



PROPOSED NEW DETACHED DWELLING AT

**LAND INCLUDING 2C/D/E HARTLAND
COURT, HARTLAND ROAD, READING RG2 8BP**

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF MR S MARKEL

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application is submitted following the recent withdrawal of application 200385 for 2 x 2-bedroom dwellings at the same site. The application was withdrawn due to a number of concerns raised by Officers, and a new proposal has been drawn up to reduce the number of proposed new dwellings to one.
- 1.2 Pre-application liaison took place with the previous Planning Officer, Alison Amoah, to help ensure the current submission properly addresses concerns relating to the previous application(s).
- 1.3 The current proposal introduces a detached two storey 4-bed dwelling to the side of the existing flats at Hartland Court.
- 1.4 The application will be supported by a s106 agreement, providing an affordable housing contribution, as requested by the Council.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The application site lies on the southern side of Hartland Road, a residential road within the Whitley suburb of Reading. A major employment area is sited directly to the west of Hartland Road, with primary and secondary schools, a recreation ground and leisure centre located directly to the north of Hartland Road. It is a sustainable location, approximately 3km to the south of Reading Town Centre, and connected with it via the No.6 Bus, which includes a stop on Basingstoke Road, within 100m of the application site.
- 2.2 This section of Hartland Road consists predominantly of two storey dwellings. They are primarily semi-detached or terraced in form, but detached properties are apparent. Dwellings are typically set back approximately 8m from the pavement, which has allowed for off street parking to be introduced to the front of most properties. Brick is the most apparent material used in the houses, albeit elements of render are clearly present in the streetscene.
- 2.3 On street parking is provided for along much of the road, and a grass verge and pavement on both sides of the highway adds to the suburban environment.
- 2.4 The application site itself is not typical at present of the wider street, in that it accommodates one half of a two-storey flatted development, without hipped roofs, to the eastern side of which is an open, cleared area approximately 10m wide, used for informal parking. A large dormer window is apparent to the rear of the existing building when viewed from the street.
- 2.5 To the eastern side of the cleared area is a gated access way that leads to Allotments, which are sited directly to the southeast of the application site. It is understood that such allotments may be subject to redevelopment for housing. Such a scenario has been allowed for in the current proposal, albeit the Applicant has no control over whether such development will take place or not.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 There are three previous planning applications that help provide useful context for the current proposal. The most recent relates to an application for 2 x 2 bed dwellings, under application reference 200385, which was withdrawn recently. There are no consultee responses, or Officer Reports on the Council's website, but it is understood that there were a number of concerns with the application, hence its withdrawal prior to determination.
- 3.2 From liaison with the Case Officer, Alison Amoah, it is understood that the previous scheme for 2 dwellings was considered to result in a cramped appearance, with overly dominant parking provision and inadequate amenity space accordingly. The introduction of two smaller dwellings was also in conflict with the Council's housing mix policy, which encourages larger dwellings. It was considered by Officers that the previous scheme represented an over development of the site.
- 3.3 Application 182015, determined in February 2019, was also for the introduction of two new dwellings on the land to the side of the Hartland Court flat development. Whilst the Council's website does not include the decision notice, it is understood questions arose with regards land ownership matters and it is assumed that the same issues as above also caused Officers concern, meaning they could not support the scheme.
- 3.4 It is also relevant to note the retrospective consent granted under reference 191941 for a two-storey rear extension and loft conversion with flat roof dormer to form a studio flat at Hartland Court in 2021. This included the provision of 3 parking spaces to the front of the building (shown on approved Drg 35718-22 A), allowing direct access onto Hartland Road.
- 3.5 In preparing for the current application a number of plans and emails have been exchanged with Alison Amoah, the Case Officer for application 200385. Through such exchange, the Applicant is confident that sufficient and appropriate amendments have now been made to the plans to ensure that they will be positively received by the Council.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The fundamental difference between the previously refused/withdrawn schemes for new dwellings at the site and the current application, is that the number of new dwellings has been reduced from two to one. In turn this generates a lower parking provision, smaller built footprint and greater amenity area per dwelling, which helps overcome the previous concerns about over development of the site.
- 4.2 The proposed dwelling will be set back about 6m from the pavement, and 10m from the road, reflecting the established building line on Hartland Road. A separation of 1.5m will be retained from the existing Hartland Court flat building. Plans of the existing flats, included with the submission, demonstrate that there are no habitable windows facing to towards the proposed new dwelling.
- 4.3 To the east of the proposed dwelling, the existing single lane access way to serve the allotments will be widened to a two-way access road. This is confirmed within the purchase agreement of some of the land in question by the Applicant from the Council.
- 4.4 The proposed dwelling is two-storey in height, with one of the four bedrooms provided within the roof space. A gable end feature is introduced to the front of the property, as is evident within a number of other dwellings on Hartland Road.
- 4.5 Parking for the proposed dwelling is provided at the rear of the property (one parking space and one garage space), accessed off the Allotments access. A further off-street parking space is introduced at the front of the proposed property, albeit accessed off the Allotments access way. A bin store is also provided at the front of the dwelling.
- 4.6 A south facing private garden is provided directly to the rear of the property, covering an area of approximately 60 sq m. Provision for safe bike storage is also allowed for to the rear of the property, near to the garage.
- 4.7 The 3 flats within the application site which are currently present will be served by 3 parking spaces at the front of the property (as approved under application 191941 referred to above). In addition, a further parking space and garage space is also allowed for at the rear of the site.

