

St Paul's Site Whitely Wood Reading : Planning Statement

To be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement

ONE : National Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the framework for the Government's planning policies. The revised National Planning Policy Framework was updated on 19 February 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Relevant to the consideration of this application are:

4. Decision-making

Para 38. 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.

8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

Para 91. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

Para 92. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

9. Promoting sustainable transport

Para 105. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

a) the accessibility of the development;

b) the type, mix and use of development;

c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;

d) local car ownership levels; and

e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

Para 106. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

11. Making effective use of land

Para 117. 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.

The site for the proposed scheme is comprised of the existing site of the St Paul's Parish Church and also land adjacent which is owned within the Oxford Anglican Diocese of the Anglican church of which, St. Paul's is a part.

The Parish-owned portion of the site currently comprises the church building in use, the single storey hall building to the centre of the site used for rental, church services and general meeting space and also the older and at the time of construction, temporary church building, to the rear which provides a 'Play Barn' : a facility for local young families where children can play safely. The Diocese-owned portion of the site comprises the two houses at the frontage. These have been used by the Parish at times and have at times been vacant over recent years. Currently one of the properties is vacant and has been for a significant period as it is uninhabitable. The site as a whole is hedged around from neighbouring residential properties to the right hand side and rear and is a prominent and important site in its locality, and might be considered currently to be under developed. The Parish church is an active group, heavily involved for many years within the local community of Whitley Wood, but is operating from buildings which are sub-standard now.

The proposal is to redevelop the site, creating a new community building, comprising Cafe, two multi-purpose community/worship areas, Meeting Rooms, two one-bed residential flats for private

12. Achieving well-designed places

Para 124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

128. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.

Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can

demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

Community Engagement

This scheme has been in the aiming for several years and there have been several iterations of the proposals prior to making this particular planning application.

There have been several public consultations made over the years in the way of open meetings in which developing proposals have been displayed and the inviting of comments from neighbours to the site and the local community in general.

In terms of the current application scheme, again, there has been at least one period of public consultation, in the autumn of 2019.

Over a three day period, drawings and explanations of the scheme were displayed in the front hall on the site and again, neighbours and members of the local community invited to view and comment on the proposals.

Indeed, certain of the comments discussed have informed the designs; mainly in the detail of planting, security and external works.

The scheme was well received in the local community. Appreciation was expressed for the improvement to local facilities that the scheme will bring in the area in both buildings.

TWO : Local Planning Policy Context

Current Local Plan and New Local Plan

At the local level, the site is located within the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council and this section of the report assesses the adopted policies that will be taken into consideration by the Council when considering this Planning Applications

The statutory development plan for the site comprises:

Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015);

Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Sites and Detailed Policies (2012, altered 2015)

In addition, Reading Borough Council's relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) include:

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)

Affordable Housing (2013)

Planning Obligations Under S106, April 2015

Employment, Skills and Training (2013)

Our responses to relevant Policies are as follows : -

Policy CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design

Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

To meet these requirements the following submitted Reports demonstrate the design steps taken regarding Sustainability:

Drainage Impact Assessment () Drainage Impact Assessment Project Ref: 472701/4001

Air Quality Assessment (2) Air Quality Assessment Ref: 19-6409

Energy Efficiency Statement (7) Sustainability and Energy Statement Ref: 19-6409

External Lighting details (9) 1861-External Lighting Details Rev1

Noise Assessment (15) Noise Impact Assessment Ref: 19-6409

Sustainability Statement (20) Sustainability and Energy Statement Ref: 19-6409

Policy CS3: Social Inclusion and Diversity

Major developments¹⁷ should demonstrate measures to enhance social inclusion in terms of access to housing, employment, services, community facilities, leisure, health, education, and other services and facilities. Development should recognise and take account of the social and cultural diversity of the area in which it is located, and contribute to the enhancement of local distinctiveness. All members of the population should be provided with access to good quality health, education and other social facilities. New housing development will be co-located with a range of accessible facilities, or appropriately planned and located to ensure that access to such facilities is provided. Public involvement in planning will be encouraged, including participation by a range of representation groups.

The St Paul's Church site on Whitley Wood Lane has been a spiritual and pastoral centre for the local community since 1911 when a new church was opened. With the later building of a hall on the site, it has been a social centre for clubs, children's parties, brownies etc., for decades.

Currently the site accommodates a disabled day care group, a Play Barn (a soft play area for toddlers and their parents/carers) and hosts the St Paul's congregation as well as a Nigerian fellowship. The site also has two houses, one of which is occupied and the other currently unsuitable for habitation.

With land at an absolute premium in Whitley Wood and with a dearth of community facilities and recognised poor health issues, the time is right to redevelop the site for this century and the one that follows. The vision is to realise the potential of the site to be a community hub that will bring well-being to the people of the neighbourhood.

A new multi-purpose church worship space, a café, a GP surgery with ancillary health services, community facilities and some residential accommodation will breathe new life into Whitley Wood.

Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

The scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities. Sites will be assessed in terms of their level of accessibility to a defined district or local centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and to a bus stop served by a strategic bus service.¹⁸ Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility as set out in other policies in this document, other Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Transport Assessment (22) Transport Statement Ref: 19-6409 is submitted with this application demonstrates the level of accessibility by the mode of transport available including walking, public transport, private cars and cycling.

Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

A Design and Access Statement is submitted with this Planning Application

Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities

The proposed development is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable. The relevant forms have been completed and submitted with the application. Also submitted is an Affordable Housing Statement (1) 1861-Affordable Housing Statement.

Policy CS17: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

Planning permission will not be granted for any loss of residential accommodation or land unless there are exceptional circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number

There is a residential aspect in the scheme.

The Diocesan land which is being transferred post-planning to the Parish to enable the development to take place, currently comprises two dwellings as already noted, albeit that only one is or has been occupied in recent times.

The use of the Diocesan land in the scheme does mean that these two houses would be lost and this has been a point of discussion with Reading Council in previous Pre Application exchanges.

In the recent pre-application enquiry response we received from RBC, the loss of these two dwellings was not considered to be a significant planning issue, against the background of the overall benefit to the local community of the new development proposed as a whole.

Notwithstanding this, the Parish are still proposing to incorporate two dwellings into their scheme, in fact as flats which are positioned over the new hall proposed as part of their new building.

These may be rented out to support the running costs of the centre. Another opportunity is for the accommodation to be used by a centre manager or by persons of need in the Parish or locally.

The nett result is that the two existing dwellings proposed to be lost, will be replaced with two new dwellings to serve the local area.

Policy CS24: Car/ Cycle Parking

Maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011) states the following:

ZONE 3 (RG2 8PN)

Car Parking Standard

RESIDENTIAL

C3 Dwelling Flat/House

Flats 1to2 BR = 1.5

House 1 BR = 1.5

House 2 BR = 1.5

House 3 BR = 2

House 4 BR = 2

CHURCH

D1 Place of Worship

1 space per 16 sqm Hall space

OR

1 per 8 Fixed seats

HEALTH CENTRE

D1 Health Centre

3 per Consulting Room plus

1 per Full Time Equivalent

(FTE) Staff

Cycle Parking Standard
RESIDENTIAL
C3 Dwelling Flat/House
Flats 1to2 BR = 0.5

CHURCH
D1 Place of Worship
1 space per 50 m²

HEALTH CENTRE
D1 Health Centre
1 space per 2 staff & 1 stand
per consulting room

A total of 47 parking spaces are proposed in the development in an area incorporating planting beds.

Four disabled bays have been indicated as part of this provision.

The site will now accommodate three access points along Whitley Wood Lane. The existing vehicle access point into the site is essentially being retained in principle, proposed to be moved slightly away from the Southern, right hand side site boundary to create parking bays within the site.

There is to be a second pedestrian access and also a separate cycle park access point as detailed.

An underlining principle of the scheme is to support the overall well-being of the community, in the facilities provided in both of the buildings. Whilst these are separate buildings, and are independent, there is this aspect of shared provision.

The parking areas are to be shared across both buildings; peak uses for the Church Centre and Health Centre are at different times of the day and different days of the week.

A sound barrier will be provided at the boundaries shared with neighbouring residential properties, comprising a solid timber boundary fence fronted with hedge planting on the site side. Secure and covered cycle storage will be provided on the site for both buildings separately.

The Transport Assessment (22) Transport Statement Ref: 19-6409 is submitted with this application

Policy CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities

Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel (including walking and cycling), and in existing centres where possible.

Proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.

The proposed Health Centre will replace South Reading surgery on Whitley Wood Road. The site is less than 0.4 mile from the surgery. It will also provide services for Whitley Wood Lane surgery, which has closed.

The current practice has a list size of 7500 patients this will increase by around 5000 patients over the next 6 – 12 months as residential developments within the catchment area are completed.

The catchment area extends from southern suburbs of Reading south to Swallowfield to the west

beyond Grazeley Green to the east beyond Sonning and up to the outskirts of Winnersh and Wokingham.

The Health Centre will provide the following services: the usual General Medical services including full GP and Nursing Services, Minor Ops, Joint injections, Patient Group Consultations, Physio, Counselling, Out-patient type Clinics, USS, Blood Tests, training for Junior Doctors and medical students, Paramedics, Pharmacists, etc. The newer improved facilities will permit a broader range of services and improved access. The Outpatient services reduce the demand for these services at the hospital.

The new Health Centre will be able to provide individual consultation rooms and group therapy spaces.

The Health Centre has to be designed to permit equal access to all services regardless of the infirmity or disability.

The new GP Contract will require Hub practices to open 08.00 to 20.00 Monday to Friday, Saturday morning and also some Sunday mornings. They will be on a rota so that not every surgery will open until 20.00 throughout the week or on the weekend. The Health Centre normal working hours will be 08.00 to 18.30 Monday to Friday.

