

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 20 July 2022

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 220244/FUL and 220245/LBC

Address: 75-77 London Street, Reading

Proposal: Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for: Proposed demolition of buildings to rear (Olympia Hall) and erection of 12 flats with associated parking, landscaping and courtyard garden and conversion of ground floor of Nos. 75-77 to 3 flats

Applicant: Woodside (Reading) Ltd

Application target decision date: EOT until 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022

### RECOMMENDATION:

#### 220244/FUL

Delegate to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) **GRANT** full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to **REFUSE** permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 (unless officers on behalf of AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following

**Affordable Housing** - £119,000 [one hundred and nineteen thousand pounds] contribution towards affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough and a deferred payment mechanism to cover the remaining shortfall to include 50% side-by-side profit share on all profits over 17% profit on GDV up to a policy compliant cap equivalent to 30% provision.

**Repair and restoration works** - to frontage building implemented and completed prior to occupation of new building development.

**Employment Skills and Training Plan** - Construction skills - preparation and delivery of an ESP or a financial contribution. As calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) - payable on commencement.

#### **Zero Carbon Offset - All Dwellings**

- Zero Carbon Offset as per SPD 2019 a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building

Regulations, plus a Section 106 contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30-year period).

- As-built SAP calculation for all dwellings to be submitted for approval within 6 months following first occupation.
- Contribution based on SPD formula below towards carbon-saving projects calculated for all dwellings based on approved SAP calculation to be paid to the Council within 9 months following first occupation:  
TER CO2 m2/yr less 35% CO2 m2/yr) = 65% of TER  
65% of TER x total square metres = total excess CO2 emissions annually  
Total excess CO2 emissions annually x £1800 = S106 contribution.

**Conditions to include:**

- 1) Time Limit (Standard)
- 2) Approved Plans
- 3) Details and samples of all external materials to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 4) Detailed schedule of internal and external repair works specifying materials and techniques to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 5) Schedule of windows repair/replacement to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 6) Condition survey and assessment of historic masonry to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 7) Hard and soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 8) Boundary Treatment details prior to commencement.
- 9) Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.
- 10) Biodiversity Enhancements to provide to include 8 swift bricks to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 11) Noise Assessment to be submitted and approved
- 12) Hours of Construction
- 13) Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved
- 14) Demolition Method Statement - in accordance with submitted and approved
- 15) No Bonfires
- 16) Contaminated Land Assessment - to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 17) CL Remediation scheme - to be submitted and approved
- 18) CL Remediation scheme - implementation and verification
- 19) Assessment of previously unidentified contamination
- 20) BREEAM Pre construction - Very Good prior to commencement.

- 21) BREEAM Post construction - Very Good - prior to occupation
- 22) SAP Assessment Major - design stage to be approved - prior to commencement.
- 23) SAP Assessment major - as built to be approved - pre-occupation.
- 24) SUDS plan to be approved prior to commencement.
- 25) SUDS to be implemented prior to occupation.
- 26) Vehicle Parking as specified prior to occupation.
- 27) Vehicle Access as specified prior to occupation
- 28) Cycle Parking to be approved - prior to commencement.
- 29) Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof) prior to commencement.
- 30) Visibility splays to be provided as specified - prior to occupation.
- 31) Parking Permits
- 32) Written scheme of archaeological work to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
- 33) Site Security strategy to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.

**Informatives to include:**

- 1) Terms and Conditions
- 2) Building Regulations
- 3) Pre-Commencement Conditions
- 4) CIL
- 5) S106
- 6) Highways
- 7) Access Construction
- 8) Complaints about Construction
- 9) Encroachment
- 10) Noise between residential properties
- 11) Parking Permits
- 12) Positive & Proactive.

**220245/LBC**

Grant Listed Building Consent

**Conditions to include:**

1. Time Limit Listed Building (works)
2. Approved Plans
3. Details and samples of all external materials to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.
4. Schedule of windows repair/replacement to be submitted and approved prior to commencement
5. Condition survey and assessment of historic masonry to be submitted and

approved prior to commencement.

**Informatives to include:**

1. Positive and Proactive
2. Pre-commencement conditions
3. Terms and Conditions
4. Any additional works affecting character of listed building will require listed building consent
5. Associated Planning Permission
6. Positive and Proactive

## **1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The application site comprises a three storey mid-terrace building with attached rear hall located on the east side of London Street, close to the junction with South Street to the north.
- 1.2 The site is located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. No.75 London Street is Grade II\* listed and No.77 London Street is Grade II listed. The listing descriptions are as follows:

No's 73 and 75

*"LONDON STREET 1. 5128 (East Side) Nos 73 and 75 SU 7173 SE 3/195 22.3.75. II\* GV 2. 1748, house of Dr Addington, physician to George III, father of the later Prime Minister. (Lead rainwater head with initials AM and date 1748 removed since previous list). An imposing pair of houses of the same general design. 3 storeys and basement. Stucco plinth, red brick, header bond. Painted stone string at 1st floor level, and painted stone cills to 1st and 2nd floor windows. Moulded and painted stone cornice, plain brick parapet with stone coping. Old tile roof, taller hipped part to left with shaped chimney. Glazing bar sash windows (No 75 has a vent now to 2nd floor left hand window), scalloped blind boxes to No 75. Central doors with stone steps (only No 73 retaining moulded nosing). No 73 has 6 panelled door with radiating fanlight over deep plain painted wood architrave with ovolo moulding. Moulded open pediment on half scroll fluted brackets with acanthus ornament, repeated at right angles on wall face. No 75 has double 6 panelled door with rectangular fanlight (oval and star glazing pattern); wood case with panelled reveals, architrave surround, plain frieze, moulded cornice and half scroll fluted brackets with acanthus ornament.*

*Recently a further door has been inserted to left of No 75, smaller with isolated brackets (probably intended for a flat hood). C18 or early C19 ramped spearhead cast-iron railings with panel standards topped with small urns and segmental bar and ball across front of both houses. No 73 retains a pair of sphinx footscrapers. Interior of No 75 altered to cinema. No 73 has original staircase with fluted balusters and plaster panelling in principal rooms, hall and staircase. Flagged hall with black diamond corners. Rear altered.”*

