

UPDATED PLANNING STATEMENT

EATON COURT, 112 OXFORD ROAD,
READING, RG1 7LL

ON BEHALF OF VENTA PROPCO 1 LIMITED

February 2023



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This Updated Planning Statement has been prepared by Montagu Evans LLP on behalf of Venta PropCo 1 Limited (“the Applicant”) to support an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of Eaton Court, 112 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7LL (“the Site”).
- 1.2** This Statement is prepared in addition to the previous Planning Statements prepared and submitted to Reading Borough Council (“RBC”) in both April 2021 and March 2022 (application ref. 210639). It provides a comprehensive planning assessment of the development proposals.
- 1.3** Since the submission of the original application in April 2021 the Applicant has changed and the Site is now owned by Venta PropCo 1 Limited. Venta Propco 1 Limited are a Joint Venture between Osborne Developments and PGIM Real Estate. They are committed to bringing this Site forward for re-development and commencing the build-out at the earliest opportunity post the grant of planning permission.

POST-SUBMISSION ENGAGEMENT

- 1.4** Following the original submission of the planning application to RBC in April 2021 and the submission of a revised scheme in March 2022, the Applicant has continued to discuss the proposals with RBC officers, local stakeholders and neighbours. A summary of this engagement is set out below:
- Ongoing discussions with RBC case officer during the statutory determination period;
 - Ongoing discussions and in-person meetings with the Royal Meteorological Society (104 Oxford Road); and
 - Ongoing discussions and in-person meetings with Fynecast, the owners of the adjacent 114 Oxford Road scheme.
- 1.5** As a result of further interaction with the above stakeholders, a number of key themes relating to the acceptability of the proposed development arose from these discussions, and which this updated submission seeks to address. In summary the main issues resulted in the following changes being made:
- Omission of the podium and undercroft car parking;
 - Re-arrangement of central landscaped courtyard;
 - Reduction in massing of the central building (Block 3);
 - Reduction in height and massing of the proposals on the west elevation (Block 1);
 - Repositioning of first floor windows on Block 2 (in respect of the Royal Meteorological Society Building (104 Oxford Road));
 - Further activation of the Eaton Place ground floor frontage;
 - Reduction and rearrangement of car parking;
 - Amended footprint of Block 3 to maximise separation distances;
 - Minor alteration to unit mix; and

- Rearrangement of ground floor and omission of retail units.

FORMAT OF UPDATED PLANNING STATEMENT

1.6 The remaining sections of this Statement are presented as follows:

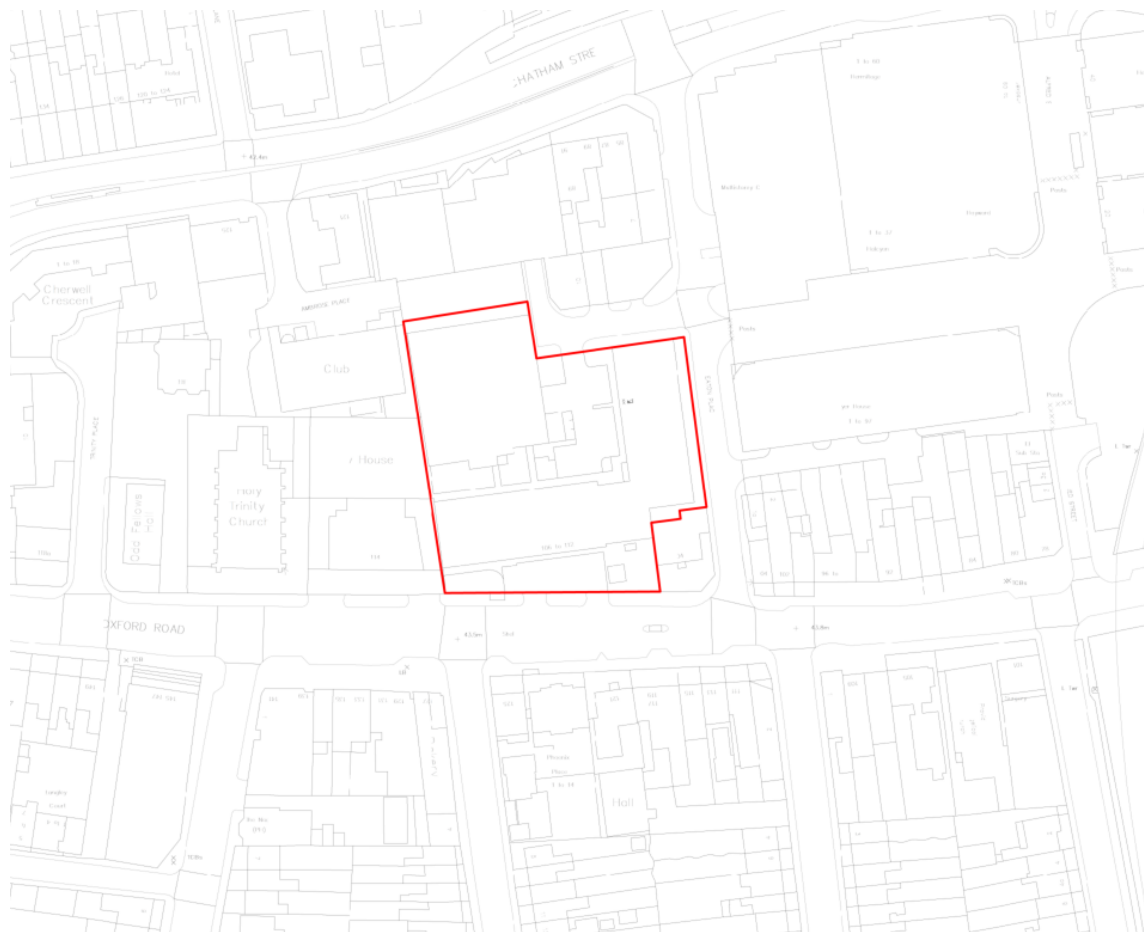
- **Section 2.0** provides a description of the Site, the surrounding area, background to the proposals and planning history overview;
- **Section 3.0** confirms the changes to the proposed development which have taken place;
- **Section 4.0** summarises the planning policy framework relevant to the Site;
- **Section 5.0** provides a planning policy assessment of the scheme revisions;
- **Section 6.0** provides a summary of the likely planning obligations; and
- **Section 7.0** summarises the analysis of the proposed development to form a planning balance and concludes the Statement.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS

THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1** The Site (**Figure 2.1**) is located at 104-112 Oxford Road and lies within the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council.

Figure 2.1 – Planning Application Site Boundary



- 2.2** The Site consists of a part two and three storey office building and a decked car park, comprising a total floorspace of 3,550 sq.m. (GIA). The majority of the Site has a lawful Class E(g)(i); however, there is a small portion of Class F floorspace (approximately 213 sq.m. (GIA)) on the ground floor which is occupied by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 2.3** The Site currently provides a multi-storey car park to the rear, accessed via Eaton Place, with parking for 106 vehicles. There is also forecourt parking to the front of the Site along Oxford Road, providing space for 10 vehicles to park. The main office entrance is accessed from Oxford Road.
- 2.4** The northern and eastern boundaries of the Site are bounded by Eaton Place and Oxford Road borders the Site to the south. To the immediate west is 114-116 Oxford Road, which is currently under development for the creation of a part 4 and part 5 building to provide new residential units. To the north-west lies the Face

Bar night club and the Chatham Street surgery. An area of surface car parking is situated further north of the Site, adjacent to Chatham Street, and the Butler Pub (Butler's Wine Vaults - Grade II listed) is located on the north-east corner of Eaton Place.

2.5 The Site does not contain statutorily or non-statutorily Listed Buildings. It does however sit within the setting of the Grade II Listed Mansion House which is located directly to the south east of the Site. There are a number of other listed buildings located within proximity of the Site, which include:

- Church of the Holy Trinity (Grade II);
- 118 Oxford Road (Grade II); and
- Butler's Wine Vaults (Grade II).

2.6 The Site is not located within a conservation area, however the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area is located on the northern side of Oxford Road and includes the Royal Meteorological Building (104 Oxford Road).

2.7 The Site has good public transport accessibility with Waylen Street Bus Stop located on the Oxford Road boundary of the Site. Waylen Street is served by a number of bus routes and includes operators from Reading buses and Thames Travel. Reading Train Station is located approximately 0.6 miles away (9 minute walk), and provides national rail links, including to Heathrow Airport, London Paddington, Cardiff and Birmingham.

