



9 Upper Crown Street Reading RG1 2SS (LPA Ref. 211614)

Planning Statement Addendum

This Planning Statement Addendum accompanies revised drawings prepared by the architect submitted to the Council in January 2022. It specifically responds to points referenced by the Council during the application process.

Relationship between Building 1 and 2

The scheme has now been adjusted such that an intervening landscape buffer area is located immediately to the north of building 1's garden areas. In addition, the windows located in building 2's south facing elevation (towards building 1) are secondary windows serving the main living areas. Conceivably, the windows proposed on building 2's southern elevation could be omitted from the scheme in full. However, they have been included so to provide some additional natural light into the main living areas of the apartments located in the southern part of building 2. However, these windows would be obscure glazed and can be secured as non-opening through a conventionally worded condition so to ensure no undue overlooking occurs. The same can occur through the use of appropriate privacy screens on the small parts of the balconies that could have a south facing aspect (bearing in mind the main aspect of the balconies are either east or west facing).

Building 2's primary aspect is in an east or west facing direction and its relationship with building 1 can therefore be reasonably described as a flank to rear elevation. When assessing such a relationship, the distance between buildings would not normally require a 20 metre separation. In addition, the scheme has been revised so to include intervening landscaping to the immediate north of building 1's gardens and a potential green / living wall on building 2's south facing elevation. Positive biodiversity effects can then be achieved through the proposal and in addition, an improved green outlook towards building 2 can be secured from building 1's gardens. The rear to flank relationship between building 1 and 2 is therefore appropriate to the site's sustainable urban location by virtue of careful window placement and considered landscaping.

Relationship between Previous Buildings 2 and 3

This matter now falls away as an issue by virtue of the buildings being combined. This in turn removes a number of the inter-scheme relationship concerns mentioned previously.

Relationship between Building 2 and 3

The width of building 2 has been reconsidered such that it is now set further back from building 3. At its absolute closest point, the separation distance between building 2 and building 3 is 10 metres at lower levels. This separation increases at upper floors. The relationship is effectively a front to front relationship across a pedestrian access road / area of public realm. It is not unusual for dwellings to have a separation of this distance in an urban location across a street (or in this case a pedestrian access and intervening landscaping). The relationship is on a due east to west axis such that good levels of daylight will still be available to each building's elevations at different times of the day as the sun moves from east to west. The relationship between the two buildings is appropriate to the site's urban location.

Relationship between Building 2 and Indigo Apartments

Building 2's northwestern corner is located circa 13 metres from Indigo Apartments at its closest possible point. This distance significantly increases at higher levels. In addition, building 2 (and for that matter building 3 (that is sited yet further away from Indigo Apartments)) are located roughly to the

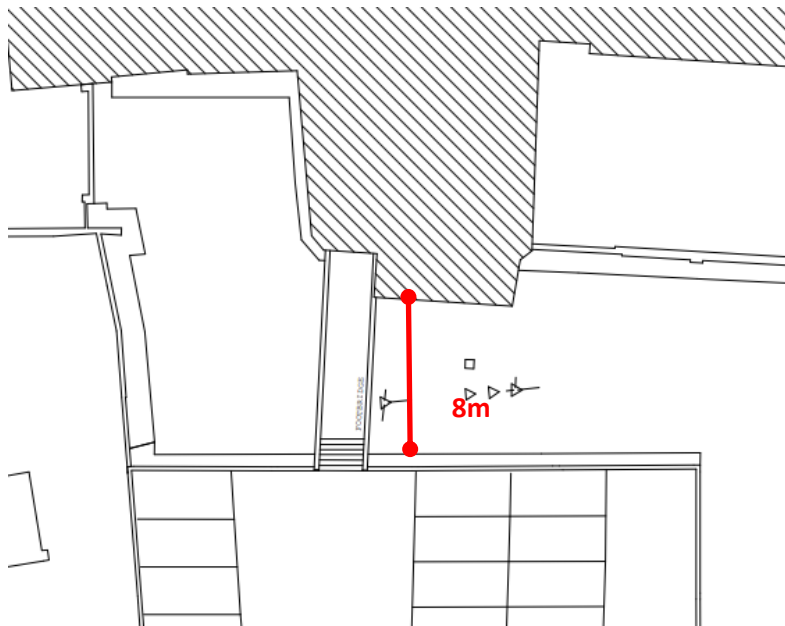
southeast and southwest of Indigo apartments. By not being located due south of Indigo Apartments, an open outlook is retained rather than having a due south to north relationship. This enables a less direct relationship whereby a large area of openness is provided due south of Indigo Apartments in the form of the landscaped public realm area that lies between buildings 2 and 3.

