verticality, however this frontage also provides much greater domestic variation through residential entrances and communal open space than anything at present.
- 6.2.36 Further to the above, officers encouraged the applicant to enhance the public realm around the building as far as possible, providing more opportunity for both human interaction and additional soft landscaping (for which there is currently none along Eaton Place or Chatham Street). This led to the introduction of an area of amenity gardens to the southern elevation onto Eaton Place. This provides welcome relief to what is recognised as currently being a rather sterile and unpleasant urban back land environment. This area of amenity space not only considered to enliven and enhance what is currently a harsh and poorly-surveyed part of the site allocation, but in conjunction with residential entrances, seating areas and enclosed soft landscaping, will encourage greater resident/public interaction and create a whole new sense of place within the CR12c sub area allocation. In this respect the development is considered to perform a positive role and marks a welcome intervention into an area where this redevelopment will be the

first to deliver public realm improvements and a safe environment (see below) and allow other redevelopment parcels within the allocation area to be brought forward satisfactorily.



Figure 13 - CGI view looking northeast along Eaton Place (Rear elevation).

- 6.2.37 The proposal is considered to represent a robust contemporary design, and through its articulation and appropriate materials, successfully integrates with both the more modern developments to the east and more isolated traditional buildings within its vicinity like the Pub.
- 6.2.38 In summary, the design of this building is considered to respond positively to the opportunity created by the site's current lack of activation and seeks to raise design standards by not simply replicating surrounding buildings and spaces, but by creating a more positive sense of place than would not have otherwise existed at present.

Heritage balance

- 6.2.39 In returning to the national and local policy tests which govern the considering of such proposals on the setting of designated heritage assets, officers consider that the proposal would on the whole, have a negative impact (i.e. it would cause harm) to the existing setting of the Butler Pub due to the re-introduction of built form on its western flank elevation. The identified harm caused to the character and appearance of the Pub has been given considerable importance and weight in your officers' assessment of this scheme.
- 6.2.40 In this instance, officers consider that the harm caused to the setting of the Listed Building would be 'less than substantial', and result in a limited negative impact on the character and appearance of this building. As described earlier in this report, para 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 6.2.41 The only way to completely eliminate any such harm upon the current setting of the listed building would be to not develop the car park at all on the eastern portion of the application site, thereby retaining the current

openness and isolated setting of the listed building. This consequently would mean that any proposal along the entire Chatham Street frontage would not be able to come forward in the manner proposed, nor contribute meaningfully to the overall sub-area site allocation as defined by CR12c.

6.2.42 The incorporation of this car park into any scheme allows any new building to span the entire width of the site, creating a single coherent block which respects both the former historical importance of Chatham Street and its current role as a key arterial route to the town centre. Officers therefore consider that any proposal would not be successful architecturally, or by way of fulfilling the aspiration of the site allocation without redeveloping the existing car park along this key frontage. Furthermore, it is clear that the significance of this listed building in particular is derived more from its historic and architectural interest and functional connection to the surrounding urban area (as with any town centre pub), rather than from any sense of isolation (like a standalone monument or isolated farmhouse), which in this case was enforced through the insensitive removal of traditional terraced rows in the mid-20th Century.

6.2.43 It is considered no benefit to the pub's historical significance that it should remain as the only traditional building addressing the north side of Chatham Street, flanked by a significantly and utilitarian multi-storey car park to one side and an open-air car park and vacant dated office building to the other. For the pub to once again be read as part a regenerated Chatham Street frontage is considered a considerable public benefit, one which accentuates its juxtaposition as being a historic community building between two larger modern buildings. This would aid in improving the legibility and understanding of its setting and traditional function as a place of meeting.



Fig 14 - View looking east along Chatham Street with reinstated frontage to the south.

6.2.44 In terms of other public benefits which must be balanced against the less than substantial harm caused, the proposed development (made possible by the removal of the car park and two existing buildings) includes 54 residential units with 30% affordable housing, new soft landscaping onto both Chatham Street and Eaton Place and the creation of a car club (See Transport section). Increasing the supply of housing within the borough is a Council priority and

the uplift of residential units and the provision of on-site affordable housing is especially welcomed. Reading has particularly high property prices, so offer to provide 70% of affordable units provided at 'Reading Affordable Rent' and capped at 70% of market rent is also considered a significant public benefit.