2.8 The Environment Agency's (EA) flood map for the area shows that the Site is located within Flood Zone 1, indicating as having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding.

2.9 There are a number of medium-to-low category trees located on the Site but none of these have a TPO categorisation.

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

2.10 The surrounding area consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses. A number of residential-led mixed use developments have been permitted to the east of the Site, at Chatham Place, over recent years.

2.11 The Site lies within close proximity to Reading Town Centre and within a short walking distance to Reading's Central Core and Primary Shopping Area.

2.12 The Site is situated directly to the west of Reading's Tall Buildings Cluster (**Policy CR10**), which includes buildings adjacent to the Site which rise to 8 storeys and above.

2.13 We are aware that recently development proposals have been submitted to Reading Borough Council for determination in respect of two sites located immediately to the north of Eaton Court. These sites are:

- 115 Chatham Street (application ref. 210349) - Seeking planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and erection of a 3-5 storey building to provide 54 residential units

(Class C3) and provision of private and communal external amenity areas, car and cycle parking; and

- 10 Eaton Place (application ref. 201104) – Seeking planning permission for demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a residential building of up to 8 storeys (Use Class C3) and associated public realm improvements.

2.14 The proposals at 115 Chatham Street have been developed in close collaboration with the Applicant's Site and seek to ensure that an appropriate design response to policy allocation CR12c and the physical context of the area, including nearby listed buildings, is achieved.

2.15 The proposals at 10 Eaton Place, to the best of our knowledge, have been developed in isolation from adjacent landowners.

POLICY DESIGNATIONS

2.16 The Site is located within areas designated as the following on Reading's Policies Map:

- Reading Central Area;
- Air Quality Management Area; and
- West Side Major Opportunity Area.

2.17 The Site forms the majority (circa 65%) part of an adopted Local Plan allocation (CR12c) which is described as suitable for residential development of up to 260 dwellings, with ancillary community uses and small scale retail units. The wording of the allocation states:

"CR12c, CHATHAM STREET, EATON PLACE AND OXFORD ROAD:

Development of this area will be primarily for residential, with potential for community uses. There may also be some small scale retail and leisure uses on the Oxford Road frontage. This area is surrounded by heritage assets or low-rise residential, and inappropriate building scale at the fringes of the site will not be permitted.

Site size: 1.15 ha Indicative potential: 180-260 dwellings."

PLANNING HISTORY

Application site

2.18 Reading Borough Council's online planning records show there are a number of previous applications relating to the Site. Those considered most relevant to the proposed development are set out below:

- Ref. 190291 - On 16 April 2019 a Certificate of Lawfulness was granted for Continuous Use of the Site as B1(a) office accommodation for 10 years or more.
- Ref. 190419 - On 14 May 2019 Permitted Development was granted under Part 3, Class O (Offices to Dwellinghouses) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order

2015 (as amended) (GPDO). The proposal included the change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 58 Units.

Surrounding planning history

2.19 There are a number of applications in the surrounding area that have been submitted to and determined by Reading Borough Council. Those most relevant to the proposed development are set out below.

- **115 Chatham Street** (ref. 210349) – Application submitted on 4 March 2021 for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and erection of a 3 - 5 storey building to provide 54 residential units (Class C3). Provision of private and communal external amenity areas, car and cycle parking and refuse storage – Application approved subject to conditions and Section 106 Agreement on 17 December 2021.
- **10 Eaton Place** (ref. 201104) – Application submitted on 3 August 2020 for the demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a residential building of up to 8 storeys (Use Class C3) and associated public realm improvements - Application is currently pending determination.
- **Butler Pub** (ref. 180365) – Application submitted on 26 February 2018 for the conversion of existing outbuildings from tyre fitting and associated repairs (Class B1a) and part of existing pub (Class A4) to a 14 bed hotel (Class C1) with parking and associated works – Full planning permission was granted on 5 March 2019.
- **Foundry Quarter** (ref. 170326) – Application submitted on 5 April 2017 for full planning permission for the demolition of all existing buildings (including 3 retail units) and structures, and erection of new buildings ranging between lower ground & 4 storeys to lower ground & 11 storeys in height, providing 427 (233x1, 182x2 & 12x3-bed) residential units (Class C3) and 1 flexible ground floor retail shop (Class A1) or restaurant and cafe (Class A3) unit, together with new public realm, landscaping, accesses, parking and associated works (amended description) - Application approved on 15 March 2018.
- **114 Oxford Road** (ref. 150721) – Application submitted on 21 August 2015 for full planning permission for the erection of part 4, part 5 storey building providing 16 (2x1, 13x2 & 1x3-bed) residential units (Class C3) with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings (Class A1 / B8/ nil use). (amended description) - Application approved on 17 February 2016.
- **Chatham Place** (Phase 2) (ref. 120293) – Application submitted on 18 May 2012 for full planning permission for Phase 2 of the Chatham Place redevelopment comprising one nine storey and one nineteen storey building to accommodate a total of 184 residential units and ground floor retail uses (use classes A1, A2 or A3), together with basement car parking, public and private amenity space, public realm works and landscaping and alterations to existing vehicular access - Application approved on 28 November 2012 and construction was completed in 2016.

- **Chatham Place** (Phase 1) (ref. 05/00849) – Application submitted on 27 July 2005 for full planning permission for Phase 1 comprising a mixed use development of 50,289 sq.m GEA including 307 residential units (211 Private and 96 affordable), 591 space multi- storey car park, ancillary parking, a community use, flexible mixed uses at ground floor level comprising A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D2 uses, highways and public realm works - Application approved on 29 November 2005 and construction was completed in 2009.

3.0 CHANGES TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The April 2021 submission and March 2022 addendum sought full planning permission for the following:

“Demolition and residential-led mixed use redevelopment to provide three buildings comprising residential units (Use Class C3), one ground floor unit comprising flexible commercial floorspace (Use Class E & F2) and one ground floor unit comprising flexible commercial and residential floorspace (Use Class E, F2 & C3), along with car parking, cycle parking, servicing bay and associated landscaping, amenity space, plant and refuse areas, and access arrangements”.

- 2.2 In response to the latest changes made to the scheme, as outlined in [Section 1.0](#) of this report, the description of development will change as follows (alterations outlined in red):

“Demolition and residential-~~led mixed use~~ redevelopment to provide three buildings comprising residential units (Use Class C3), ~~one ground floor unit comprising flexible commercial floorspace (Use Class E & F2) and one ground floor unit comprising flexible commercial and residential floorspace (Use Class E, F2 & C3),~~ along with car parking, cycle parking, servicing bay and associated landscaping, amenity space, plant and refuse areas, and access arrangements”.

- 2.3 These changes are explained in more detail in the sections below.

OMISSION OF THE PODIUM

- 2.3 As a result of ongoing discussions with RBC officers the scheme has been revised to remove the podium. It was considered by our Case Officer that the podium deck led to the creation of inactive frontages around the Site and limited the scope for meaningful landscaping, principally tree planting.
- 2.4 The removal of the podium therefore ensures that the proposed development is now accessed from ground level and the landscaping will be planted at grade.
- 2.5 This change has also led to an increased activation of the northern frontage of the Site, along Eaton Place, through the creation of additional pedestrian access points. Residential receptions have also been introduced to the ground floor on the Eaton Place frontage, further activating this part of the Site.
- 2.6 The omission of the podium and reconfiguration of the courtyard have also allowed for the introduction of ground floor residential units and associated private terraces. These assist with increasing natural surveillance across the development.

MASSING & LAYOUT

- 2.7** The number of residential units has not changed from the March 2022 scheme, and the proposed development is still providing 120 units. The proposed maximum heights of the three buildings has remained the same, with the following proposed:
- Building 1 – ground + 4 storeys
 - Building 2 – ground + 5 storeys
 - Building 3 – ground + 6 storeys
- 2.8** The proposed massing is rationalised as a result of this latest design iteration. The stepping up to Block 2 has been rationalised and this has led to the creation of rooftop amenity space on levels 3 and 5.
- 2.9** The other principal design change is the omission of the flexible non-residential floorspace, originally proposed along the Oxford Road frontage. This has been replaced with three residential units.
- 2.10** During the determination of the application concern was raised by RBC officers that the separation distance between Building 3 and Building 1, at approximately 10m, was too tight. In response to this, the footprint of Building 3 has been amended and this has improved the separation distance between Buildings 1 and 3. The separation distance has increased from 10m to 13m. This has been achieved by inseting the proposed balconies on these facades as much as possible. The separation distance between Buildings 2 and 3 has also been amended to 13m, to match the distance between Buildings 1 and 3.