No's 77 and 79

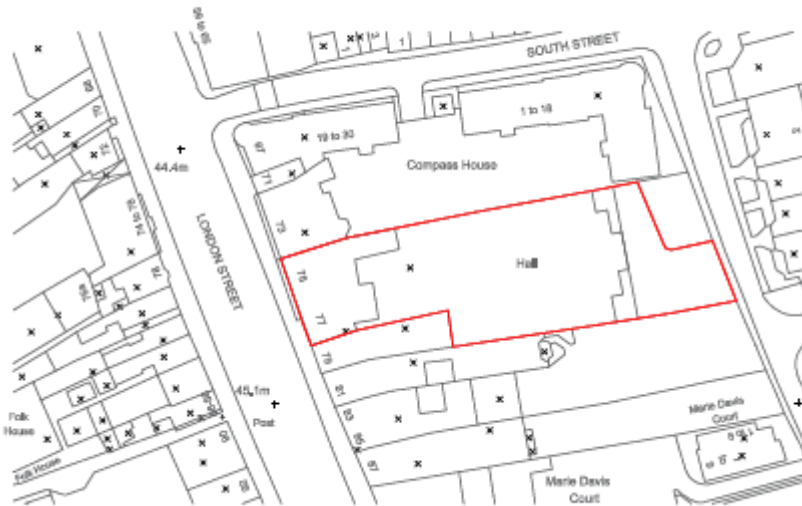
*“LONDON STREET 1. 5128 (East Side) Nos 77 and 79 SU 7173 SE 3/194 22.3.57. II GV 2. Mid C18. 3 storeys, symmetrical pair. Silver grey brick headers with red quoins and dressings. Stucco strings at 1st and 2nd floors. Moulded stucco cornice, part over No 19 replaced by string. Parapet, now with concrete coping. Modern tile, concealed roof. Glazing bar sash windows, 5 on upper floors. Paired doorways in centre with 4 panelled doors, rectangular fanlights (with rectangular glazing patterns) and plain wood surround with cornice on square console brackets, lost on No 77 (cinema).”*

- 1.3 The Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) specifically refers to the wider terrace of buildings at No's 73-79 London Street within which the frontage buildings of the site form part of as being among the best examples of Georgian houses and as being a feature which contributes positively to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area. The appraisal document also notes that the London Street townhouses are devoid of their historic spacious gardens. The presence of vacant commercial space within the conservation area is also specifically identified as contributing negatively to its character and appearance, a situation which has worsened since the Conservation Area Appraisal was written in 2007.
- 1.4 The Olympia Hall is a 20<sup>th</sup> century steel-frame structure attached to the rear of the listed houses. It can be accessed from the front of the Georgian terrace as well as from the rear of the site from East Street, which also includes vehicular access and a small parking area.
- 1.5 The Olympia Hall sits on an area originally occupied by rear gardens of the Georgian terrace of buildings. It is vacant but has historically been used as a dance hall, concert hall, bingo hall and cinema and most recently as a private function venue.
- 1.6 The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area and the Reading Central Area. The surrounding area contains a mix of uses,

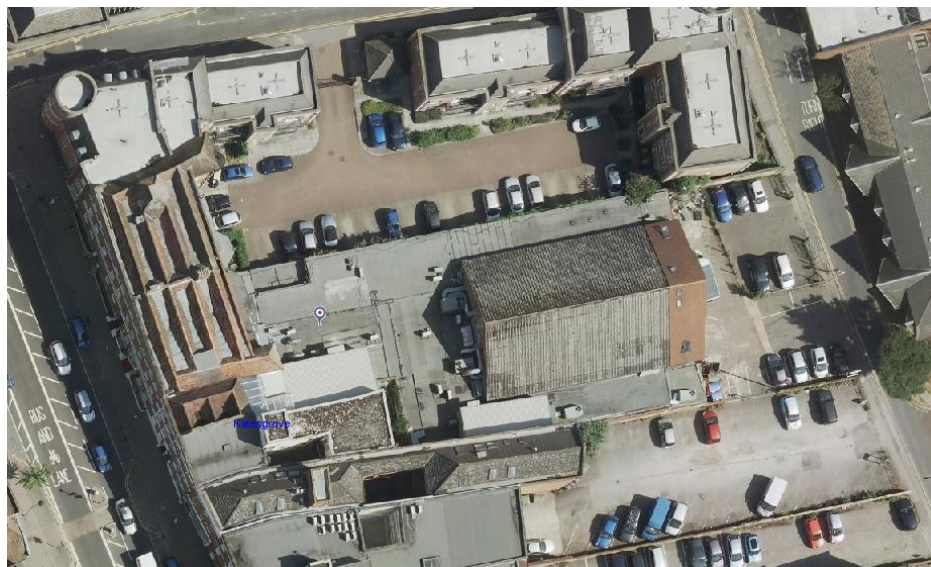
predominantly commercial at ground floor and residential on the upper floor levels.

- 1.7 The application is referred to committee due to being a 'major' development.

Location Plan (not to scale)



Aerial Photo



**2. PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposal seeks planning permission and listed building consent for:

- Demolition of buildings to the rear, including the Olympia Hall
- Two new build blocks to the rear of the site comprising 12 flats
- Conversion of ground floor of No's 75-77 to 3 flats
- Reinstatement of the rear of No's 75-77 and proposed rear garden areas

A total of 15 no. residential units are proposed, comprising:

- 2 x three bed dwellings
- 8 x two bed dwellings
- 5 x one bed dwellings

with 7 car parking spaces (1 one which will be accessible), 7 new trees and soft landscaping.

2.2 Submitted plans and documentation

- Window and Door Detail 9107-111 Rev
  - Proposed Elevations 9107-108 Rev K
- Received 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022

- Proposed Roof Plans 9107-107 Rev L
  - Proposed Flat First Floor Plans 9107-106 Rev L
  - Proposed Flat Ground Floor Plans 9107-105 Rev K
- Received 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022

- Location Plan 9018
  - Part 1 Listed Building Proposal Existing and Proposed Plan and Elevation 9018 Rev G
  - Balcony Plan and Detail Proposal 9018 Rev G
  - Site Massing Section 9018 Rev G
  - Site Plan 9018 Rev G
- Received 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

Transport Statement with CMS  
Received 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Landscape Proposals Plan L1  
Received 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022

Bat Scoping and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal  
Received 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Sustainable Drainage Assessment  
Received 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

Air Quality Assessment  
Archaeological Desk-based Assessment  
Energy Statement  
Noise Survey and Noise Insulation Measures  
Sustainability Statement  
Received 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Advice from Historic England  
Condition Overview  
Daylight and Sunlight Assessment  
Design and Access Statement  
Heritage Statement  
Received 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

- 2.3 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): The proposal will be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the CIL Additional Information Form. However, this has not been completed. The estimated amount will be provided in an Update Report.

