



Toucan Finance

86-87A BROAD STREET, READING

Planning Statement and Economic Statement



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Planning Statement and Economic Statement

WSP

In conjunction with

- Suttonca
- James R Brown and Company Limited
- Heyne Tillett Steel
- Air Quality Consultants
- RKS
- Heritage Collective
- Aspect Ecology
- DESCO
- Sandy Brown
- Key Transport

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Planning Statement and Economic Statement

WSP

WSP House

70 Chancery Lane

London

WC2A 1AF

Phone: +44 20 7314 5000

Fax: +44 20 7314 5111

WSP.com



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Signature				
Checked by	Jamie Bryant			
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Toucan Finance (“the Applicant”) to support a planning application for redevelopment behind retained façade to deliver optimised retail and new residential accommodation at 86-87a Broad Street, Reading.
- 1.1.2. The application site is located at the heart of the town centre in Central Reading within Reading Borough Council (“RBC”) (herein “the Council”) and comprises the following parcels of land herein referred to as “the site”:
- 86 Broad Street – formerly let to Shoe Zone who vacated in January 2021, currently an active retail unit, upper floor partly let to Blue Arrow (employment agency)
 - 87 Broad Street – vacant since June 2017 and formerly occupied by EE, upper floors partly let to Blue Arrow (employment agency)
 - 87a Broad Street – vacant since June 2017 and formerly occupied by EE, minimal occupational interest owing to un-refurbished nature of the unit and its narrow frontage.
- 1.1.3. The existing site and its cluster of vacant buildings are in a poor state of disrepair following long term vacancies, as demonstrated above, and poor quality additions in the past, which has led to an ad hoc industrial style structure. There is a clear and compelling opportunity to utilise the sites full potential, within Central Reading, in a way that respects and celebrates its original design.
- 1.1.4. The site is previously developed land located in a sustainable location in close proximity to public transport links. Other than the retained facade, the existing buildings do not contribute to the character and appearance of this under-utilised, yet prominent town centre site. It therefore presents an excellent development opportunity which should be maximised in accordance with the Council’s town centre revitalisation agenda and Reading’s Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy (2020).
- 1.1.5. Planning permission is therefore sought for:
- “Redevelopment behind retained facade to provide a part-four, part- five storey building to provide Class E at ground floor and C3 residential above, together with associated works, landscaping arrangements and external plant.”*
- 1.1.6. This Planning Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant national, regional and local planning policies and all other material considerations.
- 1.1.7. The scheme design has evolved through an iterative and collaborative design process, including two separate pre-application meetings, a presentation and roundtable discussion with the Reading Design Review Panel (“DRP”), and a similar session with ward councillors and senior officers. Significant scheme revisions have been made throughout the process to positively respond to the feedback received. These are set out in detail within the Design and Access Statement and the Pre-application Engagement section of this report.
- 1.1.8. The proposed revitalisation of the site represents the opportunity to:
- Retain and refurbish the front façade of the existing building;
 - Preserve and enhance the character and setting of nearby heritage assets, particularly through the enhancement of the rear of the property;

- Revitalise under-performing and inefficient retail stock through the optimisation of tradeable floorspace at ground floor, with dedicated back-of-house facilities to the rear, and the subsequent re-activation of a key Central Reading frontage;
- Deliver 15 much-needed new homes through the efficient use of brownfield land in a highly sustainable location within close proximity of various modes of public transport and town centre amenities;
- Deliver a sustainable development resulting in an overall cumulative on site carbon saving of 46%, with a planning contribution to offset the remaining carbon emissions to zero; and a commercial unit that would achieve a policy compliant BREEAM 'Very Good' rating;
- Numerous socio-economic benefits, including:
 - Benefits to the local economy during the construction period including GVA to the UK economy of approximately £2.1 million, and up to 32 temporary construction jobs, of which 15 would be located in Reading and would generate an additional £12,528 in local expenditure in Reading across the construction programme;
 - Benefits to the local economy during operation including up to 28 permanent jobs nationally, of which 17 would be located in Reading and would support £1.2 million annually in GVA, whilst the jobs supported in national supply chains could contribute a further £563,870 annually.

1.2 SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS

1.2.1. In addition to this Planning Statement and Economic Statement, and in accordance with the Council's Planning Validation Checklist, the application is accompanied by the following:

- Application Forms and Ownership Certificates, signed and dated;
- Completed Community Infrastructure Levy Forms;
- Full suite of planning drawings, prepared by Suttonca;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Suttonca;
- Planning Statement, prepared by WSP;
- Statement of Community Involvement, prepared by WSP;
- Air Quality Statement, prepared by Air Quality Consultants;
- Archaeology Assessment, prepared by RSK;
- Heritage Assessment and Statement, prepared by Heritage Collective;
- Historic Building Record, prepared by Heritage Collective;
- Phase I Environmental Risk Assessment, prepared by WSP;
- Daylight / Sunlight Report, prepared by Hollis;
- Ecology Survey and Report, prepared by Aspect Ecology;
- Energy and Sustainability Strategy (including BREEAM Pre-Assessment), prepared by DESCO;
- External Lighting Details, prepared by Desco;

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Utilities Statement, prepared by Heyne Tillett Steel;
- Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by Sandy Brown;
- Transport Statement, including Parking and Servicing details, prepared by Key Transport;
- Travel Plan, prepared by Key Transport; and
- Viability Assessment, prepared by James R Brown and Company.

1.2.2. The requisite planning application fee of £9,240.00 has been sent to the Council under separate cover.

1.3 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

1.3.1. This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** describes the application site and surrounding area, whilst also setting out any relevant policy designations and planning history;
- **Section 3** outlines the comprehensive pre-application discussions with RBC and Reading's Design Review Panel, and details the engagement undertaken;
- **Section 4** sets out the development proposals in detail;
- **Section 5** identifies the relevant planning policy framework within which the application proposals are determined;
- **Section 6** addresses the acceptability of the principle of development and other technical considerations;
- **Section 7** sets out the socio-economic benefits of the proposed development; and
- **Section 8** summarises the planning benefits of the proposals and our overall conclusions.

2 APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1.1. The site is located within Central Reading, approximately 80 metres to the east of the Broad Street Mall shopping centre. Broad Street is Reading's traditional main shopping street, and the site subsequently falls within the Central Core and the Primary Shopping Frontage which encourages town centre uses and the retention of an active retail use at ground floor.
- 2.1.2. The surrounding area comprises a mix of retail and commercial uses on the ground floor with commercial or residential at upper floors, typical of a town centre. Building heights of the within the site's vicinity vary, ranging from three to five storeys. Taller buildings are located to the north-east and west, including 25 Friar Road, which is a 12 storey building, and 6 to 34 Oxford Street, which is a 5-storey terrace building. The proposed redevelopment scheme for the Broad Street Mall, located 80m to the west of the site, will comprise up to 20 storeys.
- 2.1.3. The site is not located in a conservation area, but the St Mary's Butt/ Castle Street Conservation Area is located 75m to the south of the site. The special interest of the St Mary Butts/ Castle Street Conservation Area is identified within the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal, and includes:
- The Grade I listed Church of St Mary in St Mary's Butts (Reading Minster), a Reading landmark, originally Norman, and mentioned in the Domesday Book, but now mostly Medieval in origin. This is the focal building of the Conservation Area (List Entry: 1113573); and
 - St Mary's Churchyard, an important open space in Central Reading.
- 2.1.4. Other listed buildings within close proximity of the site include:
- Grade II listed 89 and 89A Broad Street/ Congregational Church (Waterstones) (List Entry: 1321954) to the east of the site;
 - Grade II listed 67 and 68 Broad Street (List Entry: 1113405) opposite the site; and
 - Grade II listed 95 Broad Street is to the east of the site (List Entry: 1113406).
- 2.1.5. The site is otherwise within an Area of Archaeological Significance.
- 2.1.6. The site also has excellent public transport accessibility. The nearest bus stops are located within 50 metres, and the recently upgraded Reading Railway Station is a 15-minute walk away and serves as a major interchange providing direct services to Central London (Paddington) and Bristol. Reading will also mark the western extent of the new Elizabeth Line (formerly known as Crossrail), which will provide direct services across Central London.
- 2.1.7. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, meaning there is minimal flooding in the area due to the flat topography.

2.2 EXISTING BUILDINGS

- 2.2.1. The site includes 86-87a Broad Street. The extent of the land and buildings within our client's ownership is illustrated on the Site Location Plan (ref.1316-0500-Rev C).
- 2.2.2. The existing site comprises a three storey group of mid-terrace buildings, with two retail units on the ground floor and an access point to the rear of the site next to 87A Broad Street. Ancillary retail accommodation is located on the upper floors, along with a small office.

- 2.2.3. The site is predominantly vacant, with all ground floor retail units and the associated ancillary retail space on upper floors now unoccupied. An employment agency occupies the office space on the first floor of No. 87. The established lawful uses at the site all fall within Use Class E and are set out as follows:
- 86 Broad Street – formerly let to Shoe Zone who vacated in January 2021, currently an active retail unit, upper floor partly let to Blue Arrow (employment agency)
 - 87 Broad Street – vacant since June 2017 and formerly occupied by EE, upper floor partly let to Blue Arrow (employment agency)
 - 87a Broad Street – vacant since June 2017 and formerly occupied by EE, minimal occupational interest owing to un-refurbished nature of the unit and its narrow frontage.
- 2.2.4. The buildings have proven difficult to let owing to the quality of the retail space at ground floor and the significant portion of ancillary retail space at the upper floors, which means they are inefficient for prospective commercial occupiers who primarily want ground floor retail space.
- 2.2.5. Public access to the site is via the pedestrianised Broad Street, with all servicing, including deliveries and refuse collection, operating through the rear service yard from Saint Mary's Butts.
- 2.2.6. The site is not listed and has not been identified as a locally listed building. However, it has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset by RBC officers as part of the pre-application discussions.
- 2.2.7. As set out in the accompanying Heritage Statement, Heritage Collective's view is that the existing building is of a limited level of local interest and that the value has been eroded by later additions and alterations which have considerably affected the authenticity and integrity of the buildings and their potential heritage value. The interest of the buildings primarily relates to a low level of architectural value (limited to the first and second floor and surviving chimneys) and a similarly low level of historic interest (related to how the buildings help, amongst others, represent the late 19th century development of Broad Street).

2.3 LOCAL DESIGNATIONS

- 2.3.1. The Council's adopted Policies Map (2019) identifies the following designations for the site:
- The site is located within the Central Reading area, including:
 - The Primary Shopping Area;
 - Central Core; and
 - Office Core;
 - The ground floor units of the site are designated as Primary Frontage in Central Reading;
 - The site is designated as an Area of Archaeological Potential;
 - The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area; and
 - The site is outside a tall building cluster area.
- 2.3.2. These designations are discussed in greater detail in **Section 6** of this Report.

2.4 PLANNING HISTORY

2.4.1. In preparing this application, the project team has had regard to relevant applications relating to the site, and those in the surrounding area.

THE SITE

2.4.2. There is little relevant planning history informing the current proposals. The planning history for the site includes:

- On 6 June 2019, planning permission was granted at 87a Broad Street for the unit to be reinstated as a single retail unit as it had previously been amalgamated with the adjacent premises of 88 Broad Street to provide a larger retail unit (LPA ref. 190038).
- On 1 September 2008, advertisement consent was granted at 87a Broad Street for 1 x non-illuminated aluminium fascia panel with illuminated orange logo (LPA ref. 080266).
- On 13 January 2003, retrospective planning permission was granted for a new shopfront at 87a Broad Street (LPA ref. 020548).
- On 28 March 2002, planning permission was granted for the erection of fire escape staircase to rear of 86 Broad Street for 1st and 2nd floor escape (LPA ref. 020474).
- On 2 June 1994, planning permission was granted for the change of use from a restaurant to a shop at 86 Broad Street (LPA ref. 940423).
- On 30 June 1994, a certificate of lawfulness was refused for the use of 86 Broad Street as a fast food restaurant with ancillary take away (LPA ref. 940714).

OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2.4.3. Other recent planning permissions in the vicinity include:

- 43 London Street (530m from the site) – planning permission was granted on 16 June 2020 for the part-demolition of the existing façade, internal works and the demolition of a two-storey building to the rear to enable a residential-led mixed-use development comprising 48 sqm community use (Class D1) and 21 no. residential units, together with associated services enclosures, parking and landscaping (LPA ref. 191043).
- Bristol & West Arcade Market Place (250m from the site) – planning permission was granted on 9 January 2019 for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of an 8 storey mixed use development providing 35 residential units and 4,208sqm of office floorspace; and the change of use of an existing building to provide flexible retail use on the ground floor (LPA ref. 180358).
- 45 Caversham Road (400m from the site) – planning permission was granted on 24 February 2021 for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a 5 storey building comprising 40 flats with associated landscaping and parking (LPA ref. 201420).
- 115 Chatsham Street (500m from the site) – an application received resolution to grant planning permission at planning committee in July 2021 for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the erection of a 3 to 5 storey building to provide 54 residential units (Class C3). The scheme includes the provision of private and communal external amenity areas, car and cycle parking and refuse storage (LPA Ref. 210349).