UNIT MIX

- 2.11** The omission of the podium, reconfiguration of Building 3 and omission of the non-residential floorspace has led to a minor change in the proposed residential unit mix.
- 2.12** A comparison of the March 2022 unit mix and the new proposed unit mix is set out in [Table 2.1](#) below.

March 2022 Scheme					January 2023 Scheme				
No. of Bedrooms	Studio	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	No. of Bedrooms	Studio	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed
Total	9	64	40	7	Total	10	57	47	6
Percentage	7.5%	53.3%	33.3%	5.8%	Percentage	8%	48%	39%	5%
Summary of changes	-	-	-	-	Summary of changes	+ 1 unit	-7 units	+ 7 units	- 1 unit

Table 2.1 – Comparison of unit mix (March 2022 and January 2023)

- 2.13** There has been an increase in the provision of studios and 2-bed units, and a respective reduction in the number of 1-bed and 3-bed units.

CAR PARKING

- 2.14** As a result of the podium being omitted there has been a reconfiguration of the car parking. The March 2022 scheme proposed a total of 42 car parking spaces within an undercroft car park. Of the parking spaces provided, 34 were for residents parking, inclusive of 7 accessible spaces. The remaining 8 parking spaces were allocated for use by the adjacent Meteorological Society (104 Oxford Road).
- 2.15** This updated scheme proposes 14 parking spaces. 6 of these spaces are allocated to residents, all of which are disabled spaces. The remaining 8 spaces continue to be allocated for use by the Meteorological Society.
- 2.16** All spaces will be provided with active or passive electric vehicle charging facilities to promote electric car use.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 2.17** As a result of the loss of the podium, all three buildings are now centred around a ground-level courtyard, which continues to provide communal amenity space for residents of the proposed dwellings.
- 2.18** The proposals continue to incorporate a high quality landscaping scheme and the increased separation distances between the buildings further improves the quality of this space, particularly from a daylight and sunlight perspective.
- 2.19** As a result of the alteration to the proposed landscaping in the courtyard, the playspace provision has also been altered to now provide 55 sq.m. of play facilities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- 2.20** To illustrate the changes outlined above, the following material is submitted alongside this Updated Planning Statement:
- Application Form for Full Planning Permission, prepared by Montagu Evans;
 - Community Infrastructure Levy Additional Information Form, prepared by Montagu Evans;
 - Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (February 2023), prepared by Montagu Evans;
 - Architectural drawings, prepared by Squire and Partners;
 - Landscaping statement & drawings, prepared by Aspect Landscaping;
 - Area schedule, prepared by Squire and Partners;
 - Design and Access Statement (January 2023), prepared by Squire and Partners;
 - Flood Risk Statement and Surface Water Management Report (January 2023), prepared by Morph;
 - Transport Statement (January 2023), prepared by Caneparo Associates;
 - Residential Travel Plan (January 2023), prepared by Caneparo Associates;

- Construction Environmental Management Plan (January 2022), prepared by Osborne;
- Statement of Community Involvement (February 2023), prepared by Forty Shillings;
- Energy Statement (February 2023), prepared by Chapmanbdsp;
- Sustainability Statement (January 2023), prepared by Chapmanbdsp;
- Existing Utilities Assessment (January 2023), prepared by Chapmanbdsp;
- Noise Impact letter (January 2023), prepared by Sharps Redmore;
- Updated Bat Survey and Assessment (December 2022), prepared by Aspect Ecology;
- Biodiversity Enhancements Scheme (January 2023), prepared by Aspect Ecology;
- Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report (January 2023), prepared by Point2;
- Viability Assessment (January 2023), prepared by BNP Paribas Real Estate;
- Preliminary Investigation Report (Desk study and site reconnaissance) (January 2023), prepared by Soiltechnics;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (January 2023), prepared by DPA;
- Air Quality Assessment (January 2023), prepared by XCO2;
- Fire Safety Statement (February 2023), prepared by Sweco; and
- Desk-based Archaeological Assessment (August 2021), prepared by Mills Whipp.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 This Application has been informed by the adopted development plan policies and other relevant guidance. This section of the Statement provides a summary of the planning context.

4.2 **Section 5.0** provides an assessment of the application against the policies and guidance contained within the adopted development plan for Reading Borough Council.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

4.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.4 The revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") was published in July 2021 and sets out the Government's approach to planning matters, and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.5 **Paragraph 11** notes that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making, this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

4.6 The National Planning Practice Guidance ("NPPG") was first published in 2014 and is updated from time to time. It is also a material consideration and should be read in conjunction with the NPPF.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.7 The statutory development plan for the Site comprises:

- Reading Local Plan (2019).

4.8 There is no adopted or emerging neighbourhood plan which includes the Site.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.9 In addition to the Development Plan, the following Supplementary Planning Documents (“SPD”) have been prepared by Reading Borough Council and are identified as key material considerations to the assessment of the proposed development:

- Affordable Housing SPD (2021);
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011);
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (2015);
- Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013);
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011);
- Tree Strategy for Reading (2010); and
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019).

5.0 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 5.1** This Section assesses the principles of the proposed development against the statutory development plan and other material considerations. It should be read in addition to the previous Planning Statements prepared and submitted to Reading Borough Council (“RBC”) in both April 2021 and March 2022 (application ref. 210639).

PRINCIPLE OF REDEVELOPMENT

- 5.2** **Paragraph 11** of the NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. For decision making this means:

“...c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

- 5.3** **Paragraph 60** of the NPPF sets out that to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

- 5.4** The NPPF encourages making effective use of land and **Paragraph 119** sets out that planning policies and decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. **Paragraph 120** states that planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs. Development should also promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.

- 5.5** Similarly, **Paragraph 121** of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land for accommodating it.

- 5.6** As set out in **Sections 1.0** and **3.0** of this Statement, the Site is allocated within the adopted Local Plan. It is located within the West Side Major Opportunity Area (Policy CR12) which sets out that development in this area will:

- i) Contribute towards providing a mix of uses including residential. Development for education will be an acceptable part of the mix;*

5.7 The proposed development seeks a residential development, which accords with this specific policy requirement.

- i) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, in particular on key movement corridors and east-west links through the area and between development areas and the station, including improved crossings of the IDR where achievable;*

5.8 The proposals incorporate improvements to both the Oxford Road and Eaton Place frontages and seek to create a high quality public realm which encourages pedestrian movement. Cycle parking for residents of the proposed development is provided on-site in secure and sheltered facilities. The omission of the podium has improved the permeability of the development, allowing the courtyard to be accessed at grade.

- i) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;*

5.9 This part of the policy is not applicable to the Site.

- ii) Provide additional or improved areas of open space where possible, generally in the form of town squares, and provide additional green infrastructure where possible;*

5.10 The proposals include enhancements to the public realm located along Oxford Road through the planting of 5 new trees and a high quality hard landscaping treatment. The proposed development incorporates a new landscaped courtyard space for use by residents of the new dwellings. Further greening opportunities have been explored across the development, including through the installation of green roofs and further tree planting along Eaton Place.

- i) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and conservation areas and conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings;*

5.11 The proposed height, bulk and massing of the proposed development has been carefully considered and evolved as a result of thorough pre-application and post-submission discussions with officers at Reading Borough Council. The Site is located in a transitional area whereby new development, principally to the east, has resulted in a taller building line (rising between 7 to 19 storeys). The tallest element of the proposed development (ground plus 6 storeys) is considered appropriate in the wider context and is a sensitive 'step-down' from the taller buildings located to the east.

5.12 There are also two adjacent schemes (115 Chatham Street and 10 Eaton Place) which propose building heights of 3-5 storeys and 8 storeys respectively. These further demonstrate the transitional nature of this part of Reading, and it is considered the proposed development aligns with these emerging developments.

5.13 The Site lies adjacent to the Grade II listed Mannson House and the design of the proposals ensures that the setting of this heritage asset is both preserved and enhanced as a result of the development. The building immediately adjacent Mannson House has been appropriately set-back to ensure that its scale does not appear overbearing and a small public square is situated next to the building.

