

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1st March 2023

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 221405

Address: Land at Battle Street, Reading

Proposal: Clearance and taking up of existing hardstanding and structures from the site, erection of seven buildings, up to four storeys in height, containing 49 affordable dwellings (Class C3 use), 13 supported living accommodation (Class C2 residential institution use), and older persons day centre (Class E(f)), and associated roadways, car parking, open space and other infrastructure.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: 21/12/2022

Extended Deadline: 30th April 2023

Planning Guarantee 26-week target: 22nd March 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services to i) **GRANT** full planning permission, subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of a Unilateral Undertaking (S.106).

OR ii) **Refuse** full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 30th April 2023 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The Section 106 Legal Agreement to include the following heads of terms:

Affordable Housing

- To secure affordable housing consisting of 19 units (30% provision) on site, operated by Reading Borough Council, comprising 2 x 3 bed houses; 4 x 3 bed, 8 x 2 beds and 5 x 1 bed general needs housing. To be let at Social Rent levels as set out in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD, i.e. A rental level set by central government according to a formula (also known as formula rent).

Employment Skills and Training Plan

- Construction phase skills - preparation and delivery of an ESP or a financial contribution. To comply with Policy CC9 and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. Contribution to be paid prior to commencement of development.

Zero Carbon Offset - All Dwellings

- Zero Carbon Offset as per SPD 2019 to provide 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.

- Payable prior to occupation of 52nd unit.

Transport -

- Applicant to enter into a S278 agreement in relation to the reconfiguration of the vehicular access on to Battle Street, relocation of build out on Battle Street, and new access on to James Street including closures of existing vehicular access points as may be required.
- A contribution of £5,000 towards Traffic Regulation Orders necessary to alter existing parking restrictions surrounding the site.

Open Space

- To secure an off-site Open Space contribution of £72,450, towards the improvement of facilities within Beresford Road Playground and/or public realm improvements on Oxford Road within the conservation area - payable before first occupation.

General

- Contribution towards monitoring costs plus a separate commitment to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs in connection with the proposed S106 Agreement will be payable whether or not the Agreement is completed.
- Any unexpended contributions to be repaid within ten years beginning with the start of the Financial Year after the final (including phased contributions) obligation payment for each obligation is received. In accordance with Policy CC9.
- All financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) TL1 - 3 yrs.
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 4) C1 - Hours of Construction
- 5) C2 - Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved
- 6) C4 - No Bonfires
- 7) CO3 - Contamination assessment to be submitted and approved
- 8) CO4 - Remediation scheme to be submitted and approved
- 9) CO5 - Remediation scheme to be implemented and verified
- 10) CO6 - Unidentified contamination
- 11) DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 12) DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified prior to occupation
- 13) DC6 - Cycle Parking to be provided as approved
- 14) DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved/provided as approved (to be vermin proof)
- 15) Refuse Management Plan to be submitted and approved.
- 16) Visibility Splay free of obstructions
- 17) Vehicle accesses to be stopped up
- 18) Roads provided
- 19) Visibility Splays
- 20) Parking allocation plan
- 21) Parking permits - notification
- 22) Parking permits - no automatic entitlement
- 23) DE6- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

- 24) L10 - Habitat enhancement - Submission and approval of mitigation and enhancement to be installed and retained thereafter.
- 25) L2 - Hard and soft landscaping scheme
- 26) Boundary treatments
- 27) L4 - Landscape Management Plan to be submitted and approved
- 28) Landscaping to be implemented in accordance with the approved plan
- 29) Green Roof in accordance with details
- 30) Green Roof maintenance plan - submission and approval
- 31) No removal of vegetation during bird nesting season
- 32) N10 - Noise Mitigation Scheme as specified (ventilation and glazing)
- 33) N2 - Mechanical Plant Noise Assessment to be submitted and approved (ASHP)
- 34) External lighting plan - to be submitted and approved
- 35) SU1 - SAP assessment (design stage)
- 36) SU2 - SAP assessment (as built)
- 37) SU7 - SUDS plan to be approved
- 38) SU8 - SUDS to be implemented
- 39) Accessible and adaptable dwellings to built in accordance with approve plans and remain so
- 40) Obscure glazing to bathrooms
- 41) Removal of permitted development rights for Block C and F
- 42) Designing out crime measures to be approved and implemented

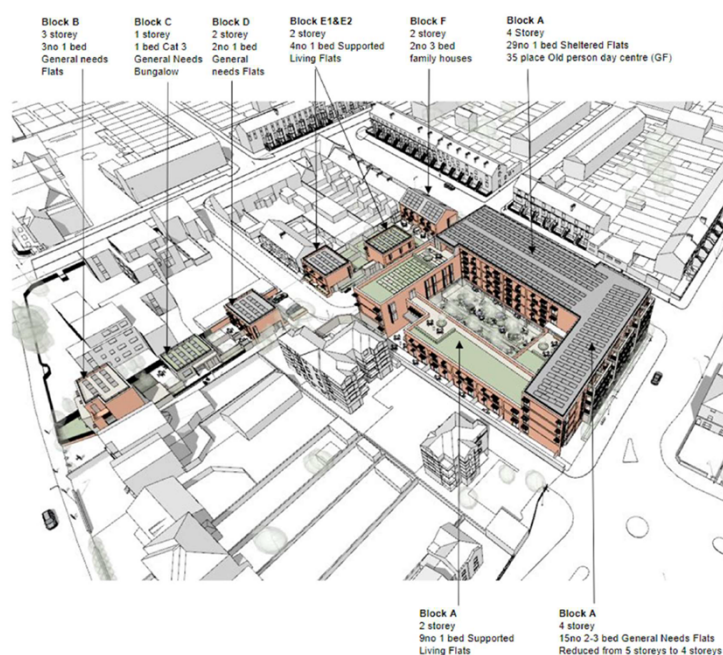
INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- IF1 - Positive and Proactive
- IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- IF3 - Highways
- IF2 - Pre-Commencement Conditions
- IF4 - S106
- IF6 - Building Regulations
- IF7 - Complaints about Construction
- IF8 - Encroachment
- Contamination
- I10 - Noise between residential properties
- I11 - CIL
- I13 - Parking Permits
- Housing Act
- I29 - Access Construction
- Thames Water

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The existing site is approximately 0.55ha and vacant with the former Central Pool buildings having been demolished. The existing car park hard standing remains with 4 or 5 small trees. The substation is in operation and will require access. The surrounding area is primarily residential. To the north and west are two and three storey Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses. To the south are two more modern blocks of flats and there are semi-detached houses, terraces and flats on Oxford Road. There are a range of architectural styles and eras of property.
- 1.2 It is located within the Central Area Boundary (Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) Policies CR1-CR10) and is a specifically allocated site under Policy CR14a (Central Swimming Pool, Battle Street - full policy wording in

Building	Height	Use	Amount
A	Up to 4 storeys	Class C3 dwellings	29 x 1-bed sheltered apartments
		Class C3 dwellings	12 x 2&3 bed General Needs apartments
		Class E(f) day centre of older persons	-
		Class C2 residential institution	9 x 1-bed units and communal/shared facilities
B	3 storey	Class C3 dwellings	3 x 1-bed
C	1 storey	Class C3 dwellings	1 x 1-bed
D	2 storey	Class C3 dwellings	2 x 1-bed
E1	2 storey	Class C2 residential institution	2 x 1-bed
E2	2 storey	Class C2 residential institution	2 x 1-bed
F	2 storey	Class C3 dwellings	2 x 3-bed



- 9 on-site car parking spaces (3 of which accessible spaces) and 32 cycle spaces;
- Creation of a 'Mews'; and
- Landscaping.

2.2 Submitted plans and documentation are as follows:

Received 21st September 2022, dated September 2022, unless otherwise stated:

- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1000 - Location Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1500 - Existing Site Plan

- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1501 - Proposed Site Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1850 Rev P1 - External Building Materials
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1860 Rev P1 - Brick Bond Types, Distribution and Precedents
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-00-DR-A-2000 - GA Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-01-DR-A-2010 - GA First Floor Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-02-DR-A-2020 - GA Second Floor Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-03-DR-A-2030 - GA Third Floor Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-RL-DR-A-2040 - GA Roof Level Plan
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-BB-XX-DR-A-2075 - Block B GA Plans, Elevations and 3D View
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-BC-XX-DR-A-2080 - Block C GA Plans, Elevations and 3D View
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-BD-XX-DR-A-2085 - Block D GA Plans, Elevations and 3D View
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-BE-XX-DR-A-2090 - Blocks E1 and E2 GA Plans, Elevations and 3D View
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-BF-XX-DR-A-2095 - Block F GA Plans, Elevations and 3D View
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3000 - GA Elevations East + West
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3001 - GA Elevations North + South
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3002 - GA Elevations Additional
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3200 - GA Sections
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-BA-ZZ-DR-A-3050 - Block A Bay Elevations
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5900 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block A Sheet 01
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5901 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block A Sheet 02
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5902 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block A Sheet 03
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5903 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block A Sheet 04
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5904 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block A Sheet 05
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5905 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block A Sheet 06
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5906 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Blocks B - E1
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5907 - Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes Block E2 - F
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-00-DR-L-7000 - Landscape GA Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-ZZ-RL-DR-L-7001 - Landscape GA Roof Plan
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7101 - Hard Surfaces Plan
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7201 - Means of Enclosure and Furniture Plan
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7301 - Tree and Specimen Shrub Planting Plan
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7302 - Planting Plan
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7401 - Detail Sections [Landscaping]
- Drawing no: P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7501 - Landscape Amenity and Private Space

- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-00-00-DR-A-7800 Rev P1 - Parking Strategy and Recycling/Refuse
- Drawing no: E05077-ECH-XX-XX-DR-C-7500 Rev P01 - Below Ground Drainage
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1800 Rev P1 - Aerial View From North
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1810 Rev P1 - Proposed Visuals 01
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-DR-A-1820 Rev P1 - Proposed Visuals 02
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1830 Rev P1 - Proposed Visuals 03
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-00-ZZ-M3-A-1840 Rev P1 - Proposed Axonometrics
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1870 Rev P1 - 1:500 Massing Model Development Model
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1880 Rev P1 - 1:500 Terracotta Massing Model Development Model
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1890 Rev P1 - 1:250 Timber Massing Development Model
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1900 Rev P1 - 1:25 Typical Flat Model
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-00-00-DR-E-8100 - Electrical Engineering Services Existing LV and HV Cable Routes
- Drawing no: E05077-HCC-00-00-DR-E-8102 - Combined M&E External Services
- Drawing no: E05077-ECH-XX-XX-SK-C-7101 Rev P03 - Refuse Tracking Plan, received 10th February 2023
- Drawing no: E05077-ECH-XX-XX-SK-C-7102 Rev P03 - Fire Tracking Plan, received 10th February 2023
- Two Tier Bike Rack Layout, received 10th February 2023
- Two Tier Bike Rack Elevations, received 10th February 2023

Other Documents:

- Access Strategy, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Affordable Housing Statement, dated 15/9/22, prepared by Property Development Team RBC
- Air Quality Assessment, Revision 1.0, dated 19/8/22, Prepared by Entran Ltd
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 12/8/22, Job ref: SS21016 ReBc Btt St AIA SK1.2, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Archaeological Heritage Statement, version 1.0, dated 6/9/21, prepared by Hampshire County Council ETE Archaeological Service
- Phase 1: Contaminated Land & Geotechnical Desk Study Report, Document no: 6999, dated August 2022, Prepared by Terra Firma
- Daylight/Sunlight Report - Neighbours, dated 12/9/22, prepared by Daylight Sunlight Consulting
- Design and Access Statement, dated September 2022, updated 9th February 2023, prepared by Hampshire CC, received 10th February 2023
- Ecological Appraisal Rev 2, dated December 2021 updated August 2022, prepared by Hampshire County Council Ecology Team
- Energy Efficiency Statement dated 15/9/22, prepared by Hampshire CC Property Services
- External Lighting Strategy, prepared by Hampshire CC

