

Fig.1 – Proposed street illustration, extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-13

Project:
Residential Development

Site Address:
816 Oxford Road
Reading
RG30 1EL

Client:
John Filbee Properties Ltd

Document Title:
Design and Access Statement

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0.1 Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement is written as a supporting document for a planning application for a proposed residential development at 816 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1EL.
The proposed development involves the demolition of the existing light industrial buildings on the site and the erection of two new residential buildings up to 6 storeys in height to provide 24 new residential dwellings. Provision of associated private and communal landscaped amenity areas, parking spaces, refuse and cycle storage facilities.

The objective of this scheme is to deliver high quality living accommodation on this underused but well located, brownfield site. The development will provide an overall improvement to the immediate area, in terms of appearance, security and community, as well as contributing to the local authority's housing targets.

0.2 The Project Team

John Filbee Properties Ltd as landowner of 816 Oxford Road has assembled the following consultant team to bring forward the development of a high quality residential scheme design to a detailed planning application stage.

Weston & Co Architects: Architect and Lead Consultant

Milestone Transport Planning: Transport Consultant

Energist UK: Energy and Carbon Consultant

Stuart Michael Associates: Surface Water Drainage Consultant

SJ Stephens Associates: Arboricultural Consultant

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy: Ecology Consultant

Accon UK: Environmental Consultant

Ground and Water: Geotechnical Consultant

S106 Management: Financial Viability Consultant

0.3 Supporting Documents

This statement should be read in conjunction with the completed application and CIL questions forms along with the following documents.

Weston & Co Architects drawings:
19014-PL-1 Location & Proposed Block / Roof Plan
19014-PL-2 Existing Site Plan
19014-PL-3 Proposed Site Plan
19014-PL-4 Block A: Proposed Floor Plans (1of2)
19014-PL-5 Block A: Proposed Floor Plans (2of2)
19014-PL-6 Block B: Proposed Floor Plans
19014-PL-7 Block A: Proposed Elevations (1of2)
19014-PL-8 Block A: Proposed Elevations (2of2)
19014-PL-9 Block B: Proposed Elevations
19014-PL-10 Proposed Site Section & Street Elevation
19014-PL-11 Block B Bin & Cycle Store Plan & Elevations
19014-PL-12 Proposed Bay Elevations & Materials
19014-PL-13 Proposed Aerial View Illustration
19014-PL-14 Proposed Street View 1 Illustration
19014-PL-15 Proposed Street View 2 Illustration
19014-PL-16 Proposed Courtyard View 3 Illustration

Milestone Transport Planning:
Transport Statement Report ref: 21-148

Energist UK:
816 Oxford Road Energy Strategy Report

Stuart Michael Associates:
Surface Water Drainage Strategy & Statement ref: 6799

SJ Stephens Associates:
Arboricultural Impact Assessment ref: 1791

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy:
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ref: R2928/a

Accon UK:
Air Quality Assessment ref: A4337/AQ/01
Noise Impact Assessment ref: A4337/N/01
Daylight and Sunlight Assessment ref: A4337/DS/01

Ground and Water:
Phase 1 Desk Study Report ref: GWPR4463/DS/November 2021
Phase 2 Site Investigation Report ref: GWPR4463/DS/December 2021

S106 Management:
Financial Viability Appraisal Report dated 14/01/2022
Financial Viability Appraisal Report Schedule 1

1.1 The Vision

The proposed scheme seeks to create a new place for sustainable living and growth in Reading to the benefit of both the new occupants but also the existing community. It will deliver a high quality residential-led development, comprising a range of home types as well as new green landscape that also integrates the parking needs of the site.

The key objectives of the scheme are as follows:

1. Delivery of high-quality homes which will assist in promoting healthy lifestyles, well-being and enjoyment for all residents.

2. Placemaking, to create a sense of place where people and families enjoy living with a clear sense of identity.

3. Encourage site permeability and community integration with the wider neighbourhood.

4. Ensure the development meets the high standards of environmental sustainability in response to the climate emergency that Reading Borough Council have declared.

5. Promote innovative and sustainable approaches to travel which alongside public transport provide healthy alternatives to reliance on the car.

6. Respect and respond to the local context and integrate the design with local culture and history.

7. Deliver an external landscape habitat that supports and expands biodiversity and ecology.

1.2 Sustainability Objectives

The project team is committed to playing their part in the delivery of a sustainable development to assist with the challenge of meeting Reading Borough Council's carbon reduction targets and declaration of a climate emergency. These targets set out by RBC's Local Plan and Approved Document L have been at the core of the design process for this scheme.

For further details, please refer to the separate Energy and Carbon Strategy Statement, by Energist UK, submitted as part of this application.

Sustainability has been considered across all aspects of the planning and design of this scheme. Key considerations are summarised below.

Economic Drivers:

- Delivering well-connected communities: The scheme aims to create homes and communities which leverage the excellent transport connectivity of the site and promote sustainable travel and living choices.

- Developing local economies: Drive economic development through job creation, apprenticeships, construction innovation, responsible procurement, and the promotion of small and medium construction enterprise.

Social Drivers:

- Building inclusive communities: This scheme will create a place that is accessible and inclusive to all, with well-designed, quality homes.

- Creating social value: Make a positive impact on the local community through a process of context-driven design.

- Supporting health and wellbeing: Promote the mental and physical health and well-being of the residents and the community.

Environmental Drivers:

- Optimising building performance: Optimise building performance with respect to energy, carbon, water and waste.

- Integrating nature: Increase biodiversity on site through the integration of appropriate green landscaping features to the groundscape as well as roofscape.

- Embedding the principle of healthy streets, with a focus on creating high-quality public realm and promoting sustainable travel.

1.3 Summary of Provisions

- 24no. dwellings proposed
- 20no. car parking spaces proposed
- 34no. secure and sheltered cycle spaces proposed
- 210.4 sq.m of shared green external amenity space proposed
- 507.6 sq.m of private external amenity space proposed



Fig.2 – Aerial view of proposed residential development, extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-13

1.4 Consultation

The design team has consulted and engaged with the local authority, stakeholders and the local community throughout the design process. Feedback has helped to inform and shape the proposed scheme that is being submitted for approval.

The timeline below shows this process of engagement with the different stakeholder groups.

Reading Borough Council

- Pre-application meeting held on 17/06/2021, written feedback provided on 18/06/2021
- Design Review Panel meeting held on 17/06/2021, written feedback provided on 25/06/2021

Community

On 04/12/2021, an information pack outlining the emerging proposals was posted to the immediate neighbouring properties around the site inviting comments and input into the developing design. The following were the specific addresses included in this consultation:

- 14no. houses along Stone Street (nos. 9-35)
- 26no. flats at Winslet Place (nos. 55-60 & nos. 61-80)
- 67no. flats at Branagh Court (nos 28-94)
- Portakabin site at 814 Oxford Road
- Units 1, 2 & 3, 816 Oxford Road (behind Portakabin site)

Six email responses were received during the consultation period between the 4th-17th December 2021. There were a number of key areas of support, including support for the redevelopment of the site for residential use and that proposals would enhance the local area.

There were also a few concerns, including the potential height of Block A with respect to privacy and sunlight received by properties on Stone Street.

The design team considered the views gathered through this exercise, incorporating this feedback into the evolving proposals for the development. The proposals have been developed to be as sensitive as possible to respect the privacy and daylight of the existing neighbours which was the main comment arising from one property on Stone Street. This is evidenced in the Daylight and Sunlight Assessment that forms part of the application.



Fig.3 – Thumbnail view of illustrated neighbour consultation letter, refer to Appendix for full size copy

2.1 Site Location Plan

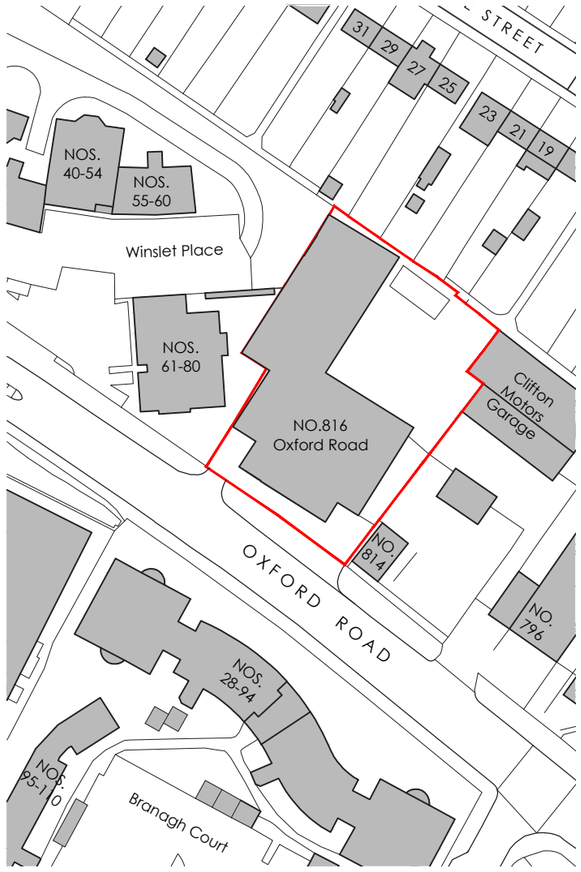


Fig.4 – Site Location Plan, extract from drawing no.19014-PL-1

2.2 The Site - Existing Condition

The application site is located along Oxford Road, to the south-east of Norcot Roundabout junction.

The site is situated on the northern side of the road and has a street frontage of approximately 35metres in length facing directly over Oxford Road. The site is bounded to the west by a residential development, and to the east by light industrial units and associated parking. To the north, the site is bounded by the long rear gardens of houses located along Stone Street.

There exists a collection of 1-2 storey light industrial buildings on the site which have been vacant for some time. The buildings themselves are of no architectural merit and are in various states of decay.



Fig.5 – Aerial view from the south

1. Application Site (bounded by red line)
2. Oxford Road
3. Stone Street
4. Nearby allocated site WR3K
5. Winslet Place Flats
6. Branagh Court Flats



Fig.6 - Aerial view from the east

2.3 Site Photographs

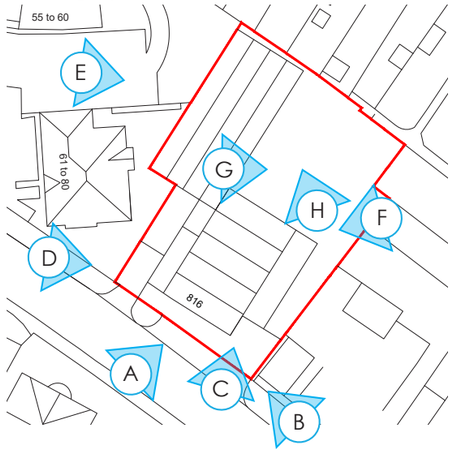


Fig.7 Existing Site Photographs and Key Plan

















2.4 Planning Policy Context

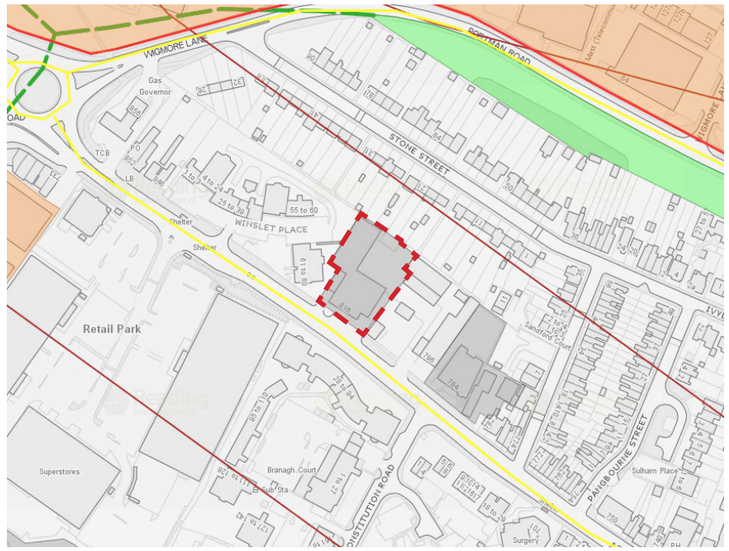


Fig.8 Extract from Reading Borough Council Local Plan Proposals Map

The site is an Allocated Site reference WR3L within the Reading Borough Council Local Plan, as noted below:

Site WR3L

816 OXFORD ROAD Development for residential.

Development should:

- Address air quality impacts on residential use;
- Address noise impacts on residential use;
- Address any contamination on site; and
- Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.

Site size: 0.23 ha 13-20 dwellings

Other policies shown on the policy map above are:

Air Quality Management Area* *(see policy EN15)*

Classified Highway Network* *(see policy TR3)*

2.5 Site History

At the start of the 20th century, this stretch of Oxford Road had little development and acted only as a transport thoroughfare towards Oxford.

By 1930, Stone Street to the north of the site had been established as a residential street, whilst Oxford Road had developed a mix of uses, including Berkshire Printing Co. print works, a school and a cinema.

The application site itself has always had a collection of smaller buildings on the site, rather than some of the larger industrial units that had been constructed nearby.

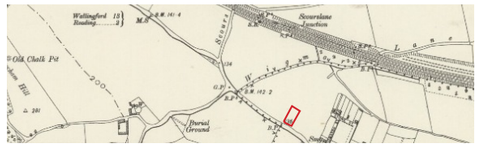


Fig. 9: Historic Ordnance Survey Map 1900

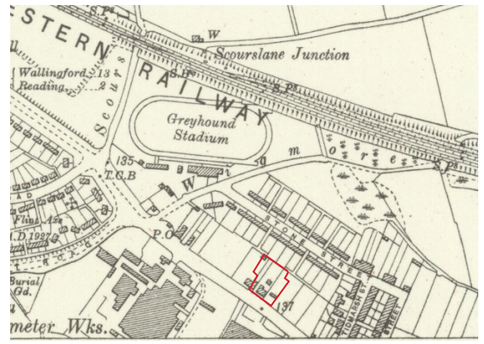


Fig.10: Historic Ordnance Survey Map 1931

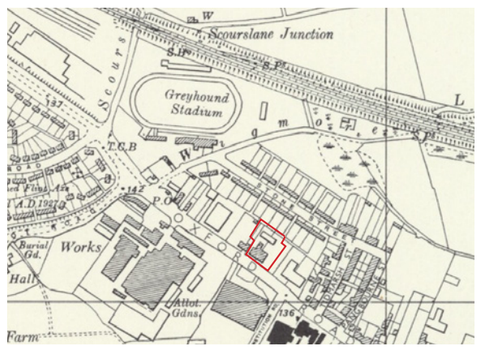


Fig. 11: Historic Ordnance Survey Map 1961

2.6 Significant Neighbouring Development

Around the turn of the 21st century there have been two major residential developments adjacent to the application site, beginning a trend towards residential use replacing the previous mix of other uses. In this case, the redevelopment of the former printing works and the former cinema.

Winslet Place, 820 - 836 Oxford Road

79 Dwellings with associated access and parking.

Application No: 00/00381/FUL Granted Approval: 2nd January 2001 Varying between 3 and 5 storeys plus pitched roofs





Fig 12. Approved Oxford Road Elevation and recent site photographs

Branagh Court, 707 Oxford Road

165 Dwellings with associated car parking Application No: 02/00425/FUL Granted Approval: 18th October 2002 Varying between 3 and 5 storeys plus pitched roofs







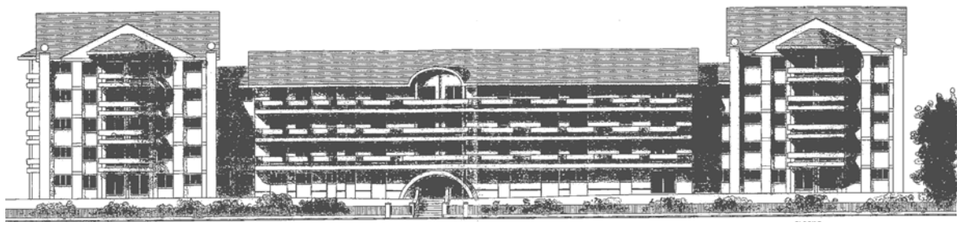


Fig 13. Approved Oxford Road Elevation and recent site photographs

2.7 Existing Uses

The allocation of the application site in the Local Plan for residential development reflects the general trend towards residential use along this stretch of Oxford Road.

A second site further east along Oxford Road has also been allocated for residential development at 784-794 Oxford Road.

This will leave only a small stretch of non-residential use on the northern side of Oxford Road between the two allocated sites. Part of the design strategy for the application site will be the consideration of the adjacent site to ensure that the proposals do not inhibit any future development opportunity.

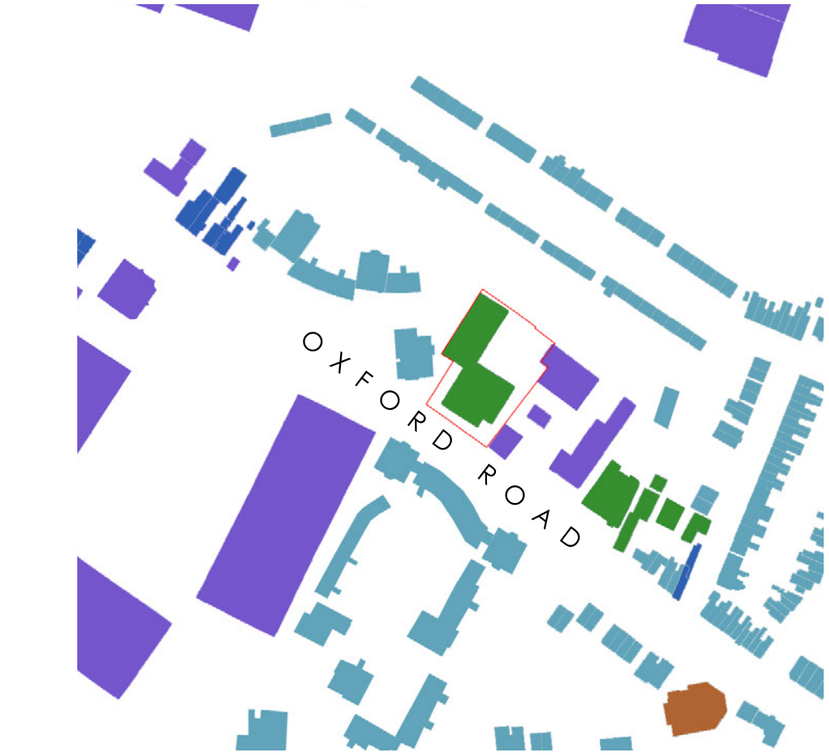


Fig 14. Existing Uses Diagram

2.8 Existing Building Heights

The wider context in this area of Oxford Road is made up of predominantly 2 storey housing, in general due to the large quantity of terraced housing within the area.

However, the relatively recent developments of Branagh Court and Winslet Place adjacent to the application site have set a new height datum along this section of Oxford Road (rising to 5 storeys plus a roof storey). A row of 2 storey terraces is located to the north on Stone Street, however these houses are some 23 metres from the application site boundary.

This suggests that the application site can contribute to the emerging taller scale along the Oxford Road, while also respecting and responding to the lower rise context to the north.



Fig 15. Existing Building Heights Diagram

2.9 Transport



Fig 16. Reading Borough Council Zonal Scheme Map Extract, site highlighted by red circle

The application site is located within RBC's Transport Zone 3 'Secondary Core Area'.

The site however is located directly on one of the town's high frequency bus routes and therefore performs better in terms of public transport accessibility than its location in Zone 3 would suggest.

Oxford Road is a main transport corridor in and out of central Reading. The nearest bus stop is less than 100 metres along Oxford Road, served by bus routes 16 and 17, which together, provide a good quality, reliable, high-frequency public transport service. The number 17 service alone provides buses travelling to and from the town centre every 7 minutes.

Oxford Road itself has wide, safe and accessible footways, which can encourage pedestrian movements to nearby local centres and amenities.

There is also the R5 Cycle Route which runs along Portman Road, just to the north of the site, providing a stretch of traffic-free route to avoid the congestion along Oxford Road from Tilehurst Station to Central Reading.

Reading West Station is located 1 mile to the east of the site, which is on the route between Reading and either Basingstoke or Newbury. Tilehurst Station is located 1 mile to the west, which is on the mainline between Didcot Parkway and London Paddington.

Refer also to the submitted separate Transport Statement for additional detail on existing and proposed transport matters.

