

REF: R00810/MR/TJ

Reading Borough Council
Planning
Reading Borough Council Civic Offices
Bridge Street
RG1 2LU

23 June 2023

Dear Planning,

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CREATION OF A NEW EXTERNAL STRUCTURE PROVIDING COMMUNAL AMENITY SPACE
KENDRICK HALL, 4 CROWN PLACE, READING, RG1 5AE
PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

I write on behalf of Hudson Advisors (the Applicant), to submit a planning application at the existing student accommodation building at Kendrick Hall, 4 Crown Place, Reading, RG1 5AE. The development proposes the creation of a new external structure providing communal amenity space for residents of Kendrick Hall.

Background to Planning Application

Full Planning permission was granted in 2009 under LPA ref. APP/E0345/A/09/2102211 to redevelop the existing site for student accommodation. Planning permission was granted for the:

'Demolition of Newbury Hall, Oxton Hall, BT building and the rear section of Mansfield Hall and development to provide 14 private dwellings and 132 student dwellings, associated highways and landscape works.'

This application follows a pre-application meeting that took place on 15th March 2023 between the applicant and David Brett a Senior Planner at Reading Borough Council (Ref:230346/PREAPP). The pre-application advice dated 12th May 2023 concluded that the development, size and scale of that proposed is considered unlikely to be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area. This is largely due to the single storey nature of the proposal, and the fact that it would not be visible from the highway.

The Proposal

The proposal comprises of the redevelopment of part of the currently unused courtyard to create a new internal amenity hub. The proposed section of the courtyard is currently an existing area of hardstanding, green space and trees.

The single-story amenity hub will have timber cladding in the colour brown with PPC aluminium windows, doors and coping in the colour dark grey. It also will feature wall-mounted downlights on all elevations. In front of the new pod will also be planting with a number of trees and shrubs in order to maintain greenspace onsite.

Additional detail on the proposals is available on the proposed plans prepared by CPS Architects (Drawing nos. 400-1101-21, 501-1101-21, 501-3103-21, 501-3104-21).

Planning Considerations

a. Principle of Development;

Policy H12 'Student Housing' of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states that all new student accommodation uses should be provided in existing sites.

Policy CC1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

The development proposes the creation of a high-quality external pod on an existing student accommodation site, which will provide much needed external communal amenity space for students thereby enhancing the overall student experience. Overall, the proposal is considered to be in line with Policy H12 and Policy CC1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019).

b. Design and Heritage;

The site is within Kendrick Road Conservation Area and is located 60m from the nearest Listed Buildings at 16-22 Kendrick Road.

Policy EN1 'Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment' of the Local Plan (2019) states that 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. Policy EN3 'Enhancement of Conservation Areas' of the Local Plan (2019) states 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.

Policy CC7 'Design and the Public Realm' of the Local Plan (2019) states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. This is supported by Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' of the NPPF (2021).

The proposed development will be of high-quality architectural design and respect the setting of the Victorian Villas at 16-22 Kendrick Road. The proposal will be of an appropriate scale and mass to sit comfortably within the urban grain of the Kendrick Road Conservation Area. Given the development proposes a single storey building, it is considered that the proposal will have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is important to note that the proposal will be concealed below the boundary line of the brick wall (at approximately 2.9m high) to the rear of the site which further reduces the level of risk posed to the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. Overall, the development will not negatively impact the setting of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with policies EN1, EN3 and CC7 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) and Section 16 of the NPPF (2021).

c. Trees and Landscaping;

There is currently a tree preservation order on site under LPA Ref. 5/003 as classified by type T42 and G1. It is noted that the proposed development is not situated at the location of the TPO. The Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021) seeks a net gain in tree numbers. Given the location of the site, partially within the Air Quality Management Area, a net gain of trees within the site is required.

The proposal requires the removal of existing trees from within the courtyard. However, it is proposed that new trees are provided within adjacent courtyards as part of the development to provide additional compensatory planting and maintain a net gain of trees. Furthermore, a biodiverse green roof is incorporated into the flat roof to improve the biodiversity net gain for the site and create a natural visual component to views from high-level windows surrounding the courtyard and views towards the site from adjacent properties. For the reasons set out above, namely the re-planting of trees on site, it is considered wholly justified that a Tree Survey is not required in support of this application. This was agreed via email exchange with Planning Officer David Brett on 15th June 2023.

d. Car and Cycle Parking;

Policy TR5 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

It is important to note that the development does not propose the loss of any car or cycle parking spaces.

Summary and Conclusion

To summarise, the proposal is considered acceptable for the following reasons:

- 1. Principle of Development** - The development proposes the creation of a high-quality external pod on an existing student accommodation site, which will provide much needed external communal amenity space for students thereby enhancing the overall student experience.

2. **Design and Heritage** - The proposal will be of high-quality architectural design and will respect the setting of the Victorian Villas on Kendrick Road. The proposal will be of an appropriate scale and mass to sit comfortably within the urban grain of the Conservation Area. The development will not negatively impact the setting of the Conservation Area.
3. **Trees and Landscaping** – Tree planting is proposed to provide additional compensatory planting. Furthermore, a biodiverse green roof is incorporated into the flat roof to improve the biodiversity of net gain for the site and create a natural visual component to views from high-level windows surrounding the courtyard and views towards the site.
4. **Car and Cycle Parking** – The development does not propose the loss of any car or cycle parking spaces.

It is therefore concluded that there are no policy grounds for objection to the application proposals and we respectfully request that the application is granted.

Scope of the Application Submission

The planning application comprises:

- This covering letter prepared by ROK Planning;
- The completed application form;
- The required fee of £462.00;
- Site Location Plan 1:1250 or 1:12500 A3 (drawing no. KHR438v301-300-1101-1101 P01);
- Design and Access Statement prepared by CPS Architects (dated June 2023);
- Existing and proposed plans prepared by CSP Architects (dated June 2023);
 - Existing Context Block Plan (Drawing no. KHR438v101-300-1101-2101 P01);
 - Existing Site Plan (Drawing no. KHR438v101-400-1101-2101 P01);
 - Proposed Context Block Plan (Drawing no. KHR438v301-300-1101-2101 P03);
 - Proposed Site Plan (Drawing no. KHR438v301-400-1101-2101 P03);
 - Proposed Bldg Plan (Drawing no. KHR438v301-501-1100-2101 P01);
 - Proposed Bldg Elevations (Drawing no KHR438v301-501-3100-2101 P01); and
 - Proposed Bldg Elevations (Drawing no KHR438v301-501-3100-2102 P01).

I trust that you have all the information you require for the submission of this application. If, in the interim, you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either Tiahna Joshi (tiahna.joshi@rokplanning.co.uk) or myself at this office. I look forward to your formal acknowledgement of the application.

Yours faithfully,



Matthew Roe

Director

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