

Planning Statement
Relating to 85 Cressingham Road,
Reading , Berkshire RG27RX



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1.Introduction

This planning statement has been produced in support of an outline planning application, for a proposed residential conversion and redevelopment at the of the 85 Cressingham Road Reading I RG2 7RX.

The formal description of development is:

Proposed change of use A1 shop into C3 with side and rear extension with loft conversion. 3No x1 bedroom and 2 No.x 2-bedroom flats (C3)

Ground Floor

Flat 1 - 1 x 1 bedroom (38m²)

Flat 2 - 1 x 2 bedroom (50m²)

First Floor

Flat 3 - 1 x 1 bedroom (37m²)

Flat 4 - 1 x 2 bedroom (50m²)

Loft Floor

Flat 5 - 1 x 2 bedroom (50m²)

Secure private bicycle storage

7 x parking spaces, meeting parking requirement for the flats

Approximately 180sq.m of private garden at the rear side of the property

Dedicated bin store area

In addition to this planning statement, the application has been submitted with the following.

Location Plan

Existing & Proposed Block Plan

101 – Existing Floor & Elevation Plan

A102 – Proposed Elevation

A103 – Proposed Loft Floor Plan

A104- Proposed Ground Floor & First Floor Plan

A105- Existing & Proposed Roof Plan

A106 Proposed Drainage

CIL form

2. Site Assessment

- 1) The site is located on Cressingham Road, in a residential area in the South of Reading. A public footpath runs down the side of the site. The front of the site features hardstanding and the rear is a large garden. The surrounding area contains a mix of residential dwellings.
- 2) The existing site contains a mixed-use building, ground floor being an A1 retail shop, and the first floor and part of the ground floor being a C3 use flats.
- 3) The current business in situ is not achieving the income as expected. This is due to increasing competition in the local area as well as recent changes in the economy and increase in energy prices and cost of living is becoming a concerning burden, something which does not show long term sustainability.
- 4) The existing site contains a large amount of unused, overgrown space that has much more potential than the existing use takes advantage of, and we believe the proposal offered provides a much better solution.
- 5) The road facing elevation features hard landscaping and the building sits close to the road, ultimately this does not create an attractive view and is quite imposing on the road. Being that of a prominent location.
- 6) Cressingham road slopes from East to West, and as such the height of houses increases with this slope. The houses immediately surrounding are a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings.
- 7) The site is within close proximity of where many shops, restaurants, public buildings, community buildings and local amenities can be found. There are also various educational facilities, religious buildings, green spaces, and playgrounds within its' immediate surroundings.
- 8) The site is not the subject of any specific designation. The building is not included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest.

3.Planning History

85 Cressingham Road has been a shop and 2 flats for 10 years or more.

There have been multiple applications made for this site, all of which bar one were rejected:

11/01324/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a new two-storey building containing five flats. (Resubmission of planning application 11/00248/FUL). Appeal dismissed. Inspector found this scheme with flat in the roof to be too high and with an unacceptable mass. He also found the amenity for occupiers of the top floor flat to be unacceptable.

11/00729/PREAPP - Pre-application advice for demolition of existing building containing five flats – Observations sent

11/00248/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a new 2-storey building containing 6 flats – not entertained.

08/00861/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of a new two storey building containing five self-contained flats – refused.

05/01158/CLP - Erection of outbuilding (280sq m) to be used as garage, storeroom, and playroom – refused.

03/01491/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of a new two storey building containing 4 x 2-bedroom units and a 1 x 1-bedroom unit with associated parking and amenity space – refused.

12/01670/FUL - Demolition of existing building and erection of a 2-storey building containing 4 x 2-bedroom flats (resubmission of 11/01324/FUL) – Application permitted.

4.Planning Policy

The site is subject to the following planning policies, and they have informed design decisions accordingly:

Reading borough local plan (RBLP) Policy H8 (residential conversion), H10 (private and communal outdoor), EN12 (biodiversity and green network), H3 (affordable housing) and national planning policy framework (2019)

The proposed development aim to balance its scale, footprint, the height and width within the proposed site and the surrounding properties. The new residential location aims to be in keeping with RBLP H8 (DM8) policy, in terms of physical impact and visual character of the area and adjoining properties.

Although cressingham road varies considerably in building size and scale, the immediate area around the proposed site is made up mainly 2 storeys building with traditional high roof ridgelines. The immediate area is also predominantly semi-detached dwelling to the North side, and a mixture of detached and terraced properties to the South. This provides a great canvas for the news plans to blend in and add diversity to the existing mix.

