

# **PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Demolition of existing building and  
erection of a 4 ½ storey 29 room hotel**

**at**

**77 – 79 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3DD**

**On Behalf of:** The Keen Partnership

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a 29-room hotel with ground floor bar/restaurant at 77-79 Kings Road, Reading.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, a Sustainability Statement and Carbon Reductions Options Report prepared by Property & Energy Services Ltd, a Transport Statement prepared by Motion, a Bat Scoping Report prepared by The Ecology co-op, a Archaeology Report and the following documents prepared by The Keen Partnership:

PL-01- Location Plan

PL-02 – Topographic Survey

PL-04 – Proposed Site Plan

PL-05 – Existing Floor Plans

PL-06 – Existing Elevations

PL-07 – Existing Side Elevations

PL-08- Proposed Plans

PL-09 – Proposed Elevations

PL-10 – Proposed Side Elevations

PL-12 - 3D Images

PL-13 - 3D images

- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

## **2. Site Location and Description**

- 2.1 The current occupier of the ground floor is Kings Kitchen Indian restaurant who took over from the previous tenant Cardamom restaurant who went out of business after six months. The Warwick Arms originally operated as a public house and eventually more of a Thai Restaurant than drinking establishment, it struggled for many years due to bad management and eventually closed down and was then sold off by the Pub company owners.
- 2.2 The upper parts of the building are over first, second and third floors providing a five-bedroom flat and a separate two-bedroom maisonette. The accommodation over the restaurant is in poor condition and the whole building requires a substantial investment.
- 2.3 The site fronts Kings Road which consists of a variety of office, leisure and retail uses varying from 1 to 5+ storeys in height.
- 2.4 To the rear of the site is a block of 3 storey residential accommodation and a row of terraced housing fronting the River Kennet.
- 2.5 The site is within the 'Central Core' area of Reading Town Centre as defined by Reading Borough Council's Local Plan adopted November 2019.

## **3. Planning History**

- 3.1 No relevant planning history.

#### **4. Development Proposals**

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “*well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time*” (para 120-121).

- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:

*Use and Amount*

- 4.3 This proposal seeks to extend upwards from the existing public house, to create a 20-room hotel with an overall height of 4 ½ storeys. Given the town centre location and the proximity to other existing tall buildings, the proposed use and amount is considered entirely appropriate for the location.

*Layout and Scale*

- 4.4 The proposed layout of the development has been designed to provide good-sized hotel rooms with carefully considered stacking of similar rooms/areas. All rooms would be accessed via a central lobby and stair, and large windows are provided to deliver natural light.
- 4.5 The height of the proposed building on Kings Road has been carefully considered so as not to introduce any overbearing impact upon pedestrians or neighbouring residents. The overall height is commensurate with other buildings in the immediate vicinity and thus is considered appropriate for this location.

- 4.6 Careful consideration was given to the design of the layout to ensure that it retained the enclosed nature of the corner plot, providing continuity to the street scene. This also allows for a clear and easy to understand legibility to the proposed layout.

#### *Appearance*

- 4.7 This proposed hotel development has been designed utilising a contrasting brick and green render to give a modern yet sympathetic appearance which will be in keeping with the established character of the street scene.
- 4.8 The design responds positively to its context, reinforcing the local character by re-introducing an active frontage to the street scene. The introduction of gull height glazing will also be a massive improvement over the current uninviting and dark appearance of the subject site. This will enhance the quality of the public realm providing high-quality built form with natural surveillance to create a safe and accessible environment.
- 4.9 Large symmetrical glazing fenestration details are proposed to afford good natural light whilst breaking up the perceived scale of the building allowing it to assimilate into its surroundings.
- 4.10 The use of different, and modern materials will contribute to the proposed change of use and comply with the standards for high quality design.

#### *Landscaping*

- 4.11 There are no existing trees on site. New planting can be accommodated within the curtilage and is proposed for control via condition.

#### *Access and Parking*

- 4.12 Given the accessible town centre location and the proximity to excellent public transport, the provision of 5no. parking spaces all of which are designated for staff use only is considered to be ample.

- 4.13 The supporting Transport Statement carried out by Motion indicates that the proposed development will actually result in a net decrease in 2-way vehicular movements of 73. This therefore indicates that the proposal is a highly sustainable form of development for the town centre location.
- 4.14 Internally, disabled access and circulation requirements are designed to achieve Building Regulations Part M standards, including entrance doors to be a minimum of 800mm, electrical fittings and service controls at suitable heights for disabled persons use, and all bathrooms and WC facilities designed for disabled access. This allows for an inherent adaptability to the internal layouts and also ensures diversity by meeting a wide range of needs.