### **3 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 The application site has an extensive planning history. The following are considered to be most relevant to the determination of this application:
- 3.2 96/0744/FD - Demolition of later additions (including former Olympia Dance Hall) and conversion and refurbishment of listed buildings for residential use comprising 1 four bed house and 4 flats (2 three bed, 2 one bed) with associated garden and parking. Erection of 6 two bed houses with access, parking and gardens - Approved (16th January 1997) (Never Implemented).
- 3.3 160957FUL and 160958LBC - Change of use of part-ground, first and second floors from sui generis to 6 (4x1 & 2x2-bed) residential units (Class C3) and associated works, including fenestration alterations on rear elevation at first floor level and cycle/bin storage areas at ground floor level - Granted.



## 4 CONSULTATIONS

### **Statutory**

#### **Historic England**

- 4.1 Further to extensive pre-application discussions with Historic England, no objection subject to conditions. Discussed further below.

### **Non-statutory**

#### **Conservation and Urban Design Officer (CUDO)**

- 4.2 No objection subject to conditions, in line with comments from Historic England. Discussed further below.

#### **Berkshire Archaeology**

- 4.3 No objection subject to archaeological condition to ensure a scheme of archaeological works is constructed to further evaluate the presence or absence of archaeological remains. Discussed further below.

#### **Ecology**

- 4.4 No objection subject to conditions to secure biodiversity and wildlife enhancements. Discussed further below.

#### **Environmental Health**

- 4.5 No objection subject to conditions to include further noise assessment and contaminated land assessment. Discussed further below.

#### **Natural Environment**

- 4.6 No objection subject to landscaping conditions. Discussed further below.

#### **SUDS**

- 4.7 No objection subject to sustainable drainage scheme to be submitted and approved. Discussed further below.

#### **RBC Transport Strategy**

- 4.8 Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions. Discussed further below.

#### **Public consultation**

- 4.9 Consultation letters were sent to nearby occupiers on London Street, South Street and East Street. A site notice was displayed, and a press notice was published.

- 4.10 2 letters of representation received, concerned with:

- site workers listening to music loudly
- impact on East Street
- construction hours
- noise pollution
- impact on ability to sell current property

## 5 LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

5.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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

5.4 The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021**

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

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

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

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

### **Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction  
Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change  
Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage  
Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development  
Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm  
Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment  
Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas  
Policy EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets  
Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context  
Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
Policy EN15: Air Quality  
Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
Policy H1: Provision of Housing  
Policy H2: Density and Mix  
Policy H3: Affordable Housing  
Policy H5: Standards for New Housing  
Policy H8; Residential Conversions  
Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities  
Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
Policy RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres  
Policy RL6: Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public Houses  
Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities  
Policy CR1: Definition of Central Reading  
Policy CR2: Design in Central Reading  
Policy CR4: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading  
Policy CR6: Living in Central Reading

**5.6 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are:**

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

**5.7 Other relevant guidance:**

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)  
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1:  
Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic  
England, 2016)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)  
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b)  
Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)  
Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)  
Reading Tree Strategy (2021)  
Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)  
National Design Guide: Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places (2019)

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of Development
- Housing Mix and Affordable Housing
- Demolition, Design and Effect on Heritage Assets
- Housing Mix and Affordable Housing
- Residential Amenity for Nearby Occupiers
- Quality of Accommodation for Future Occupiers
- Transport/ Parking
- Landscaping & Ecology
- Sustainability
- Archaeology
- Environmental Matters
- Legal Agreement
- Equalities impact

### Principle of Development

6.1 A key consideration of this proposal is the loss of the existing leisure facility function of the site which incorporates the ground floor of the London Street frontage buildings, rear extension and large rear hall.

6.2 In respect of the above it is noted that demolition of the hall building (Olympia Hall) and loss of the leisure facility use of the site was approved in 1996 under application ref.96/0744/FD (see history section above). However, this permission was not implemented. At the time, the building had been in use a bingo hall and it is understood that alternative premises had been identified for the use of the bingo hall use. The officer report at the time set out that a key element in justifying the loss of the leisure facility was also that

the loss of hall and its demolition would facilitate reinstatement of the rear elevations of the listed London Street Georgian frontage buildings, reinstatement of the building internally back to layouts more in keeping with their original residential use and also reinstatement of rear garden areas to the London Street buildings. The significant heritage benefits of the proposals and enhancements to the listed building were considered to outweigh the loss of the leisure facility.

6.3 Further to the above, it is acknowledged that similar works and enhancements to the London Street listed buildings are put forward as part of the current proposals. Notwithstanding this, since the previous decision the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 has been adopted. In terms of leisure facilities, Policy RL6 (Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public House) states that existing leisure facilities or public houses will generally be retained, and that developments that would result in the loss of a leisure facility will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a) there is no need for this type of facility in the area; or
- b) the function of the facility can be adequately fulfilled by an existing facility, or a facility proposed as part of the development, where that facility would be at least as accessible to the same catchment; or
- c) unless the site is a sports or recreation facility, the impacts on amenity of residents or on crime and security of retaining the facility could be dealt with through other measures and would be severe as to outweigh the benefits to the wider community of retaining the facility.

6.4 For the last 13 years, since its use as a nightclub ceased, the building had been used as a private function venue. The application submission states that in recent years use of the building as a private function venue had been declining due to competition from other venues, particularly those able to offer on-site hotel accommodation and parking. The application submission goes on to state that the premises closed in 2019 due to ongoing financial losses as the business entered receivership and the premises have remained vacant since this time.

6.5 As referred to in the planning history section above, planning permission was granted in 2016 for change of use of the upper floors of the London Street frontage buildings to 6 flats, to provide an alternative use to some of the floor space. Furthermore, many of the other office buildings surrounding the premises have been converted

to flats either through planning permission or permitted development. This has further restricted the use of the building for functions and entertainment due to potential increased noise and disturbance.

- 6.6 Given the small size and dated design of the rear hall it is considered to have limited potential alternative uses. It can reasonably no longer compete with other nearby hotels which are better places to provide for parking and noise. Parts of the hall are in poor condition, with extensive repairs needed to the roof and the hall, which has been closed for many months, does not make a positive contribution to either the listed building nor the conservation area in its current run down and empty state.
- 6.7 The Olympia hall is sited in a relatively dense urban area where there are now more residential properties in close proximity than in the past. Overall, officers are satisfied that the site is no longer suitable for the type of use which conflicts with surrounding residential uses, and that sufficient alternatives exist within modern hotels locally.
- 6.8 With no objection to the loss of the existing use, the principle of C3 residential accommodation within the town centre is supported by Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) and the provision of 15 residential units would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting in meeting the Borough's annual housing targets.

Given the above, the principle of the proposed use is considered to be acceptable subject to other policy considerations being met as discussed further in this report.

