

PLANNING STATEMENT

Location: 58 Prospect Street, RG4 8JN

Client: Chopra Property Group Limited

Date: September 2021



PLANNING
INSIGHT

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Revision	Author	Reviewed By	Date
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	4
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	7
PLANNING POLICY	12
PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	17
CONCLUSION	25

INTRODUCTION

PLANNING STATEMENT

Chopra Property Group Limited

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Planning Insight on behalf of Chopra Property Group Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') to accompany a planning application to Reading Borough Council in respect of the proposed development at 58 Prospect Street, RG4 8JN (the 'Application Site').

"Construction of a two-storey detached single family dwelling."

- 1.1.2 The overall objective of the scheme is to provide a high-quality family dwelling development at this site, in order to make efficient use of the land and contribute towards the Council's housing targets. The scheme will significantly improve the appearance of the site and enhance the wider character.
- 1.1.3 The Applicant has had extensive pre-application discussions with the local planning authority. Through constructive dialogue with the Local Planning Authority the proposal has evolved to the fully compliant scheme hereby submitted. The advice received from the Local Planning Authority has been used to inform and shape the proposal in a positive manner.

1.2 Application Documents

- 1.2.1 The Applicant has commissioned a consultant team to prepare a full planning application for the development of the application site. This statement describes the application proposal in more detail and in the context of the relevant policies. It should be read in conjunction with the following:
- 20-04 PL-01 – Location Plan
 - 20-04 PL-02 – Existing and Proposed Block Plan
 - 20-04 PL-03 – Proposed Ground and First Floor Plan
 - 20-04 PL-04 – Proposed Roof Plan and Street Scene
 - 20-04 PL-05 – Proposed Elevations
 - 20-04 PL-06 – Proposed Side Elevations
 - 20-04 PL-07 – Proposed 3d images

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

PLANNING STATEMENT

Chopra Property Group Limited

2.0 Description of site and surroundings

- 2.1.1 The application site is situated in Caversham, which is located within the Reading Borough Council administrative area. The site is located at the rear of 58 Prospect Street RG4 8JN which is at the intersection of Oxford Street and Prospect Street. The site is approximately a 20-minute walk from Reading Station and there are a number of bus stops in close proximity.
- 2.1.2 The site is currently in use as a car park, while the main property of 58 Prospect Street is in use as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
- 2.1.3 The surrounding area is typified by residential dwellings. Whilst residential use predominates, there are also a variety of community and retail facilities in the wider area. In terms of the street scene, the immediate area is characterised by residential buildings which generally consist of two storey terraced properties.
- 2.1.4 The site currently comprises of a plot of land that is used for vehicle parking and it does not have any built form. The site did previously contain a single storey garage, but this has been demolished. The site is accessed of Oxford Street.
- 2.1.5 The application site is bound by two buildings. The boundary wall at the end of the rear garden of No. 58 Prospect Road is located to the east of the site. The side boundary wall of No. 5 Oxford Street projects along the western boundary of the site. The north of the site is bound by the rear garden of No.60 Prospect Road.
- 2.1.6 The site does not include any designations within the Reading Local Plan Policies Map. The site is not located within a conservation area nor is it a listed building.





Figure 2.1 – Site photos

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PLANNING STATEMENT

Chopra Property Group Limited

3.0 Relevant planning history

3.1 Application Site

3.1.1 A search of the Reading online planning database for the Application Site identified one relevant application. The details for the application are as follows:

Planning reference: 20/04/2015

Application type: Full planning application

Description: Demolition of existing garage and erection of a detached 4-bedroom dwelling, with associated access and parking.

Decision: Refused

Decision date: 26 March 2019

3.1.2 The planning application was refused for the following reasons:

- *The proposed dwelling, by reason of its form and detailed design, would have a detrimental impact on the street scene, as it fails to respect the prevailing urban grain, architectural styles (for instance eaves and floor levels) and would produce an undesirable and incongruous development of the side garden, whose openness contributes to the character of the street/area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Core Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008) and Policy DM11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough LDF: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).*
- *Due to the overlooking distances from first and second floor rear bedroom windows to the boundaries of other properties in close proximity, unacceptable overlooking and loss of privacy would occur to the rear garden areas of Nos. 58 and 60 Prospect Street and No.1 Oxford Street, to the detriment of the amenity and enjoyment of these properties. This would therefore result in a cramped form of development, where a 'borrowing' of outlook over other properties' gardens would occur from the habitable rooms, contrary to policies DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) and DM11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough LDF: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).*

