

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
TO ACCOMPANY AN OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR THE
ERECTION OF 1 X 2 , 1 X 1 & 1 X 3 BED FLATS
ON LAND ADJACENT TO
5 STONEHAM CLOSE
READING
BERKSHIRE
RG30 4HB

FOR SANJAR DEVELOPMENTS LTD

(DOC NO3336.DA)



FDF ARCHITECTURE
JUNE 2021

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1. ASSESSMENT OF THE PHYSICAL SITE AND ITS CONTEXT.

- .01 The development site is to the West of the main urban town centre of Reading and to the West of Prospect Park within a well established mixed density residential area. The site comprises the South part of the garden and existing garage of 5 Stoneham Close. The site area is outlined in red on the accompanying submission and is . ha in total.
- .02 The site is prominently located on the corner of Stoneham Close which was developed in the early 1960s. The close is a quiet through route and features a mixture of single storey and two storey brick properties some with rooms in the roof and further side or rear extensions.



Fig i. Aerial view of site.

- .03 The site has an SSE sub station to the South in a fenced enclosure and this is a local transformer station for the close.
- .04 The site comprising the garage and south garden with a crossover access from the North facing approach road to the close.

- .05 The site rises from a low point to the south and slopes up to the main close circulation road. It is stepped midway up the garden and is subdivided from the existing house by a low retaining wall around the single storey concrete garage.



Fig ii. View from within the site of the single storey existing garage and outbuilding

- .05 The site has a number of small trees and shrubs to the rear which would be retained wherever possible.
- .07 The surrounding houses were developed at the same time and are of typical post war design using scarce materials as efficiently as possible.



Fig iv View from the North of the site of no 5 Stoneham Close

- .08 The rear garden is small but the surrounding houses are arranged with their gardens facing the property so good distance is kept to reduce overlooking. Many of the boundaries of the nearby gardens have mature trees included and this creates a green rear amenity space for all owners with privacy.



Fig v. East boundary view of the site showing the existing garage and recessed sub station site.

- .09 It is not known when the garage was added to the property. Many of the house types in the close rely on driveways for off street parking as few were originally provided for covered vehicle storage.
- .10 The close has not had large extensions built over the years primarily because the houses are close side to side. There have been a number of rear garden rooms and roof extensions within the broad footprint of individual houses in the area.
- .11 The materials used vary from local red brick to render, pebble dash and half timbering.
- .12 The local area contains many amenities which serve the well established local community.
- .13 The site is shown in its context by the photographs above

Shopping:

- .14 To the East of the Close there is a neighbourhood shopping precinct containing a supermarket a newsagent and general stores which provides essential goods within easy walking distance
- .15 Within a short distance of the site West towards the M4 along the Bath Road is a large retail park containing food and household goods.

Take away food is widely available up and down the Bath Road and the side streets.

Medical facilities:

- .16 Medical facilities are close by in the form of 4 dental and at least 8 GP surgeries within 2 km together with a Pharmacy within the local centre . The public transport network also gives access to the main town centre hospital facilities at the sites of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Trust.

Recreation and leisure facilities:

- .17 There are a number of open spaces in the immediate area - Prospect Park is the largest and provides a children's play area along with its well known sports pitches changing facilities and pub / restaurant. To the West is Calcot Park golf club.
- .18 Meadway Sports and Leisure Centre is close to the application site and contains a swimming pool, badminton courts and an artificial surface for football and hockey.

Schools

- .19 The area is well served by schools and colleges all within walking distance.

Public Transport:

- .20 There is a very good supply of public transport links both into and out of Reading near the site which all provide links to national and international transport facilities. The Reading Bus company have stops local to the site for routes 2, 15 and 33 and one - the 33 - runs past Prospect Park and into and out of the town centre. The national rail station in the town centre provides fast links to Heathrow and most of the national rail network as well as the soon to open Cross Rail link to London.

2. THE BRIEF AND EVALUATING LOCAL FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING A SCHEME DESIGN

DEVELOP LETTABLE FLATS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

- .01 The applicants have asked the Architects to explore the potential for increasing the accommodation on the site of 5 Stoneham Close by replacing the garage with a modest development of 3 flats to let.

The house itself is being refurbished and the aim eventually is to increase the floor area of that as well to maximise the available accommodation for the owners.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS - DEMAND AND LOCATION

- .02 We believe that the rear, Southerly, part of the site will provide sufficient additional space to serve the strong lettings market in the area.
- .03 Reading is now a destination for local employers and industries particularly in the services and technology sector and there is good demand for economic high quality apartments. The delivery of large scale apartment blocks has been stalled recently with the fallout from high profile safety concerns over high rise and there is fresh impetus to integrate the provision of flats into the suburban environment and existing local communities on a smaller scale.
- .04 There are also a wide range of key worker employers in the town and the market for private rental at reasonable cost means the West side of Reading is popular as a location.