- 5.14** The Site lies to the north of the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area. The proposed materiality of the proposed development reflects the appearance of Mannson House and the adjacent conservation area, with red brick being the consistent feature.
- i) Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;*
- 5.15** The Site does not fall within an Area of Archaeological Potential, however the application is supported by a Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment.
- i) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and*
- 5.16** The design and layout of the proposed development has ensured that the redevelopment of the other sites which make up the Opportunity Area will be able to come forward and will not be prejudiced by development already taking place on our Site. The site to the immediate east, 114 Oxford Road, was granted planning permission in 2016 for the erection of a part 4, part 5 storey building to provide 16 residential units. The design of our proposals ensures that there will be no detrimental impact on amenity levels experience on the adjacent site.
- 5.17** The proposals at 115 Chatham Street, rising to 3-5 storeys, have been developed in close collaboration with our Site and seek to ensure that an appropriate design response to policy allocation CR12c and the physical context of the area, including nearby listed buildings, is achieved.
- i) Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*
- 5.18** The proposed development has been informed by the necessary utilities and sustainability assessments which confirm that the proposals will not adversely impact water and wastewater infrastructure. A Utility Statement is submitted with the application.
- 5.19** The Site is specifically allocated within **Policy CR12c** (*Chatham Street, Eaton Place and Oxford Road*) which seeks the following:
- “Development of this area will be primarily for residential, with potential for community uses. There may also be some small scale retail and leisure uses on the Oxford Road frontage. This area is surrounded by heritage assets or low-rise residential, and inappropriate building scale at the fringes of the site will not be permitted. There is an opportunity to enhance the Oxford Road frontage, including with tree planting.*
- Site size: 1.15 ha Indicative potential: 180-260 dwellings”*
- 5.20** The proposed development is consistent with the aim to optimise under-used land for housing to meet Reading's significant housing need and accords with the NPPF, Opportunity Area designation and the adopted site allocation.

- 5.21 Therefore we consider that both in isolation and in combination with the surrounding development sites, the proposed development accords with the requirements of the adopted site allocation and the principle of redeveloping the Site is wholly acceptable.

PRINCIPLE OF RESIDENTIAL USE

- 5.22 **Section 5** of the NPPF emphasises the need to deliver a sufficient supply of homes and states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.
- 5.23 **Policy H1** (*Provision of Housing*) of the Local Plan states that provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.
- 5.24 The proposed development seeks to deliver 120 residential units and will comprise a Build to Rent scheme. As set out above, the Site falls within site allocation CR12c which requires the development of this area to be primarily for residential.
- 5.25 The principle of residential development on the Site has therefore been accepted in light of the adopted site allocation. In accordance with the NPPF, the redevelopment of the Site seeks to optimise the potential for housing delivery on a sustainable brownfield site. It will deliver residential development in a well-located and sustainable location, adhering to the aspirations for achieving sustainable development.
- 5.26 Therefore in accordance with the adopted policy context, we consider the principle of residential development is acceptable on the Site.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

- 5.27 **Paragraph 119** of the NPPF sets out that developments should make optimal use of the potential of each site to deliver housing.
- 5.28 **Policy H2** (*Density and Mix*) states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development will be informed by;
- *the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;*
 - *its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;*
 - *the need to achieve high quality design;*
 - *the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and*
 - *the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.*
- 5.29 In addition to the above criteria, indicative density ranges for town centre locations are above 100 dwellings per hectare. Reading's Local Plan identifies the fact that there are considerable areas of underused land around the edge of Reading town centre, such as this Site, which offer an opportunity to accommodate development at higher densities. **Policy CC6** (*Accessibility and the intensity of development*) states that the scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public

transport to a range of services and facilities. The densest and largest scale development should take place in the most accessible locations.

- 5.30** The April 2021 Planning Statement outlines that Reading's Local Plan identifies the fact that there are considerable areas of underused land around the edge of Reading town centre, such as this Site, which offer an opportunity to accommodate development at higher densities. Previously the Scheme proposed the delivery of 131 dwellings, which equated to a density of 298 dwellings per hectare. Given the Site's location within a transitional residential area, which is driven by its location within a defined opportunity area, it was considered that the proposed density is appropriate and in accordance with the Local Plan.
- 5.31** This updated scheme is consistent with the March 2022 submission, which delivers 120 dwellings and a density of 240 dwellings per hectare. As outlined in the April 2021 Planning Statement, the Site comprises the majority (circa 65%) of site allocation **CR12c** which provides an indicative site capacity of 180-260 dwellings. Considering the upper level of the site capacity (260) and the size of the Site in relation to the entire allocation, no more than 169 dwellings should be delivered. Using the lower level of the site capacity (180), 117 dwellings could be delivered. The provision of 120 dwellings, proposed as part of this revised application, therefore falls comfortably within the parameters set by the site allocation.
- 5.32** The density has been reduced as a result of alterations made to the massing and layout of the proposals, which has led to a reduction in unit numbers. The proposals continue to comprise a mid-density development which optimises previously developed land, through the provision of housing and encouraging local planning authorities to maximise densities on land allocated for development to meet their housing delivery requirements.
- 5.33** The proposed density ensures no harm arises to residential amenity and this is explained further in the remaining sections of this Statement.

HOUSING MIX

- 5.34** The proposed development seeks to provide a Build to Rent scheme, and **Policy H4** (*Build to Rent schemes*) of the Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for developments of self-contained, private rented homes which provide for a mix of unit sizes in accordance with **Policy H2** or **CR6**.
- 5.35** The Site falls within the Central Reading Area. **Policy CR6** (*Living in Central Reading*) of the Local Plan sets out that all proposals for residential development within the central area will be required to contribute towards a mix of different sized units within the development. This will be measured by the number of bedrooms provided within individual units. Ideally, a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units should be provided.
- 5.36** As a guide, in developments of 15 dwellings or more, a maximum of 40% of units should be 1-bed/ studios, and a minimum of 5% of units should be at least 3-bed, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable.
- 5.37** The proposed development will provide 120 new residential units and the proposed unit mix is broken down in **Table 5.1** below:

No. of Bedrooms	Studio	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed
Total	10	57	47	6
Percentage	8%	48%	39%	5%

Table 5.1 – Proposed Housing Mix

- 5.38** Reading's Local Plan, at paragraphs 4.4.1 to 4.4.6 note that Reading is likely to provide a significantly greater proportion of smaller dwellings than its neighbours within the West Berkshire Housing Market Area (HMA). The above mix demonstrates that the scheme meets the 5% requirement for 3-bed units and more than 30% of the total unit mix will comprise 2-bed units. We consider the proposed housing mix accords with the requirements of **Policy CR6** and is reflective of the central and highly accessible location of the Site.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.39** **Paragraph 65** of the NPPF sets out that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of homes to be available for affordable home ownership. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should be made where the site or proposed development provides solely for Build to Rent homes.
- 5.40** The proposed development seeks to provide a Build to Rent scheme, and **Policy H4** (*Build to Rent schemes*) of the Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for developments of self-contained, private rented homes which:
- *Provide 30% on-site affordable housing, either in accordance with Policy H3 and any relevant Supplementary Planning Document; or in the form of Affordable Private Rent Housing as defined and set out in a relevant Supplementary Planning Document.*
- 5.41** **Policy H3** (Affordable Housing) of the Local Plan outlines that on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing. The policy confirms that for sites of 10 or more dwellings, provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate.
- 5.42** In determining residential applications, **Policy H3** confirms that the council will assess the site size, suitability and types of units to be delivered in relation to the current evidence of identified needs. The council will seek an appropriate tenure mix of affordable housing to include social rented, affordable rent, intermediate rent and shared ownership affordable units. The affordable units provided should be integrated into the development.
- 5.43** **Policy H3** goes on to state that 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.

- 5.44 The application is supported by an updated **Viability Assessment** prepared by BNP Paribas. It confirms that the proposed development could not viably support any affordable housing, as when 100% market rent units are assumed the proposed development results in a deficit when compared to the Benchmark Land Value.
- 5.45 However, notwithstanding the results of the Assessment, the Applicant remains willing to make the commercial decision to proceed with the proposed development at their own risk, and are committed to delivering this new residential accommodation.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 5.46 The scheme revisions have arisen primarily in response to a desire to improve the quality of residential amenity for existing residents and occupiers of the surrounding area, and also proposed residents of the new development.
- 5.47 The **Design and Access Statement** outlines the proposed changes in detail. In terms of residential amenity, the proposed development provides a high-quality living environment with a high percentage of units being dual aspect. The number of north-facing single aspect units has been minimised.
- 5.48 All the above changes are considered to comply with **Policy H5** (*Standards for new housing*) of Reading's Local Plan.
- 5.49 10% of the proposed residential units will be accessible units, complying with Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations. The remainder of the units will comply with Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. These units are located in Buildings 1 and 2 on the first and second floors.
- 5.50 **Policy H10** (*Private and communal outdoor space*) outlines how dwellings should be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas and children's play areas.
- 5.51 The quantity of landscaped communal open space has increased slightly from the March 2022 version of the scheme, with the proposals now providing 1,724 sq.m. of amenity space, which equates to 5.97 sq.m. per habitable room. Within this space, 55 sq.m. of children's play space is proposed, which accords with the requirements of Reading's Open Spaces Strategy.