#### **Housing Mix and Affordable Housing**

- 6.9 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) addresses density and housing mix and states that this will be informed by character and mix of the area; accessibility; the need to achieve high quality design; maximise efficiency of land; need to minimise the environmental impacts including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers. Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) seeks residential developments within the town centre area should incorporate a maximum of 40% of 1 bedroom units and a minimum of 5% of 3 bedroom units.
- 6.10 In relation to the mix of units proposed, the scheme seeks to create 1 x 1 bed, 12 x 2 bed and 2 x 3 bed dwellings. This mix accords with

the requirements of Policy CR6 and is suitable and appropriate for the town centre location.

- 6.11 Moving on to consider affordable housing matters, Policy H3 of the Local Plan (Affordable Housing) seeks to ensure that development proposals of more than 10 dwellings should provide the equivalent of 30% on-site provision of affordable housing. The applicant has provided an Affordable Housing Financial Viability Appraisal (FVA) to demonstrate that the development cannot sustain such a contribution towards affordable housing. Policy H3 states that where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability, the Council will take an 'open-book approach' with the onus on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.
- 6.12 The Council's Valuer has assessed the information provided and, in summary, does not agree with the viability information submitted. Instead, it is considered that a financial contribution towards affordable housing in the Borough of £119,000 is in fact possible, and therefore required, based on the assessment of the figures provided. This is equivalent to 4% provision compared with the 30% policy requirement. As such, and in accordance with the adopted Affordable Housing SPD, the shortfall must be subject to a deferred payment mechanism.
- 6.13 The deferred payment mechanism would be triggered if profits on GDV reach 17% or more (on an open book cost and value basis). In this scenario the Council would receive 50% of those profits on a side-by-side (pound for pound) basis up to the policy equivalent cap (which will be 15% of GDV as per SPD guidance). More detailed heads of terms in respect of the deferred payment mechanism will be reported to Committee in an update.
- 6.14 All these affordable housing measures are recommended to be secured at individual Heads of terms within any S106 agreement should permission be granted.
- 6.15 As with all instances where a shortfall in affordable housing provision is identified, a degree of harm exists in terms of meeting housing need. This harm will need to be weighed against the public benefits of the development in the overall planning balance at the end of this report.

### **Demolition, design and effect on heritage assets**

- 6.16 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is situated.
- 6.17 Policy CR2 (Design in the Centre) seeks to secure appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and frontages, specifically seeking to build on then existing structure of streets and places and provide high levels of access and connectivity into the centre and to the public transport interchanges.
- 6.18 Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) requires “*proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats.....*” to be “*assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area...*”. “*Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats ....will only be acceptable where:* • *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features...*”
- 6.19 As the building is a Grade II and Grade II\* Listed Building, there is a duty imposed by Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting or any features of special architectural historic interest which it possesses. This is reflected in Policies EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment), EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets) and EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) of the Local Plan. EN1 states that “*historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced*”.
- 6.20 The site also lies within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and as such there is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regards to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) as above and Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) which states that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced and that development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The Council will, therefore, have



regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.

- 6.21 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.22 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF details that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 6.23 With regard to the above, the proposals have the potential to affect the heritage interests of both the Listed Building and the Conservation Area.
- 6.24 This application has been submitted following pre-application advice provided by the Local Planning Authority and extensive engagement with Historic England. A Heritage Statement and corresponding Heritage Assessment has been submitted and considered by both the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer and Historic England.
- 6.25 The demolition of the Olympia Hall, which, given its attachment to both the Grade II and Grade II\* listed London Street frontage buildings forms part of the listing, must first be considered.
- 6.26 The hall is a steel-framed structure covered with corrugated cemented roof. It is considered to have limited aesthetic value, a view which has been echoed by Historic England. Indeed, the hall sits on area originally occupied by rear gardens of the London Street Georgian frontage buildings. Whilst of limited aesthetic merit, the

cultural value of the hall to Reading's local community and social history (in providing a large ballroom in 1900s and then in later years a venue for music groups) is recognised.

- 6.27 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF sets out that any development proposal that would harm the significance of a heritage asset from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting must be clearly and convincingly justified. Given that the demolition of the hall would cause the loss of a historically and socially significant building for the local community, any replacement proposal needs to provide heritage benefits in terms of enhancement of the setting of the listed buildings as well as of the character and appearance of the conservation area to justify and offset that harm.
- 6.28 Further to the above, paragraph 206 of the NPPF requires that Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset - or which better reveal its significance - should be treated favourable.
- 6.29 Following demolition of the large flat roof rear extensions to the London Street frontage buildings, including the hall, it is proposed to reinstate the rear elevations of the frontage buildings. Provision of three rear garden areas to the three flats proposed to be provided by way of conversion works to the ground floor of the building are also proposed.
- 6.30 It is considered that the demolition of the large full width single storey rear projection which integrates with the rear hall and extends over 50m from the rear elevation of the London Street buildings and its replacement with a much more modest single storey rear extension (to facilitate conversion of the ground floor of the frontage buildings to three flats) would be beneficial to the setting and historic character of the Grade II and Grade II\* listed frontage buildings. Notably this allows provision of three rear garden areas which would serve the ground floor flats and in part re-provides the garden space historically found to the rear of the buildings which is also considered of benefit to the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.31 The proposed restoration of the rear elevations of the London Street buildings, to include red brick and window style - including cills, lintel details and window bars to match the upper floors - is considered appropriate. Historic England are supportive of the design

approach which includes continuation of a 'tower style' bay window down to ground floor level and inclusion of characteristic Georgian style railings at first floor parapet. The removal of the existing modern rendered section at first floor level to the rear elevation of the buildings would reveal the original fabric brickwork which is welcomed.

- 6.32 No alterations - other than the removal of exiting signage - are proposed to the principal London Street elevations which is considered appropriate given their significance and contribution to the character of the conservation area. However, many of the windows to the front elevations are in poor condition and deteriorated timber windows are proposed to be repaired or upgraded as part of this scheme.
- 6.33 With regard to the proposed works to No's 75 and 77 themselves, the restoration of windows is considered to be an enhancement to the listed buildings and the surrounding conservation area and the proposed removal of link building structures at the rear will improve the views of the back of the listed buildings, a further enhancement. Therefore, the repair and restoration works to No's 75 and 77 London Street is recognised as being a positive benefit reinforcing the historic significance of the building and immediate area.
- 6.34 With regard to the proposed new build element to the rear of the site, the residential mews layout of two narrow separate blocks is considered suitable for this site given its long and narrow shape. This approach is reflective of the layout of other similar residential developments to the rear of London Street, and, furthermore, is considered more reflective of the former historic character of this part of the conservation area.
- 6.35 The proposed scale of the development at two and half storeys is considered to retain a suitable level of subservience to the scale of the London Street frontage such as to not appear dominant to their setting. The incorporation of the third floor accommodation with the roof slope with dormer window projections is considered to further soften the mass of the development. The scale, combined with the layout - including central gaps between the two buildings - would allow views of the rear elevations of the London Street frontage buildings with proposed 'garden areas' presented to East Street. Officers view is that the opening up of these views represents a significant enhancement to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area and street-scene where many other modern

developments have obscured such views and entirely removed green spaces. This view is supported by Historic England.