The relationship between building 2 and Indigo Apartments is offset at an angle and the actual distance between any windows will be more circa 15 metres at an angle of around 45 degrees. It follows that the potential for building 2 to have any direct undue overlooking impact upon him Indigo Apartments is now resolved.

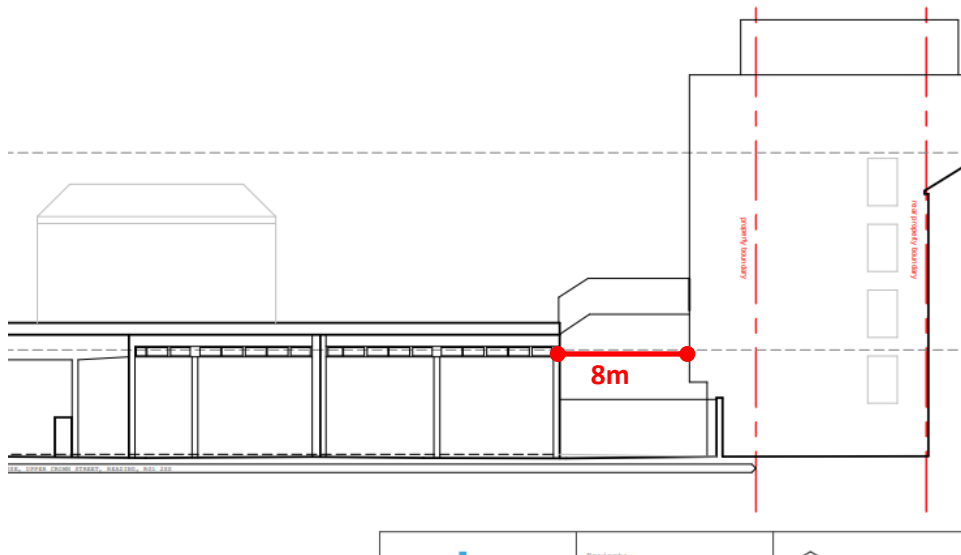
In addition, the scheme retains the intention to remove the existing footbridge and replace it with a new external staircase at a lower level and the existing building. The below plans and images assist in considering this relationship further.