- Arthur Hill Pool and Fitness Studio (1.65km from the site) – planning permission was granted on 28 May 2021 for the creation of 15 residential units through the change of use and conversion of the front building and the redevelopment of the rear building, together with car parking and landscaping (LPA ref. 201135).
- 362 Oxford Road (1.6km from the site) – planning permission was granted on 3 June 2021 for the erection of a mixed-use development comprising two commercial units on the ground floor and 26 residential units above, with associated landscaping, car and cycle parking (LPA ref. 201391).
- Broad Street Mall (80m from the site) – an application received resolution to grant planning permission, subject to S106 legal agreement, on 4 March 2020 for the construction of three residential buildings ranging in height from 5 to 20 storeys above Broad Street Mall to provide up to 422 residential units above retail floorspace at ground floor (LPA ref. 182137).

3 PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1.1. The development proposals have been informed by pre-application advice and stakeholder engagement. The proposals have evolved through discussions with Reading Borough Council (“RBC”) officers, the Reading Design Review Panel (“RDRP”), the three councillors for Abbey Ward and the Central Reading business community.
- 3.1.2. Pre-application meetings and activities have included:
- First pre-application meeting with RBC Planning officer on 9 September 2020;
 - Presentation to the Crime Prevention Design Adviser at Thames Valley Police on 3 February 2021;
 - Second pre-application meeting with RBC Planning officer and RBC Design and Conservation officer on 9 February 2021;
 - Presentation to the RDRP and follow-up discussion on 11 February 2021;
 - Newsletter (Appendix A) issued to:
 - Reading Civic Society;
 - Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee;
 - Cllr Tony Page (Abbey Ward) – Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport;
 - Cllr Karen Rowland (Abbey Ward) – Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage and Recreation;
 - Cllr Mohammed Ayub (Abbey Ward) – Chair of Traffic Management Sub-Committee;
 - Central Reading business community;
 - Nigel Horton-Baker – Executive Director of Reading UK;
 - Sue Brackley – Economic Development Manager;
 - Bobby Lonergan – Business Improvement District Manager;
 - Presentation to Nigel Horton-Baker, Sue Brackley and Bobby Lonergan (Central Reading business community representatives) on 28 May 2021; and
 - Presentation to Cllrs Tony Page, Karen Rowland and Mohammed Ayub (the three councillors for Abbey Ward), together with the RBC Acting Planning Manager and Design and Conservation officer on 4 June 2021.
- 3.1.3. The feedback received during this process and the subsequent evolution of the design is summarised set out in **Table 3-1** below:

Table 3-1 – Evolution of the Design

First Pre-Application Advice

Autumn 2020 – Design Iteration

Pre-application advice was initially sought at 86 to 88 Broad Street in respect of a comprehensive redevelopment of the site, demolishing the existing buildings and replacing them with a new five to seven-storey building, re-providing an active retail use at ground floor, with 27 residential units above.

Front:



Rear:



Autumn 2020 – Comments Received

RBC Response

- In land use terms, residential use on the upper floors would be supported as the provision of housing would assist in meeting an acknowledged pressing need for housing in the borough.
- No in-principle policy objection to the amalgamation of the ground floor units or removal of the upper floor uses.
- The Council raised concern over the location of the single café unit located to the rear of the service yard.
- The Council raised concern over the demolition of the existing building. It was recommended that the design to be explored to retain and improve the existing building.
- The Council raised concern over the proposed 7 storeys stating that the scale is out of character with the surrounding area which is predominantly 3 to 4 storeys.
- The provision of private and communal outdoor space would be supported by the Council subject to overlooking/ privacy concerns.
- Cycle parking should be provided at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit for 1 and 2 bed units and 1 space per unit for 3+ bed units. These would need to be provided within a covered lockable and conveniently located store.

Follow-Up Pre-Application Advice

Spring 2021 – Design Iteration

A follow-up pre-application advice was sought for the amended scheme at 86 to 87a Broad Street for a comprehensive redevelopment of the site, demolishing the existing buildings and replacing them with a new five-storey building, with retail at the ground floor and 16 residential units above (2x studios, 4x 1-bed, 9x 2-bed and 1x 3-bed) and associated works.

Front:



Rear:



Key changes made in response to comments received in the first pre-application response were:

- Reduction in building height and residential units to respond to comments regarding the relationship of the building with the terrace along Broad Street.
- Independent heritage advice, from Heritage Collective, was sought to ensure the principle and design of the scheme considered the surrounding heritage assets.
- Omission of No. 88 Broad Street to provide some positive distinction between the Grade II listed chapel and the application site.
- Alterations to the design of the Broad Street elevation to respond to the positive characteristics within the local area, including defined bays and incorporation of distinctive gables
- use of green as a reference to the large trees that dominate the outlook to the north and south of the site, with glazed faience terracotta being considered for the front elevational treatment.
- Removal of proposed rear facing café following concern raised over desirability and crime prevention.
- Separation of retail and residential servicing.

Spring 2021 – Comments Received

Reading DRP Response

- The Panel commended the aspirations of the proposals, stating that there is an excellent opportunity to illustrate how redevelopment of the town centre can bring both aesthetic improvements and community benefits.
- The Panel welcomed the design of the front façade as three gabled form, and considered the principle of the two buildings linked by a lightweight connection as an appropriate approach for this site.
- The Panel noted that they would support the removal of the existing period façade provided that its removal was not detrimental and the proposals would enhance Broad Street.
- The Panel suggested that the rear of the proposed development was perhaps overdesigned, and suggested a more restrained approach that was more sympathetic to its context.
- The Panel expressed concern on certain aspects of the design, including internal flat arrangement and quality of amenity, separation distances, and the massing and layout of the ground floor, rear block and core.

RBC Response

- RBC recommended further exploration of the retention and the re-use of the existing building, stating that as a minimum, the front façade should be retained.
- RBC noted that the Conservation and Urban Design Officer would not support the demolition of the existing building, especially the street façade. The Council confirmed the existing building as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset.
- The Council remain to have no fundamental issues with the amalgamation of the ground floor retail units, with the separation of servicing / access seen as positive at ground floor level.
- Concern was raised on the proposed design, height and massing of the development in terms of overdevelopment, issues on daylight/sunlight levels, privacy and overlooking, and the bridge link.

Response from Reading Councillors

- Councillors commended the design of the scheme, but not the redevelopment of the existing buildings that would enable it.
- Councillors raised significant concerns regarding the demolition of the existing buildings, noting that the existing buildings, including the front façade, have a group value relative to the townscape context of Broad Street.
- Councillors were pleased to hear that there was no net loss of retail space at ground floor, but would prefer not to see an amalgamation of retail units for fear that this would decrease opportunities for smaller, independent retailers.

Response from Reading's Business Community

- The proposals were generally well-received, with no concerns about the loss of the existing buildings, and the design and appearance of the replacement building at Broad Street was well-received.
- They were keen to understand the existing and proposed quantum of retail floorspace, and were pleased to see that the quantity of ground floor retail space was not decreasing.
- They were particularly interested in the relationship between the proposals and the rear service area and noted that they would be particularly willing to support any intervention which improves this area.

Proposed Scheme

Autumn 2021 – Design Iteration



The submitted scheme following feedback received is as follows:

- The retention of the front façade of the buildings onto Broad Street, with retention of the first and second floor elevation fabric, together with two of the three surviving chimneys and re-use of the existing slate roof tiles
- A further reduction in the height of the building onto Broad Street, with a single storey extension above the retained façade, in the form of a set back mansard roof, ensuring the building blends into the Broad Street townscape.
- Amendments to the design of the Broad Street shopfronts.
- The new south building will be a complete redevelopment of the rear of the site to comprise a five-storey building which steps-down, in respect of the Church of St Mary.
- The glazed walkway will link the north and south buildings at first, second and third floors and will incorporate obscured glass to prevent overlooking to the residential properties at the upper floors.
- A more restrained and respectful approach to materiality and design on the rear elevation, with use of brick to match the existing context.
- The retention of the front façade and the construction of two buildings, joined by a glazed walkway, to provide a Class E unit on the ground floor and 15 residential apartments above.

3.1.4. The result of this iterative process is a design response which sympathetically blends new with old and retains the architectural interest of the original Victorian buildings.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1. Planning permission is sought for:

“Redevelopment behind retained facade to provide a part-four, part- five storey building to provide Class E at ground floor and C3 residential above, together with associated works, landscaping arrangements and external plant.”

- 4.1.2. The proposed development seeks a sensitive redevelopment behind the Broad Street façade that retains the first and second floor elements of front elevation fabric, which have been identified as being of interest during our pre-application engagement with officers, together with two of the three surviving chimneys and the re-use of the existing slate roof tiles.
- 4.1.3. The new north building behind the retained façade incorporates a new third floor through a set-back mansard roof extension. This allows the development to blend seamlessly into the Broad Street townscape, and crucially preserves the primacy of the nearby Grade II listed congregational chapel.
- 4.1.4. The stepped-back mansard extension would re-use the existing slate tiles, with the two chimneys at the party wall boundaries retained and elongated with eight courses of new bricks. The flat roof behind this single-storey mansard extension also represents an opportunity for a sedum green roof.
- 4.1.5. The new south building results from the complete redevelopment of the rear of the site and is a five-storey building which steps-down in deference to the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.
- 4.1.6. A glazed walkway would link the north and south buildings at first, second and third floors and would incorporate obscured glass to prevent overlooking to the residential properties fronting the internal courtyard.
- 4.1.7. A detailed description of the proposed development, including its design evolution, is set out within the Design and Access Statement, prepared by Suttonca.
- 4.1.8. The scheme would provide 15 new high-quality residential units across the upper floors of both buildings, with a single combined floorplate at ground floor re-providing optimised and flexible Class E floorspace and a re-activated frontage to Broad Street.
- 4.1.9. The flexible Class E floorspace provides 357sqm of prime ground floor floorspace and includes the ability to subdivide the space into two distinct units. Whilst this is a net reduction in Class E floorspace on the site (down from 881 sqm), this is a net increase in retail space at ground floor level (up from 284 sqm), which is the most valuable and usable space for retailers.
- 4.1.10. The design response re-instates the pattern of the historic shopfronts and extends the language of the external façade to ground. The scheme also incorporates a dedicated residential entrance from Broad Street with minimal interruption to the frontage and extent of retail floorspace.
- 4.1.11. Separate retail and residential servicing entrances and back of house facilities are accessed via the rear of the ground floor from St Mary's Butts. Separate, dedicated and secure cycle storage for the retail space and residential dwellings are provided to the rear of the ground floor, as indicated in drawing ref. 1316-2000-Rev F. The scheme is car-free, which befits the Central Reading location.
- 4.1.12. A summary of the proposed uses and quantum of floorspace, along with proposed unit mixes are set out below.

Table 4-1 – Existing and Proposed Quantum

Land Use	Existing Floorspace (in GIA)	Proposed Floorspace (in GIA)
Class E	881 sqm	357 sqm
Class C3 Residential Units	-	1,539sqm
Total	881 sqm	1,896sqm

Table 4-2 – Proposed Unit Mix

No. of Bedrooms	No. of Proposed Units	Local Plan Policy CR6 Target (%)	% of Proposed Units
Studios	2	40% maximum	13.3%
1-bedroom	4		26.7%
2-bedroom	8	N/A	53.3%
3-bedroom	1	5% minimum	6.7%
Total	15	N/A	100%

5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1.1. This section identifies the relevant planning policies and guidance at a national and development plan level. The proposals are then assessed against these policies in Section 8 of this Statement.

5.2 STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.2.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that where an adopted development plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2.2. The statutory development plan for this site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted in November 2019). The policies of particular relevance are summarised below.

