



ELSTREELAND



45 coversham road, reading

123456-ELS-DAS | October 2020 | Design and Access Statement

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introduction

Elstree Land is seeking Full Planning Permission, from Reading Borough Council, for a residential development of 40 apartments located at 45 Caversham Road, Reading.

The application will include associated landscaping and parking, as well as the demolition of the existing buildings.

This Design and Access Statement describes the design principles for this application in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (Validation Requirements) paragraphs 029 - 031.

We recognise and welcome the increasing necessity for high quality design in new developments, set down within the National Planning Policy Framework and the recently introduced National Design Guide. The high standard of design which underpins this application is essential to the positive contribution that the development will provide, both to the physical environment and the local community.

The design and planning standards set down within Reading Borough Council's policies and guidance have been assessed within our planning and architectural proposals. We have also been directed by our detailed appraisal of the local context and the established development pattern

and character, as well as consultation with the Local Planning Authority, the Reading Design Review Panel and a comprehensive Professional Team across a range of disciplines. In particular, the following consultants have contributed to this Design and Access Statement:

- Architectural Consultant: [DHA Architecture](#)
- Planning Consultant: [McConnell Planning](#)
- Transport Consultant: [i-Transport](#)
- Landscape Architect: [Aspect Landscape](#)
- Noise Consultant: [Cass Allen](#)
- Air Quality Consultant: [Syntegra](#)
- Energy Consultant: [Hodkinson](#)

In the following chapters we set down our design strategy, detailing the urban design, landscape design, architectural approach and access principles for the scheme, and describe the way in which the form of the site and the open space areas provide a legible and positive experience of the development, enhanced by a consistent architectural style and materials palette.

The development offers a sensitively designed, high quality built environment, meeting local and national aspirations for sustainability and character.

overview of the development proposals

OUR VISION:

- ✎ To make a positive, distinctive contribution to this part of Reading town centre, meeting local and national aspirations for sustainability and high quality design.
 - ✎ To “heal” the broken townscape along Caversham Road with a high quality frontage which reinforces its established residential character, and draws from its fascinating blend of historic and more recent developments juxtaposed along this section of the street.
 - ✎ To provide the strong “fourth corner” design response, together with the existing buildings opposite, to frame the junction and to create interest and articulation to this prominent location.
 - ✎ To create a characterful, compatible street scene along Great Knollys Street.
 - ✎ To make the most efficient use of this sustainable under-utilised site, and to offer a variety of high quality living accommodation, with attractive amenity space and appropriate parking.
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- ✎ In developing this site, Elstree Land is seeking to enhance the quality of the built environment and deliver sustainable development for Reading. We aspire to create a thriving, flourishing place, where residents engage with the locality, are keen to connect with each other and with the area, and are inspired to look after and maintain the high quality of their surroundings.
 - ✎ To achieve a successful design, the development team has sought to understand the functioning of the site and how it relates the surrounding area. Technical studies have been undertaken to support this analysis, including assessment of the visual setting, the character of the area in built form and spaces, landscape, movement and access.
 - ✎ Engagement has also taken place with Reading Borough Council Officers, Committee Members and the Reading Design Review Panel in order to consider the needs and aspirations of the town in relation to the development potential of the application site, and the approach to the design, building form and scale, and architecture.
 - ✎ This interaction guided the evolution of the architectural and urban design proposals, the access principles, landscape strategy, and eventually the contribution to the place: seeking to enrich the character of Caversham Road, Great Knollys Street and the wider area.
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- ✎ The development will provide a mix of housing to meet local need: 40 new homes are proposed, of which 12 will be affordable. These new homes will include a variety of types and sizes, providing social benefits through the delivery of a significant amount of affordable housing.
 - ✎ The development will also provide attractive amenity space for the enjoyment, recreation and overall improved well-being of the residents - including roof terraces, balconies and communal landscaped amenity space to the rear of the building.
 - ✎ The development has been carefully considered so that it accords with relevant policies in the Reading Local Plan.
 - ✎ The development will deliver environmental benefits through a reduction in the number of car journeys to and from the site together with additional landscaping to generate bio-diversity enhancements.
 - ✎ The development will generate economic benefits through the construction programme and by bringing in more residents close to the town centre to help support existing both the daytime and nighttime economy.
 - ✎ The Elstree Land team recognises that this development will be perceived, not as a standalone building, but as an integral part of the neighbourhood and built fabric of Reading, which will promote sustainable living for existing and future residents.



The Proposed Development - viewed from Caversham Road

pre-application design evolution

This application has been shaped by several stages of engagement and guidance from Officers of Reading Borough Council, as well as the Reading Design Review Panel. Some significant alterations have been made to the development proposals as a result of this pre-application advice and guidance.