- *The proposal, by reason of its height, massing and proximity to the western boundary of the site, would result in an overbearing effect and loss of light to the rear habitable rooms and garden at No.1 Oxford Street. This overbearing would also enclose and reduce surveillance (and therefore reduce safety and increase the fear of crime) of the adjacent alleyway. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008) and policies DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) and DM11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough LDF: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).*
- *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough, the proposal fails to mitigate its effects on local infrastructure and is contrary to Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008) and policies DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) and DM6 (Affordable Housing) of the Reading Borough LDF: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012), and the Council's adopted SPD, 'Affordable Housing' (2014).*

3.1.3 Following the refusal the applicant amended the scheme and submitted a pre-application, 200907/PREAPP. The key findings from the pre-application response was as follows:

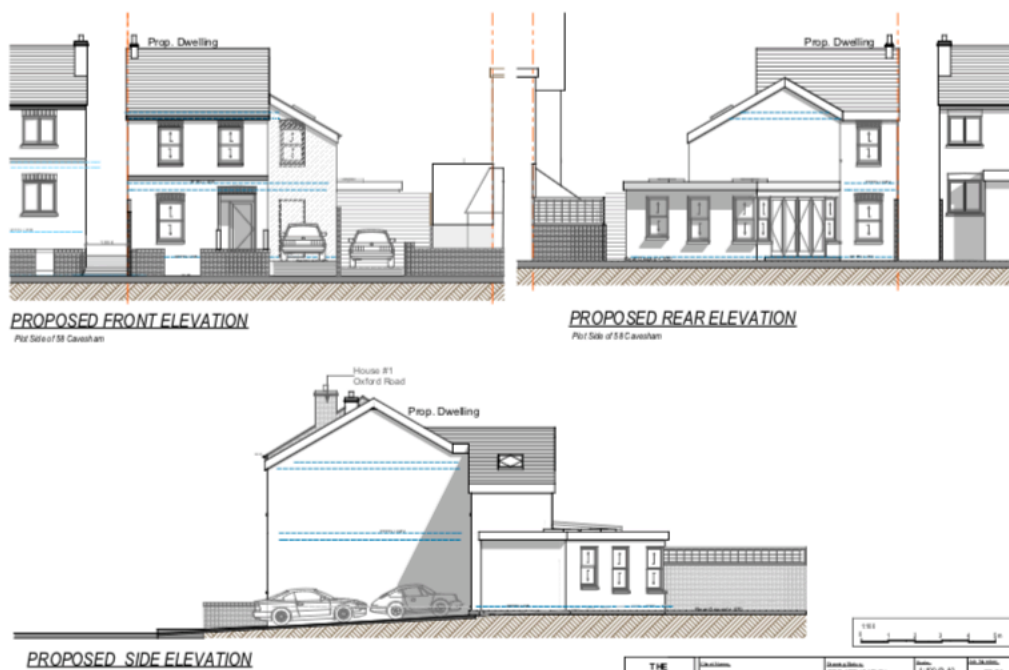
*"... in principle a dwelling on this site would be acceptable however there are a number of concerns that would need to be addressed. The main front elevation is considered acceptable and fits well within the streetscene however **the two storey and single storey side/rear elements are contrived and do not sit comfortably within the site which creates a larger property than the plot can take.** The proposed two storey and single storey side/rear element also creates a poor relationship with 58 Prospect Street as they extend along the boundary with this neighbouring property."*