READING LOCAL PLAN

- 5.2.3. Reading's Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and contains policies for how Reading will develop up to 2036. The Plan identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided.
- 5.2.4. The relevant policies are set out below
- Policy CC1 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'
 - Policy CC2 'Sustainable Design and Construction'
 - Policy CC3 'Adaptation to Climate Change'
 - Policy CC5 'Waste Minimisation and Storage'
 - Policy CC6 'Accessibility and the Intensity of Development'
 - Policy CC7 'Design and the Public Realm'
 - Policy CC8 'Safeguarding Amenity'
 - Policy CC9 'Securing Infrastructure'
 - Policy EN1 'Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment'
 - Policy EN3 'Enhancement of Conservation Areas'
 - Policy EN4 'Locally Important Heritage Assets'
 - Policy EN5 'Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest'
 - Policy EN6 'New Development in a Historic Context'
 - Policy EN15 'Air Quality'
 - Policy EN16 'Pollution and Water Resources'
 - Policy EN17 'Noise Generating Equipment'
 - Policy EN18 'Flooding and Drainage'
 - Policy H1 'Provision of Housing'
 - Policy H2 'Density and Mix'
 - Policy H3 'Affordable Housing'
 - Policy H5 'Standards for New Housing'
 - Policy H10 'Private and Communal Outdoor Space'
 - Policy TR3 'Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters'
 - Policy CR5 'Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging'
 - Policy CR1 'Definition of Central Reading'
 - Policy CR2 'Design and Central Reading'

- Policy CR6 'Living in Central Reading'
- Policy CR7 'Primary Frontages in Central Reading'

5.3 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.3.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised on 20 July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 5.3.2. Paragraph 10 states that, at the heart of the NPPF, is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 5.3.3. Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking, applying a presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.3.4. The Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. Paragraph 38 continues by stating 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."*
- 5.3.5. In terms of housing, Paragraph 60 states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed in order to meet the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Section 5 of the document sets the objective of boosting housing supply significantly.
- 5.3.6. The Framework seeks to build a strong competitive economy. Paragraph 81 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.3.7. Paragraph 120(c) requires that substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs. Part (d) seeks to 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.
- 5.3.8. Paragraph 203 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

- 5.3.9. The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance (SPG) have been used as a material considerations for this proposal:



- Affordable Housing SPD (adopted in March 2021);
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted in October 2011);
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (adopted in April 2015);
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted in December 2019); and
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (adopted in March 2015).

6 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1.1. This section identifies the key planning considerations relating to the scheme and assesses the proposed development in the context of the relevant national and local planning policy and other material considerations.

6.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND REDEVELOPMENT BEHIND RETAINED BROAD STREET FACADE

- 6.2.1. It was confirmed during pre-application discussions that RBC officers consider the existing buildings to be non-designated heritage assets.
- 6.2.2. The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

- 6.2.3. Policy EN4 of the Local Plan states that development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset. The policy wording contains three requirements relevant to this proposal:

- Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset’s significance.
- Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals.
- Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.

- 6.2.4. Heritage Collective have assessed the buildings and have prepared the enclosed Heritage Impact Assessment. Heritage Collective have concluded that the existing buildings on the site (86-87a Broad Street and rear additions) are of *“some limited local heritage value which can be summarised as a low level of architectural value (limited to the first and second floor and surviving chimneys of the Broad Street frontage) and a similarly low level of historic interest (related to how the buildings help, amongst others, represent the late 19th century development of Broad Street).”*

- 6.2.5. Whilst previous pre-application proposals sought the total demolition of these buildings, in response to the feedback received from officers and ward councillors, the proposals now comprise a redevelopment behind the retained façade, and include the following beneficial works to these structures:

- Reintroducing the historically influenced shopfronts to the ground floor;

- Introducing residential accommodation within the roof structure alongside the retained chimneys which flank the site;
- Re-using the existing slate tiles within the set-back mansard roof extension fronting Broad Street; and
- Replacing the existing windows with new timber double glazed units to match the existing windows.

- 6.2.6. Whilst the proposals would result in the loss of some historic fabric associated with the non-designated heritage asset (i.e. all built form behind the retained façade), the proposals would retain the most significant element of the buildings, namely the first and second floor of the Broad Street elevation and two of the three surviving chimneys, as described in **Section 4** of this statement. The removal of the chimney that is off centre to the right hand side would result in the loss of some historic fabric, but this minor change would not affect the significance of the non-designated heritage asset given that the overall traditional character of the building and roofscape would be preserved.
- 6.2.7. As a result of this, whilst the majority of the buildings would be removed, the key architectural elements of the buildings and their historic interest would be preserved by the proposed development. Based on Heritage Collective's professional experience, the wholly limited heritage interest of those parts of the buildings to be removed does not weigh significantly in favour of their retention.
- 6.2.8. Heritage Collective have also prepared the enclosed Level 2 Building Record of the existing buildings on the site, which mitigates against the loss of the built form behind the retained façade by providing a clear record of those elements now proposed to be removed.
- 6.2.9. Overall, the proposed development would not result in any noticeable effect on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset meaning that there would be no identifiable harm under paragraph 203 of the Framework. The proposed development is also found to accord with the requirements of Local Plan Policy EN4 with regards to the non-designated heritage asset insofar as the proposals, whilst resulting in façade retention, would conserve the primary architectural and historic values of these structures and result in aesthetic enhancements to the asset with the development having been informed by its context and setting. In addition, the non-designated heritage assets on the site have been fully recorded as part of a Level 2 Building Record submitted as part of this application. The benefits of the proposed development identified in Section 8 clearly outweigh any perceived harm.

PROPOSED LAND USE PRINCIPLES

Principle of Class E at Ground Floor

- 6.2.10. The introduction of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 has categorised the existing uses, as set out in **Section 2** of this Statement, as Use Class E. The introduction of Class E responds to the ongoing need for flexibility within the UK's high streets, maintaining and improving the vitality and viability of town centres. This change also affords a degree of flexibility by allowing the existing floorspace to be re-purposed for any use within the definition of Class E without it amounting to "development" or a material change of use
- 6.2.11. The proposals include the provision of new Class E floorspace at ground floor. As noted above, this is a net decrease in the total amount of Class E floorspace on the site, but a net increase in usable space at ground floor, which is the most valuable for future occupiers. The proposed ground floor

plans indicate how the space could be used as a single unit or split into two retail units. The proposed commercial unit(s) would be accessed publicly from Broad Street, with dedicated back of house facilities and servicing via St Mary's Butts to the rear. The separation of the servicing/ access at ground floor has been provided in response to officer comments during pre-application discussions.

- 6.2.12. Policy RL1 of the Local Plan designates Reading town centre (Central Reading) as a regional centre where a mix of town centre uses (as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF), including shops, restaurants, leisure, recreation, entertainment, and office uses, are seen to contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre.
- 6.2.13. Local Plan Policy CR7 relates to preferred uses at the ground floor of primary frontages only, with an exception for entrances to accommodation at upper floors. Officers confirmed during pre-application discussions that there are no subsequent in-principle issues with the removal of the upper floor Class E uses, and that a flexible approach would likely be applied in terms of specific Class E occupiers at ground floor.
- 6.2.14. On this basis, the proposed development would not result in the loss of a main town centre use at ground floor and is therefore consistent with Local Plan policies RL1 and CR7.

Principle of Residential at Upper Floors

- 6.2.1. The site is a commercially inefficient brownfield site in Reading town centre, sustainably located close to amenities and public transport links.
- 6.2.2. The NPPF encourages the effective and efficient use of brownfield land in meeting the need for homes, whilst safeguarding and improving Green Belt areas and the countryside, adding further weight to the importance of utilising available previously developed sites. Paragraph 120(c) gives "substantial weight" to the value of using suitable brownfield land and part (d) supports the efficient use of such land in delivering new homes where land supply is constrained.
- 6.2.3. Increasing housing supply is also an important strategic objective of Reading where there is a recognised pressing need for new homes. Opportunities for large-scale expansion of the town onto greenfield sites are virtually non-existent, with the small rural areas within the tightly defined borough boundary subject to significant flood risk or forming important public open space. This means having to look within the existing urban area for opportunities, and to ensure efficient use of land in accordance with the Framework.
- 6.2.4. Policy H1 of the Local Plan sets out a housing target of 15,874 new residential units in Reading Borough for the period of 2013 to 2026, averaging 689 net additional dwellings per annum ("dpa"). Supporting paragraph 4.4.7 states that with the significant need for housing in Reading, it is important that efficient use is made of the land that is available to boost the delivery of new homes.
- 6.2.5. As the most accessible location, as well as the retail and employment hub of the area, there is a clear expectation for Central Reading to provide a significant amount of new homes and commercial floorspace at a higher density. The new Local Plan sets down that 7,600 homes (49% of the total planned for) will be delivered within Central Reading.
- 6.2.6. According to Reading's latest Annual Monitoring Report 2019/20, the borough previously exceeded its annual housing delivery target of 689 dpa. In 2018/19, 910 new additional residential units were completed. However, in 2019/20, the borough was unable to meet the annual housing target, completing only 521 net additional dwellings.

- 6.2.7. Whilst the 2020 Housing Delivery Test results, published on 19 January 2021, demonstrate that the borough is delivering 141% against this housing requirement, the 698 dpa OAN figure is based on the out-of-date 2012 household projections.
- 6.2.8. On 16 December 2020 the government announced a new Standard Method for calculating local housing need, which applies an uplift of 35% to focus a greater degree of housing delivery in the twenty most populated cities and urban areas, including Reading.
- 6.2.9. The Governments 'Indicative Local Housing Need' figure for Reading, in accordance with the December 2020 changes, is 876 dpa. This increases the annual target set down within the Local Plan by 187 units.
- 6.2.10. There is a significant need for housing in Reading and in this context, the provision of 15 new homes in a sustainable location is a benefit of the proposed development. In pre-application discussions, officers have confirmed that, in land use terms, the principle of residential accommodation on upper floors would be supported.

Socio Economic and Place Making Benefits

Economic Benefits

- 6.2.1. This application is supported by a Socio-Economic Statement at **Section 7** which has assessed the anticipated economic benefits of the proposed development, utilising well defined and robust methodological processes. The assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would generate significant economic benefits for Reading and the wider economy in both the short-term (£2.1 million gross value added to the local economy during the construction phase); and the long-term (£1.8 million annual gross added value to the local economy once the scheme is complete and operational). The proposed development would also support 28 full-time equivalent permanent jobs.
- 6.2.2. These significant socio-economic benefits would contribute to the continued vitality and viability of Central Reading.

Contributing towards the Central Reading Offer

- 6.2.3. Policy RL1 of the Local Plan supports redevelopment in Central Reading noting that the town centre will receive the greatest levels of development and change, which will maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. Broadening the range of facilities and providing residential use on the upper floors are both seen as acceptable in relation to improving the town centre.
- 6.2.4. Section 5.2 of the Local Plan outlines the strategy for Central Reading and lists a number of key principles for the area, including:
- The centre will contain a broad range of different but complementary uses within an area easily accessed by foot;
 - The centre will appeal to all sectors of Reading's population as a place to live in, work in, study in and visit;
 - New development will exhibit an excellent, safe and sustainable quality of design that contributes to the attraction of the centre;
 - Access to the centre by foot, cycle and public transport will be improved; and
 - Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of the Central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

- 6.2.5. Reading Vision 2050 states that *“To achieve good growth, liveability needs to be enhanced by creating places which contribute positively to people’s quality of life and wellbeing - to bring streets and spaces to life during the day and evening”*.
- 6.2.6. The proposed development seeks to bring forward an under-utilised site comprising inefficient retail units in a prominent town centre location, seeking to support social value, deliver healthy streets, create jobs, strengthen inclusion and promote good growth. The existing buildings are largely vacant and have an inefficient configuration. This application seeks to maximise the site’s contribution to the Central Reading area, whilst retaining and celebrating the locally valued front façade, in accordance with national and borough aspirations to create and enhance successful places.
- 6.2.7. The introduction of flexible and adaptable retail floorspace with new residential accommodation above would:
- Increase the town centre’s night time presence and culture, which would support the local economy, promote activity for all ages and interests, and ensure the safety of visitors and night time workers;
 - Enhance the cultural scene, which moves beyond and diversifies the existing retail focused activity;
 - Contribute towards making Central Reading and the town centre inclusive and accessible owing to the incorporation of a mixed and balanced community, supporting social integration within the town centre;
 - Encourage people to walk and cycle thereby improving the town centre’s air quality, perception of safety, and activating frontages to create things to see and do (including at the rear of the site);
 - Reinforce spaces for dwelling and relaxation (particularly at the rear), which is important to complement more active areas within the town centre; and
 - Increase community activity, which would boost social value.
- 6.2.8. The proposals would not only deliver much needed new homes, but also provide a sustainable solution for an under-utilised site and increase local resilience. The scheme aims to contribute towards making Broad Street more liveable and inclusive whilst valuing and celebrating the town centre’s diversity and heritage.
- 6.2.9. By introducing new residents to the town centre, the proposed development would enhance the night time culture of the area which in turn would support the local economy and enhance the cultural scene. Additionally, there would be numerous other positive economic benefits, both from the increase in expenditure from new residents and from the re-provision of employment generating uses.

6.3 CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

- 6.3.1. The effect of the proposed development on the existing buildings as non-designated heritage assets has been discussed above. This section considers the effects of the proposed development on designated heritage assets.
- 6.3.2. The NPPF at Paragraph 126 sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The National Design Guide identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of ‘Context’ and it states that *“well-designed new development responds positively*

to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones". Additionally, there is specific reference to 'views inwards and outwards' of such sites.