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report, Document ref: E05077-ECH-XX-XX-RP-C-7001 Rev P01, dated 14/7/22, prepared by Hampshire Engineering Services
- Footway Width Note dated 9/2/23 received 10th February 2023
- Green Roof Note, dated 9/2/23, received 10th February 2023
- Heritage Statement, prepared by Hampshire CC Property Services
- Landscape Principles, Document ref: E05077-HCC-XX-RP-L-01 rev A, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Noise Assessment, Document ref: R8986-2 Rev 1, dated 12/9/22, prepared by 24 Acoustics
- Open Space Statement, Document Ref: E05077-HCC-XX-XX-RP-L-03, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Phase 3 Remediation Strategy, dated 2022, Document Ref: 6999/R003, prepared by Terra Firma South, received 13th December 2022
- Planning Statement, dated September 2022, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Preliminary EIA Screening Battle Street and Hexham Road Development, dated 20th July 2022, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Pre-Planning Consultation Comments Tracker
- Refuse Collection Vehicle Access to Bin Store Note, dated 9/2/23, received 10th February 2023
- Refuse Chute Note, dated 9/2/23, received 10th February 2023
- Review of Daylight and Sunlight Report For a Proposed Development at Battle Street, dated 7/2/23, Issue 1, ref: P124972, Prepared by BRE, received 7th February 2023
- Superfast Broadband Statement, dated August 2022
- Sustainability Statement V4.1, dated 14/9/22, prepared by Mace
- Technical Note dated 25th January 2023, prepared by Hampshire County Council [re geo-environmental matters], received 2nd February 2023
- Transport Statement, dated August 2022, prepared by Hampshire CC
- TRICS Vehicle Trip Generation Assessment, received 27th January 2023
- Utilities, dated 15//9/22, prepared by Hampshire CC
- Vent/Flue & Ventilation Details Statement, dated 4/8/22, prepared by Hampshire CC

2.3 *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*: the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The proposed C3 use is CIL liable however as it would be affordable housing it would be subject to Social Housing relief.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

181606/DEM - Application for prior notification of proposed demolition of Central Swimming Pool down to ground level. Prior Approval Notification - Approval 11.10.2018. Demolition completed.

(031246) 03/00826/OUT - Proposed redevelopment to include demolition of existing swimming pool complex and erection of residential development of 89 units comprising 67 private dwellings and 22 affordable dwellings. Permitted subject to Legal Agreement, on 12.10.2004. Not implemented - now lapsed (massing image as below).

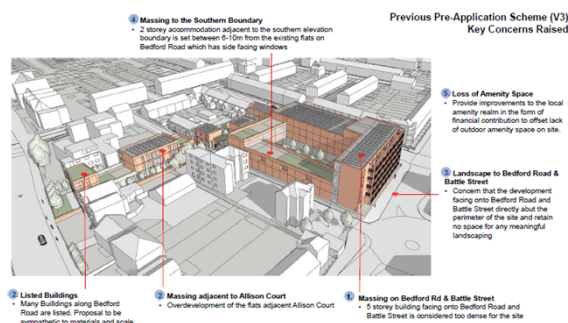


181900/PREAPP - Redevelopment of the Central Pool Site bounded by Battle Street, Bedford Road and Oxford Road (site area 0.55 hectare) for a total of 94 units comprising of 1,2 and 3 bed units (from 2-5 storeys) with access, amenity space and parking (total spaces 86). The proposal consists of a mix of private residential and affordable housing with a mixture of 2, 3, 4 and 5 storey buildings in the form of 4 blocks.

201753/PREAPP - New Day Centre for older persons, adults' mental health accommodation and affordable flats. Observations provided 28th October 2021.

The conclusion of which was that:

"Notwithstanding the lack of suitable and necessary supporting material submitted with the pre-application proposal (i.e. planning statement, heritage statement and DAS required to support/ inform any further design proposals) officers remain concerned regarding the extent of built form proposed on the site in terms of footprint and massing of the proposed block fronting the Bedford Road and Battle Street frontage; and the footprint and massing of the linear flatted block that has a frontage to the Oxford Road. A reduction in the overall building footprint shown is necessary to provide for a more appropriate lay off between built form within the site and to the site boundaries. This reduction will increase separation distances to achieve an acceptable impact on residential amenity and provide additional space for meaningful landscaping. The proposed development is also required to confirm that satisfactory car/cycle parking can be provided on site. Therefore, iteration V3 of the scheme cannot be supported by officers at this time."



Version 3 pre-application plan

211802/PREAPP - Follow up pre-application for New Day Centre for Older Persons, Adult Mental Health Accommodation, Sheltered Flats and Affordable Dwellings. Final observations were provided on 13th May 2021. This followed initial feedback in December 2021, further amendments, discussions and the presentation of an amended version to the Reading Design Review Panel on

23rd February 2022. A further follow up meeting was held on 16th March 2022 and further amended information submitted on 29/3, which was the version commented as part of this pre-application enquiry.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Statutory

4.1 None.

Non-statutory

Berkshire Archaeology

4.2 Our view is in accord with the conclusions of the Desk Based Assessment submitted with the application, that whilst the wider area does show some limited archaeological potential, earlier negative impacts to the site from the central pool buildings and earlier development are likely to have significantly truncated any remains present, and as such no further archaeological work is merited. This is in line with advice given previously for the site.

TVP - CCTV

4.3 No objection

Conservation and Urban Design Officer, RBC

4.4 No comments received at time of writing.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

4.5 It is noted where the trough is going to be moved to and that is fine. This looks like a thoughtful development and there is some good documentation in this pack. No comment from CAAC.

Ecology

4.6 The- application is for the clearance and redevelopment of the former Central swimming pool and land to the west. The proposed development will comprise seven buildings of varying heights.

4.7 The Ecology report (Hampshire County Council Ecology Team, August 2022) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that once precautions are in place to protect nesting birds, the proposals are unlikely to impact upon protected species and/or priority species. As such, there are no ecological objections to this application.

4.8 The Ecology report states that “*formal Biodiversity Net gain calculation is provided, demonstrating that the development will deliver a 334% net gain in biodiversity*”. The calculation does not seem to have been uploaded to the RBC planning website, however it would seem unlikely that the proposals would not deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

4.9 In accordance with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, which states that “*opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged*”, it is recommended that conditions are set to ensure that the site is enhanced for wildlife post development through the provision of bird nesting and bat roosting features and wildlife friendly landscaping. The ecology report recommends a number of biodiversity enhancements

which include amenity grassland, new tree planting, formal planting and sedum roofs along with two bat, two swift boxes and two bird boxes.

- 4.10 Outline details of the landscaping enhancements are shown on the drawings *GA Roof Level Plan*, E05077-HCC-ZZ-RL-DR-A-2040 which refers to the green/brown roofs and *Landscape GA Ground Floor Plan*, E05077-HCC-ZZ-00-DR-L-7000 which also shows a number of new trees and raised planters. However, the species listed in the 'Tree and specimen shrub planting' plan and the 'planting plan' are entirely non-native (only two species in the list are native) and these should be replaced by native wildlife friendly planting. Furthermore, full details of the green roofs should be submitted with the planning application. The roofs should be designed to maximise its value for wildlife and should be a biodiverse green roof as opposed to a sedum roof. Full details of these enhancements including locations, plant species, numbers, specifications and ongoing management would need to be secured by condition.
- 4.11 The planning statement refers to 'in-wall bird nest bricks, invertebrate 'bee bricks', and integrated bat roost units and swift nest boxes at high level around the roof / top of walls'. However, there do not appear to be any drawings showing the locations of these bat and bird boxes. As such, full specifications and details of these all bird and bat boxes and plans showing the locations and elevations should be provided prior to approval of the application or a condition should be set to ensure that details are provided prior to commencement of development.
- 4.12 No objection on ecology grounds subject to the conditions: green roof details; bird or bat boxes, bricks or tiles; swift bricks; hard and soft landscaping details; external lighting scheme and how this will not adversely affect wildlife; and no removal of vegetation during bird nesting season.

Environmental Health

- 4.13 *Noise impact on development* - The noise assessment submitted shows that the recommended standard for internal noise can be met, if the recommendations from the assessment are incorporated into the design. It is recommended that a condition be attached to consent to ensure that the glazing (and ventilation) recommendations of the noise assessment (and air quality assessment, where relevant) will be followed, or that alternative but equally or more effective glazing and ventilation will be used.
- 4.14 *Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building* - informative recommended.
- 4.15 *Noise generating development* - Applications which include noise generating plant (in this case air source heat pumps) when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 methodology. A condition is recommended.
- 4.16 *Air Quality - Increased exposure* - The assessment concludes that pollutant levels will be well within objective limit values at the new development therefore further assessment and/or mitigation is not required.
- 4.17 *Air Quality - Increased emissions* - The assessment states that there will be no significant traffic associated with the development therefore no further assessment is required regarding the impact on air quality.

- 4.18 *Contaminated Land* - The initial phase I assessment identifies risks from contaminated soils and potential risks from ground gas in made ground and recommends further assessment. Conditions are recommended and these are required to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination: Contaminated Land Assessment to be submitted and approved; Remediation Scheme to be submitted and approved; Remediation Scheme to be implemented and verified; and Unidentified contamination.
- 4.19 *Construction and Demolition Phases* - We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).
- 4.20 Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.
- 4.21 The developer is recommended to apply for a section 61 Control of Pollution Act 1974 consent for the construction works.
- 4.22 The following conditions are recommended: Construction Method Statement; Hours of Construction/ Demolition; and no bonfires.
- 4.23 *Bin storage - rats* - There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas e.g. flats and hotels there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste. A condition is recommended.
- 4.24 ***Planning Officer Note:*** The agent sought to avoid pre-commencement conditions so submitted a Contamination Remediation Strategy and following review of this Strategy the Environmental Health Officer stated “*I have reviewed the report and in theory it means that only the validation condition would be required (in addition to unforeseen contamination condition). However, I have a couple of queries regarding the report which will need to be addressed first, as follows:*
- *Clean cover system with marker layer is proposed as the remediation scheme. However, it is not totally clear what this will comprise as the reference to the marker layer is not consistent throughout the report. The proposed cover system needs to be made very clear so that there is no confusion at validation stage.*
 - *Will the proposed clean cover system in landscaped areas address risks from PAH vapour (internal and external)?*
 - *Is the removal of contaminated material a necessary part of the remediation, if so, in which areas (landscaped and/or building areas and/or hardstanding as the report is not clear on this point?)*
- 4.25 This will be reported in an update report.

Natural Environment (Tree Officer)

- 4.26 The comments on the original submission were as follows: The site sits within the lowest canopy cover ward (see further comment below), within the Air

Quality Management Area and partly within a Conservation Area. As such, the incorporation of landscaping / greening to provide a net gain is necessary.

- 4.27 The Design & Access Statement (DAS) provides some landscape principles, including in-ground planting, roof terraces & green roofs - the inclusion of the latter is positive. Section 5.1 sustainability of the DAS does not introduce Landscape led SuDs which should be considered (see further comments below).
- 4.28 With reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA 0 SS21016 ReBc BttSt AIA SK 1.2 dated 12/08/22): The tree survey includes 6 trees and confirms that all 6 (all on site) are to be removed with 37 to be planted - this provides a net gain of 31. Section 7.4 explains that this provides a 500% more canopy cover within ten years
- 4.29 Paragraphs 3.14 & 3.15 of the AIA refer to a TPO check on-line via Basingstoke & Deane's web info which is obviously not applicable. I can confirm that there is no TPO and although a small part of the site is within the Conservation Area none of the existing trees are within that.
- 4.30 Para. 6.4 discusses canopy cover in the ward. This has now been reassessed as a result of ward changes and the site sits within the lowest canopy cover ward in the borough at 5.5%, meaning that successful long-term tree planting is vital.
- 4.31 Para. 6.7 explains that limited space means that proposed trees will be small or medium in size so as not to negatively impact the properties by casting shade. Within the design proposed, this is mainly true, however I note one Oak (large canopy tree) is proposed which is positive.
- 4.32 Para. 8.3 indicates the need for good trees pits, preferably joined pits, however joined pits have not been proposed. See further comment on tree pits below.
- 4.33 Landscape GA Roof Plan E05077-HCC-ZZ-RL-DR-L-7001 - shows green roofs and the roof terraces, albeit it's slightly confusing showing other landscaping too.
- 4.34 Landscape GA Ground Floor E05077-HCC-ZZ-00-DR-L-7000 - noted and consistent with Tree and specimen shrub planting plan Landscape Principle document Rev A: 2.21 states '*Where feasible, tree pits within the landscape are to be designed to act as attenuation features*'. However, it does not appear this has been actioned hence an explanation is required (further comments given below).
- 4.35 Detailed section plan (including tree pits & planters) P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7401 - the soil volumes per tree should be stated to confirm that sufficient can be provided. In line with recommendations in the arboricultural report, joined pits should be considered and, depending on response to the SuDs queries below, combined with drainage.
- 4.36 Planting Plan P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7302 - It appears that wherever a dashed square is shown is 112m² but m³ should be stated - I note that 500mm depth of topsoil is indicated but presumably that is on top of subsoil?

