



Planning, Design and Access Statement

In respect of an application for outline consent – access, appearance, scale
and layout

for:

Demolition of existing retail units and ancillary buildings and redevelopment
to provide ground floor retail, ancillary office space, with 12 apartments
above plus parking

at

142 – 144 Whitley Wood Lane,
Reading
RG2 8PP

Clients : Whitley Wood Properties Ltd
c/o 193 Coldharbour Lane
Hayes
UB3 3EH



Robert Young Associates (Hungerford) Ltd

29th November 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application proposes development of 3 retail units with twelve flats above following demolition of the existing shops, flats above and ancillary buildings at 142-144 Whitley Wood Road. Buildings on the site are obsolete and have a negative impact on the area, presenting an exciting opportunity to redevelop the site so as to make more efficient use of the land, contribute towards local housing supply with local retail facilities in a landmark development befitting the prominent corner plot on a busy local roundabout.

2 SITE LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The c. 800m² site occupies a corner plot to the north west of the Engineers Arms Roundabout, with Whitley Wood Road to its south and Whitely Wood Lane to the east. The site is within the 'suburb' of Whitley Wood approximately 2.5 miles south of Reading town centre.
- 2.2 At present the site includes vacant retail floorspace on the ground floor with a large single storey building to the rear. A flat is located at first floor level.
- 2.3 Neighbouring the site to the north is the commercial premises at 138 Whitley Wood Lane with mostly of Edwardian houses beyond, set to a stepped building line as the plots are not perpendicular to the road.
- 2.4 To the west of the site along Whitley Wood Road are 8 terraced houses at 'Howard Villas' separated from the site by their parking area.
- 2.5 On the opposite side of Whitley Wood Road to the south is modern 2-storey housing within Copenhagen Close.
- 2.6 On the opposite side of Whitley Wood Lane to the north east of the site is a newsagent with residential premises beyond.
- 2.7 On the diagonally opposite side of the roundabout are the 3-storey flats at Engineers Court which prominently front the roundabout.
- 2.8 Vehicular access into the site is gained from Whitley Wood Road into the parking area and service yard to the south and west of the buildings.

- 2.9 Whilst development on the site appears to be of Edwardian origins, there have been many subsequent alterations and extensions together with a ‘functional’ outbuilding with a mismatch of building materials and finishes. The buildings thus offer little architectural merit, and in addition to be outdated and of poor thermal efficiency and currently underused, the prominent site has a negative impact on the character of the area.
- 2.10 The application thus proposes redevelopment of the site to make more efficient use of the brownfield site and to allow it to make a positive contribution to the character of the area, with reference to the policies and guidelines below:

3 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – RELEVANT POLICIES

Reading Borough Local Plan

CC1:	PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2:	SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3:	ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5:	WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC6	ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
CC7	DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
H1	PROVISION OF HOUSING
H2	DENSITY AND MIX
H3	AFFORDABLE HOUSING
H5	STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H10	PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
H14	SUBURBAN RENEWAL AND REGENERATION
TR3	ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR4	CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES
TR5	CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

4 OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

RBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

RBC Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

RBC Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document

RBC Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations under Section 106

RBC Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Architects, Planners, Contractors, Managing Agents and Landlords

5 THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed to demolish and remove the existing buildings at the site, with arisings to be recycled and sold for re-use where suitable.
- 5.2 The new development will comprise a 3-storey building providing retail and residential accommodation.
- 5.3 At ground floor level retail floor space is proposed comprising 3 retail units of 83 m², 52 m² & 57m with additional ancillary office space. There would also be undercroft parking for 10 vehicles and bin storage. The retail units would principally address Whitley Wood Lane with shop fronts, but with the cornermost unit (Shop 3) also having side windows alongside Whitley Wood Road to the south. Staircase entrances for half the flats above be onto Whitley Wood Lane, with the entrance to the other half from Whitley Wood Road.
- 5.4 On the first floor would be flats 1-6 comprising 4 x 1-bedroom and 2 x 2-bedroom flats.
- 5.5 On the second floor would be flats 7-12 similarly comprising 4 x 1-bedroom and 2 x 2-bedroom flats.