- 6.2.45 The demolition of the unprotected warehouse building to the rear would make it easier for the rest of site allocation to come forward, which includes a substantial range of other benefits in addition to the residential uplift and affordable housing included as part of this particular scheme.
- 6.2.46 In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the LPA must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Officers are therefore of the view that the public benefits are substantial and compelling and outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' caused to the setting of the Butler Pub through the introduction of development in the first place.
- 6.2.47 The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Section 66 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the statutory duties of the Council in this regard have been discharged. Officers therefore support the scale, siting and design of the proposed building along Chatham Street due to the public benefits brought about by redeveloping this part of the CR12c site allocation and due compliance with Policy En1 of the Local plan.

6.3 Amenity

Privacy

- 6.3.1 The site is within a densely built up area of the edge of the town centre with a mixture of large flatted developments near to more high-density traditional terrace neighbourhoods to the west. The proposal would introduce active residential frontages to both Chatham Street and Eaton Place, where currently poorly surveyed inactive frontages and car parking dominate. Windows, winter gardens, balconies and front doors would both front north and south providing a greater sense of activity.
- 6.3.2 Due to the layout and orientation of the application site, the closest facing habitable windows would be (in the event of approval) approximately 23m directly south across Eaton Place within the proposed development at 112 Oxford Road (known as Eaton Court) which is currently pending consideration. The nearest development (in the event of approval) is at 10 Eaton Place (also pending consideration), located directly on the south eastern boundary of the application site. According to submitted plans of this neighbouring scheme, the nearest facing elevation of 10 Eaton Place would contain openings serving a communal decked access corridor on each floor (See below).



Fig 15 - Relationship to 10 Eaton Place (Proposed)

- 6.3.3 Therefore, should this development receive permission, this relationship is not considered to give rise to any significant privacy concerns. On the western and eastern elevations, conventional side to side relationships allow any future redevelopment opportunities within the site allocation to be exercised without privacy concerns. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy CC7 and CC8 of the Local Plan.

Daylight and sunlight

- 6.3.4 The applicant has provided a daylight/sunlight assessment with the application. This technical assessment uses the methods set out in Building Research Establishment's (BRE) "*Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice*" to determine the daylight and sunlight amenity within neighbouring properties. As result of there being no relevant neighbouring residential receptors to the north across the dual carriageway (where most overshadowing would occur), the assessment has concentrated on the quality of daylight and sunlight levels within the proposed accommodation.
- 6.3.5 The report confirms that the development provides daylight levels which meet or exceed the target levels appropriate for such an urban environment. Where transgressions are present, they are generally minor and are in considered in keeping with the prevailing urban context.
- 6.3.6 Separate concern was raised by the owner of the Butler Pub as to the relationship between the proposal and the 2019 planning approval given for a 14-bed hotel located to the rear of the Butler's Pub (permission 180365/FUL). The submitted daylight/sunlight assessment demonstrates there would be no adverse impact on neighbouring properties or future developments, and furthermore, the nearest flank elevation of the pub has no windows within it. As the building does not provide permanent habitable

accommodation, as such, officers consider this proposed relationship to be acceptable in context to its urban location.

Noise and disturbance

- 6.3.7 Both the Face Bar and Butler Pub are popular and important parts of the town's night time economy. As recognised community/leisure facilities and entertainment venues, there is a need for officers to ensure that future residents of this development are able to suitably co-exist without prejudicing the commercial viability of either venue.
- 6.3.8 In this regard, the proposal is considered to trigger the 'Agent of change' principle. This principle is a successful means of protecting such venues from unnecessary closure. Local authorities have traditionally been required to act upon complaints from residents in new developments over noise levels from established music venues in the area in which they are located. Along with the prior approval process, this has been cited as a major factor across the country in the large numbers number of pub and venue closures in recent years.
- 6.3.9 The principle holds that the person or developer responsible for any change in the current situation must also be responsible for managing the impact of the change. This would mean that the developer of this new residential development near both venues is required to include appropriate noise attenuation measures for future occupants to manage the existing noise generated from these venues, or in extreme cases through noise easements. This position is held irrespective of how long the 'nuisance' has existed, historic instances of the same noise being a nuisance, or whether someone has moved into the vicinity of the noise in full knowledge of it.
- 6.3.10 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF recommends that decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated with existing land uses, which "*... should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established.*"
- 6.3.11 The Council's Environmental Protection Team have considered the noise assessment submitted with the application in detail. The information provided has specifically considered noise from both The Face Bar nightclub and the Butler Pub. However, as no live music or club nights were occurring at the time of the application due to Covid19, officers requested further information which contained noise data from approved noise reports for adjoining developments, which contained worst case scenarios from both venues when in full operation and live music occurring.
- 6.3.12 The noise assessment and an additional technical note provides an adequate assessment of the likely noise levels at the façade of the development using the highest noise levels for an event at the Face Bar by an acoustic specialist for a similar development. This confirms that in order to reduce intrusive noise to acceptable levels inside the flats, improved insulation, glazing with an enhanced performance, along with high-performance acoustic ventilators are recommended for those rooms which could be worst affected by potential noise from Face Bar. In order to ensure that the flats meet the required specification once built, it is recommended that a condition is attached, requiring acoustic tests to be carried out prior to occupation.