- 4.37 Tree and specimen shrub planting plan P05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7301 - *Betula Jacquemontii* should be replaced with one/both native Birches if birches are desired in line with biodiversity aim of Tree Strategy.
- 4.38 *Ostrya carpinifolia* is proposed on Bedford Road frontage - as discussed during a meeting with the agent, this frontage is important for greening/tree planting but there is very limited in terms of tree planting space, hence there is concern about the choice given its potential size. The spread of 8+m seems unfeasible, particularly given the balconies proposed which, in view of the ultimate height of 12+m will be a conflict. In a pre-application meeting on 6/4/22 it was agreed that a narrow form tree species was required here. It would appear prudent for the location of the *Malus* in the amenity spaces of Blocks E & F to be slightly relocated so they are not in the middle of gardens.
- 4.39 It would be useful for this plan to show the location of any proposed shed etc in gardens to demonstrate that all hard landscaping/structures and soft landscaping can both be achieved.
- 4.40 As advised, a diversity of family, genus and species is required. The species mix appears reasonable but the family, genus, species mix/proportions should be provided for completeness. I note that, aside from Birch, the species most recently planted by Parks in the area (info provided in April) have been avoided. It would be helpful for this plan to note which tree pit type is proposed in which location.
- 4.41 I note that big stock sizes are proposed which will result in greater maintenance requirements and higher costs - the applicant could save money on this aspect by reducing stock size, allowing more to be spent on tree pits.
- 4.42 With reference to the 'Below Ground Drainage Layout' plan (E05077-ECH-XX-XX-DR-C-7500 P01) - the central court attenuation feature potentially conflicts with trees, however I think the soil depth is approx. 0.8m above the tank? This is just about sufficient for tree planting but that whole depth would be required. Confirmation is sought as Tree pit details are shown above the attenuation tank but with no depth confirmed. However, ideally, there should be joined tree pit / SuDs combination. The drainage layout plan confirms separation of drainage from landscaping whereas EN18 hierarchy requires a joined-up system in the first instance, and it appears possible in this case. The likely hotter, drier summers, as a result of climate change, mean that creative ways of saving water must be incorporated. Landscaping will require a significant volume of water hence measures should be incorporated to limit the use of potable water. Direct runoff into/through landscaping before reaching the attenuation features and potential use of collected water for landscape maintenance should be considered.
- 4.43 Combined tree / SuDs features and/or joined tree pits may need further consideration or service routes. As per the Landscape principles document, services will need to avoid tree pits, albeit they can be run through root cells if necessary. Details of service routes will be required.
- 4.44 In conclusion, the principle of the development is acceptable, but a number of things need further consideration and/or clarification, as detailed above. I assume the applicant will seek to address these prior to a decision to avoid pre-commencement conditions.

- 4.45 **Planning Officer Note:** An amended plan/ further details were submitted seeking to respond to the matters raised. This is currently being reviewed by the Natural Environment Officer and will be reported in an update, however, none of the matters originally raised were fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme overall from a landscape/ tree perspective.

NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board

- 4.46 We have noted the potential population numbers for planning purposes and will be informing the GP practices closest to the proposed development. You will be aware that we continue to liaise with yourselves with regard to S106 and CILs contributions for health services to help meet the increased demand associated with the aggregate impact of housing developments in Reading.

SUDS Manager

- 4.47 The proposed drainage design includes the provision of 3 attenuation tanks which will significantly reduce the surface water run off from the site and in principle is acceptable. The rate of discharge is to be set at 2.5 l/s however it is noted that the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change rate has been set at 3.9 l/s, it would therefore need to be clarified what the actual discharge rate would be. Should this be limited to 2.5 l/s then further drainage calculations would be required.
- 4.48 The courtyard area includes a large attenuation tank but no surface water from within that space feeds into that drainage system given that there is no gullies, permeable paving, slot drains etc. the drainage is limited to the rain water pipe network only, it would therefore need to be confirmed how this area will drain.
- 4.49 However, regardless of the above at this stage the applicant just needs to confirm that the proposal will reduce the surface water discharge from the site which has been provided, with this in mind I am happy to accept what has been submitted subject to the following conditions: Sustainable drainage to be approved; sustainable drainage to be implemented.
- 4.50 **Planning Officer Note:** Further information will be reported in an update.

RBC - Sustainability

- 4.51 The proposal includes good fabric standards, heat pumps and PV so it would meet policy standards in terms of zero carbon subject to payment for the balance of carbon. The scheme must meet the new building regulations as well as the -35% against part L.
- 4.52 More evidence needs to be provided that ground source heat pumps are not viable due to space requirements (also considering open loop boreholes).
- 4.53 The site is not far away from the District Heating energy Cluster as set out within the Council's commissioned Element Energy Report, and therefore, the site would ideally be connectable to district energy and with a compatible distribution system, albeit the submitted information identifies that as a justification on the basis of overheating.
- 4.54 **Planning Officer Note:** A further response was received from the applicant to address these points as discussed in Section h below

Thames Water

- 4.55 Foul Water - The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection.
- 4.56 There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimise the risk of damage.
- 4.57 Surface Water - if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow guidance under sections 167 & 168 in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.58 Water - On the basis of information provided, no objection with regard to the water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity.
- 4.59 An informative is recommended as follows: Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

RBC Transport Strategy

- 4.60 The original comments were as follows: The site is located within Zone 2 primary core area and on 1 and 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.

Parking

- 4.61 Parking should be provided in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD.
- 4.62 The parking requirement for the accommodation would be a total of 73 spaces 68 spaces plus 5 visitor spaces, however it is proposed that 9 No. car parking spaces are proposed for the site, all spaces to be provided with Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. Spaces are to be allocated in the following way:
- 2 x 3 bed dwellings = 2 allocated spaces (1 space each)
 - Wheelchair Accessible flat = 1 allocated accessible space
 - Older Person Day Centre = 3 allocated spaces. Open from 7 am to 5pm.
 - Supported Living Mental Health Flats 3 allocated spaces.
- 4.63 With regards to the day centre and supported living element, the submitted Transport Statement states a total of 13 staff has been established based on the number of staff at the current facilities that will be transferring to the proposed facility. This therefore equates to 6, which is what is being proposed and is deemed acceptable for this element of the development.
- 4.64 Dimensions of proposed parking bay conform to the Councils current standards and are deemed acceptable.
- 4.65 It is clear that the provision for the rest of the proposed units on the site falls well below the Councils current adopted standards, however given the extensive parking restrictions in place that include the operation of a residential parking scheme, double yellow lines etc and the frequent bus

service and general proximity of the town centre, a lower provision can be accepted in this instance.

- 4.66 As this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area, there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed residential units will not be issued with resident or visitor permits which would be covered by condition and an informative applied, this will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.
- 4.67 It is likely there will be a net decrease in vehicle trips however the applicant has not provided the full assessment of TRICS data for this to be reviewed. Data is required for review.
- 4.68 To facilitate the relocated site access, offsite parking alterations are proposed that include:
- 2no existing permit parking spaces on Battle Street to be converted to provide a drop off bay/zone for the day centre minibuses.
- 4.69 It needs to be clarified that this will also serve as a loading bay as was discussed at the Pre-App stage. This facility is located on the Public Highway and therefore cannot be dedicated to the site and must be available to public as well.
- 2no existing 2-hour parking spaces on Battle Street to be converted to a 'car club' zone.
- 4.70 Plans would indicate that there will be a loss of approx. 23m of permit bays of which half of this is to be re provided for relocation of the new access and remaining element for the drop off/loading bay, therefore a further loss of permit bays for the proposed car club would require further justification given that it would only appear that 2 standard family homes are to be provided, with rest requiring some assistance/support for residents. Therefore, would a car club be required in line with our current standards where it states:
- The following standards for Car Clubs (Residential) will apply in Reading:
- For developments of more than 10 residential units in Zones 1 and 2, developers will be required to:
 - Provide or support a car club on the site or demonstrate that the development will have access to and the use of a car club on a nearby site.
 - Create dedicated car parking spaces on the site for the car club.
- 4 existing permit parking spaces to be removed to provide a day care drop off point, to mitigate the loss of these spaces, 3 new spaces to be provided on Battle Street and 1 on James Street.
- 4.71 Having viewed aerial images of where James Street will be connected to the site, there are a number of Transport concerns. Given that there will be one way traffic through the development site exiting on to James Street a no entry sign will be required to ensure traffic travelling up James Street do not enter the site. The proposed bay on James Street cannot be provided as a retained turning area and must be provided for residents.

4.72 Tracking for refuse vehicles has been submitted entering and exiting the site, however the tracking diagrams do not show the width of the parking bays on James Street to prove that the refuse vehicle can exit the site without conflict with the on street parked vehicles.

4.73 As advised in previous Transport comments the applicant will need to meet all the TRO costs and that any works will be included in the Highways Agreement.

Access to the site

4.74 The access road is 3.7m wide, tracking has been provided for vehicles travelling through the site and is deemed acceptable however it is noted that the access is to be relocated.

4.75 Vehicular one-way system from Battle Street through the site and exiting on to James Street is proposed, as well as a new 3m pedestrian footway that will link directly to Oxford Road, close to the existing bus stops and train station. There is an existing highway sign along the Oxford Rd that has not been illustrated on plans and therefore revised plans identifying the location of the signage and the proposed tree are required to ensure there is no conflict.

4.76 A 2m pedestrian width footpath must be provided throughout the site, given the main entrance will be from Battle Street.

Cycle Storage

4.77 Cycle storage should be provided in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD which states:

- C3 Dwelling 1 & 2 Bed Flat = 0.5 spaces
- C3 Dwelling Flat 3+ Bed Flat = 1 space
- C3 Dwelling 3-Bed House 2 = spaces.

4.78 As there is currently no comparable standard for cycle storage for a day centre, in line with D1 use, 1 space per 2 staff would be required.

4.79 32 cycle parking spaces are proposed across the site. Details of the type of storage proposed is required. It is noted that the 2 x C3 family dwellings will be provided cycle storage within the rear garden areas and this is deemed acceptable.

Refuse

4.80 In addition to the comments above requesting a revision of the tracking diagrams. Details are also required of how the bin storage fronting Battle Street (see below) will be serviced should all bays be occupied. In addition to this, if a dropped kerb is required to allow for the larger bins that will be associated with this development to be wheeled out for collection, this will require a licence from the Highways Department.



- 4.81 A Construction Method Statement will be required for this development.
- 4.82 Subject to the above being addressed the suggested Conditions and Informatives are as follows: CMS; Vehicle Parking as specified; Vehicle access to be approved; Cycle parking to be approved; refuse collection to be approved; parking permits, EV charging points.