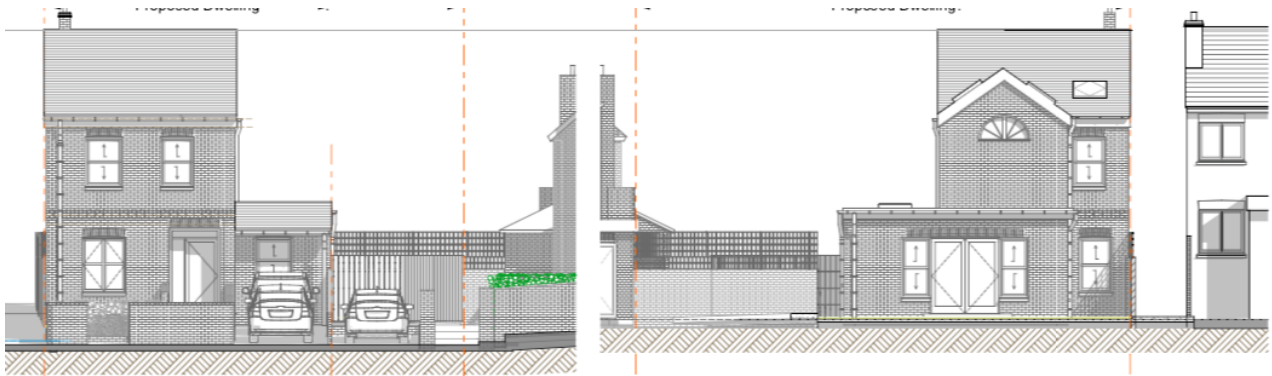
***A regular/traditional two storey rear gable would be more acceptable with a single storey to the side (adjacent to the alleyway).** I do not feel any parts of the property should extend outwards from the main side elevations due to the plot size and the proximity to neighbouring properties and the gable should*

not be any deeper than is currently proposed. A regular shaped property would also create more usable outdoor space which is currently cramped and awkward in shape which means parts of it would be unlikely to be used. It would also remove the impact on the neighbouring property at 58 Prospect Street.

There is the concern over the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of the proposal being overbearing and visually dominant, loss of privacy and harm to outlook however if a smaller, more regular/traditional element is proposed to the rear of the property then the impact on the neighbouring properties is likely to be reduced. It would be helpful if a plan showing the relationship of the proposal with the rear windows at 58 Prospect Street was provided should a planning application be submitted."

- 3.1.4 The applicant has taken the above reference comments into consideration and used them to inform this proposed development. The two-storey side/rear extension has been amended and reduce to a single storey. The two-storey rear extension has been amended to have a traditional gable end. The images below show the design submitted for the pre-application alongside the design being proposed for this application.



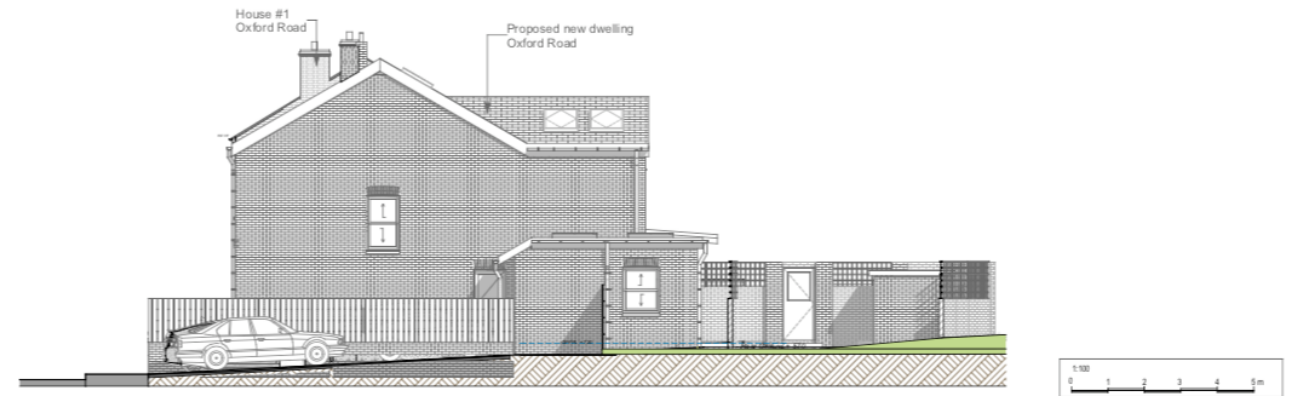


PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION SOUTH

Plot Side of 58 Cavesham

PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION

Plot Side of 58 Cavesham



PLANNING POLICY

PLANNING STATEMENT

Chopra Property Group Limited

4.0 Planning policy

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 This section of the Statement provides an analysis of the planning policy context in which the proposed development should be considered in accordance with the relevant planning legislation and national policy guidance.
- 4.1.2 Planning decisions in England and Wales should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statutory requirement is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 4.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear at Paragraph 11 that development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.1.4 The statutory development plan for Reading Borough Council consists of:
- Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)
- 4.1.5 While not forming part of the statutory development plan, the following documents remain important material considerations for the determination of planning applications in ...:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG);
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents;
- 4.1.6 The most relevant extracts of these documents are analysed in more detail below