existing footbridge

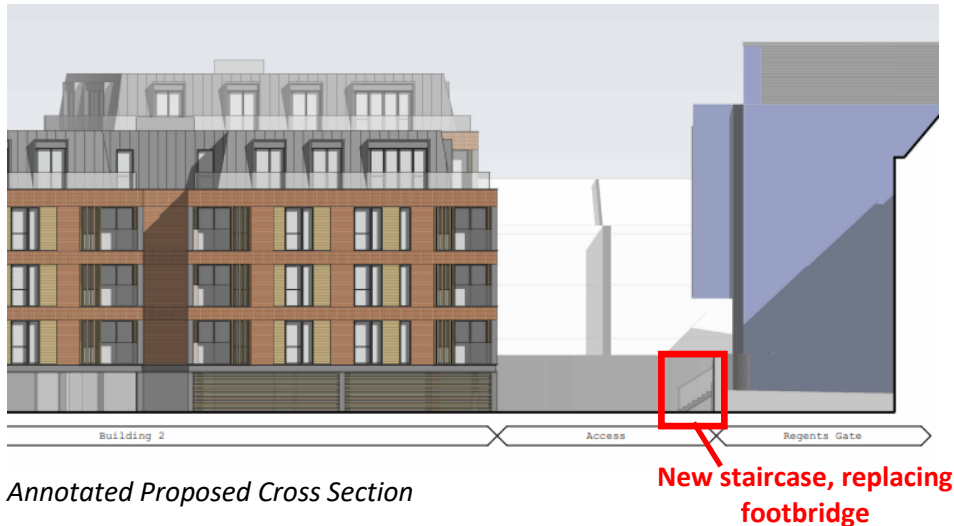


Annotated Existing Floor Plan



Annotated Existing Cross Section

The existing building is located due south of Indigo apartments at a distance of circa 8 metres. In addition, there is an existing footbridge that would have an adverse impact upon the outlook and the amount of available daylight received into the lower levels of Indigo apartments. By comparison, the scheme removes any building located due south of Indigo apartments and increases the separation to a minimum 13 metres. Further, it removes the existing footbridge and replaces it with a staircase at basement level therefore again improving the outlook and amount of daylight into Indigo apartments when compared to the current situation. This is illustrated on the proposed section below.



Annotated Proposed Cross Section

The result of this will be that lower levels of Indigo apartments will actually benefit from an improved outlook when compared to the current outlook that at the moment is compromised in particular by the footbridge and to a lesser degree the existing building. It follows that an appropriate relationship in all respects can be secured and actually betterment enabled. The relationship between building 2 and Indigo apartments was identified as acceptable in the originally submitted Daylight Report and by increasing the separation distance from building 2 to Indigo apartments yet further enables the conclusion of the report to now be yet more positive. The scheme's relationship with Indigo apartments has therefore been considerably improved and addressed.

Relationship between building 2 and Newark Street properties

Building 2 has been stepped back further from the Newark Street properties when compared to the distance previously proposed on the flank elevation of building 3. At its closest point the building lies circa 7.5 metres from the shared boundary. However, its proximity to the main rear elevation of the Newark Street properties is substantial by comprising circa 27 metres at its closest point. It is acknowledged that a three storey building with a set back mansard roof level above will exist in a location where a lower height extending car park structure exists. However, when one considers the existing cross section plan it is evident that it is only building 2's third floor and mansard roof level that in reality extend further upwards above the existing structure.

The separation distances between building 2 and the rear of the Newark Street properties are substantial and the impact upon potential privacy is at a distance appropriate to an urban sustainable location such as this. The relationship is a due east to west relationship such that any impact upon daylight will be minimal and only would occur during later periods of the day. It follows that the separation distance is appropriate in achieving appropriate relationship between building 2 and the properties on Newark Street.

Summary: Consideration of Living Conditions

The proposed scheme has been revised materially in relation to both its relationships with existing properties and within the scheme itself. In developing a site of a brownfield nature in a highly accessible location there is a need to strike a balance between appropriate residential amenities and ensuring the efficient use of rarely available brownfield land for development. This is particularly referenced at paragraph 120 and 125 of the NPPF (discussed below).

Paragraph 120, parts (c) and (d) state that planning decisions should:

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) 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 service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)⁴⁸; (Our emphasis)

Paragraph 125, part (c) refers to the importance of making an efficient use of land:

Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies³⁷ and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

...

c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards). (Our emphasis)

The revisions to the scheme secure an appropriate balance between these two objectives ensuring that appropriate residential amenities are protected (taking a necessarily flexible approach) whilst enabling development of a type of under utilised land specifically identified at paragraph 120 of the NPPF.

Overdevelopment / Height

The relationship between building 1 and its surroundings are illustrated on the below street elevation and 3D perspective.



Proposed Street Elevation



Upper Crown Street Approach

3D Perspective from Upper Crown Street

The proposed eaves and ridge heights of building 1 are broadly consistent with those found to the east further along Upper Crown Street. Their slight increase in height is entirely appropriate as one moves west towards the far taller buildings of City Gate and building 1 can therefore be considered appropriately proportionate to the Upper Crown Street street scene.

The relationship between building 2 and its neighbours is illustrated on the below east facing elevation and site section AA.



Site Section AA

Proposed Site Section



East Elevation: Access Road

Proposed East Elevation

Building 2 includes five floors of accommodation (albeit basement level is parking). However, if the height of the existing building car park structure is considered, the basement and ground and part of the first floor level are effectively already in existence and the upward extension truly relates to one to two full floors of accommodation plus the mansard roof.

