



31 Kingsgate Street, Reading, RG1 3JR

Proposed single storey front extension to the existing building

Planning Statement

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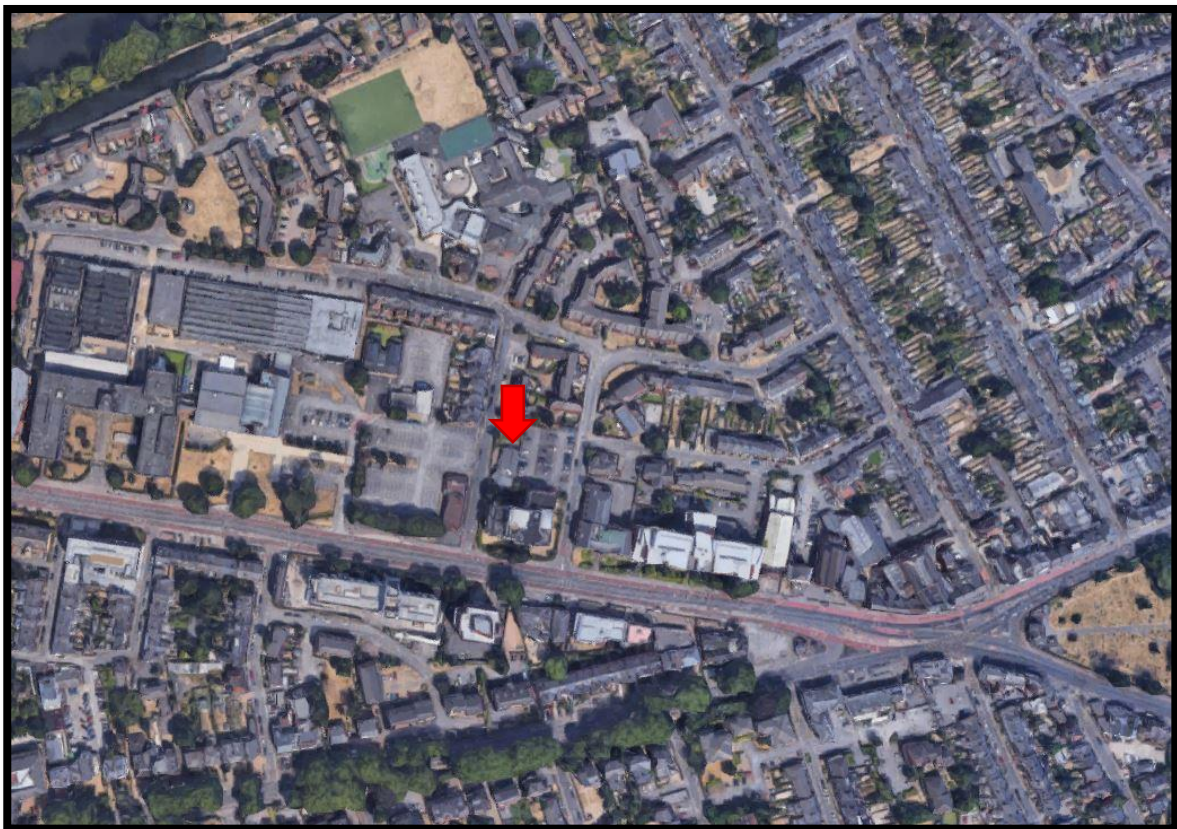
1. Introduction

1.1. Preface

This design statement has been prepared in support of a Full application for the proposed single storey front extension to the existing building at 31 Kingsgate Street in Reading.

The following statement covers the subject and information required for submission as set National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Reading Borough Local Plan documents. This document will outline the application site history and the design strategy for the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

1.2. Site Location



1. Aerial photograph





2. Bird's eye photograph (front)



3. Bird's eye photograph (rear)

1.3. Site Description

The application site is located on the eastern side of Kingsgate Street. The application site is about 1.0km to the east from the Reading Town Centre. The application site is located adjacently to



residential properties, various in scale and different in terms of their character and design. The neighbouring buildings includes more scalable block of flats on the corner of Kingsgate Street and King's Road and mix of terrace houses and blocks of flats to the north.

The application building serves for the local community (church), it is sited close to the highway, clearly visible within the streetscene. The site is occupied by a single storey building, which is currently used as a community facility. The host building comprises some outside amenity space to the front with insignificant landscaping, in total around 65.0m² surrounded with a metal fence with brick pillars. The entire area of the application property is circa 354.0m², where the host building covers approximately 240.0m² footprint (including open porch). The property benefits only from on-street parking to the front, however given its location close to the town centre and service, it is considered to have a convenient transport links.

The application property constitutes a detached building with contrasting appearance and design. It appears outstanding and visually disintegrated in relation to the adjacent buildings and the host property, without any clear pattern in terms of the design, roof forms etc.

1.4. Planning history

No relevant planning history.

