



BVA Planning

Town Planning Consultancy

Planning Statement

130 Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 7DT

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a detailed planning application seeking permission for the conversion and extension to an existing residential property to form 5no. x 2-bed Apartments with parking for 6no. vehicles.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to outline the background to the proposed scheme and the justification for the development in the context of relevant planning policy.
- 1.3 The planning application is accompanied by plans prepared by Colony Architects.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Detailed information on the site and surrounding area can be found in the Design and Access Statement. In summary, the existing property is a large single use residential property (4/5 bedroom) that occupies a corner plot at the junction of Shinfield Road and Cressingham Road.
- 2.2 To the front there is a large hard surfaced parking area and to the rear a generous and mature garden with trees to its boundaries some of which are at the end of their life.
- 2.3 The property lies within a predominately residential area made up of a range of properties from large, detached homes to semi-detached new builds and apartment buildings that reflect the patchwork quilt of development that has emerged in this popular East Reading location over the past 100 years or so.
- 2.4 The site is sustainably located being on a main road with easy access to Reading University, Shinfield Road shopping parade and the town centre either on foot or by use of the frequent bus services that run along this road.
- 2.5 The property is not listed, does not fall within a Conservation Area and the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) as defined by the Environment Agency's Online Flood Mapping. There are no other statutory constraints adjacent to or within proximity of the site.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed application seeks approval for:

‘the conversion and extension to an existing residential property to form 5no. x 2-bed Apartments with parking for 6no. vehicles.’

- 3.2 The main design principles are to facilitate the conversion of this non-occupied single home to form 5 new 2-bedroom apartments in what is a well-established residential area of Reading with access to all the services and amenities at its doorstep.
- 3.3 The site plan indicates the existing pedestrian and vehicular access will remain unaltered off Shinfield Road to allow for the parking for 6 vehicles and space for refuse/bicycle storage.
- 3.4 The submitted plans shows how the property would be extended and converted to create the spacious 5 apartments and how the property would be upgraded with new windows, guttering and general tidy up of the facades and surrounding land.
- 3.5 To the rear of the property, the ground floor apartments will have access to private amenity space with the remainder of the garden being communal for all to use. The private gardens will be clearly defined through the use of soft landscaping to demarcate the area and to provide some level of privacy to the occupiers of these apartments.
- 3.6 The proposed elevation drawings (and the DAS) show the intended appearance of the new property in context with materials to match the locality and its setting, which will be in-keeping with the character of the surrounding area. The proposal has been designed in accordance with the Council’s Design Guide and the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.7 The proposal development will deliver social benefits, including the delivery of much needed new homes in the area.

4.0 Planning Policy

- 4.1 This section outlines the key planning policy considerations relevant to the proposed development at both the local and national level.
- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that local planning authorities should determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.3 At the national level, relevant policy and guidance is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (“**NPPF**”) published February 2019 and the associated Planning Practice Guidance (“**PPG**”).
- 4.4 The Development Plan (and associated guidance) for Reading BC currently comprises and is complemented by a range of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):
- Reading Local Plan (2019);
 - SPDs:
 - Affordable Housing (2013);
 - Design Guide to House Extensions (2003);
 - Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011); and
 - Planning Obligation (2015).

The key policies within the Local Plan are as follows:

- CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
- CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
- CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
- CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
- CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
- CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
- EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
- EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE
- H2: DENSITY AND MIX
- H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK
- H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
- TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.5 The new National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) was published in February 2019 and replaces the previous NPPF published in July 2018. The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.6 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which at a very high level, means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.7 Paragraph 8 goes on to add that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These objectives are economic, social, and environmental.
- 4.8 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF makes it clear that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework.
- 4.9 Paragraph 11 explains the for decision taking this means:
- *“Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
 - *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