- 6.3.13 Officers have considered the objection received from the owner of the neighbouring Butler Pub. It should firstly be noted that ordinarily, a pub and residential uses are commonly seen as compatible uses. Most urban and rural pubs across the country are traditionally located next to or within close proximity of a residential use. In Reading itself, there are a number of successful and longstanding pubs which operate successfully with similar characteristics to the application site, which itself was once next to a terrace of housing.
- 6.3.14 The Noise Assessment which was submitted for the 14-bed hotel to the rear of the Butler's Pub (180365/FUL) concluded that the introduction of a hotel use would have no impact on the pub's ability to provide live music. The relevant committee report accepted there would no significant impact in regard to noise in relation to the new hotel use.
- 6.3.15 Based on the information provided within the Noise Assessment, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer considers it necessary for a specific tailored condition to be attached requiring a further assessment to be undertaken in order to specify suitable glazing for the eastern façade closest to the Pub. As currently the specification for that façade is based on the premise that the noise from music at The Butler is not higher than noise from other sources such as traffic noise. This does not take account of the audibility of music causing extra annoyance and the likely higher low frequency levels of that music noise. Therefore, the same, more stringent, criteria for internal noise used for the façades overlooking the Face Bar should also be used for the eastern façade (overlooking The Butler). It should be noted that new noise measurements are not necessarily required, simply a reassessment of required ventilation and glazing based on the existing measurements with the more stringent internal noise criteria applied.
- 6.3.16 With the use of these mitigation measures, Officers are of the view that the re-introduction of a residential use to the west of the Butler Pub is not considered to adversely affect the ability of the Pub to provide live music, as protected by the 'agent of change' principle.
- 6.3.17 In regard to both the Butler Pub and the Face Bar, once any required noise mitigation measures are implemented, the officer agree with EP officer that it will be necessary to require acoustic testing via condition to ensure that the mitigation provided is sufficient to ensure these noise levels are complied with, and therefore acceptable living standards for new residents are provided. National guidance also suggests that developers should inform potential purchasers/occupiers of the mitigation measures available to reduce the risk of later complaints to these adjoining venues. This advisory note can be included as an informative on any permission granted.

Air quality

- 6.3.18 An air quality assessment was submitted with this application. Following feedback from the Environmental Health Team, an additional technical note was required to determine whether future occupants would be exposed to concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) or particulate matter (as PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) above the UK air quality objectives set for the protection of health.
- 6.3.19 Detailed dispersion modelling of traffic on the local road network has been undertaken to predict pollutant concentrations at the proposed development in 2022, the anticipated opening year. The results of the modelling indicate

that there may be an exceedance of the annual mean air quality objective at the ground-floor residential façade and therefore it is recommended that the affected dwellings are mechanically ventilated to minimise exposure to poor air quality.

- 6.3.20 At the rear of the development and at first-floor level, the predicted concentrations are within the relevant objective limits. Ideally, any air intake for the mechanical ventilation system would be located at the rear of the development or above ground-floor level. If the intake is at the ground-floor roadside façade then NO_x filtration will be required. These matters can be secure via condition as recommended by the assessment.

Living conditions of future occupiers

- 6.3.21 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. Furthermore, the majority of flats contain designated home office spaces separate to bedrooms. This is a welcome feature which responds to changing lifestyle and employment habits accelerated by Covid19 and resulting in more working from home. As such, the internal arrangement of the flats are considered generous in this regard.

- 6.3.22 Policy H10 states that “... flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens”. In this instance, the majority of units have a private balcony/terrace (51 out of 54 units). Each balcony/terrace is accessed via the primary living space/habitable rooms by either glazed door or a set of bi-fold doors. The balcony/terraces are a sufficient size to allow a table and chairs and are considered commensurate with the size of such features within the area.

- 6.3.23 As described, a landscaped communal courtyard of 152sqm is proposed to the rear of the site by Eaton Place. This communal amenity area is to be enhanced with soft and hard landscaping. This space is considered to create a contemporary courtyard which provides access to the apartment frontages from the parking court, while creating more intimate seating areas for the residents to sit and enjoy as a landscaped space, whilst providing valuable defensible space to those ground floor units.