- .04 Some additional parking may be required to replace the existing garage but the availability of public transport and the ease of on street parking suggests that parking allocation is not required.

GENERAL DESIGN AND LAYOUT:

- .05 The site is not in a conservation area nor are the existing houses in the Close listed nationally or locally. The scheme has been designed to reflect local sub urban design and to retain more traditional detailing of roofs and brick facing.

The height of the three storey building exploits the natural slope to the land and is fully in keeping with other local housing types both in The Close and surrounding streets.

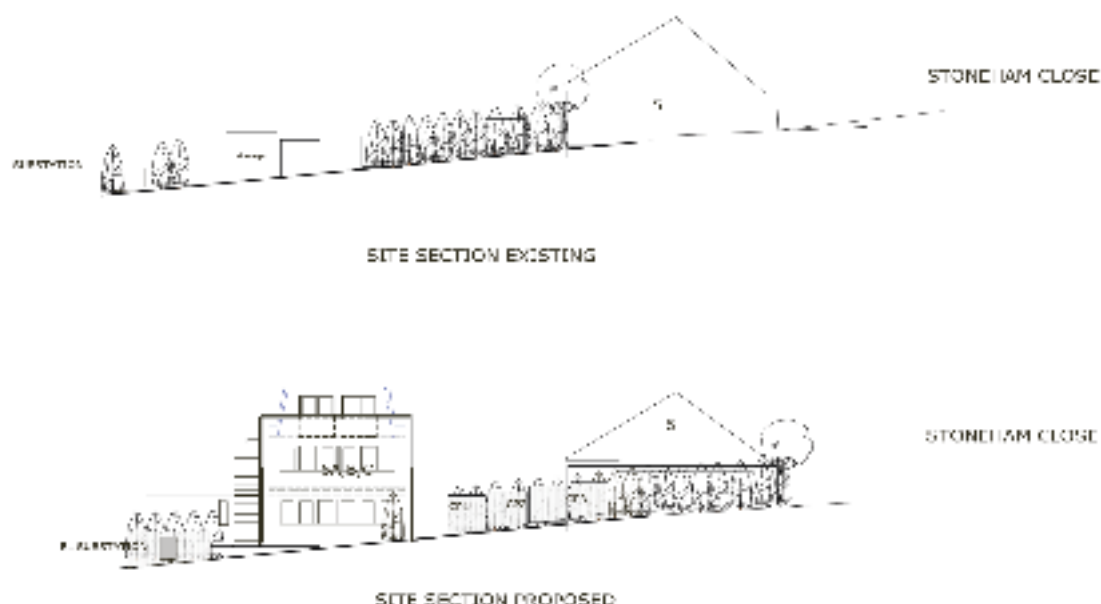


Fig vi. Existing and proposed elevations on the road up to Stoneham Close

- .06 The layout of the flats provides compact two bedroom accommodation to the national space standards and kitchen and bathroom facilities inline with market expectations.
- .07 Construction is robust and materials attractive, traditional and low maintenance.
- .08 The flats have principal windows to the East and West to avoid overlooking to neighbours and this provides good daylight to all levels.

- .09 There is a small terrace area to the West which will be available to residents on the ground floor .



Fig vii. General layout plans for the three flats showing the larger 3 bedroom accommodation at ground floor.

- 10 Access to the substation site is maintained and the enclosure screened by evergreen shrubs.

RELATION OF THE NEW FLATS TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- .11 The orientation of the new flats is East West to maximise the daylight without generating solar heat gain and creating overlooking to habitable rooms. The second floor mansard is designed to control the height and bulk of the new building in relation to the other suburban buildings in the Close.

PROVISION OF AMENITY SPACE

- .12 The experience of the last year has shown that outdoor amenity space is a requirement for all dwellings and the design incorporates balconettes capable of being used by residents.

PROVISION OF REFUSE AREAS.

- .13 The brief calls for a small refuse area to contain the required bin storage and recycling. This is shown within the car parking spaces with easy access to set the bins out on the highway edge for LA collection services.

MEANS OF ACCESS

- .14 The flats are accessed by a metal painted stair running externally from ground level to the top floor.

CAR PARKING PROVISION

- .15 The proposals provide for a single disabled parking space on the front driveway of the property and 4 further general spaces are created on the land adjacent to the pavement edge.

TREE SURVEY.