- 6.3.3. Local Plan Policy CC7 requires all development to be *"of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located"*.
- 6.3.4. Any decision made affecting listed buildings and their settings and that of a conservation area must satisfy the statutory tests of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as the relevant policies within the NPPF and the Council's Local Plan.
- 6.3.5. Para 200 of the Framework states that *"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification"*. Para 202 goes on to state *"where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal..."*
- 6.3.6. Local Plan Policy EN1 requires that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special character or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.
- 6.3.7. Local Plan Policy EN6 requires that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development and that new development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.
- 6.3.8. The existing buildings on the site do not contribute to or better reveal the significance of the identified listed buildings and conservation area. Heritage Collective conclude that the demolition of these buildings behind the retained Broad Street façade would not result in any harm to the significance or setting of these assets.
- 6.3.9. The Broad Street frontage of the site is only appreciable within the setting and context of one of the identified heritage assets, the Grade II listed Congregational Church and 89 & 89a Broad Street. Whilst this building is listed for its interior, the 1982 Broad Street frontage is also of architectural and historic interest. Heritage Collective conclude that the changes arising from the proposed development are wholly minor in the context of the street scene and setting of the Congregational Church and 89 & 89a Broad Street. The proposed minor increase in height relates well to the already varied scale of built form along the street and would not dominate the listed building, the decorative roof of which far exceeds the ridgeline of the proposed development.
- 6.3.10. Furthermore, the proposed development would not obscure the listed building in any view (either static or transient) and there would be no change to the silhouette of the building. Overall, Heritage Collective conclude that the proposed works to the northern block would have no effect on the significance or setting of the Grade II listed Congregational Church and 89 & 89a Broad Street.

- 6.3.11. The southern block has been designed with muted tones in response to the significant heritage assets located to the south. The palette of the southern building makes use of dark grey brick, hit and miss patterns and patinated bronze reveals to windows.
- 6.3.12. It is the southern building which has greater potential to cause change to the setting of the nearby identified heritage assets, namely the:
- Grade I listed Church of St Mary;
 - St Mary Butts/ Castle Street Conservation Area;
 - Grade II listed Church House and the building to the west; and
 - Grade II listed Congregational Church.
- 6.3.13. The Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Heritage Collective confirms that the existing additions to the rear of the site do not contribute to or reveal the significance of the above assets, in particular the church and conservation area. Due to the present condition of the buildings to the rear, this part of the setting could be considered to detract from the significance of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary. Redevelopment of the rear of the site therefore offers a clear opportunity for enhancement within the setting of these assets.
- 6.3.14. Whilst the southern block is of a larger scale and massing than the existing built form, it is not considered to be out of keeping with the massing of built form in the wider area (for example, the John Lewis building). The massing has also been carefully considered with the design response incorporating a step down in subservience to the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.
- 6.3.15. Importantly, the proposed development, whilst resulting in a change within the setting of the assets, would not be visible to a detrimental degree in any of the key views associated with the listed buildings and conservation area:
- **Church of St Mary** – key views of the church are from the west towards its prominent chequerboard tower and from the south where the church can be seen sat within its well-grassed and treed churchyard. There would be no change to these key views as a result of the proposed development given the distances involved and intervening built form.
 - **St Mary Butts/ Castle Street Conservation Area** – key views within, into and out of the conservation area are identified within the adopted conservation area appraisal. Due to the orientation of these views and intervening built form, the proposed development would not feature in any of these key views and, as such, these important views would not undergo any change.
 - **Church House and building to the west** – key views of these two assets are from the south where their front elevations can be best appreciated. The proposed development would feature in the periphery and background of these views. However, due to its siting and the architecture of the development, the replacement built form would not obstruct or impinge upon these views and the back of house character of the site would be enhanced relative to the existing situation.
 - **Congregational Church and 89 & 89a Broad Street** - key views of this asset are from Broad Street (or internally viewing the galleried chapel). These would not undergo any change as a result of the rear block. It is not possible to appreciate the significance or understand the history of the former chapel to the rear due to the large scale rear additions and modern built form.
- 6.3.16. The Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Heritage Collective confirms that by virtue of the reasons identified above, the proposed redevelopment at the rear would not dominate or encroach

upon the identified assets and would not result in any competition with or distraction from them, with all key views remaining unaltered.

- 6.3.17. Whilst there would be a change to the built surroundings of these assets as a result of the development of the rear block, this change is found to be a wholly positive one due to the considerable visual improvement to the current back of house area, which would result in an aesthetic enhancement within the settings of these assets. There would be a marked improvement to the general character of this part of the setting of the assets, in particular the Grade I listed Church.
- 6.3.18. Overall, Heritage Collective conclude that whilst resulting in a change within the setting of the identified heritage assets, the proposed development would not cause harm to their significance or an appreciation thereof. The redevelopment behind the retained façade would amount to a considerable visual improvement to the current back of house area, which would result in an aesthetic enhancement within the setting of these assets. As such, the proposed development would fall outside the remit of paragraphs 200-202 of the Framework insofar as the development would not result in any harm to, or loss, of significance. The proposed development is therefore found to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies EN1, EN3 and EN6. There would be preservation for the purposes of the decision-maker's duty under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

6.4 DESIGN APPROACH

- 6.4.1. The NPPF at Paragraph 126 sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The National Design Guide identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of 'Context' and it states that *"well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones"*. Additionally, there is specific reference to 'views inwards and outwards' of such sites.
- 6.4.1. Policy CC7 of the Local Plan sets out that all development must be of high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.4.2. Policy CR2 requires applications for development within Central Reading to build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces. The policy states that development should provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm.
- 6.4.3. The enclosed Design and Access Statement, prepared by Suttonca, and the Statement of Community Involvement both explain the iterative process involved with the scheme's design development, with the former identifying the rationale behind the submitted design response.
- 6.4.4. On the Broad Street frontage, the proposals comprise the retention of the existing façade, the sensitive refurbishment of the ground floor shopfronts, and the introduction set back additional storey within a mansard roof.
- 6.4.5. The design approach to the rear building is restrained and reserved in acknowledgement of the relationship with the conservation area and the listed church to the south, and the simplicity of the vernacular buildings that comprise the rear of the retail environment. The choice of materials would match the existing context.

6.4.6. Overall, the proposed design is considered to be a high quality one, which:

- Responds positively to the challenge of making more efficient use of the site;
- Delivers a suitable separation of the retail and residential uses, facilitating a successful co-existence of uses;
- Respects the existing building by retaining the Broad Street façade, which is the most interesting part of the building;
- Respects the historic environment, with a sensitive mansard roof extension on the Broad Street frontage as well as an improvement to the appearance of the rear of the site, within the setting of the conservation area and listed church; and
- Responds to the local context in terms of the choice of materials on the new mansard roof extension and the brick on the rear building.

6.5 HOUSING TYPE, MIX AND TENURE

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

- 6.5.1. The proposed development would achieve an efficient use of the land, which is recognised as a priority both at a national level through the NPPF and locally within the Local Plan. The NPPF states at Paragraph 120(d) that planning policies and decisions should *“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”*.
- 6.5.2. The Local Plan recognises that as the most accessible location, as well as the retail and employment hub of the area, there is a clear expectation for Central Reading to provide a significant amount of new homes and commercial floorspace at a higher density. The new Local Plan sets down that 7,600 homes (49% of the total planned for) will be delivered within Central Reading.
- 6.5.3. Local Plan Policy CC6 makes the important link between the scale and density of development and its ability to support accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities. This supports the approach that the highest density and largest scale development should take place in the most accessible locations.
- 6.5.4. Policy H2 of the Local Plan relates to residential density and mix and states that the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by the character and context of the surrounding area (including nearby heritage assets); its current and future level of accessibility by sustainable means; the need to achieve high quality design; the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 6.5.5. Figure 4.5 sets out indicative density ranges for town centre, urban and suburban locations with densities in excess of 100 units per hectare sought in town centres.
- 6.5.6. The proposed development would provide 15 dwellings at the heart of the town centre, which would equate to a density of approximately 214 dwellings per hectare (“dph”). The site lies within Reading town centre, 340m from Reading railway station, and is therefore highly accessible by public transport as well as being within the immediate vicinity of a range of amenities. The residential optimisation of the site is therefore considered to be entirely appropriate.

RESIDENTIAL MIX

- 6.5.7. Local Plan Policy CR6 requires all proposals of 15 dwellings or more to provide a maximum of 40% studios/ 1-bed units, and a minimum of 5% 3+ bed units.
- 6.5.8. **Table 4-2** in Section 4 of this Statement summarises the proposed unit mix and confirms that 40% of the units would be studios/ 1-bed units and 7% would be 3-bed units. The proposals therefore provide a policy-compliant unit mix in accordance with local requirements.

RESIDENTIAL TENURE

- 6.5.9. Local Plan Policy H3 states that sites which deliver 10 or more dwellings should provide 30% of the total dwellings in the form of affordable housing. In cases where proposals fall short of this policy target, as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/ landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.
- 6.5.10. A detailed Financial Viability Assessment in respect of the scheme for total redevelopment tabled at the second round of pre-application discussions, and a subsequent addendum in respect of the proposed redevelopment behind retained façade have been prepared by James R Brown and Company Ltd. The assessment finds that the proposed development is not in a financially viable position to support any provision of affordable housing owing to the Residual Land Value being lower than the Benchmark Land Value.
- 6.5.11. The proposed development is in compliance with Policy H3 as the viability evidence demonstrates that it is not possible to deliver affordable housing within the development.

6.6 RESIDENTIAL QUALITY

SPACE STANDARDS

- 6.6.1. Local Plan Policy H5 states that all new buildings outside of the Central Area will comply with the nationally-described space standard. Supporting paragraph 4.4.42 explains that even where it does not apply (i.e. in Central Reading), the nationally prescribed space standard offers a useful point of reference and a good basis for design of new developments.
- 6.6.2. The Nationally Described Space Standards (2015) set out minimum gross internal floor areas (GIA) which proposals for new residential development will be required to meet. As set out within the Accommodation Schedule enclosed with the Design and Access Statement, the proposed residential units would all comply with the minimum internal space standards required by the 2015 standards.
- 6.6.3. The Design and Access Statement confirms that all units have been designed to be accessible to all and all units comply with the National Space Standards.

AMENITY SPACE PROVISION

- 6.6.4. Local Plan Policy H10 relates to private and communal outdoor amenity space and states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space. In addition, the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, and will not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.

- 6.6.5. However, the text at supporting paragraph 4.4.83 specifies that flats in Central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor space as houses in other parts of Reading, and the sites are usually more constrained in any case. This is because often the needs of residents within central Reading can be different to those of the rest of the Borough. Flats in central Reading are less likely to attract families, and the ability to walk to public open space nearby, notably the celebrated oasis of St Mary's Churchyard, reduces the need for private open space.
- 6.6.6. Eleven of the 15 proposed homes would have access to a private amenity space, and the other homes would benefit from access to the area of shared amenity space.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Daylight and Sunlight

- 6.6.7. Local Plan Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties, or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties in terms of access to daylight and sunlight.
- 6.6.8. The supporting text to the policy notes that there is good practice guidance available to assist in planning decision-making when considering amenity issues. The policy makes specific reference to the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice'.
- 6.6.9. The BRE document provides guidance and is not planning policy. It should also be recognised that the guidance is not designed specifically with higher density town centre developments in mind, and therefore the standards within it should be applied flexibly with respect to the development's context.
- 6.6.10. The NPPF at paragraph 125(c) states *"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)"*.
- 6.6.1. The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that the dwellings receive sufficient amounts of sunlight and daylight. In order to optimise the quality of the dwellings proposed, the layouts of 13 units (87%) have been designed to be dual aspect.
- 6.6.2. A Daylight Sunlight Report prepared by Hollis Group has been submitted in support of this application.

Internal Daylight

- 6.6.3. Of the 38 rooms assessed for Average Daylight Factor ("ADF"), all but four (89%) would meet or exceed the target values as set out in the BRE guide. One of the four rooms that does not meet the target would serve a Lounge/ Kitchen/ Dining Room ("LKD"), two would serve studios and the other would serve a bedroom. The main contributory factors accounting for these shortfalls are the proposed location and orientation of each room's windows in relation to the surrounding context.
- 6.6.4. Of the 38 rooms assessed for Daylight Distribution, all but eleven (76%) would meet or exceed the BRE criteria for daylight distribution. Eight of the eleven rooms in the proposed accommodation that would fall marginally short of the numerical target would serve bedrooms. The BRE guide states that living rooms and kitchens require more daylight than bedrooms and this, coupled with the minor

nature of this deficiency, leads Hollis to conclude that the proposed development in general is compliant with the BRE guide in terms of daylight amenity.

- 6.6.5. Given the infill nature of the site, Hollis consider that the proposed flats, when taken collectively, would achieve a very high level of daylight amenity against the BRE guide's recommended targets.