- 6.36 The setback of the two new build blocks from East Street is also welcomed and which, combined with the proposed scale of development, is considered to sit appropriately within the prevailing scale of the East Street street scene. It is disappointing that just over half the site frontage to East Street is taken up by a private car park, however, it is acknowledged that this land outside of the Applicant's ownership and control. The proposal shows indicative landscape planting to the frontage and area behind the car park as well as provision of central courtyard communal area. This greenery is welcomed.
- 6.37 The two new build blocks would be constructed out of red brick, with design characteristics and cues taken from the frontage buildings including Georgian window, sills and brick header lintel detailing and slate roofs. Window proportions are considered to reflect those of the frontage buildings and the dormer window projections would be small scale so as not to dominate the roof space.
- 6.38 It is considered that the proposed layout has successfully maximised the use of the site. The proposed new build blocks are not considered to dominate or detract from the rear elevation of the listed buildings. The layout created by the linear mews, combined with the landscaped areas is considered to be a positive aspect of the scheme.
- 6.39 In overall heritage and design terms it is considered that the proposals have been well considered and comments taken on board from pre-application advice stage and Historic England, which is welcomed and appropriate. The proposed repairs of the Georgian Houses and the provision of sympathetic development within their setting is considered to result in suitable preservation and enhancement of the historic character and setting of the listed buildings and of the currently neglected character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.40 The proposed residential infill linear mews style development is considered to re-introduce a style of dwelling once found in the area but since largely cleared during the last century in favour of car parking or lower density detached forms of development. The proposed scheme effectively reinstates built form - and gardens to the rear of the listed frontage buildings - in a manner that is considered to be an appropriate design response to an historically constrained back street site.

- 6.41 Given the above, it is considered that the heritage and public benefits of these enhancements justifies the loss of the aesthetically mediocre - but locally valued - Olympia Hall in heritage terms. Whilst the Olympia Hall does have an important history to Reading, the later changes and alterations have severely impacted on this significance. The rear building in their current state is not considered to preserve or enhance the character, appearance or setting of either the listed buildings or conservation area.
- 6.42 Further to the above, it is considered that the repair and restoration work to the London Street buildings should be afforded significant weight this justification and in order to secure these important works it is recommended that implementation and completion of the repair and restoration works to the frontage buildings should be secured through the S106 legal agreement prior to occupation of the new build development at the rear of the site.
- 6.43 The proposals are considered to provided significant heritage and public benefits by considerably enhancing the site, the setting of listed buildings and the conservation area through the creation of a more 'traditional' and more domestic visual setting. The proposed mews development provides a repurposed sense of place whilst respecting the heritage significance if its surroundings.
- 6.44 Details of materials would be secured via condition, to ensure design quality, to include submission of samples given the visual sensitivity of the site.
- 6.45 In conclusion, both elements of this scheme - conversion and new build - will preserve the setting of Listed Buildings to the London Street frontage and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. In accordance with Policy CC7, EN1, EN3, EN4, EN6 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

#### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.46 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that development proposals should safeguard the amenity of both existing and future occupiers and Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors in terms of pollution. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) sets out the standards to which new dwellings shall be constructed. Policy EN15 (Air Quality)

seeks to protect existing and future occupiers from the impact of poor air quality.

- 6.47 Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) states that conversion into self-contained flats will only be acceptable where: “.....*There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties; • There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units; • Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and • The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents*”.

#### *Surrounding Occupiers*

- 6.48 The proposed new building located adjacent the north boundary would be located at least 15m away from Compass House to the north, which comprises residential units over 2 and 3 storeys. Given this distance and that the roof would be hipped away to minimise the impact, no overbearing effects are considered to arise. The proposed internal layout includes careful positioning of windows and rooflights to minimise overlooking. Given the distance between buildings and when compared with the existing bulk of the hall, no additional overbearing effects are considered likely to arise and it is not considered that any significant material overlooking would occur.
- 6.49 To the south of the site is the rear car park of the offices at No.81 London Street. It is considered that due to the placement of windows and rooflights of the proposed building adjacent the southern boundary, that any future redevelopment opportunities could be exercised without significant privacy concerns.
- 6.50 With regard to No.79 London Street to the west, there would be a distance of 10.7m from the proposed building adjacent the south boundary to the rear of No.79 and the proposed development will clearly be visible to occupiers of the upper floor flats. A light assessment has been submitted with the application that demonstrates that lighting parameters will not be breached and the main roof of the new build will be hipped away to minimise the impact and the dormer window on the west roof slope would be small in scale. It is considered that the replacement of the single storey rear element of the hall with garden area would open the space between No.79 and the new build, resulting in a less

oppressive relationship at ground floor and resulting in a more domestic relationship. Whilst there will be some impact to the occupiers of the upper floor flats, it is not considered to be so significant so as to warrant a refusal on this basis.

- 6.51 The windows on the west elevation facing No.79 would be small and are shown on the plans to be obscurely glazed so not to result in any material loss of privacy. This will be secured by condition.
- 6.52 With regard to the new flats of No.75-77 itself (as well as the upper floors already in residential use), given the distance of at least 18m from the new buildings to the rear elevation, no material overbearing effects are considered to arise. As above, the windows on the west elevations would be small scale and obscurely glazed so as not to result in any material loss of privacy.
- 6.53 Overall, in terms of overlooking and privacy, Officers are of the opinion that in this relatively dense urban environment, any additional overlooking from the proposed units is acceptable and what can be expected in Central Reading.
- 6.54 In addition to the above, a further condition is required in respect of protecting the amenity of neighbours during the construction period. A pre-commencement construction method statement will therefore be secured via condition and is required from a highway safety perspective too. As such in overall terms, considering all nearby residential occupiers, no significantly harmful amenity impacts would occur, subject to conditions and in compliance with policy CC8.

#### *Future Occupiers*

- 6.55 The proposed new build units would meet the size standards set out under Policy H5 in both the size of the units and the size of bedrooms. The internal layout is arranged as such so as to create an overall high standard of living accommodation for future occupiers and within the constraints of the site and, since the omissions of the louvres (for design purposes), all units are considered to be served by adequate outlook and daylighting.
- 6.56 Considering privacy and overlooking matters, the two proposed buildings would be sited 8m from each other. Whilst Policy CC8 states that a back-to-back distance of 20m is usually appropriate, this is a front-to-front relationship, with views across the public 'street' to the front of the properties reflecting a typical mews-style layout.