S106/Unilateral Undertaking

- 4.83 Applicant should enter in to a S278 agreement in relation to the reconfiguration of the vehicular access on to Battle Street and new access on to James Street including closures of existing vehicular access points as may be required.
- 4.84 A contribution of £5,000 towards Traffic Regulation Orders necessary to alter existing parking restrictions surrounding the site.
- 4.85 **Planning Officer Note:** Following the submission of some additional/ amended information further comments were provided by Transport summarised as follows:
- the proposed location for a refuse vehicle on Battle Street would be further than 10m from the proposed refuse store. On the basis that there would be a strong possibility that cars would be parked in the resident/ 2-hour bay adjacent to the refuse store it would mean collection would have to be taken from the pavement build out further west and double the distance. Transport suggested that it would be a better option for the build out to be relocated east closer to the refuse store. The Waste Team have also confirmed that the proposed arrangement would be too far from the refuse store and would not be acceptable, and, therefore, bins would have to be presented to the roadside for collection rather than being collected from the refuse store. The applicant has confirmed that they will provide amended drawings to relocate the build out to address this issue and this will be reported in an update report.
 - The footway widths within the Mews remain unacceptable. The applicant has agreed to make amendments to the Mews layout to increase the width of the footway each side, to be achieved through adjustments to the siting of Block F (2 proposed houses) westwards and reduction in the width of parking bays. Transport has confirmed that this approach would be acceptable, and an amended plan is awaited. This will be reported in an update report.
 - TRICs information was submitted, which demonstrates that the proposal would generate fewer trips than the previous use.
 - The applicant has confirmed that 2 of the existing permit parking spaces on Battle Street would be converted to a drop off bay for the Day Centre/ loading bay, which is acceptable.
 - The originally proposed car club spaces have now been removed from Battle Street, which is agreed.
 - The no entry sign has been repositioned for the western end of James Street to the start of the Mews.
 - James Street would remain two way.
 - Revised tracking plans for the Mews, for refuse and fire trucks, will be required. These will be discussed in an update report.
 - A drawing is still required to show how the visibility of the sign on Oxford Road, in its current location, would not be obstructed by the proposed trees. This may also require amended tree information too. This will be reported in an update.

Waste

- 4.86 The waste will need to be deposited into separate receptacles. Will there be 3 different chutes for residents to deposit the waste properly? Also with the lockable bin store will this be coded or accessed with a key.
- 4.87 The maximum pulling distance from the bin store is 10m, so in this case the bins would need to be presented for collection or if it's possible the bin store would need to be relocated to eliminate the potential access issues or remove that parking bay/ place bollards outside the store, to stop others parking in that bay.
- 4.88 **Planning Officer Note:** As set out above an amended plan will be provided which addresses the relationship of the refuse vehicle to the proposed refuse store. Further details regarding the chutes was provided which is deemed acceptable.

Public consultation

- 4.89 As set out in the submitted Planning Statement, the applicant undertook their own public consultation prior to submission of the application. This comprised a public event and engagement in Spring 2022. Comments arising from this process are documented in the Pre-Planning Consultation Comments Tracker.
- 4.90 Following submission of the application, the following addresses were consulted by the Local Planning Authority:
Allison Court 1-22 (all)
Flats 1-6 120A (all), 120-134 (even) Oxford Road
2-8 (even) James Street
1-31 (flats) (all), 32-40 (even), 33-37 (odd) Bedford Road
134-144 (even), 146-148 Chatham Street
23-37 (odd), 6-44 (even) Battle Street
Flats 1, 2a, 2, 3, 4 - 21 George Street
7-19 (odd) George Street
5, 6, 9, 11 and 18 Cherwell Crescent
- 4.91 Site notices were displayed on Oxford Road, Battle Street and Bedford Road.
- 4.92 2 no. objections and 1 no. support were received, summarised as follows:

- Impact on natural daylight to ground floor flat of 4. Allison Court as five of the property's six windows would face the development.
- An EIA has not been undertaken.
- The temperature in the building would be negatively impacted.
- Support for the redevelopment of Central swimming pool site as there is a need for affordable housing in Reading.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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

presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 5 - Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

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

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 5.2 The site includes a part within a Conservation Area and close to listed buildings, therefore, the following Sections of the Act are relevant:
- 5.3 Section 16(2) and 66(1) 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 The Development Plan is the **Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP)**. The entire site is within a specific allocation under Policy CR14: Other Sites for Development in Central Reading.

Policy CR14a Central Swimming Pool, Battle Street

Development for residential use once replacement swimming provision has been addressed.

Development should:

- *Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings;*
- *Take account of nearby scale of development, including higher density development to the east;*
- *Address noise impacts on residential use;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Avoid overlooking of the rear of existing residential properties; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Site size: 0.55 ha 80-120 dwellings

- 5.6 Other relevant policies within the Local Plan are as follows:

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC4: Decentralised Energy

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 EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest
 Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
 Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space
 Policy EN9: Provision of Open Space
 Policy EN10: Access to Open Space
 Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
 Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
 Policy EN15: Air Quality
 Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
 Policy EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
 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 H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People
 Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
 Policy TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
 Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
 Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
 Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
 OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities
 CR1: Definition of Central Reading
 CR2: Design in Central Reading
 CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading
 CR4: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading
 CR6: Living In Central Reading

5.7 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents are as follows:

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

5.8 Other RBC documents

- Reading Tree Strategy (2021)
- Reading Borough Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)
- High Street Heritage Action Zone
<https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/reading-high-streets-heritage-action-zone/>
- Open Spaces Strategy 2007, RBC
- Housing Strategy for Reading 2020 - 2025
- Annual Monitoring Report 2021-2022 December 2022
- BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight - A guide to good practice, (BR 209 2022 edition)
- Russell Street/ Castle Hill /Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) (The CA is within Historic England's At Risk Register)

- The National Design Guide (2019)
- The National Model Design Code (July 2021)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition)
The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main matters to be considered are:

- a) Principle of Development
- b) Housing Density & Mix
- c) Design and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Area and Heritage
- d) Residential Amenity
- e) Landscaping & Ecology
- f) Transport/ Parking
- g) Open Space and Public Realm
- h) Sustainability and Energy
- i) SUDS and Water Supply
- j) Environmental Matters - Contamination
- k) Unilateral Undertaking
- l) Equalities impact

6.2 The key concerns Officers raised, as part of the pre-application process, that needed to be addressed as part of a formal submission, were as follows:

- *That the design of the building form to Battle Street and Bedford Road was further developed to address massing issues;*
- *That the design of the building fronting Oxford Road would be appropriate within the context of the Conservation area, near to Listed Buildings and being within the Highstreet Heritage Action Zone;*
- *That the public route through from Oxford Road to Battle Street would create an attractive street in its own right;*
- *Justification that the central east facing mews building would be acceptable with specific reference to residential amenity concerns;*
- *Clear demonstration that the proposed scheme overall, both in terms of internal and external spaces and adjoining developments, would meet relevant daylight/ sunlight requirements;*
- *Greening of the site and specifically the road frontages, especially that of Bedford Road, would be satisfactorily addressed to create a high-quality scheme, which meets the relevant policy framework.*

a) Principle of Development

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all applications for housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.4 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three overarching objectives of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. It is considered that the proposal would meet the economic role through construction and direct local employment. In terms of social it would provide for affordable housing, the provision of social care accommodation for which

there is a substantial need, provision of day care for older persons and an accessible location with good connectivity to the local and wider area. For environmental it would use fabric efficient and low carbon technologies to reduce carbon emissions, create a net gain in biodiversity and provide public realm and amenity open space provision. This would accord with RBLP Policy CC1 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'.

- 6.5 Policy CR14a allocates the site for residential use subject to replacement swimming provision being provided. The Central Pool was closed in 2018 as it was deemed that it had reached the end of its design life. A demountable, temporary replacement pool was constructed at Rivermead and opened in January 2018 and remains in use. The new Rivermead Leisure Centre is due to open in 2023 and will include enhanced swimming facilities including a diving pool.
- 6.6 The Policy identifies an indicative number of 80-120 dwellings for the site. The proposal is for a residential-led mixed use development, which would achieve up to 62 dwellings along with a 35-person older persons' day centre. This would secure fewer dwellings than the allocation seeks, and in terms of the supported living units proposed and the old persons' day centre, would include units, which would not contribute to meeting the overall housing targets need. However, the supported living units would meet the priorities as defined in the Housing Strategy for Reading 2020-2025 and in meeting a specific housing need would in turn accord with the requirements of Policy H6 that *"where development would result in a loss of general housing, it must meet identified needs in the most up-to-date Housing Strategy and be able to accommodate at least an equivalent number of people"*.
- 6.7 Assessment of how the proposal meets the other criteria within Policy CR14a are addressed under the relevant sections below.
- 6.8 The provision of an older persons' day centre is supported by Policy OU1 'New and existing community facilities', where there is a choice of means of travel, and in existing centres where possible. The site's location is considered to sufficiently meet these criteria. The Policy also encourages the co-location of community uses where the provision of a mix of compatible services on one site is encouraged.
- 6.9 Para 5.4.36 of the Local Plan states: *"On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for other groups, outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in local policy - this decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing trajectory."* The latest version of the housing trajectory in the 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) shows that delivery over and above the targets in the plan period are expected.
- 6.10 It should be noted that Policy H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People supports development for specialist accommodation as proposed subject to detailed criteria including: adequate provision of (non-emergency) ambulance access; incorporation of green spaces; and design to respect the

residential character of the surroundings. It is considered that the proposed scheme meets these criteria.

- 6.11 This policy also states that affordable housing for vulnerable people that meets the needs of the most up to date housing strategy may count towards affordable housing provision in line with Policy H3.
- 6.12 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the LPA would look to secure 30% of the units as affordable housing as part of any unilateral undertaking legal agreement linked to a planning permission. The scheme presented includes for all of the units to be affordable housing. The 100% provision exceeds affordable housing policy requirements, but in itself would have significant weight within the planning balance.
- 6.13 The proposal would accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the intensity of development) as it is a highly sustainable location accessible by all modes of transport and the intensity of development is considered appropriate.
- 6.14 A residential-led, mixed-use development is, therefore, acceptable in principle subject to addressing a range of policy matters including: design, amenity, mix, and sustainability as follows.

b) Housing Density and Mix

- 6.15 The proposal includes 62 dwelling units, with a mix of 1 bed, 2 bed and 3 bed units, mostly in flats and some in houses. In relation to housing mix CR6 'Living in the Central Reading' sets out as a guide that in developments of 15 dwellings or more, a maximum of 40% of units should be 1-bed units and a minimum of 5% of units should be 3-bed units. The proposal would require 4 x 3 bed units which would be achieved in the form of 2x 3 bed houses and 4 x 3 bed flats, and, therefore, exceeds the policy guidance. The proposal would include 77% 1 beds, but this is deemed to be acceptable due to the nature of the housing that would be provided.
- 6.16 The proposal includes 13 supported living flats (C2 use) targeted at people living alone to meet an identified need and it is considered that the proposed unit mix is appropriate in this instance under Policy H6.
- 6.17 In relation to density the local plan allocation at Policy CR14a suggests 80-120 dwellings however, paragraph 5.4.33 of the supporting text to Policy CR14e states that *"where dwelling or floorspace figures are included alongside the allocations, these are intended as a guide, and usually reflect an indicative maximum capacity. They are based on an initial assessment taking into account the characteristics of each site. However, the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout. The fact that a site is allocated in CR14 does not preclude the need to comply with all other policies in the local plan"*. Policy H2 Density and Mix sets out that the capacity of a site will depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage.
- 6.18 The scheme proposes a density of 113dph that is in keeping with the indicative density range of 'above 100dph' in the Town centre specified in Policy H2.

c) **Design and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Area and Heritage**

- 6.19 The NPPF (Para 126) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 6.20 Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, requires all development to be of a *“high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”* Design includes layout, landscape, density and mix, scale: height and massing, and architectural details and materials.
- 6.21 Developments in Central Reading should demonstrate a number of attributes as defined under Policy CR2 including: Building on and respecting the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area; well-designed public spaces and other public realm; where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment; architectural details and materials to be of high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site; public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, and be designed to enhance community safety.
- 6.22 Policy CR14a specifically identifies that development of the site needs to :
 - *Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings.*
 - *Take account of nearby scale of development, including higher density development to the east;*
- 6.23 The southern part of the site is within the Russell Street / Castle Hill /Oxford Road Conservation Area and within close proximity of listed buildings, which are both defined as heritage assets. The extract below shows that part of the site is within the CA and is opposite and close to a number of listed buildings.

