



Planning Statement

640 Oxford Road
Reading

Prepared on Behalf of: VX KVA Ltd

Project: 16194
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Executive Summary

Evans Jones Ltd have been instructed by VX KVA Ltd to submit a full planning application to seeking a mixed-use development at 640 Oxford Road in Reading. The development would comprise three separate commercial units (one at basement level; and two at ground floor level); and four self-contained dwellings (two at first floor and two at second floor).

The ground floor commercial unit is currently occupied by a hair and beauty salon (Use Class Sui Generis) which is proposed to be retained. The remaining units are proposed to comprise Use Class E.

In order to facilitate the development, extensions and alterations are proposed to the rear.

The housing tenure as proposed would comprise a 100% affordable scheme; which, within the first five years (at least), is proposed to be rented to Reading Council who themselves will let the flats to vulnerable people. The housing mix would comprise 4x 1 bed flats; all of which would exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards.

The development is proposed to be served by vehicular and cycle parking; and the application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which demonstrates the approach to the provision.

The proposal is acceptable in principle complying with the relevant Development Plan policies. This statement has assessed all the other relevant planning considerations and found that the scheme is fully compliant with the Development Plan and other material policy considerations, including national policy and the pursuit of sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of the full planning application seeking permission for to provision of a mixed-use development at 640 Oxford Road in Reading. The development would comprise three separate commercial units (one at basement level; and two at ground floor level); and four self-contained dwellings (two at first floor and two at second floor).
- 1.2 The ground floor commercial unit is currently occupied by a hair and beauty salon (Use Class Sui Generis) which is proposed to be retained. The remaining units are proposed to comprise Use Class E. In order to facilitate the development, extensions and alterations are proposed to the rear.
- 1.3 This Statement sets out the main planning considerations and justifications for the scheme. In support of the application, this Statement demonstrates that the proposed scheme is acceptable in principle and expands upon issues relating the principle of development; design and visual amenity; impact upon neighbouring amenity; and impact upon the transport network.
- 1.4 The application submitted comprises the following plans and documents:
- Site Location Plan
 - Existing and Proposed Block Plans
 - Existing and Proposed Roof Plans
 - Existing and Proposed Side (West) Elevations
 - Existing and Proposed Side (East) Elevations
 - Existing and Proposed Rear Elevations
 - Existing and Proposed Front Elevations
 - Existing and Proposed Basement and Ground Floor Plans
 - Existing and Proposed First and Second Floor Plans
 - Planning Statement by Evans Jones
 - Transport Statement by Evoke Transport Ltd
- 1.5 This statement should be read in conjunction with the plans and documents that make up the application as a whole.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site comprises a three-storey building which is located at a corner-plot location on the junction of Oxford Road and Alma Street in Reading. The existing building comprises a dual-pitched slate tile roof and the elevations are finished in white render. There is a courtyard and parking area to the rear; beyond which is a two-storey office building within the applicant's ownership. This can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Site Location (taken from Google Maps)

- 2.2 The building is currently within a mixed use; the basement is let out for storage (Use Class E); the ground floor is a hair and beauty salon (Use Class Sui Generis); and the first and second floors are two separate, self-contained flats (Use Class C3) currently occupied by vulnerable people as identified and housed by Reading Council.
- 2.3 Access is gained via a pedestrian door on Alma Street which enters onto a staircase which leads both to the basement and upper floors. Access to the ground floor is gained to the frontage which comprises an open, glazed appearance resemblant of a shopfront.
- 2.4 The character of the area is urban; the southeast comprises a series of terraced dwellings which are arranged in a grid-style form along the road network. The north and west are occupied by commercial buildings such as hotels, warehouses and

supermarkets, with the area benefiting from a Core Employment Area strategic allocation. Immediately to the western border is the Royal Albion pub which is part of the “Green King” chain, beyond which is a block of flats and “Ibis” hotel.

- 2.5 The local buildings are generally modern which are of little historic or architectural merit. There is no strict vernacular although the character is resemblant of an outer city residential area. Many of the buildings in the area have been extended or altered; and of particular note, many of the buildings along Oxford Road have had lightwells installed to the front to enable light into the basement areas to transform them into useable spaces.
- 2.6 Vehicular access to the site is currently obtained via Alma Street which leads to a private walled and gated courtyard and parking area.
- 2.7 There is permit parking along Alma Street, and Oxford Road is identified within the Local Plan as a Classified Highway Network. The site is well served by public transport; the closest bus stops are 120m west and 104m east which provide various services connecting Reading with surrounding centres. In addition to this, Reading West train station is some 1.1km east; and Tilehurst train station is 2.1km north-west.
- 2.8 The site is not affected by any restrictive constraints or landscape designations and equally is located within Flood Zone 1 which indicates the lowest probability of surface water flooding according to the Environment Agency.