1.5. Existing appearance of the application site







2. Planning Policy

2.1. NPPF

Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF (2021) emphasises that “*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*” and expands that in the paragraph 8, that it “*has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive:*

- *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible*



services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;

- *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

Furthermore, a decision-making in favour of sustainable development is strengthened and its significant weight is confirmed in paragraph 38, which states that *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.*

Quality and Design

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that the *“creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”* and 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”.*

Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 128 emphasizes an important role of the design codes and guides, which should *“provide a local framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design”* and that *“their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified”*.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF comprises a list, in terms of what decisions should ensure with regards to proposed developments, inter alia:

- *“function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*



- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

Delivering a decent level of design quality is comprised in paragraph 134 - *“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents”.*

2.2. Local Development Framework (November 2019)

Community facilities

The Reading Local Plan Policy OU1 ‘New and Existing Community Facilities’ refers to sites similar to the above application property, which includes an important community facility. This policy highlights that *“Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site”* and *“On-site intensification of some facilities, particularly schools, may result in some loss of open areas. This may be acceptable where the impact on open areas is minimised, and the area has no specific use, or where that use can satisfactorily be accommodated elsewhere on the site, subject to other policies in the plan.”*

The Reading BC Local Plan also emphasises an importance of a high quality of the community facilities and states that *“Quality of life for the residents of Reading is one of the key elements of the vision for the Borough. A good quality of life is not only desirable in itself, but also ensures that Reading remains attractive to investment. The provision of sufficient good quality community facilities is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and continue living.”* Furthermore, it considers that *“Given the dense, built up nature of Reading and the lack of appropriate new sites, it is inevitable that some of the Borough’s community facility needs will have to be met through intensification of the use of existing sites.”*

Sustainability



Number of Local Plan Policies relate to sustainable development, such as CC2 ‘Sustainable design and construction’, which highlights that *“new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately(...)”*.

CC6 ‘Accessibility and the intensity of development’ part, emphasises importance of sustainable location of development – *“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. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.”*.

Policy CC6 explains in paragraph 4.1.25 that *“...primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses”*. Paragraphs 4.1.27 continues that good level of accessibility means - *“to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service with a frequency of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.).”*

The general health targets, accompanying appropriately located developments, mentioned in the explanation of this policy include:

- *“increased physical activity;*
- *decreased incidences of cardiovascular disease and obesity;*
- *reduced levels of stress caused by traffic noise and congestion;*
- *fewer cases of lung or heart disease associated with poor air quality;*
- *proximity to healthcare services;*
- *access to open space for recreation”*.

Design Quality

Policy CC7 states that *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:*



- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*
- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials”.*

The above components are linked with the subsequently highlighted urban design objectives, which should be enhanced by the proposals, inter alia:

- *“Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place;*
- *Continuity and enclosure;*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping;*
- *Ease of movement and permeability;*
- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand;*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time;*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs”.*

In addition, CC7 summarizes and encourages to ensure that proposed developments:

- *“Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.”.*

3. Appraisal

3.1. General concept

The overall aim of the proposal is to make efficient use of the existing site and its assets, by proposing extension of the existing detached building and erection of a single storey front element, of improved design and sustainability, through the above proposal. The application property is characterized with a location within Reading settlement boundaries, which is mixed in terms of the design or scale, where such development is acceptable in principle. The proposal would include an extension to the front,



which would contain a consistent gable roof form and sympathetic design enlargement with rearrangement of the front garden.

3.2. Impact on the Character of the Area

The proposed development would include external extension to the front of the building, where its appearance and layout would be improved and clearly visible within the streetscene. The proposed single storey front element, would be erected in line with the existing front open entrance porch, effectively resulting in a retention of the building line, providing a cohesive form in terms of the overall appearance. The project includes an in keeping external design, consistent gable roof form, set down in relation to the ridge of the main building, which would appear in keeping with the character of the area, but also upgraded to a high-quality design and internal standard. The proposal includes some additional fenestration alterations and new windows installed within the proposed extension. In combination with materials of similar appearance, the proposal would provide an appropriate character and improved quality for the future users. The proposal includes installation of sympathetic windows and doors on the ground floor, which would result in a cohesive look of the fenestration details and architectural features, resulting in a sympathetic and in keeping design, fully suitable for this exposed property.

Notwithstanding the above, the most significant advantage of the proposed development would be improvement of the existing community facility, by provision of additional space for storage, office and a library for children and adult users. The existing building requires an additional space for such use, due to development of the local community, growing needs, therefore it is considered that using of the available space to the front is the most suitable solution for the church and in accordance with the Reading BC Local Plan Policy OU1.

3.3. Impact on neighbours

Loss of Light and Overbearing

Due to the proposed building's situation, overall scale and form of the proposed development and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overbearing and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to arise.

Overlooking

Due to the application building's situation and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overlooking arrangement would be considered to arise as



well. The proposed windows would be installed only on the ground floor level, with no unacceptable impact upon the neighbouring occupiers amenity.

8. Conclusion

By virtue of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that it would comply with the relevant parts of NPPF, Reading BC Local Plan, therefore we kindly appeal, to approve the submitted application.

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