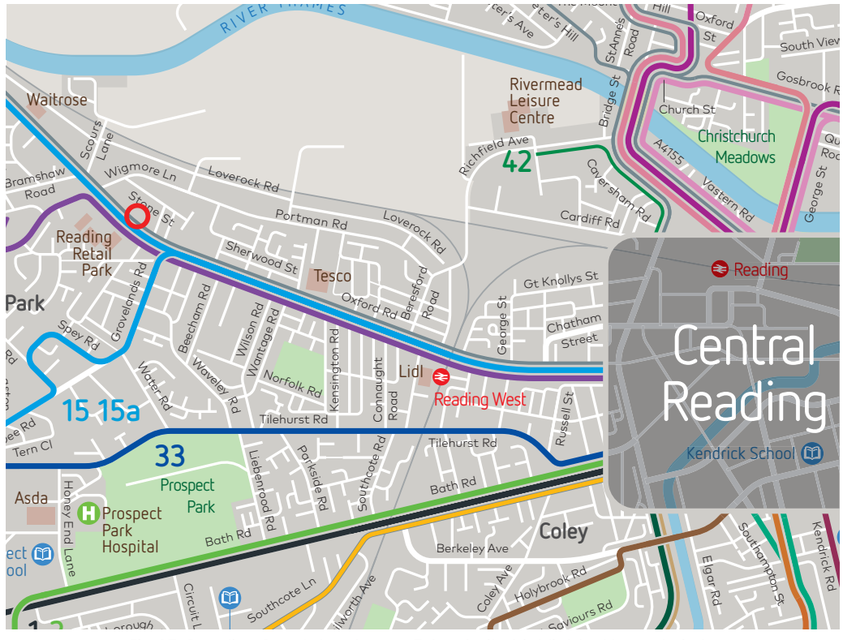


Fig 17. Reading Bus Network Map Extract, site highlighted by red circle

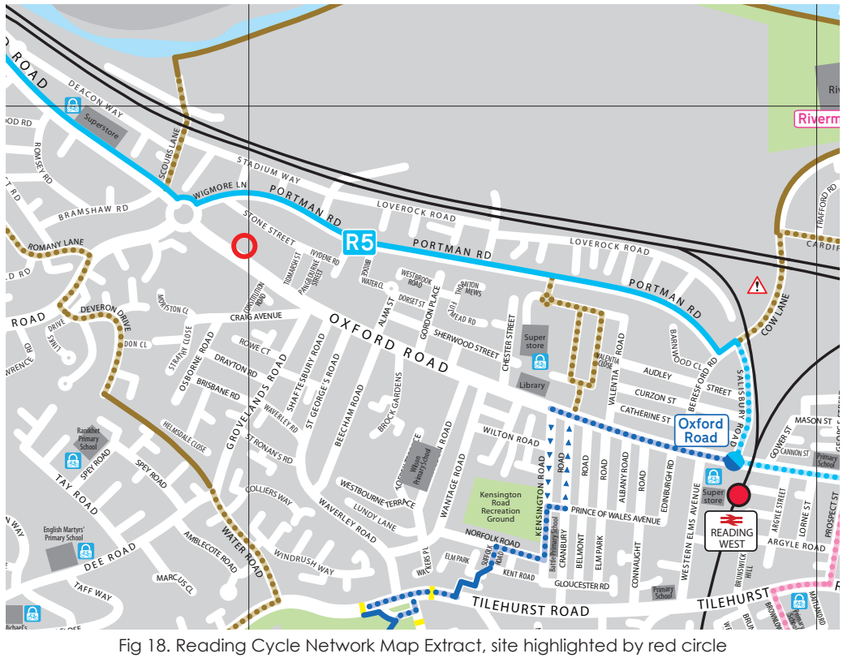


Fig 18. Reading Cycle Network Map Extract, site highlighted by red circle

2.10 Noise and Air Quality

The site's location along Oxford Road, a key transport route in and out of Reading, means that there are associated noise and air quality considerations, as demonstrated by the Road Noise Mapping in Fig 19 below. Refer to the separate and more detailed noise and air quality assessments for more detail.

The main railway route situated to the north of the site is too far away to have any impact on the application site, as shown on Fig 20 below.

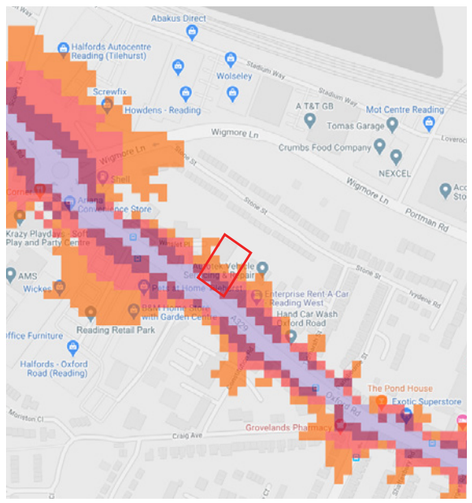


Fig 19. Road Noise Mapping, site bounded by red line

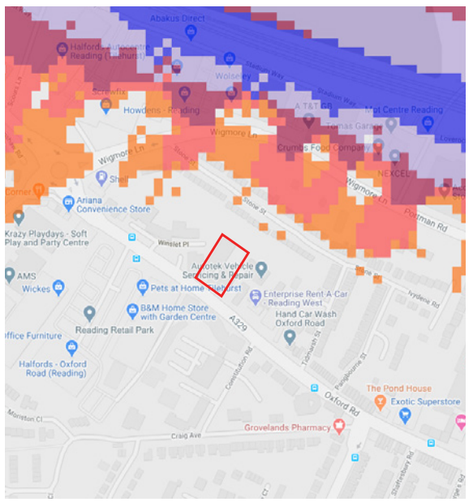


Fig 20. Rail Noise Mapping, site bounded by red line

Design measures have been put in place to mitigate the impact of the external environment and ensure that noise levels inside the new homes remain within recommended levels. The strategies that have been implemented are:

- As many as possible of the homes have been designed to be dual aspect, with 92% of the total achieving this. Wherever possible, layouts were planned to position bedrooms away from the primary noise source of Oxford Road.
- The buildings have been pulled back from the noise source of Oxford Road as much as possible and a soft landscaped garden buffer is created.
- Careful specification of building envelope and glazing.
- A mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system incorporating a noise attenuation system will be implemented.

2.11 Flood Risk

The site is not located within any flood risk areas, as shown in Fig 21 below.

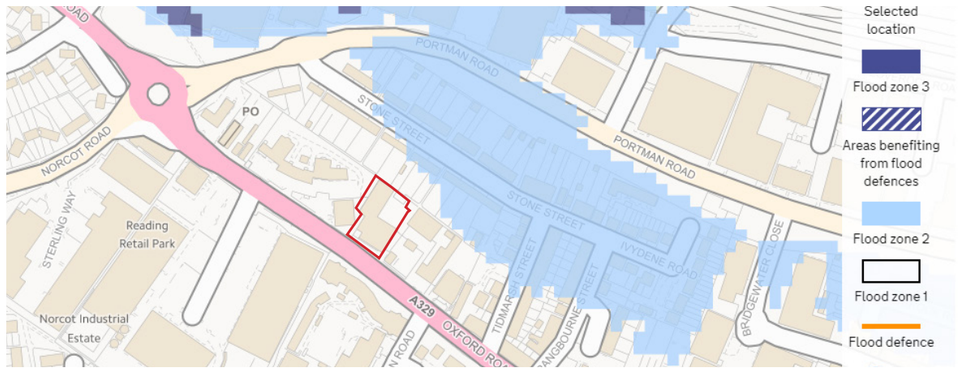


Fig 21. Government Flood Risk Map Extract and Key, site bounded by red line

2.12 Local Green Spaces

The site is well located within easy reach of a variety of public green spaces. The expansive space of McIlroy Park, Lousehill Copse, the Thames Path, Wilson Primary School field, Ivydene Road Play Area, Portman Road Park and Kensington Park are all within a 15 minute walk of the site.



A. Ivydene Road Play Area

B. Thames Path

C. Wilson Primary School Field

D. Kensington Park

E. McIlroy Park

F. Lousehill Copse

Fig 22. Site Proximity to Public Green Spaces

2.13 Character analysis

The character of the area around the site is varied both in terms of use and built form. As outlined in section 2.5 (History), this stretch of Oxford Road historically contained industrial and commercial uses and little to no residential use. This character has been changing in recent years and will continue to do so with residential development replacing some of the former commercial use sites as identified within the Local Plan including this application. This has the potential to improve the public realm quality and add to the rich mix of uses that have always characterised Oxford Road and are more evident to the south east stretch towards the town centre. Here the built character is predominantly continuous terraces of buildings, typically residential but often with stretches with commercial ground floor use beneath residential. The buildings step both in plan, height and also in their roof forms with features such as ornate gable ends, chimneys and dormer windows that add interest and variety to the street scene.

The intention is to build on this existing character and to improve the streetscape quality along Oxford Road.

The overriding character of the areas that lie to the north and south of Oxford Road is of repetitive rows of terraced and semi-detached houses predominantly in red brick but with some variety of detailing features materiality and colour. The proposals will respect and respond to this character as well as that of Oxford Road.



Fig 23. Urban Character Areas Diagram

Fig 24. Urban Character Photographs



A. Large retail units and car parking at Reading Retail Park



B. Stone Street low-rise terraced housing



C. Weak, loose and irregular Oxford Road street frontage around application site



D. Tall, strong and ordered frontage, Branagh Court adjacent to application site



E. Strong Oxford Road street frontage with gables and dormer adding variety of volume and height



F. Brick dormer volumes on Oxford Road street frontage creating form variety and interest



G. Dormer volumes on Oxford Road street frontage creating form variety and interest



H. Strong / Tall brick volumes creates interest & variety adjacent to lower buildings adjacent, Army Reserves Barracks



I. Strong Oxford Road street frontage with ground floor bays



J. Ground floor bays & feature brickwork detailing along Grovelands Road

2.14 Site Constraints

There are a number of constraints on the site that have informed the development of the proposal. The predominant constraints to development proposals are illustrated by the diagram below.

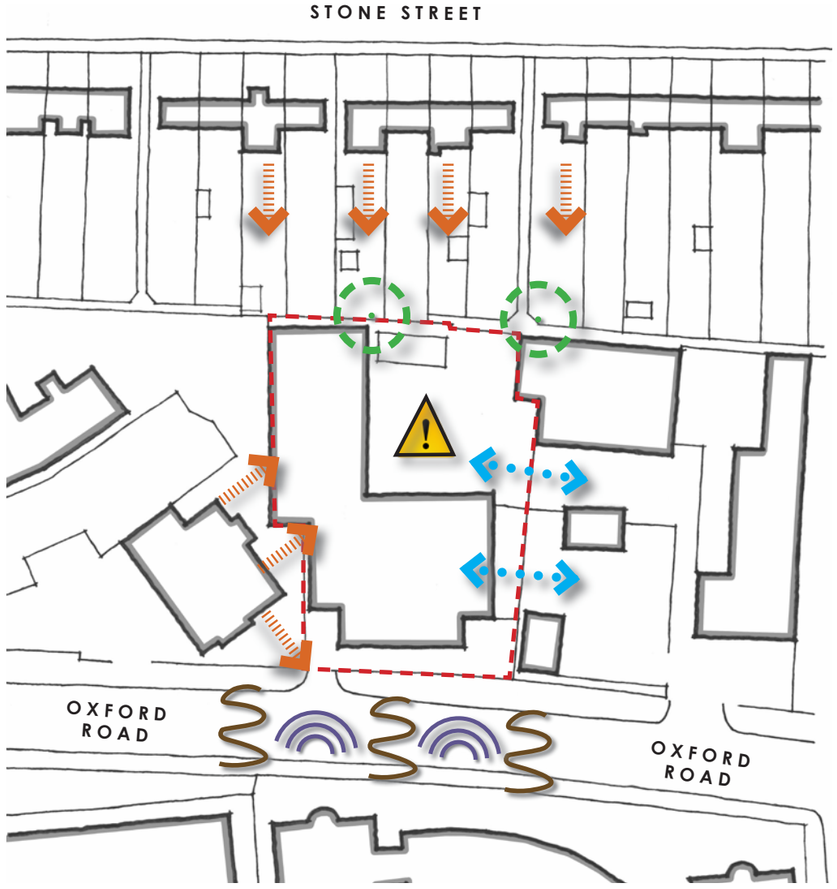


Fig 25. Existing Site Constraints Plan Diagram and key

KEY

- Application site
- Respect proximity of windows on Winslet Place and Stone Street dwellings (privacy/daylight/sunlight)
- Potential site contamination
- Noise considerations from Oxford Road
- Air pollution considerations from Oxford Road
- Respect site boundary condition and proximity of existing and future buildings
- Respect constraints of trees adjacent to site

2.15 Site Opportunities and Layout

The existing residential nature of the area, the mixed commercial uses and other social infrastructure as well as very good transport connections make this site a special opportunity to deliver much needed high quality and sustainable homes in a location that can support them. The opportunities for a residential sche me on this site are summarised on the diagram below.

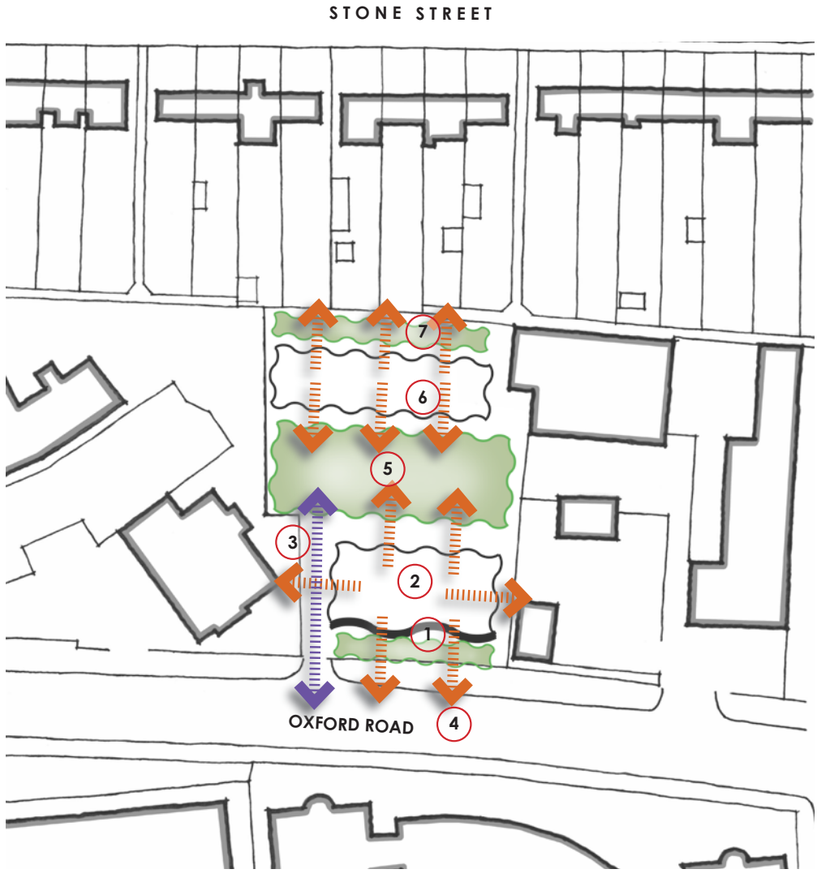


Fig 26. Proposed Site Opportunities Plan Diagram and key

KEY

1. Create an active set-back built edge with front doors facing the street
2. More opportunity for height to Oxford Road edge
3. Vehicular and pedestrian access into the heart of the site
4. Views out
5. Central green amenity courtyard and resident parking
6. Massing with active edge to courtyard. Reduced height rear building in response to smaller scale to north of the site
7. Residents gardens space creates privacy buffer to neighbouring properties

3.1 Early Scheme Development

Prior to the formal pre-application enquiry submission several feasibility study options had been developed and appraised.



Fig 27. Extracts from 4no. early Wfeasibility study option schemes

3.2 Formal Pre-Application Enquiry Submission Summary

The scheme developed from the preferred early design options was submitted to Reading Borough Council for review on the 18th February 2021.

Drawing extracts of the scheme submitted are illustrated in figs 28, 29 and 30 adjacent. Two new residential buildings were proposed on the site with heights of 3 and 6 storeys separated by a landscaped car parking courtyard providing the following accommodation:

- 25 new dwellings
- 25 car parking spaces
- 32 cycle spaces
- Associated bin storage and external amenity space

The submitted scheme was then presented and discussed in a virtual meeting with the Reading Borough Council Case Officer and a Design Review Panel on the 17th June 2021.



Fig 28. Pre-Application Enquiry Proposed Site Plan



Fig 29. Pre-Application Enquiry Proposed Oxford Road Elevation

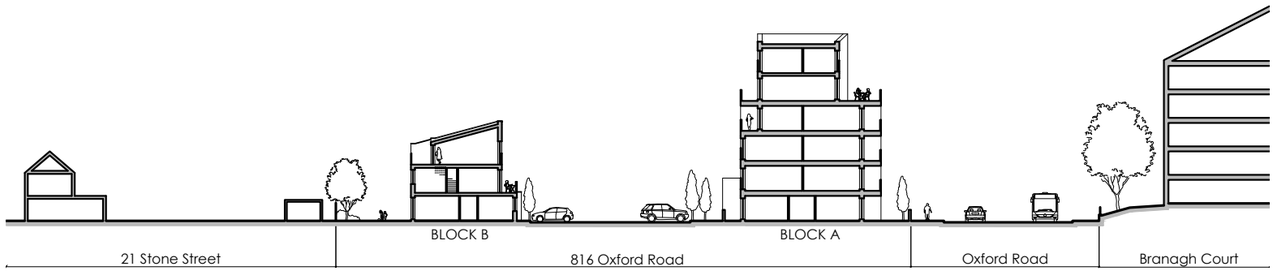


Fig 30. Pre-Application Enquiry Proposed Site Section

3.3 Pre-Application Enquiry Feedback Summary

- The principal of two blocks with heights of 3 and 6 storeys as proposed was considered acceptable.
- Concern for the scale of the flank elevations of block A of 6 storeys with no relief or set backs. Care will need to be taken to ensure these are well articulated.
- More harmony is required between the lower and upper facades of Block A.
- Brick is welcomed as a good contextual choice, though red brick would be preferred over London Stock.
- More activation of the Oxford Road frontage is required. The main communal entrance should have more prominence and it is recommended that ground floor dwellings have individual front doors to the street.
- Recessed balconies – potential daylight and sunlight issues. Prioritise balconies to face courtyard where possible on Block A.
- Car parking provision to be reviewed with regard to RBC standards, or propose evidence-based justification for a lower provision. Provide active charging points.
- Prioritise sustainability and energy matters at earliest opportunity.
- More focus on quality and quantum of landscaping. Insufficient Oxford Road green frontage for its green corridor status. Positions/ sizes of trees to be considered. Review courtyard soft landscaping and amenity space vs car parking.
- SuDs/drainage strategy to be developed at early stage.
- Advise that bin & bike stores would be better located within the buildings they serve rather than separate structures within the courtyard.
- Review arrangement of Block B. Smaller ground floor units with large gardens vs larger family units above with no garden. Suggest that Block B incorporates row of townhouses.

3.4 Design Development Response Summary

- Massing of Block A revised creating a more unified architectural language. Set backs at 4th floor on flank elevations break up their mass and scale. Articulated brickwork and generous windows provide further interest and detail. Red toned brick proposed.
- A prominent communal entrance to Oxford Road has been created. A series of maisonettes are proposed with individual front doors to the street provide increased activation at ground level.
- Projecting balconies proposed with solid balustrades to mitigate sound impact.
- Block B re-arranged as row of townhouses and small 2 storey flatted building.
- A more generous setback from Oxford Road is proposed, wide enough to plant a line of trees within it to contribute to a green corridor.
- Green resident amenity space in the courtyard is to be increased, along with implementation of green roofs where possible.
- Bin and cycle stores will be re-located to within building footprints where practical.

3.5 Site Layout

The design response aims to achieve a simple arrangement of buildings that respond to the context of the site, the constraints as well as opportunities identified. The feedback from consultation with Reading Borough Council planning officers and Design Review Panel meeting as well as resident consultation has shaped these proposals.

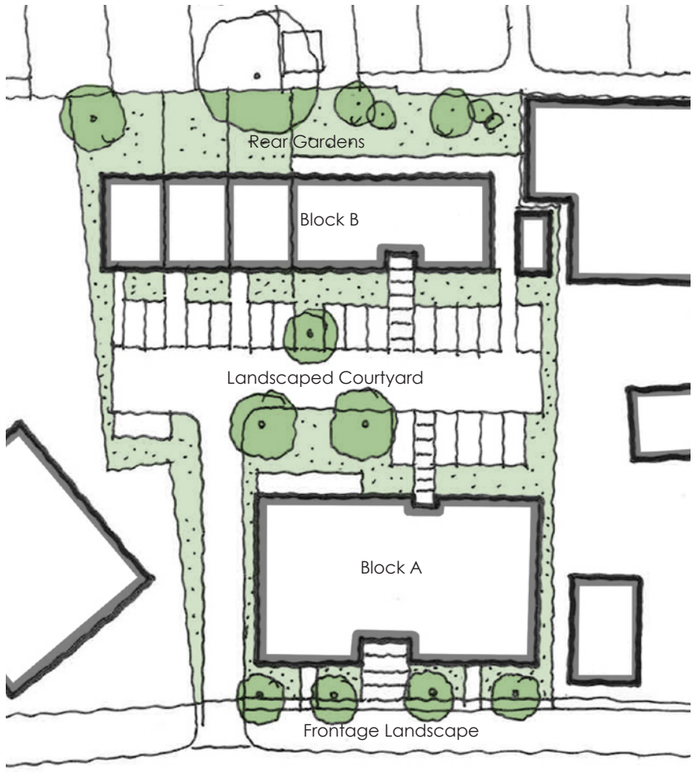


Fig 31. Proposed Site Layout Principle

The site layout is composed of 2 buildings (Blocks A and B) arranged parallel to Oxford Road which frame and enclose a central landscaped courtyard containing communal and private amenity space for residents as well as the resident car parking provision.

Vehicular access into the courtyard is accommodated as well as access for pedestrian and cycle access for residents, maintenance servicing, refuse collection as well as emergency vehicles.