Internal Sunlight

- 6.6.6. Of the 38 windows assessed for sunlight (Annual Probable Sunlight Hours or "APSH"), fourteen would meet or exceed the target values as set out in the BRE guide, with twenty four rooms falling short of the recommended target.
- 6.6.7. Each of these rooms contain windows which are oriented within 90° of due north, meaning that they would rarely receive any direct sunlight. The BRE guide recognises that site constraints can sometimes limit the ability to place windows in south-facing elevations and this must be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposed development as a whole.
- 6.6.1. In terms of sunlight, the emphasis of the BRE guidance is on living rooms rather than bedrooms and kitchens. The guide recommends that *"sensitive layout design of flats will attempt to ensure that each individual dwelling has at least one main living room which can receive a reasonable amount of sunlight"*. As such, the shortfalls noted to the sixteen bedrooms should be seen as minor.
- 6.6.2. The remaining eight rooms that would fall short of the BRE's APSH targets serve as studios and LKDs and predominantly face north.
- 6.6.3. Given the nature of this town centre site, it would be very difficult to satisfy the criteria with regards to winter sunlight hours and a flexible approach to applying the BRE target criteria is appropriate.

Overshadowing

- 6.6.4. Hollis have also assessed the proposed shared and private amenity areas for permanent overshadowing. The results demonstrate that ten of the fourteen areas (71%) would comply with the BRE guide, as over 50% of their respective areas would receive at least 2 hours of direct sunlight on March 21 at ground plane level.
- 6.6.5. The four amenity areas that fall short of the recommended sunlight exposure are located within the courtyard between the two proposed wings, which in turn has an effect on the amount of sunlight amenity able to reach the lower amenity areas on March 21.

Overall

- 6.6.6. The results of the assessments demonstrate that the vast majority of rooms within the proposed development would achieve good levels of daylight and sunlight amenity.
- 6.6.7. The application of the guidance contained in the BRE guide is not mandatory and should not be used as an instrument of planning policy. It offers guidelines to architects and building
- 6.6.8. designers on how to optimise daylight and sunlight through site layout planning and design. The BRE guide notes that certain sites will have constraints that inhibit access to daylight and sunlight, particularly for flats that are located in dense urban environments, such as this.
- 6.6.9. Overall, the proposed development has been well-designed and great care has been taken to maximise the potential for both daylight and sunlight within the proposed units, as well to ensure that the majority of the proposed outdoor amenity spaces would receive good levels of sunlight throughout the year.

- 6.6.10. As such, Hollis consider that the proposed development is broadly in line with the recommendations set out in the BRE guide for daylight.

Privacy and overlooking

- 6.6.11. Policy CC8 of the Local Plan states that the position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20m between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.
- 6.6.12. There is no adverse impact on any existing residential homes in terms of privacy and overlooking.
- 6.6.13. The proposed north and south buildings have been designed to ensure that the potential for overlooking to neighbouring residential properties is minimised. The primary outlook for the homes in the north building is to the north, whereas the primary outlook in the south building is to the east or the south. Where there are windows or balconies in the north building that face towards the south building, there are no direct facing windows in the south building. The use of obscure glazing in the link prevents any overlooking from within the link. Planting is included within the space between the two buildings to soften the outlook from windows that face onto this space.
- 6.6.14. The proposed development therefore creates an appropriate residential environment that protects the privacy of the future occupiers of the new homes, in compliance with Policy CC8.

Noise

- 6.6.15. Local Plan Policy CC8 also requires proposals to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing and new residential dwellings in terms of noise and disturbance. Policy EN16 of the Local Plan states that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through noise. Policy EN17 requires that noise arising from external plant equipment to be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.
- 6.6.16. An Acoustics Planning Report has been prepared by Sandy Brown in support of this planning application. The assessment finds that the dominant noise sources observed at the front of the site were the occasional pedestrians, with the dominant noise sources observed at the rear of the site comprising external plant located at adjacent buildings.
- 6.6.17. The prevailing noise background was measured to inform the façade construction, glazing and ventilation strategy for the proposed development. Based on the highest ambient noise levels, double glazing systems have been recommended for façade sound insulation, together with acoustically attenuated passive ventilation (i.e. trickle vents).
- 6.6.18. The survey data has also set down the noise limits for all future building services plant to adhere to. This would need to be assessed as the design progresses.
- 6.6.19. Sandy Brown also conclude that the noise levels at the terraces, both during the daytime and night-time hours, are not anticipated to exceed the upper guideline value given in BS 8233:2014.
- 6.6.20. Therefore, in light of the above, the proposed development is considered acceptable on noise grounds in accordance with Policies CC8 and EN16 of the Local Plan.

Air Quality

- 6.6.1. Local Plan Policy EN15 states that developments should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality through design, mitigation and where required planning obligations to be used to help improve local air quality.
- 6.6.2. Part (ii) of Local Plan Policy CR6 states that proposals for new residential development within Central Reading will be required to demonstrate air quality implications on future occupants.
- 6.6.3. An Air Quality Assessment has been prepared by Air Quality Consultants in support of this planning application. The assessment concludes that as the proposed development would not generate any additional daily vehicle movements and heat and hot water would be provided by heat pumps, the impact of the proposed development would be 'negligible'. The overall operational air quality effects of the development are concluded to be 'not significant'.
- 6.6.4. The proposed development is consistent with Paragraph 186 of the Framework, being appropriate for its location both in terms of its effect on the local air quality environment and the air quality conditions for future residents. The proposed development is also judged to accord with Policy CD6 and Policy EN15 of the Local Plan.

6.7 TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 6.7.1. The NPPF outlines that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development, but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. In considering developments that generate significant amounts of movements, local authorities should seek to ensure they are located where the need to travel will be minimised, and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.
- 6.7.2. In determining planning applications, the NPPF at paragraph 111 states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are "severe".
- 6.7.3. The application site is within walking distance of Reading train station and is served by multiple bus routes to the local area. These connections mean that the site can promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel and reduce the need to travel by car.
- 6.7.4. A Transport Assessment has been prepared by Key Transport Consultants Ltd and is submitted as part of this application. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development is highly accessible by a range of travel modes and, due to its town centre location, is well placed to make use of the various local amenities, services and facilities available within Reading as a car-free development.
- 6.7.5. Key Transport conclude that any residual cumulative highway impacts of the development are not considered to be 'severe', and that there are no transport related grounds preventing the proposed mixed-use development from being approved.
- 6.7.6. It is demonstrated through the assessment work completed by Key Transport that the scheme accords with policies TR1 and TR3 of the Local Plan and the transport objectives of the Framework.

PARKING

- 6.7.7. Local Plan Policy TR5 related to car and cycle parking and EV charging facilities, and requires development to provide car and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations.

- 6.7.8. The Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) identifies the site as located within Zone 1 'Central Core Area', meaning that this site is in a highly accessible location where car-free development is appropriate. No car parking is therefore proposed as part of this town centre development.
- 6.7.9. Cycle parking is proposed to be provided for residents, together with staff and visitors of the proposed retail unit. A total of nine cycle parking spaces would be provided for the residential units and two spaces for staff of the Class E unit. Visitors would have access to the existing cycle parking available in the local area.
- 6.7.10. It is noted that if there is no individual secure facility, for example a store or garage associated with the property, dedicated parking is required. The proposed cycle parking would be located on the ground floor close to the rear entrance in a dedicated safe, secure and conveniently accessible cycle store.
- 6.7.11. In light of the above, this proposed car-free development with its policy compliant provision of cycle parking accords with Policy TR5 of the Local Plan and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011).

ACCESS

- 6.7.12. The site would retain its one vehicle access to the rear of the site from St Mary's Butts in the existing communal service yard. It is anticipated that this area would be used for deliveries, servicing and collections, similar to the general principles of the existing arrangement.
- 6.7.13. Pedestrians would continue to access the site via the dedicated retail and residential front entrances off Broad Street. The residential units would be accessed via a residential lobby, separate to the retail unit, to provide a new 24hr front door from Broad Street. This element has been designed through collaboration with the Crime Prevention Officer. The residential upper floors would also increase surveillance in the area, particularly at the rear.
- 6.7.14. Access for cyclists would be provided through the rear entrance from the service yard, and into a conveniently located and secure cycle store at ground floor.

REFUSE AND SERVICING

- 6.7.15. Local Plan Policy CC5 states that development should promote layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, re-use, recycling and composting.
- 6.7.16. Refuse and recycling stores would be located to the rear of the development at the ground floor, with separate dedicated stores for the residential and the retail uses. Refuse collection for the proposed development would continue to take place from the rear of the site, with access from St Mary's Butts.
- 6.7.17. Servicing for the retail unit would be similarly undertaken from the rear of the development per the existing arrangement. However, deliveries are available from the front of the retail unit between 18:00 - 10:00 thereby providing additional flexibility for a future retail occupier.

TRAVEL PLAN

- 6.7.18. A Travel Plan Statement prepared by Key Transport Consultants Ltd accompanies this planning application, which from the outset presents a package of measures to encourage sustainable modes of travel at this town centre site.

- 6.7.19. The Travel Plan sets out key objectives and measures to be undertaken during construction and occupation of the development to ensure that residents and employees have the opportunity to review their travel options. A Travel Plan Coordinator would be appointed to oversee the travel planning measures for the development.
- 6.7.20. The proposed development would not have a negative impact on traffic or highways safety and would provide and encourage sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Local Plan Policy TR1.

6.8 ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 6.8.1. Policy CC2 of the Local Plan states that proposals for new development will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care, taking account of the effects of climate change.
- 6.8.2. Policy H5(b) requires residential accommodation to be built with high water efficiency under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations; and (c) requires all major residential developments to be designed to achieve zero carbon homes (or if unachievable, a minimum 35% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations and a planning contribution to offset remaining carbon emissions to zero).
- 6.8.3. An Energy Statement has been prepared by Desco, which sets out the energy efficiency measures and technologies incorporated to enable the proposed development to meet national and local planning requirements in relation to energy and CO2 emissions.
- 6.8.4. The calculations at design stage demonstrate that adopting individual air source heat pump technology to provide heating and hot water at the development contributes to an overall cumulative on site carbon saving of 46% over Part L2A of the 2013 Building Regulations, which exceeds the 35% carbon reduction required by the Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.
- 6.8.5. A planning contribution to offset the remaining carbon emissions to zero would be secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement.
- 6.8.6. The proposed development therefore accords with policies CC2 and H5 of the Local Plan.

BREEAM

- 6.8.7. Local Plan Policy CC2 requires all minor non-residential developments to meet BREEAM 'Very Good'.
- 6.8.8. A BREEAM Pre-Assessment Report has been prepared by Sol Environment in respect of the 357 sqm (GIA) commercial unit(s), which is appended to the Desco Energy Statement
- 6.8.9. Based on the initial review by Sol Environmental, the overall assessment score for the development achieves the required score (62.25%) for a 'Very Good' rating, in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy CC2.

UTILITIES CONNECTION

- 6.8.10. A Utilities Connections Report has been prepared by DESCO in support of this planning application.

- 6.8.11. This outlines that a desktop survey was carried out to obtain responses and installation/ connection quotes from various utility providers. The Utilities Statement identifies a strategy to ensure that electricity, gas, sewer, and clean water connections can be confirmed with the relevant providers.
- 6.8.12. Overall, it is considered that the surrounding utility assets has sufficient capacity for the proposed development and that the necessary connections are available.

6.9 BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPING

- 6.9.1. Policy EN9 requires all new development to make provision for appropriate open space based on the needs to development, which can be achieved through on or off-site provision.
- 6.9.2. The existing site does not comprise any trees or greenery. A group of trees are located to the front of the site, along the pedestrianised Broad Street. The proposed development proposes new planting within the amenity areas. Each residential unit within this Central Reading location would also have access to either private or shared amenity space.
- 6.9.3. Local Plan Policy EN12 states that on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.
- 6.9.4. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been prepared by Aspect Ecology in support of this planning application, to determine whether any ecological constraints could affect the proposed works for the site.
- 6.9.1. The PEA confirms that there are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations within or adjacent to the site, and that no habitats of ecological importance are present on site or within the vicinity.
- 6.9.2. The PEA determines that the existing building offers some 'low' potential for roosting bats, however No. 87a is known to support at least one roosting Common Pipistrelle. As such, a mitigation strategy would be devised and implemented under licence from Natural England. This would likely involve the provision of replacement roosting opportunities in the new structures, a pre works check for roosting bats and a soft-strip of potential roost features under ecological supervision.
- 6.9.3. Recommended measures include new planting, bat boxes and bird boxes, which would increase roosting opportunities for bats and birds on site as well as the overall biodiversity net gain. Measures to safeguard nesting birds would also be implemented during the removal of building structures suitable for nesting.
- 6.9.4. Overall, subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, Aspect Ecology consider it unlikely that the proposals would result in significant harm to biodiversity. The proposals relate to mostly built habitats and therefore the proposals would result in the minimal loss of a biodiversity resource, which would be compensated by the provision of bat and bird boxes and through new planting to achieve an overall biodiversity net gain at the site, and in accordance with policies EN9 and EN12 of the Local Plan.