DESIGN & LANDSCAPING

- 5.52 **Paragraph 124** of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, or of promoting regeneration and change and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. **Section 12** of the NPPF relates to 'Achieving well-designed places' and sets out that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
- 5.53 **Policy CC7** (*Design and the public realm*) sets out the general design policy principles for Reading. These are reiterated in **Policy CR2** (*Design in Central Reading*) of the Local Plan which outlines that development within this area should "...build on and respect the existing grid layout 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”.

- 5.54** **Policy CR2** requires the architectural details and materials used in the central area to be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site. The design of the proposed development has evolved during the thorough pre-application discussions which have taken place with planning and design officers at Reading Borough Council. The proposals incorporate a layout and appearance which maintains the area’s prevailing character and setting, in accordance with **Policy CR2** and the NPPF. The predominant building material is brick and traditionally proportioned windows are proposed, which are consistent with the surrounding townscape.
- 5.55** Since March 2022, in response to further feedback from RBC officers, the appearance of the upper sections of the buildings has been altered. They now comprise a light brick detail, which intends to ensure the proposed development responds sensitively to the brickwork of the adjacent Grade II listed Mannson House.
- 5.56** **Policy CR2** requires development in the West Side Major Opportunity Area to create appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces and active frontages at street level. The Site lies adjacent to the Grade II listed Mannson House on the corner of Eaton Place and Oxford Road. The proposed development incorporates a setback to the building which abuts this heritage asset, ensuring that an appropriate relationship is established between the two. The proposals seek to remove the existing surface parking located along Oxford Road and replace it with a new area of landscaped public realm, which will create an active frontage and both preserve and enhance the setting of Mannson House.
- 5.57** As outlined in **Section 1.0** of this **Updated Planning Statement**, the design of the proposals has evolved through ongoing discussions with our RBC case officer and the adjacent landowners. The March 2022 revision to the scheme led to a reduction in the massing, with the tallest element of the proposed development now being ground plus 6 storeys. This continues to fall below the threshold of tall buildings within Reading, which is 12 storeys of residential. The tallest building (Block 3) is situated within the centre of the Site, furthest from Oxford Road and the Conservation Area located to the south. Blocks 1 and 2 will rise to ground plus 4 and 5 storeys respectively and are appropriately set-back to ensure they respond positively to the Eaton Place and Oxford Road streetscape.
- 5.58** In accordance with **Policy CR2** and ongoing engagement with the adjacent landowners, a further setback has been introduced to the built form of Block 1 (on the western boundary of the Site) to ensure the scheme achieves a respectful relationship with the 114 Oxford Road development.
- 5.59** In summary, the proposals continue to incorporate a layout and appearance which maintains the area’s prevailing and transitional character and setting. Building materials and proportions are used which relate strongly to the surrounding area, and seek to assist with strengthening the townscape of Oxford Road.
- 5.60** **Policy CR2** goes on to state that development should provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscaped areas. This is reiterated in **Policy CR3** (*Public realm in Central Reading*) of the Local Plan sets out that all development should contribute towards improvements to the public realm. The provision of trees (including street trees) and other planting, as well as hard landscaping, to create high-quality spaces will be expected.

- 5.61** The removal of the podium seeks to vastly improve permeability across the Site. It is now accessed from ground level and the associated landscaped courtyard is planted at grade. This change has also led to an increased activation of the northern frontage of the Site, along Eaton Place, through the creation of additional pedestrian access points. Residential receptions have also been introduced to the ground floor on the Eaton Place frontage, further activating this part of the Site.
- 5.62** The omission of the podium and reconfiguration of the courtyard have also allowed for the introduction of ground floor residential units and associated private terraces. These assist with increasing natural surveillance across the development.
- 5.63** The proposals continue to provide a high quality landscaping scheme. A landscaped courtyard is provided at ground level between Blocks 1, 2 and 3. Sedum green roofs are also proposed on all three blocks, along with a green roof at level 3 to the west side of Block 2 and south of the private terrace in Block 2. This results in further greening of the urban environment, which is illustrated in the [Design and Access Statement](#) and the [Landscaping](#) material.

HERITAGE

- 5.64** [Chapter 16](#) of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment. [Paragraph 194](#) of the NPPF states that “*in determining applications, an applicant is required to describe the significance of any heritage assets effected by a proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting*”.
- 5.65** [Paragraph 200](#) confirms that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of grade II listed buildings should be exceptional.
- 5.66** [Policy EN1](#) (*Protection and enhancement of the historic environment*) sets out 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. 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.
- 5.67** Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.
- 5.68** [Policy EN6](#) (*New development in a historic context*) states in such areas, new development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.
- 5.69** A [Heritage and Townscape Statement](#) has been prepared by Montagu Evans, which outlines the significance of the adjacent Conservation Area and surrounding listed buildings, the contribution of the Site towards that significance, and an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development to that significance.
- 5.70** The Statement concludes that the demolition of the existing buildings on the Site would be wholly positive to the character and appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings. The recent removal of the podium, reconfiguration to the building footprints and introduction of additional

setbacks is considered to make a further positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is also confirmed within the updated illustrative views included in the [Design and Access Statement](#).

- 5.71** The [Heritage and Townscape Statement](#) maintains that the proposed development will, at least, preserve the setting and significance of the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. Through the introduction of high-quality architecture and the improved townscape function of the area brought about by active frontages and natural surveillance, the proposed development has the opportunity to enhance the setting of the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area and the Mannson House listed building in particular.
- 5.72** [Policy CR3](#) states that the public realm should conserve and enhance the historic environment of the centre and the significance of heritage assets therein and their setting, including through layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping. There may be opportunities for areas of public realm to provide improved access to and visibility for heritage assets.
- 5.73** The [Heritage and Townscape Statement](#) considers the proposed development achieves an improved visibility of the adjacent Grade II listed Mannson House, by providing a sensitive set-back to the proposed building and a new area of public realm immediately adjacent the building. These factors will allow for a better appreciation of the heritage asset.
- 5.74** As such the proposals continue to accord with [Policy EN1](#) (*Protection and enhancement of the historic environment*) and [Policy EN6](#) (*New development in a historic context*) and we consider the NPPF policies are also met.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

- 5.75** [Section 9](#) of the NPPF refers to 'Promoting sustainable transport' and [Paragraph 108](#) sets out that in approving development it should be ensured that:
- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
 - b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and*
 - c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.*
- 5.76** [Paragraph 124](#) of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land by taking into account the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use.
- 5.77** [Policy TR1](#) (*Achieving the Transport Strategy*) of the Reading Local Plan sets out that all development proposals should make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport, walking and cycling. [Policy TR1](#) goes on to state that developments will be assessed for their impact upon the transport network.
- 5.78** [Policy TR3](#) (*Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters*) outlines that development will be permitted where:

- i. The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;*
- ii. The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists; and*
- iii. For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.*

5.79 A **Transport Statement** has been prepared by Caneparo Associates and confirms that the revised proposals do not result in any material impact on the local highway and public transport network, and furthermore, will in fact deliver improvements to on-site car and cycle parking and waste storage, as well as reducing the number of trips associated with the development. Therefore according with the requirements of **Policy TR3**.

5.80 Vehicular access into the Site will continue to be facilitated from Eaton Place and pedestrian access will be provided via a dedicated reception entrance on Oxford Road. The proposals remove the existing forecourt parking provided along the Oxford Road frontage to deliver new public realm, which will improve the pedestrian and cyclist environment along the front of the Site.

5.81 The proposals will remove all existing car parking and re-provide a total of 14 parking spaces. Of the parking spaces provided, 6 will be disabled spaces (42%) allocated for residents only. The remaining 8 parking spaces will be allocated for use by the Royal Meteorological Society (104 Oxford Road), who maintain a right in title for 8 parking spaces-on site. This therefore equates to a parking ratio of 0.11 car parking spaces per unit.