Block A

Block A is the larger of the 2 buildings within the scheme. It is of comparable scale, footprint and height to the existing buildings of Winslet Place and Branagh Court that lie adjacent to the site. The ground level of the building activates the public experience at street level of Oxford Road by positioning the shared primary building entrance as well as front doors of ground level maisonettes on this elevation. A building setback with front gardens and space for mature trees to thrive provides adequate privacy as well as visual green amenity for the residents and public, while boosting biodiversity. Careful attention has been paid to the side and rear elevations at ground level where the living and amenity spaces of the maisonettes and a secondary building entrance front the new courtyard.

Block B

Block B is a narrower and lower building than A that forms the northern edge of the courtyard. It is constituted of a terrace of 3 townhouses and a small building containing 4 flats over 2 levels. These buildings have fronts facing the courtyard, (where their front doors are positioned) and back onto compact but useful private gardens to the rear. This provides a privacy buffer to the gardens and windows of the houses on Stone Street that back onto the site.



Fig 32. Proposed Site Plan Extract from Drawing no. 19014-PL-03

3.6 Proposed massing and distribution of height

Careful attention has been made with the approach to building massing and height to avoid any detrimental daylight or privacy impact to existing residents in neighbouring properties and to the visual impact of the scheme on townscape views.

The focus of the massing and height in the scheme is adjacent to Oxford Road in Block A which is Ground plus 5 storeys tall. This follows the pattern already established where existing buildings are larger in footprint and taller along Oxford Road with height decreasing moving away from it. The orthogonal alignment and proposed height is important in providing a strong edge definition to Oxford Road which is characteristic of the more successful sections of this important access corridor into Reading's town centre as the 2.12 Character Analysis chapter illustrated. The top 2 storeys are set back which establishes a cornice line at 4th floor that responds to the eaves line of the adjacent Winslet Place and Branagh Court buildings.

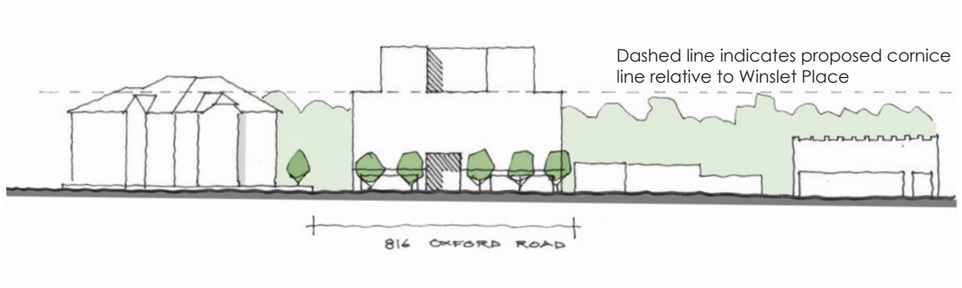


Fig 33. Proposed Street Elevation Principle

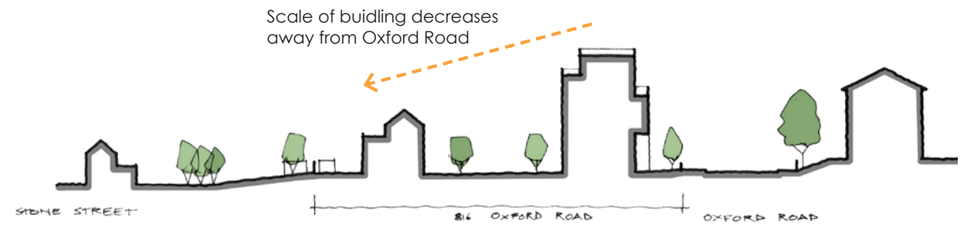


Fig 34. Proposed Site Section Principle

Building height is lower to the rear of the site (north) where Block B is 2 storeys plus a pitched roof storey. This is the equivalent scale of the terraced houses on Stone Street and avoids any adverse visual, daylight or privacy impacts to existing properties.



Fig 35. Ground Level View East Along Oxford Road Extract from Drawing no. 19014-PL-15

3.7 Variety and roofscape

The massing of both buildings is broken down into a finer grain in response to the local architectural character and in order to articulate and add further elegance to the elevational composition. Two different approaches have been taken on each of the blocks, informed by:

- Sensitive response to the neighbouring context
- To enrich the architecture of the scheme
- To enhance the richness of the local townscape

Block A is conceived as a sculpted brick volume. The top two storeys are set back to pare back the massing and open up sight-lines to the sky. The set back is modelled in plan to create finer dormer-like volumes that are inspired by the wide variety of dormer windows evident in existing buildings along Oxford Road. These also serve to create privacy and wind shielding to a series of external amenity spaces that serve the flats accessed from the 4th floor.

The 3no. townhouses of Block B follow the grain and pattern predominant in the area of terraced houses. Their roofs are articulated with pitched gabled roof forms which add character and express each individual house. The lower building element that contains flats over 2 floors has a simple parapet roof form to minimise its scale and impact on the surroundings.



Fig 36. Proposed Massing Aerial View

3.8 Use

The proposals would change the use of the site to residential (Class C3) from its current commercial light industrial use [Class E(g)(iii)].

This is in accordance with the site's allocation for residential development in the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Site WR3L).

The scheme accords with the specific criteria of **Policy EM3** as follows:

(i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?
- The site has very good access to the road network, public transport and cycle network making it an ideal location for sustainable new homes with good access to amenities and employment opportunities.

(ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?
- The smaller 'Unit 2' has been un-occupied since 15th December 2015. The larger 'Unit 1 was occupied by HSS Plant Hire until 8th February 2021 and has been since un-occupied. The site is in a dilapidated condition with potential commercial tenants showing no committed interest in operating from the site.

(iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?
- Refer to Section 106 Management's Financial Viability Appraisal for clarifications.

(iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?
- The site is surrounded by residential use. Depending on the specific occupant of this light industrial site there could be a detrimental impact to the residential area such as noise, additional traffic and air pollution (the site is within an Air Quality Management Area and a Smoke Control Zone).

(v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?
- There is a great need for new homes in Reading to meet the housing target within policy H1. This is an excellent location to provide new homes as the site has very good access to transport and amenities within walking distance. It also expands and reinforces the predominant local residential land-use. This principle is further acknowledged by the site's allocation within the Local Plan for a residential development.

(vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?
- The site's inherent constraints determine that it is problematic to propose attractive, versatile and sustainable commercial accommodation alongside the required residential accommodation. The site's allocation within the Local Plan does not confirm any commercial uses are to be retained on site which further clarifies that a wholly residential use scheme should be acceptable.

3.9 Amount - Density

Based on the proposal for 24no. residential dwellings on a 0.23Ha site, a density of 104.3 dwellings per hectare (dph) is being proposed.

We are aware the Local Plan site allocation suggests 13-20 dwellings, but consider that the site can support a higher density than this with respect to the factors which inform an appropriate density within Policy H2.

Policy H2 outlines indicative densities of above 100dph for Town Centre and 80-120dph for Urban areas. The density proposed lies within both of these parameters.

The scheme accords with the criteria of **Policy H3** as follows:

(i) 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;
- Residential use of this density is appropriate in the area and compliments the existing predominance for housing in this part of Reading. There are complimentary amenities such as shops in close proximity. No sensitive heritage assets or townscape areas lie near the site.

(ii) Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- With respect to Policy CC6, Chapter 2.8 (Transport) and the separate transport assessment outline the detail of the site's excellent access to road, public transport, cycle and pedestrian access. Therefore the potential of the site should be maximised for delivering housing.

(iii) The need to achieve high quality design;
- The proposals developed and outlined in this statement and accompanying drawings are the result of a rigorous design process. This Design and Access Statement sets out the quality of the design within its chapters alongside the submitted drawings.

(iv) The need to maximise the efficiency of land use;
- The great need for additional, well located, sustainable and high quality housing in Reading means that the potential of sites such as this should be maximised. The site is central and well located in Reading with good public transport links so density should be maximised. We consider this has been achieved while still providing buildings in harmony with the local context.

(v) The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- The design has been developed with the avoidance of any negative impact to neighbouring properties' amenity at its core. The principle means of avoidance through site layout and massing are outlined in Chapter 3.1 and 3.2. Also refer to the Daylight and Sunlight, Noise Survey, and Air Quality Reports for specific detail.

3.10 Amount-Mix

Please refer to the below schedule of accommodation for the summary of proposed accommodation amount and mix.

Block A

Floor	Unit No.	1B2P	2B3P	2B4P	3B4P	3B5P	4B6P	4B7P	NSA (sqm)	NSA/Floor (sqm)	GIA (sqm)	GEA (sqm)	Private Amenity (sqm)
Ground										439	323.5	360	
	A-01					1			110	(duplex)			28.5
	A-02					1			110	(duplex)			28.5
	A-03					1			109.5	(duplex)			34.5
	A-04					1			109.5	(duplex)			41
First											335.5	374	
	-												
Second										288.5	347	383.5	
	A-05	1							60.5				6
	A-06	1							52				6
	A-07		1						60.5				6
	A-08	1							50				6
	A-09		1						65.5				6
Third										288.5	347	383.5	
	A-10		1						60.5				6
	A-11	1							52				6
	A-12		1						60.5				6
	A-13	1							50.0				6
	A-14		1						65.5				6
Fourth										299.5	201.5	233.5	
	A-15					1			101.5	(duplex)			33.5
	A-16					1			96.5	(duplex)			34
	A-17					1			101.5	(duplex)			33.5
Fifth											178	206.5	
	-												
Sub-Total	17	5	5	0	0	7	0			1315.5	1732.5	1941	293.5

Block B

Floor	Unit No.	1B2P	2B3P	2B4P	3B4P	3B5P	4B6P	4B7P	NSA (sqm)	NSA/Floor (sqm)	GIA (sqm)	GEA (sqm)	Private Amenity (sqm)
Ground										527	331	373	
	B-01							1	133.5	(house)			77.5
	B-02							1	133.5	(house)			45.5
	B-03							1	133.5	(house)			46
	B-04	**1**							53.5				18
	B-05		**1**						73				24
First										143	334	376	
	B-06		**1**						70				6
	B-07			**1**					73				6
Second											81.5	107.5	
	-												
Sub-Total	7	1	2	1	0	0	0	3		670	746.5	856.5	223

82% (flats)

		1B2P	2B3P	2B4P	3B4P	3B5P	4B6P	4B7P	NSA	GIA	GEA	Private
Total	**24**	**6**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**3**	**1985.5**	**2479**	**2797.5**	**516.5**
Mix		25%	33%		29%		13%					
RBC Target		18.6%	30.5%		36.5%		14.4%					

Fig 37. Proposed Schedule of Accommodation

We are aware that Policy H2, figure 4.6 requires that 50% of the dwellings should be 3+ bedroom family homes. The scheme delivers 42% 3+ bedroom dwellings however there is over provision of 2 bedroom homes by 8% which results in the total of 2+ bedroom dwellings to 50%. Clause 4.4.9 of policy H2 suggests 2 bedroom dwellings are capable of accommodating families. We also note clause 4.4.10 which acknowledges that 'it is not possible to introduce a blanket requirement across the whole Borough….and delivery of a substantial amount of family housing on town centre sites will not be achievable.' Although not located in the town centre location, the site is within a distinctly urban area where similar principles should be considered.

Waste & Recycling Provision

The following external bin storage provisions are accommodated within the scheme:

Block A (Shared Internal Bin Store):

- 3no. 1100 litre bins for mixed recyclables
- 2no. 1100 litre bins for general waste
- 2no. 240 litre bins for food waste

Block B (Terraced Houses)

- 1no. 240 litre bin for mixed recyclables
- 1no. 240 litre bin for general waste
- 1no. caddy for food waste

Block B (Flats Shared External Bin Store)

- 1no. 1100 litre bin for mixed recyclables
- 1no. 1100 litre bin for general waste
- 1no. 120 litre bin for food waste

Cycle Storage Provision

The following secure and sheltered cycle storage provisions are accommodated within the scheme:

- Block A - Shared Internal Cycle Store accommodating 24no. cycles
- Block B Terraced Houses – Individual stores to accommodate 2no. cycles each
- Block B Flats - Shared External Cycle Store accommodating 4no. cycles

Affordable Housing

A Financial Viability Appraisal has been prepared and submitted as a supporting document for the application. The appraisal report demonstrates that it is unviable to make any contribution to affordable housing either on-site or as an off-site contribution.

It is therefore proposed that the scheme would be wholly market housing.

Refer to Section 106 Management's Financial Viability Appraisal report for additional detailed clarification on the financial viability constraints on the proposed development.

Self / Custom Build Housing

The potential for provision of self or custom-build plots within the scheme was explored during the design process. Block A is a multi-storey, multi-dwelling building which would not be appropriate for this approach. Again the 4no. flats within the eastern portion of Block B are not appropriate for similar reasons.

The townhouses of Block B present the only reasonable opportunity to provide any self / custom build units should this be deemed essential.

3.11 Building Layout

3.11.1 Block A

The layouts of the building have been developed to optimise function and efficiency. A compact rectilinear footprint with a centrally positioned lift and stair core makes for practical and well arranged dwelling floor plates. It also keeps circulation distances to each dwelling as direct as possible on each floor level and maximises the number of dual aspect homes achieved (88% dual aspect).

Ground Floor

A generous and prominent communal entrance is located in the centre of the plan fronting Oxford Road. A double height recess provides shelter from the weather and a fully glazed door and fixed panel make for a welcoming and uplifting arrival experience. Resident post boxes will be positioned in the lobby area. An additional resident access door is provided on the courtyard side to allow easy and direct access to external amenity, cycle storage and car parking.

Vertical circulation is positioned to the rear of the plan. Generous stair circulation with windows on each floor enhances the user experience and promotes the use of the stair over the lift for the inherent health benefits this brings to users as well as increased chance of interactions with neighbours.

Family maisonette homes are provided on the ground and first floor level with individual entrance doors as well as kitchens located fronting Oxford Road to provide activation and surveillance to the street. The living rooms of the northern maisonettes front onto the courtyard where they open onto private external terraces and provide active frontage to the courtyard. All bedrooms are located on first floor level to afford greater privacy to these more sensitive rooms.

Plant, cycle and refuse stores are provided to the north east (courtyard facing) portion of the plan with simple and direct access for residents as well as refuse collection.

24 resident cycle parking spaces are provided as Sheffield stands which is in excess of the minimum provision of RBC's parking SPD in zone 3.

Refuse stores are sized to provide the required volume of refuse containers for refuse and recycling.

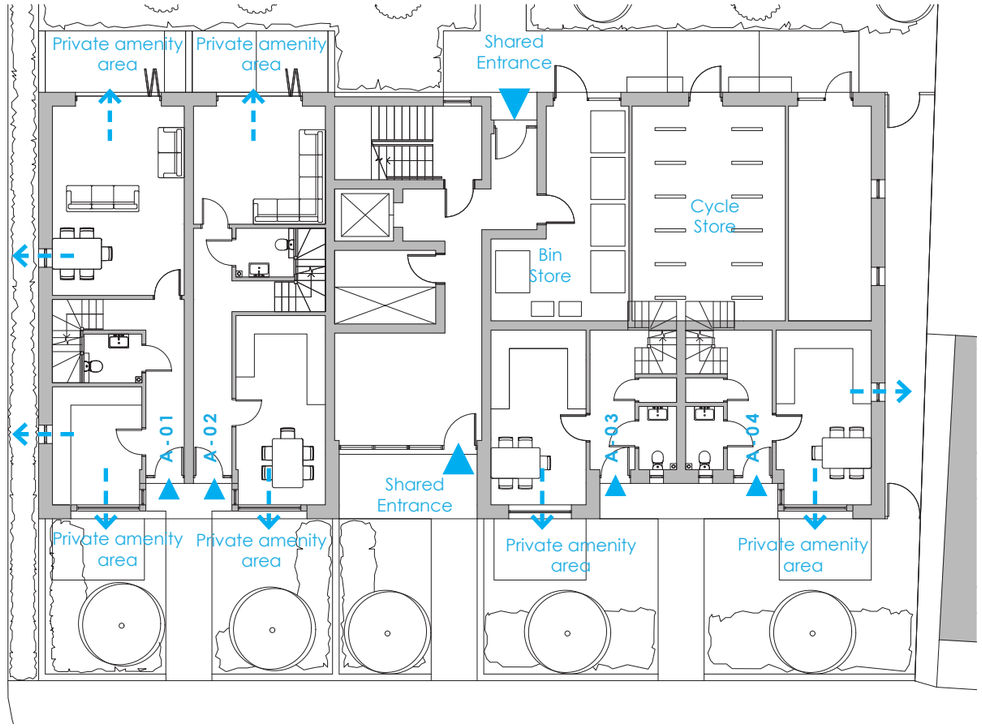


Fig 38. Proposed Block Ground Floor Layout Principle

Upper Floors

The typical upper floor plan is composed of 5 flats arranged around the core which allows dual aspect to be maximised by positioning 4 of the 5 flats on the corners. All flats have generous projecting balconies which allows the best penetration of daylight into dwellings below each.

The top 2 storeys of the building contain 3 duplex units all of which are dual or triple aspect and each enjoying a large external private terrace.

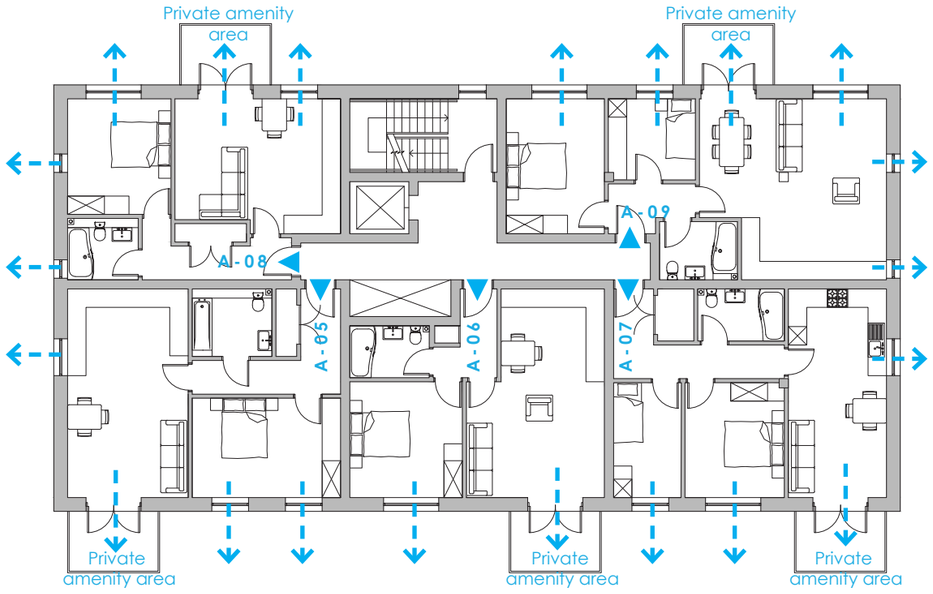


Fig 39. Proposed Block A Second Floor Layout Principle

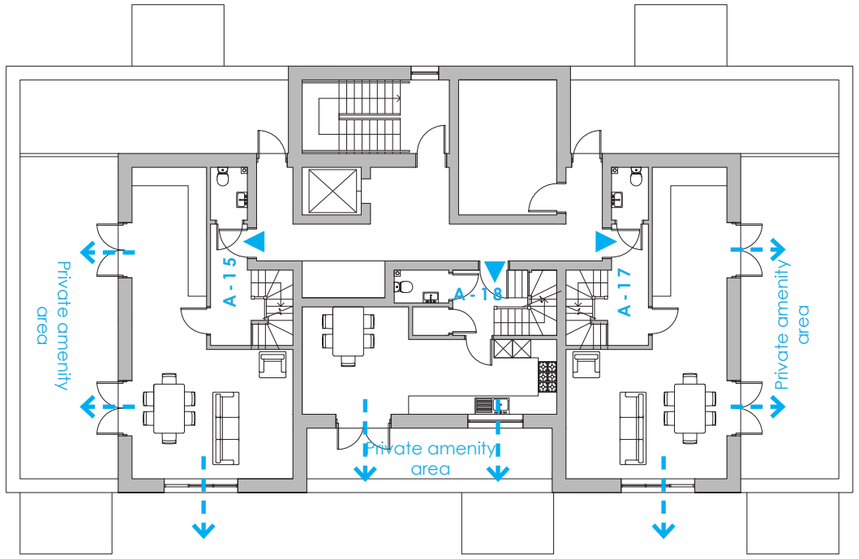


Fig 40. Proposed Block A Fourth Floor Layout Principle

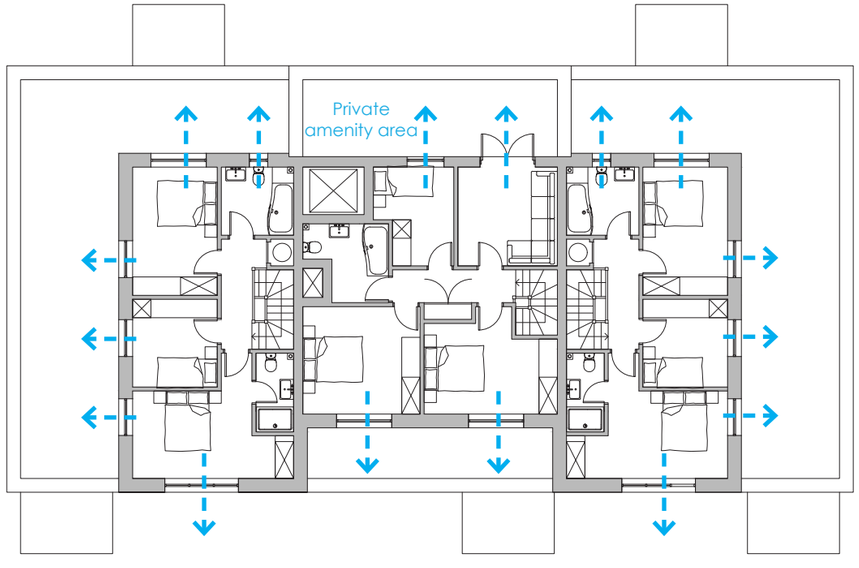


Fig 41. Proposed Block A Fifth Floor Layout Principle

3.11.2 Block B

Block B is comprised of 3 repeating townhouses arranged over 3 levels with a private front and rear garden. The block is completed with a two storey building containing 2 flats per floor at its south-eastern end. All dwellings within this block are dual aspect and provide efficient, practical and flexible rooms.