- 6.3.24 Despite balcony/terraces and communal landscaped courtyard providing sufficient amenity space for all occupants, for informal recreation residents will continue to require access public open space. The site is located 500m from the Victoria Park (5 minutes’ walk away). This park contains open space and play equipment for families.

Accessibility and lifetime homes

- 6.3.25 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’.

- 6.3.26 The development includes 6 of the units (11%) are designed to be M4(3) compliant accessible units, and Officers are satisfied that this overprovision of accessibility/adaptability of the units is a welcome social benefit. 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.

6.4 Natural environment

6.4.1 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 areas like this. 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, a high public realm, and trees, grass, planting etc. This is a key aspect in demonstrating the Council's ambition and commitment to tackling climate change via the declared climate emergency and supported through the Council's Tree Strategy (2020) which identifies the area as having a low canopy coverage.

6.4.2 A detailed landscape plan is submitted with the application (See below). The proposals show a significant increase in tree and vegetation planting to the front and rear of the site. In particular, the generous tree planting fronting Chatham Street will enhance both local biodiversity and visual amenity of the local area, linking the site in to proposed landscaping to occur to the frontage of the Butler Pub in the hotel planning permission. The principles of the landscaping have been discussed at length with the Council's Natural Environment Officers during pre-application discussions and the scheme is supported by them and officers in this regard.



Fig 16 - Extract from Landscape Strategy plan 7396/ASP3.

- 6.4.3 With reference to the Landscape Strategy, officers agree that the precise tree species will need to be revisited and confirmed when final landscape details are determined via condition. The planting currently suggests inclusion of Cherries - with reference to our Tree Strategy, this species has been identified as being over-represented in the Borough (on Council land) and an over-reliance can risk disease spread. Agreement over the final positioning of the trees should consider where they will have minimal negative impact on the future residents, e.g. be placed in front of bedroom windows rather than living room (principal habitable room) windows. In addition, species will have to be of fastigiate (slender upright) form given the space available and provision of suitable tree pits and soil volume will have to be provided.
- 6.4.4 With reference to the Surface Water Drainage Strategy from a natural environment perspective, this provides the hierarchy that should be followed, however the proposal on this site is for an attenuation tank to store all surface water drainage from the proposed roof area, amenity gardens and shared parking area. Whilst officer preference would be for rainwater harvesting or to direct this to water the landscaping, it is recognised that this is challenging on restricted urban sites. These shortcomings do not represent a in principle conflict to the Council's Local Plan in order to warrant refusal.
- 6.4.5 In considering the level of greening that can be realistically secured on a what is a constrained site in an urban location, officers are of the view that the proposal provides a meaningful contribution to the local natural environment and performs a considerably greater role than the site does at present (car park and office buildings). This overall contribution is afforded positive weight in the overall balance.
- 6.4.6 With regard to ecology, the Council's Ecologist has considered the proposals and notes that demolition is involved which contains features suitable for use by roosting bats. Government guidance makes it clear the need for the presence or otherwise of protected species and the impact upon them to be established before the planning permission is granted. Covering such matters via planning condition after the grant of consent should only be explored in exceptional circumstances. As the Bat survey had not been received at the time of writing this report, but is expected prior to Planning Committee, any recommendation is subject to no objection being raised from the Council's Ecologist to the results of any submitted survey.
- 6.4.6 With regards to biodiversity enhancements, Section 6.3 of the Ecological Appraisal proposes a total of three 'Bat Tubes' (a kind of bat box built into the building fabric), or similar, to be integrated into the new build and a total of four bird boxes to also be integrated into the new build.
- 6.4.7 Subject to acceptance of other bat-related matters above, these enhancements can be secured via a condition. In addition a condition is required to ensure that if the buildings are to be demolished outside of the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if this is not practicable, a suitably qualified ecologist will survey the building prior within 48 hours of demolition and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded works that may any disturb active nest shall proceed until the nest is no longer occupied.