5. Assessment against Development Plan Policy

- 5.1 In this instance the Development Plan is made up of the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in 2019. There are a number of relevant policies within the Plan which the proposed scheme is assessed against below.
- 5.2 In general terms, Policy CC1 confirms the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that proposals which adhere with policies in the development plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For reasons set out below, the proposed development is considered to be in adherence with relevant policies of the Plan.
- 5.3 Policy CC7 relates to Design and Public realm. It encourages schemes to be of a high design quality and to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of their location. This is to be assessed through a number of identified design components, which the proposed scheme is assessed against below;
- 5.4 **Layout** – The proposed scheme continues the established layout of development along Hartland Road, this being frontage properties, set back a notable distance from the highway, which typically allows for off-street parking to the front of dwellings, with associated private amenity areas at the rear.
- 5.5 **Landscape** – Much of the application site is currently a cleared area used for parking. There is no planting of note within it. The proposed scheme will enable the provision of some new planting to the front of the dwelling, and within the rear garden area. This can be ensured by way of condition if considered necessary by Officers.
- 5.6 **Density & Mix** – One of the concerns with previous schemes at the site was that the proposed dwellings were too small and there were too many of them. Officers were concerned that it resulted in an over development of the site and did not address the Council's requirement for larger dwellings. The current proposal has responded to this by introducing a single 4-bedroom house. With regards the resulting density, this will reflect the suburban context of the location, whilst the size and type of property will provide for the type of family properties which the Council have confirmed are required.

- 5.7 **Scale (Height & Massing)** – The proposed dwelling is two storey height, as are the vast majority of dwellings in the vicinity. The gentle gradient means there is variety in roof lines along the street, and the proposal will be consistent with the general character in this respect, even if slightly higher than the neighbouring flats. With regards massing, the depth of the proposed dwelling is very similar to the neighbouring building, whilst the width of the plot is entirely appropriate and reflective of the local context.
- 5.8 **Architectural Detail and Materials** – The incorporation of a gable end feature within the front elevation adds interest to the building and reflects similar features in properties opposite. The proposed use of brick will reflect the main treatment of established houses on Hartland Road, and the Applicant is willing to agree details of brick type by way of condition, if considered necessary by Officers.
- 5.9 It is therefore considered that the proposed development adheres with the requirements of, and is supported by, Policy CC7.
- 5.10 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to the provision of housing, advising that the Council will provide for an additional 15,487 homes between 2013 and 2036, including the provision of 2,159 home on sites of less than 10 dwellings. The current application will assist with this intention.
- 5.11 Policy H2 relates to Density and Mix. Commentary in response to Policy CC7 above explains why the proposed scheme is considered appropriate in this respect. Policy H2 specifically comments that *'wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.'* The proposed scheme does precisely this, by providing a 4-bedroom property, and hence receives the support of Policy H2.
- 5.12 Policy H3 relates to affordable housing. It advises that for sites of 1-4 dwellings a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. In order to enable such a contribution, a s106 agreement will be made with the Council, hence ensuring the proposal complies with Policy H3.