The proposed development depth will allow comfortable living conditions for the potential residents, and ensure the flats work well internally with regards to access and space. Proposed development has no impact on light or overbearing, whilst maintaining a clear 45degree line from the nearest adjacent window, by maintaining a reasonable depth it ensures that the scale and impact appears correct when views from the exposed public area to the side.

Whilst considering the size of the proposed building it is also very important to consider a scale and design of the roof. Our proposal for side extension roof and loft dormer flat roof will be below with ridgeline to appear in keeping with semi-detached properties in the area. Bringing the properties up to current Building Regulations will allow an opportunity to improve the current fabric which will help the overall environmental footprint of the development and be sustainable for the future.

5.Design Methodology

It is clear from the existing properties on Cressingham road and the surrounding streets that there is a demand for affordable accommodation in this location, with its ease of access to a multitude of community facilities the abundance of business area and strong employment opportunities. Having explored the proposals with local estate agents and potential supported living providers, it is clear that larger, luxury accommodation would be less desirable in this area, but there is a high demand for affordable, smaller units of accommodation due to the practical and sustainable location of the existing properties and with the added benefit of existing nearby amenities. These would be aimed at young professionals and skilled workers wanting to live close to the city centre or perhaps use as a home whilst considering on commuting.

5.1 Proposed Design

The proposals seek to provide a high-quality residential development consisting of 3no. one-bedroom flats and 2no. two-bedroom flats which will be suitable for single professionals or couples. The proposed conversion to living accommodation helps the demand for housing, especially affordable living, providing inexpensive, low hassle, maintenance free accommodation for young professionals, part time workers or students.

Layout - Access to flats will be via a main front door to the building. The ground floor hallway will serve flat 1 & 2 and a communal staircase will lead up to the loft.

5.2 Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 of the RBLP Safeguarding Amenity states that:

"Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of

5.2.1 Privacy and overlooking.

Along the east side of the site there is an existing high-level wall that will screen the building and landscape along the boundaries of the site will be retained and enforced in order to further mitigate the likely impact on neighbours. This will create privacy for both the resident of the proposed development and the residence of the neighbouring buildings. On the other side a new wall separates the car park and building from the public footpath for security, practicality, and safety issues. The cycle store at the rear will be bordered by a landscape area and high-level fence, ensuring the property is separate from any potential noise and nuisance from the public footpath.

5.2.2 Access to sunlight and daylight

As stated above, the proposed dwellings will be low-rise and of an indicative maximum of 2.5-storeys in height. Where they are to be sited to the south of existing properties, where overshadowing and loss of daylight and sunlight could occur, they will also be sited well away from the boundaries of the site. The risk of loss of sunlight and daylight to neighbouring properties will be minimal.

5.2.3 Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development.

Existing boundary landscaping will be retained and re-enforced to act as a buffer between properties and new development will be low-rise and no more than 2.5-storeys in height. New dwellings will be carefully sited in relation to each other, to ensure that none of the new development suffers from any harmful overbearing impact as a result of the proposals.

5.2.4 Noise and disturbance.

The noisiest and most disturbing time for neighbouring residents is likely to be during the construction phase of the development. However, the LPA will be able to place enforceable conditions on the planning consent to ensure that a Construction Management Plan is put in place prior to development and the hours of working are not excessive.

Bonfire

No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works, or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.

5.2.5 Artificial lighting

The development will need driveway lighting, that it is not excessive or harmful. The LPA will be able to place a condition on the planning consent to ensure that lighting levels are not excessive and do not harmfully disturb the amenities of neighbouring properties or areas of ecological interest.

5.2.6 Crime and safety.

The development aims to protect the sites boundaries by having an existing blockwork wall to the east side, a brickwork wall and high-level fence separating the public footpath on the west side down each side of the proposed building will be lockable gates preventing any unwanted visitors accessing the rear of the property,

A communal front door and hallway area before each flat provides security to all units the front door is also visible from the street protecting residents when entering the building.

Security lights are to be installed to the front, side, and rear of the development along with low level lighting in the car parking area. All windows will be double & safety glazed.

The bicycle store has been positioned to the rear of the development away from view of the main street.

Paragraph 130 f) of the NPPF states that developments should create spaces that have a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. The proposal will comply with this requirement of national policy.

Consequently, it is considered that the proposal will not result in any material harm to residential amenity, and it will comply with the requirements of the relevant development plan policy and the NPPF.