6.5 Health and wellbeing

- 6.5.1 The current Covid19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role our urban environment has on the way we live and work. It also highlights how, as a Local Planning Authority, supporting well planned development can have a huge impact on peoples' health, wellbeing, safety and overall comfort. In addition to the above discussion on amenity, the Council has an obligation to consider the following health and wellbeing topics in relation to any new development.
- 6.5.2 Maximising exposure to natural daylight, providing users with an external view and connection to nature are crucial measures in supporting the mental wellbeing of occupants and supported strongly by Policy CC8 'Safeguarding amenity'. As described, for an urban location all proposed flats have access to natural light, and outdoor space, with the smallest flats benefitting from multiple windows and external balconies serving living areas. Larger flats benefit from dual aspects in addition private balconies and in some case large private terraces. This access to private outside space would assist with recovery from respiratory illnesses, support any unintended or prolonged occupation should the situation require, or home working by choice. The development will maximise the use of natural daylight and reducing the need for artificial light by occupants through generous amounts of glazing.
- 6.5.3 In recognition of the challenges presented by climate change and with due regard to the Council's recently declared climate emergency, extreme temperatures can also have an immediate and detrimental effect on health and wellbeing of residents. Effectively controlling and regulating temperature both in warmer months and those colder months is crucial in maintaining a healthy and comfortable environment which is supported by Policy CC3: 'Adaptation to climate change'. Private balconies provide the opportunity for natural ventilation to habitable room, whilst also serve as shading elements for the openings of the floor below, obstructing direct solar gains during the peak hours of the summer.
- 6.5.4 Crime and the fear of crime also have a major impact on quality of life and the wellbeing of a building occupants and must be considered carefully on this site. Enabling occupants to feel safe and secure is therefore essential to successful, sustainable communities and is supported by Policy CC7 'Design and the public realm'. The proposed development now provides welcome natural surveillance of the adjacent streets and pedestrian areas between buildings.
- 6.5.5 As described in the previous section, green infrastructure and access to green space provides benefits not only to the natural environment, but to the building's occupants. This development provides all flats with private external amenity space or in a few cases, access to communal amenity space within the site. This offers the opportunity for fresh air, drying of clothes and importantly ventilation of internal spaces. Finally, designated working from home space is also considered a material and tangible benefit to occupants. Accordingly, the above health and wellbeing factors are considered material planning benefits which must be afforded weight in the overall balance.

6.6 Sustainability

- 6.6.1 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.

- 6.6.2 The applicant has submitted a Energy and Sustainability statement 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'.
- 6.6.3 The information submitted demonstrates that through the measures outlined in the energy strategy, it is anticipated that a 40.8% improvement below Building Regulations Part L compliant baseline is achievable (the Policy/SPD requirement is 35% improvement). In terms of decentralised energy, the inclusion of a decentralised system is not financially viable for a development of this size.
- 6.6.4 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.
- 6.6.5 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 exceeds policy compliance in this regard.

6.7 Transport

- 6.7.1 The site is located to the south of Chatham Street to the west of Reading Town Centre, and is accessed via Eaton Place. Eaton Place forms a junction with Chatham Street to the north and Oxford Road (A329) to the south which is a main transport and red route 'no stopping' corridor. The site is located within the Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. The site is within a 5-10 minute walk of Reading's primary shopping area.
- 6.7.2 Policy TR1 of the Reading Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted unless there is a commitment to implement measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities, such as through provision to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.
- 6.7.3 A reduced total of 15 parking spaces (including 2 disabled spaces) will be provided within the site accessed from Eaton Place. While parking provision

is well below RBC's required standards, this is considered acceptable as it takes account the extensive parking restrictions in the area and the location of the site in terms of opportunities for both public transport and access to local services and facilities.

- 6.7.4 Policy TR5 of the Local Plan also 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 has committed to provide 4 no. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to promote the use of renewable electric vehicles at time of build which is in excess of the required standard.
- 6.7.5 Pedestrian access is gained from Chatham Street, and as such the Council are processing a Section 278? agreement to dedicate land along the Chatham Street frontage of the site as Public Highway. The applicant is required to enter into a S278 Agreement to provide footpath access to the residential units and associated landscaping. The adoption of the land allows for the applicant to enter into a Section 142 licence with the Council permitting the developer to plant and maintain the proposed planting along that Chatham Street frontage.
- 6.7.6 It is proposed that large deliveries and servicing will be undertaken within the site (i.e. from Eaton Place and not Chatham Street). Swept path analysis has been undertaken for a refuse vehicle entering and turning within the site. The bin store is conveniently located on the ground floor of the building with direct access to the collection point. To allow the turning manoeuvre for a service vehicle, a new access is proposed off Eaton Place which is in the form of a bellmouth junction. This will necessitate the need for a S278 Agreement in its own right; however this can be in the form of a joint agreement given the alterations required along the Chatham Street frontage.
- 6.7.7 A cycle store will be provided on the ground floor of the building with direct access to Chatham Street. The proposed location is acceptable, however, officers require detailed plans confirming that the cycle parking provision meets the Council's adopted standards in terms of layout. Officers are content for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.
- 6.7.8 A Construction Method Statement will be required given the significant remodelling of the site proposed within this application. The proposed work should be in accordance with the Borough's Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway. This will be secured via condition.