6.10 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

ARCHAEOLOGY

- 6.10.1. The site is located within an area of archaeological potential. In line with Policy EN2 of the Local Plan, an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, prepared by Headland Archaeology, accompanies this application.

- 6.10.2. The assessment identifies that the site has a high potential for the presence of archaeological remains and deposits dating back to the Saxon period, where substantial disturbance has not been previously introduced through the construction of existing basements. The site has however been repeatedly redeveloped and renovated since the early 17th century culminating in the current Victorian Broad Street building with modern shops at ground floor level.
- 6.10.3. The assessment concludes that the proposals would not represent a conflict with legislation or national or local policy and that the likely development impacts are not considered significant to warrant a refusal on archaeological grounds. The assessment recommends that further investigation is required by condition of consent given the high archaeological potential of the application site.
- 6.10.4. In light of the above, the proposal is considered acceptable on archaeological grounds in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Local Plan.

CONTAMINATION

- 6.10.5. Local Plan Policy EN16 states that development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.
- 6.10.6. Given the nature of the end use, a Phase 1 (Desk Study) Environmental Assessment has been prepared by WSP, which determines the history of the site in order to identify the potential for the presence of contamination.
- 6.10.7. The desk study finds that since the 1870s, multiple properties have been present on site including possible residential housing and outbuildings. Since 1956, the site has remained as three buildings with the same structure as the current existing configuration. Based on the history of the site and surrounding area, a range of potential contaminants could be present within surface soils, including asbestos.
- 6.10.8. As a result of the research undertaken, the desk study concludes that there is considered to be a 'moderate' risk for asbestos, and a 'low' to 'moderate' risk for organic and inorganic contaminants. The risk of inhalation of soil and groundwater-derived vapours to current and future users is considered 'low' to 'moderate' and the explosion risk of hazardous gases is similarly considered 'low' to 'moderate'.
- 6.10.9. The desk study recommends that an intrusive ground investigation be undertaken to assess the identified plausible contaminant linkages together with the identification of potential remedial measures. A Demolition Survey is also recommended to be undertaken to identify the presence of asbestos.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 6.10.10. Local Plan Policy EN18 states that all major developments must incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems ("SuDS") as appropriate and in accordance with the Government's Technical Standards. Paragraphs 167 and 169 of the Framework require major development to incorporate SuDS unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.

- 6.10.11. The Environment Agency categorises the application site and its immediate surroundings as within Flood Zone 1, an area of low probability of flooding where residential development is most suited. The site is currently almost entirely impermeable in nature meaning that any development has the potential to reduce surface water runoff.
- 6.10.12. Heyne Tillett Steel has undertaken a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy for the proposed development. The report concludes that the proposed development is at 'low' risk of flooding from all sources and therefore no further mitigation is required.
- 6.10.13. In relation to drainage, the proposed development would use SuDS to capture surface water runoff where feasible, utilising both above and below ground storage in the form of blue / green roofs and geo-cellular storage.
- 6.10.14. The runoff from the development would be limited to 0.5l/s, for a contributing area of 586.4sqm for the 1 in 100-year storm event with 40% climate change (rounded to the existing 600sqm for MicroDrainage calculation). The restricted flow rate achieves >94% betterment in all storm events compared with existing unrestricted rates, resulting in a significant reduction in peak run-off rates relative to the existing situation.
- 6.10.15. Foul drainage is to be discharged via the existing outfall to the Thames Water foul sewer. Thames Water have confirmed sufficient surface water and foul sewer capacity.
- 6.10.16. On this basis, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Local Plan.

6.11 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 6.11.1. The applicant recognises that proposed development may generate the need for infrastructure improvements in the surrounding area. The applicant is therefore willing to enter into discussions with the Council over the course of the application, however these discussions would need to have regard to the overall viability of the proposed development.

6.12 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The applicant recognises that the development will be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL Additional Information Form has been completed and is submitted as part of this application.

7 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

- 7.1.1. Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that: “significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”.
- 7.1.2. This chapter of the Planning Statement assesses the anticipated economic benefits of the proposed development, utilising well defined and robust methodological processes. It considers the following **temporary socio-economic benefits**:
- Temporary construction employment;
 - Gross value added to the local economy by the temporary construction employment; and
 - Temporary worker expenditure in the local economy.
- 7.1.3. It goes on to consider the following **permanent socio-economic benefits** which would be enjoyed in the long term:
- Direct on-site employment;
 - Net additional permanent employment taking into account additionally effects and multipliers;
 - Additional worker expenditure generated in the local economy;
 - Gross value added to the local economy by the net additional permanent employment;
 - Additional household expenditure generated by the new residential population; and
 - Council tax revenues.
- 7.1.4. This chapter sets out the calculations undertaken to estimate the economic effects of the development and the ways in which this will have an impact upon the local community and the wider economy more broadly. This report sets out methodology and assumptions, along with the results of these calculations
- 7.1.5. This chapter has been prepared by WSP’s Economics team.

7.2 TEMPORARY ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- 7.2.1. This section considers the temporary economic impacts that can be expected during the construction phase of the development.

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT

- 7.2.2. The proposed development would include a construction phase which would generate turnover and temporary employment for construction firms and related trades.
- 7.2.3. The UK construction sector is characterised by an extensive network of supply chains and contracting relationships covering a very wide range of trades and skills. As a result, the spin off benefits from new construction projects are greater than for many other economic sectors in the UK.
- 7.2.4. WSP has estimated the temporary construction employment benefits based on the anticipated build cost for the development proposals, and data from the ONS Annual Business Survey.

- 7.2.5. Data from the Annual Business Survey 2018 published in May 2020¹ reveals that total turnover in the construction sector during 2018 was £287,717 million. The average number of people employed in the construction sector during 2018 was 1.53 million, suggesting that average turnover per full time equivalent construction job in 2018 was £188,050.
- 7.2.6. Using the build cost estimate range of £3.4 million and the average turnover per full time equivalent construction job in 2018 of £188,050, WSP estimates the proposed development would generate approximately 18 person years of temporary construction employment across the 1-year construction period.
- 7.2.7. The standard convention in economic impact assessment is that ten person-years of construction employment equates to one full-time equivalent permanent job in the construction sector. The construction of the proposed development would therefore support the equivalent of around 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent construction jobs (rounded up from 1.8).
- 7.2.8. The 18 person years of temporary construction employment represent a gross employment figure. In order to understand the real construction employment effects of the proposed development, adjustments have been made for several additionality factors which, when considered together, allow an assessment of the net additional construction jobs that would be generated by the scheme. The following additionality factors have been allowed for:
- **Displacement Effects** - the proportion of intervention outcomes accounted for by reduced outcomes elsewhere. In this context it refers to the possibility that a proportion of the construction workers will have moved from an existing operation in the local area to the proposed development;
 - **Leakage Effects** - The proportion of benefits that accrue outside of the intervention's target area. In this context it refers to the possibility that jobs created by the proposed development are taken up by people living outside the local area;
 - **Substitution Effects** - This effect arises where a firm substitutes one activity for a similar one (such as recruiting a jobless person while another employee loses a job) to take advantage of public sector assistance. It can be thought of as “within firm” displacement; and
 - **Multiplier Effects** - Further employment associated with additional expenditure by workers and throughout the supply chain.
- 7.2.9. To understand the additionality of this on a local and regional scale, assumptions as set out within Table 7-1 were used.

Table 7-1 – Assumptions used to calculate net additional construction jobs

	Local level (Reading Borough Local Council)	National level (UK)

¹ ONS (2020) Annual Business Survey 2018 Revised Results [Online] Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/uknonfinancialbusinesseconomy/previousReleases>

Displacement	15% As of the 2011 Census ² , 2,250 persons across Reading worked in the construction industry. The potential for 18 jobs per year for the development would therefore represent 0.8% of this workforce. As such, it is likely that this employment would have a negligible impact on the local workforce and therefore displacement would be minimal. A conservative displacement rate of 15% has therefore been applied.	15% This level of displacement is adopted to account for any potential local adverse effects and for consistency with the local level of displacement.
Substitution	0% It is not considered likely that any firms that will be operating within the construction industry will be substituting employment activities for other activities. Therefore, this has been considered to be negligible.	0% It is not considered likely that any firms that will be operating within the construction industry will be substituting employment activities for other activities. Therefore, this has been considered to be negligible.
Leakage	10% A low level of leakage at the local area has been assumed based on the HCA Additionality Guide ³	0% It is not considered that any jobs within the development will leak outside of the UK.
Multiplier	1.1 It is assumed that 'average' linkages will be evident in the supply chain. Based on this, the Additionality Guide recommends a multiplier of 1.1 at the local level.	2.11 The multiplier of 2.11 is used for the construction industry, as set out in the United Kingdom Input-Output Analytical Tables, 2016 ⁴ .

7.2.10. Based on the assumptions set out within Table 7-1, the total number of temporary jobs arising from the development is detailed in Table 7-2 below.

Table 7-2 – Additionality of construction jobs

Step involved	Residents of Reading	South East and UK
1. Construction workers (gross, total)	18	
2. Leakage to workers from outside impact area	-2	0
3. Displacement of other activities	-2	-3
4. Construction workers on-site (net, direct)	14	15
5. Employment off-site induced by construction employment (net, indirect)	1	17
Total additional employment from construction of proposed development	15	32

² ONS (2011) Labour Market Profile – Reading [Online] Available from:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157223/report.aspx>

³ Homes and Communities Agency, 2014, 'Additionality Guide: A Standard Approach to Assessing the Additional Impacts of Projects', 4th Edition, HCA, London.

⁴ ONS (2020) UK Input-Output Analytical Tables – Industry by Industry [Online] Available from:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/supplyandusetables/datasets/ukinputoutputanalyticaltablesindustrybyindustry>

- 7.2.11. As demonstrated in Table 7-2, whilst there would be 18 gross construction jobs supported, taking into account leakage, displacement and multiplier effects this equates to 15 net additional construction jobs for the local area over the construction period (14 construction workers on site and a further 1 supported in the supply chain). In terms of FTE roles, this is the equivalent of 2 FTE construction jobs (rounded up from 1.5).
- 7.2.12. More broadly at the regional and national scale, the construction activity required to build the proposed development would support 17 jobs in the supply chain over the construction period.
- 7.2.13. In total the construction activity associated with the proposed development can expect to support up to 32 jobs nationally, of which 15 would be located in Reading.

GROSS VALUE ADDED FROM TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT

- 7.2.14. The Office for National Statistics defines GVA as “the contribution of each individual producer, industry or sector to the economy.” GVA can be estimated at either an aggregate (or macro) level or at an individual producer (or micro) level, as follows:
- 7.2.15. At the macro level – GVA measures the value of output (goods and services) produced in the national economy minus the cost of raw materials and other inputs used to produce them; and
- 7.2.16. At the micro level – GVA measures the value of output generated by a producer minus the costs associated with the production of the output.
- 7.2.17. The Annual Business Survey 2018 provides estimates of the approximate GVA added by different sectors of the UK economy. During 2018 the approximate gross value added by the construction sector was £107,614 million.
- 7.2.18. With an average number of people employed in the construction sector during 2018 of 1.53 million, this suggests that the gross value added per construction job in 2018 was £70,335. WSP estimates that the 32 person years of temporary construction employment generated nationally by the development would create GVA added to the UK economy of approximately £2.3 million (£1.1 million generated by local workers). This is a gross figure over the 1-year construction period.
- 7.2.19. Based on ready reckoner figures provided in the Additionality Guide and professional judgement, a low level of leakage has been assumed (10% leakage). After allowing for this leakage, it is
- 7.2.20. estimated that the construction employment generated by the development would generate gross value added to the UK economy of approximately £2.1 million.

EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY FROM TEMPORARY WORKER EXPENDITURE

- 7.2.21. During the construction period, using professional judgement, a conservative estimation was made that 60% of the workforce would spend £6 per day on food and drink on 232 days per annum. This assumes that a full-time equivalent employee works five days a week, with four weeks holiday and eight bank holidays off per year. This expenditure assumption has been informed by a number of research papers which have surveyed the typical spend of workers across a working day. These include:
- 7.2.22. The Visa Contactless Working Day Spend Report (2014) which found that the average UK worker spends approximately £3.69 on lunch and £2.09 on hot drinks a day (approximately £6);

- 7.2.23. Kantar World Panel's 'Out of Home Purchase and Consumption' report (2017) indicates that on average workers spend £4.13 on lunch and £1.84 on afternoon snacks a day (approximately £6); and
- 7.2.24. The Global Market Research company Mintel's 'Attitude Towards Lunch Out of Home' report (2016) found that 64% of consumers buy lunch to eat out of the home for an everyday occasion (e.g. work).
- 7.2.25. Based on the assumption that the construction phase would support on average 15 local construction jobs, this would mean an additional £12,528 spent in the local area per year (i.e. the duration of the construction period).