Town houses

Each house has a private front door entrance at ground level with a bin store enclosure adjacent to each in the front garden. Kitchen and living spaces are located at ground floor level which open onto a compact rear garden. Bathrooms and bedrooms are arranged on the upper levels including the zone within the pitched roof. Cycle storage is provided within a separate enclosure in each garden.

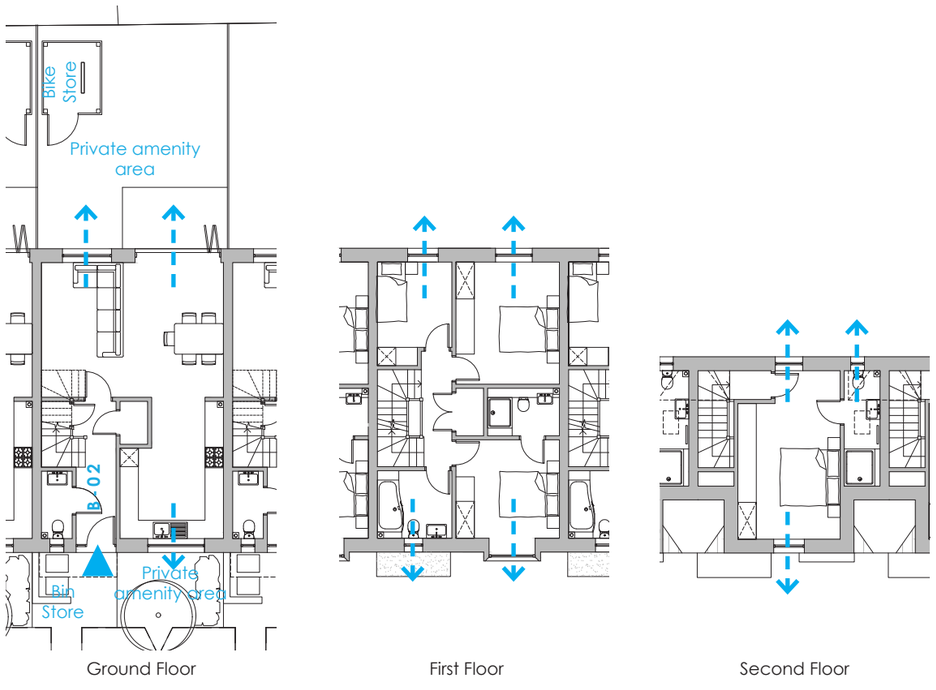
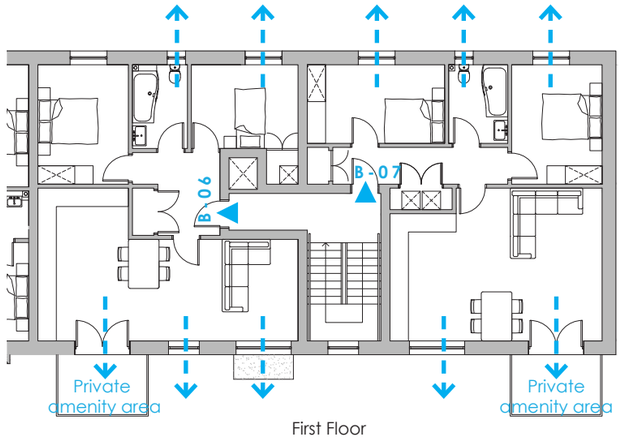


Fig 42. Proposed Block B Townhouse Layout Principle

Flats

Two flats are arranged either side of a central main entrance door fronting the courtyard at ground level. The central entrance lobby also allows access to the rear communal garden. A communal staircase provides vertical circulation to the first floor where 2 further flats are located each with balconies fronting the central courtyard.

Communal refuse and cycle storage to serve the 4 flats is provided in a single storey structure at the south eastern end of the block.



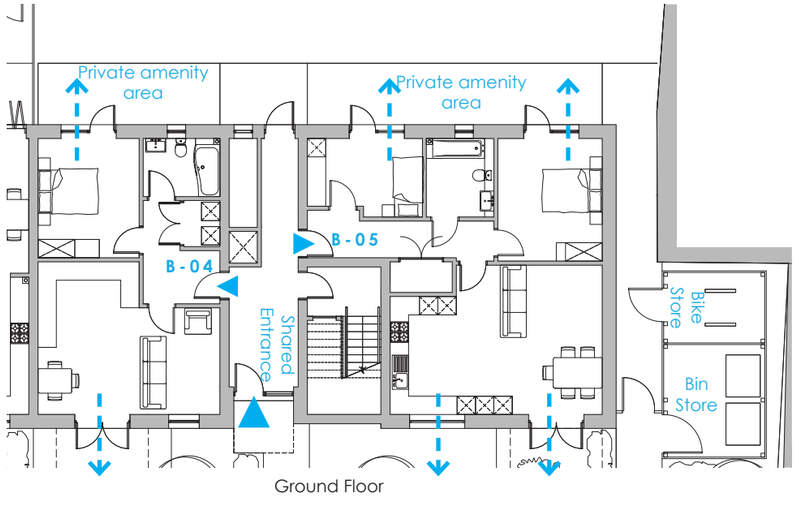


Fig 43. Proposed Block B Flats Layout Principle

3.12 Residential Unit Layouts

All dwellings have been designed to provide high quality living spaces with well proportioned, practical room arrangements, with ample storage and allowance for maximum flexibility to arrange furniture.

All residential units accord with elements a) to f) of Reading Borough Council's Policy H5 as follows:

(i) All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.
- All dwellings are sized to be at least the minimum gross internal floor area as well as providing the minimum built in storage requirement as stipulated in Table 1 of the Nationally Described Space Standards. The minimum floor to ceiling height, minimum room widths and areas are also achieved. Refer to example floor plans which illustrate how this is achieved.

(ii) All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations.[79]
- This will be achieved all dwellings.

(iii) All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.
- The development has been designed to achieve a zero carbon homes rating through the Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green and Offset payment measures. Refer to Energist UK's submitted Energy Strategy report for further details.

(iv) All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.
- This is a major development, refer to item c) above.

(v) All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below).
- All dwellings will be designed to meet the requirements of M4(2), Accessible and Adaptable dwellings of the Building Regulations. Refer to example dwelling floor plans which illustrate how this is achieved.

(vi) On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be 'wheelchair adaptable' as defined in part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be 'wheelchair accessible'.
- Two of the dwellings will be wheelchair accessible (Unit A-05 and Unit B-05) in line with the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3). This equates to 8% of the total.

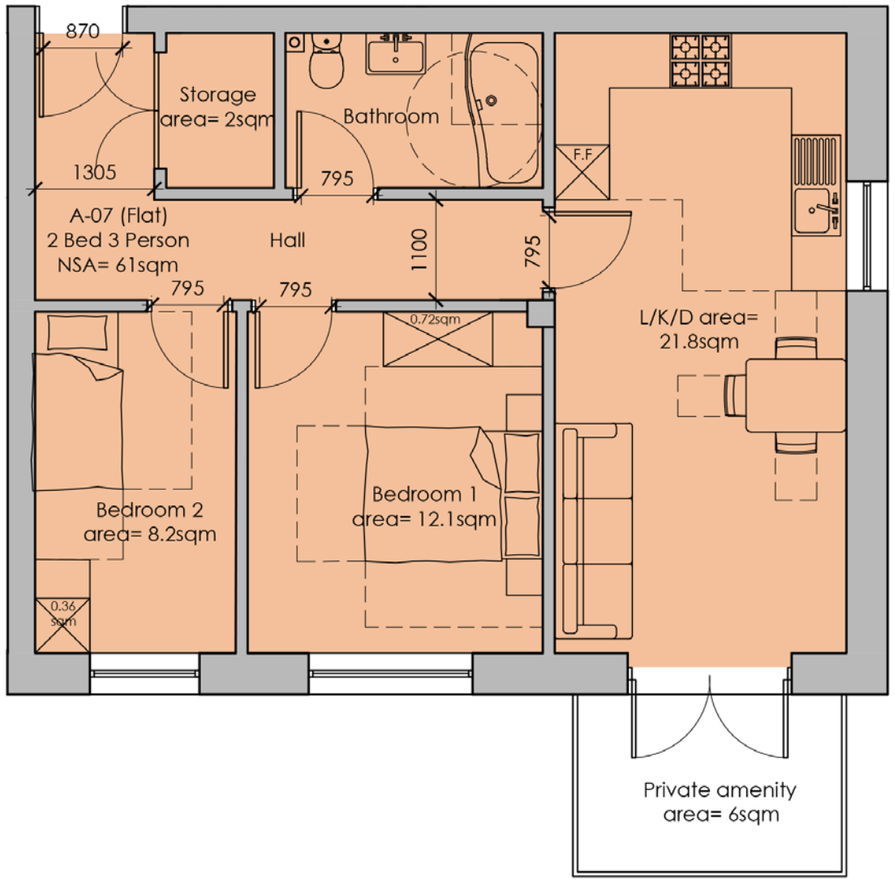
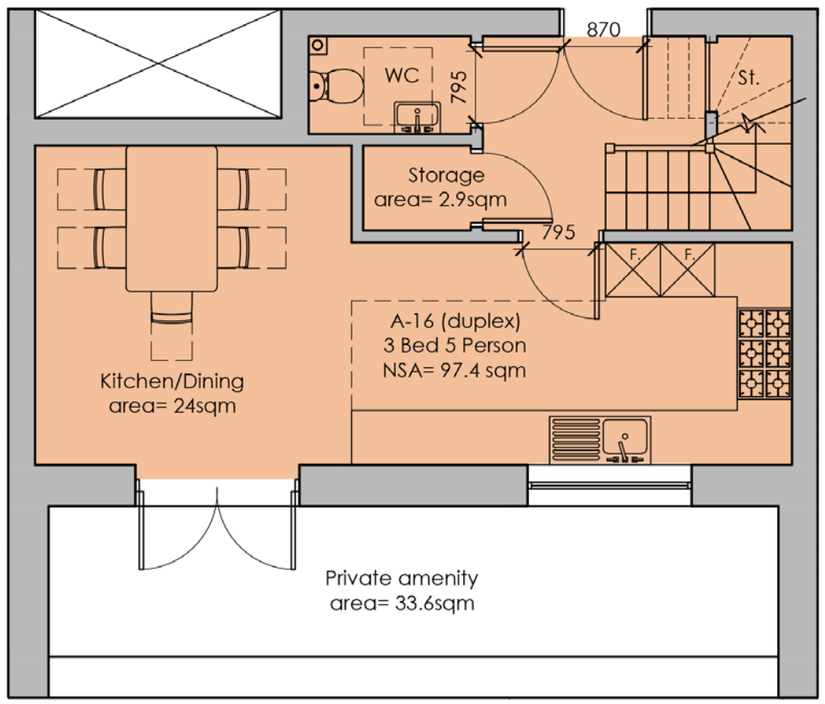
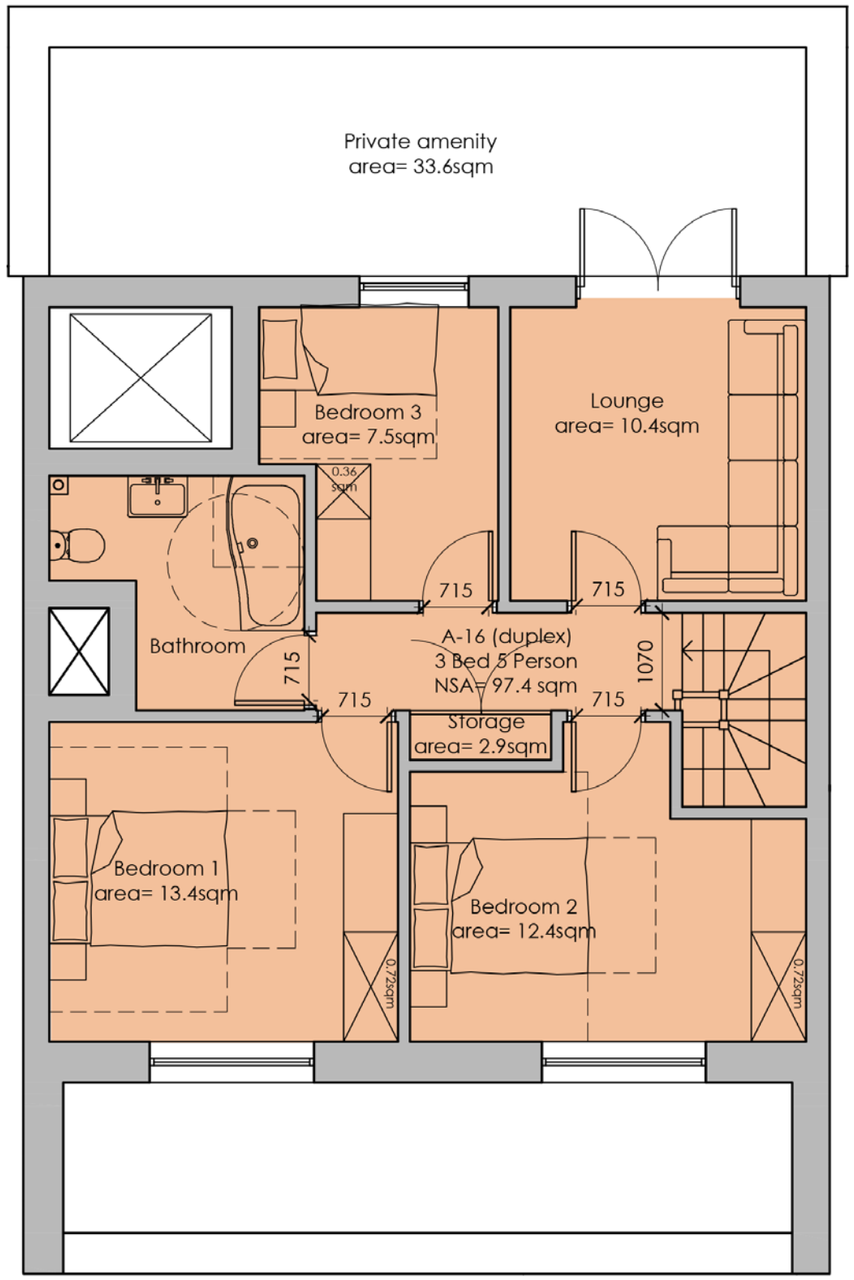


Fig 44. Proposed Block A Unit A-07 2-Bed 3-Person M4(2) Layout Principle

Fig 45. Proposed Block A Unit A-16 3-Bed 5-Person M4(2) Layout Principle



Lower Level Plan



Upper Level Plan

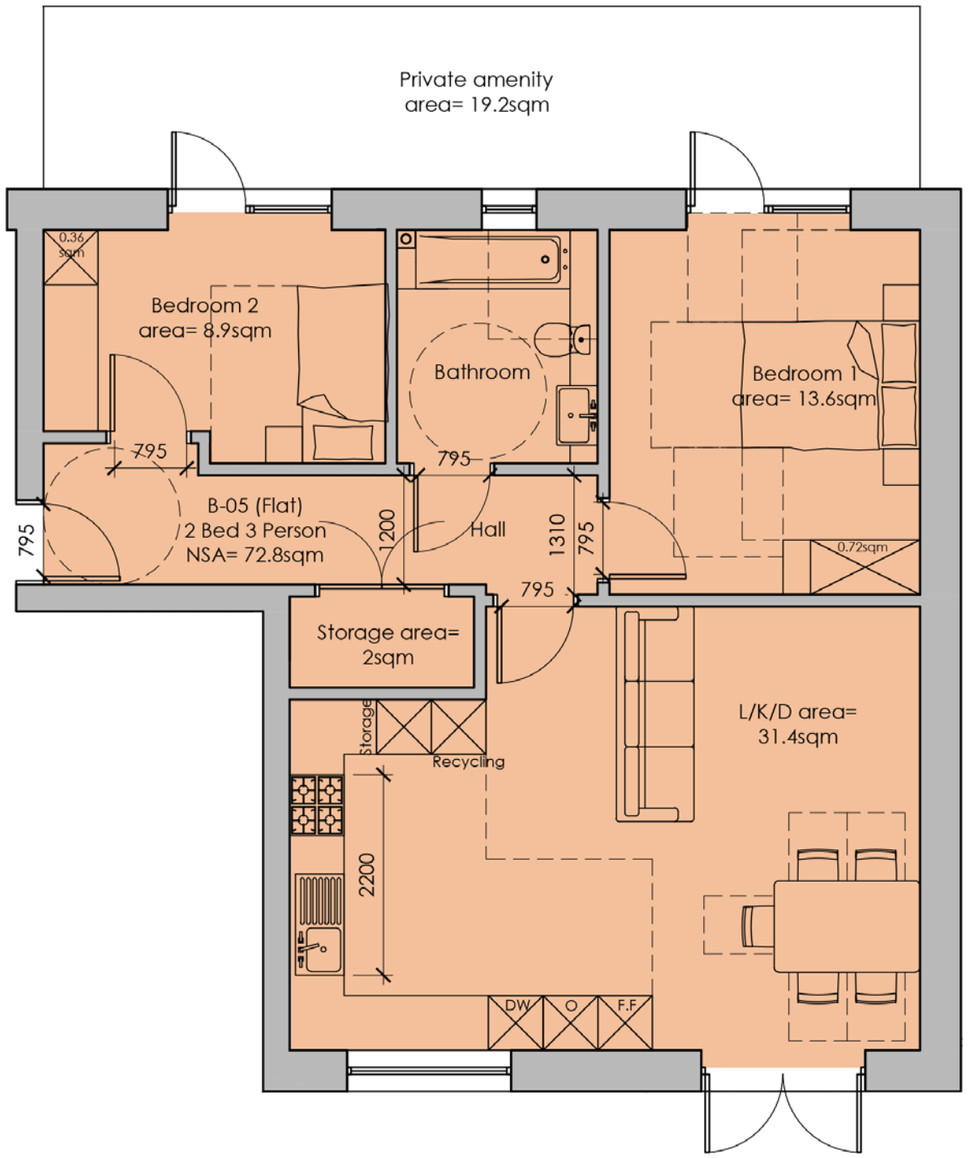


Fig 46. Proposed Block B Unit B-05 2-Bed 3-Person M4(3) Layout Principle

Summary of key Part M4 (3) Wheelchair accessible dwelling measures

- 1500mm turning circle in private entrances
- 1500mm x1500mm clear external landing space outside private entrance
- All entrances to have increased distance beyond door opening
- Increased width of kitchen space for wheelchair accessibility
- Increase in bedroom and living spaces
- Bathrooms are to be adaptable to provide space for hoists and wheelchair turning circle of 1500mm diameter.

3.13 Private Amenity Space

In line with RBC Policy H10, all dwellings will be provided with generous private amenity space. The 9 dwellings that lie at ground level have front and rear gardens. The flats above all have direct access to practical sized balconies or terraces from their living room.

Safeguarding the amenity of existing as well as the proposed new dwellings has been a priority while meeting all other constraints on development of this site. Close attention to mitigating the impacts listed in Policy CC8 has been implemented in the design.

3.14 Appearance

3.14.1 Block A: Facade Design

Block A forms the primary public face to the scheme, re-instating an active built edge to the street which improves its continuity. The sculpted roof forms on levels 5 and 6 are inspired by and echo the stepped front wall profile, created by dormers and gables evident on many of the existing buildings along the Oxford Road.



Fig 47. Block A Proposed Street (Front) Elevation extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-07





Fig 48. Appearance Precedent Photographs:
Brentford Lock West Housing Scheme – Mikhail Riches (L) & Oxford Road Brick Dormer Volumes (R)

The fenestration pattern is composed of a calm and rational arrangement of generous punched windows with projecting metal balconies. The ground storey is expressed as a plinth in the composition through the means of enlarged window and entrance door openings to create a highly activated front, as well as through an enriched material palette.



Fig 49. Block A Proposed Front Elevation Sketch View19014-PL-14

3.14.2 Block B: Facade Design

The scale and pitched roof forms of the townhouses echo those of the local vernacular housing. These as well as the natural divisions of the townhouses break up the length of the block into vertical bays, giving it order and proportional elegance.



Fig 50. Block B Proposed Courtyard (Front) Elevation extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-09





Fig 51. Appearance Precedent Photographs:
William Street Quarter Housing Scheme – AHMM (L) & Oxford Road Terraced Housing (R)

Like Block A, the fenestration arrangement of Block B is a calm and rational composition, reflecting patterns seen in buildings of the locality. Projecting oriel windows on the townhouses and balconies on the flatted element add a further dimension of interest to the building's form and appearance. A ground level plinth order is expressed through an enriched material palette as well as through enlarged window and door opening size.