3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the expansion of a mixed-use development at 640 Oxford Road in Reading.
- 3.2 The existing building comprises basement storage; a hair and beauty salon at ground floor and two flats in the upper floors.
- 3.3 The development as proposed would comprise three separate commercial units (one at basement level; and two at ground floor level); and four self-contained dwellings (two at first floor and two at second floor). The hair and beauty salon would be retained so the use would be mixed (Class E, Sui Generis and Class C3).
- 3.4 Extensions and alterations are proposed to enlarge the building to facilitate the internal conversion; which would include the erection of a rear extension and roof dormer. The existing and proposed layouts are shown side-by-side below.



Figure 2 -Existing and Proposed Site Layout (extracted from submitted plans)

- 3.5 The proposal seeks a 100% affordable housing scheme.
- 3.6 The residential units are proposed to be let to the Council; who themselves will rent the housing out to vulnerable individuals. Given that it is expected that the tenants are likely to receive little or no income at the point of their tenancies, it is expected that they will unlikely own or have use to private vehicles. The location of the development in this sustainable area close to services, facilities and local transport links is imperative; and this goes hand-in-hand with a reduced reliance on private vehicle. The application is thus supported by a Transport Statement which rationalises the provision of parking.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 A review of the Council's online planning register shows the following applications which are of relevance to this application:

- **210365** - Lawful Development Certificate application under section 191 to establish the existing use class of the current building as shown on the accompanying location plan to be B1(a) offices (Use Class E(c) as amended 1st September 2020).
Result: Certificate Granted.
- **150077** - Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed Use as administrative office and call centre (Use Class A2).
Result: Certificate Granted.
- **150256** - Change of Use to Sui Generis (call centre for a private-hire vehicle company, Abbey Cars) with related parking provision at the existing rear parking court.
Result: Permission Granted.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 5.2 The Development Plan policy context for the site and the surrounding area is provided by Reading Borough Local Plan Adopted 2019 (Local Plan).

- 5.3 The policies that are of relevance to this application are set out below:

- Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC6 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm
- Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity
- Policy H1 – Housing provision
- Policy H2 – Density and Mix
- Policy H3 – Affordable Housing
- Policy H5 – Standards for New Housing
- Policy H6 – Accommodation for Vulnerable People
- Policy H10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- Policy TR1 – Achieving the Transport Strategy
- Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- Policy TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

- 5.4 Policy CC1 says: *“A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.”*

- 5.5 Policy CC2 says: *“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.”

- 5.6 Policy CC6 says that: *“The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.”*
- 5.7 Policy relating to design is provided by CC7. This policy seeks high quality design from all forms of development.
- 5.8 Policy CC8 says that: *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: • Privacy and overlooking; • Access to sunlight and daylight; • Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; • Harm to outlook; • Noise and disturbance; • Artificial lighting; • Vibration; • Dust and fumes; • Smell; • Crime and safety; or • Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys. The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.”*
- 5.9 Policy H1 confirms that provision will be made for 15,847 new homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.
- 5.10 Policy H2 says that: *“The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by: • the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas; • its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport; • the need to achieve high quality design; • the need to*

maximise the efficiency of land use; and • the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.”

- 5.11 The provision of affordable housing is covered by Policy H3. On sites of 1 – 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.
- 5.12 Policy H5 sets out standards for new build dwellings. As part of this, dwellings outside of the central area will be required to meet the National Space Standards, be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations, achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations, and be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3).
- 5.13 Policy H6 says that; *“Development for specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will, where possible, locate accommodation close to, or incorporate, relevant community facilities, such as healthcare services. Affordable specialist housing for vulnerable people that meets the needs of the most up to date Housing Strategy may count towards affordable housing provision in line with policy H3.”*
- 5.14 Policy H10 requires flats to be provided with communal space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space.
- 5.15 Policy TR1 says that: *“All development proposals should make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling, in accordance with any agreed transport assessment submitted as part of the application.”*
- 5.16 Policy TR3 says that: *“In determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the*

environment. Development will only be permitted where:- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority; ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network; iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists; iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.”

- 5.17 Policy TR5 says that: *“Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points: • All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide 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.”*

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.18 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised on 20th July 2021. The Framework sets out the Government’s economic, environmental and social planning policies for England and details how these are expected to be applied. It is, in itself, a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.19 The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means *“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay”* or *“where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless: i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the*

development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.”