7.3 PERMANENT ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- 7.3.1. Having identified the anticipated temporary economic benefits associated with the construction of the proposed development, this section assesses the anticipated permanent economic benefits, which would be felt once the scheme is complete and operational. These effects would be felt in the longer term.

DIRECT, ON-SITE EMPLOYMENT

- 7.3.2. The proposed development would support a number of permanent jobs across ground floor retail uses.
- 7.3.3. The employment that would be generated from the proposed commercial floorspaces at the proposed development was assessed using the HCA's Employment Density Guide (Third Edition, 2015)⁵, by applying the relevant employment densities to the respective use classes. Employment density refers to the average floor space in sqm per FTE job. Employment density describes the intensity of use within a building and is an indicator of the amount of space typically occupied by one person in a commercial building. The employment density standards have been applied to the Net Internal Area (NIA) floorspace figures.
- 7.3.4. The proposed development includes the provision of commercial floorspace under Use Class E as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), introduced on 1 September 2020. As this amendment has not coincided with updates to the Employment Density Guide, assumptions have been made based on the proportion of Class E space to be provided, in line with the former use classes relied upon within the Guide.
- 7.3.5. The proposed commercial floorspaces as part of the development are outlined in Table 7-3 below. This also includes references to the former use classes relied upon to derive assumptions for the proposed employment density, along with figures for the floorspaces relied upon in this assessment, current at the time of writing.

Table 7-3 – Estimation of direct jobs to be supported by the development

	Description from	Use Class	Floorspace used for	Type*	Employment density	FTE jobs
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⁵ Homes and Communities Agency (2015) Employment Density Guide 3rd Edition

	Development schedule Rev i		calculation (m2)			
Employment	Retail	A1	308	NIA	15	21
	Total					21

- 7.3.6. As demonstrated in Table 7-3, the number of jobs estimated to be directly supported on-site is 21 FTE jobs.

NET ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- 7.3.7. The 21 FTE jobs that would be created by the proposed development represent a gross employment figure. In order to understand the real employment effects of the proposed development, adjustments have been made for several factors which, when considered together, allow an assessment of the net additional jobs that would be generated on this site.

Additionality Effects

- 7.3.8. To consider the net additional employment created through the site, the following formula was used:

$$\text{Gross on-site jobs} \times (1 - \text{displacement}) \times (1 - \text{substitution}) \times (1 - \text{leakage}) \times \text{Multiplier} = \text{net additional jobs}$$

- 7.3.9. Two different scenarios were tested to understand the wider implications of these additional jobs in the context of the local economy (Reading local authority) and the national economy. These are outlined in Table 7-4 below. The purpose of including both types of analysis was to demonstrate the broader impacts of the employment to be generated by the proposed development.

Table 7-4 – Assumptions used to calculate net additional jobs

	Local level (Reading local authority level)	National level (UK)
Displacement	15% As the new employment space is not considered to have a notably adverse effect on the existing businesses within Reading, a low rate between 0% and the ready reckoner figure for 'low' displacement of 25% from the HCA Additionality Guide ⁶ was adopted.	15% This level of displacement is adopted to account for any potential local adverse effects and for consistency with the local level of displacement.
Substitution	0% It is not considered likely that any firms that will be operating in the new employment floorspaces will be substituting employment activities for other activities. Therefore, this has been considered to be negligible.	0% It is not considered likely that any firms that will be operating in the new employment floorspaces will be substituting employment activities for other activities. Therefore, this has been considered to be negligible.
Leakage	20%	0%

⁶ Homes and Communities Agency, 2014, 'Additionality Guide: A Standard Approach to Assessing the Additional Impacts of Projects', 4th Edition, HCA, London.

	Out of 161,800 people residing in Reading, the 2011 Census recorded 32,960 residents who commuted outside of the local authority for work ⁷ . This represents a leakage rate of 20%. This would be considered a worst-case scenario.	It is not considered that any jobs within the development will leak outside of the UK.
Multiplier	1.25 Table 4.13 of the HCA Additionality Guide provides composite multiplier effects at the local and regional scales of 1.25.	1.6 The multiplier of 1.6 is derived from the United Kingdom Input-Output Analytical Tables (2017) ⁸ , for the wholesale and retail trade sector.

7.3.10. Based on the formula referenced above and the assumptions set out within Table 7-4, the total number of jobs arising from the development is detailed in Table 7-5 below.

Table 7-5 – Additionality of permanent employment

Step involved	Residents of Reading	UK residents
1. Operational workers on-site (gross, direct)	21	
2. Leakage to workers from outside impact area	-4	0
3. Displacement of other activities	-2	-3
4. Operational workers on-site (net, direct)	14	17
5. Employment off-site induced by operational employment (net, indirect)	3	10
6. Total additional employment from operation of proposed development	17	28

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

- 7.3.11. As shown in Table 7-5, whilst the development itself would support 21 jobs, taking into account leakage, displacement and multiplier effects, this equates to approximately 17 net additional jobs for the local area being supported (14 jobs on site and 3 in the supply chain).
- 7.3.12. More broadly at the national scale, the proposed development would support approximately 10 jobs in the supply chain.
- 7.3.13. In total the proposed development can expect to support approximately 28 jobs nationally, of which 17 would be located in Reading.

GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA) BY NET ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- 7.3.14. The employment to be supported by the commercial uses within the proposed development would have wider economic effects by generating gross value added to the UK economy. Gross value

⁷ ONS (2011) WU03EW - Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work (MSOA level) [Online] Available from: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?forward=yes&menuopt=201&subcomp=>

⁸ ONS (2021) UK Input-Output Analytical Tables – Industry by Industry [Online] Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/supplyandusetales/datasets/ukinputoutputanalyticaltablesindustrybyindustry>

added (GVA) is a conventional measure of economic well-being. GVA measures the value of output generated by a producer minus the costs associated with the production of the output.

- 7.3.15. In estimating the GVA that is generated by the additional employment (micro level), data provided by the Office for National Statistics has been used. Detailed information on GVA per filled job is provided by the Regional Economic Analysis Sub Regional Productivity Tables published in February 2020⁹. Table B3 reveals that GVA per filled job for the UK was £56,387 in 2018, and for Reading it was £70,358, the most recent year for which data is currently available.
- 7.3.16. Based on this evidence, it is estimated that the local jobs to be supported by the development would generate approximately £1.2 million annually in GVA, whilst the jobs supported in national supply chains could contribute a further £563,870 annually.
- 7.3.17. This takes the total GVA contribution of the scheme to approximately £1.8 million annually.

WAGE EFFECT

- 7.3.18. Based on a modest assumption that on average 60% of permanent local employees (17 FTE jobs) spend £6 a day across 232 days on food and socialising, it is estimated that the expenditure effect from the new employment could be approximately £14,198 per annum.

ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

- 7.3.19. The proposed development would provide 15 new households. The new residential population would generate additional demand by increasing household spending in the local area.
- 7.3.20. The report on Family Spending, published by the Office for National Statistics in March 2021¹⁰, provides data for the financial year ending 2020 on household expenditure. The results reflect the Living Cost and Food Survey completed across the United Kingdom.
- 7.3.21. Family Spending reveals that the average weekly household expenditure in the South East of England for the period between the financial year ending 2018 and financial year ending 2020 was £698.60. The survey also shows that, on average, each household in the South East spent £84.90 per week on net housing (excluding mortgage interest payments and Council Tax), fuel and power costs. Since this spending typically goes to major national institutions with only modest impacts on the local economy, this spending has been deducted from average weekly household expenditure.
- 7.3.22. This means that for the period between the financial year ending 2018 and financial year ending 2020 (net) average weekly household expenditure in the South East was £613.70, which is equivalent to an annual figure of £31,912. Assuming that VAT of 20% had been paid on all of this spending, the average annual household expenditure (net of indirect taxation and housing, fuel and power costs) was £25,530 for the South East during the period April 2018 to March 2020.

⁹ ONS (2020) Sub regional Productivity: Labour Productivity (GVA per hour worked and GVA per filled job) indices by UK NUTS2 and NUTS3 subregions

¹⁰ ONS (2021) Family Spending in the UK: financial year ending 2020. Available from:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/bulletins/familyspendingintheuk/april2019tomarch2020>

- 7.3.23. Based on this analysis and the net addition 15 households to the local area, it is estimated that the gross additional household expenditure generated by the new residential population at the site would be around £382,949 per annum. This assumes that the 15 net additional households demonstrate spending patterns typical of the South East as a whole.
- 7.3.24. This additional household expenditure of £382,949 per annum is a gross effect. Some of this spending would clearly leak out of the local area. It has been assumed that 25% of the additional household expenditure generated by the new residential population at the proposed development would be spent outside the local area.
- 7.3.25. This means that the net additional household expenditure generated by the new residential population at the proposed development would be around £287,212 per annum.

COUNCIL TAX

- 7.3.26. The new housing would bring increased revenue to Reading Borough Council through additional Council Tax payments. An estimation of the additional Council Tax receipts generated by the new accommodation in the development has been calculated based on the assumption that all new properties would be rated as Council Tax Band D. This is a mid-rate Council Tax Band which generates a conservative estimate of Council Tax receipts.
- 7.3.27. The Reading Borough Council Tax Band D payment amounts to £2,076.83 per annum (effective 2020/21) ¹¹.
- 7.3.28. The proposed plans for the site however indicate that 6 units would be exclusively one-bedroom and studio dwellings. In the instance that all dwellings were occupied by one person only, there would be a 25% reduction to the value of the Council Tax revenue generated by each property. The Council Tax charge per property would therefore be £1,557.62. This represents a worst-case scenario given it is unlikely all dwellings would be occupied by one person only.
- 7.3.29. In combining the reduced revenue from the one-bedroom dwellings with the other residential units, the total Council Tax receipts to be generated are assumed to be approximately £28,037 per annum. This figure would be revenue for the Council to be used for both local services, along with contributing towards other services provided throughout the region.

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.4.1. This assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development would generate significant economic benefits for Reading and the wider economy as a whole.
- 7.4.2. The proposed development would create the following temporary economic benefits:
- In total the construction activity associated with the proposed development can expect to support up to 32 temporary construction jobs nationally, of which 15 would be located in Reading;

¹¹ Reading Borough Council – Council Tax Bands 2021/22. Available from: <https://www.reading.gov.uk/housing/council-tax/counciltaxbands/>

- The total construction employment generated by the development would generate gross value added to the UK economy of approximately £2.1 million; and
- The 15 local jobs would generate an additional £12,528 in local expenditure in Reading across the construction programme.

7.4.3. The proposed development would generate the following permanent economic benefits, all of which would be enjoyed in the long term:

- After allowing for displacement, leakage and multiplier effects, it is estimated that the proposed development can expect to support up to 28 permanent jobs nationally, of which 17 would be located in Reading;
- It is estimated that the local jobs to be supported by the development would generate approximately £1.2 million annually in GVA, whilst the jobs supported in national supply chains could contribute a further £563,870 annually. This takes the total GVA contribution of the scheme to approximately £1.8 million annually;
- The permanent local employment would support additional expenditure in the local economy to the value of £14,198 annually;
- The 15 residential units to be provided would result in additional household spending locally of approximately £287,212 per annum; and
- The 15 residential units would generate Council Tax receipts for Reading Borough Council to the value of £28,037 per annum.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP in connection with the proposed development of 86 to 87a Broad Street to deliver a high quality mixed-use, residential-led development.
- 8.1.2. The proposed development has been informed throughout the design process by engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including local business groups, local councillors, RBC officers and RDRP panellists. The consultation process has increased local awareness and has led to stronger proposals that are influenced by knowledge and views of key stakeholders.
- 8.1.3. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals for new development to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Planning Statement has assessed the proposals against the development plan and material considerations.
- 8.1.4. The principle of development is supported by planning policy including policies RL1, CR7 and H1 of the Local Plan and national planning policy.
- 8.1.5. The proposals includes the amalgamation of the existing ground floor retail units to create a 357sqm flexible commercial unit capable of being used for any purpose falling within Class E. The proposed Class E unit would deliver 357sqm of high quality retail floorspace that upgrades the existing active frontage character of the site, whilst enhancing its offer for visitors and residents.
- 8.1.6. There is a significant need for new homes in the borough. The redevelopment of the site would help deliver 15 new residential apartments which would be a welcome addition to RBC's housing supply. The proposals makes a more efficient use of a highly accessible and sustainable, brownfield site, within Reading town centre.
- 8.1.7. The site was identified by RBC during pre-application discussions as a non-designated heritage asset. In response to feedback during pre-application discussions, the proposed development retains the existing façade, which is recognised as the most interesting element of the existing building.
- 8.1.8. The design of the proposals is of high quality and fully responds to the site's constraints and opportunities as well as its local historic context. The proposed development preserves the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, to allow the site to retain the group value of the site relative to the townscape context of Broad Street, as well as the setting of nearby heritages assets.
- 8.1.9. All residential dwellings would have access to either shared amenity or private amenity space in the form of a garden, terrace or balcony. Planting is proposed on the first floor amenity space to improve visual amenity, whilst also minimising overlooking.
- 8.1.10. The proposed development is in a highly accessible location within Central Reading, with accords with the Local Plan to encourage sustainable transport modes. The car-free proposal is appropriate and measures to encourage sustainable travel are provided through on-site facilities.