The church uses are likely to continue to operate similar uses to the existing site and will therefore remain open throughout the week and weekends, as well as in the evenings. Sunday mornings are likely to

constitute a regular 'peak', where the car park is anticipated to be most full due to Sunday Church service.

Current Numbers of Users for the Church Centre is as follows:

- Currently, Playbarn hosts around 20 children with accompanying adults (so 40 people in total), 3 mornings per week. Over half arrive on foot. I've rarely seen more than 5 or 6 cars.
 - The hall hosts Mencap four days per week, say around 20-30 people. Most of these arrive by Readibus. I've rarely seen more than 2 or 3 cars.
 - There is a lunch club once a week, say 30-40 people. Most arrive on foot or by bus. I've rarely seen more than 4 or 5 cars.
 - Playbarn also hosts a Polish nursery on Saturday mornings, say another 40 adults and children. Most of these arrive by car – say 12-15 cars
 - Services are held in the Hall on Saturdays and Sundays by our own and other churches. Again, 30-40 people.
- Car sharing must take place, as I've never seen more than 20 cars.
- The hall is used on some evenings for small meetings – rarely more than 6 people. No more than 4-6 cars.
 - The hall or Playbarn is rented out on some Saturday evenings for private parties, say 30-50 people, with 12-20 cars.

It is expected that the halls and meeting rooms in the new Church Centre will have similar usage, with hope that the size of Sunday services will increase over time to around 60 people, and occasional large services / Parish get togethers of up to 100 people may be held on a Sunday.

The Church Centre also hope to offer evening social gatherings for the community, eg youth clubs, such gathering will close mid evening between 9pm and 9:30pm. We would expect most of the people attending such evenings to

walk or cycle, as they would be aimed at the local community. The new Church Centre will also offer café facilities.

This is likely to attract additional people during weekdays (up to 20-30 at any one time?). It is expected that many of

these additional people will walk or cycle, as the café is intended for local community use. Also, it is expected that

some of those using the café will also be using the Health Centre.

The parking areas are to be shared across both buildings; peak uses for the Church Centre and Health Centre are at different times of the day and different days of the week.'

Details of how the external space will be shared and managed is set out in the Heads of Terms between Church Centre and Health Centre the document states that:

- On completion of the Health Centre MRHC agrees to keep the Health Centre and its surrounds in good external repair and condition and good external decorative order throughout the duration of the lease.

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- MRHC will allow the PCC and the Diocese to have conditional use of its car parking spaces within the demised land.

- The PCC will allow MRHC to have conditional and reciprocal use of the car parking spaces on land retained by the PCC.

- The shared conditional use of the car parking spaces will be subject to a management agreement detailing the days and times when each party can use the other party's car park spaces.

- It is agreed that neither party will charge the other for the use of their spaces nor hold the other party liable

for any loss of damage incurred while using the other party's spaces.

- The management agreement will require the parties to pay an annual service charge to fund the cost of

maintaining the common access road but each party will be responsible for the keeping in repair their own

car parking spaces. The service charge will be paid by the parties in proportion to the number of car parking

spaces on each party's land.

- The PCC will allow MRHC to have a vehicular and pedestrian right of way at all times over the access road

that lies within the PCC's retained land.

- The PCC will allow MRHC to inspect and maintain any service media located within the common access road

which serves the Health Centre subject to reasonable prior notice and making good any damage at its

expense.

Travelling considerations are further detailed in the The Transport Assessment (22) Transport Statement Ref: 19-6409 submitted with this application

Policy CS34: Pollution and Water Resources

Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution; where it would preserve or ideally enhance ground and surface water quality; and where existing water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure are adequate to support the proposed development.

Proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of air, noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution.

Development will be permitted on land affected by contamination where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the LPA, that the contamination can be satisfactorily remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use.

To meet these requirements the following submitted Reports demonstrate the design steps taken regarding Pollution:

Drainage Impact Assessment () Drainage Impact Assessment Project Ref: 472701/4001

Air Quality Assessment (2) Air Quality Assessment Ref: 19-6409

External Lighting details (9) 1861-External Lighting Details Rev1

Noise Assessment (15) Noise Impact Assessment Ref: 19-6409

CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

To meet these requirements the following submitted Reports demonstrate the design steps taken regarding Biodiversity:

Ecological Survey (6) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report Ref: 19-6409

CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended.

To meet these requirements the following submitted Reports demonstrate the design steps taken regarding Vegetation:

Landscaping Scheme and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (13):

-803-L-01 Rev B St Pauls Church - Landscape Proposals

-803-L-02 St Pauls Church - Planting Plan

-Arboricultural implications assessment, tree protection plan and method statement Jan 2020

Tree Survey () BS 5837:2012 TREE SURVEY Ref: SPH/5837-01/28.04