5.20 The Framework defines the three overarching objectives of sustainable development as:

An Economic Objective – *to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

A Social Objective - *to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*

An Environmental Objective – *to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

5.21 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in the Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

5.22 Paragraph 218 of the Framework advises that the policies within the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.

5.23 Paragraph 219 of the Framework advises that existing policies should not be considered

out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to publication. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework and that the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.

- 5.24 Section 12 of the Framework provides context to design within planning. Paragraph 126 states *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”*

Other Material Policy Consideration

- 5.25 Outside of the Development Plan and the Framework, there are other material policy considerations that need to be discussed in relation to this development. In this case, the other material policy considerations are:

- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document

Appropriate Weight

- 5.26 Regarding the weight that is given, Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, determination of applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, full weight is given to the Local Plan as it forms the Development Plan.
- 5.27 As it forms the basis of Government policy for planning applications, substantial weight should be given to the policies of the Framework.
- 5.28 Since they do not form part of the Development Plan, limited weight can be given to the aforementioned SPDs/SPGs.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Having regard for the proposed development; the sites planning history; the relevant planning policy context; and all other material issues; the main planning considerations for the determination of this application relate to the principle of development; housing tenure and mix; design; transport and parking; and, impact upon neighbouring amenity.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The main policy considerations relating to the principle of development are set out by Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) both of the Local Plan; and Paragraph 11 of the Framework.
- 6.3 Policy CC1 says that: *“A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.”*
- 6.4 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is set to a national standard within the Paragraph 11 of the Framework which says that proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be appreciated without delay.
- 6.5 The three objectives of sustainable development are set out within Paragraph 8 of the Framework and are as follows: *a) An Economic Objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure; b) A Social Objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and c) An Environmental Objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using*

natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.6 Policy H1 says that: *“Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 – 2036.”* The sub-text says that *“Reading is a very tightly defined urban area, and sites for new development are limited. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. Provision of new housing therefore involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land, and the supply of such sites constrains the amount of housing that can be delivered in the Borough.”*

6.7 Thus, given that part of the proposal seeks to expand the existing commercial and residential use of the building through sympathetic extensions thereby increasing the housing stock and available commercial space, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the principle of development therefore accords with the development plan and thus permission should be granted without delay.

6.8 The stipulations associated with affordable housing have been assessed separately below within the housing tenure and mix sub-heading.

Housing Tenure and Mix

Residential Mix

6.9 Policy H2 sets out the housing mix, type and size requirements. Table 4.6 (below) sets out the following general housing need mix requirements:

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
Market	10.3%	29.6%	41.5%	18.5%
Affordable	43.4%	32.9%	21.6%	2.1%
Overall	18.6%	30.5%	36.5%	14.4%

6.10 The housing mix would comprise 4x one-bed flats; all of which would be affordable housing. Thus, as is demonstrated above, the Reading Local Plan, via the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (“SHMA”) published in 2016 identifies the biggest need for housing is for 1 bedroom affordable housing and therefore this proposal helps to meet an identified need through the provision of 1-bed dwellings in the form of flats.

Tenure

- 6.11 Policy H3 states that: *“On sites of 1 – 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.”*
- 6.12 The housing tenure would comprise 100% affordable housing; a provision which is well in excess of the policy requirement and contributes to a recognised housing need in the Borough.

Internal Space Standards

- 6.13 All homes have been designed to meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards in terms of overall unit sizes and the internal space standards of individual rooms and storage space in accordance with Policy H5.

External Space

- 6.14 Policy H10 says that: *“Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.”*
- 6.15 The plans incorporate private communal space to the rear of the property which can be utilised for refuse storage, green waste composting, general outdoor storage, cycle parking and drying space.

Design

Siting and Layout

- 6.16 Paragraph 119 says that: *“Planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses.”* Paragraph 120 goes on to say that: *“Planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs; and should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available*

sites could be used more effectively (for example, converting space above shops and building on or above); and should support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where a development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.”