Car club

- 6.7.9 In line with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed development is required to provide a car club facility so as to reduce car ownership and the dependence on the private car but still allow residents to have access to a vehicle for those journeys where alternative modes may not be viable.
- 6.7.10 The Highway Authority are of the view that providing the car club on the Public Highway would be of benefit given that it would not only serve the application site but the wider area. The reason for this is that it becomes more accessible to the general public therefore increasing usage and giving the car club(s) more of an opportunity to be successful, particularly given

the opportunity for further patronage as other sites within the site allocation come forward.

- 6.7.11 To facilitate this, the applicant would be required to contribute £5,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) so that the car club space/bay can be provided on the Highway. Given that the car club will need to serve this application site, it is proposed for the car club bay/space to be provided on Eaton Place, south of the application site. The delivery of such a bay, the line marking and signing, would be provided by the applicant by way of the S278 works which would be required as part of these works.
- 6.7.12 Given the size of the development, the Highway Authority are happy that the development provides a single car club vehicle on occupation of the development; however this should be continually reviewed so that should there be an increase in demand, an additional car club vehicle can be provided. In line with the Council's Parking Standards and SPD, the car club should be provided/funded by the developer for a duration of 5 years.
- 6.7.13 In light of the above, no transport or access objections to this application are raised subject to the recommended conditions.

6.8 S106/Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.8.1 The proposals would be liable for CIL. Any calculation may be subject to change, 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.
- 6.8.2 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.
- 6.8.3 With regard to any required 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 on-site affordable housing consisting of 16 units (6x one-bedroom, 8x two-bedroom and 2x three-bedroom), of which 12 would be for Reading Affordable Rent and 4 shared ownership.
 - In the event that an Affordable Housing provider is not secured. The developer to pay to the Council the 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. To be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation
 - The developer should fund the provision of a car club bay on the surrounding highway network for a duration of 5 years
 - The provision of one car club vehicle should be provided on first occupation of the development.

- The car club usage should be reviewed on an annual basis (for 5 years) to establish whether the second vehicle is required.
- A contribution of £5,000 towards the Traffic Regulation to provide a car club bay, to be paid prior to commencement of the development.
- The applicant is required to enter into a S278 Agreement to provide the following:
 - Footpath access to the residential units and associated landscaping along the Chatham Street frontage
 - Access to the parking area / service access to the rear of the site.
 - Car club bay on Eaton Place to the south of the site
- 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.
- All financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission.

6.8.4 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.

6.9 Other matters

Equalities Impact

6.9.1 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

6.9.2 All relevant matters raised are considered covered within the Appraisal section above.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposal would see a residential scheme on underutilised land allocated for housing within the local plan. The principle of development in land use terms is therefore considered acceptable. The overall dwelling mix proposed by the development is acceptable in accordance with the requirements of the local plan.

- 7.2 Economically, during the construction phase the proposed development would clearly contribute to and encourage associated economic activity by directly sustaining jobs in the borough. This would be supported further by a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan which can be secured via the Section 106 legal agreement. Through development of an under-utilised brownfield site, the development would make an important and positive contribution to the economic recovery of the borough throughout and following the Covid19 pandemic.
- 7.3 In the longer term, future occupants of 54 new flats will contribute to the viability and vitality of businesses in local area at a time where the economic health of the town is a key Council priority. Other related economic benefits include CIL contributions, the matters set out in the S106 Heads of Terms Council Tax receipts to the Council. The development would therefore clearly perform a positive economic role.
- 7.4 In terms of the social role, the proposal will undoubtedly fulfil one of the NPPF's core aims to 'boost significantly the supply of housing' and deliver a wide range of homes of different types and tenures. The proposal would contribute to meeting the Borough's identified housing need through an uplift in the site allocation, and of a mix and density appropriate to its sustainable location.
- 7.5 The proposal also makes positive policy complaint contribution towards affordable housing in the borough (30%). Ensuring a supply of good quality, secure and affordable housing to meet identified local housing needs is a key priority for Reading Borough Council as highlighted in the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021, Local Plan, and corporate objectives. Not only does this development provide a policy complaint on-site contribution, but also a tenure-mix in excess of policy. The development would therefore make a welcome contribution to improving access to local affordable housing to meet local needs and would constitute a significant and tangible public benefit in accordance with Policy H3 of the Local Plan
- 7.6 In design terms, the site is currently a notable underutilised site next to a prominent listed building. The proposed development is considered to positively improve the character and appearance of the immediate area, by providing much needed visual uplift to what is a busy arterial route, allow better passive surveillance and activity along what is currently an inactive frontage and to the backland along Eaton Place.
- 7.7 In terms of health and wellbeing, as described, the development is considered to create a good quality level of residential accommodation that would not prejudice or prevent future occupiers from enjoying a good quality of life, hinder any recovery from respiratory illnesses, or make any unintended or prolonged occupation by residents difficult should the situation require. This includes the internal provision of home offices for occupants. Accordingly, the above health and wellbeing factors are considered key material social benefits and comply with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan.
- 7.8 Finally, with regard to the historic environment, Officers do consider that the proposal would on the whole have a negative impact (i.e. it would cause harm) to the existing setting of the Butler Pub due to the re-introduction of built form on its western flank elevation. As made clear, in this instance,