This Design and Access Statement should be read as a supplement to the submitted pre-application documents which are appended - these include the background to the development, analysis of the development context and the relationships with the immediate and wider setting.

ref.1 March 2020: Initial Proposals



ref.2 May 2020: Evolution following DRP comments



ref.3 June 2020: Evolution following RBC comments



subsequent design evolution & application proposals



The Local Planning Authority provided written comments on the evolving proposals on 12 August 2020. These comments required several fundamental aspects of the proposals to be reconsidered and redesigned.

A subsequent videoconference was held on 27 August 2020 during which the redesigned proposals were presented by the Elstree Land design team. These proposals were positively received and this planning application has been prepared on this basis.



ref.4 The Proposed Development - *viewed from the north*

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| <p>☞ In respect of the building form, Officers considered the five-storey element addressing the intersection that was initially proposed to be too tall and bulky.</p> | <p>☞ In response to these comments, the Caversham Road end of the building has been reduced in height to four storeys, as illustrated below.</p> |
| <p>☞ However they considered that the recessed five storey element along Great Knollys Street could be acceptable, subject to reconsideration of the elevational principles.</p> | <p>☞ This artist's impression also illustrates the redesigned elevational approach, which moves away from Regency-style detailing towards a more contemporary scheme. This is further illustrated overleaf.</p> |

The Proposed
Development
V

ref.5 The Proposed Development - viewed from the northeast

- The Officer's comments regarding the architectural design, materials and detailing were of the view that the facades were under-articulated, with insufficient architectural detailing and too much repetition of window openings; the Council's suggested approach was for simplified architectural detailing which did not seek to reproduce the detailing typical to a Georgian building.
- The image below illustrates these redesigned elevations, which maintain the facade proportions and regularity of the two neighbouring Regency-style buildings, reinterpreted in a contemporary vernacular.
- The historic Forbury Works building in central Reading was also a key design reference for this reconsidered architectural language: in particular the projecting multi-storey bays distinguishing the entrances, the contrasting material to the lower storey acting as a visual pediment to the building, and the horizontal friezes balancing the strong verticality of the projecting bays and windows.
- The application proposals represent a contemporised interpretation of these distinctive features prevalent on more historic buildings both in close proximity to the site and typical to Reading.



Forbury Works, Blagrove Street



Forbury Works, Blagrove Street



- The view below illustrates the building form and scale along Great Knollys Street. The Officer's comments were of the view that this part of the building, with a recessed fifth floor, could be successful with an alternative approach to the design of the elevations.
- The Officer's comments referred to the Design Review Panel's suggestions in this regard, which included a mansard roof style fifth floor. A contemporised approach to a traditional mansard has been adopted, as modelled below, with angled screens implying the mansard form and a slate grey coloured panel finish.
- This image also shows the reconsidered relationship with Lion Court: this part of the building is stepped back, as suggested by Officers; without the upper storey, and finished in a more visually recessive grey brick.



ref.7 The Proposed Development - *viewed from the west*

- As noted above, this view illustrates the stepped-back building line and the differentiated material finish to the bay of the proposed building which neighbours Lion Court.
- This view of the proposed development also shows that the elevational concept no longer differentiates between the Great Knollys Street aspect and the corner element which addresses Caversham Road and Stanshawe Road, a relationship which Officers had considered to be jarring: with the exception of the western bay, the materials and detailing have been applied consistently around the building (including to the rear).
- Officers and the Design Review Panel requested that this longer facade be broken up visually. This has been achieved by designing this elevation in short sections, delineated by recesses to the brickwork where the downpipes are accommodated. In addition, the elevations are given visual interest through the use of projecting bays, which allow for repetition and simplicity in the facade whilst creating this visual interest.





This view shows the rear of the proposed building in the context of the surrounding built development. The evolving proposals had suggested that the private rear elevation of the building would have a somewhat different character to its public frontages - created by the scale of its balconies, the scale and proportions of its windows and balcony doors, and its stepped and angled facades. The Design Review Panel was concerned with this approach, encouraging a building

design where the front and rear should be designed with the same architectural language.

This advice supported the Council's more general consideration that a more contemporary language should be adopted for the building as a whole. The application proposals have been redesigned on this basis.

ref.9 The Proposed Development - *viewed from the south*

When viewed from the south, the proposed development knits successfully into the articulated skyline along Caversham Road - the established pattern of intensified building forms at junctions and intersections, with the proposed building becoming one element of the street's general transition between its tallest 6-storey buildings positioned at the roundabout to the south of the site along Caversham Road and adjacent to the railway bridge to the north, moderating in scale through 4-storey developments to the 3-storey Regency townhouses in the centre of the composition.