5.82 All parking will be provided at ground floor and all spaces will be provided with active electric vehicle charging facilities. This accords with the requirements of **Policy TR5**.

5.83 In terms of cycle parking, **Policy TR4 (Cycle Routes and Facilities)** states that developments will be expected to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities. The scheme proposes 71 long-stay spaces, which exceeds RBC's parking standards (which require 63 spaces). These will be provided within a secure ground floor cycle store in each building. In terms of short-stay, 4 spaces (in the form of 2 Sheffield stands) will be provided near the residential reception entrance on Oxford Road. The proposals therefore continue to result in an overprovision of cycle parking, further promoting cycle parking to residents.

5.84 Servicing and waste collection for the development will take place on site within the turning area adjacent to the internal disabled parking spaces. In the event there are larger deliveries to the Site, vehicles will be able to make use of the existing section of single yellow line kerbside adjacent to the Site on Eaton Place. It is anticipated the proposed development will generate approximately 15-16 deliveries per day, but this is not expected to result in a material impact on the local highway network. It is anticipated that the reduction in unit numbers will reduce the number of deliveries required by circa 1-2 deliveries per day.

5.85 The application is also supported by a **Residential Travel Plan**, which intends to encourage residents to choose more sustainable modes of transport. It sets out the following measures to achieve this:

- Reducing the need to travel – influencing the volume and timing of travel activity to lessen its impact;
- Making better use of the car – ensuring car parking provision is based only on need;

- Maintaining and encouraging further use of sustainable modes of travel – reducing the need for car usage and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport;
- Reducing emissions – reducing the environmental impact of the sites travel demands; and
- Raising awareness – promotion of travel choices.

5.86 The Applicant will also investigate the offer of car club membership for each residential unit, through consultation with residents as part of the Travel Plan, thus seeking to reduce car ownership.

5.87 Considering the implementation of the permit-free agreement, the preparation of a Travel Plan, the offer of car club membership for residents and the highly accessible location of the site, we consider the proposed level of car parking is acceptable. Additionally during the determination of the application Reading Borough Council's Transport Development Control raised no objection to the April 2021 proposals, subject to agreeing appropriately worded planning conditions.

5.88 Therefore considering the implementation of the permit-free agreements, the preparation of a Travel Plan, the implementation of a local car club bay, the offer of car club membership for residents and the highly accessible location of the Site, the proposed level of car parking is considered reasonable and appropriate.

ECOLOGY

5.89 **Section 15** of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Part d) of **Paragraph 174** requires development to enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

5.90 At the local level, **Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the green network)** of the Local Plan states that on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity, and provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development is also encouraged to:

- *Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*
- *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

5.91 The Site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations and currently comprises a large expanse of hard landscaping.

5.92 The April 2021 submission was supported by a Bat Survey and Assessment prepared by Aspect Ecology. It confirmed that the main building at the Site was recorded to support a day roost for a low number of Common Pipistrelle bats. As such a Natural England mitigation licence will be required to facilitate demolition of the main building.

5.93 An **Updated Bat Survey and Assessment** was undertaken in November 2022. It confirms that suitability of the buildings within the Site to support roosting bats remains unchanged since the time of the previous survey work in 2019, with no fresh evidence of bats recorded. Update dusk / dawn survey work will be required prior to the acquisition of a Natural England Protected Species license, to confirm the current status of the known Common Pipistrelle roost associated with Building B1. A suitable mitigation strategy will also need to be implemented to ensure bats are safeguarded during the construction and operational phases of

the development. As such, the evaluation and assessment of impacts set out within the Bat Survey and Assessment report (March 2021) remain valid and appropriate.

- 5.94** In accordance with **Policy EN12**, we consider that roosting bats will be fully safeguarded under the development proposals and the conservation of the local bat populations will be unaffected.
- 5.95** A **Biodiversity Enhancements Scheme** is submitted with the application which demonstrates how the Site is currently dominated by buildings and hardstanding with little vegetation present in the form of a small number of trees and very little amenity planting. The redevelopment of the Site presents the opportunity to provide a number of biodiversity benefits as part of the proposals. The proposals continue to present the following enhancements:
- New landscape planting;
 - Green roofs;
 - Bat boxes;
 - Bird boxes; and
 - Bee bricks.
- 5.96** The removal of the podium means that the landscaping proposals have been brought down to ground level and provide a better interaction with the wider public realm in the surrounding area, presenting a further biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.97** In line with the NPPF and **Policy EN12**, the proposed development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the Oxford Street frontage with the planting of 5 new trees, and seeks to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough.

CONTAMINATION

- 5.98** **Paragraph 183** of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.
- 5.99** **Policy EN16** (*Pollution and water resources*) of the Local Plan outlines that development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.
- 5.100** In April 2021 a Preliminary Investigation Report was prepared by Soiltechnics and submitted with the application. The findings of the Report confirmed that potential sources of chemical and gaseous contamination have been identified on site and further investigations will be required to refine the preliminary risk assessments.
- 5.101** An updated **Preliminary Investigation Report** is submitted with this revised scheme. The findings of the Report are consistent with the April 2021 version, revealing that potential sources of chemical and gaseous contamination have been identified on site and further investigations are required to refine the preliminary risk assessments.

5.102 We continue to anticipate these will be dealt with via appropriately wording planning conditions attached to the permission.

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

5.103 **Section 14** of the NPPF relates to '*Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change*' and states that the planning system should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. **Paragraph 154** states that new development should be planned for in ways that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.

5.104 **Policy CC2** (*Sustainable Design and Construction*) of the Local Plan outlines that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings, 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 and take account of the effects of climate change.

5.105 **Policy CC3** (*Adaptation to Climate Change*) of the Local Plan sets out how all developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:

- *Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;*
- *Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;*
- *Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and*
- *All development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in river flooding levels as a result of climate change*

5.106 **Policy CC4** (*Decentralised energy*) states that any development of more than 20 dwellings and/ or non-residential development of over 1,000 sq m shall consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision.

5.107 **Policy CC5** (*Waste minimisation and storage*) sets out that development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the

promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

- 5.108** In April 2021 an **Energy Strategy Report** was prepared by Chapmanbdsp and submitted with the application. It outlined how, in accordance with Local Plan **Policy CC2** (*Sustainable design and construction*), the design of the proposed development has sought to optimise the building fabric to reduce the need for heating, cooling and artificial lighting, thus minimising the energy demand. It confirmed that the residential and non-residential components of the proposed development would achieve a 48% and 34% improvement, respectively, against the Part L 2013 carbon emission target. To meet the zero-carbon target for domestic, the remaining carbon emissions would be offset via a cash in-lieu contribution.
- 5.109** The **Energy Strategy Report** has been updated to reflect the revised scheme and confirms that the proposed development would now achieve a 64% improvement against the Part L 2021 carbon emission target. Therefore continuing to be comfortably above the 35% policy requirement. Given the percentage improvement in carbon reduction, a cash-in-lieu payment contribution will continue to be sought.
- 5.110** The proposed development continues to include a low carbon communal heating network, serving all domestic and non-domestic areas. In accordance with **Policy CC4** (*Decentralised energy*) and considering the decarbonisation of the grid and the Council's target for zero carbon developments, the Site's community network will be fed by an air source heat pumps (ASHP).
- 5.111** A study of district heat networks in proximity of the Site was undertaken and it confirmed no existing or foreseen networks are located in the area. However, the proposed energy strategy ensures future resilience is provided to connect to a district heating scheme when one is made available for connection.
- 5.112** A **Sustainability Statement** has also been prepared by Chapmanbdsp and submitted with the application. It outlines how the design of the proposed development had been optimised to adapt to the effects of climate change, particularly to minimise the risk of overheating.
- 5.113** In accordance with the requirements of **Policy CC2** and **Policy CC3**, the proposed development will significantly reduce its demand on mains water supply through the use of water efficient fittings. Preference has been given to the selection of sustainable materials with a low environmental impact over their life cycle, as well as sustainable procurement and waste disposal, in accordance with **Policy CC5**. A **Construction Environmental Management Plan** is submitted with this application, and details of this are set out later in this Statement.
- 5.114** The proposed development therefore continues to accord with the requirements of adopted planning policy in respect of energy and sustainability.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

- 5.115** **Paragraph 185** of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location and in doing so should mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development, and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.