4.2 Statutory Development Plan

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- 4.2.1 The Council adopted the Local Plan in November 2019 and it forms part of the development plan for the area. The Strategy sets out the spatial vision which supports the overarching vision and goals for Reading. The following policies are considered relevant to the determination of the application.
- 4.2.2 Policy CC1, *'Presumption in favour of sustainable development'*. This policy aims to ensure that decisions are taken in line with that presumption in favour of sustainable development. In doing so, it helps to achieve all of the core objectives
- 4.2.3 Policy CC2, *'Sustainable design and construction'* states that proposals will only be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, effectively and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.
- 4.2.4 Policy CC6, *'Accessibility and the intensity of development'* states 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.
- 4.2.5 Policy CC7, *'Design and the public realm'*, requires all development to be of a high design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 4.2.6 Policy CC8, *'Safeguarding amenity'*, states that development should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential for new residential properties.
- 4.2.7 Policy H1, *'Provision of housing'*, states that the Council will make provision for the additional 15,847 homes in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036 (average 639 homes per annum).
- 4.2.8 Policy H2, *'Density and mix'*, aims to ensure that proposal is of an appropriate density and provide a mix that meets the need of the borough.
- 4.2.9 Policy H5, *'Standards for new housing'* states that proposal for new residential development should be built to specific set of standards. The relevant set of standards that apply to this development include, internal space standards, meet Regulation 36(3) of the Building regulation, achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwellings emission rate, adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations.

- 4.2.10 Policy H10, 'Private and communal outdoor space', requires dwellings to be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible.
- 4.2.11 Policy H11, 'Development of private residential gardens', deals with new residential development on garden land and identifies this form of development is a component of the overall housing land supply in the Borough.
- 4.2.12 Policy TR5, 'Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging', 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.

Supplementary Guidance

Reading Borough Local Development Framework – Revised Parking Standards and Design (adopted October 2011).

4.3 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3.1 On 19th June 2019, the government adopted the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document provides a consolidated framework of planning policy which replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012.
- 4.3.2 The NPPF outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: an economic objective, a social objective and environmental objective.
- 4.3.3 The framework is clear at Paragraph 11 that development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.3.4 Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

- 4.3.5 The NPPF constitutes a material consideration in determining applications.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.3.6 The Government launched the Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource in March 2014. The resource is continually updated, with the most recent update reflecting the revised National Planning Policy Framework adopted in February 2019.
- 4.3.7 Paragraph 001 of Design states that as a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.
- 4.3.8 Paragraph 007 of Design states that development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 4.3.9 Paragraph 040 of Design states that well-designed housing should be functional, attractive and sustainable. It should also be adaptive to the changing needs of its occupants.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PLANNING STATEMENT

Chopra Property Group Limited

5.0 Planning Considerations

5.1 Principle of Development

- 5.1.1 Policy H11, '*Development of private residential gardens*', deals with new residential development within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens. The policy identifies this form of development as being a key component of the overall housing land supply in the Borough.
- 5.1.2 However, the policy acknowledges that this kind of development can potentially change the character of a local area and worsen the quality of life of local residents. As such, it is imperative that developments are designed sensitively and positively contribute towards the character of the area.
- 5.1.3 The application site would have previously formed part of the rear garden at No. 58 Prospect Street however was separated off considerable time ago to form off-street parking.
- 5.1.4 Therefore, policy H11, is applicable to the principle of this application. The proposal would provide a new high-quality detached 3-bedroom family dwellinghouse. The proposal has been carefully designed in order to ensure that it positively contributes to the character of the area whilst providing an appropriate internal and external layout that complies with the rest of the requirements in policy H11.
- 5.1.5 The key design principles and details of the design have been addressed in the design section of this document.
- 5.1.6 Policy H1, '*Provision of housing*', identifies the Council's need for housing and sets out the housing targets. The policy notes that the Council has a target of providing 15,847 new homes between 2013-2036. This equates to an average annual target of 689.
- 5.1.7 The Local plan sets out a Spatial Strategy for the Borough and whilst the strategy itself does not form part of the policy as such, it shows what the policies in the plan are trying to achieve and how it sits within a wider spatial approach.
- 5.1.8 The Spatial Strategy acknowledges the constrained nature of Reading Borough and notes that there is a need to look within the existing urban area for opportunities, and to ensure efficient use of land. The Local Plan has identified north Reading, where the application site is located, as having the potential to provide approximately 5% of the housing target.
- 5.1.9 This proposal would positively contribute to Reading's housing targets. Furthermore, it would be providing a three-bedroom family dwelling house, which according to policy H2, '*Density and mix*', is the preferred size of market housing.

