



Planning Design and Access Statement

Client:

Paul Bonney

1a Eaton Place

Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7XP

To support a planning application for the demolition of the existing commercial building and the erection of two 1x bedroom residential flats

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CIL | Enforcement | Land Promotion | Planning | Sequential Tests | Viability

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the demolition of the existing commercial building and the erection of two x 1 bedroom residential flats at 1a Eaton Place, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7LP.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by Paul Bonney:
- BA0175-10 "Existing Plans and Elevations" 1:100
 - BA0175-11 "Proposed Floor Plans" 1:100
 - BA0175-12 "Proposed Elevations" 1:100
 - BA0175-13 "Site Plan" 1:200
 - BA0175- 14 "Site and Location Plans" 1:100
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is located in a densely populated area of Reading, off Oxford Road.
- 2.2 The site is currently occupied by an existing single storey commercial building, which is on the corner plot of Eaton Place and Chatham Place.
- 2.3 The surrounding area comprises buildings that are predominantly in use as residential flats, with a large number of commercial uses present.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 There is no relevant planning history at the site.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).

- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 **Use and Amount:** The proposed use is for the demolition of the existing commercial building, and its replacement with 2 residential flats.
- 4.4 **Layout and Scale:** The proposed building will be 2 storey in height. Internally, the accommodation has been laid out to maximise the internal space and light afforded. The internal layouts would comprise 2 x 1 bedroom flats, with each one occupying a floor.
- 4.5 **Scale Height & Mass:** The building will measure 6.75 meters in height, and will extend marginally beyond the existing building, with parameters of width (12 meters) and depth (5.10 meters).
- 4.6 **Landscaping:** There is little to no existing landscaping currently at the site. New planting can be accommodated and is proposed for control via condition.
- 4.7 **Appearance:** The external appearance of the building will be designed to be in keeping with the area, through the use of red brick and a hip to gable roof. Windows will be provided symmetrically to ensure consistency is maintained.
- 4.8 It is considered that the appearance of the existing building will be greatly improved by development at this site.
- 4.9 **Access & Parking:** No parking is proposed at the site. The site subject to this application is in a sustainable location, within a 5 minute walk to town centre amenities. Furthermore, the site is in closer and accessible proximity to wider car, bus and railway transport services. Therefore the application site is sustainable and suitable for residential development.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way” and “at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”. Paragraph 117 of the NPPF comments that planning should “make effective use of land” in “meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”.
- 5.3 Paragraph 59 confirms the Government’s objective to boost the supply of housing, and paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.4 Paragraph 124 identifies that “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”, whilst paragraph 131 states that “In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”
- 5.5 The National Design Guide builds on the above, and clarifies that “well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of

tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use” (para 109).

- 5.6 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.7 The site falls within the settlement boundary of Reading, whereby residential development is acceptable in principle. The site is considered to be previously developed land, as per the definition laid out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.8 Paragraph 118.b) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ‘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.
- 5.9 Policy CC2 indicates that new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment of existing building stock will be acceptable subject to the necessary factors.
- 5.10 Paragraph H1 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan suggests a provision of at least 15,847 homes in the Borough for the period 2013

to 2036. This application will contribute to this supply of housing, whilst in a sustainable location.

5.11 It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle.

5.12 **Loss of Employment:** It is considered that the modest single storey existing commercial building does not offer a significant enough contribution to employment in the area to outweigh the benefits of providing housing.

5.13 **Density and Size of Dwellings:** Policy H2 of the Local Plan suggests that appropriate densities will differ, depending on factors such as the character and mix of uses in the area, sustainability in terms of accessibility and the need to maximise the efficiency of land use.

5.14 As per Policy H2, net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable. This proposal will contribute to a higher net density than the policy minimum, making an efficient use of land.

5.15 **Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area:** The proposal is for a two storey development. This is considered to be in keeping with the existing character, given that many of the buildings are two or more storey residential blocks.

5.16 The proposal is similar in design to other buildings in the vicinity, and is the same height as the building immediate south. It has been designed to assimilate into the existing street scene, whilst resulting in a visual improvement over the existing building. Subtle architectural design has been included in such a way to ensure the development is subservient to the street scene, in line with Policy CC7.