6.0 Internal and External Amenity Standards (Policy H5))

Policy H5 of the RBLP Standards for Housing states that:

"New build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:

- a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally described space standard."*

In this case, all of the new dwellings will be constructed to comply with the national space standard.

The Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard, published by the Government in March 2015, sets out minimum areas for different sizes and

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) ²			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

types of dwellings, which are set out in the table below:

7.0 Policy H10 of the RBLP Private and Communal Outdoor Space states that: The landscaping proposal has been designed taking into account RBLP H10 policy providing high quality maintainable landscaping. To the front of the site there will be hard landscaping associated for parking provision and the bin storage area. However, will be broken up with featured soft landscaping areas between spaces and all the way along the front of the building. The hard car park surfacing will also be screened from the street scene by large bushes to the front of the site.

Hard landscaping will appear down the sides of the building and to the rear slightly for access to the garden and bike storage area. A tasteful patio area will allow positioning of tables and other garden furniture. Beyond this will be predominantly grass area with decorative border around the edges.

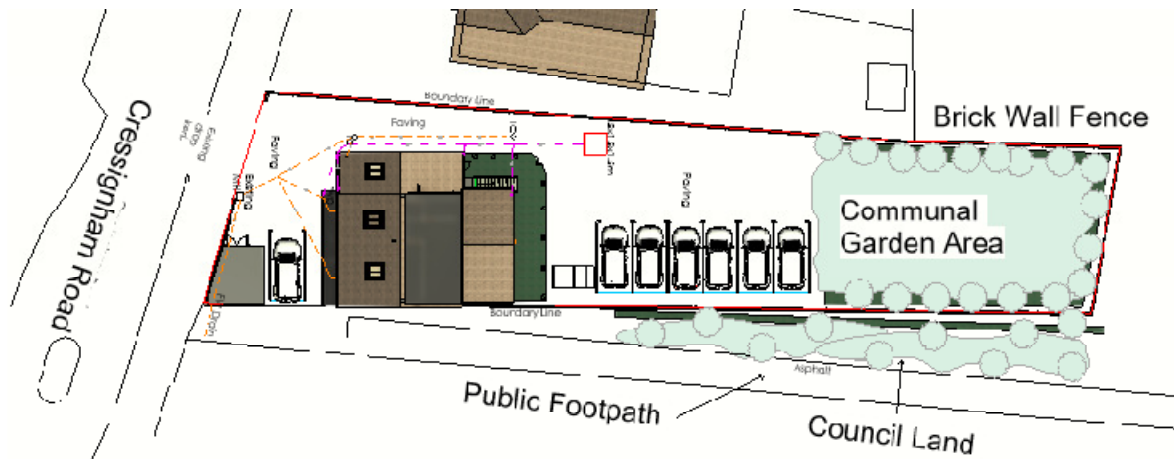
The proposed development includes a slighter of land that is current being acquired by the client from the council. Of this land the area to be included within the site boundary will not be used for any of the proposed building. This area will remain open to the public and will be dramatically improved from the poorly kept grass area that currently exists. Along with these positive changes it is proposed as part of the section 106 agreement that contributions are made to the improvement of the grass area long the public footpath to the side of the site.

"In the past, the Council has sought the following minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and they provide a useful guide for proposals:

(b) Flats outside central Reading:

- *1 and 2-bedroom: 25 sq m per flat*

As indicated on the illustrative site layout plan below, it is intended that the proposed flats will have at least 25 sqm of amenity space each, in the form of garden. (Total grass area – 180sq.m)

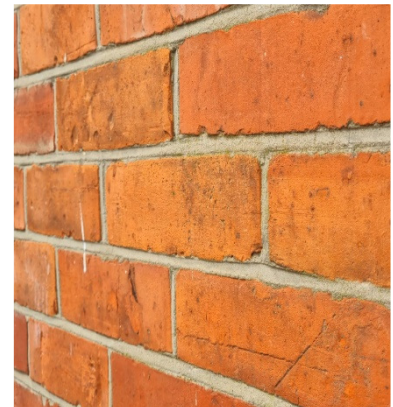


Proposed Landscape

Shrub, hedges, and plant species are proposed in design and access statement. However, final landscaping layout and plant species and maintenance schedule shall be subject to planning approval and recommendation from the reading borough council planning department.

8.0 Material details

The other important feature is material selection. We're proposing materials traditional to architecture in reading and immediate surrounding. Redbrick will form the base of the development with white finishes render. UPVC windows and doors are widely used in surrounding area and there best suited on the proposal, special attention should be part to roofscapes as reading sis quite hilly and therefore roofs can be seen in many cases. We are proposing traditional plain tiles of good quality to be in keeping with majority or roofs in the area.