Officers consider that the harm caused to the setting of the Listed Building would be 'less than substantial'. As described earlier in this report, para 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

- 7.9 As concluded, Officers are of the view that the above public benefits are substantial and compelling and outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' caused to the setting of the Butler Pub through the introduction of development in the first place. This complies with national requirements and that of Policy EN1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.10 With regard to the natural environment and the role this development will play in meeting the challenge of climate change, it is recognised that this residential development would inherently meet an enhanced level of sustainability than existing through compliance with the Council's enhanced energy efficiency and sustainability standards. By utilising allocated previously developed land, the proposal will meet the Council's spatial strategy for the location of new development by reusing land of low environmental value.
- 7.11 In terms of sustainable transport and supporting the Council's key objective of reduced car usage and improved air quality, the proposal would provide desirable cycle facilities for residents and a S278 agreement and TRO allowing the creation of a new car club for residents. These are additional wider public benefits which fulfil the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
- 7.12 On-site planting and landscaped amenity areas would provide visual and environmental benefits to immediate area, thereby allowing the site to confidently perform a far greater environmental role than it does currently.

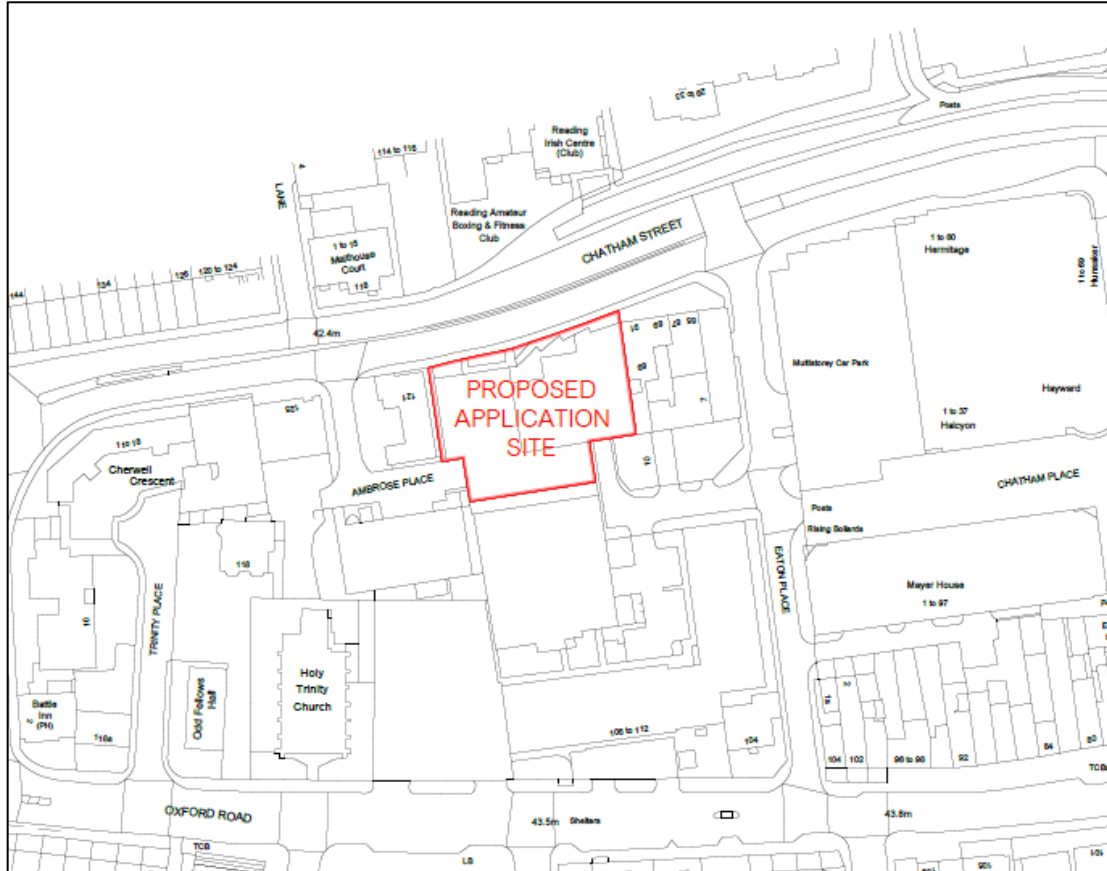
Summary

- 7.13 In conclusion, the proposed development is considered to provide substantial and compelling public benefits, fulfilling many aspects which contribute to achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- 7.14 Having regard to all matters raised, it is considered that the 'less than substantial harm' caused to the setting of the Butler Pub would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by those identified benefits when assessed against the relevant policies in the Framework as a whole and the Council's Local Plan. Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations presented, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of a S106 Legal Agreement.

Case Officer: Brian Conlon

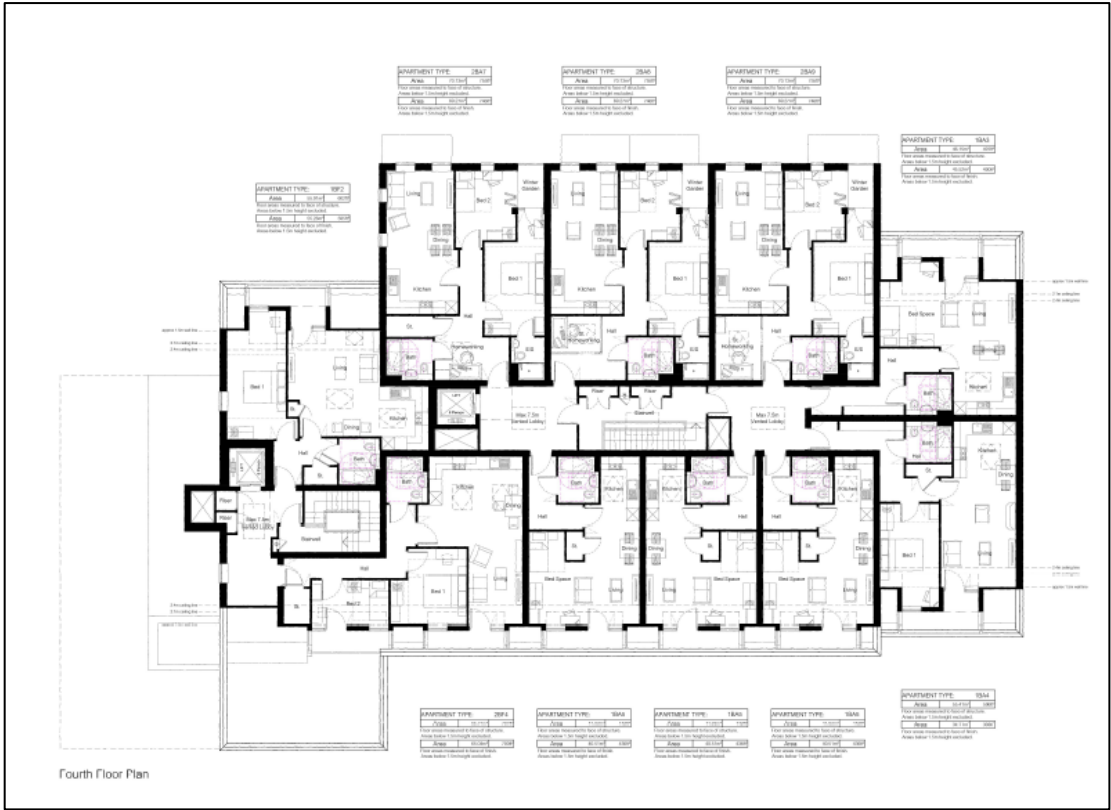
8. Plans and photos

Site Plan



Site Layout





North and west elevation



South and east elevation



Landscape Strategy Plan





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SITE PHOTOS

Looking west along Curzon Street



Looking north east from Oxford Road



Looking east towards Butler PH



Looking south into site



Looking south into site



Looking southwest into site



Looking west in the site



Looking northwest from Eaton Place