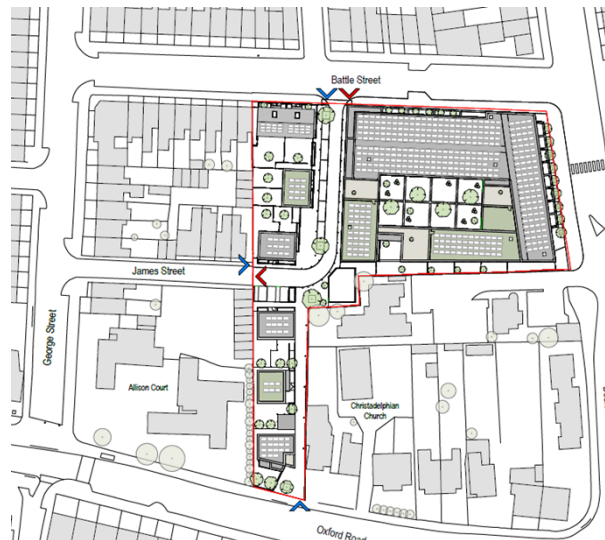


The star marks the part of the site on Oxford Road

- 6.24 Therefore, the proposals have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (section 16) and local policies EN1, EN3 and EN6, which state:
- 6.25 EN1 - *“All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a*

heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.”

- 6.26 EN3 - *“the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.”*
- 6.27 EN6 - seeks that in areas characterised by heritage assets the historic environment will inform and shape new development.
- 6.28 Part of the site is also within the designated High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), which is a heritage-led initiative project run by Reading Borough Council and supported by Historic England, to create economic growth and improve the quality of life in historic high streets. The objectives include to improve the physical condition and viability of the high streets and to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve the public realm.
- 6.29 The Conservation Area (CA) Appraisal identifies that redevelopment within or adjoining the CA should respect the general height, massing and alignment of existing buildings and use a palette of materials which reflect its existing character, predominantly comprising red brick, and that there is a lack of green canopy cover in the area.
- 6.30 The site is an irregular shape and comprises three distinct blocks of form with the scale of the proposal intended to act as a transition between the taller development of the town centre to the east and the low-rise residential development to the west and to accord with the scale of adjoining development



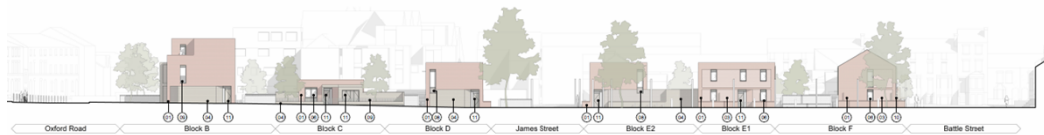
- 6.31 The main blocks are as follows:

Block A - A perimeter courtyard block, which has development which addresses the street frontages of Battle Street and Bedford Road and steps down in scale on the Mews (west) and the southern wing of Block A. Four storeys are proposed to the main frontages to Bedford Road and Battle Street and a two-storey part to the south adjacent to existing flats. The building

line is maintained along Bedford Road and Battle Street and there is tree planting proposed to enhance the appearance within the wider streetscene.

Blocks F, E1 & E2 - houses fronting Battle Street, and 2 blocks, one adjacent to the end of James Street and one facing the new 'mews' - 2 storeys

Blocks B, C and D - Three buildings on the narrow linear section of the site from Oxford Road to the end of James Street - three, one and two storey respectively.



Section looking towards the west



Block A Elevation from the Mews looking towards Bedford Road



Blocks A and E2 looking towards Battle Street



Block B (Block A in the distance) from Oxford Road looking towards Battle Street

Block A

- 6.32 The proposed facades of the block are simple and repetitive in detailing and composition. The subtle height variation and recessed top floor break up the scale and add visual interest to this mixed-use block. There are corner windows to the Battle Street/ Mews corner with a set-back so that there is an articulation in the massing along the Mews frontage side and this creates a more celebrated corner as envisaged in policy. The parapet wall height to the corner of Battle Street and Bedford Road is higher than the remainder of

the building and it projects further forward than the remainder of the Battle Street frontage, which serves to break down the overall length of the building and provide articulation in the massing. The design solution for the balconies on Bedford Road (eastern façade) are considered suitable for the gateway location. It is considered that the proposed four storey building would be sympathetic to its surroundings. The overall massing and articulation of the main blocks to Battle Street and Bedford Road include a set-back which enable planting to be achieved to the frontage.



Blocks A and F from Battle Street

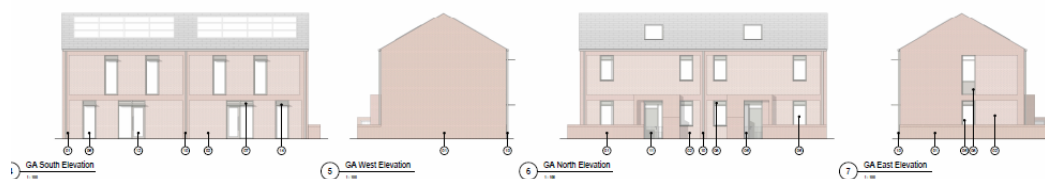


Block A from Bedford Road

- 6.33 In terms of the internal layout, each user group would access spaces through their own core with lifts and stairs. Units would be single aspect.

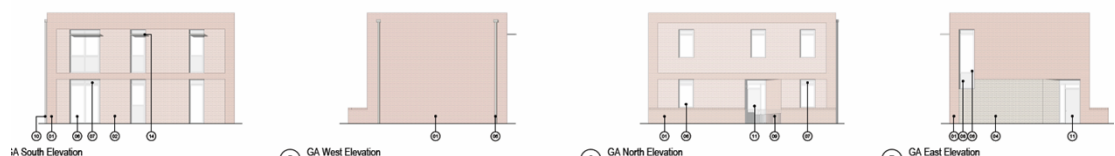
Block F - houses

- 6.34 The proposed houses fronting Battle Street use traditional pitch roof form and set back with front gardens to accord with the overall design of the adjoining terrace.



Blocks D, E1 & E2 - two storey buildings- flats

- 6.35 These two storey dual aspect blocks would face the Mews. They would be of a simple contemporary form of a similar scale to the existing terraces and using some traditional materials. The flat roofs would maximise the potential for PV panels and contribute to the sustainability of the scheme.



Block D



Blocks E1 & E2

Block C - single storey

- 6.36 The single storey accessible dwelling would be simple in form with an active frontage to the new pathway from Oxford Road. There are other examples of single storey buildings in between buildings eg the church to the east of the site and this scale of building would maximise the redevelopment of the site, whilst minimising impacts on existing buildings.

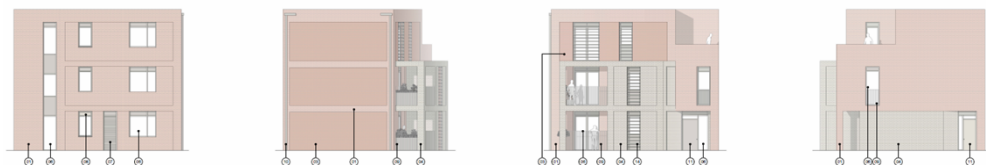


Block C

- 6.37 Buildings C, D, E1 and E2 are either single or two storeys, and are considered to be at an appropriate scale to fit in with the surrounding development, whilst ensuring amenity affects are minimised in terms of overbearing, loss of privacy, outlook and effect on daylight and sunlight, as discussed further below.

Block B

- 6.38 The southern part of the site facing Oxford Road is located within a Conservation Area. It is currently a vacant plot, which has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



- 6.39 A Heritage Statement has been submitted as part of the application and the design of the Oxford Road building (Block B, as above) would be three storeys and would include a parapet to reflect architectural detailing of other buildings in the vicinity as well as to enable maximisation of PV panels. Although contemporary in appearance it would include recessed balconies and projecting bay features, alignment of windows, and materials which would reflect and be consistent with nearby buildings.

- 6.40 The building would be set back, consistent with the prevailing building line, and would include space for soft landscaping to the front with paving and boundary treatment of railings and a wall on the frontage. It would improve the appearance of the site and would be the gateway to the site from Oxford Road and would include an active frontage and the entrance to the public

path connecting from Oxford Road to Battle Street. It would incorporate tree planting and the relocated trough from Bedford Road.

- 6.41 It is considered that it would have appropriate massing and form and would successfully fill the gap in the urban grain on this side of the road by restoring the active frontage to Oxford Road.
- 6.42 It is, therefore, considered to be appropriate within the context of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings as well as its location within the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).
- 6.43 The overall scheme is considered to create continuity and enclosure, through the use of a series of perimeter blocks with public fronts and private backs seeking to 'stitch' the new development into the network of existing streets. This enclosure of built form would assist with natural surveillance, wayfinding and legibility, particularly along the mews street from Oxford Road.
- 6.44 The proposal includes windows and front doors to the streets to create active frontages and would provide access directly from a level footpath with no steps or ramps.
- 6.45 The building lines to Battle Street and Bedford Road align with neighbouring buildings and include a set-back to allow defensible space in the form of raised beds and trees. The buildings along the Mews and the path linking Oxford Road to Battle Street would have entrances and windows facing on to these public areas.
- 6.46 The proposal includes streetscape enhancements with the reintroduction of frontage development to Bedford Road, Battle Street and Oxford Road and a new Mews street and would make a positive contribution to the public realm. It would include green infrastructure which would enhance the urban environment.
- 6.47 There would be enhanced permeability through the site both for vehicles and pedestrians and the improved pedestrian links for both residents and the wider community. There would be vehicular access from Battle Street (one way) to James Street (remaining as two way) out onto George Street for access, deliveries, maintenance and refuse collection. The improved pedestrian link would be from Battle Street to Oxford Road.
- 6.48 In terms of materials the proposed scheme utilises the area's predominant red brick with grey bricks for ground floor elements and entrances. Fibre cement cladding is proposed to the top floor of the supported living elements on the Battle Street elevation, to lighten the mass to this elevation and fibre cement slates are proposed for the pitched roofs to the Battle Street homes, to match the adjacent slates on the terraced housing.
- 6.49 In certain parts of the scheme it is proposed to use Flemish bond brickwork to reference the historical context and decorative brickwork within the passageway wall to illustrate the historical and cultural context of the area designed in collaboration with local artists.
- 6.50 It is considered that the proposed approach to the overall layout, massing and design of the development has been well thought out and justified

appropriately in the context of the site's surroundings, including impact on heritage asset

- 6.51 The development proposals were assessed by the Reading Design Review Panel (DRP) at pre-application stage (Feb 2022), and they supported the approach with regard to the scheme seeking to respond to the urban grain with the key aims of: mending the city block; routes through connecting to Oxford Road; a scale to reflect the adjacent buildings; and placemaking through the inclusion of a Mews and courtyard. They identified that *“a development of this order can be accommodated if the design is evolved to address a few subtleties”* which included:

*“- The realignment of frontages along Battle Street & Bedford Road
- The introduction of a focal / ordering space central within the site
- Reorientation and improved engagement of the Mews buildings with the public realm.
- The enhancement of boundary treatments between the Mews gardens and the public route through the site.”*

The submitted scheme has responded to these matters.