- 6.57 Policy H10 (...) states that “... *flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens*”. The upper floor flats of the new builds would have a private balcony/terrace. These would be sufficient size to allow a table and chairs. The ground floor units would have access to the landscaped communal garden areas. The amount of amenity space is considered acceptable for this town centre location.
- 6.58 For future occupiers of the units provided through the ground floor conversion of No’s 75-79, it is considered that the layouts of the proposed units are suitable in size and shape to provide an appropriate standard of accommodation, given the constraints of the nature of the proposals, site and (listed) building), Although some of the rooms do not follow a standard shape/size, this is owing to the listed nature of the building and therefore compromises are considered inevitable/acceptable. As welcome benefit if the provision of garden space
- 6.59 In overall terms, the scheme is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies CC8, H5, H8 and H10.

#### **Transport**

- 6.60 Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 6.61 The application site is within Zone 2, the Primary Core Area which surrounds the town centre within Zone 1. Zone 2 extends to walking distances up to 2 kilometres from the town centre and includes areas well served by public transport.
- 6.62 The site is located on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs. 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 close proximity to the Oracle shopping centre and multi-storey car parks and in close range of Broad Street with a range of shops and services.
- 6.63 The proposed scheme includes 7 parking spaces (to include 1 disabled bay). Whilst this is below the parking standards (9 required for Zone 1), Transport Officers advise that a reduction in parking provision is acceptable and will not lead to on street parking being detrimental to road safety. This is due to the sites central and sustainable



location close to the borders with Zone 1 and the rationale for fewer parking spaces as set out in the submitted Transport Statement. Namely, due to sustainable transport options and controlled on street parking measures. Unauthorised on street parking can be further controlled via the administration of the Council's residential Parking Permit scheme that operates in this area and conditions removing automatic entitlement are recommended.

- 6.64 During the course of the application a tracking diagram was received to show how service vehicles will enter and exit the site. Transport officers consider this to be acceptable, subject to the widening of the existing dropped kerb. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of condition.
- 6.65 The existing vehicle access from East Street is to be retained, to serve the 7 parking spaces. Refuse storage and collection is proposed at the rear of the site adjacent to the East Street vehicle access which is acceptable.
- 6.66 Revised plans demonstrate a total of 9 cycle storage spaces are to be provided. This would comply with standards and a condition is recommended to secure exact details.
- 6.67 Officers advise that there are no transport objections to the proposed development subject to conditions and informatives and the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 and the SPD.

#### **Natural Environment - Trees, Landscaping and Ecology**

- 6.68 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which is it located including landscaping. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) requires new development to make provision for tree retention and planting. The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area (EN15) where the provision of tree coverage is important. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) requires that new development should provide a net gain for biodiversity where possible and should incorporate biodiversity features into proposals where practical.
- 6.69 The application site is a constrained urban site covered with buildings and hardstanding and there are no existing trees or vegetation on or directly adjacent to the site.

- 6.70 An indicative landscaping plan has been provided which includes provision of 7 new trees, a net gain of trees on the site, which is appropriate. Other hedging and ground cover vegetation is provisioned throughout the site and as discussed elsewhere in this report, the provision of garden spaces within the site is welcomed.
- 6.71 A pre-commencement landscaping condition is recommended which will secure planting details to include the species, maintenance and management schedule in accordance with EN14.
- 6.72 An Ecology Report has been submitted with the application and the Council's Ecologist considers this has been undertaken to an appropriate standard. The report concludes that the works are unlikely to impact upon protected species or priority habitats and this conclusion is agreed with by the Council's Ecologist.
- 6.73 The proposed development represents an opportunity for habitat enhancement to benefit swifts as well as other birds, bats and insects. A such, and in accordance with Policy EN12, a condition is recommended to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided within the new development.
- 6.74 In natural environment terms, it is considered that landscaping and biodiversity enhancements will be significant, improving the ecology of the site. The Ecology and Natural Environment officers have confirmed that the scheme is acceptable, subject to the conditions recommended above.

### **Sustainability**

- 6.75 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials. Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.
- 6.76 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) sets out the expectations for the performance of new build homes in terms of emission, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. With respect to major residential schemes the policy states: *"...b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations. c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes. ....e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3)..."*

- 6.77 With regard to the proposed new buildings, the submitted Sustainability and Energy Statements explain that the reduction in the development's overall CO2 emissions, achieved by fabric enhancements and the use of low carbon technology compared to Building Regulations 2013 criteria would equate to an average improvement of CO2 emissions of 100.31%. It is considered that the new builds could achieve (or be very close) to being carbon neutral.
- 6.78 Policy H5 and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting. Although the clear intention is to achieve a carbon neutral development, should this not be possible, and to ensure that the policy would be fully met, obligations in respect of carbon offsetting are recommended for inclusion within the legal agreement as set out above.
- 6.79 With regard to the conversion element, the Sustainability and Energy Statements detail that the energy efficient measures of the three dwellings would help improve the carbon emission to a percentage of 19% over Building Regulations. Whilst this is recognised, Policy CC2, supported by the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, requires that the three flats to be formed by conversion work should demonstrate compliance with BREEAM standard of 'Very Good'. Given that no substantial details have been submitted it is therefore considered necessary to secure the standard two-part sustainability condition. The first, a pre-commencement condition, seeks a final design stage assessment and certificate to demonstrate that the units would achieve the required 'very good' rating. The second element, secured prior to first occupation, will secure final BREEAM domestic refurbishment certificate of compliance with the 'very good' rating.
- 6.80 Officers acknowledge that there may be inherent difficulties incorporating substantial sustainability improvements within a scheme such as this, primarily owing to it predominantly involving the change of use of an existing building, with the grade II listing likely to be a further substantial constraint. As such, should there be shortfalls in the subsequent discharge of condition submissions (i.e. not in line with the wording of the condition), mitigating factors will be taken into account by officers when subsequently assessing such matters (i.e. a flexible approach to the stipulations of the BREEAM rating will be able to be applied by officers in the event that justifiable reasons for any shortfalls are put forward for

consideration by the applicant). As such, the conditions are considered to be necessary in this case (and pass the other tests of a condition too), but a degree of flexibility will be able to be applied by officers (if justified) in the future at the discharge of conditions stage and this will be reflected in the wording of the condition.

- 6.81 Overall, subject to the conditions and obligations, the scheme would accord with measures in Policy CC2, CC3 and H5.