- 5.1.10 It is considered that the principle of provide a new family size residential dwelling is on this size is considered acceptable. The Local Planning Authority noted in the pre-application report that the principle of residential development on this site would be acceptable.

5.2 Design

- 5.2.1 Policy CC7, '*Design and the public realm*', requires all development to be of a high design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The key components which will determine the success of the design fall within the form of the development. These include:
- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
 - Landscape;
 - Density and mix;
 - Scale: height and massing; and
 - Architectural detail and materials.
- 5.2.2 The proposed scheme has been amended in order to respond to the concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority at pre-application stage. The overall bulk and massing has been reduced and a more traditional aesthetic has been into the rear extension. The side extension has been reduced to a single storey in order to overcome the concerns that a two-storey side extension would have been contrived. The single storey extension would appear more subservient to the main dwelling and innkeeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- 5.2.3 The site is located within an area that is typified by two-storey terraced residential properties. The majority of these properties have both, original and new rear additions. The proposed development has sought to integrate these key design features whilst still ensuring that the new development would appear as an appropriate and functional detached dwelling on the site.
- 5.2.4 The existing appearance of the site is not an efficient use of land but also out of character of the area. The paved hardstanding use for vehicle parking would in keeping with an area characterised by commercial use. It appears as a broken link in the run of residential type building along Oxford Street and the junction with Prospect Street.
- 5.2.5 As such, the addition of a new residential building on the empty site would be more in keeping with the appearance of the area whilst also positively contributing to one of the key aspirations of the Local Plan, providing housing.

- 5.2.6 The design and appearance aim to integrate the development into the established built form within the area. The scale of development would match that of the terraced properties along both Oxford and Prospect Street. Furthermore, it would incorporate key architectural details and materials that of prominent within the area.
- 5.2.7 In addition to the design, the layout of the development would respond positively to the local context and character the area. As such it is considered to positive addition to the area and one that will integrate seamlessly into the street scene.



Figure 5.1 - 3d images of proposal

5.3 Quality of Accommodation

Internal Space

- 5.3.1 Part (a) of Policy H5, 'Standards of new housing', of the Local Plan (2019) states that the Local Planning Authority will require developments to comply with the nationally described space standards.

- 5.3.2 The proposal is for a double storey three-bedroom 5-person dwellinghouse. According to the national space standards the minimum gross internal floor area and storage for a property of this size is required to be 93sqm. The proposed exceeds this minimum space standards as it provides 102sqm of internal space including storage.
- 5.3.3 All of the bedrooms and living areas meet and exceed the minimum space standards for the respective rooms.

Private amenity space

- 5.3.4 Policy H10, '*Private and communal outdoor space*', states that dwellings will need to be provided with functional private or communal open space and that the design of outdoor areas will need to respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.
- 5.3.5 The policy notes that in determining the appropriate level of private amenity space the Local Planning Authority will take into consideration the constraints of the site and the extent of deprivation of public open space within the proposed scheme. In the past the Local Planning Authority had sought minimum provisions of private outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and the Local Plan states that they still provide a useful guide for proposals.
- 5.3.6 The guidance states that new houses will aim to provide outdoor space no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates. The proposed floor area is 71.13sqm and proposed rear garden is 60sqm. Whilst the proposed private garden would be just under the guidance it is considered to be in keeping with the size and character of the area and neighbouring properties along Oxford Street. The pre-application scheme proposed a similar ratio and it was considered to be acceptable.
- 5.3.7 Furthermore, the occupants will have access to a Balmore Park which is located at the rear of the site and approximately a 5min walk from the front of the site. Therefore, it is considered that the provision of outdoor amenity space is appropriate for the type of development and the character of the area.