It should be noted that the proposed development design and material selection can be amended in accordance with Reading Borough Council recommendation and to their approval.

9.0 Transport

The existing site is within zone 3 secondary core area, but proposed development aims to take into account Reading Borough Councils local transport policies and their design for sustainable homes. The cycle store and parking bays have been design in accordance with the RBLP car parking requirement 1.5 per dwelling. The proposal aims to provide seven spaces at the rear of the site and 1 space to the front using existing dropped kerb, so disturbance to the existing road will be negligible.

The site is approximately 1.4km from the local centre on A327 Shinfield road between elm road and Whitley wood road and approximately 300m from the shopping parade located on Northumberland Avenue close to the cressingham road / Northumberland Avenue/ Buckland Road /long barn lane roundabout.

Bus services can be accessed at bus stops located witing walking distance of approximately 750m from the site along A327 shinfiled road. Premier bus route 9 providing a link to and from the reading town centre area at 15mins frequency serves this stop. Bus services can also be accessed along C300 Northumberland Avenue., which is a distance of approximately 300m from the site. Bus route 5 again providing a link to and from the reading town centra area at 6-10mintures frequency from the stops along Northumberland Avenue.

The previous proposal's Planning Officer noted the Neighbourhood Statistics (2007) had the area at 1.01 vehicles per household, so recommended a revised requirement of 1 space per flat. The 2011 Census noted Reading as having 66,681 Cars and 62,869 Houses, or 1.06 Vehicles per household. (Table HS404EW, 2011 Census: Car or Van Availability, Local Authorities in England, and Wales). So, we suggest the previous requirement of 1 parking space per flat is still adequate, and we more than meet this.

The development features a cycle store that is able to house 6 bicycles This will hopefully be an incentive for the potential resident to commute or travel via bike as the site is located very close to the town centre.

10.0 Bin Storage

The bin store location is by the access driveway to the site off of the main road and therefore no need for waste disposal vehicles to enter the site on collection.

With the site previously used as a shop and therefore experiencing high frequencies of traffic in and out of the forecourt, the new residential demand of vehicles will be able to cope easily. The combination of private parking spaces on site, on street parking bays, local public transport and cycle routes will serve the new residential transport requirements adequately.

11.0 Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC2 of the RBLP Sustainable Design and Construction states that

“Proposals for new development of existing building, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care.”

- Construct in accordance with the latest version of building regulations.
- Using flow restrictors into respective outlets incoming pipework
- High energy lighting

The proposal sets out to maintain areas of landscaping towards the front, rear and side, to maintain a softer visual than the existing dwelling, and will be native species adapted to the area.

Surface water treatment will be tackled by Sustainable Underground Drainage Systems, such as a soakaway.

Photovoltaics are being considered for the roof to reduce the energy requirements of the dwellings.

12.0 Ecology

Policy EN12 Biodiversity and the green network state that:

"a) The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended, and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:

Planning Policy DM17 – This development site does fall within the green link network.

- The Ecological Assessment will be submitted with this application help to highlight the measures undertaken to increase net biodiversity on site.
- Subject to planning approval and recommendation from assessment and RBLP will be considered.
-

13.0 CIL and Section 106 Contributions:

Policy CC9 of the RBLP Securing Infrastructure states that:

"Proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time."

13.1 Proposal for Financial Contribution

Given the current flow of economic trends and squeeze in the property market with unstable interest rates, increasing base rates and the cost-of-living following suit, proves to be a very difficult time for all sectors. Having said that the landlords that have a growing portfolio and a sustainable one of that will continue to fight and better their rental yields (simple form of business).

But with the cost burden increasing associated with rising material costs and labour too doesn't provide much incentive to develop at this current time, but the double edge sword paradox prevails, as there is no better time than now either!?

The councils guided policies and formula workings on Financial Contributions is a key sticking point and arguably the main determinant that influences any development opportunity. It is either too high therefore causing a complete blow out on one's budget or it simply does not sit well with development agenda. But we are sure that the respective council see that a greater achievement is attainable in working together and finding a reasonable but fair contribution. Please could you kindly consider a contribution of £26,228 pound sterling.

Whilst the contribution is one element of the building that the council benefits from, there are also other trailing benefits such as more jobs and employment, more demand for skilled workers, and more money cycling through local communities, as well as opportunities for regional growth. It would also mean more people would have access to housing they could truly afford.