#### **Archaeology**

- 6.82 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) seeks to protect areas of archaeological potential.

- 6.83 The site falls within an area with high potential for medieval and post medieval remains and an archaeological assessment has been submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by the Berkshire Archaeologist who has raised no objection to the proposals subject to a condition to ensure a scheme of archaeological works is conducted to further evaluate the presence or absence - and significance - of any archaeological remains and to ensure that any necessary mitigation is in place.

#### **Environmental Matters**

- 6.84 **Air Quality:** Policy EN15 (Air Quality) requires developments to “*have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality*”. An air quality assessment has also been submitted with the application. RBC Environmental Protection Officers are satisfied that this demonstrates that pollutant levels at the new dwellings would be below threshold values such that further assessment or mitigation is not required, and future occupiers would not be subject to poor air quality. RBC Environmental Protection Officers are also satisfied that the air quality assessment demonstrates that the development itself would not detrimentally impact on air quality levels at and surrounding the application site.

- 6.85 **Noise:** Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) states that “*proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution.*” The Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the submitted noise assessment and agrees that the recommended standard for internal noise in respect of the new build flats can be met if the recommendations from the assessment are incorporated into the design. However, only trickle venting is proposed and this

will likely not be sufficient for flats fronting London Street, due to the high external noise levels and additional ventilation will be required to prevent overheating. As such, a further noise assessment is required to be submitted to show that internal noise levels will meet the recommended standards. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of condition and a pre-commencement noise assessment condition is recommended.

- 6.86 ***Contaminated land:*** Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) requires that developments on land affected by contamination be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use.
- 6.87 The rear of the development site lies adjacent to the site of an historic slaughterhouse which has the potential to have caused contaminated land. Given this, the recommended standard four-stage conditions are proposed to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement).
- 6.88 ***Drainage & Flood Risk:*** Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage) requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions or be no worse than existing. The Council's SUDS Officer has confirmed that the proposals do result in a reduction in the runoff rates when compared to the exiting brownfield rates which is acceptable. Exact details of the drainage strategy are to be provided and therefore conditions for the submission and approval of SUDS strategy have been included.

#### **Other Matters**

##### *Employment, Skills and Training Plan*

- 6.89 For construction skills the applicant will have the option of either developing an Employment Skills Plan in conjunction with Reading UK CIC or providing a financial contribution. This will be secured as part of the S106 legal agreement.

##### *Other Matters Raised in Representation*

- 6.90 All material considerations are discussed in the above report.
- 6.91 Loss of value to nearby property is not a material planning consideration.

## **Equalities Impact**

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

## **7. CONCLUSION**

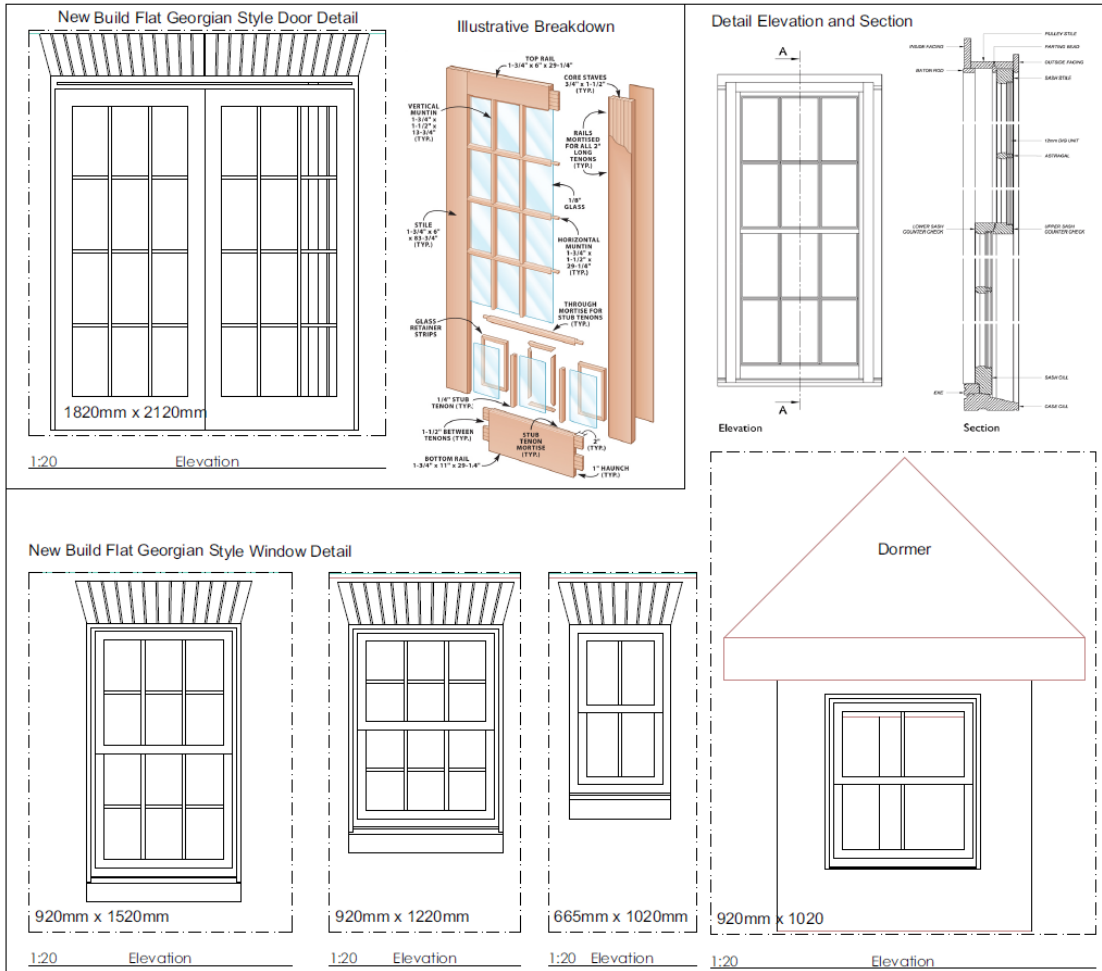
- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, National Policy and Guidance and other material considerations as set out within the report.
- 7.2 The loss of the existing use is not considered harmful and the proposal would provide housing that would contribute towards meeting the Borough's annual housing targets in a sustainable urban location. A contribution would be secured towards provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. However, this falls short of policy requirements and a degree of harm therefore exists in terms of meeting housing need. The fact that requiring more affordable housing would render the scheme financial unviable at this stage is noted, as is the proposed deferred payments mechanism.
- 7.3 The proposals would make effective use of an urban site and would preserve and enhance the setting of Grade II and Grade II\* Listed Buildings and enhance the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. The overall design approach is considered to be of good quality, which would be carbon neutral, and the proposal would provide a visual and environmental uplift to the site, with the provision of landscaped gardens, alongside significant greening of the site considered to substantially enhance the biodiversity and ecology value of the site given its current condition without any form of natural greenery.
- 7.4 In this particular instance, the specific heritage benefits combined with the environmental and visual enhancements described above are considered to outweigh the harm identified in respect of housing need. The fact that the benefits would not be realised if additional affordable housing were to sought due to viability constraints should also be given weight in determining the application.
- 7.5 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on





