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PLANNING STATEMENT

in respect of the existing 8-bedroom HMO at

98 Wokingham Road, Reading, Berkshire RG6 1JL

1. ENVIRONS

98 Wokingham Road, Reading ['No.98'], is a semi-detached house situated in a row of similar houses on the western side of Wokingham Road, the A329 classified road providing a bus route between Wokingham to the south-east and Central Reading to the north-west. The site is opposite Palmer Park, to the east, and is within a short cycling distance from the commercial shops further south along Wokingham Road, and from Royal Berkshire Hospital and various commercial, social and religious establishments in east Reading and Woodley.

Disregarding the nearby Tower House Hotel and other the commercial properties further south along Wokingham Road, the immediate area is predominantly residential in nature with generously sized dwellings built around 1920 consisting of similar three-storey semi-detached houses of traditional construction, usually with facing brick walls surmounted by timber-framed pitched tiled roofs, although the neighbouring No.100 is a similar but sole detached house. Many of these houses, including No.98, are used as HMOs providing accommodation generally for students attending nearby Reading University.

All houses in Palmer Park Avenue, including No.98 and its immediate neighbours, have the benefit of private rear gardens, and all are separated from Wokingham Road by front gardens, most having been paved to provide off-street parking. Most of the rear gardens of these houses abut those on the eastern side of College Road.

2. THE SITE

No.98, still with its original three storeys and facing brick walls surmounted by a timber-framed pitched tiled front roof, is joined to the neighbouring No.96 Wokingham Road ['No.96'] to the north, and is separated from No.100 Wokingham Road ['No.100'] to the south by its own garage and a paved area to No.100. Originally these houses all have their original two storey outriggers of similar construction as the main part of the house and projecting into the rear garden. At No.98 this was further augmented by a single-storey rear extension constructed in 2008 to enhance common areas of the already then extant HMO by providing additional sanitary facilities and a dining area to an enlarged kitchen.

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3. HISTORY

Since before the single-storey rear extension was constructed in 2008 it has been used as an eight-bedroom *sui generis* HMO, and it has been continuously used as such to the present day, its eight bedrooms being registered as such with the local planning authority's Environmental Health department.

4. CURRENT APPLICATION

The applicant is seeking a retroactive Certificate of Lawful Development.

The property has been occupied continuously as a *sui generis* HMO since the building before 2008, and tenants have been responsible for all utility bills and council taxes. However, due to data protection requirements, these authorities are unable to lawfully provide corroborative documentation but, accompanying the application are copies of the relevant tenancy agreements covering the full period to unequivocally demonstrate that the property has been continuously used as a seven-bedroom *sui generis* HMO for over 10 years.

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