- 5.116 Policy CC8** (*Safeguarding amenity*) of the Local Plan sets out that new development adjacent to residential properties should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of noise and disturbance.
- 5.117 Policy CR6** (*Living in Central Reading*) of the Local Plan sets out that proposals for new residential development within the central area will be required to demonstrate how the issue of potential noise disturbance from neighbouring land uses and other sources have been considered and if necessary, mitigated. New residential development should not be located next to existing town centre uses where those uses would give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to the occupiers of the new scheme, unless this can be mitigated.
- 5.118** In April 2021 a **Noise Impact Assessment** was prepared by Sharps Redmore and submitted with the application. It assessed the impact of existing noise sources on the proposed residential units and the impact of noise from mechanical services plant which will serve the proposed commercial units.
- 5.119** It concluded that taking into account the good acoustic design measures the Site can be developed to ensure reasonable internal and external noise levels which comply with the requirements of BS 8233:2014. It is concluded that noise from existing sources would not cause unacceptable disturbance to future residents and the proposed development will not result in a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residents.
- 5.120** During the determination of this application, Reading's Environmental Health Officer has considered that subject to the implementation of suitable pre-commencement conditions, requiring details of the proposed sound insulation measures and noise levels from any mechanical ventilation system to be submitted and approved, the proposals are acceptable from a noise perspective.
- 5.121** An **Update Noise Letter** from Sharps Redmore accompanies this revised submission and demonstrates that in terms of noise, the changes to the proposed development do not alter the conclusions to the April 2021 Noise Assessment.
- 5.122** The proposed development therefore continues to be in accordance with the policy aims of the NPPF and the Local Plan.

AIR QUALITY

- 5.123 Policy CR6** states that proposals for new residential development within the central area will be required to demonstrate how air quality implications of residential development, have been considered and if necessary, mitigated.
- 5.124 Policy CC8** (*Safeguarding amenity*) of the Local Plan sets out that new development adjacent to residential properties should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of dust and fumes.
- 5.125 Policy EN15** (*Air Quality*) states that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.

- 5.126** Where a development would introduce sensitive uses (such as residential) into, or intensify such uses within, an Air Quality Management Area, detrimental effects on that use will be mitigated. Mitigation measures should be detailed in any planning application.
- 5.127** An **Air Quality Assessment** has been prepared by XCO2 and submitted with the application. It confirms that the Site falls within an Air Quality Management Area. It had been undertaken to quantify the potential impacts on local air quality associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development, as required by Local Plan **Policy CR6**.
- 5.128** The Assessment reveals that the operational traffic associated with the proposed development is not anticipated to significantly affect local air quality. During the construction phase, the Site has the potential to generate dust nuisance beyond the application boundary. However, through the implementation of an Air Quality Dust Management Plan, the impacts will be effectively minimised and are unlikely to be significant. In accordance with **Policy CC8 (Safeguarding amenity)**, the proposals should not result in unacceptable levels of dust and fumes being experienced by local residents.
- 5.129** The proposed development will generate less traffic than the existing site uses, which will benefit local air quality. The all-electric energy strategy of air source heat pumps also improves air quality, in line with **Policy EN15**.
- 5.130** Therefore there are not considered to be any air quality issues created as a result of the proposed development and the scheme accords with the adopted development plan requirements.

DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

- 5.131** **Policy CC8 (Safeguarding amenity)** of the Local Plan sets out that new development adjacent to residential properties should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of access to sunlight and daylight.
- 5.132** As outlined in **Sections 1.0 and 2.0** of this **Updated Planning Statement**, alterations to the April 2021 and March 2022 versions of the proposed development have been made to address feedback received from adjacent landowners. The impact of the proposals on the daylight and sunlight conditions of the neighbouring 114 Oxford Road development has been one of these discussion points.
- 5.133** The April 2021 submission was supported by a **Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report**, prepared by Point2. It considered the likely penetration of daylight and sunlight into the proposed residential development and within the proposed outdoor amenity space. It also set out the proposed impact of the new development on existing surrounding residential properties. This is required to demonstrate accordance with **Policy CC8 (Safeguarding amenity)** of the Local Plan, which requires new development adjacent to residential properties to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.
- 5.134** An updated **Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report** has been prepared by Point2 and supports the revised scheme. In terms of daylight, the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) results demonstrate that 80% of windows meet the recommendations of the BRE guidelines. The results for the second daylight test, No Sky Line (NSL), demonstrate that 81% of rooms meet the strict application of the BRE Guidelines. Both of

these result should be acknowledged in relation to the urban context of the Site. For sunlight the results continue to demonstrate full BRE compliance.

- 5.135 Policy CC8** also requires consideration of daylight amenity levels within the proposed residential development. The proposed development has been designed to maximise the daylight levels within the main living areas, whilst providing each unit with a private external amenity space in the form of a balcony. The updated Report confirms that the daylight amenity levels are considered good with 69% of rooms tested meeting or exceeding the BRE guidelines. Where rooms are not able to reach the advisory target values, this is as a result of providing balconies, which in themselves add significantly to the amenity afforded to occupants.
- 5.136** The updated results show that the proposed amenity space will have access to good levels of sunlight, especially during the summer months, when it is more likely to be used and enjoyed. All 6 terrace amenity spaces record full BRE compliance on 21st March.
- 5.137** The proposed design continues to demonstrate how generous separation distances will be achieved between the proposed development and the sites to the immediate north (115 Chatham Street and 10 Eaton Place) and the proposed massing, layout and orientation of Blocks 2 and 3 will not result in unacceptable daylight and sunlight conditions. The additional setbacks to Blocks 1 and 3 will also have a positive impact on daylight and sunlight conditions.
- 5.138** Therefore in summary the proposed development accords with the relevant adopted planning policy relating to daylight and sunlight and falls within the practical application of the BRE Guidelines.

FLOOD RISK AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE

- 5.139 Paragraph 167** of the NPPF sets out that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and where appropriate applications should be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
- 5.140 Policy CC3** (*Adaptation to climate change*) of the Local Plan sets out that all developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:
- *Whenever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;*
 - *Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc.;*
 - *Use if trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and*

- *All development shall minimize the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in river flooding levels as a result of climate change*

- 5.141 Policy EN18** (*Flooding and sustainable drainage systems*) states that development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance, following the Sequential and Exceptions Test set out in the NPPF, and taking into account the effects of climate change. All major developments must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as appropriate and in line with Government's Technical Standards.
- 5.142 Policy EN18** goes on to state that runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site. Whenever possible, SuDS provision should maximise ecological benefits, link into the existing Green Network, incorporate tree planting and landscaping and avoid damage to existing significant trees, including through changes to the site hydrology. All new developments in areas of flood risk should give propriety to SuDS.
- 5.143** A **Flood Risk Statement and Surface Water Management Report** was prepared by Morph Structures and submitted with the April 2021 application. The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 'Low Probability' with a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding. The proposed development is therefore not required to pass the Sequential Test set by the NPPF.
- 5.144** An updated **Flood Risk Statement and Surface Water Management Report** has been prepared by Morph Structures and is submitted as part of this revised submission. In accordance with **Policy CC3** and **Policy EN18**, to reduce the surface water run-off to the greenfield rate, SuDs methods are to be introduced. All feasible SuDS methods have been assessed including the incorporation of an attenuation tank, green / blue-roofs, permeable paving and a flow control chamber.
- 5.145** The surface water run-off has been restricted to as low as possible to accommodate appropriate attenuation structures, as required by **Policy EN18**. The maximum surface water run-off rate for all storm up to and including the 1 in 100-year + 40% climate change storm event of 3.10 l/s. This rate is the equivalent to the 100-year greenfield rate, and between up to 99% betterment of the pre-development surface water run-off rates.
- 5.146** Therefore in conclusion the future occupants and users of the proposed development will be at a low risk of flooding and the proposals continue to comply with the adopted policy requirements with respect to sustainable drainage.

ARBORICULTURE

- 5.147 Policy CR12c** recognises the opportunity to enhance the Oxford Road frontage, including tree planting. The Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy also identifies Oxford Road as an area of the Borough where there is a lack of tree cover and requires any redevelopment to consider this and enhance tree cover on Oxford Road, wherever possible.
- 5.148 Policy EN14** (*Trees, hedges and woodland*) sets out that new development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character

and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.