- .16 There are no significant trees on the site affected by the development.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- .17 The application does not include an environmental study related to the proposed development and this is cited as a reserve matter. The garden environment is typical of this part of suburban Reading.

SUNLIGHT AND DAYLIGHT ORIENTATION

- .18 The orientation of the development gives opportunity to install solar heating panels either PVP or passive solar tube type.
- .19 Arranging the dwellings East West allows all the flats to benefit from direct sunlight at the start and end of the day.

LANDSCAPING AND PLANTING

- .20 The lower garden around the old garage will be largely built upon but the upper garden will remain as an amenity for the occupants of the house which is in the applicants ownership.
- .21 Existing bushes and planting on the site boundary and in the upper garden will be retained and safeguarded during the construction.

3.0 **PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND**

- .01 This part of the outline submission describes the context of the development in terms of the NPPF and the local plan

Establishing the need for housing.

- .03 Examining the Local Plan, para 3.2 gives:

"...The Structure Plan indicates that Reading will have one of the highest levels of growth in the County in terms of employment generating development over the Plan period. This continued growth will further increase the pressure on the local housing stock as new employees come into the local area."

The Applicant is certain that the demand for dwellings in the West Reading area will be sustained over the time taken for the scheme to be built out and that the site location is attractive to those looking for market rental dwellings.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The National Planning Policy Framework March 2012.

- .06 The general guidance from the Government to Local Authorities in fulfilling the growing need for housing to suit local people is contained in the recent NPPF in the following general headings:

"Presumption in favour of sustainable development"

"Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes"

We set out below in a commentary how the application seeks to fulfil the aims of the NPPF and is in accordance with the Council's retained and developing LDF.

- .07 Within the overarching context set by the Plan for Growth, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued in March 2012. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development for both plan-making and decision-taking (NPPF para 14).
- .08 For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, the NPPF requires the granting of permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF policies as a whole.

- .09 The NPPF also expects local planning authorities to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- .10 Local planning authorities are required to significantly boost the supply of housing by using their evidence base to ensure that the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market are met (NPPF, para 47).

Market housing

- .11 One of the Government's key objectives is to provide a variety of high quality market housing. This includes addressing any shortfalls in the supply of market housing and encouraging the managed replacement of housing, where appropriate.
- .12 Local Planning Authorities should plan for the full range of market housing. In particular, they should take account of the need to deliver low-cost market housing as part of the housing mix.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

- .13 The Reading Borough Local Plan was modified and was adopted in November 2019.

It seeks to update the concerns of the central Government guidelines and seeks to support the provision of new housing in 'sustainable locations'. In this section we address the specifics of the LDF that are closest to the NPPF of March 2012 and might be relevant to the application site, **Provision of housing, Density and mix, Standards, use of private residential gardens, conversion of garages and general design** principles.

Housing Land supply.

- .14 The application site is not shown any of the land availability document and would be considered 'windfall'. Windfall or opportunity sites make up a significant proportion of the RBC expectations for fulfilling the land supply targets and this site being small does not appear in the current housing land supply document. It should therefore be welcomed as a contribution to the required housing land in the urban part of the Borough.
- .15 The site being urban and previously developed is in any case outside of the calculations of land supply shortfall locally.

- .16 The relevant housing policies of the Plan are summarised in Chapter 4.4 of the Local Plan as:

H1 Provision of Housing

The council have identified the target provision of homes in the Borough over the lifetime of the plan to 2036. This equates to an average of 689 homes annually.

The local plan acknowledges that Reading being a tightly defined urban area has limited new sites. It also suggests that some of the shortfall can be fulfilled by building outside of the immediate Borough boundaries.

The proposal though small makes a contribution to the need by utilising an urban space in an existing established residential area to provide much needed private rental accommodation.

H2 Density and Mix

The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:

- . The character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;

The proposal provides smaller accommodation suitable for market rental starter and family flats which will prevent houses in the area being subdivided to fulfil the demand for 2 bedroom compact dwellings.

- . Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;

The site is close to established amenities, green space and shopping and is well served by public transport for easy connection to the city centre.

- . The need to achieve high quality design;

The proposal is designed to provide a high quality design layout and integration into the existing urban environment. It is of a scale that does not clash with post war suburban typologies nearby.

- . The need to maximise the efficiency of land use;

The proposal creates 3 two bedroom apartments on a street fronted piece of land which is currently only used for a poor quality garage. It leaves in place a garden for use of existing residents of the house 5 Stoneham Close.

- . The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

The proposal carefully avoids direct overlooking of neighbours and maintains excellent daylight provision.