Fig 52. Block B Proposed Front Elevation Sketch View19014-PL-16

3.14.3 Proposed Materials

A palette of high-quality materials has been selected for the facades of the buildings. Appropriateness for the local context and aesthetic quality have driven the materials selection process but also with careful consideration for robustness, lifespan and low maintenance needs.

Brick has been selected as the principal material for the external walls which has been informed by its predominance in the local context. Two different brick colours have been selected for each of the two blocks to further reinforce the principle of a street front building (Block A) and the smaller and more domestic character of Block B. In doing so, this rich and varied piece of new townscape will knit in to its context which already contains a mix of brick colours and other materials.

Metalwork of windows, infill panels and balconies are proposed in a restricted palette of paint colours (PPC finish). Each building with its individual metalwork colour, selected to compliment both the brick tones and also each other. This gives each building its own identity as well as to the scheme as a whole.

The composition of the facades has been carefully tuned to deliver elegant and finely proportioned elevations to each block. A sense of a base, middle and a roof top has deliberately been articulated in the design through the means of brick texture in the plinth base element of each block and sculpting the massing at the upper storeys, creating pitched roofs on Block B and sculptural form on Block A.



Fig 53. Block B Proposed Front Elevation Bay Study Extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-12



Fig 54. Block A Red, Block B Light Red Multi and recessed feature brickwork swatches (L-R)



Fig 55. Block A Proposed Front Elevation Bay Study Extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-12

3.15 Sustainability Statement

In realising the objectives identified in 1.2 Sustainability Objectives, the following are a summary of the main sustainability strategy measures employed across the scheme:

1.Sunpath: The buildings have been located to ensure that good levels of sunlight and daylight are achieved in internal and external spaces.

2. Biodiverse Landscape: Landscaping strategies will allow residents to positively engage with the public realm with new trees, planting and SUDs providing wildlife habitats as well as colour, shade and shelter

3. Green Roofs: Green roofs across the scheme provides a rainwater buffer, purifies the air, reduces ambient temperature and encourages biodiversity. These are combined with photovoltaic solar panels in a combined bio-solar system.

4. PVs: Photovoltaic panels capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity, cutting the carbon footprint of the scheme.

5. Daylight in the Home: Building layouts maximise natural light and ventilation through a high percentage of dual aspect dwellings while the size and placement of windows within flats are informed by daylight and sunlight overheating analysis using the BRE guidelines.

6. Balconies and Terraces: Each flat incorporates its own private balcony or terrace to provide generous private amenity.

7. Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design: Homes are energy-efficient and well insulated through a fabric-first design approach, but also to avoid overheating by passive solar design, such as through the incorporation of balconies, green roofs and deciduous planting in the landscape. Meanwhile, MVHR units will be utilised to ensure continuous fresh air and ventilation while avoiding noise impact from Oxford Road.

8. ASHPs: Air Source Heat Pumps will be integrated in the design, providing heating and hot water circuits to the scheme in a highly efficient manner to minimise the carbon footprint.

9: Sustainable modes of transport will be promoted. A large quantity of convenient and secure cycle storage is provided across the scheme incorporating charging points for e-bikes and scooters. The scheme is located such that cycling and walking are a viable means of transport to access a wide range of amenities. A large area of Reading, including the town centre can be accessed within a 20minute cycle ride.

10. SuDS: A robust and practical approach to sustainable urban stormwater drainage will be integrated into the design of the scheme. Please refer to the separate Surface Water Drainage Strategy and Statement for detailed clarifications.

3.16 Sustainability and Energy

The proposed development would achieve the zero-carbon performance level required by policy H5. Overall, the scheme achieves a 73% on-site reduction in carbon through lean, clean and green initiatives. For further details, please refer to the separate Energy and Carbon Strategy Statement, by Energist UK, submitted as part of this application.

LEAN: 15.56% C02 savings achieved through façade and lean system measures
CLEAN: No impact, as no local district heating or cooling network is available
GREEN: Air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels achieves a cumulative CO2 saving of 57%. In order to achieve the zero carbon target a carbon offset payment will be made (see Energy Statement).

3.17 Landscaping

3.17.1 Vision and Objectives

The aim is to create a landscape that serves both the residents of the development, the neighbours as well as the public. This will be achieved by creating both an attractive green setting for the new buildings to sit within, set back from Oxford Road but also one that provides practical external amenity spaces for the residents.

Alongside the human benefits, the landscape will greatly boost the biodiversity of this site and ecological value through increased low level soft planting as well as a net increase of 23no. trees (all proposed to be native species), provision of bio-diverse green roofs and nesting boxes for bats, birds and insects. The strategy encompasses sustainable urban drainage at its core, where the run-off from this site will be greatly reduced from the existing condition.

At this stage it is the landscaping strategy being presented for consideration, it is requested for the requirement for a detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme to be applied as condition to planning approval for the scheme.

3.17.2 Objectives

1. Provide, safe and attractive public and private external space on this dense urban site.
2. To enhance the public realm experience on Oxford Road.
3. To enhance site biodiversity.
4. To create a sustainable landscape.
5. To create a resilient and practical landscape that is low maintenance.

3.17.3. Proposals- Ground Level

The landscape design is structured around the creation and definition of 3 distinct zones:

1. Street Frontage
2. Central Courtyard
3. Rear Gardens

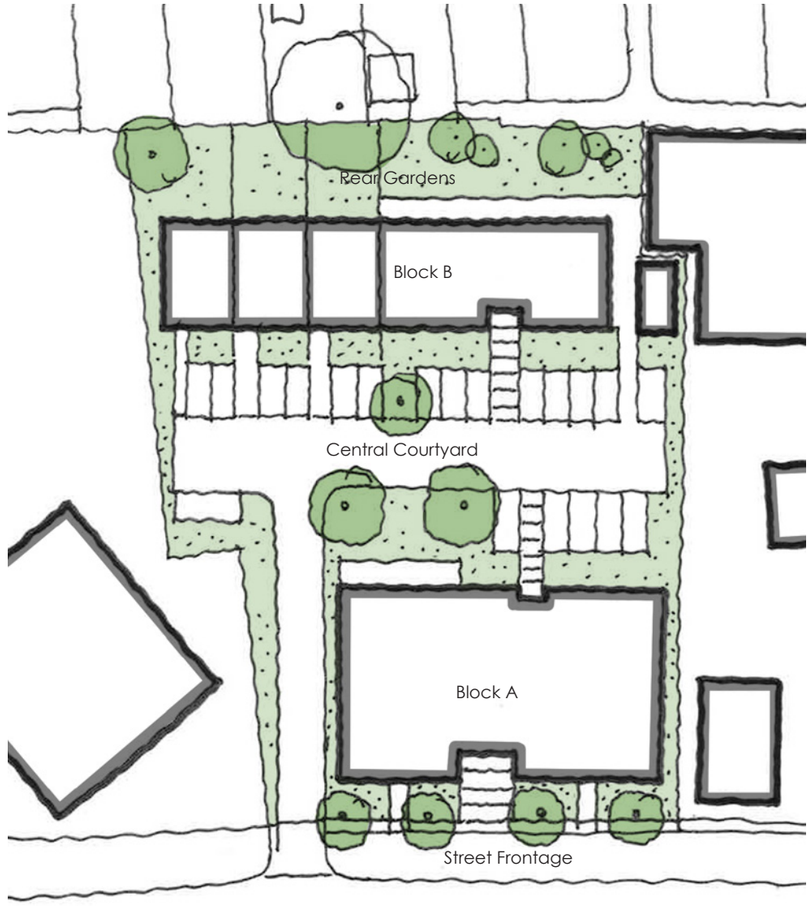


Fig 56. Landscaping Principles Diagram

3.17.3. Proposals- Ground Level (continued)

1. Street Frontage

Recognising the status of Oxford Road as a 'Treed Corridor' (as defined in RBC's Tree Strategy, 2021) a generous green landscape zone has been allowed at the front of the site to plant a row of trees that have room to mature into good sized specimens. This zone is 5m wide at its narrowest (increased from the 3m illustrated in the pre-application scheme). It forms the front garden private amenity spaces for the 4 maisonettes that are accessed from the street and the central section serves as a communal amenity space and garden for residents in front of the main entrance to Block A. Low level planting will be provided to the perimeter within these gardens to assist with visual screening to the new homes, filtering noise as well as air pollution.

2. Central Courtyard

The central courtyard is the heart of the scheme that is landscaped to perform a range of functions. A hard-scaped area in brick setts to accommodate vehicle parking has been broken up with areas of green soft landscape. At the centre of the yard is an area of shared resident amenity space with fixed bench seating and soft low-level landscaping. A defensible garden terrace space is provided to each of the ground level dwellings as private amenity. A planted green buffer zone separates these from the communal amenity and parking area in the centre of the courtyard to provide a greater degree of privacy.

3. Rear Gardens

The north eastern portion of the site forms external garden amenity space for the dwellings of Block B. Private gardens are provided for the 3 townhouses and a shared communal garden for the residents of the flats. This soft landscaped zone ensures that the 2 mature trees in close proximity to the site in the Stone Street gardens (Goat Willow and Beech) identified in the arboricultural report are unaffected by the development. (Refer to the arboricultural survey and report for further detail).



Fig 57. Proposed Hard and Soft Landscaping Strategy Extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-03

3.17.4 Boosting Biodiversity

The site as existing is comprised of hard standing, low grade unoccupied buildings and a small amount of self-seeded ephemeral vegetation to damaged areas of the hard standing. As a result the site is currently of very poor ecological value (Refer to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for further detail).

In accordance with the requirements of NPPF clause 175, the proposals will make a dramatic enhancement to the biodiversity and ecological value of the site as it stands now with a total of 639.4 sq.m of the site area to become soft landscaped with a wide range of native plant species. In addition, green roofs are employed on the flat roof areas of both blocks delivering a further 249.8 sq.m to encourage biodiversity, provide rainwater attenuation as well as contributing to reducing ambient temperature. 20no. new trees in a range of native species will be planted and a number of bird/ insect/ bat boxes installed on the building roof tops as recommended by the ecological statement.

The new habitats created extend pre-existing ones such as the rear gardens of the Stone Street houses and the emerging tree corridor along Oxford Road.



Fig 58. Proposed Roof Landscaping Strategy

3.17.5 High Quality Amenity

RBC Local Plan policy H10, Clause 4.4.87 sets out the space standards usually required for external amenity space. Sub-clause (c) acknowledges 'Development in central Reading will not always be expected to comply with the standards set above. Open space is nonetheless required, unless exceptional circumstances prevail, to accommodate modest sitting out areas and clothes drying facilities.'

This scheme has been designed at a commensurate density for its urban and highly accessible location. As outlined in the earlier section 3.6.1, all dwellings in the development are provided with generous private external amenity space directly accessible from each home which will allow for sitting out, clothes drying and growing plants as Clause H10 requires. The communal amenity space at ground level has also been maximised in addition to this for further opportunity for sitting out, interacting with neighbours or child play in. As outlined in the 2.11 Green Spaces chapter the site is well located within easy reach of a variety of larger public green spaces. The expansive space of McIlroy Park as well as Wilson Primary School field and Kensington Park are all within a 10-minute walk of the site.

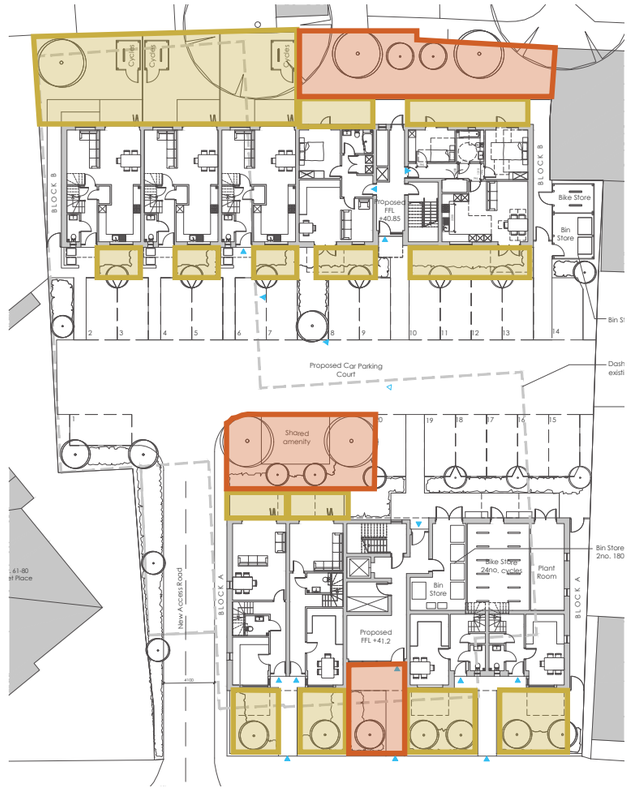


Fig 59. External Amenity Space Measure Plan

3.17.6 Sustainable Urban Drainage

A robust and practical approach to sustainable urban drainage has been integrated into the design of the scheme which has been coordinated with the landscaping strategy. Please refer to the separate Surface Water Drainage Strategy and Statement.

In relation to greywater recycling that is highlighted in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy under Clause C2, this was currently seen to be cost prohibitive but may be explored further at a later design stage.

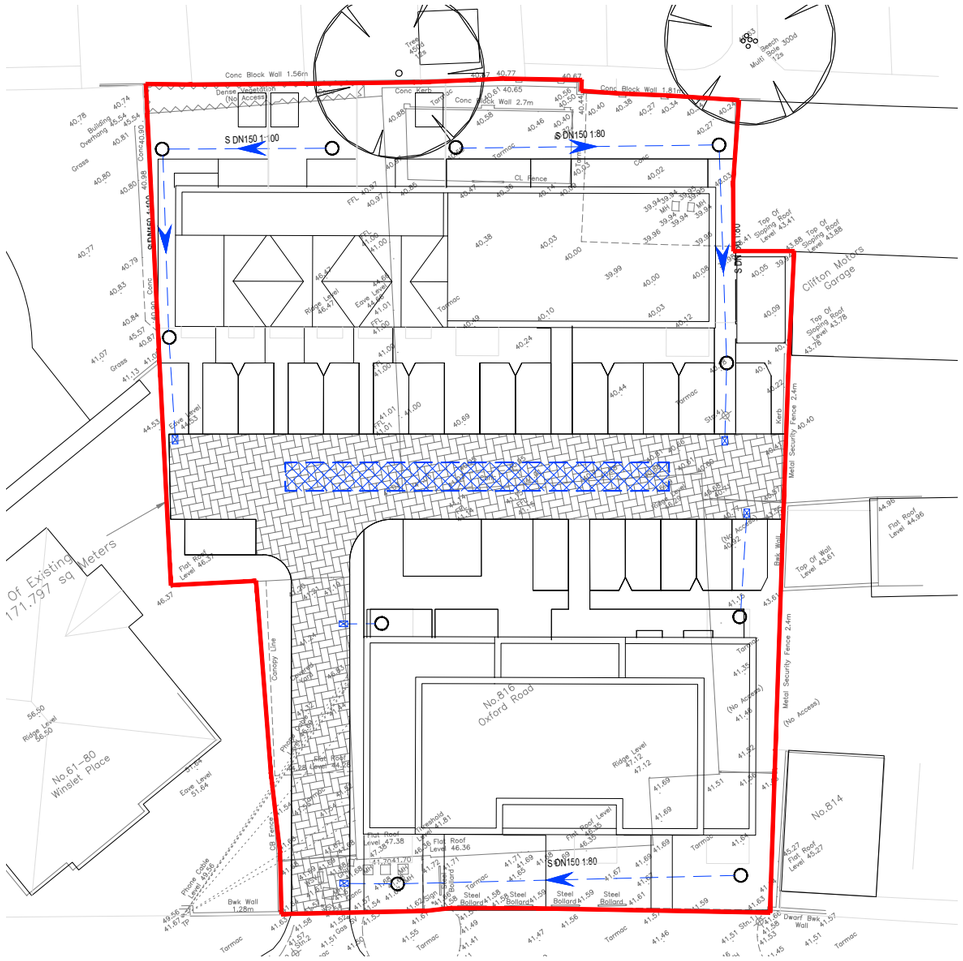


Fig 60. Sustainable Urban Drainage Plan Extract

3.17.7 External Space Lighting

It will be proposed for there to be a high-quality external space lighting scheme which will incorporate low energy exterior fittings. The lighting scheme will create a safe and comfortable external after dark environment whilst presenting no intrusion or disturbance to the existing adjacent tenants.

At this stage it is requested for the requirement for a detailed exterior lighting scheme to applied as condition to planning approval for the scheme.

The access and movement strategy for the development ensures the safety and security of all residents and the local community as well as equitable access for all.

4.1 Pedestrian Access

The proposal is a human led development which puts pedestrians' access, enjoyment of outdoor space and their safety first.

Pedestrian access to the site is as direct from Oxford Road as possible. The primary communal entrance to Block A fronts Oxford Road and is visually prominent being centrally located within the building, generously proportioned as well as open and welcoming. There is a secondary pedestrian entrance to the rear of Block A to allow more direct access for residents to the courtyard, vehicle parking, refuse and cycle stores. The 4 maisonettes in this building have individual entrances fronting Oxford Road which further activate the public realm and provide easy and direct access for their residents.

The residents of Block B access their building through the courtyard via the access route from Oxford Road that is shared with other modes of transport. Entrances to this block front directly onto the new central landscape, fostering a sense of community. The 3 townhouses have individual entrances that are easily visible from within the courtyard. The communal entrance to the 4 flats within this block is more prominent than those of the townhouses by being both wider and with a more open and glazed character.

Entrances and ground floor flats will also enjoy defensible planting that provides privacy while creating active frontages that foster a sense of place.

4.2 Cycle Access

Access for cyclists is provided via the shared access route from Oxford Road into the courtyard where separate communal cycle stores for Blocks A and B (provided within each building) are accessed directly through external doors. Cycle stores for the town houses are provided separately within their private gardens.

4.3 Vehicle Access

The scheme has been designed to encourage and promote more sustainable and active forms of transport including cycling and walking. However, there are 20 residents parking bays provided including 2 Blue Badge spaces within the courtyard area. In line with RBC Policy TR5,10% of the spaces will incorporate an electric vehicle charging point, so 2 points will be provided.

Vehicles will access the courtyard via the shared surface access road which has a dropped curb to Oxford Road. The shared surface is in brick setts to differentiate it from highway and signal that drivers are entering a 'homezone' where speeds must be kept safe.

(Refer to Transport Statement for detailed access swept path drawings for these vehicles)

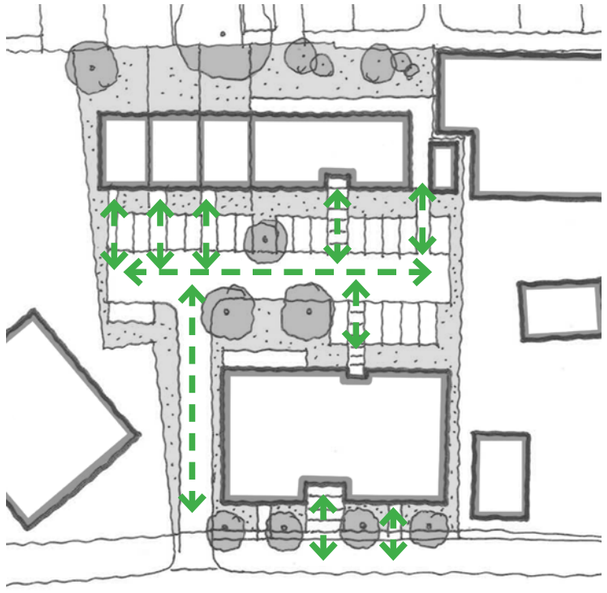


Fig 61. Ground Level Pedestrian Access Diagram

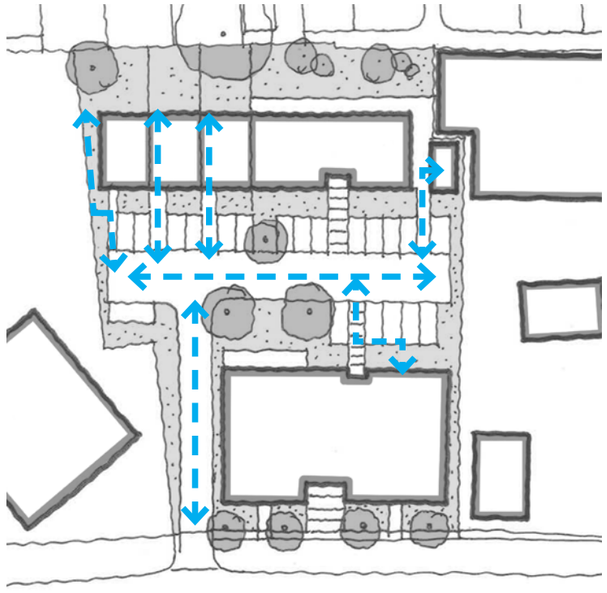


Fig 62. Ground Level Cycle Access Diagram

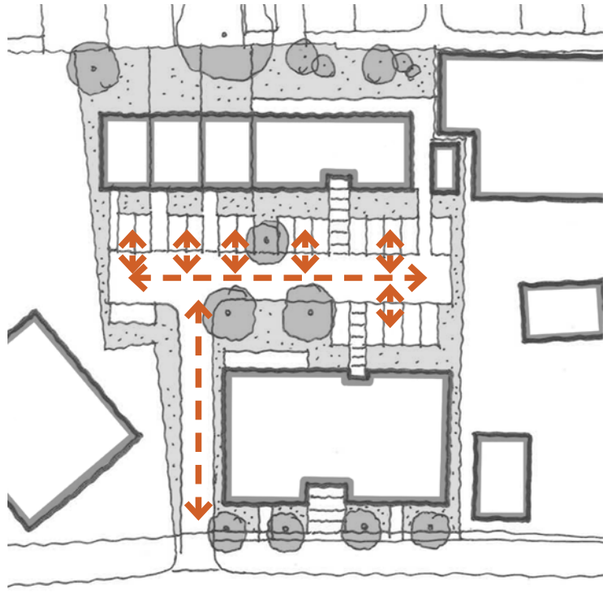


Fig 63. Ground Level Vehicle Access Diagram

4.4 Servicing and Refuse Collection

All servicing of the development is carried out off street with all servicing vehicles to enter and stop in the courtyard.