- 6.52 The overall bulk and mass and the proposed design appearance is considered to be sympathetic to the surrounding character making a positive contribution to it, whilst offering a contemporary character. Subject to the above conditions it is considered that it accords with relevant policies CR14a, CC7, EN1, EN3 and EN6 and meets the statutory requirements of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve the setting of listed buildings and to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas respectively.

d) Residential Amenity

- 6.53 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.
- 6.54 Policy CR14a also includes criteria to: “
- *Avoid overlooking of the rear of existing residential properties;*
 - *Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
 - *Address air quality impacts on residential use.”*
- 6.55 Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors by way of pollution. Policy EN15 specifically seeks to protect existing occupiers from poor quality and EN17 from noise associated with plant equipment. Policy CR6 requires new residential type development within the defined Reading Central Area to demonstrate how issue of noise and other disturbance from town centre uses have been considered and where necessary mitigated.

Privacy and Overlooking

- 6.56 In terms of Block A the southern wing is ca 6.6m from the nearest point of the existing flat blocks to the south and includes a roof garden. The flats to the south have their main living spaces to the east and west and the majority of this south wing is opposite the flats' parking and landscaped areas. As the internal layout of the existing flats, has kitchens and bathroom windows towards the site, it is not considered that there would be a significant detrimental impact with respect to overlooking and loss of privacy for either the proposed or existing residents.
- 6.57 The 4-storey block which faces Bedford Road is ca 20m to the nearest property and the block facing Battle Street is opposite 3 storey terraced houses and at distance of ca 18m (building to building). It is considered that there would be sufficient distance to ensure minimal impact on overlooking and loss of privacy.
- 6.58 The east facing building fronting the mews (Block E1) would have some oblique views into the rear of existing dwellings on James Street and Battle Street at a distance of ca 13.6m, but it is considered that this is a common relationship in built -up areas.
- 6.59 Block E2 would be adjacent to the end of James Street, and the closest existing terrace has a small side facing window, but this would face a blank elevation.
- 6.60 Block D would be sufficiently distant from James Street terraces and the closest west facing windows of Bedford Road flats.
- 6.61 Allison Court is 9m from the Oxford Road building (Block B) and has living rooms which would face the new blank elevations so there would be no direct overlooking. There would be some oblique views to Allison Court from the rear (kitchen windows).
- 6.62 There would some views from the kitchen windows of Block B to the amenity space and windows of the single storey dwelling (Block C). This would be minimised through the use of landscaping.

Access to Sunlight and Daylight

- 6.63 The submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment has been independently reviewed for the LPA. It was confirmed that the scope of the assessment is reasonable and that using the previous pool buildings as a comparison to the proposed scheme is also reasonable. However, although consented schemes can be used as an alternative target, in this instance the previous consented scheme is almost 20 years old and officers, therefore, consider that comparisons to this approved, but lapsed scheme, is not applicable in this instance.

Existing Properties

- 6.64 The impacts of proposed development on existing surrounding properties, in terms of receipt of daylight, is assessed via the Vertical Sky Component (VSC), which is a measurement of the amount of daylight falling on a vertical wall or window; and the No Sky Line (NSL) which is a measurement of the how much sky can be seen from a room/window. An assessment of sunlight is made using the Annual Probable Sunlight Hours (APSH) parameter which is a measurement of the average of the total number of hours during a year in which direct sunlight is expected be received.

- 6.65 A minor adverse impact includes where only a small number of windows or limited area of open space would be affected; the loss of light would only marginally be outside the BRE guidelines¹; the affected room has other sources of skylight or sunlight. A major adverse impact includes a large number of windows or large area of open space would be affected; the loss of light is substantially outside the guidelines; all of the windows in a particular property would be affected.
- 6.66 The Assessment reviewed windows at the following existing properties: nos. 6-30 Battle Street; no. 23 Battle Street; no.8 James Street; 1-14 Allison Court; nos. 32, and no.33 Bedford Road; 146-148 Chatham Street, 134 Oxford Road; and 2 flat blocks 1-21 Bedford Road (to the south of proposed Block A).
- 6.67 Of the windows assessed there would be minor adverse impacts on the lower ground rooms of nos.6-14 Battle Street and also to the ground floor rooms of nos. 6-10.
- 6.68 No. 23 Battle Street would experience some loss of light to windows within the side of a rear extension, but has another window serving the same room which would meet guidelines.
- 6.69 No. 8 James Street would experience minor adverse impacts to a kitchen window and side bedroom window. There would be a major impact to the sunlight within the garden. However, because of its size and orientation, there would already be restricted levels of sunlight.
- 6.70 Of nos. 1-14 Allison Court there would be a single east facing window at ground floor which would experience a minor adverse impact, marginally below guidelines. This room is understood to be served by an additional front (south) facing window.
- 6.71 Flats 1-21 Bedford Road there would be a minor adverse impact to flats 9-21 to a kitchen/ living/ dining room rear window, but the overall room would have sufficient daylight and sunlight.
- 6.72 The impact of the development on the existing properties is largely negligible, with a few areas of minor adverse impact. There is one major impact in terms of loss of sunlight to a garden area, which already experiences below standard levels of sunlight. This would be a very limited harmful effect when the scale and benefits of the scheme are considered overall.

Proposed Units

- 6.73 With regard to the proposed units in addition to the BRE report there is also BSEN17037:2018 'Daylight in Buildings', which for daylight provision to rooms recommends target illuminances over at least 50% of a room as 100lux for Bedrooms, 150lux for living rooms and 200lux for kitchens. This is the method used in the submitted daylight/sunlight assessment. With respect to sunlight this is measured as the hours of sunlight received to a point on the inside of windows on a selected date (suggested by the BRE report as 21st March) with minimum =1.5hrs, medium= 3hrs and maximum=4hrs. The submitted assessment has assumed a cloudless sky and therefore the data presented represents a maximum possible amount of sunlight. The standard states that at least one habitable room in a dwelling should receive at least

¹ Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice, BRE

the recommended number of hours exposure to sunlight and the BRE suggest that living areas may be seen as more important than bedrooms.

- 6.74 The BRE Report suggests that for open space to be well sunlit that at least 50% of its area should receive at least 2 hours of sunlight on 21st March and this is the method used in the submitted assessment.

Daylight to proposed units

- 6.75 The submitted assessment has considered ground and first floor rooms of Block A and the ground floor rooms of Blocks B-F, therefore, not all rooms in the proposed scheme have been included in the assessment.
- 6.76 For Block A, 11 of the 30 rooms assessed would be below daylight recommendations and the independent review undertaken by BRE sets out that the second and third floors have equivalent rooms, and there would, therefore, be the potential for at least some of these to also be below the recommendations, i.e. up to 23 bedrooms, albeit in general terms there would be an improvement in daylight the higher up the room is.
- 6.77 Eight living areas of the 26 analysed would be below daylight recommendations. As with the bedrooms there would be equivalent rooms at the second and third floors, but may also have the potential to be below recommendations, i.e. up to 16 living rooms.
- 6.78 The majority of the rooms, below the recommendations, lie to the eastern façade (towards Bedford Road) and to improve these would require design changes to the proposed balconies. The balconies themselves are considered important to the overall amenity provision of the flats and also form a key part of the overall design presented. It is considered that the benefits in terms of the provision of balconies outweighs any negative impact resulting from rooms which would not fully meet daylight recommendations.
- 6.79 For the remainder of the Blocks, one bedroom in Block C would be below daylight recommendations, but a bedroom is considered to be less sensitive to daylight provision than living rooms, and this limited infringement is not considered significant when the scheme is considered overall.

Sunlight to proposed units and open spaces

- 6.80 For Unit A 15 of the 24 living areas assessed at ground and first floors would have at least 1.5 hours of sunlight, and by extrapolating these to other living rooms in the block it would mean that at least 29/50 (58%) would meet the minimum sunlight recommendation. Those below recommended guidance levels would largely be the single aspect north facing units (to Battle Street) and the eastern facing units with balconies. As with daylight the amendment of the balconies would lead to some improvement. However, when weighed in the planning balance in terms of the efficient use of this brownfield site and the significant benefits in terms of the type of housing provision including 100% affordable housing, the provision of balconies for amenity space, it is not considered that it would be so harmful as to warrant refusal on this basis.
- 6.81 All the proposed living areas of Blocks B-F would be able to meet at the minimum recommendation for sunlight provision.
- 6.82 There would be some areas of gardens/ open space that would fall below the recommended guidelines, for sunlight, but this would not be uncommon when

considering maximising the redevelopment and reuse of this urban site and the resulting orientation and layout required.

Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development

- 6.83 This has been addressed in the design section above.

Harm to Outlook

- 6.84 The development of the site would be a significant change to the current cleared site, but overall, there would be a limited harm to outlook to surrounding residential properties taking into account the previous swimming pool and that any re-use of this urban site would have some effect on outlook for some properties. Reintroducing a perimeter block would, as stated above, 'stitch' the new development into the network of streets to accord with sound design principles, and as commended by the Design Review Panel, and this is considered to outweigh any harm to outlook.

Noise and disturbance

- 6.85 A noise assessment has been submitted and this urban site includes areas which would be impacted by noise from the road environment, primarily from traffic along Oxford Road and Bedford Road corridors. The proposal includes for affected facades on those roads to have triple glazed windows and to be ventilated mechanically, and the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that the glazing specification and mechanical ventilation proposed demonstrates that future occupiers of the flats would be subject to acceptable internal noise levels and a condition is included along with informative regarding sound insulation (a building regulations requirement) to minimise disturbance between adjacent units. This would accord with Policy EN16.
- 6.86 The proposed hours of operation for the day centre would be Monday-Friday from 7am to 5pm, so would not significantly affect the residential units and would not be an uncommon period of operation for a centrally located community facility.
- 6.87 The proposal includes noise generating plant (air source heat pumps). A condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of a noise assessment and the implementation of identified mitigation measures. This would accord with Policy EN17.

Air Quality

- 6.88 The site is also located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and an air quality assessment has been submitted with the application which concludes that the predicted concentrations of relevant pollutant (NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) concentrations would be well within objective limit values. Future occupants would, therefore, not be exposed to pollutant concentrations above the relevant objective levels **and the** impact of the development with regards to new exposure to air quality would be considered to be negligible. The assessment also concludes that there would not be a significant impact on air quality in the local area as a result of the proposed development. The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that no mitigation would be required and the proposal would comply with relevant Policies EN15 and EN16.

Artificial Lighting

- 6.89 An External Lighting Strategy was submitted, and this includes a detailed proposal for lighting for the scheme, and it recommends that the strategy

outlined which includes criteria, luminaries, switching methods, lamp types etc is adopted and developed into a more detailed design. It is proposed that all external lighting would be designed to accord with relevant lighting standards and would achieve the following:

- External lighting illuminates areas around buildings, such as external doors, amenity, car parking and footpaths leading to buildings.
- Amenity lighting (bollards) and external security lighting illuminate communal areas, footpaths, signage, storage areas and parking areas.
- External lighting design for road, footpaths and public amenity areas are in accordance with BS 5489-1:2013.
- Lighting designed to the standards set by BS 5489-1:2013 is also recommended in ILP guidance to act as a measure to reduce crime within developments.
- 5m high street columns and a series of LED external lighting throughout the site ensures a safe approach for all residents to their front door.
- 24 hours lighting to communal areas provided both internally and externally.
- External lighting located at all the front doors, including the communal entrance doors to the apartment building. Other areas will have day light time clock operation, where required.
- Passive Infrared Sensor (PIR) controlled lighting will be operated in specific areas.
- A series of hoods and cowls will be provided to avoid glare/light spill.
- Also planting will be used as a measure to mitigate effects impact on nearby dwellings and surrounding roads.

- 6.90 The submission and approval of an appropriate external lighting plan will be included as a condition.