- 4.10 Section 5 of the NPPF relates to the delivery of new homes. Paragraph 59 says it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 4.11 Paragraph 63 clearly advises that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major.
- 4.12 Paragraph 91 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which, among other criteria, promote social interaction; are safe and accessible; and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 4.13 Paragraph 92 says to provide the social, recreational, and cultural facilities and service the community needs, planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.
- 4.14 Paragraph 96 states that *“Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”*.
- 4.15 Paragraph 102 says that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that, among other criteria, the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; and patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.
- 4.16 Paragraph 117 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 4.17 Paragraph 122 goes on to add that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
- *“The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
 - *Local market conditions and viability;*

- *The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- *The desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- *The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”*

4.18 Section 12 of the Framework seeks to achieve well-designed places. Paragraph 124 begins by declaring that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It goes on to add that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

4.19 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- *“Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

- 4.20 Paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.
- 4.21 Paragraph 165 states that major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.
- 4.22 Paragraph 170 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, among other criteria, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

5.0 Scheme Justification

- 5.1 This section of the Statement provides justification for the proposed scheme in the context of relevant planning policies. Reference should also be made to the other reports and drawings accompanying this application for further justification.

Principle of Conversion

- 5.2 As set out in section 1 of this Statement, this part of Reading is amongst the most suitable location for development with the ability to support sustainable patterns of living through the area's current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.
- 5.3 As set out at paragraph 8 of the NPPF, achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives. In respect of this application the proposed scheme would deliver the following:
1. **Economic Role:** The application site would deliver new and additional housing to improve choice and competition in the marketplace. The construction of the proposed scheme would also bring increased spending by residents in local shops and increase demand for local services.
 2. **Social Role:** The scheme would deliver much needed quality housing in the short to medium term. The application site is well connected to nearby facilities, being located along Shinfield Road which is a major arterial road through Reading and beyond. It is in close proximity to bus routes and the Shinfield Road shopping parade, which hosts a range of retail and eateries, petrol station and other facilities all within walking distance of the site. New residents will strengthen the community by improving the demographic balance and by adding to existing social capacity by introducing new skills and volunteer capacity. This, in turn, will help support a strong, vibrant and healthy community.
 3. **Environmental Role:** Any necessary development brings about change and the proposed scheme is no exception. The application site is currently a single

residential home with a sizeable garden and is not considered to hold any significant ecological value nor harm any nationally designated landscape area, conservation area or listed buildings. The proposal will contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment through new planting, including trees being retained where possible.

- 5.4 Overall, it is clear that the application site is suitable for residential conversion given its sustainable location and thereby, would be in accordance with the advice in the NPPF and policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC6 and H7.

Housing Mix/Affordable Housing

- 5.5 In total the proposed development will provide 5 x 2-bedroom apartments utilising an existing single residential house.
- 5.6 Policy H2 advises that density will be based upon a range of factors including the following:
- the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;
 - its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
 - 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.
- 5.7 In respect of mix, the Core Strategy recognises that a wide range of units is required to be provided in line with table 4.6 of the Core Strategy. In the case, the use of an existing site ensures efficient use is made of a previously developed site which is the most sustainable form of development. The proposed units, when taken into consideration of the wider residential market in this area, will increase the range of homes available at a price point that complements the area which is predominately made up of detached and semi-detached properties.
- 5.8 With regard to affordable housing, policy H3 advises that on sites of 1 – 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing

to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. The applicant is providing a viability assessment which will confirm the level of financial contribution that may be appropriate.

Character, Appearance and Layout

- 5.9 The proposed scheme looks to make use of an existing building to form 5 new apartments. This will be achieved through a programme of upgrading the existing services and external finishes of the building and surrounding areas along with new extensions to the building.
- 5.10 The proposed extensions to the building are proportionate and will still allow a generous amount of space to the boundaries of the site where the mature trees are located. The appearance of the extensions will mirror the architectural detailing of the existing Edwardian building.
- 5.11 The layout of the units internally will ensure that no overlooking occurs to neighbouring properties. The ground floor units will be provided with their own private fenced off garden space to ensure privacy and security of these units. The remainder of the rear garden will be communal for all residents to enjoy.
- 5.12 To the front of the property the existing parking area will be redefined to mark out 6 parking spaces and a bin store. Most of the existing mature landscaping will be retained and enhanced where appropriate. The outward appearance will be one of a large detached residential property similar to others in the area that either are in single occupation or converted to apartments. Therefore, the proposal will have no discernible negative impact upon the character of the area in accordance with policies CC2, CC3, EN14, H2, H3, H10 and the guidance in the NPPF.