5.17 The roof and windows have been designed to match other buildings in the area.

- 5.18 The site is also located within the Castle Hill/Russel Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area.
- 5.19 Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas gives further criteria which needs to be fulfilled. It states that 'Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of Conservation Areas.' The existing building is poorly maintained and in a state of disrepair. As such, it is considered to be an eyesore to the Conservation Area in which it is sited. The new development will bring a new lease of life to the site, and will greatly enhance the outlook and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.20 Number 104 Mannson House opposite is also listed. The sensitive design and modest scale of the development is not considered to adversely affect the setting of the listed building.
- 5.21 In order to fully address heritage matters, a Heritage Statement has been provided alongside this application. This will assess the impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area and the adjacent listed building which is approximately 10.2 meters away.
- 5.22 It is therefore considered that the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area, and will result in a great improvement for the use and appearance of the site.
- 5.23 **Residential Amenity – Internal Space:** The first floor flat exceeds the National Space Standards for a one bed flat, of 37SQM. Whilst the ground floor flat measures 30.4 SQM, it is considered that there is flexibility in the policy, given the central area location of the application site and proposed occupation by just one person.

- 5.24 **Residential Amenity – Overlooking, Loss of Light and Overbearing:** Given that the majority of buildings in the area are two or more storeys in height, the proposal is not considered to contribute to any overbearing effects on the amenity of neighbouring buildings.
- 5.25 The proposal represents a lower height than buildings in the vicinity. Given the general massing and density in the area, it is not considered that the development would lead to any further loss of light, or privacy to surrounding residential properties than is already present. The development is therefore in line with Policy CC8.
- 5.26 **Trees and Landscaping:** Given the built up, urban location of the site, it is not considered that trees or landscaping need be included as part of this proposal. There are no existing features affected.
- 5.27 **Transport and Parking:** Whilst no parking is proposed at the site, and its position within a designated central area, a lack of parking is not considered to be prohibitive to the proposal.
- 5.28 The site is situated in an extremely sustainable location. For example, the Broad Street Mall is approximately 300 meters away. There are ample public transport links surrounding the site, further reducing the need for parking provision.
- 5.29 The parking demand is also likely to be similar or less than the parking demand generated by the existing commercial building.
- 5.30 **Cycle Provision:** The proposal includes sufficient cycle storage as part of the application, which is suitably demonstrated on the submitted plans.
- 5.31 This cycle provision is integrated within the building, and is given a designated storage area. This reduces any effect on the appearance of the building and is extremely subservient.

- 5.32 **Refuse Provision:** A bin store is located within the footprint of the building for ease of access adjacent to the highway.
- 5.33 **Air Quality:** Whilst the site is situated in the Reading AQMA, it is not considered that it's scale would cause a local worsening in air quality.
- 5.34 **Drainage and SuDS:** The proposed development would be sited on the same hardstanding land as the existing building. As such, the existing drainage system will be retained.
- 5.35 No additional sections of hardstanding are proposed to be constructed.
- 5.36 **Sustainability and Energy:** Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2010 requires a 25% reduction in carbon emissions over the 2006 standards. This is equivalent to Code level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;
- A. The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the employment of good building standards to create an excellent SAP rating;
 - B. Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable;
 - C. Maximizing the use of natural light through large windows;
 - D. Reduced internal water consumption of 110 litres per person per day through the incorporation of water efficient sanitary

fittings, including low flow toilets and water efficient taps for wash basins;

E. Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service;

F. Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport;

G. 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings;

H. 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision;

I. Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable;

5.37 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

5.38 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The Council have a CIL charging schedule, adopted on 01/04/2015. It is acknowledged that CIL will be payable at a rate of £156.71/m², subject to conditions. The relevant CIL forms are submitted with the application.

5.39 **Affordable Housing:** The provision of additional dwellings will require a financial contribution towards affordable housing. This is agreeable and can be secured via section 106 legal agreement.

6. Conclusion

6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.

- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would contribute an appropriate windfall site to the Borough's housing supply, will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area over the appearance of the existing building, and will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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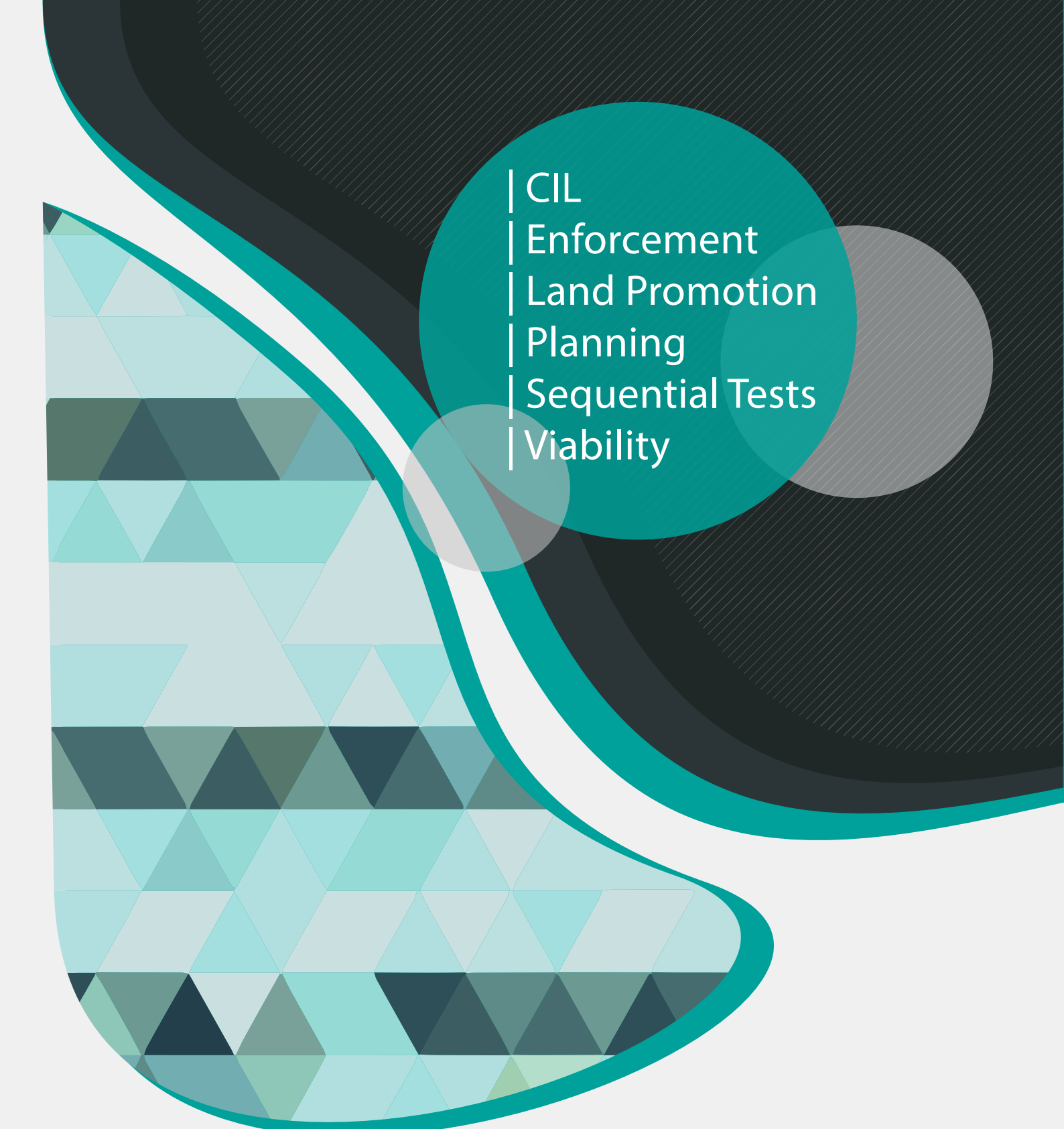
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