Crime and safety

- 6.91 The DAS states how the design has been guided by Secured by Design principles and a condition is included requiring the submission and approval of such. The routes through and around the site would be well defined and overlooked. The enclosure would assist in reducing crime and fear of crime. A number of safety measures have been incorporated including:
- Rear access routes to provide access to gardens, cycle stores and bin stores have been carefully designed to ensure that they are as short as possible and would only have a single point of entry via secure entry gates.
 - The courtyard space would be secured by fences and via access control gates.
 - The communal entrances to the flats would include an 'airlock' entry system to provide two means of defence before entering communal corridors.
 - Residents would only have access to the lobbies that provide access to their own front door.
 - Lighting to communal areas would be provided both internally and externally. External lighting would also be located at all of the front doors, including the communal entrance doors.
 - The proposed landscaping has been carefully considered, with a combination of low-level planting and tree canopies to be at least 2.4m from the ground, in order to maintain clear sight lines and natural surveillance.
 - Perimeter treatment along the mews, including planting and bollards have been intentionally selected to prevent vehicles encroaching onto pavements.
 - Rear gardens would be secured with fencing defining the private space.
 - Defensible space is proposed around the ground floor dwellings.

Housing Standards

- 6.92 Policy H5a requires all new building housing located outside the Central Area to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. This is not a requirement in the Central Area, but it is welcomed that all the proposed units would meet the national space standards providing good sized units of accommodation for future occupiers
- 6.93 Part f of Policy H5 requires that at least 5% of dwellings are wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. The proposal would meet this Policy.
- 6.94 In addition the development would also include for all units to be wheelchair accessible dwellings. There would also be 1.5m wide corridors to all flat circulation spaces and 1.8m wide corridors to the Older Persons' Day Centre to allow wheelchairs to turn round. To ensure ease of access and future adaptability habitable room sizes would be 1500m wide and doors to all habitable rooms, wcs and bathrooms would have a minimum 0.75m clear opening width.

Amenity Space

- 6.95 Policy H10 deals specifically with private and communal space and for flats requires communal space, balconies and/ or roof gardens, and para. 4.2.40 states that *"Policy H10 seeks to secure private and communal outdoor amenity areas on all residential developments, the extent of which will be guided by the site's proximity to quality public open space."*
- 6.96 The central courtyard to Block A is proposed for singular use by the Old Persons' Day Centre; The proposed houses, i.e. those to the Battle Street frontage, have similar sized gardens to the adjacent existing terraces and the provision is considered acceptable. Private gardens would also be provided for one/ two storey flats and the ground floor supported living flats. There would be balconies for the General Needs Flats facing onto Bedford Road and Oxford Road and accessible roof terraces and green roofs for the Sheltered Flat residents. The provision for on-site amenity for residents would secure good levels of amenity space for this central location, consistent with surrounding residential sites.
- 6.97 The application is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies CC8, CR6, CR14a, EN15, EN16, EN17, H5 and H10.

e) Landscaping and Ecology

- 6.98 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended.
- 6.99 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) sets out that good design should incorporate appropriate landscaping.
- 6.100 The site is within Abbey Ward, which is identified as a ward of low canopy cover within the Reading Tree Strategy (2021) where planting is of greater importance to help bring the canopy cover of the ward up to 12% by 2030 to mitigate the effects of air quality being within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and to respond positively in terms of measures to adapt to climate change (Policy CC3).

- 6.101 The proposed landscape scheme includes tree planting to the Battle Street and Bedford Road frontages, within the central courtyard of Block A, within the new Mews and along the public pedestrian route from Oxford Road to Battle Street, to the south of Block A and within garden areas of the remaining blocks as well as other planting and green roofs.



- 6.102 The Natural Environment (Trees) Officer provided detailed comments with regard to appropriate tree species. Further details have been submitted by the applicant and the Natural Environment Officer comments will be reported in an update. However, the matters addressed are not fundamental to the acceptability of the proposal from a landscape and tree perspective.
- 6.103 As the existing site consists of hardstanding and very few trees it is considered that the proposed scheme would represent an enhancement in terms of the appearance and greening of the site within the town centre in accordance with Policies CC7 and EN14
- 6.104 Policy EN12 seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable.
- 6.105 The submitted ecological appraisal concludes that small areas of scattered scrub and ephemeral / short perennial plants around an open area of hard standing and a small number of urban street trees would be directly impacted but are of low ecological value.
- 6.106 The assessment also identifies that the site has a low potential to support populations of common nesting birds. Mitigation methods identified include incorporating in-wall bat box units, in-wall general bird nest units, external swift boxes and bee bricks. Subject to conditions as recommended by the LPA's Ecological Advisor, and the resulting measures and landscaping enhancements, the scheme would deliver biodiversity gains in accordance with Policy EN12.

f) Transport/ Parking

- 6.107 Policies TR1, TR3 TR4 and TR5 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.

- 6.108 The site is located within Zone 2 and on the edge of Zone 1 in the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, and to meet parking standards would need to provide 73 spaces and five visitor spaces. However, the following proposed provision has been confirmed as acceptable by Transport based on the extensive parking restrictions in place that include the operation of a residential parking scheme, double yellow lines etc and the frequent bus service and general proximity of the town centre.
- 6.109 Future occupants would not be entitled to a parking permit or visitor permits and a condition is included to ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.
- 6.110 The proposal includes 9 car parking spaces on site, three of which would be accessible spaces, allocated as follows:

- 2 spaces - 1 per family house (Block F)
- 1 space - for wheelchair accessible unit (Block C)
- 3 spaces - Older Person's Day Centre (Block A)
- 3 spaces - Supported Living Mental Health Flats 3 (Blocks A, E1 and E2)



- 6.111 All spaces would have an electric charging point and this provision would exceed the Policy TR5 requirements.

- 6.112 Two existing permit bays on Battle Street would be converted to a shared Loading/ drop off bay. Four existing permit bays would be removed to create the entrance from Battle Street and the drop off/loading bay, two would be relocated to Battle Street, however, as permit holders could park in the shared bays along Battel Street, which are being retained, this is deemed acceptable.
- 6.113 The proposed scheme would include a secure cycle store within Block A to accommodate 32 spaces - 1 per 2 dwellings and 8 for staff and individual cycle stores for the family houses and 2-3 storey flats. A secure mobility scooter store for 7 scooters for shelter residents and day care centre. Transport has confirmed that this provision would be acceptable subject to the receipt of amended plans showing the details of layout, which would then form an approved plan/s. These will be reported in an update.
- 6.114 The proposal would include a one-way Mews linking Battle Street and James Street, the latter street remaining two-way. This would allow for delivery, refuse and fire vehicles to access the development and, further to conformation of tracking, has been confirmed by Transport as acceptable. Transport raised an issue with regard to the pavement widths within the Mews, however it has been agreed that this will be amended, as set out in para.4.84, to provide for 1.7m wide pavements, which Transport has confirmed would be acceptable, subject to the receipt of acceptable amended plans, which would then be included under the approved plans condition. As a result of this proposed amended Mews layout, Transport has requested updated tracking plans for refuse and fire vehicles, and these will be reported in an update.
- 6.115 In terms of refuse vehicles servicing Block A the agent has confirmed that amended plans will be submitted to address the issue of proximity to the proposed centralised refuse store with chute. This will be reported in an update. For the remaining units there would be smaller lockable bin stores accessible for refuse collection from the remainder of the development.
- 6.116 The proposal would create an enhanced pedestrian link between Battle Street and Oxford Road providing a safe and convenient access to the nearest bus stop on Oxford Road and other services. It would not impact detrimentally on highway safety, and it would provide for reduced levels of parking in a sustainable location.
- 6.117 Subject to the above recommended conditions and obligations and receipt of amended plans the scheme is considered acceptable regarding Policies TR1, TR3 TR4 and TR5.

g) Open Space and Public Realm

- 6.118 Policy EN9 requires all new development to make provision for appropriate open space based on the needs of the development and for sites of 50 dwellings or more development must ensure satisfactory provision of children's play area and neighbourhood parks.
- 6.119 At pre-application stage it was made clear that due to the limitations presented on site, a commitment would be required to pay an off-site contribution, in order to meet policy requirements. The submission documents identify that, given the specialist housing and support services, the provision of 100% affordable housing and major regeneration benefits of

the scheme, it was not proposed to make an off-site contribution towards open space.

- 6.120 Albeit it is recognised the significant benefits that the proposal would bring, the deficiency in open space within the central area and the increasing pressure generally on the Borough's open spaces from development, is also a significant matter for consideration, which needs to be addressed. It is, therefore, recommended that an open space contribution is secured in order to make the scheme acceptable overall in planning terms.
- 6.121 An obligation for an off-site contribution is therefore included in the recommendation above and this could be used for either the nearby Bedford Road open space and/or for public realm improvements on the Oxford Road within the conservation area and HSHAZ, the latter would also benefit residents when taking leisure walks. This would contribute towards enhancements within the Conservation area and the HSHAZ and would, therefore, be policy compliant as explained further within paragraphs 6.151-6.153 below. However, in acknowledging the type of housing proposed and the likely occupants, it is accepted that the level of demand for open space may be less intensive than for other more standard private housing sites. Therefore, in recognition of this, the level of open space contribution sought would be less than an equivalent standard private housing scheme.
- 6.122 It is considered that the on-site public realm would significantly enhance the site and with the recommended obligations for open space would accord with Policy EN9.

h) Sustainability and Energy

- 6.123 Matters of sustainability are a priority for Reading Borough Council with Policy H5 'Standards for New Housing' requiring that all major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes and to adhere to water efficiency standards more than Building Regulations. Requirements are also set out in Policies 'CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction', CC3 'Adaptation' to Climate Change' and a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 6.124 Policy CC4 'Decentralised Energy' states that any development of more than 20 dwellings is required to consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision within the site itself, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision. There is also an expectation in developments of over 10 dwellings to link into an existing district energy network, where one is present within the vicinity of an application site or demonstrate why this is not feasible. (Chapter 8 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD).
- 6.125 Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 6.126 The proposed scheme has been designed in line with zero carbon homes standards using Passivhaus principles for all uses with the aim for the development to achieve net zero carbon through reducing energy demand via high levels of insulation, airtight construction, triple glazed windows and air source heat pumps for heating, cooling ventilation and hot water, and on-site renewable energy generation and storage via photovoltaic panels and battery storage. An initial Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) calculation

(measurement of the improvement of the dwelling emission rate) indicates that the development with the above measures would be at or close to zero carbon in operation.

- 6.127 In response to the Sustainability Officer comments the applicant confirmed that an initial assessment of utilising ground source heat pumps was carried out and discounted. For a 100kw output in the order of 20 no. 85 m deep boreholes spaces 6m apart would be required and there would be insufficient space within the site for such works.
- 6.128 The Passivhaus principles exceed the required BREEAM standard and therefore this approach can be considered to achieve an improved outcome in terms of sustainability. Necessary conditions/obligations would, however, be required to ensure a standard which is equal to the SPD level, i.e. 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 tonne towards carbon off-setting. Therefore, a carbon offset payment is included as a recommended financial contribution to be secured through the Unilateral Undertaking, for the policy to be fully met (as set out in para. 4.4.6 of the RBLP).
- 6.129 In terms of Policy CC3 the scheme has been orientated to maximise opportunities for natural heating, ventilation and reduce exposure to wind. Green roofs are also appropriately located in areas exposed to direct sunlight. Trees would provide adequate shade and tree species have been selected which can adapt to changing climatic conditions. The submitted flood risk assessment and drainage strategy set out how the development would minimise the impact of surface water runoff including being attenuated within the site using tree pits and permeable paving and discharged below ground into a system designed to cater for the 1% AEP (1:100 year) storm with 40% additional storage to allow for climate change.
- 6.130 In accordance with Policy CC4 the development would include decentralised energy within the site in the form of PV panels and air source heat pumps (ASHP), which would provide heating and hot water to each flat. Policy CC4 also requires links into an existing district energy network, where one is present within the vicinity of an application site, and where such is feasible. An identified District Heating Energy Cluster, within the adopted SPD, is ca 325m away and is not yet in existence.
- 6.131 The layout and design of the development includes storage for recycling waste in centralised bin stores as well as bin chutes. The requirement for a Site Waste Management plan is recommended as a condition. This would accord with Policy CC5.
- 6.132 The submitted Sustainability Statement, notes that low flush fittings and fixtures would be selected to meet the higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day.
- 6.133 Overall, subject to the conditions and obligations, the scheme would accord with measures in Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5 and H5.