## **5. Policy Assessment**

### *National Guidance*

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is relevant to the consideration of the application. Some weight also needs to be given to the content of the Ministerial Statement, 'Planning for Growth', issued in March 2011.
- 5.2 The 'Golden Thread' running through the centre of guidance within the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.3 The NPPF also sets out core planning principles (paragraph 17) which should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The main core principles relevant to this proposal are:
- ☐ Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;

- ☐ Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- ☐ Encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed;
- ☐ Promote mixed use development and encourage multiple benefits from use of land in urban and rural areas;
- ☐ Actively manage patterns of growth that make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus development which is, or can be made sustainable;

- 5.4 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that *"Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way"* and *"at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible"*. Paragraph 117 of the NPPF comments that planning should *"make effective use of land"* in *"meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions"*.
- 5.5 Paragraph 124 identifies 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"*, whilst paragraph 131 states that *"In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."*
- 5.6 The National Design Guide builds on the above and clarifies that *"well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by*

*enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use" (para 109).*

#### *Principle of Development*

- 5.7 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.8 A hotel development in this location accords with the objectives of Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policy CR4 which states that '*the central core (where the site is located) will be the primary focus for major leisure, cultural and **tourism** (our emphasis) development*'. The proposed hotel use is therefore considered acceptable in principle.
- 5.9 In terms of design; Local Plan Policy CC7 requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area and Policy CC2 requires all major non-residential development to meet the most up to date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards.
- 5.10 The proposal is considered to be of a high design quality which will enhance the character and appearance of the area through introducing a modern yet sympathetic design which makes the most effective use of the site. Further details on how the site meets the urban design principles is included in section 4 above and the BREEAM standards are discussed below.

#### *Sustainability/Energy (BREEAM standards)*

- 5.11 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. Furthermore, Local Plan Policy CC2 requires all major non-residential development to meet the most up to date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards.
- 5.12 These standards cover a wide range of matters which are discussed below, however, the standards also place high emphasis on the sustainability

benefits of utilising previously developed land that is close to services, amenities and public transport routes.

### *Management*

- 5.13 This category encourages the adoption of sustainable management practices in connection with design, construction, commissioning, handover and aftercare.
- 5.14 The proposal will achieve 'excellent' rating here by considering BREEAM performance targets early, managing the construction in an environmentally and socially considerate and responsible manner and ensuring the building responds to the needs of the occupants.

### *Health and Wellbeing*

- 5.15 This category encourages the increased health, wellbeing and safety of building users. An excellent rating will be achieved here due to the creative building design and specification decisions which create a healthy, safe and comfortable internal and external environment.

### *Energy*

- 5.16 This category encourages the specification and design of energy efficient building solutions, systems and equipment that support the sustainable use and management of energy during the building's operation.
- 5.17 An excellent rating will be achieved through the energy efficiency of the building, the reduction of carbon emissions and efficient management throughout the operational phase of the building's life.
- 5.18 The proposed construction will use standard cavity walls, with a u value of 0.21. The floors and roof will also have u-values of 0.15 or less. With the addition of a glazing system that is at least 1.4 u-value, the hotel will be very efficient from a thermal perspective.

- 5.19 Further details on the energy efficiency of the building can be found in the supporting Sustainability Statement prepared by Property & Energy Services Ltd.

#### *Transport*

- 5.20 This category encourages provision of and improved access to local amenities and to sustainable means of transport, i.e. public transport and other alternative transport solutions for building users.
- 5.21 Due to the town centre location and proximity to public transport, the proposal will achieve an excellent rating in terms of transport.

#### *Water*

- 5.22 This category encourages sustainable water use in the operation of the building and its site. An excellent rating will be achieved by reducing potable water consumption (internal and external) over the lifetime of the building and minimising losses through leakage.
- 5.23 The water fittings within the bedrooms will be chosen for low usage rates e.g. 3 lpm for basin taps and 10 lpm for showers, plus baths with a max capacity of 165 litres to overflow. The commercial dish washers to be fitted will be specified to ensure the water usage is kept as low as possible.

#### *Materials*

- 5.24 This category encourages decisions which reduce the environmental and social impact of construction products used on a project. It takes a 'whole life cycle' approach to construction product impacts, encouraging consideration of impacts during manufacture, design, procurement, installation, in use and end-of-life.
- 5.25 All timber will be sourced with approved certification, which are primarily FSC and PEFC marked.