Delivery vehicles will stop in the courtyard and access the communal or private entrance accessible from the courtyard for deliveries.

Refuse collection for both Blocks A and B would be collected from the internal courtyard area where collection vehicles can stop within 10m of the refuse stores. A turning head allows these large vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

(Refer to Transport Statement for detailed access swept path drawings for these vehicles)

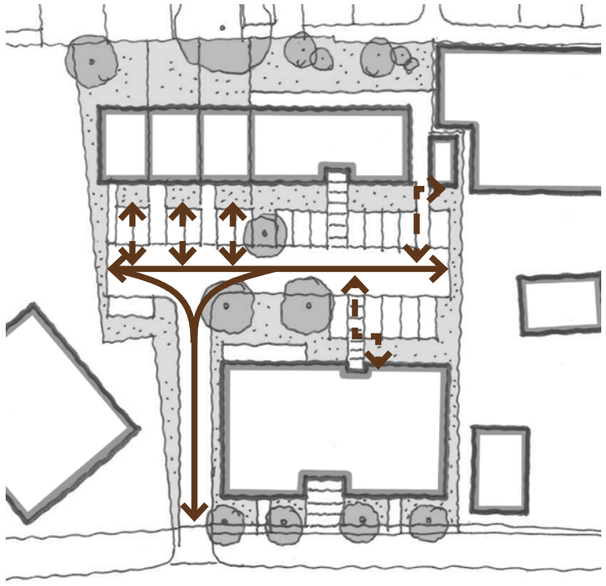


Fig 64. Ground Level Servicing & Refuse Vehicle Access Diagram

4.5 Emergency Vehicle Access

All emergency vehicles can access the site as with other service vehicles.

Fire tenders are the largest emergency vehicle to access the site. The access road will be designed in accordance with the relevant fire safety guidance, such that it is suitable for fire appliance access. Fire vehicle access will be provided to within 18m from a dry riser fire main inlet, placed at the ground floor façade of each block near the entry point.

Hydrants will be provided within 90m of the dry riser inlet points serving the site.

(Refer to Transport Statement for detailed access swept path drawings for these vehicles)

4.6 Transport Strategy

For additional detail and supporting information on access and transport planning matters refer to Milestone Transport Planning's Transport Statement.

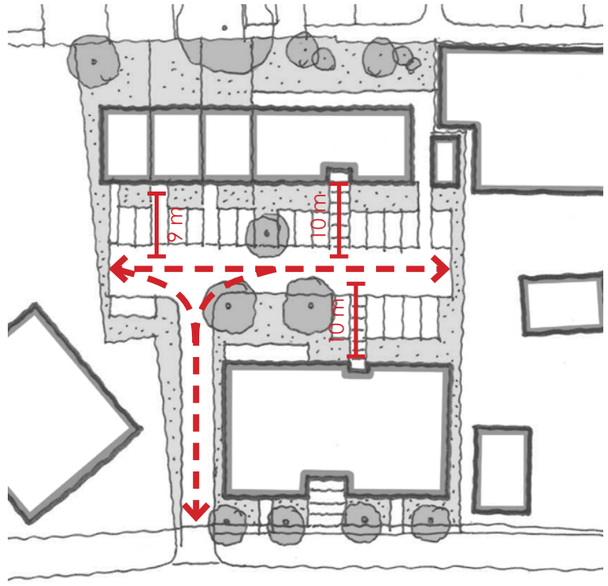


Fig 65. Ground Level Fire Tender Vehicle Access Diagram

4.7 Inclusive Design

The application proposals aim to meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion so that all potential users can access the internal as well as external areas of the scheme safely and easily.

The proposed scheme aims to promote inclusive access by eliminating barriers, physical, attitudinal and procedural, which may otherwise inhibit the involvement of the whole community.
The ultimate aim of inclusive access is that the design and layout of the development, both building and landscape, should enable everyone to enter, use the facilities and leave safely, independently and with ease.

The only exception to this are the 2 flats on the first floor of Block B where it is unviable to provide lift access for just 2 dwellings. However these constitute just 8% of the scheme as a whole and will still be designed to M4(2) Adaptable standard.

4.7.1 Legislation & Guidance

In developing the proposals, the design team have followed the following statutory requirements, guidance and best practice documents:

- Buildings Regulations Part M 2010 – 2015 addition incorporating 2016 amendments
- British Standard 8300:2009 (amended 2010)
- Equality Act 2010

4.7.2 General Design Principles

Entrances

Across the scheme the design ensures the main entrances are accessible to every occupant. In addition the main entrance doors of each building will:

- Be at least 850mm wide between door stops (clear opening)
- Have a level landing outside
- Have a level threshold (max 15mm change in level)
- Have door controls and handles that are easy to see and at a height which can be reached by wheelchair users (no higher than 1000mm from floor level)
- Have at least 300mm alongside the leading edge of all doors to enable wheelchair users to open the door
- Full glass doors and large full height areas of glazing can present particular access barriers for some disabled people. Manifestation at two eye level heights will be applied, (approximately 1500mm from floor level for adults and child/ wheelchair users approximately 1200mm) to make them visible.
- Where any external entrances are locked or unattended it is important to ensure access for all. In these situations an intercom will be provided. We propose that intercoms are at wheelchair accessible height (between 750mm and 1000mm from floor level)
- The entrance lobbies to the residential cores have been designed to allow a wheelchair user to clear the outer door before opening the inner door
- The lighting within entrance lobbies will need to be sufficient to help people adjust to changes in light between the outdoors and indoors.

Circulation

The communal circulation areas have been designed to ensure unobstructed access. The design considerations that have been taken into account are:

- All walkways have been designed to accommodate a minimum width of 1200mm with no obstructions such as furniture or fire extinguishers

All doors will:
- Have a minimum width of 900mm (between door stops) when fully open
- Be fitted with vision panels to enable people to see and be seen — Will be fitted with lever type handles or 'D'pull handles at a height appropriate for a wheelchair user (1000mm from floor level)
- Be light enough to be used by disabled people with limited mobility or strength

Throughout each building the communal stairs will:
- Use a slip-resistant floor finish
- Have a tactile surface to indicate the beginning and end of the flight
- Be well lit
- Have the nosing strip of each step riser in a contrasting tone/colour to the tread
- Handrails for stairs will be at a height of 900mm (1000mm at landings) on both sides running the entire length to enable those with a weakness on one side to use them

Bathrooms and WCs

Sanitary accomodation spaces have all been designed to BS8300:2001 and the requirements of either Part M4(2) or M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

Signage and Navigation

We have developed the planning of the buildings to be simple and intuitive to minimise the need for wayfinding signage. We propose that any signage should be grounded in the following ways:

- The content of signs and information is written concisely and in plain English
- Rules for clear print are followed (contrast between text and background colours, large enough text and easy-to-read fonts) — Simple illustrations or pictograms and symbols should be incorporated whenever possible
- All directional signs to and within the premises incorporate directional arrows
- Signs are well lit

The items listed here, alongside further detail incorporated at later designs stages will ensure that the proposed buildings and scheme will provide accessibility and inclusivity for all.

4.8 Fire Safety Strategy

Fire safety has been considered from the start of the scheme layout design. The proposed scheme has been proposed to conform with the standards required from Building Regulations Approved Document B Fire Safety Volume 1: Dwellings 2019 edition incorporating 2020 amendments.

Following the advice within the Reading Borough Council pe-application enquiry response, the local fire service have been contacted and issued with the submission drawings to enable their consultation on access and other fire safety matters relating to the proposed development. Relevant consultation feedback will be provided to the application case officer once received.

General Fire Safety Design Principles:

- No flammable materials will be used for external cladding
- No flammable materials will be used for internal linings
- LD2 category detection and alarm systems to be installed throughout scheme

Block A Additional Fire Safety Design Principles:

- A single common stair is proposed with every flat separated from the stair by a protected lobby with the escape route from dwelling entrances to stair not exceeding 7.5 metres
- Separate compartmentation to be provided vertically and horizontally between dwellings and shared escape routes and stair providing minimum 60 minutes fire protection
- A fire sprinkler system to be fitted throughout the building
- Automated opening smoke vent windows provided to shared stairwell serving flats
- Mechanical smoke extraction system installed to protected lobbies on al floors
- Area of windows (unprotected areas) on the South East elevation have been proposed to not exceed 5.6 sq.m per dwelling
- Proposal for dry riser main to be installed with inlet located within 18m of pumping fire appliance access

Block B Additional Fire Safety Design Principles:

- Means of escape to be provided via protected stairway providing 30minutes fire separation from adjacent rooms (within townhouses)
- Separate compartmentation to be provided vertically and horizontally between dwellings providing minimum 60 minutes fire protection
- Automated opening smoke vent window provided to first floor shared stairwell serving flats
- Proposed for pumping fire appliance access to within 45 metres of all areas within the dwelling houses and flats

5.1 Conclusion Summary

It is considered that planning permission should be granted for the proposed residential development for the following reasons:

- The submitted proposals have been revised to address: comments raised during the formal pre-application enquiry process with Reading Borough Council, specialist consultant reports and comments from neighbours to the site.
- The scheme and supporting documents have been developed in order to address all the relevant planning policy compliance matters raised as part of the pre-application enquiry process.
- The proposed scheme enables residential use to be established on the site in accordance with the ambitions of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan contributing to the Borough's required housing supply.
- The development proposals will enhance the richness and quality of the local townscape, improving the definition of the existing disjointed portion of Oxford Road. The scheme sensitively references interesting and attractive elements of the existing local urban context heritage to create a sense of place where people and families enjoy living with a clear sense of identity.
- A sensitive response to the neighbouring built and natural environment context is proposed.
- High-quality homes are proposed which will assist in promoting healthy lifestyles, well-being and enjoyment for all residents.
- Environmental sustainability standards are upheld by the proposed scheme in order to address issues associated with the climate emergency declared by Reading Borough Council.
- The proposals promote innovative and sustainable approaches to travel which alongside public transport provide healthy alternatives to reliance on the car.
- The development will significantly expand local wildlife habitats enabling the ecology and biodiversity of the site to be enhanced.



Fig.66– Aerial view of proposed residential development, extract from drawing no. 19014-PL-13

6.1 Local Authority Pre-application Enquiry Response

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

Frances Martin
Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU

☎ 0118 9373787

Our Ref: 210277/PREAPP

Direct: ☎ 07971 015688

e-mail: jonathan.markwell@reading.gov.uk

18th June 2021

Christopher Weston
Weston & Co Architects Ltd
Watlington House
44 Watlington Street
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 4RJ

Via email only to: christopher@weston-co.com

Your contact is: Mr Jonathan Markwell, Planning

Dear Mr Weston,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
Enquiry Reference & Address: 210277/PREAPP – 816 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1EL
Proposal: Pre-application meeting with respect to the proposal to comprehensively redevelop the site, demolishing the existing commercial / light industrial buildings and replacing them with two residential blocks, one six-storeys in height (fronting Oxford Road) and one three-storeys in height (to the rear of the site) to provide 25 residential dwellings (5x1, 7x2, 12x3 and 1x4-bed units, of which 7 would be affordable housing units) and associated car parking, cycle and bin storage and landscaping.
Details of virtual pre-app meeting: 3.35pm – 4.45m on 17th June 2021, attended by: Jonathan Markwell (Reading Borough Council) & Christopher Weston (Weston & Co Architects Ltd).
List of other officers who have provided input, but did not attend the meeting itself: Myriam El Harouchy (GS Ecology – RBC Ecology consultants); Sarah Hanson (Natural Environment Officer); Alice Layzell (Senior Recycling and Enforcement Officer); Ross Jarvis (Senior Environmental Health Officer); Neg Hussain (Transport Development Control Officer).

Information considered for pre-app meeting: 19014.6.1_21.02.18_Pre App Enquiry Form; 19014.9.1_21.02.18_Pre-Application Statement; 19014-SK-10 Proposed Location & Block Plans; 19014-SK-11 Proposed Site Plan; 19014-SK-12 Proposed Site Section; 19014-SK-13 Block A Proposed Plans; 19014-SK-14 Block B Proposed Plans; 19014-SK-15B Block A Proposed Elevations; 19014-SK-16A Block B Proposed Elevations.

Thank you for your recent standalone meeting pre-application enquiry in relation to the above site. The level of detail within the pre-application submission is welcomed and appreciated, enabling detailed pre-application comments to be made.

The scheme was separately considered by the Reading Design Review Panel on 17th June 2021. The formal written comments from the panel will be forwarded onto you separately once they have been received.

Background information / context

Based on the New Local Plan policies, as adopted in November 2019, the following initial contextual information is noted:

- The site is specifically allocated for development within the local plan, as follows:

> ***WR3l*** ***816 OXFORD ROAD***
> ***Development for residential.***
> ***Development should:***
> - ***Address air quality impacts on residential use;***
> - ***Address noise impacts on residential use;***
> - ***Address any contamination on site; and***
> - ***Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential.***
>
> ***Site size: 0.23 ha 13-20 dwellings***

- Within an Air Quality Management Area
- Potential contaminated land – garage use
- Smoke Control Zone
- Oxford Road is a classified road
- Within Kentwood ward

Within the past quarter of a century the following planning applications have been submitted at 816 Oxford Road:

010776 - Retrospective application for a 3m high galvanised metal fence. Refused 3/12/2001

041436 - Internally illuminated signs. Granted 20/12/2004.

051255 - Demolition of existing building and erection of A1 retail unit with associated parking. Withdrawn 9/8/2005.

051340 - Demolition of existing building and erection of A1 retail unit with associated parking (Resubmission of 05/00736/FUL). Granted 27/3/2006.

060131 - Change of use from temporary car wash to the erection of a modular office with car parking for use as a hire centre for temporary modular buildings with the display of temporary modular buildings (Sui Generis). Granted 19/10/2006.

060833 - Change of use from petrol station (Sui Generis) to car valeting (B1) for a temporary period of three years (retrospective). Granted 12/7/2006.

Land use principles

It is acknowledged that the site is allocated within the Reading Borough Local Plan, as referenced in the context section above.

Notwithstanding the site allocation for residential, the starting point in the assessment of any future redevelopment proposal at the site is the loss of the existing uses at the site. Policy EM3 relates to the loss of employment land and your future submission should include commentary as to how the proposals accord with the (i) to (vi) criteria within the policy. Owing to the site allocation it is anticipated that such commentary can be succinct, and a case is likely to be able to be made. Nevertheless, the onus is on you to demonstrate that in your future submission.

6.1 Local Authority Pre-application Enquiry Response

Should this be established, the principle of providing residential accommodation at the site would be welcomed in line with Policy H1 and the site allocation. The site allocation references several elements which any development should address, with your future submission being required to demonstrate these points, as well as all other typical elements any residential proposal would need to.

Demolition of existing buildings

The existing buildings are not considered to be of any specific or special architectural merit to warrant their retention. As such, the principle of demolishing the existing buildings at the site is considered to be acceptable.

Layout, urban structure and urban grain

The proposed two block approach, one fronting Oxford Road and the other to the rear, appears a reasonable one within the context of the site and surroundings. In particular, the layout of the neighbouring Winslet Place development from the early 2000's, together with the existing neighbouring context to the north, east and south all result in a two separate block pattern of development The footprint of the Winslet Place development, together with the red line boundary of your site, means that it is accepted that it is not possible to follow this pattern of existing development to the west. The orientation of the nearest Winslet Place block means this is the nearest sensitive (i.e. residential) building, with the proposed inclusion of access at the nearest part of the prospective application site being a logical decision to create due separation at this point.

Questions are however posed in relation to standalone buildings being proposed for the bin storage areas and part of the cycle parking. First, it would be a better design solution had these facilities been provided as integral to the buildings they serve, rather than separate entities. From a security perspective it would also be far preferable for these structures to be integral too. Another issue is that these are proposed hard on the boundary with land to the east, potentially constraining any future development of that neighbouring site. Accordingly, this is one element where further thought should be given, with the preference for all associated facilities being provided within the envelope of the proposed buildings.

Height / massing

The information contained within your supporting statement is helpful in identifying the nearby context, which in-turn assists in justifying the proposed heights and massing proposed. It is clear that the proposals have attempted to take cues from the surrounding context to influence the proposed massing at different points of the proposed site. On the Oxford Road frontage it is acknowledged that the proposal would be taller than other nearby buildings on the north side of Oxford Road, where for example neighbouring Winslet Place is predominantly 4-storeys in height (with small sections being 5 storeys). Although the proposed Block A is sought to be 6 storeys in height, the top two-storeys are set back and staggered to minimise the impact. You have also demonstrated in the section plan the outline of the Branagh Court properties opposite, which are set on higher ground and are five storeys in height with pitched roofs too. Set within this context, it is considered that provided that the high-quality design of the proposals envisaged be fully demonstrated further in due course, the principle of an up to six storey building is likely to be able to be supported at this part of the site.

For Block B the proposed massing is three storeys, with a single pitched roof proposed to minimise the height towards Stone Street properties. The proposed massing is considered to successfully

integrate with the surrounding massing at Stone Street, Winslet Place and Block A, responding at the appropriate points to the existing context.

Accordingly, officers are largely content with the height and massing proposed, albeit this is considered to be at the uppermost limit of acceptability and any future increase is unlikely to be able to be supported or justified.

Density and mix

Based on the proposal for 25 dwellings on a 0.23ha site, this equates to a density of 108.7 dwellings per hectare. As per Policy H2, there are several factors which inform an appropriate density. In this instance the accessibility of the site and the need to maximise the efficiency of the land use are likely to be factors which count in favour of the anticipated density. Your future submission should include commentary seeking to justify the proposed density, bearing in mind the indicative density ranges specified at paragraph 4.4.8 of the supporting text to Policy H2. You should also be mindful of Policy CC6 too.

In terms of mix, the 5x1, 7x2, 12x3 and 1x4-bed units proposed fully accord with the Policy H2 expectation for over 50% 3-bed dwellings being provided. This is welcomed and supported, with it evident that a range of unit types are proposed.

In relation to the mix specific to the affordable units, the 3x1, 3x2 & 1x3-bed mix proposed again accords with the need referenced at figure 4.6 of the Local Plan. In due course a suitable tenure breakdown of the affordable units will also need to be demonstrated (see the March 2021 adopted Affordable Housing SPD for details).

In addition, as per Policy H2, you should explore making appropriate provision for plots as self-build – should you wish to explore this further, please contact officers to discuss further.

Linked to this, it is noted that the site allocation references the site is allocated for 13-20 dwellings, with your proposal of 25 units exceeding this. This is not an in-principle issue, as the figures within the local plan are indicative and various factors combine to ascertain an appropriate number of dwellings for each site (e.g. the need to make efficient use of land being one such factor).

Affordable housing

Regarding affordable housing, please see Policy H3 in the first instance. This clearly details that there would be a requirement for 30% of the on-site proposed units to be affordable housing. The recently published Affordable Housing SPD (March 2021) has clarified that the target tenure breakdown should be:

- Affordable rented accommodation at 'Reading affordable rent' levels – at least 62%;
- Affordable home ownership (shared ownership or another product) – maximum 38%.

Your submission has indicated that 7 of the proposed units would be affordable, equating to 28% on-site provision. This falls below the Policy H3 requirement, with this equating to a shortfall of 1 on-site unit in practice. In such instances, scheme viability can seek to justify a lower than policy compliant contribution. An open book approach to viability should be taken, with the onus on you to justify the lower contribution and this being subject to evaluation, as (separate from the application fee) funded by the applicant. The current initial fixed fee, as per paragraph 6.10 of the SPD, is £8,000 for a 15-29 unit scheme.

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The tenure breakdown of the affordable housing offer has not been specified. You are strongly advised to consider the SPD in this regard, with particular reference to the 'Reading affordable rent' product.

It is also unclear from the submission where precisely the on-site affordable housing units would be located within the scheme (section 10 of your report specifies the affordable units were in bold, but 7 units were not shown in bold – based on our meeting on 17th June it is now assumed that the units are in Block B). This should be carefully considered, ideally with early input from registered providers to ensure it is suitable for their needs.

Any on-site affordable housing provision, financial payment and / or deferred contribution would be secured via s106 legal agreement as part of any future application. Given the relatively low level of on-site provision, a cascade mechanism (should a registered provider not take on the units in the future for whatever reason) would be included as part of the agreement, to offer the units for the Council to take on as affordable housing units, followed by a financial contribution (in line with the Policy H3 amount). In addition, given the anticipated high proportion of 3-bed units and to cover the eventuality of extensions/conversions of the blocks to create additional units in the future, a further obligation would ensure affordable housing contributions would be considered on a cumulative basis in that scenario (as per paragraph 4.36 of the SPD).