Proposed New Build Elevations





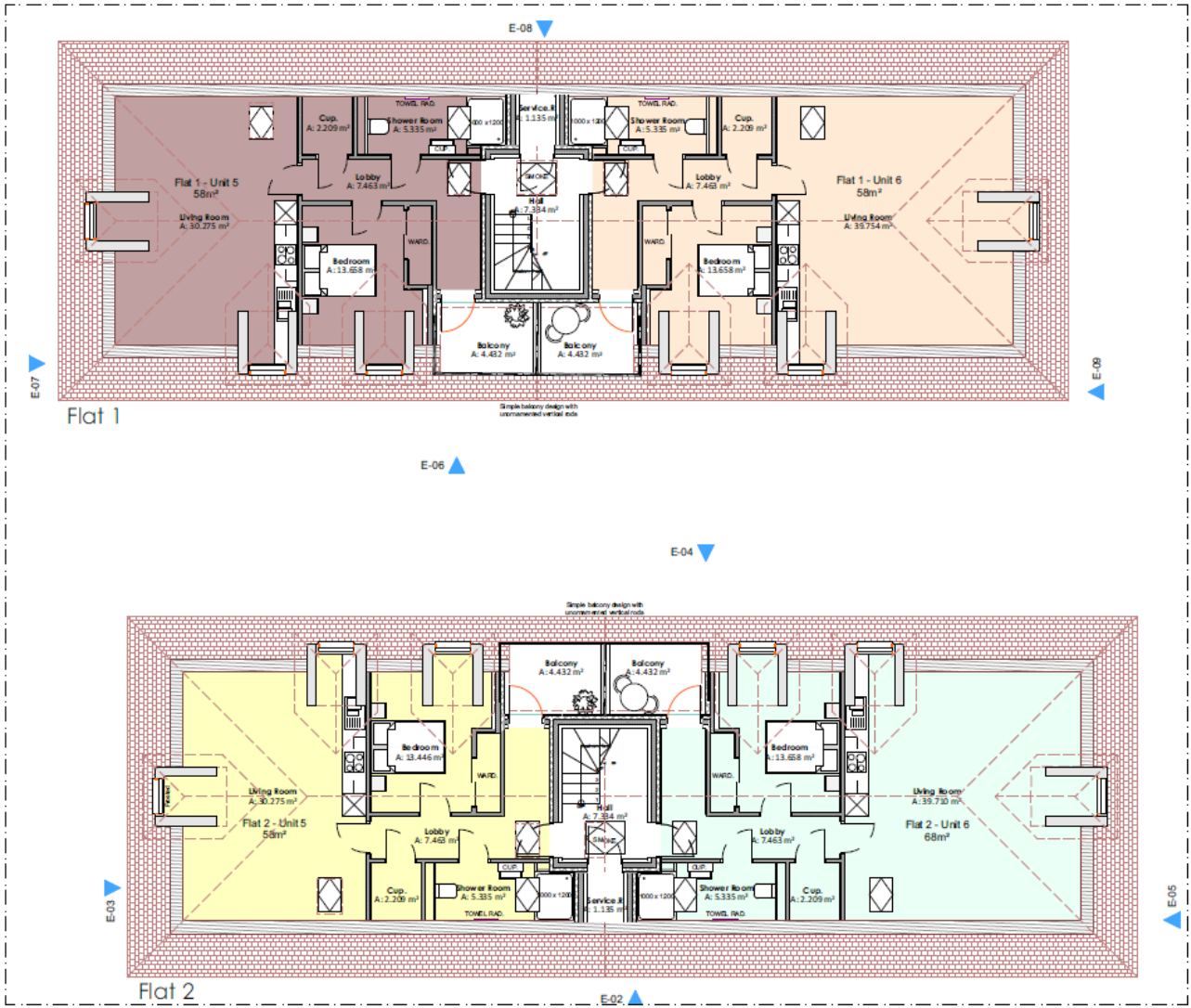
**New Build Window and Door Detail**



**Proposed New Build Ground Floor Plans**



Proposed New Build First Floor Plans



## Proposed New Build Roof Plans



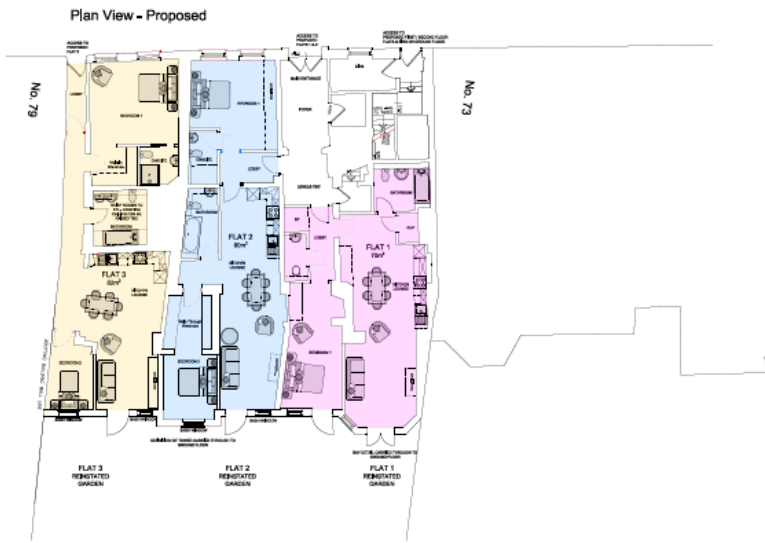
Rear Elevation - Proposed

Datum Level 43.00m



Rear Elevation - Existing  
(0.5x IF TWO STOREY)

PROPOSED & EXISTING REAR ELEVATION FOR GEORGIAN PROPERTY



PROPOSED & EXISTING PLAN VIEW



Plan View - Existing

DATE	01/11/2023
PROJECT	75-77 London Street Reading RG1 1AA
CLIENT	75-77 London Street Reading RG1 1AA
DESIGNER	[Signature]
DATE	01/11/2023
REVISION	0

Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations - 75-77 London Street Alterations