The above elevations indicate that the main eaves height of building 2 will sit at a level actually just below the ridge height of building 1. The building then extends approximately a single floor above that height through the provision of a mansard roof. It is apparent that the eaves and ridge height of building 2 are approximately two floors respectively below the heights found at Indigo apartments to the north and similarly about two storeys below the height of the properties at City Gate to the west. It is important to note that the basement level is truly below ground and building 2's top floor is of a far less prominent form by virtue of it being set back from the main elevations in a mansard room form. When this is considered and the heights of surrounding buildings are assessed building 2 is of a proportionate scale and remains considerably below the heights of its immediate neighbours.

Building 3's footprint (formerly building 4) has been chamfered to lessen the scheme's impact on the Coop site to the west. In addition, its western elevation has been enlivened with windows, but these are then obscured (and serve stairwells) so to avoid overlooking. The below internal street elevation assists in assessing the building's height.



Proposed Internal Street Elevation

As mentioned, the building has been chamfered to lessen the impact on the neighbouring site to the west. It is acknowledged that the building is the tallest of the three proposed. However, this is for the logical reason that it lies on the site's north western boundary adjacent to the town centre and the dense allocations proposed to the northwest including on the site controlled by the Council at the Crown Street / Southampton Street junction. The above street elevation shows the eaves height to be circa half a storey below the neighbouring City Gate building and the ridge height to be similarly around half to two thirds of a storey below the City Gate building. In addition, it is around one storey lower than the height of Indigo apartments located to the north. This part of the site has been selected as the most appropriate location for a taller building but still one that remains below the heights of the buildings found facing towards Crown Street and Southampton Street and is therefore appropriate in scale and height respects.

Public Realm

The scheme's main public realm area is illustrated on the below "on the ground" 3D perspectives.



Main square looking north



Main square looking south

3D Street Views

The main public realm areas are illustrated on the 3D views provided above and offer the opportunity for a high quality, attractive landscaped environment to be introduced. Anyone seeking to access any of the 3 buildings in a pedestrian form would use this area and it would also be available for public recreation. In addition, the existing users of the parking areas would either walk through these public realm areas or a direct staircase is provided adjacent to their property such the easy access to parking areas is provided. The site presently offers a building of no visual merit and benefits from no green landscaping at all. By comparison, the scheme offers an opportunity to introduce considerable public realm and green landscaping and enable an area of public realm to the betterment of Upper Crown Street and in a naturally surveilled form.

Affordable Housing

The revised scheme includes a substantive reduction in total gross internal area. However, it remains a policy compliant one in providing 30% as affordable housing provision consistent with Local Plan Policy H3. The Council's most recent Annual Monitoring Report refers to a need for 406 affordable dwellings per annum but that in the most recent monitoring year only 80 were delivered. In addition, many brownfield sites in the Borough when being developed are subject to viability assessments whereby the policy aspiration is not met. The scheme's policy compliant affordable housing provision benefits from substantial positive weight in undertaking the necessary overall planning balance exercise.

Dwelling Mix

The scheme retains a strong mix of 21 x 1 bed, 11 x 2 bed and 14 x 3 bed dwellings. This includes the provision of 4 terraced houses that rarely feature as an accommodation offer in town centre (or adjacent to town centre locations) within Reading Borough. The ability for a true mixed community to develop is therefore enabled. Further, it is noted that the recently constructed schemes to the northeast of the site on the Crown Street / Silver Street junction included only 8 x 3 bedroom flats out of a total 99 dwellings (LPA Refs. 170794/FUL & 180417). No houses were proposed. The proposed scheme therefore compares very favourably to such examples. It provides an appropriate balance between a site on the edge of the town centre needing to be developed in an efficient form, whilst providing a balance of dwelling types and sizes.

Car Parking

A detailed Car Parking Management Plan has been prepared and supports the re-submission.

Summary

This Planning Statement Addendum supports the original Planning Statement. It details the revisions made to the scheme and includes a response to comments received during the application process.

The scheme proposes 46 new residential dwellings, including a policy compliant affordable housing provision. It therefore directly contributes to the Council's minimum housing needs and the pressing need for housing advocated in the NPPF.

The scheme proposes a policy compliant scheme having regard to the development plan as a whole and relevant material considerations including the NPPF. Consequently, the application can be supported and planning permission granted.

TR/24Jan/7847