H4 Build to rent schemes

The local plan encourages the expansion of the private rented sector in Reading and the scheme introduces smaller units into a mixed tenanted area at the lower end of the affordability scale. It is not large enough as a scheme to be able to sustain a proportion of affordable housing but meets the clear demand for accommodation outside of the full ownership category.

H5 Standards

The council requires that new build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:

- a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally -described space standard.

The proposals are for three flats - 1 x2 bedroom @ 70m2, 1 x 3 bedroom @ 92 m2 and 1 single bed flat at 43 m2. They comply with the sizes defined in the local plan and nationally.

- b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations79.

The proposals will be fully compliant with this standard.

- c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.

The scheme is not a major one but the applicant wishes to use the available material technical standards to fulfil the zero carbon homes targets. High performance cladding with energy conservation strategies for services, heating and ventilation.

- d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.

The scheme will be fully compliant with these required standards.

- e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below).
- f. On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be 'wheelchair adaptable' as defined in part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be 'wheelchair accessible'.

The ground floor flat will be compliant with M4 (2). There is no lift required so the two upper level flats will comply with normal space access standards.

H11 Development on private residential gardens

The policy sets out the criteria to be judged when considering building on gardens in the borough: The net loss of a small area of the rear garden behind the garage is seen as an efficient use of the existing site.

1. The proposals should create a positive contribution to the area and other buildings in it.

The scheme fits well within the massing and spacing of other dwellings in the area and creates a positive enhancement of a street frontage containing a sub station and a garage.

2. The proposal site should be of adequate dimensions

The three flats fit within the site leaving adequate space around

them for maintenance and to keep the East West elevations from directly overlooking neighbours windows.

3. The proposal should include provision for access.

Access is easy from the adopted carriageway and will need additional drop kerbs to allow off street parking. The footway passes directly North South to the front of the site.

4. The proposal does not lead to 'tandem development'

The building is sited on the frontage of the access road and is therefore not landlocked behind the existing house. Its outlook is clear and fits in with the pattern of the Stoneham close area.

5. The proposal minimises the exposure of private gardens to public areas, creating the need for additional security.

The existing enclosed private garden to 5 Stoneham Close remains and will be secured by planting of shrubs and small trees. The frontage of the building is directly on the street side and no access to the rear of the building from the street is possible.

6. Affect of the proposals on nearby and adjoining property.

As described the proposals are aligned East West to avoid overlooking of neighbours windows. The roadway separates the East elevation windows from the opposite properties to the East.

7. The proposals provide family housing.

The definition of family sized accommodation is flexible and a flat of these dimensions is often valuable for young families to be able to live near relations, work and leisure of a City like Reading. The layout and outlook are attractive and the proximity of Prospect Park makes them suitable for smaller families.

8. The proposals create biodiversity net gain.

The landscape proposals seek to plant more hedges to front the two properties 5 and 5A and the substation will be screened with hedging to blend it more easily into the streetscape and allow the biodiversity of the site to be improved.

Other matters

There are separate policies on conversion of garages and outbuildings

but these outbuildings on the site are to be removed and replaced rather than converted or extended.

4.0 SUMMARY AND SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION:

<u>NO</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NET INTERNAL M2 EACH</u>	<u>SUB TOTAL</u>
1	1 BED FLAT	43	43
1	2 BED FLATS	70	70
1	3 BED FLAT	92	92

TOTAL INTERNAL FLOOR AREA **205m2**

SUMMARY

The applicant seeks outline consent for the proposals as shown on the drawings and as described in the design and access statement.

We believe the scheme provides much needed low cost family housing, both in terms of its acquisition and use. This in a well established predominantly residential area and is sustainable as defined by the NPPF.

The scheme satisfies the design criteria of the local authority as set out in local and central planning policy and is designed to blend with the existing urban design typology. The design uses the latest thinking in reducing energy cost for the build and develops a sympathetic language of vernacular design. The Architects have considered the scale, design grammar and proportion of the other residential buildings in the local area and have taken note of the commentary within the previous draft committee report by officers,

The layout of the homes provides flexible family living space capable of being easily altered over the occupancy and ownership period to respond to changing family needs.

APPENDIX

PROPOSAL DRAWINGS AND APP DOCUMENTS- FDF ARCHITECTURE

Dwg no. Title

100.P.01 Floor plan layouts 3 storey flats.
100.P.03 Elevations and sections 3 storey flats
100.P.02 Elevations existing and proposed from East
100.P.04 Existing and proposed sectional elevations on roadway.

500.SP1 Site plan existing
500.RP3 Site plan proposed
200.AP4 Aerial view with boundaries

1250.LP.6 Location plan

Design and Access statement