- 5.6 In addition to this statement, the following details are submitted with the application:

Existing drawings

Location Plan	001
Existing plans and elevations grd	002
Existing plans and elevations 1 st flr	003
Existing plans and elevations 2 nd floor	004

Proposed development

Block Plan	001
Ground Floor	005
First Floor	006
Second Floor	007
Elevation (east and south)	008
Elevation (north & west)	009
Perspective	007

<u>Supporting details with reference to the RBC validation checklist</u>	
Sustainable Drainage System Proposals	See section 16 below
Affordable Housing Statement	See section 15 below
Air Quality Assessment	Not required as not within AQMA
Archaeological Assessment	Not within Area of Archaeological Potential
Contaminated Land Survey	See section 17 below
Daylight/Sunlight assessment	Not required
Ecological survey & reports	See section
Energy and Sustainability Statement	See section 18
Environmental Impact Statement	Not required
External Lighting	Not required
Flood Risk Assessment	Not required. <1Ha in FZ1
Heads of Terms proposals	See section 2015 below
Heritage Statement	Not required
Landscape principles	See section 015 below
Levels survey information	See topographical survey
Materials details	See submitted drawings Final details to be conditioned
Noise & Vibration Impact Assessment	Not required
Open Space Assessment	Not required
Town Centre/Retail/Leisure Uses Impact Assessment	Not required – less than 1000m ²
Transport Statement & Travel Plan	Not required as no significant traffic generation
Tree Report	No trees impacted
Utilities Statement	See section 19 below
Vehicle Parking & Waste collection details	See sections 13 & 15 14 below
Ventilation/Extraction details	Not required

6 THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The principle of redevelopment of the site for residential and retail uses is supported in this locality by the principles of sustainable development, and particularly the need to make efficient use of previously developed land which is supported by the

objectives of the Local Plan policies¹. The housing proposed would contribute towards the 127 dwellings needed from windfall sites towards maintaining a 5-year housing land supply. Whilst the site is not within an identified Local Centre, a commercial use is well established both on the site itself as well as other premises in the immediate locality. The modern retail premises proposed would help cater for the needs of local people whilst at the same time providing local employment and an active street frontage.

7 DESIGN AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

- 7.1 As noted above, development on the site is currently of poor architectural quality and has a negative impact on the character of the area. Redevelopment of the site thus provides opportunity to introduce contemporary landmark development befitting the prominence of the site on the roundabout and reflecting the scale of the opposite Engineers Court.
- 7.2 Development in the vicinity is of varied scale, form and character and development thus need not adhere to any established form or character.
- 7.3 The site has been subject to a number of proposals in modern history, most recently as subject to pre-application advice under reference 180688, and then application 190974 (withdrawn on 11th August 2020).
- 7.4 The application draws on the feedback from the previous schemes to propose a development that would respect the prevailing building line along Whitley Wood Lane and the position of the existing building relative to Whitley Wood Road. It would be of contemporary form and character, incorporating brickwork and tile construction so as to remain in-keeping with the area, yet at the same time introducing timber cladding on distinctive box gable projections and modern fenestration to provide distinctive contemporary elevations that provide for a high level of natural surveillance of the street and make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

¹ Local Plan Para. 2.2.2(2)

- 7.5 As such the development would meet the overarching aims of policy CC7 in achieving a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and policy H14 which supports development in suburban areas of the borough where it will improve the local built environment, improve and modernise the housing stock and deliver additional homes.

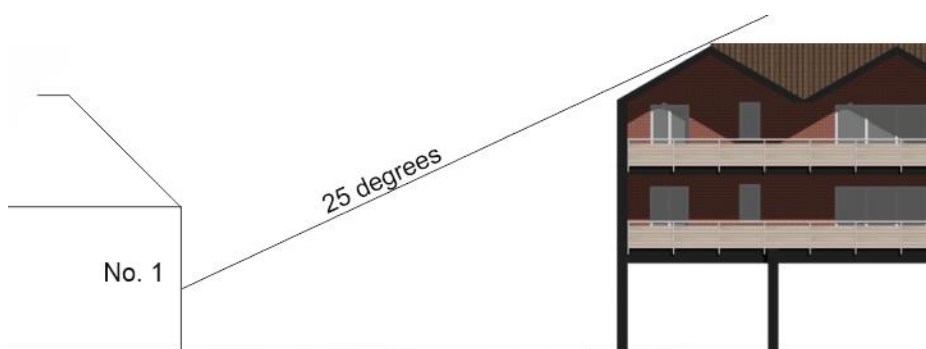
7.6 Landscape Principles

- 7.6.1 The details of landscaping are a reserved matter. The site currently does not provide for any landscaping of note, and under the proposals similarly offers limited scope for soft planting. There is opportunity for improved hard and perhaps soft landscaping however within the retail frontages to Whitley Wood Lane where currently there is an unattractive mix of concrete and macadam that has a negative impact on the pedestrian environment. Details to be submitted as reserved matters would provide for an improvement to this aspect of the public realm along Whitley Wood Lane.