8.2 THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

- 8.2.1. The proposed development would result in the following benefits:

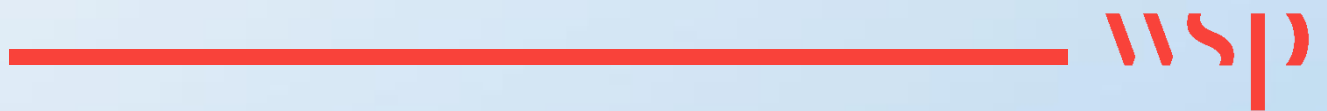
- Regeneration of an underutilised, non-designated heritage asset in a highly accessible town centre location;
- 15 new high-quality homes, which would be a welcomed addition to housing delivery in an area of housing need;
- Provision of 87% of units as dual aspect units;
- The delivery of high quality private and communal amenity space;
- A car-free development with safe, covered and well-designed cycle parking;
- Benefits to the local economy during the construction period including GVA to the UK economy of approximately £2.1 million, and up to 32 temporary construction jobs, of which 15 would be located in Reading and would generate an additional £12,528 in local expenditure in Reading across the construction programme;
- Benefits to the local economy during operation including up to 28 permanent jobs nationally, of which 17 would be located in Reading and would support £1.2 million annually in GVA, whilst the jobs supported in national supply chains could contribute a further £563,870 annually.
- The proposed 15 residential units would result in additional household spending locally of approximately £287,212 per annum, and would generate Council Tax receipts for RBC to the value of £28,037 per annum.

8.3 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- 8.3.1. A full suite of technical assessments has been submitted which demonstrates that the proposals would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on residential amenity or highways grounds, by way of noise, overshadowing, pollution or traffic.
- 8.3.2. The planning application submission demonstrates that the proposals are policy compliant and adhere to all relevant aspects of the development plan, the NPPF, and all other material considerations. Accordingly, in line with the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development set out at Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted without delay.

Appendix A

ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER



86 – 87A BROAD STREET, CENTRAL READING

Bankfoot APAM are bringing forward a planning application for development proposals at 86 - 87a Broad Street in Central Reading. The proposals seek to redevelop the existing, mostly vacant commercial terrace and replace it with a new building with revitalised retail at ground floor and much-needed residential homes above.

This leaflet provides you with some more detail of the proposals and how you can provide feedback.



SITE BACKGROUND

The site is located at the heart of Reading Town Centre, approximately 80 metres to the east of the Broad Street Mall shopping centre.

This three-storey group of mid terrace buildings includes two retail units at ground floor with ancillary retail storage and offices above. The extent and proportion of ancillary retail floorspace on the upper floors makes these units inefficient and unattractive to prospective occupiers. No. 87 has subsequently remained vacant since June 2017, despite active marketing, with Shoe Zone having departed No. 86 in January.

The quality of the existing buildings has degraded significantly over time with various unsympathetic alterations, particularly at ground floor.

New development at this site will maximise opportunities to enhance the visual appearance of the area through the delivery of high quality and sympathetic architecture, whilst reactivating the dead Broad Street frontage and offering new high-quality homes in accordance with local need.





Front of the existing building from Broad Street showing the vacant retail units



Rear of the existing building and unsightly service area, which detracts from the setting of the Reading Minster of St Mary



Rear of the existing building, which has been neglected and has degraded over time

EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGN

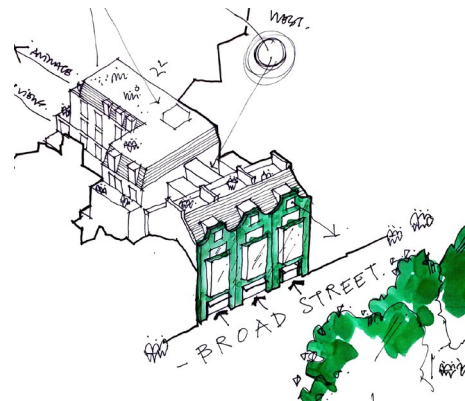
The proposals have evolved through discussions with Reading Borough Council and the Reading Design Review Panel. The key changes made during this design process have been:

- A change in the design of the Broad Street elevation, influenced by local character and informed by expert heritage advice;
- Reduction in building height from 7 storeys to part 4, part 5 storeys;
- Reduction in new homes from 27 to 16;
- The omission of No. 88 Broad Street from the scheme, to allow a positive distinction between the adjacent chapel (Waterstones) and our site;
- Splitting the new massing into two distinct buildings (a front building and a rear building), connected by a link bridge.

The result is a design response which we think provides a high quality and sympathetic response to the surrounding townscape.



Developed concept for Broad Street



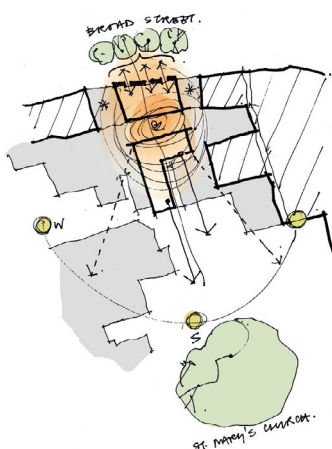
Developed concept for Broad Street



Context analysis - 26-28 Broad Street



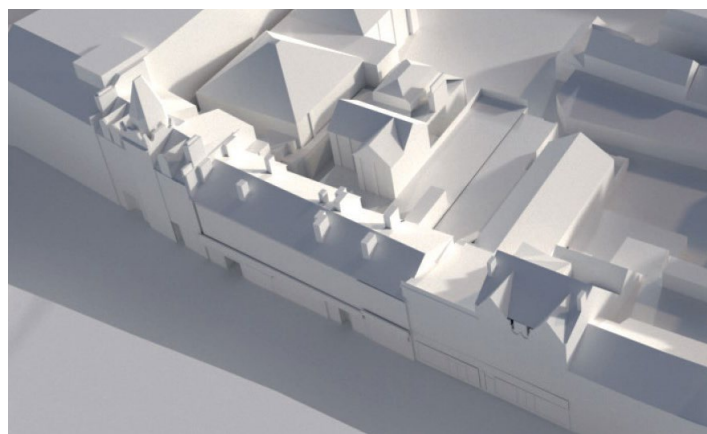
Context analysis - 37 Broad Street



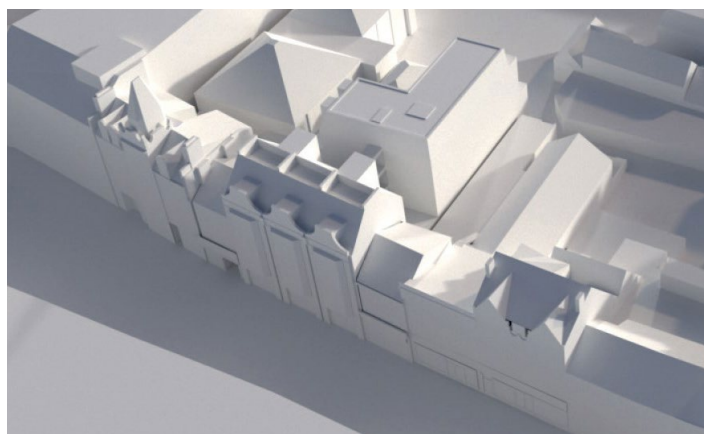
Layout principles



Aerial view of proposed development



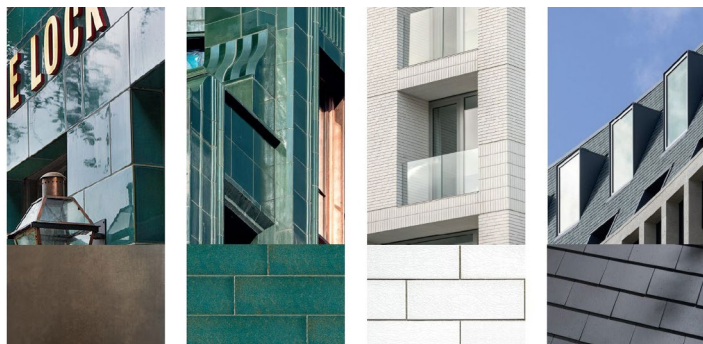
Model of existing building from Broad Street



Model of proposed building from Broad Street

COLOUR AND MATERIALITY

Front building (Broad Street)



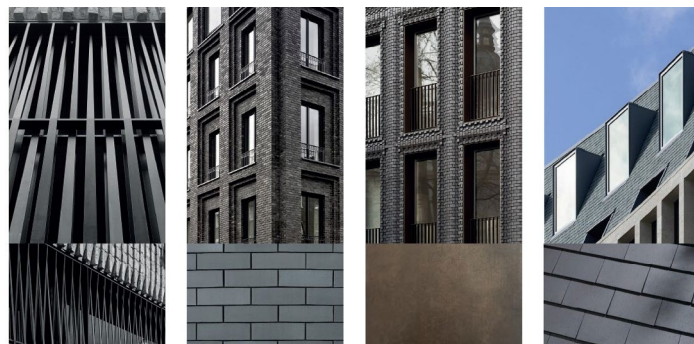
Ground Floor:
Glazed faience
terracotta
Patinated bronze
details

**Broad Street
Facade:**
Glazed faience
terracotta
Glazed brick

Courtyard Facade:
Glazed brick

Roof:
Slate
Patinated bronze
dormers

Rear building



Ground Floor:
Engineering brick,
regular bond
Decorative
metalwork

**Broad Street
Facade:**
Engineering brick,
regular bond
Deep reveals

Courtyard Facade:
Engineering brick,
pattern
Patinated bronze
reveals

Roof:
Slate
Patinated bronze
dormers

WHAT IS PROPOSED?

The proposed development would deliver the following:

- A new and distinct pair of high-quality five storey buildings:
 - The north building will address Broad Street with an elaborate front façade that positively engages with prevailing townscape features;
 - The south building will be more reserved out of respect to the Reading Minster of St Mary, and will aim to set the agenda for rationalising and improving the rear service yard and environment.
- 16 new homes of a range of unit sizes in accordance with local need;
- Approximately 320 sqm of revitalised and flexible ground floor retail space with a reactivated Broad Street frontage, adding vibrancy and vitality to the town centre;
- Separate access and servicing for retail and residential uses;
- New private external amenity spaces for residents;
- A car-free development and provision of secure and covered cycle parking for all occupiers.

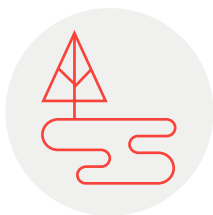


THE NEED FOR NEW HOMES

Reading faces an acute housing crisis with demand outpacing supply. The Borough has a tightly defined urban area with undeveloped land either forming part of the functional floodplain or important public open space. Reading's Local Plan therefore stipulates that at least 7,600 new homes will be delivered within Central Reading by 2036.

At locations such as this site, there are opportunities to make the best use of land by enabling development of brownfield sites that are close to shops and services and well connected by public transport.

KEY BENEFITS



Efficient use of previously developed land in a sustainable location



Provision of much-needed new homes



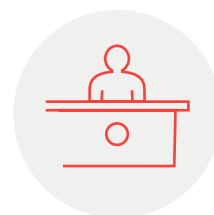
New high-quality homes in a range of sizes and types, and in accordance with local need



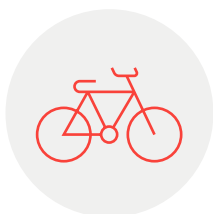
Revitalised retail space and the reactivation of a key town centre frontage



Increased household expenditure through new homes in the town centre



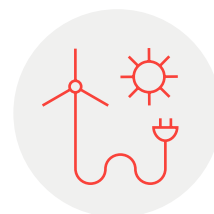
Employment generation within revitalised retail space



A car free development and provision of adequate cycle parking befitting town centre living



Enhancement of local character and the setting of nearby heritage assets through the delivery of high quality and sympathetic architecture



A strategy which strives to create a zero-carbon development in accordance with the Borough's declared climate emergency

WHAT NEXT?

We welcome your views on our proposals for 86 – 87a Broad Street. Let us know what you think or if you would like further details:

UKPlanningComment@wsp.com

Our intention is to submit a planning application to Reading Borough Council in the coming weeks and there will be an opportunity to make formal comments to the Council as part of the process.



WSP House
70 Chancery Lane
London
WC2A 1AF

wsp.com

PUBLIC