Design approach

The design approach is largely covered by separate comments provided by the Reading Design Review Panel, which as detailed above will follow separately. As discussed at the DRP meeting, there would be scope for the proposals to be re-assessed by DRP in the future. As mentioned, the DRP work on a rota basis and this panel is scheduled to formally meet again on 21st October 2021 and 24th February 2022. We discussed that this may not align with your emerging timescales and DRP verbally advised me that they would potentially be open to an interim re-review, re-assessing a further iteration of your proposals outside of the formal DRP meeting dates, albeit with a lesser number of members than the meeting on 17th June. If this is of interest to you, please let me know and this can be explored further. Alternatively, you may be content to work towards a further version of your scheme being prepared for further pre-application advice, with DRP input in October or February as part of this.

Notwithstanding the future DRP comments, planning officers have some initial comments too, which based on the discussion at the DRP meeting, also align with matters also raised by DRP:

- The general contemporary approach, utilising brickwork as the predominant material, is generally welcomed and it is likely to be considered as a suitable addition in principle to this part of Oxford Road.
- It is likely that there will be a need for some articulation on the side elevations of Block A (e.g. patterned brickwork, recessed brickwork mimicking bricked up windows or green walls) or otherwise the proposed massing may appear monolithic in longer views along Oxford Road
- Landscaping does not appear to have been given sufficient focus in the proposals and the position / size of trees will need to be carefully considered to ensure they do not restrict light to bedrooms, but at the same time be significant in their own right rather than being tokenistic (see separate comments from the Natural Environment Officer below).

Several more detailed points are also picked up in the later sections of this response too.

Quality of accommodation - internal layout and amenity-based comments

A series of initial comments are raised in relation to the quality of accommodation for future occupiers. As a starting point, it is positive that you have specified that all units will achieve the national space standards. This is a requirement of local policy H5 and your future submission should include a specific section demonstrating how the proposals meet each of the standards referenced at paragraph 4.4.42 of the supporting text to Policy H5. This should form part of a wider 'Policy H5 checklist assessment' document you should prepare as part of any submission, demonstrating in detail how the proposals accord with elements a) to f) of Policy H5. Below are a series of initial comments make in relation to the layout and related quality of accommodation points, which are requirements of Policy CC8:

- There is presently an under-provision of wheelchair user dwellings – 1/25 = 4%. Policy H5f requires at least 5% - so the proposals are required to provide at least 2 wheelchair user units within a 25-unit scheme. You will note the reference within the requirement to 'wheelchair adaptable' market units and 'wheelchair accessible' Council properties; your future submission should be clear in this regard.
- It is presently queried whether ground floor front doors are actually provided on the Block A Oxford Road elevation? It is considered that individual front doors serving each of the three units should be provided (with these being readily evident in visual design terms too), as well as the communal entrance point to the other units. At present there is little prominence given to the entrance from Oxford Road and it is considered this could/should be better defined to assist with truly activating the frontage to assist natural surveillance. For example, based on the floor plan unit A.01 is already proposed to be separately accessed, but there is no clear reference to this from the elevation plan; it is respectfully considered that the rear elevation entrance presently looks better defined than the front one.
- Bedroom 3 within unit A-03 is a single aspect room, almost on the boundary with the neighbouring site to the east. Accordingly, it is the potential to lack outlook and access to daylight/sunlight and solutions to this should be explored.
- Bedrooms 1 & 2 within unit A-03 could include limited outlook and access to day/sunlight owing to being north facing and being in close proximity to the proposed bin store. It is queried whether there will be a future desire for screening (to protect privacy of future occupiers from the bin store and car park) at this point, which may further worsen these impacts too?
- From experience, the provision of recessed balconies always results in potential daylight and sunlight issues for the internal rooms; this will need to be thoroughly tested at application stage. There is also a wider question as to how well the front amenity spaces will be used, given they front onto the busy Oxford Road (noting that Oxford Road is a classified road and within an Air Quality Management Area). As such, it is questioned whether the layout should be flipped, so as to explore providing the majority of amenity space on the quieter side of the building? It is acknowledged that this elevation being north / north-east facing may have influenced your decision to date?
- In terms of the shared amenity space to rear elevation of Block A at first and second floor level, there is potential for this to result in overlooking at close quarters to bedroom 3 of units A-04 and A-05. You are advised to explore steps to seek to mitigate this impact (e.g. reducing the footprint of the terrace and including soft landscaping in these areas instead), without harming levels of outlook or access to day/sunlight to these habitable rooms either.
- In terms of Block B, it is questioned why smaller units are served with individual rear gardens, whereas the larger units would (aside from those townhouses at either ends of the block) would only include balcony/terrace spaces? It would normally be expected for the larger units

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to include dedicated garden spaces, rather than 1-bed units. It is noted that you explained at our meeting that this was dictated by seeking to provide these as on-site affordable housing units. You are nevertheless encouraged to explore flipping the internal composition of the units to provide the maisonettes at ground and first floor level?

- Moreover, on first glance of the elevation plans I was personally anticipating the Block B units to be a series of individual townhouses, rather than being a combination of flats and maisonettes. At the DRP meeting, this viewpoint was shared by several panel members too. The current arrangement results in inevitable issues of overlooking/lack of privacy to the rear amenity spaces of the ground floor flats from the maisonettes above. It is questioned why Block B is simply not proposed as a series of 7 x 3 or 4-bed townhouses, with any loss in number of units (in the scheme as a whole) potentially offset by changes to create smaller units within Block A?
- The current arrangement of Block B also results in the ground floor elevation looking overly dominated with 9 doors across the frontage. When also combined with the continuous row of parking proposed, there is a general feeling of the layout being cramped at this point, lacking in greenness and therefore perhaps not being as welcoming as it could/should be.
- It is also questioned why bike and bin stores are in a separate block, rather than individual facilities provided for each unit as one would usually anticipate to assist each future occupier? It is considered that these elements of the proposals are further considered and refined.
- Within Unit B.01, bedroom 2 is only served by rooflights, rather than any standard windows. This would result in unacceptable levels of outlook and access to day/sunlight, with the internal layout altered accordingly to address this shortcoming. It is noted that on the corresponding B.06 unit an en-site and expansive storage room is shown instead at this point.
- Concerns are raised in relation to the second floor rear (north elevation) Block B terraces overlooking the rear gardens of Stone Street. The short distance to the boundary, together with the second floor level, would provide clear overlooking/overbearing and the perception of a loss of privacy to the rear amenity spaces of Stone Street properties. Although the internal window to window distances are satisfactory, I would advise against provision of external terraces on this elevation due to the limited distance to the boundary.
- It is positive that the vast majority of units (22 / 25) appear to be dual aspect, with the exception being 3 south west facing single aspect units. In respect of these units, you are advised to be particularly mindful of overheating of these units (from their orientation and resultant sun impacts) and explore at an early stage ways to minimise and mitigate this. This applies to all south-west facing elevations. The opposite orientation of rooms, those facing north / north-east, should also be carefully considered in respect of providing sufficient levels of sunlight to these rooms too.
- Open space – it is acknowledged that the proposals make a sustained effort in seeking to provide individual (and in some instances shared) amenity space, bearing in mind Policy H10 and the guidance at paragraph 4.4.87 of the supporting text. This compares favourably with adjacent nearby developments.

Environmental Protection observations

Closely linked to quality of accommodation matters, initial observations have been sought and received from the Environmental Protection (EP) team. Several the matters identified in the site allocation, together with criteria for Policies H5 and CC8 can be evidenced through the matters initially commented on by EP below:

Noise impact on development

The front façade of the development is likely to be affected by road noise from the busy Oxford Road. A noise assessment should be submitted in support of applications for new residential proposed in noisy areas.

The noise assessment will be assessed against the recommendations for internal noise levels within dwellings and external noise levels within gardens / balconies in accordance with BS 8233:2014 and WHO guidelines for Community Noise. The report should identify any mitigation measures that are necessary to ensure that the recommended standard is met.

Where appropriate, the noise assessment data should also include noise events (LAMax) and the design should aim to prevent noise levels from noise events exceeding 45dB within bedrooms at night. Noise levels above 45dB are linked with sleep disturbance.

It may be possible though clever design to reduce the need for additional noise mitigation measures, for example, ensuring that noise sensitive rooms are located on the quieter façades and bathrooms, kitchens, hallways and cupboards etc on the noisiest facades.

Noise mitigation is likely to focus on the weak point in the structure; glazing. Given that the acoustic integrity would be compromised should the windows be opened, ventilation details must also be provided, where mitigation relies on closed windows. Ventilation measures should be selected which do not allow unacceptable noise ingress and should provide sufficient ventilation to avoid the need to open windows in hot weather, however non-openable windows are not considered an acceptable solution due to the impact on living standards.

Internal noise criteria (taken from BS8233:2014)

Room	Design criteria	Upper limit
Bedrooms (23:00 to 07:00)	<30dB $L_{Aeq,8hour}$	
Living rooms (07:00 – 23:00)	<35dB $L_{Aeq,16hour}$	
Gardens & Balconies	<50dB $L_{Aeq,T}$	<55dB $L_{Aeq,T}$

Noise generating development

Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. It is possible that this development will include noisy mechanical plant such as air conditioning, a generator or an externally ventilated plant room. If these are proposed then a noise generating noise assessment should be undertaken.

The noise assessment needs to establish the predicted noise rating level taking account of any characteristic factors like tonality or impulsiveness of the noise. The rating level should be compared with the background noise level.

The noise policy (EN17) states for proposed new plant:
The noise source specific noise level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor [and the rating level should not exceed the background level (as measured in accordance with BS4142:2014)].

Within Reading there is strong justification for requiring the plant specific noise level to be at least -10dB below the measured background level. This is specifically to prevent the cumulative impact

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from addition of plant over time which could result in background creeping up to levels which might cause adverse health impact, which is more likely in a densely occupied town such as Reading. Levels of -10dB ensure that the background level is not increased and nuisance is unlikely.

However, there may be some situations where this cannot be achieved there may be some flexibility where this is justifiable for example where there are very low background noise levels, etc.

Air Quality - Increased exposure

The proposed development is located within an air quality management area that we have identified with monitoring as being a pollution hot-spot (likely to breach the EU limit value for NO2) and introduces new exposure / receptors. An assessment and/or mitigation measures should be provided as part of the application.

You will need to demonstrate sufficient mitigation measures are implemented to protect the residents from the effects of poor air quality.

Where the development involves converting an existing building and allowing a buffer zone is not an option then it may be that other mitigation can be applied. In the first instance this would be to implement measures to reduce the level at the facade of the property by creating a barrier between the property and the carriageway, such as close boarded fencing or planting vegetation.

If this is not possible then locating habitable rooms away from the source of pollution or the use of mechanical ventilation with the inlet on the clean side of the property may be acceptable. This list of potential measures is by no means an exhaustive list:

Mitigation against increased exposure:
- Mechanical ventilation – inlets from the 'clean' side of the development, long term maintenance needs to be addressed
- Buffer zones – consider increasing distance of the building façade from very busy roads
- Habitable rooms – consider placing stairwells, corridors and bathrooms on the façade fronting pollution source
- Mixed use – locate any sensitive uses on higher floors, allowing commercial use on lower elevations
- Balconies – consider avoiding use in areas of exceedance, especially on ground and first floor level
- Non-opening front windows – this should only be considered in certain circumstances, needs to be balanced against loss of freedom for future occupants

Reading Borough Council's Air Quality Policy DM19 requires that developments have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality through design, mitigation and where required planning obligations to be used to help improve local air quality.

Bin storage - pest proofing

There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats. This is exacerbated by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. You should consider how bins will be stored and ensure that bin stores are designed in such a way as to minimise access from vermin.

Re-development of land - pest control

Where development will be taking place on sites with a former land use, particularly with a former drainage network, you are advised to ensure that former unused drains have been removed and / or properly capped or the proposed development may be at risk of rodent ingress.

It is likely that rats will occupy a cleared site. If there is a significant gap between site clearance and re-development, it is recommended that baiting be carried out to eradicate rats prior to redevelopment. This is to prevent rat populations which may be disturbed due to the redevelopment of the site causing subsequent problems to residents and businesses in the local area.

Contaminated Land

Ideally a 'phase 1' desk study should be submitted with applications for developments on sites with potentially contamination, such as this, to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether further investigation is necessary.

Investigation must be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action.

It is possible that the desk study will recommend further intrusive site investigation. If consent is given the further investigation will be required by condition, along with a condition for a remediation strategy and a condition for validation certification that remedial works have been successfully completed. The remediation strategy shall be submitted and approved prior to development and the validation certification prior to occupation. If no contamination is found by the intrusive investigations, then all conditions will be discharged.

Accordingly, you are strongly advised to take into full account all of the advice provided by the EP team and prepare any future application with these requirements in mind.

Transport/ highways considerations

The proposed development will consist of the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of two new residential blocks to provide 25 new residential dwellings consisting of:

BLOCK A	BLOCK B
1 Bed x 1	1 Bed x 4
2 Bed x 5	2 Bed x 2
4 Bed x 9	3 Bed x 3
	4 Bed x 1

Oxford road is a classified road and a red route. It is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development would be required to provide the following parking and cycle provision.

Type of Dwelling	Zone 3 Parking requirements	Zone 3 Total Parking Provision	Zone 3 Cycle Spaces Requirements Per Dwelling	Zone 3 Total Cycle Provision

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C3 Dwelling **House** 3+ Bed (2)	2.0	4	2.0	4
C3 Dwelling Flat 1-2 Bed (12)	1.5	18	0.5	6
C3 Dwelling Flat 3+ Bed (11)	2.0	22	1.0	11
Visitor Parking (flats only)	1 space per 10 dwellings	2	0	
TOTAL		46		21

The dimensions of the parking spaces and forecourt depths conform to the Council standards. However, the submitted Planning Statement states that 25 car parking spaces are proposed (1 for each unit), this falls considerably short of the Council's current parking standards in these locations. The proposed development is located in an area that is currently unrestricted and therefore overspill parking could occur. The development would therefore need to provide parking that is in accordance with the Council's required standards. Alternatively, if a reduced amount is proposed officers would require a comprehensive assessment of car ownership data to ensure this complies with Policy. For information, any car ownership data should represent the local area of the development and the size of units proposed.

It should be noted that recent changes to the Local Transport Plans States that developments should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Planning Officers recognise that the level of parking required is largely as a result of the large sized units, another requirement for this location. Accordingly, planning officers are likely to show flexibility on the parking requirements (i.e. accept a lower than policy required provision) should the justification for a lower provision be made/submitted by you. This needs to be an evidence-based rationale, rather than simply being sought to be agreed with officers (as you mentioned may be the case at our meeting).

Subsequent to our meeting, I sought further clarity from my transport colleagues, who further advised:

> Any subsequent planning application would need to be submitted with a Transport Statement and this will need to include car ownership data for the area to ascertain what level of car parking should be provided. It is noted that within the immediate area there are existing apartment blocks (Winslet Place and Branagh Court), which would give good comparable data on car ownership levels in the area and therefore these should be included within any assessment. The Highway Authority would not be able to 'just agree' a reduced figure.

At our meeting it was also referenced that the provision of car-club spaces could be another element you may wish to explore providing at the site. Subsequent to the meeting I discussed this specific point with my Transport colleagues, who consider that there may be some inherent difficulties with a car club in this specific instance, as follows:

> In this case given the levels of parking provided to the surrounding apartment blocks and the extensive areas of unrestricted parking, alongside the fact that the proposed development is quite modest in scale, I do not believe that a car club would generate a significant demand that would warrant it viable in the long run. Therefore, this would not be sufficient mitigation for the Highway Authority to accept a reduction in car parking on the site. This is not to say that residents would not wish to own a car or make use of a vehicle, only that car clubs also require the demand to be from sources outside of any development to make them viable in the long term (based on our experiences).

If you do subsequently propose a car club, clear justification and future management of this would need to be clearly explained within the Transport Statement, for officers to then further assess this.

In line with Policy TR5, Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:

▫ Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.

These should be specified on the floor and elevation plans submitted with your future application.

Accesses will need to provided in line with the Geometric Design Guidance for Accesses on to classified roads and a license will need to be obtained to undertake all works on the public highway. All unrequired accesses will need to be reinstated and realigned with the footway and new accesses will require visibility splays of 2.4m x90m to be illustrated on plans.

If a full application is submitted, tracking diagrams would be required illustrating delivery vehicles entering and turning on site and leaving in forward gear.

Cycle storage should be provided in accordance with the Council's current Parking standards which should be covered, secure Sheffield type stands. The cycle storage area should be fully accessible, full details of the type of provision would be required if a full application were to be submitted.

In terms of bin storage, please see the separate specialist comments received from Alice Layzell below. Notwithstanding this, Transport Planning also advise that bin storage should comply with Manual for Street and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Bin storage has been illustrated on submitted plans in 2 locations. It should be noted that these should not be located further than 10m from where the vehicle can wait to undertake collection. It should also be noted Schedule 1, Part H of the Building Regulations 2000 defines locations for the storage and collection of waste. One key point in the approved document at part H includes that residents should not be required to carry waste more than 30m (excluding any vertical distance) to the storage point.

A Construction Method Statement will be required for this development and the proposed work should be in accordance with the Borough's Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway.

You may wish to provide these details at application stage (in particular if a contractor has already been appointed - it is acknowledged that if a contractor is not appointed, this will limit your ability to provide detail at application stage) to avoid the need for this pre-commencement condition in full:

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No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Demolition and Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for WHERE REQUIRED:

a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided;
b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
d) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
e) Required wheel washing facilities on site;
f) A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
g) Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
h) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction; [Environmental Protection (EP) REQUIREMENT]
i) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction; [EP REQUIREMENT]
j) Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements. [EP REQUIREMENT]

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Owing to the nature of the proposed works, there may also be several bespoke elements (beyond those noted above) required in this instance. This will be able to be ascertained at the time of your submission. However, you should be mindful of the above should you wish to avoid this being a pre-commencement condition (should the subsequent application be supported).

Energy/ sustainability considerations

Reading Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency and set out its commitment to working to achieve a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. Elected members are particularly conscious of schemes meeting the more stringent policies the new local plan details (in comparison with the old local plan superseded in 2019).

As per Policy H5 the accommodation is required to be zero carbon, with the challenge of this target not to be underestimated. The December 2019 Sustainability SPD goes into detail as to the level / nature of information to be submitted. In particular, should the proposals not be zero carbon, then a carbon offsetting financial contribution will be required, as secured within the S106 Legal Agreement.

Furthermore, as per Policy CC4, there will be a requirement for the consideration of decentralised energy provision within the site. Again, please refer to the SPD regarding the level and nature of information required to be submitted. Please note that typically new major applications with energy requirements (such as your emerging scheme) will be sought to be independently reviewed on behalf of the local planning authority at the time of the future application, with this funded by you. Please see the 'other matters' section below for more details.

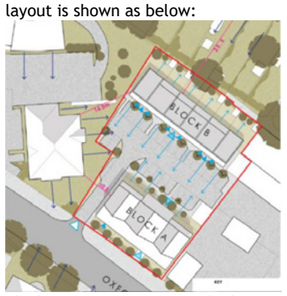
The above requirements will be incorporated within likely separate sustainability and energy statements submitted as part of your future application, with these elements frontloaded in your considerations to ensure that sustainability and energy requirements are at the forefront of your overall approach to the site. Your present submission appears to be silent in terms of sustainability and energy matters, with it advised that they are prioritised from the earliest opportunity.

Other matters

Natural Environment – The Council's Natural Environment Officer confirms that the site sits on a 'Treed corridor' (as defined in the 2021 Adopted Tree Strategy) and within the AQMA; hence tree planting/greening must be an integral part of the development to meet the aims of the Tree Strategy.

Site allocation Policy WR3L also supports the need for greening by virtue of the need to address air quality and noise impacts – trees can help with both.

With reference to the Pre-Application Statement dated 18 February 2021, ref 19014.9.1_21.02.18, the layout is shown as below:



Block A – up to 6 storeys; Block B – 3 Storeys

The Statement says: *The courtyard will include space for communal and private external amenity space, along with parking provision and access to bin and cycle storage.* The Natural Environment officer is not clear how this area could be defined as providing 'amenity space' as it appears to be a car park with thin soft strips behind Block A and in front of Block B, neither of which seem particularly 'useable' or desirable places to be? Clarity will be required on submission of a future application to demonstrate that the residents of Block A, in particular, will have sufficient, 'usable' amenity space.

The Statement includes the following in relation to landscape principles:
Landscaping
It is proposed to create a soft landscaped set-back from the Oxford Road footway which will include new native species tree planting to bring environmental and visual enhancement to the street scene.
Native species tree planting will also be included within the car parking court to soften the appearance of this hard landscaped area and also encourage biodiversity.
A soft landscape buffer will also be proposed at the rear of the site along the north western boundary with the rear gardens of the terraced housing along Stone Street.
The landscaping proposals are illustrative at this stage for the purposes of the preapplication enquiry. A detailed landscaping proposals would be prepared as part of the later full planning application process.

An illustrative layout is provided, as below:

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The inclusion of tree planting on the Oxford Road frontage is positive and would be a requirement, albeit it does appear fairly narrow so wouldn't, for example, mirror the treed frontage of the site opposite. It is yet to be demonstrated that there is sufficient space for meaningful tree planting that aids air quality (filtering pollution) and of sufficient size to also function as a noise barrier. You will need to consider this in any future application where landscape principles should be confirmed, including a planting palette.

Landscape principles should refer to the aims and guidance in the Tree Strategy with regard to e.g. species, diversity, size, wildlife value, tolerance of the specific site conditions (including use in pollution filtering/tolerance) and maximise the species size.

You should also include additional greening, given the comments above, in the form of green walls and roofs as also supported by policy.