Transport, Accessibility and Parking

- 5.13 The site is within a highly sustainable location with excellent public transport routes linking into the wider Reading area.

- 5.14 It is proposed that the existing access will remain and provide access to the 6 proposed parking spaces in accordance with Core Strategy policies CC6 and TR5.
- 5.15 In line with the advice in the NPPF, there will be no material change in the number of vehicle trips to and from site and no severe impact upon the local highway network.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.16 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency's online flood mapping, which means that the land has a low probability of fluvial flooding (less than 1 in 1000 (<0.1%) annual probability). Residential development is appropriate in Flood Zone 1 and therefore the application complies with the aims of the sequential approach.
- 5.17 Foul and surface water drainage details will be submitted in accordance with any agreed planning condition.

Construction Method and Waste Management

- 5.18 A detailed construction and waste management strategy will be prepared and implemented whilst the works are being undertaken in line with building regulations and, therefore, there is no need for a condition to cover this point. In terms of working hours, this will be regulated to 8am to 5pm Mon-Sat with no working on Sundays or bank holidays.
- 5.19 In addition, the applicant will seek to adhere to the following guidelines:
- Minimising noise and dust disturbance
 - Planning deliveries to be out of peak hours where possible, and ensuring all materials are immediately incorporated into the project as soon as practically possible.
 - Advising the adjacent users of the master programme and sectional completion plans.
 - Showing consideration to local residents, businesses and the general public to ensure that construction works and operatives do not intrude on normal day to day activities.

5.20 In considering a Waste Management strategy, the four criteria listed below for effective waste management will be taken into consideration:

1. Minimise / Reduce
2. Re-use
3. Recycle
4. Disposal

5.21 In particular, opportunities will be investigated to maximise the practicable recycling potential of construction material. The following are identified at this stage:

- Re-use excavated spoil within landscape/other areas of fill if suitable;
- Timber waste considered for recycling for use of by-product;
- Arrange recycling of packaging with suppliers; and
- Prevention of over-ordering/damage of materials on-site.

5.22 In respect of waste management once the units are occupied, it is proposed that each apartment will be provided own recycling and refuse storage bins and a communal refuse area will be located at ground level.

Amenity Space, Trees and Landscape

5.23 There are a number of trees and shrubs within the site which where possible will be retained to provide a mature landscape and communal garden area. In addition, the ground floor apartments will be provided with an individual private garden area screened from view. The site is well contained and given the existing vegetation will ensure no loss of amenity to surrounding properties in accordance with policies CC8 and EN14.

Summary of Policy Compliance

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	✓
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION	✓
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE	✓
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE	✓
CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT	✓
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM	✓
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY	✓
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND	✓
EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE	✓
H2: DENSITY AND MIX	✓
H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING	✓
H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK	✓
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE	✓
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE	✓

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application seeking detailed planning permission for the conversion and extension of a residential house to form 5no. apartments and 6 parking spaces and associated facilities. T
- 6.2 One of the core land-use planning principles set out in the NPPF is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes that the country needs and every effort should be made by local authorities to meet the housing needs of an area.
- 6.3 The application is within a highly sustainable location, and the proposal has been designed and integrates well into this part of Reading. The layout, design and appearance of the proposal has been carefully devised paying particular attention to respect the amenity of surrounding residents.
- 6.4 The proposal has met all the conditions of the adopted Core Strategy and fully complies with the advice in the NPPF., and, therefore, should be approved without delay.