- 5.26 Where possible, all materials will be sourced within a 35-mile radius of the development. Any material that cannot be obtained within this radius (like insulation) will be sourced from local distribution centres. Any particular material required from outside this area will have a brief justification note added to the project management files. A minimum of 25% of materials for the roads, paving, parking spaces and public open spaces will make use of locally recycled materials
- 5.27 All insulation materials will also be zero Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP).

#### *Waste*

- 5.28 This section encourages the reduction of waste from construction and throughout the lifetime of the building. An excellent rating will be achieved through sustainable waste management, waste reporting, reduction and diversion from landfill during construction and waste minimisation through optimised design.

#### *Land Use & Ecology*

- 5.29 This category encourages sustainable land use, habitat protection and creation, and improvement of long-term biodiversity for the building's site and surrounding land.
- 5.30 An excellent rating will be achieved as the proposed development makes the most efficient use of an existing brownfield site. Furthermore, the site has been assessed as having a low ecological value.
- 5.31 A report carried out by The Ecology Coop concluded that the building was assessed as '*having a negligible bat roosting potential.*'
- 5.32 There is no green space or associated vegetation within the site that might support other protected species, or species of conservation concern.

- 5.33 The local landscape provides very limited potential habitat for foraging bats. In accordance with current Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, no further surveying or mitigation in relation to roosting bats is considered necessary.

*Pollution*

- 5.34 This category addresses the prevention and control of pollution and surface water run-off associated with the building's location and use. Any light or noise pollution arising from the building during construction and operation will be missed in order to achieve an excellent rating.

*Innovation*

- 5.35 The innovation category provides opportunities for exemplary performance and innovation to be recognised that are not included within, or go beyond, the requirements of the credit criteria.

*Neighbouring Residential Amenity – overlooking, loss of light and overbearing*

- 5.36 There is no specific guidance on separation distances between residential and hotel uses. However, the proposed development will not extend further than the existing building and thus the relationship between properties is considered to remain acceptable.
- 5.37 The proposals are therefore considered to comply with Local Plan policy CC08.

*Archaeological Potential*

- 5.38 Please refer to submitted archaeological report conclusions.

*Air and Noise Pollution*

- 5.39 Hotels are not classified as a sensitive use; however, all new glazing will be double glazed and designed to comply with current building regulation standards to minimise the amount of sound that will travel through them.

5.40 During the construction process, building will only be done during commonly held hours. The hotel has bedrooms only and no public rooms for functions, so they will not add to the noise levels within the surrounding area.

5.41 As the properties will be heated by an air source heat pump boiler, there are no NOx emissions from the unit, but an allowance is made for some that may occur in the generation of electricity. The use of solar panels will further reduce all emissions by reducing energy demand

#### *Trees and Landscaping*

5.42 There are no existing trees which need to be retained and protected through the demolition and construction process. New planting can be accommodated within the rear curtilage and is proposed for control via condition.

#### *Employment*

5.43 Reading is the largest population and employment centre in Berkshire, which is one of the economic powerhouses of the UK. The proposed 29 room hotel and ground floor bar and restaurant will provide ample opportunities for local employment which in turn will contribute to boosting the local economy in line with the objectives of the Local plan.

5.44 The hotel will be operated 24 hours a day and will have 14 staff with six being full time. The ground floor reception will be manned 24hours a day and the restaurant will operate from 6.30am - 11.30pm daily. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. It is proposed the restaurant will also be open to the public.

*Transport and Parking & Cycle provision*

- 5.45 Local Plan Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.
- 5.46 The site is located within 'Zone 1, Central Core Area' as defined by Reading Borough Councils revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. The area is defined as having the best transport hubs with both the main railway station and also bus interchanges at the station and within Friar Street and other streets surrounding the town centre. This area also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces.
- 5.47 Reading Borough Council provide maximum parking standards of 0.25 spaces per bedroom, resulting in a maximum car parking provision for this development of 7 spaces.
- 5.48 Given the highly sustainable town centre location, and proximity to excellent transport links, it is considered that the provision of 5no. staff car parking spaces is considered acceptable.
- 5.49 In summary this transport statement has demonstrated that:
- ☐ The proposals accord with national and local policies relevant to transport;
  - ☐ Safe and suitable access to the proposals can be achieved by all modes;
  - ☐ The proposals will make provision for car parking having regard to adopted local parking standards; and,
  - ☐ The level of traffic associated with the proposals will not lead to severe impact to the existing operation and free flow of traffic on the adjoining highway network.

- 5.50 In accordance with paragraph 109 of NPPF, there are therefore no transport or highway reasons why planning permission should be withheld or refused.

*Community Infrastructure Levy*

- 5.51 The proposed development is CIL liable. The relevant forms have been completed and submitted with the application.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development can be advanced without adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.