- 5.149** An **Arboricultural Report** supported the April 2021 submission and was prepared by DPA Arboricultural Consultants. It outlined that a number of individual trees were located on Site and none of them were subject to a Tree Preservation Order.
- 5.150** An updated **Arboricultural Report** has been prepared to respond to the landscaping changes which have resulted from the loss of the podium.
- 5.151** Currently a number of trees are located adjacent to the car parking area to the rear of Eaton Court. These trees are not prominent within the context of the wider landscape as views of them are restricted by the existing surrounding buildings. These trees are to be removed and replaced as part of the development proposals.
- 5.152** A further six trees are situated along the Eaton Place frontage of the Site, which are also not prominent within the wider landscape as views of them are restricted by the existing surrounding buildings. These trees are to be removed and replaced.
- 5.153** A lime tree is located on the corner of the Site along Eaton Place and has recently been heavily topped and/or pollarded. This tree is to be retained as part of the development proposals and protected in accordance with the requirements of BS 5837:2012 (*Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*) both during and post development works.
- 5.154** In accordance with the aspirations of **Policy CR12c** and **Policy EN14**, the proposed development continues to seek to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough and to use tree planting to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposals seek to remove 3 low-value trees located along Oxford Road and plant 5 replacement trees along this frontage. Two of these trees are to be planted as a feature tree within a raised planter directly adjacent the main residential entrance. The remaining 3 trees are to be large specimen size trees, planted at ground level. Tree cover will therefore be enhanced along Oxford Road.
- 5.155** In total 20 trees will be removed from the Site and a total of 15 replacement trees will be planted, along with numerous large feature size shrubs situated along Eaton Place. The loss of existing trees will therefore be satisfactorily mitigated by the proposed new and replacement tree planting along the Eaton Place and Oxford Road frontages and within the landscaped courtyard.

FIRE SAFETY

- 5.156** A **Fire Safety Strategy** has been prepared by Sweco and is submitted with this application. It demonstrates that the proposed development complies with the Building Regulations 2010, specifically in relation to:
- Means of escape and warning;
 - Internal fire spread (linings);

- Internal fire spread (structure);
- External fire spread; and
- Access and facilities for fire fighting.

5.157 The report also demonstrates that the three buildings comprising the proposed development comply with the recommendations of Draft BS 9991:2021.

CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

5.158 **Policy CC5** (*Waste minimisation and storage*) sets out that development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

5.159 A **Construction Management Plan** was submitted with the April 2021 application and prepared by RPM. It set out details of the works required to carry out the demolition, enabling and construction activities, whilst outlining their anticipated timescales and identifying the environmental impact of the works and proposals, and how these were to be mitigated.

5.160 An updated **Construction Environmental Management Plan** has been prepared by Osborne to support this revised submission. It confirms how Osborne intends to manage the construction of the new development on site, focusing primarily on the following aspects:

- Liaison with neighbours;
- Minimisation of noise, dust and vibration;
- Engaging the local community;
- Managing logistics of deliveries and workforce to and from the construction site; and
- Controlling air pollution.

5.161 As required by **Policy CC5**, the CEMP continues to demonstrate how sustainable construction and waste management methods will be adopted, through the reuse and recycling of materials and construction waste.

6.0 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 6.1** Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) local planning authorities have the power to enter into planning obligations with any person interested in their land for the purpose of restricting or regulating the development or use of the land. In accordance with Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), a planning obligation must be:
- a) necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the proposed development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development.
- 6.2** **Paragraph 55** of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.
- 6.3** **Paragraph 56** states that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.
- 6.4** Reading's Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (April 2015) sets out the Council's approach towards seeking planning obligations. It is anticipated that obligations arising out of this Application may include the following Heads of Terms:
- affordable housing;
 - employment, skills and training (construction & operation);
 - education;
 - carbon offset payment;
 - air quality monitoring;
 - off-site public realm improvements including to local play space;
 - high street heritage action zone;
 - highways improvements secured under Section 278; and
 - administration charges and legal costs.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

- 6.5** In Reading, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted on 1 April 2015. CIL is charged at the following (relevant) rates:
- Residential (Boroughwide) - £167.06 per sq.m. (including indexation)

- 6.6** The proposed development seeks the creation of 10,403 sq.m. of residential development (GIA), which will be liable for CIL.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1** To conclude, this **Updated Planning Statement** has been prepared to provide further details and a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development against the adopted Development Plan.
- 7.2** It should be read in addition to the previous Planning Statements prepared and submitted to Reading Borough Council (“RBC”) in both April 2021 and March 2022 (application ref. 210639). It should also be read alongside the technical submission documents listed in **Section 2.0** of this Statement.
- 7.3** The proposed development will comprise 120 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and comprise three buildings which will rise between ground plus four to ground plus six storeys. A total of 14 car parking spaces will be provided alongside extensive landscaping improvements.
- 7.4** The proposed development continues to be consistent with the aim to optimise under-used land for housing to meet Reading’s significant housing need and accords with the NPPF, Opportunity Area designation and the adopted site allocation.
- 1.5** The proposed amendments to the submitted scheme include:
- Omission of the podium and undercroft car parking;
 - Re-arrangement of central landscaped courtyard;
 - Reduction in massing of the central building (Block 3);
 - Reduction in height and massing of the proposals on the west elevation (Block 1);
 - Repositioning of first floor windows on Block 2 (in respect of the Royal Meteorological Society Building (104 Oxford Road));
 - Further activation of the Eaton Place ground floor frontage;
 - Reduction and rearrangement of car parking;
 - Amended footprint of Block 3 to maximise separation distances;
 - Minor alteration to unit mix; and
 - Rearrangement of ground floor and omission of retail units.
- 7.6** It is demonstrated through these changes that the application proposals continue to be built upon the highest design standards, ensuring a high quality environment for residents, visitors and neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.7** A coordinated approach to massing, residential amenity and landscaping has been achieved, and the proposals continue to ensure the redevelopment of the other sites which make up the West Side Major Opportunity Area will be able to come forward and will not be prejudiced by development already taking place on our Site.

7.8 The proposed development provides tangible environmental benefits including new tree planting and the adoption of energy saving techniques that have the potential to result in significant carbon savings. The scheme revisions introduce even more soft landscaping to the Site, further greening this existing brownfield site.

PLANNING BALANCE

7.9 Therefore as set out in this **Updated Planning Statement**, through the planning benefits of the scheme (identified below), we consider that there are significant material considerations that weigh heavily in favour of planning permission being granted.

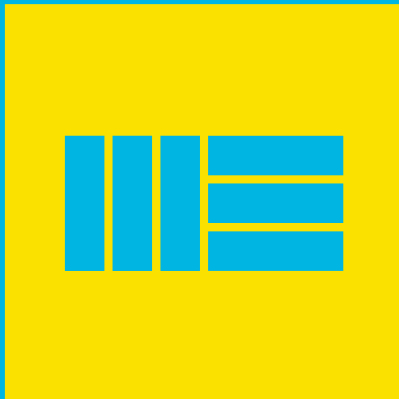
- it will regenerate and optimise a brownfield under-utilised site close to a well-established public transport network.
- it will remove an existing building which is considered detrimental to the neighbouring conservation area and setting of the nearby listed buildings;
- it will deliver a significant number of new homes for Reading Borough Council, including family-sized dwellings;
- it responds directly to the aspirations of the West Side Major Opportunity Area and Local Plan site allocation **CR12c**;
- it will deliver ground floor uses which provide active frontages and natural surveillance along Oxford Road and Eaton Place;
- it will deliver a range of residential unit sizes, all of which will have external private amenity space and access to shared, landscaped areas;
- it will remove the existing, unsightly car parking along Oxford Road, and replace it with a new area of public realm, incorporating new tree planting and landscaping;
- it will make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the nearby Castle Hill / Russell Street Conservation Area and preserve and enhance the setting of the adjacent Mannson House (Grade II listed);
- it will promote greener modes of travel and deter car dependency, through enhanced permeability, pedestrian links and opportunities for cycle parking; and
- it will deliver tangible environmental gains including new tree planting, reduced surface water run-off, and carbon reduction measures.

7.10 In view of the above, we consider that the proposal satisfies the key policy considerations identified in this Statement and accords with **Paragraph 11** of the NPPF which requires the approval of development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Furthermore, the material considerations identified above clearly weigh strongly in favour of planning permission being granted.

7.11 In conclusion, therefore, we commend this application to Reading Borough Council.

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WE CONSIDER OUR CREDENTIALS, HOW WE HAVE STRUCTURED OUR BID AND OUR PROPOSED CHARGING RATES TO BE COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE INFORMATION.
WE REQUEST THAT THESE BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL