

08 August 2022

Planning Department
Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Reading Borough Council Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Dear Sirs

Application 2017766/FUL-40 Silver Street-Revised Proposals

On behalf of my clients, Silver Street Developments Limited, please find attached revised plans in respect of this application for private rental (PRS) housing at 40 Silver Street. The revisions have followed a post submission dialogue with Alison Amoah and with other consultee officers and include updated technical supporting documentation.

Amended Plans

The amended plans as now submitted no longer show the previously suggested 2 storey rear block of terraced homes. They also remove the previously suggested basement parking. The plans now submitted replace all the originally submitted plans. They are now all by Studio NQ and referenced job no. 1759;

PL_000 rev C Site Location Plan
PL_001 rev D Site Plan Proposed
PL_101 rev J Ground Floor Plan
PL_102 rev F First Floor Plan
PL_103 rev G Second Floor Plan
PL_104 rev H Third Floor Plan
PL_105 rev F Roof Plan
PL_110 rev F Silver Street (East) Elevation
PL_111 rev F Courtyard (West) Elevation
PL_113 rev D North and South Elevations
PL_115 rev B Sections
PL_200 rev A Façade Details Elevation

Description of Development

The description of the reduced proposal is amended to;

Erection of 4 storey building to provide 28 private rental homes with associated communal facilities, surface parking, access and landscaping works

Summary of Amendments

The four storey frontage building proposed on Silver Street is retained, set back slightly further from the highway to allow additional tree planting. The internal arrangement of this block has been altered to allow a revised mix of apartment types and sizes. Amendments have been made to reduce the bulk of upper levels at the rear corner near the adjacent Platinum Apartments.

11 parking spaces are now proposed (where the terraced homes had been intended) with a shared amenity courtyard for the apartments in the same location as first submitted, amended in detail as a consequence of the principal amendments.

Revised Supporting Documentation

Updated versions of key supporting documents are now submitted in support of the revised scheme;

- The Design and Access Statement has been updated to describe the revised proposals
- The Planning Statement has been updated, including additional justification in respect of compliance with housing policies notably in respect of density/mix.
- The Transport Statement has been updated, including additional explanation justifying that the proportion of car parking provision will be appropriate to this highly sustainable (town centre edge) location.
- An updated financial viability assessment is provided (in commercial confidence), demonstrating that the viability of developing this brownfield 'windfall' housing site is challenging. A supplemental calculation shows that if the proposal were to adopt a higher proportion of larger apartments it would be less viable and a supplemental letter from local agents confirms that the proposed mix (mostly 1 and 2 bed rental apartments of varying sizes) reflects current market rental demand in the town centre vicinity.
- A supplemental assessment letter from the Daylight/ Sunlight assessor confirms that the revised proposal will have similar effects on neighbouring property compared with the submitted proposals (which were already compliant with good practice guidance) and with a previously approved scheme for the site.

Response to Case Officer Notes (4 April 2022)

The revised documentation now provided includes additional information in response to queries in response to initial sketches of potential amended plans as follows;

Mix and Density-Additional explanation in respect of the justification in respect of policy H2 is now provided by the updated Planning Statement. Although not within the Town Centre as defined by the Local Plan, the site context in terms of surrounding buildings/uses and in terms of high levels of accessibility by sustainable means are more typical of town centre than borough-wide

circumstances and the proposals are in housing market terms focused on meeting needs for private rental homes relating to town centre economic activity.

Scale/ Mass of Building-Additional dimensions on drawings and marking of the footprint of a previously approved scheme (ref 150885) help comparison. An update letter from the daylight/sunlight assessor confirms that the amendments being made to the front block (which would now be set slightly further away from Platinum Apartments and slightly further from the highway with minor adjustments to reduce upper level bulk) are not considered likely to alter their conclusion (that the proposals should be regarded as acceptable in terms of sunlight and daylight effects on Platinum Apartments and 69 Upper Crown Street) in respect of the plans originally submitted.

Parking-The updated Transport Statement explains as requested the justification for the proposed level of provision as relevant to a site with high levels of sustainable access. Parking spaces would be assigned (rented) to particular tenants and it is understood and accepted that tenants would have no entitlement to on-street parking permits.

Trees-New trees are proposed within the site boundary in the amenity courtyard, and on the site boundary edges with the setting back of the building now allowing some within the frontage forecourt. The suggestion of 'boulevard' trees within the highway as part of an enhancement of the street frontage of the site continues to be suggested by the applicants in addition as previously.

Amenity/ landscaping-A note has now been added to the third floor plan confirming the intention that the flat roof areas at this level will not be accessible to residents and the elevation now confirms that the windows at this level will have solid panels beneath them. Landscape detailing and low boundary treatments ensure that there is 'defensible space' outside the windows of all ground floor apartments providing separation from vehicular and communal access. A distinct change of surfacing on entering the site indicates arrival into the 'home zone' block paved area where vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access is shared.

Ecology-new trees as above plus (within limitations of intensive use) planting for communal amenity area will enhance habitat. Bird and Bat Boxes are intended (and can be confirmed by planning condition).

Bins and Cycle Stores- the bin store access has been moved to the West elevation allowing a shorter route for residents to it and an improved outlook from the side of Platinum Apartments. Access to the cycle store will be directly from the (shared surface) access way alongside the building. The internal door between cycle store and plant room is for plant maintenance access purposes only not intended for use by residents.

S106 Obligations-An updated financial viability assessment (prepared by S106 Affordable Housing) is now provided. This demonstrates that the viability context for the development is challenging such as to justify a reduction in affordable housing provision consistent with Policy H3/H4 and the Affordable Housing SPD. The applicants are willing to offer construction skills

training in accordance with Policy CC9 and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD and in respect of Zero Carbon (Policy H5) an updated Energy Strategy and related calculation of a potential carbon offset payment are provided to assist reaching a joint conclusion on this aspect of S106 obligation requirements.

Conclusion

We trust the planning authority will, on detailed review, agree that the proposed Private Rental Housing scheme for 40 Silver Street as now revised will offer an appropriate provision of new homes and will enhance its locality. We look forward to the joint resolution of a suitable S106 legal agreement after assessment of the information now provided.

Please do not hesitate to ask if you require any additional information in order to consider this amended scheme.

Yours sincerely

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