5.4 Neighbouring amenity space

- 5.4.1 Policy CC8, '*Safeguard amenity*', states that development should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions of new residential properties.
- 5.4.2 The proposal has taken into consideration key aspects of the design of the previous applications to address the concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority.
- 5.4.3 As such, the front and rear elevations of the development would follow replicate those of the terraced properties along Oxford Street. The part single and double storey rear extension would be located along the eastern boundary wall. This would ensure that adequate daylight and sunlight would be received at No. 5 Oxford Street whilst preserving their outlook.
- 5.4.4 The single storey rear extension would largely be set behind the existing boundary wall and as such it would not be easily seen from No. 58 Prospect Street. The first-floor addition proposed in the pre-application scheme has been removed in response to concern raised about the impact that it may have on No. 58 Prospect Street. The main building would be approximately 21m away from the closest point of No. 58 Prospect Street.
- 5.4.5 When taking the distance that separate the proposed development and No. 58 Prospect Street and the amendments made to the design of the scheme, it is considered that the development would unlikely have a harmful impact in the daylight and sunlight received at No. 58 or the outlook.
- 5.4.6 All side facing windows would be obscure glazed in order to ensure that the proposed development would not result in a loss of privacy at any of the neighbouring properties.
- 5.4.7 The proposed development would be triple aspect at ground and first floor. This would ensure adequate access to daylight and sunlight and outlook for the future occupiers.
- 5.4.8 It is considered that the proposed development would not result in a harmful loss of amenity of the neighbouring properties yet still providing adequate quality of amenity for future occupiers of the development. As such, the development would comply with policy CC8 of the Council's Local Plan (2019).

5.5 Parking and refuse storage

- 5.5.1 Policy TR5, '*Car and cycling parking and electric vehicle charging*', aims to ensure that developments provide car parking and cycling parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough. The Council has produced a Parking Standard and Design Supplementary Planning Document, which include different standards in four different zones according to accessibility of those zones.
- 5.5.2 According to the Parking Standard and Design Supplementary Planning Document, the site is located within 'Zone 2'. Residential dwelling houses that provide 3 bedrooms are required to provide two parking spaces.
- 5.5.3 The proposed comprises of two off-street car parking spaces along the eastern side of the main dwelling. This would ensure that the provision of parking would comply with the Council's policy and supplementary guidance.
- 5.5.4 The site will utilise the existing drop curve of Oxford Street to access both the front of the house and the off-street parking bays.
- 5.5.5 Refuse storage would be provided at the front of the property.

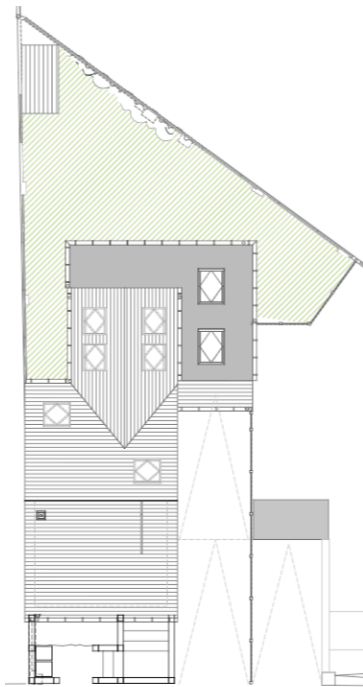


Figure 5.2 - Parking arrangement

5.6 Affordable housing

- 5.6.1 Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 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.
- 5.6.2 The applicant has agreed to the affordable housing contribution and is willing to enter into a Section 106 agreement. The applicant is in the process of obtaining three independent valuations for the proposed development in order to calculate an appropriate contribution. This will be provided as soon as all three valuations have been received and when s106 agreement commence.

CONCLUSION

PLANNING STATEMENT

Chopra Property Group Limited

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1.1 The proposed development comprises of a new family sized residential dwellings house. The proposal would provide a high-quality development that is in accordance with the relevant policy in the Local Plan (2019) and Supplementary Guidance.
- 6.1.2 The proposal would respond positively to the local context and character of the area. As such it is considered to be a positive addition to the area and one that will integrate seamlessly into the street scene.
- 6.1.3 The provision of a new three-bedroom single family dwelling would positively contribute towards the Council's housing targets whilst providing a favourable dwelling size.
- 6.1.4 The development would not have a harmful impact on the amenity on the neighbouring properties whilst ensuring that the quality of accommodation for the future occupiers meets the require standards.
- 6.1.5 The applicant has agreed to provide affordable housing contribution in line with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. This is considered to be a positive attribute of the proposal as the contribution would aid the Council in their endeavour of providing affordable housing in the borough.
- 6.1.6 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the overall aims of the Local Plan and wider aspirations of the Local Plan. We look forward to discussing the scheme with you in due course.