8 NEIGHBOURING AMENITIES

Howard Villas

- 8.1 The nearest property, 1 Howard Villas is separated from the application site by the car park serving the terrace. Whilst there are a



number of side-facing windows towards the development site they look out over the car park. Only one of the windows is at ground floor level and it is a secondary window to a dual-aspect room. Assessed against BRE guidelines there may be some small loss of daylight to this window as a result of the development, but the loss would not be significant so as to materially impact on the residential amenity of the property.

- 8.2 There would be no windows in the development facing towards No. 1 so as to give rise to any material privacy impact (the Juliette balcony to Flat 11 is sited 34m from No. 1).

138 Whitley Wood Lane (Istanbul Barbers)

- 8.3 The development would not impact on the neighbouring barber to the north.

136 Whitley Wood Lane

- 8.4 No. 136 has a number of side window facing towards the development site. The function of these windows is unknown, but at ground floor level the closest windows would not be impacted due to their proximity to the neighbouring barbers:



- 8.5 At first floor level the windows appear to be of secondary function, with the closest window (in the main side wall) appearing to serve a room that also has a rear facing window. The side window in the rear outrigger is a very small window that does not appear to serve a living room. It is also noted that the similarly scaled development proposed in 2019 did not raise any concerns in terms of the residential amenities at No. 136. It is thus concluded that there would not be any material impact on No. 136 in terms of light loss.
- 8.6 Any material impact in terms of overlooking would be prevented by screen fencing to the first-floor roof top garden areas, and the 11m+ distance from the second-floor windows and balconies.

9 PROPOSED AMENITIES

Internal space

9.1 Policy H5 requires compliance with the Nationally-Described Space Standard (NDSS). The proposed residential accommodation compares as follows:

First Floor



Bedroom floor space in blue

	Accommodation	NDSS m ²	Proposed m ²
Flat 1	1b2p	50	52
Flat 2	1b2p	50	52
Flat 3	2b4p	70	78
Flat 4	2b3p	61	73
Flat 5	1b2p	50	49.8
Flat 6	1b2p	50	47

Second Floor



	<u>Accommodation</u>	<u>NDSS m²</u>	<u>Proposed m²</u>
Flat 7	1b2p	50	52
Flat 8	1b2p	50	52
Flat 9	2b3p	61	74
Flat 10	2b4p	70	71
Flat 11	1b2p	50	49.8
Flat 12	1b1p	39	44

9.2 The units thus meet the NDSS with many of the units comfortably exceeding the space requirement both in terms of room sizes and overall internal floor area.

Outdoor space

9.3 Policy H10 seeks the provision of functional private or communal open space for new development. Flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof garden. At the same time, the policy supporting text recognises that flats are less likely to attract families but as a rule of thumb, 25m² outdoor space is suggested for 1 and 2-bedroom flats.

9.4 At the same time policy H2 recognises the need for a variety of housing as well as the need to maximise the efficiency of land use, and in this context the suggested outdoor space requirements under policy H10 will not be a requirement for all

residents. The outdoor space thus needs to be considered ‘in the round’ as part of overall residential amenity balanced alongside e.g. the internal space provided, and with the need to provide a variety of accommodation in mind.

9.5 The following outdoor amenity space is proposed:

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Flat 1	17m ² Balcony	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 2	Balcony and rooftop garden area	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 3	Balcony and rooftop garden area	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 4	No balcony	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 5	Balcony and rooftop garden area	1-bed flat
Flat 6	No balcony	1-bed flat
Flat 7	17m ² Balcony	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 8	17m ² Balcony	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 9	15m ² Balcony	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 10	No balcony	Gross internal floor area exceeds NDSS
Flat 11	Juliette balcony	1-bed flat
Flat 12	No balcony	1-bed flat

9.6 Some of the one-bed units do not include outdoor amenity space, but within the flexibility suggested within the wider policy context it is considered that the development as a whole provides for a good level of amenity in the development whilst at the same time contributing towards housing choice.

10 HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY

10.1 Policy H2 identifies a need for family accommodation of 3+ bedrooms. Whilst the development comprises 1 and 2-bedroom flats, this is considered appropriate for the location of the site adjacent to the busy roundabout and nearby commercial premises, and the accommodation to be provided would represent a significant improvement upon the current 4 single HMO rooms on the site. Given the nature of accommodation proposed, in turn the resulting density is considered to be appropriate for the location in accordance also with policy CC6.

11 **RETAIL USE**

- 11.1 Retail use is established on the site and other premises in the near vicinity, although the site is outside any designated Local Centre or Key Frontage. The 210m² retail floorspace proposed however is relatively small-scale and thus does not require retail impact assessment under policies RL2 or RL5, or under national policy.
- 11.2 Deliveries to the retail units would be via Whitley Wood Road and the undercroft parking area. Storage of refuse and recyclable materials would be separate from that for the flats with commercial collection at frequency according to need.