It is noted there are tree(s) overhanging from Stone Street which will need to be considered in a brief (detailed/concise but size appropriate) Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment. It is stressed that this should be succinct given the small number of 'existing' trees to consider.

SuDs/drainage should be considered at an early stage with total redevelopment of the site enabling creative solutions, as supported by policy and Reading Climate Emergency Strategy:

In relation to relevant policy:
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, 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.
To meet these requirements:
• *All non-residential development or conversions to residential should incorporate water conservation measures so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the appropriate levels set out in the applicable BREEAM standard. Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.*
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
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:

• *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*

Reading Climate Emergency Strategy includes a 'water theme' section and states:
Water Theme Action Plan: Reading will aim to become the most water aware and water efficient town in the UK, going beyond national targets. We will achieve this by developing and implementing a dedicated communications and education strategy and delivering a range of water saving improvements in Reading's homes and businesses. Climate change will also increase the risk of flooding: significantly from the River Thames and from urban storm water. We will help residents and businesses understand these risks and to get ready for them.

The aforementioned policies CC2 & CC3 refer to water conservation and minimising run-off. It should be remembered that the development will significantly increase water usage (compared to existing) and significantly increase the production of grey water and foul sewer requirements. In addition, the landscaping will require water to ensure establishment and continued survival. Given that water is a finite resource that is likely to have control measures enforced in the future as a result of climate change (hotter, drier summers), added to the finite capacity of Thames Water to process dirty water, all development must include creative measures to minimise use of 'clean' water and reduce output into the sewers (which includes grey water), particularly in view of likely increases 'storm' events. Without this the borough as a whole (taking into account other significant developments) will have to cope with limitations on water supply in drought conditions, flooding, probable increased discharge of sewerage into water courses and failure of soft landscaping.

The drainage should be designed to harvest rainwater and direct this to water the landscaping; storing it for this purpose during high rainfall or when watering is not required (winter for example). Greywater should also be considered for this use in addition to/as well as recycling for use within the dwellings. Policy and aims of the adopted Climate Emergency Strategy supports these measures hence you should consider their stance on this and provide details on submission on an application.

Ecology – There is a risk that the proposals may affect protected species (particularly bats and nesting birds) and an ecological appraisal (comprising an extended Phase 1 Habitat and Species Scoping Survey, and any phase 2 surveys) will need to be submitted prior to the determination of the application as detailed below:

Survey requirements
Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey protected species.

Extended phase 1 habitat & protected species scoping survey
An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised technique for environmental audit and involves classifying and if required mapping habitats on and adjacent to the application site. The survey is then 'extended' and any features or habitats that are likely to be of importance for notable or protected species, and or prove to be a constraint to development are investigated further and described.

Phase 2 ecology surveys
If the surveys show that the site contains habitats suitable for protected species further surveys for species such as reptiles may need to be carried out

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Bat survey
A presence / absence bat survey is normally undertaken in two stages, firstly a preliminary roost assessment (or bat roost potential survey), whereby the inside and outside (from ground level) of the building and any trees to be removed is thoroughly searched for bats and signs of bats, this survey can be undertaken at any time of year. If no signs of bats and few features such as cracks and crevices in which bats could roost are found and the building and/or trees have negligible potential to host roosting bats then further surveys will not be required. However, if bats are found or the buildings and/or trees have features suitable for use by roosting bats, further emergence and or dawn surveys during the bat active season (i.e. between May and the end of August/ sub optimally until mid-October) may need to be carried out to confirm the presence or absence of bats and, if bats are present, to characterise the roost and establish mitigation requirements.

Ecological enhancements
In accordance with para 175 of the NPPF which reads "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged" biodiversity enhancements (such as swift bricks) and wildlife friendly landscaping scheme will need to be provided. These should be considered from the outset and shown on the submitted plans.

Waste and Recycling Services comments

My colleague in the Environmental and Commercial Services team, Alice Layzell, advises the following in terms of bin storage requirements:

- For Block A (15 dwellings) the development would need 2x180 litre food waste bins, 3x1100 recycling, and 2x1100 general waste.
- For Block B (10 dwellings) the development would be 1x240 food waste bin, 2x1100 recycling, and 1x1100 + 1x360 general waste bin.

It is considered likely that Block A can fit in the above, but it is considered unlikely that the current set up for bin store for block B would fit the above.

For Block A, it would be suggested that the bins are accessed from the car park side, rather than alongside the car park space. Whilst at this stage the officer is unsure on the exact measurements, it appears unlikely that there would be sufficient access without the chance of hitting the car which is in the space.

Also, all bins need to be within 10 metres. So, it would be suggested for Block B that the bin store is switched with the cycle store, so that the bins are within that. All bins must be accessible, for collection, but also for residents to use well. So, by having two bins behind each other would not work on a day to day basis with residents, as well as our collections. This bin store needs to have sufficient space that all bins are accessible on collection days. Should you wish to discuss specific bin storage requirements further, please advise me and I can pass this onto Alice for further comment.

SuDS – as a likely future major development, this is a mandatory national information requirement as part of your future proposal. Should you wish to outline your intended strategy for consideration at pre-application stage, this could be discussed further.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor comments

As discussed, the CPDA who has covered the Reading area for many years recently left TVP and no permanent replacement has been appointed at the time of writing. As such, officers are struggling to

obtain comments, with CPDAs from nearby areas understandably prioritising live major developments in the town centre. Accordingly, I do not anticipate receiving comments on this pre-application submission in the near future. I apologise for this. In the circumstances, I have revisited previous comments provided by the CPDA in the past year for comparable proposals (more specifically multi-storey apartment blocks with shared entrances) and included some of the generic guidance provided in those cases for your information:

Defensible space ground floor windows: Clear demarcate between public and private space can have a significant impact on privacy, security and safety. However, the "residential privacy" of ground floor apartments should be considered. In general, setbacks or defensible space with appropriate boundary (identifying ownership) should be provided to ensure that residents are offered appropriate levels of privacy and that windows do not open up over footpaths or public realm.

Lighting: No external lighting is presently shown, although it is acknowledged that this is likely to be advanced as the scheme develops. From a CPDA perspective, detailed lighting plans compliant with BS5489 should be proposed. Please note that bollard lighting is purely for wayfinding. It does not project sufficient light at the right height making it difficult to recognise facial features and can increase in the fear of crime.

CCTV: It is unclear whether this is proposed at this stage. It is recommended from a CPDA perspective that where natural surveillance of concealed and secluded areas cannot be achieved, CCTV (formal surveillance) should be considered. CCTV can have a positive impact on crime, especially when implemented as part of a wider package. CCTV is most effective when combined with good lighting and designed to counter a set of offences, and supported by management, continuous monitoring and adequate response.

Residential blocks Communal entrance and Access control

Recessed doorways: Recessed communal entrances could provide a focal point or location for individuals to meet and congregate. Given the required lighting associated with a communal entrance, the proposed design could facilitate anti-social behaviour. It is strongly recommended that any recess should be no more than 600mm, as this would reduce opportunities for Crime, ASB and reducing the fear of crime.

Entrance lobby: To minimise excessive permeability into and through a residential block it would be ideal for a secondary internal access controlled communal entrance door be included creating a secure airlock lobby at ground floor level.

Postal services: Letterboxes for apartments are a contentious issue and can lead to the security of the apartments being undermined. Unrestricted postal delivery access (to individual front doors of flats) provides a legitimate excuse for unauthorised individuals to be in private areas where they have no right to be, this in turn raises the fear of crime and provides opportunity for ASB and criminal activity. It is therefore recommended that residential post boxes are provided within the ground floor airlock lobby area. 'Trades' buttons must not be provided as they can facilitate unrestricted or unauthorised access into private residential areas, (providing opportunities for crime and ASB). (best practice https://www.securedbydesign.com/ Homes 2019)

Access control: To ensure that the opportunity to create a safe and sustainable community is not missed TVP will request that access control into and throughout the residential block be dealt with via condition, and ask that the applicant consider the following (or a similarly worded) condition. Such a condition will help to ensure that the development achieves the highest standards of design in

6.1 Local Authority Pre-application Enquiry Response

terms of safety and security, safe guarding future residents. Creating 'Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime will not undermine quality of life or community cohesion'.

Condition:
Prior to commencement of works, a detailed robust access control strategy shall be submitted for approval by the authority. The development (and subsequent access control system) shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and shall not be occupied or used until the authority has received confirmation of that said details.

To aid the applicant the following as an aid to achieving this condition is provided:

1. **External Communal entrances**: All external and internal Communal entrance doors meet the requirements of the minimum physical security requirements of LPS1175 Issue 8 B3)
   i. Developments with more than two floors are required to have a visitor door entry system and access control system.
   ii. All external and internal Communal entrance doors access will be controlled via an electronic remote release locking systems with audio/ visual intercom links to each apartment. This will allow residents to communicate with their visitors without having to open their front door and speak to them face-to-face as this allows them to filter who is allowed into the building and up into their flat..
   iii. The system will be required to record and store images for a minimum of 30 days.
   iv. Tradesperson's release mechanisms are not permitted as they have been proven to be a cause of ASB and unlawful access to residential areas
   v. Post boxes to be located as shown on plans (outer air lock lobby of each core)
2. **Compartmentalisation:** The Access control system must provide compartmentalisation of each floor within the development, and from the parking level, and cover each of the following;
3. **Secure communal lobbies**: Any internal door sets should meet the same specification as above be access controlled (ground floor and residential floor lobbies)

I would advise that it would be prudent to take the above advice into account when advancing your proposals despite the official response from the CPDA at Thames Valley Police being outstanding at the time of writing.

S106 Legal Agreements

The proposal will require a Section 106 Legal Agreement, possibly including the following:

- on-site affordable housing, with any shortfall in policy requirements being met by a financial contribution and deferred mechanism & related affordable housing matters
- A carbon offsetting financial contribution (should the proposals not be zero carbon), as per the Sustainability SPD formula.
- Employment, Skills and Training Plan, as detailed below.

Employment, Skills & Training Plans (ESPs) – as a major development of this nature it is anticipated that a construction phase ESP will be required, as secured via s106 legal agreement. Please see the SPD for more detailed commentary in this regard. You are advised to specify in your application submission your preferred approach to the ESP (either an actual ESP or a financial contribution, as detailed within the SPD). As such, frontloading discussions with Reading UK CIC (who facilitate ESPs on behalf of the local planning authority) would be welcomed and encouraged.

Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Given the understandable increased focus on fire regulations in recent years, although this does not form a statutory requirement, elected members expect / ask questions regarding the fire strategy for developments of this type. Accordingly, your future Design and Access statement should explicitly reference the precise steps which you are committed to adhering to in this regard. This is with view to this being directly reported in any future officer committee report. As such, engaging BFRS at pre-application stage would be encouraged.

CIL – It appears certain, given the proposed uses and increases in floorspace proposed, that the proposed development will be CIL liable. Please note that the charging schedule is subject to indexation, with the 2021 rate for residential is £156.71. Should you wish to undertake discussions with officers regarding the likely future liability, please submit marked up plans indicating the methodology behind the existing and proposed floorspace figures, with this also differentiating the different uses existing/proposed (which would attract different CIL rates).

Wider consultation - It is considered that a programme of wider stakeholder and public consultation should take place for a proposal of this nature; it is considered essential that this should be undertaken at pre-application stage - please see pages 14-16 of the SCI for more information. As a minimum, nearby landowners / occupiers / tenants and Kentwood ward councillors should be engaged.

Validation requirements - At this earliest of opportunities, it is advised that the supporting documents at the time of any future application submission is outlined within the local validation checklist document. At this juncture I anticipate the following will be required:

Part 1: Mandatory national information requirements (Forms, Ownership certificates/declaration/ site plan, block plan, fee, CIL form and plans, SuDS, Design and Access Statement)

Part 2:
1. Affordable Housing Statement
2. Air quality assessment
4. Contaminated land survey & report
5. Daylight/sunlight assessment (impact on nearby residential occupiers AND future occupiers)
6. Ecological survey and reports (see Ecology section above)
7. Energy efficiency statements
9. External lighting (if proposed)
11. Heads of Terms proposal
13. Landscape principles
14. Materials details
15. Noise & vibration impact assessment (see Environmental Protection section above)
16. Open Space Statement
17. Planning Statement
18. Plans and drawings
20. Sustainability Statements
22. Transport Statement
23. Tree Survey
24. Utilities surveys and proposals (see also the SuDS part 1 requirements above)
25. Vehicle (including cycle) parking and waste collection details
27. Viability appraisal (if applicable)

In addition, a number of bespoke elements are also referenced as being required:

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- Loss of existing uses justification (can be included within the Planning Statement)
- Policy H5 assessment (preference for this to be a standalone document
- Specific commentary detailing how the proposals will adhere to fire regulations (can be included within the Planning Statement)
- Statement of community involvement

Additional fees at application stage – Beyond the standard application fee, it is also noted at this initial stage that the local planning authority would seek for the prospective applicant to fund any independent reviews of technical information relating to daylight/sunlight/overshadowing and sustainability/energy matters (at pre-application and application stage). For your information, BRE has regularly undertaken independent reviews for the local planning authority on day/sun matters. Based on my most recent experiences, you can anticipate the fees to be in the region of £1-3,000. Element Energy has regularly undertaken independent reviews for the local planning authority on sustainability/energy matters. Based on my most recent experiences, you can anticipate the fees to be in the region of £5-10,000.

There is also a separate fee for pre-application/application stage viability discussions, should the amount of affordable housing proposed be below that required by policy. These fees have already been detailed above.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion at this stage, it is considered that the pre-application proposals represent an encouraging initial proposal for the site. There are a number of areas where changes, refinements and further information is required in order for the emerging proposal to be in a position to be able to be supported by officers at application stage. The onus naturally falls on you to reflect on this advice in order to further develop the scheme. None of the issues raised in this response are considered to be insurmountable, with it anticipated that the feedback provided can be incorporated to hopefully advance a proposal which officers are able to support at application stage. Please contact me should you wish to undertake further pre-application discussions with officers (which could be tailored to solely discuss some matters, as desired) and potentially Reading DRP too.

Please note that the advice contained within this letter is that of an officer of the Borough Council and is provided without prejudice to the decision of the Borough Council, in the event of a formal application for planning permission. This advice is in good faith and will not over-ride the formal consideration of a planning application by the Council.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Markwell

Jonathan Markwell (via email only)
Principal Planning Officer

6.2 Design Review Panel Response

Reading Design Review Panel Comments

Listed Building: ~~Yes~~/No

Application No. 210277/PREAPP

Conservation Area: ~~Yes~~/No

Proposal:

Comprehensive redevelopment of the site with the demolition of the existing buildings and replacement with 2 buildings comprising 25 residential dwellings (5x 1 bed, 7x2 bed, 12 x 3 bed & 1 x4-bed.

Location:

816 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1EL

Site	Building	Sustainability	Detailing	Design Approach
Layout - Urban Structure & Grain	Layout – Density & mix	Energy	Craftsmanship	Response to context
Character of area	Scale	Materials	Functional	Legibility
Quality of public realm	Massing	Water	Longevity	Innovation
Landscape - continuity & enclosure	Appearance	Access	Weathering	
Orientation	Function	Health	Structurally honest	
Vehicle circulation	Outlook	Waste	Historically correct	
Pedestrian routes	Legibility	Reuse		
	Adaptability	Inclusivity		

Site

Oxford Road is one of the primary routes into the town centre from the West, the site is allocated in the local plan for residential redevelopment. It is a highly sustainable location, within a mile of Reading West station and well served with buses.

The proposals are arranged with a primary block facing Oxford Road and a secondary block within the depth of the site providing additional accommodation. The space between the two buildings is compromised by the quantity of parking provided, with there being little in the way of soft landscaping, amenity space or even hard landscaped aprons around the blocks.

The parking provision and the quantum of development is not a comfortably balanced just yet. The Panel are of the view that the parking standards required by RBC are out of kilter with the location and their net zero carbon ambitions.

The Panel also question whether the mixture of flats and maisonettes to the rear of the site is right, as smaller dwellings appear to be gaining from larger gardens and larger units have elevated terraces facing north towards the neighbours. It was suggested that a series of town houses should be investigated here instead as a more appropriate typology. As a scheme that has been able to adapt layout arrangements to benefit from passive principles irrespective of primary orientation, a useful precedent could be:

http://www.mikhailriches.com/project/goldsmith-street/#slide-2

If townhouses are pursued at 816 Oxford Road, some creativity will be required to provide appropriate gardens, the current 7.5m north facing garden would not work.

1

Building

The Panel were of the view that the massing is broadly acceptable in terms of the relationship to the public realm and surrounding context. That said, aside from the challenges relating to the site layout and landscape, the Panel consider that the design of the buildings in three dimensions does need to be better illustrated to prove it is acceptable. Particular concern exists relating to the flank ends of Block A that are six storeys in height with no relief or interest currently shown. Much more information about how the proposals are appropriate for their context is required.

The architectural ambitions of the scheme to date do show some merit, however there is a lack of harmony between the approach on the lower and upper floors of block A, and how this translates to the different scale and setting of block B. The sheer number of entrances at ground floor to block B further undermines the quality of the façade here, the introduction of the town house typology could address this.

The use of brick as a material that relates well to the context is sound but a 'London stock' is not as well grounded in the location as possible. Further the Panel do encourage applicants to consider the embodied carbon associated to materials proposed too.

Sustainability

No information presented but the applicant is aware of RBC's ambitions. The Panel suggest early engagement with Sustainability specialists is undertaken.

Detailing

n/a

Design Approach

Conceptually the proposals need considerable development. At present, as noted, there is some merit in the elevations presented but these are not well balanced as the massing changes within the blocks, and they are not coherent in three dimensions. The variation in fenestration pattern is quite uncomfortable in places.

Any further comments

Landscape design is of enormous importance to delivering a successful set of proposals on this site. The ambitions captured in the proposals to date are sound, but unfortunately at present the space allowed for the trees and soft landscaping will not be sufficient to create a positive living environment or the level of enhancement to the public realm needed.

The Panel would like to see a comprehensive and well-coordinated set of proposals, drawing on the expertise of specialists supporting the current team.

Date:25.06.21

Signed

On behalf of the Reading Design Review Panel

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6.3 Public Consultation Letter

Dear Resident,

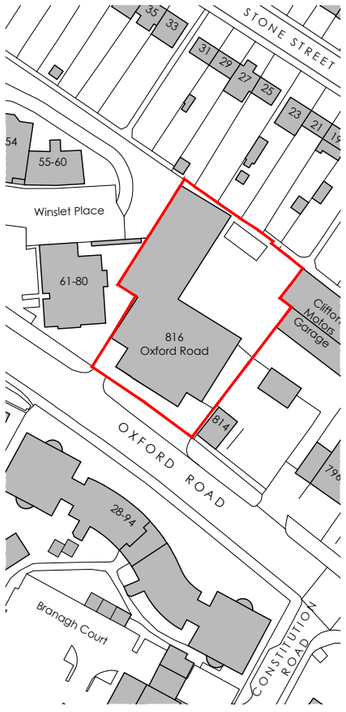
We are contacting you to inform you about proposals to redevelop the land at 816 Oxford Road by its owner, John Filbee Properties Ltd.

Design proposals are being developed by Weston & Co Architects and we want to hear what you think. Your thoughts and comments will be carefully considered by the development team and will feed into the progression of our proposals before they are submitted to Reading Borough Council for planning permission. Please make sure to have your say and share your views with us by 17th December 2021 by emailing studio@weston-co.com

The Development Site Location

The site is located at 816 Oxford Road to the south-east of the Norcot Roundabout junction. It currently contains a collection of light industrial buildings which have been vacant for some time.

The site has a street frontage of approximately 35 metres in length facing directly over Oxford Road where it is accessed. The site is bounded to the west by the Winslet Place residential development, and to the east by light industrial units and associated parking occupied by Portakabin Ltd and Clifton Motors. To the north, the site is bounded by the rear gardens of houses located along Stone Street.



Site Location Plan



Front/Street view of 816 Oxford Road as existing



Rear/Courtyard view of 816 Oxford Road as existing

The Proposed Development

The proposal is to create high quality residential accommodation on this underused but well located brownfield site. The development will provide an overall improvement to the immediate area, in terms of appearance, security and community, as well as contributing to the local authority's housing targets.
The development will achieve high sustainability standards and create a new place that will:

- Foster connections between neighbours
- Improve public communal spaces including new areas of soft landscaping with increased biodiversity.
- Thoughtful, high quality design and materials for the buildings and landscaping that are considerate and responsive to the local surroundings.
- Environmentally friendly and low energy buildings and sustainable travel options that will help reduce local traffic levels while still ensuring enough resident parking within the site.



Proposed development aerial view

1. Resident courtyard for amenity and car parking
2. Low rise houses to the rear of site avoid daylight or overlooking impacts to residents of Stone Street
3. Green landscaping and front doors onto Oxford Road enhance the street environment appearance and add safety by natural surveillance in the area
4. High quality local materials including brick will be used in the façades of the buildings
5. Green roofs maximise biodiversity and photovoltaic panels provide an on-site renewable energy source

Next Steps

We think that this redevelopment will bring about a much improved environment for local residents and neighbours while creating high quality new homes for its new occupants. We would like to hear your views and comments on the development, so please email your thoughts to studio@weston-co.com by 17th December 2021 for consideration.

Once we have received and reviewed your comments, we will make our best efforts to incorporate them where we can into the scheme design before it is submitted for planning which we estimate will be in early 2022.

We look forward to hearing what you think!

With best wishes,

Weston & Co Architects