- 6.17 Paragraph 130 of the Framework says that: *“Planning decisions should ensure that developments optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development.”*
- 6.18 The site comprises an existing building which is in a mixed commercial and residential use. It is located within an urban area in Reading where there is a recognised housing need; and lack of available sites for which this may be delivered. It is therefore considered that this site has good potential to be developed to enable effective use of land which is compatible with good design.
- 6.19 The existing building is of no architectural or historic merit; it comprises a commercial glass fronted unit at ground floor with living space in the floors above. The proposal seeks the erection of a two-storey rear gable extension; as well as roof additions, which would enable to additional dwellings to be located on the site.
- 6.20 The extensions as proposed would be consistent and in keeping with surrounding development and are thus suitable when considered within the design context of the area.
- 6.21 Overall, the siting and layout of the extensions as proposed is considered to be appropriate to the size and orientation of the plot and would be well related to the surrounding development features in keeping with the local area and maintaining its sense of place.

Height, Scale and Massing

- 6.22 The buildings within the surrounding area predominantly comprise terraced properties which are arranged along the road network.
- 6.23 Upon observation of the buildings within the immediately surrounding area, there is a

distinct trend of ‘corner turner’ and ‘bookend’ style development. This is characterised by the end buildings located on junctions/corner plot locations being higher than the remainder of the terrace; and thus they form distinct ‘finishing’ features. This is exhibited below:



Figure 3 – Street Scene of existing buildings (extracted from google maps).

- 6.24 This local trend characterises the areas sense of place and informs that 3-storey buildings adjacent to highways in this setting is an acceptable form of development consistent with the character and appearance of the area. Thus, although the provision of extensions would increase the bulk and massing when viewed from Oxford Road and Alma Road, it is considered that the development would be in keeping with the existing development.

Materials

- 6.25 The palette of materials would match those of the existing building in order that the extensions are sympathetic to its surroundings and host building. The chosen palette would be appropriate within the context of the surrounding area in accordance with the Development Plan.

Transport and Parking

- 6.26 The planning application is accompanied by a detailed Transport Note which was prepared by Evoke Transport.
- 6.27 The statement confirms that the site is located in an extremely accessible location with high quality pedestrian and cycle links and is in extremely close proximity to Reading

Town Centre. The Statement confirms that a lower provision is proposed in comparison with RBC Standards however due to the location of the site this is deemed to be appropriate.

6.28 The statement also proposes that, in order to ensure that no prospective residents park on the surrounding roads with permit holder restrictions, a legal agreement is prepared to restrict this. The applicant is thus agreeable to include this stipulation within a Section 106 agreement which will accompany the application.

6.29 In view of this, the Transport Statement concludes that the development would not result in an adverse impact upon the local highway network, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure or public transport networks; and the proposal is representative of forward-thinking, sustainable development.

Impact upon Neighbouring Amenity

Privacy, Overlooking and Outlook

6.30 There are no minimum separation distances specified the Local Plan. A general guideline of 21m between directly facing habitable room windows is common in case law however this pertains to residential-residential relationships. The relationships to be considered in this instance are: residential-office (ie rear outlook towards the “Rapid Personnel” building, residential-residential (side outlook beyond Alma Road towards No 638 Oxford Road) and residential-pub (side and rear outlook into the pub parking area). Each of the relationships are demonstrated in the visual overleaf:



Figure 4 – Visual demonstrating neighbour relationships (extracted from bing maps)

- 6.31 The first relationship (highlighted by the purple arrows above) relates to residential-office (ie rear outlook towards the “Rapid Personnel” building). The main building is currently occupied by tenants and as such the existing position is one of potential overlooking between the two properties. With that in mind however, given that the neighbouring building is an office use (which would be occupied during daytime working hours), and the host building would be in residential use (which would like be empty during daytime working hours), this relationship is not considered to be detrimental in terms of overlooking. In any event, the distance between the two buildings is 13m and the window arrangements would be staggered (and not direct) and as such this relationship would not be unacceptable.
- 6.32 The second relationship (highlighted by the orange arrows above) relates to residential-residential (side outlook beyond Alma Road towards No 638 Oxford Road). As demonstrated above, the outlook from the new windows would be towards a blank elevation which would be located across Alma Road; and as such this relationship would not result in overlooking or a loss of privacy.

6.33 The third relationship (highlighted by the green arrows above) relates to residential-pub (side and rear outlook into the pub parking area). As demonstrated above, the pub has a flat-roofed single storey rear protrusion; beyond which is a parking area. As such, although this area would be overlooked by the new development it is not considered that this would result in an adverse detrimental impact.

6.34 The proposed development has been positioned to minimise the potential for overlooking or loss of privacy with respect to the neighbouring properties whilst also maximising the use of the land for the provision of housing stock. It is also important to consider that the development as proposed would not worsen the impacts of privacy, overlooking and outlook above that which results from the existing dwellings.

6.35 In light of the above, the proposal ensures there is no adverse impact on the neighbours' amenity, in accordance with the Development Plan.