12 **ACCESS**

- 12.1 Pedestrian access to the flats and retail units would be from the footways along Whitley Wood Lane and Whitley Wood Road. Vehicular access for car and cycle parking would be as at present from Whitley Wood Road, where the dropped kerb would need to be widened slightly and would maintain priority for users of the footway. The access arrangements would introduce no additional impacts on highway users and would thus be in accordance with the requirements of Policy TR3.

13 **PARKING**

- 13.1 Policy TR5 requires an appropriate level of car parking and cycle parking for the location. The location is within Zone 3 per the adopted Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document from 2011, which suggests the need for 1½ parking spaces per 1- or 2-bedroom flat, but that lesser provision may be acceptable if there would be no detriment to highway safety as a result. In the 2019 application, the Transport Development Control Officer thus accepted 1 parking space per flat.
- 13.2 The current application proposes 10 off-street car parking spaces. The site is located in a reasonably sustainable location due to its siting within defined settlement and has close links to the local bus network; being served by the numbers 6 & 9 buses with connections to Reading Station, and also the No. 5 service stopping 450m from the site along Whitley Wood Road. The site is also set close to the R10 cycle route linking from Whitley Wood to the town centre.

Considering also the 1-bedroom size of many of the flats proposed it is concluded that in the context of the site the proposed level of car parking would be appropriate.

- 13.3 Cycle parking for a minimum 12 bicycles would be provided in the form of a secure covered cycle cage in the undercroft area as shown on the ground floor plan.

14 **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

- 14.1 The flats would each be provided with 2 x 140l wheeled bins and communal food storage bins, with storage and collection areas as shown on the ground floor plan.

15 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT**

- 15.1 Policy H3 requires 30% of the housing to be affordable housing of appropriate tenure mix to include social rented, affordable rent, intermediate rent and shared ownership affordable units. The priority is for homes of 2 or more bedrooms.
- 15.2 The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document advises that units must meet the Nationally Described Space Standards, be built to the higher water efficiency standard, designed to a zero-carbon standard, and accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations
- 15.3 12 flats in total are proposed. 4 x 2-bed and 8 x 1-bed. It is proposed that 1 x 2-bed and 3 x 1-bed flats are to be affordable units offered through an approved Registered Housing provider. At this stage the location and tenure of the units has yet to be determined and will require discussion with the Council's housing team and the chosen Registered Provider.

16 **DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK**

- 16.1 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and less than 1 hectare. With there being no identified flood risk a Flood Risk Assessment is not required.

Sustainable Drainage System Proposals

- 16.2 The whole of the site at present is hard-paved or roofed, with 100% of surface water drainage being to sewers.
- 16.3 Soakaway drainage is not feasible within 5m of buildings and trafficked areas. The site constraints thus do not support drainage by infiltration to ground. It is proposed instead to connect the surface water drainage to sewers as at present, but with

‘betterment’ being provided with attenuation resulting from the significant area of rooftop gardens. This will inevitably however result in an improvement upon the existing situation, and details of the extent of absorbent ‘soft’ garden areas can be secured by way of planning conditions.

17 CONTAMINATION

- 17.1 Historically the site has been in retail and residential uses. There is thus no reasonable likelihood of any issues of contamination impacting on the development and proposed uses.

18 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

- 18.1 The proposal is for the flats to be constructed to zero carbon standard, incorporating high levels of thermal efficiency, air source heat pump heating, and solar roof tiles. South-facing flats will benefit from passive solar gain, with the inset balconies providing respite from the sun during the summer months. The flats will be designed and fitted internally so as to comply with the optional higher water efficiency standard set under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations. As such the development will be in accordance with policy CC2.
- 18.2 The development also provides for a level of accessibility in accordance with Approved Document M4(2) as required by policy H5, with lift access to the flats accessed by the southern core.

19 UTILITIES

- 19.1 The site is served by existing sewer connections as well as gas, electricity and broadband/ telephone service.

20 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS – HEADS OF TERMS

- 20.1 A planning obligation will be entered into in respect of affordable housing for the provision of 1 x 2-bed flat and 3 x 1-bed flats as affordable housing. Details of tenures will be the subject of discussion with the Council’s housing team and the chosen Registered Housing Provider.
- 20.2 The persons with an interest in the land that will need to be a party to a s.106 agreement will be provided at a later date along with a copy of the property Title



and any mortgagor and conformation that the applicant agrees to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs and monitoring fee.

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