- 5.13 Policy H5 of the Local Plan sets out standards that new housing needs to adhere with. This includes compliance with the national space standards. The proposed dwelling has been designed to ensure that all rooms, and the house as a whole, exceeds such requirements. The dwelling will also be built to adhere with Building Regulations requirements in terms of water efficiency standards, emission rates and accessibility.
- 5.14 Policy H10 relates to private outdoor space. The policy advises, amongst other things, that such areas should respect the size and character of spaces in the vicinity and not be compromised by their relationship with other buildings. In this instance, the proposed rear garden covers an area of approximately 60 sq m. Whilst it is acknowledged that some of the rear gardens serving properties on Hartland Road are very deep, there are many examples of properties, including those directly opposite which are served by very similar or smaller sized garden areas compared to that proposed. With regards the relationship with adjoining properties, the proposed scheme will provide amenity levels that are typical of suburban areas. Whilst some overlooking of parts of the garden area will be possible from upper floor windows, there will be no unacceptable overlooking.
- 5.15 The proposed garden area is considered to offer a good, usable space for future residents to enjoy. It is also noted that the site is within very close proximity (100m) of the Whitley Wood Recreation Ground, which offers a large open area for formal and informal leisure and recreation for future residents at the site.
- 5.16 Policy H11 refers to the development of private garden land. It is questionable if that is really the case in this instance, given the current use of the site proposed for development is an informal parking area. However, it is helpful to consider the criteria that the Local Plan applies to such developments given the residential area. The following criteria are considered particularly relevant to the current proposal;
- *Makes a positive contribution to the character of the area*
- 5.17 The proposed scheme will replace a current unattractive cleared area used for parking, with an appropriately designed family house. It will definitely enhance the character of the area.
- *The site is of appropriate size*

- 5.18 Officers raised concerns that previous schemes on site resulted in an over development, due to the inability of the site to accommodate more than one dwelling. As a result, the current scheme was reduced to a single house, which can be reasonably accommodated with associated amenity, landscaping and parking.
- *The proposal includes access which meets appropriate highway standards*
- 5.19 To be addressed in detail in response to Policy TR5, but the scheme does include appropriate access arrangements.
- *The emphasis is on the provision of family sized housing*
- 5.20 Unlike the previous proposed scheme on site, which caused Officers concern, the current application proposes a 4-bedroom family home.
- *The development provides Biodiversity Net Gain wherever possible*
- 5.21 The proposed scheme will incorporate new planting within it, and this can be prescribed to enable new/enhanced habitats for wildlife. The Applicant is willing for a condition to be applied on the issue of Landscaping/BNG to ensure an appropriate solution is introduced.
- 5.22 The proposed scheme will therefore adhere with the criteria set out by Policy H11, even if there is a question mark as to whether they are even applicable given the current use of the site.
- 5.23 Policy TR5 of the Local Plan relates to car and cycle parking, advising that an appropriate level of parking, dependant upon accessibility of locations, should be provided. The associated text cross refers to the Council's Parking Standards SPD, which was adopted in 2011 and is still in use by the Council. The application site falls within Zone 3 of the Standards, defined as a Secondary Core Area. Within such areas a 4-bedroom property is required to provide 2 off street parking spaces. The proposed layout allows for 2 off street parking spaces to serve the new dwelling, plus the use of a garage. Such provision is considered to adhere with the Council's standards.
- 5.24 The proposed layout also allows for 4 car parking spaces, plus a garage, for the adjacent 3 flats (2 x 1-bed and 1 x 2-bed). The flats had previously been

approved with 3 parking spaces at the front of the flats, and two to the rear. This arrangement will be continued, albeit the two spaces to the rear will now include a garage space and a space in front. This will mean that one of the flats benefits from a space and garage, whilst the others benefit from a single parking space. Such an arrangement for 2 x 1-bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flat is considered entirely appropriate and adheres with the Council's Standards which require 4.5 spaces for such a combination of flats.

- 5.25 Policy TR5 also requires all new houses with off street parking to provide an electric vehicle charging point. This is allowed for within the parking space to the front of the proposed dwelling.
- 5.26 The above assessment of relevant Local Plan policies has shown that the proposed development is supported by the Development Plan.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This Statement has explained why, following the amendments made from previous proposed developments at the site, the proposed new dwelling will adhere with relevant development plan policy. It therefore follows that planning permission should be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 In this instance the primary material consideration is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF confirms at paragraph 60 that in order for the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes to be met, it is important that land comes forward to address the housing requirements of specific groups. Paragraph 60 goes on to highlight that such groups include families with children, and the Council's own local evidence recognises that there is a need for family housing such as this.
- 6.3 Paragraph 69 of the NPPF also highlights that small sites can assist with the provision of such homes and that greater weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for housing.
- 6.4 It is therefore strongly considered that the relevant content of the NPPF provides further support for the proposed development and as a result material considerations in this instance also point towards the granting of consent.
- 6.5 It follows that planning permission should be granted for the proposed new dwelling, subject to conditions as appropriate and subject to a s106 agreement relating to affordable housing contributions. However, if Officers do have any concerns or any queries with regards the proposed scheme, it is requested that they contact the Applicant's Agent in order that such matters can be addressed.