i) **SuDS and Water Supply**

- 6.134 Policy EN18 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.
- 6.135 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not over 1ha, therefore, no site-specific flood risk was required and there would, therefore, be minimal risk of flooding. There is a high to medium risk of pluvial flooding.
- 6.136 The submitted drainage strategy identifies that deep bore soakaways into the underlying chalk offer potential for discharging storm waters from the development. Furthermore, the drainage strategy provides a sustainable solution to potential pluvial flooding by discharging runoff to a surface water system designed to cater for the 1% AEP (1:100 year) storm with 40% additional storage to allow for climate change within the existing site boundary.
- 6.137 The site would also include green roofs, planting and permeable paving to further reduce surface water run-off.
- 6.138 The site allocation Policy CR14a requires that the developer should “*take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required*”.
- 6.139 Thames Water have confirmed that on the basis of the information provided, they have no objection with regard to the water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity. In addition, the foul water drainage would be discharged to the existing foul water sewer network using an existing on-site connection and Thames Water have also confirmed that there would be capacity within the sewer network.
- 6.140 Subject to addressing the points raised by the SUDs Manager (as set out in paras. 4.46-4.48 above) and subject to the SUDS conditions as included in the recommendation above, the scheme is considered to comply with Policy EN18.

j) **Environmental matters - Contamination**

- 6.141 The Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the submitted Phase 1 contamination assessment identifies risks from contaminated soils and potential risks from ground gas in made ground. A Remediation Strategy was subsequently submitted, and this has been confirmed as acceptable. Conditions to ensure implementation in accordance with the strategy and verification and to allow for any unidentified contamination would ensure compliance with Policy EN16.

k) **Unilateral Undertaking**

- 6.142 In accordance with Policies CC2, CC9, H3 and H5, the following obligations would be sought:
- Affordable Housing - 30% affordable housing at Social Rent
 - Employment Skills and Training Plan - construction
 - Carbon Off-Setting financial contribution based on a formula
 - Transport - S278 highway works and £5,000 for Traffic Regulation Order

- Open Space - offsite contribution towards open space/ public realm improvement
- Monitoring and legal costs

6.143 Policy H3 requires *“on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing; provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate. In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.”*

6.144 The applicant has been clear from the outset of the application and during pre-application discussions that the proposal would deliver 100% affordable housing on site. This would be in the form of 62 units, comprising a mix of 1, 2, and 3 beds with a proposed tenure of Social Rent. This would accord with types of affordable housing within the adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. It has also been confirmed by the applicant that Homes England expect the applicant to deliver 100%, so the Homes England funding for the scheme is based on this assumption.

6.145 The provision of an 100% affordable housing scheme would be significantly more than the Policy H3 30% on site affordable housing requirement. As such, any provision above the required 30% amount would be considered to be a tangible planning benefit of the proposals, in the assessment of the overall planning balance for the scheme as a whole.

6.146 Legal agreements (UU) can only secure what is reasonably required to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Section 122 of Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 specifically limits the use of planning obligations. The regulations state:

A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is—

- (a)necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- (b)directly related to the development; and*
- (c)fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

6.147 Officers have, therefore, relied on what is reasonably required by the Reading Borough Local Plan as a starting point. In this case the proposal of 100% affordable housing goes significantly beyond the 30% Policy H3 requirement (19 units). It, therefore, needs to be determined what is reasonable, bearing in mind legal cases which demonstrate that a willing applicant does not in itself justify the provision. Officers are also mindful of considering whether the obligation would be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, i.e. where proposals conflict with other policies in the plan, a higher percentage could be justified. There have been other examples in the Borough where a higher (than policy required) percentage of affordable housing has been secured previously, to *“make the development acceptable in planning terms”*.

6.148 To ensure that the above CIL tests are met in this instance, officers have carefully considered if any other policy deficiencies exist, that would justify requiring a higher percentage of affordable housing that exceeds policy

compliance. For the proposed scheme it is not considered this is the case, therefore, the UU will include the policy required 30% Affordable Housing obligation, which is in accordance with Policy H3 and the Council's Affordable Housing SPD, but being clear that it is the applicant's intention to deliver 100% affordable housing on the site.

- 6.149 Policy CC9 seeks that development that would result in employment should provide mitigation in line with its impacts on labour and skills. As a major category residential development and in line with the adopted Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013), the development is expected to provide a construction phase employment and skills plan, working in conjunction with REDA, to demonstrate how it would benefit the local employment market or an equivalent financial contribution towards local skills and training.
- 6.150 As set out in the Sustainability section above, to meet policy H5, a contribution will be required towards carbon off-setting.
- 6.151 In terms of the open space contribution sought policy CC9 includes improvements to amenities, including public realm and street care enhancements. Policy CR2 identifies the importance of public realm in design and Policy EN3 that improvements to the public realm can contribute to making a positive contribution to Conservation Areas.
- 6.152 EN9: Provision of Open Space requires all new developments to make *"provision for appropriate open space based on the needs of the development"*. For schemes of over 50 dwellings and in areas identified as deficient, new open space provision is sought.
- 6.153 Although the on-site amenity space and on site public realm would contribute in part to meeting open space requirements it would be insufficient to meet policy requirements in terms of outdoor space for recreational activity specifically children's play areas and neighbourhood parks, hence an off-site open space contribution is sought to enhance a nearby existing open space and/or public realm along the Oxford Road within the conservation area, to mitigate the impact and as set out in the recommendation above. This figure would be less than that sought for a comparable standard private housing scheme, because the level of demand for open space generated from the proposal, due to the type of housing, has been assumed to be less than for a standard housing scheme. This is set out in paragraphs 6.120-6.121 above.
- 6.154 The applicant has confirmed their commitment to these obligations, which would be part of a Unilateral Undertaking.

l) Equalities Impact

- 6.155 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would include future occupants and users who would include vulnerable individuals in terms of elderly people and those in supported living units. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered that the development has been designed positively and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The scheme is a key regeneration site in central Reading, allocated for housing. The proposal would deliver 100% affordable housing and would meet specialist and general housing needs as defined in the Housing Strategy for Reading 2020-2025 and Policy H6. The development would provide a significant public benefit and the delivery of affordable housing. These matters carry significant weight in the planning balance.
- 7.2 The development would deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.
- 7.3 The proposal makes effective use of an urban site in a sustainable location and would not cause harm to the Conservation Area or to the setting of listed buildings.
- 7.4 The design is considered to be of good quality, which would be carbon neutral in accordance with sustainability policies, incorporating enhanced public realm and amenity space, and include the reintroduction of a pedestrian link through the site for enhanced accessibility.
- 7.5 The scheme was subject to extensive pre-application discussions and officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant, and overall officers consider this to be a supportable scheme, which accords with relevant national and local policy and other material considerations. The planning application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and the completion of a UU legal agreement as detailed above.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX A: Plans

Site Plan



Block A Floor Plans



Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Roof

Elevations



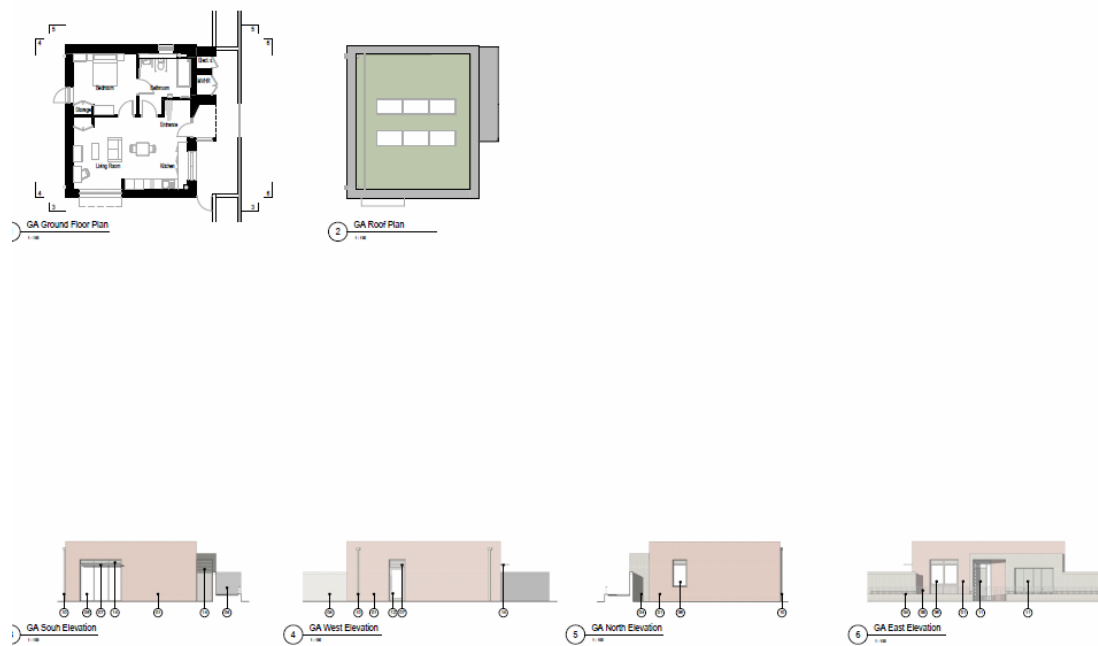
Block A Bay Elevation Detail



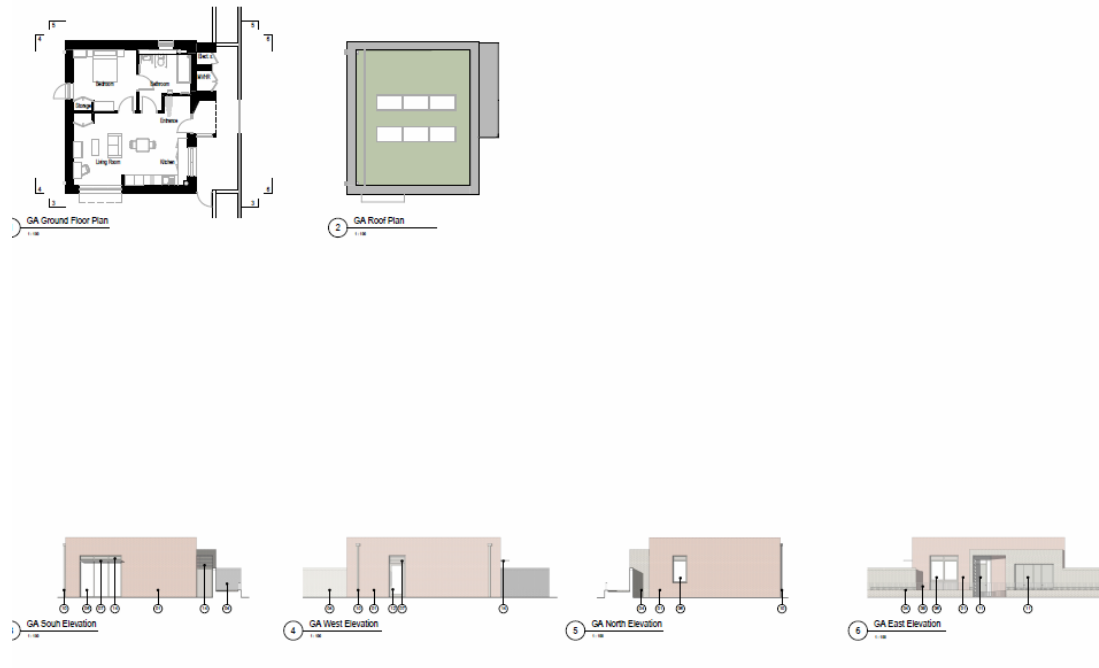
Block B Plans & Elevations



Block C Plans & Elevations



Block D Plans & Elevations



Block E1 & E2 Plans & Elevations



Block F Plans & Elevations



CGI Images





E. Courtyard East View



F. Mews South View



G. James Street East View



H. Passageway and Mews North View



A. Battle Street East View



B. Battle Street West View



C. Derby Street South View



D. Mews and Courtyard Entrance South View

Model