Bulk, Scale and Massing

6.36 The proposed building would not be taller than the existing building to be replaced. It would remain as a detached building would not overshadow neighbouring properties; nor result in an overbearing impact.

Air Quality

6.37 Due to the context of the site and nature of the development as proposed, it is not considered that studies and specialist information about air quality are required to support this planning application.

Noise

6.38 Due to the context of the site, it is not considered that studies and specialist information pertaining to noise impacts are required to support this planning application.

The Objectives of Sustainable Development

An Economic Objective

6.39 The proposed development comprises a scheme which contains 100% affordable

housing. One of the key objectives of affordable housing is to provide specific members of society with housing in order that their housing costs/payments are proportionate to their relative income. There are many economic benefits of providing such housing within this specific location which are briefly summarised below:

- Enabling the increase in discretionary spending; thus, serving to boost the local area and specifically community assets (such as the Lion Inn and local shops). This is because when affordable housing tenants are given the opportunity of subsidised rent or shared ownership and are thus able to afford the monthly payments, they are able to spend on local purchases beyond the bare necessities.
- Affordable housing can deliver job opportunities both during the construction phases and ultimately through longer term societal growth; because the healthier a local economy is – the more jobs it will need.
- When taken cumulatively with other similar developments, the boost to the local economy will have a noticeable effect on the wider economy as well as through taxes which can improve infrastructure and community facilities.

A Social Objective

- 6.40 The above described economic benefits of affordable housing come hand in hand with prospective social benefits. With more money to spend beyond the essentials, tenants of affordable units are more likely to spend on health and dental care as well as exercise and focus on a balanced diet. This can create a healthy cycle wherein the residents will benefit from good mental and physical health as a direct result of their living situation.
- 6.41 The reduction of poverty can also reduce long-term chronic health issues such as obesity, depression and COPD thereby sustaining the health of the occupiers as well as safeguarding the resources within the National Health Service. This will also reduce the likelihood of childhood poverty which not only has moral (social) benefits, but also economic benefits in terms of reducing a requirement for support and subsidy as well as giving an increased chance of the children growing to become valued citizens who contribute positively to a healthy society.
- 6.42 Further to the above, the provision of affordable units will eradicate potential homelessness, overcrowding issues and it will also lift members of society from

substandard housing which often exhibits dampness and disrepair. In addition to the above, the provision of affordable housing reduces the possibility or likelihood of eviction or other similar scenarios which enable family units to establish themselves and break previously harmful cycles.

An Environmental Objective

- 6.43 The provision of affordable housing provides an environmentally sustainable option which will provide viable assistance to needing members of the public in perpetuity. The houses will be constructed in the most sustainable manner with excellent thermal qualities and energy efficiency levels.
- 6.44 In environmental terms the building would be constructed in a thermally and energy efficient manner. It would place reliance on sustainable modes of transport encouraging local people to walk and cycle; in the spirit of the '10 minute town'.
- 6.45 As set out above, the scheme has given careful consideration to the objectives of sustainable development and is fully in accordance with the principles set out within the Framework.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The application seeks planning permission for the expansion of a mixed-use development at 640 Oxford Road in Reading. The existing building comprises basement storage; a hair and beauty salon at ground floor and two flats in the upper floors; and the hair and beauty salon is proposed to be retained.
- 7.2 The development as proposed would comprise three separate commercial units (one at basement level; and two at ground floor level); and four self-contained dwellings (two at first floor and two at second floor). The housing stock as proposed would comprise a 100% affordable housing tenure which will be secured within a Section 106 Agreement.
- 7.3 Extensions and alterations are proposed to enlarge the building to facilitate the internal conversion; which would include the erection of a rear extension and roof dormer.
- 7.4 The residential units are proposed to be let to the Council; who themselves will rent the housing out to vulnerable individuals. Given that it is expected that the tenants are likely to receive little or no income at the point of their tenancies, it is expected that they will unlikely own or have use to private vehicles. The location of the development in this sustainable area close to services, facilities and local transport links is imperative; and this goes hand-in-hand with a reduced reliance on private vehicle. The application is thus supported by a Transport Statement which rationalises the provision of parking.
- 7.5 This Statement has reviewed the relevant Development Plan Policy Framework as it applies in this case, together with the other material considerations. On the evidence presented it has been demonstrated that the proposal accords with all relevant Development Plan policies and national guidance, and there are no other material considerations present to override them.
- 7.6 It is therefore urged that the Local Planning Authority grant planning permission for this sustainable development.



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