

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**Erection of part 1.5 storey, part 2.5
storey apartment block comprising 3 x
1-bed flats and 1 x 2-bed flat following
demolition of existing car sales building**

20b Norcot Road, Reading, RG30 6BU

On Behalf of: The Keen Partnership

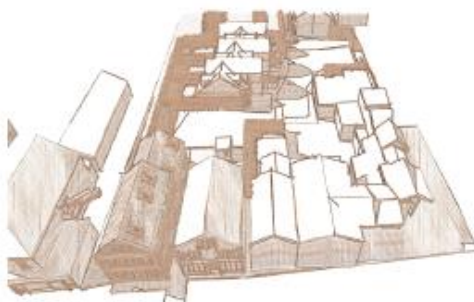
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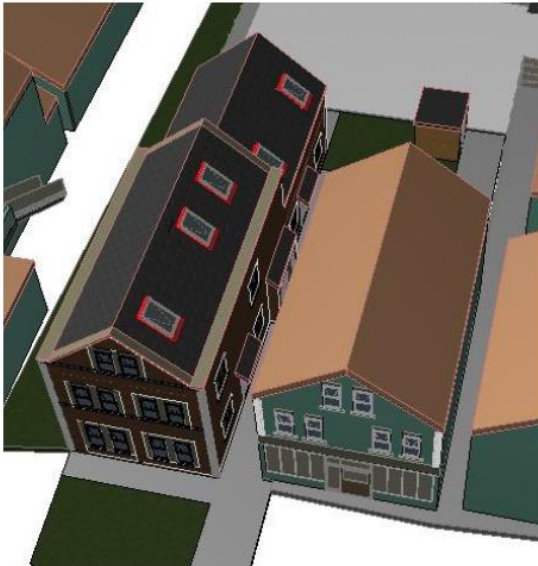
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement is produced to support a planning application for the erection of a part 1.5 storey, part 2.5 storey apartment block comprising 3 x 1-bed flats and a 1 x 2-bed flat following the demolition of the existing car sales building. The works include landscaping to the front and rear, in addition to the creation of a dedicated parking area and associated forecourt. The following comprises a selection of 3D images of the development proposals that give an impression of the way which the development would relate to the surrounding streetscape:





- 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, and the following documents prepared by The Keen Partnership:

- 1:1250 Site Location Plan – drwg. no. PL-01
- 1:500 Topographic survey – drwg. no. PL-02
- 1:500 Existing and proposed block plan – drwg. no. PL-03
- 1:100 Existing front/rear elevations – drwg. no. PL-04
- 1:100 Existing side elevations – drwg. no. PL-05
- 1:500 Proposed site plan – drwg. no. PL-06
- 1:100 Proposed floor plans – drwg. no. PL-07
- 1:100 Proposed front/rear elevations – drwg. no. PL-08
- 1:100 Proposed side elevations – drwg. no. PL-09
- 3D conceptual images – drwg. no. PL-11

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1. The application site comprises a redundant car garage and associated parking located on the southern side of Norcot Road within the District Centre of Tilehurst Triangle. The site is located adjacent to a defined 'key frontage' within the District Centre however it does not itself form part of it.
- 2.2. The immediate locality comprises a variety of commercial and residential uses given its location within a District Centre, however residential uses (both in the upper floors of buildings with ground floor commercial elements, and residential properties to the north, east and south) are still highly prominent within the immediate vicinity.
- 2.3. Properties, both commercial and residential, within the immediate locality typically vary between 2 and 2.5 storeys in scale, with an array of architectural styles prevalent.

3. Planning History

181302 – Erection of 3 semi-detached dwellings following demolition of the existing garages – Approved (land to immediate rear and south-west)

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. The proposed use is for 3 x 1-bed flats and a 1 x 2-bed flat.

Layout and Scale

4.4. The proposed development would be laid over 2.5 storeys for the section closest to Norcott Road and 1.5 storeys for the rear (southern) element. The development would effectively mirror the massing and scale of existing built development to the immediate west.

4.5. Internally, the accommodation has been laid out to maximise the internal space and light afforded.

Landscaping

- 4.6. The proposals include a degree of open grassed landscaping to the front and rear, with the site not currently benefitting from any form of landscaping. Further details can be secured by condition at the discretion of the local Planning Authority.

Appearance

- 4.7. The proposed development would effectively the design, built form and architectural vernacular of the adjacent 2.5 storey building to the immediate west and reduced in scale to 1.5 storeys at the rear.
- 4.8. The final specification of external materials if proposed for control by condition.

Access and Parking

- 4.9. The proposed development incorporates 4 dedicated parking spaces at the rear of the apartment block, and includes a parking forecourt linked to a shared access off Lemart Close to the west.
- 4.10. 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.

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 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".
- 5.3. Paragraph 59 confirms the Government's objective to boost the supply of housing, and paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.4. 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."*
- 5.5. 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

- 5.6. 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.
- 5.7. The site is located within the urban area of Tilehurst, Reading, where the principle of additional residential development is acceptable in accordance with the Council's overall spatial strategy and national planning policy. The proposals amount to the redevelopment of previously developed land and make efficient reuse of a redundant employment site for further housing delivery; therefore gaining additional support from the NPPF.

Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.8. The proposed apartment block, laid out over 2.5 and 1.5 storeys, would mirror the height, scale and built vernacular of the adjacent building to the immediate west, and in particular takes design cues from it in relation to the fenestration detailing, solid courses, lintels and quoins.
- 5.9. The property would lower to 1.5 storeys for the rear section in order to reduce the property's overall scale and massing, whilst providing a greater degree of architectural interest. The development includes attractive outdoor spaces for future residents that would successfully integrate with the recently permitted residential development to the immediate south, whilst ensuring the development would relate well to and integrate with the Norcot Road streetscene.
- 5.10. The existing site is presently fairly unattractive from a visual standpoint, incorporating a substantial degree of unsympathetic hardstanding and occupied by a single storey garage building of limited architectural interest. The proposed development would be more visually attractive form of development that fits in more successfully and sympathetically with surrounding development, whilst introducing a degree of landscaping to the

front which would further improve the visual amenities of the immediate streetscene.

- 5.11. The development would successfully correspond to the density, urban layout and character of Norcot Road, whilst reinforcing and enhancing the character and distinctiveness of the immediate setting. The proposals are therefore considered to fully confirm with the requirements of policy CC7 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity – internal space

- 5.12. The Gross Internal Area (GIA) of each residential unit would meet and exceed the minimum standards for 1 and 2 bedroom flats as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards, therefore affording future occupants a high standard of living and ensuring the development further complies with policy H5 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity – external space

- 5.13. The proposed development includes a private and functional degree of communal amenity space to the immediate front of the resultant building adjacent to the Norcot Road streetscene, which would be enclosed by hedging. This would be in addition to further communal amenity space at the rear which would integrate as part of the cycle storage facility. The proposals would therefore fully comply with policy H10 of the Local Plan by providing functional, attractive and private degrees of outdoor communal amenity space for future occupants of the apartment block.
- 5.14. In addition to the above, it is noteworthy that the application site is located within close proximity to Belgrave Recreation Ground to the south (0.1 miles, 2-min walk), Victoria Recreation Ground to the north-west (0.1 miles, 3-min walk) and Arthur Newbery Park to the north (0.5 miles, 11-min walk). All of the above demonstrate that generous degrees of public outdoor recreation space are located within close proximity to the application site,

which further afford future occupant's attractive spaces in which to relax and enjoy.

Residential Amenity – overlooking, loss of light and overbearing

- 5.15. The proposed apartment block would be sited adjacent to No. 20 Norcot Road (west), of which it is understood a residential apartment/s are located on the upper floors. The only window present in the adjacent flank elevation is believed to serve a bathroom, and therefore the proposed development would not adversely impinge existing levels of natural sunlight/daylight permeating habitable rooms, nor would the presence of 2 windows in the flank elevation of the proposed development have a material impact on privacy.
- 5.16. Due to the layout and relationship of adjacent residential units to the rear of No. 22 Norcot Road (east), the proposed development would not materially impact the amenities of such residents with respect to overdominance, loss of light, overshadowing or overlooking.
- 5.17. In summary, the proposed development would safeguard the amenities of surrounding residential properties and therefore accord with policy CC8 of the Local Plan.

Trees and Landscaping

- 5.18. There are no trees or hedgerows present within the application site, with the proposals incorporating the creation of outdoor amenity/landscaped areas to the front and rear of the apartment block which would improve the visual amenities of the site relative to the existing situation. Detailed proposals with respect to landscaping at the site are proposed for control via condition.

Transport and Parking

- 5.19. The proposals included provision for 4 car parking spaces at the rear, equating to one space per unit. Whilst it is acknowledged that the application site is located within Zone 3 and therefore 1.5 spaces would typically be required per 1-2 bed flat, the parking standards do allow for a degree of flexibility if such parking deficiency would not detriment highway safety.
- 5.20. It is noteworthy that the parking standards only require 1 space for a 1-bedroom dwelling, and 3 of the proposed flats would only include a single bedroom. Furthermore, parking restrictions along much of Norcot Road would prevent any further impact upon the safety and convenience of the highway as a result of any potential displaced parking.
- 5.21. Furthermore however, whilst the site is located with Zone 3, it is actually well served by public transport links. In particular, the site is located 0.9 miles from Tilehurst train station to the north (20-min walk, 9-min cycle ride) which provides regular services to central Reading, London Paddington, Didcot Parkway and Oxford. Bus stops are also present within a 1 to 2-minute walk from the site on Norcot Road, providing regular services throughout Reading, including the town centre and eastward to Whiteknights.
- 5.22. To summarise, the proposed development is considered to provide an appropriate level of on-site parking, particularly in the context of parking restrictions along Norcot Road but also due to the site being well served by public transport links, which would likely reduce the need for car ownership over and above 1 space per residential unit.
- 5.23. The development is therefore considered to comply with policy TR5 of the Local Plan.

Cycle and refuse provision

- 5.24. The proposals included dedicated bin storage facilities located to the front of the resultant property adjacent to the Norcot Road streetscene, with secure cycle parking facilities located at the rear. It is proposed that further details can be secured via condition if required by the Local Planning Authority.

Drainage/SUDs

- 5.25. The application site comprises less than 1 hectare and is located within Flood Zone 1, therefore a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment is not required in this instance. The submission of a detailed drainage scheme/strategy is proposed for control via condition.

Sustainability/Energy

- 5.26. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2010 requires a 25% reduction in carbon emissions over the 2006 standards. This is equivalent to Code level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;
- a) The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the employment of good building standards to create an excellent SAP rating;
 - b) Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable
 - c) Reduced internal water consumption of 110 litres per person per day through the incorporation of water efficient sanitary fittings, including low flow toilets and water efficient taps for wash basins, and therefore conformity with Regulation 36(3) of the current Building Regulations legislation.

- d) Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service
- e) Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport
- f) 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings
- g) 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision
- h) Water butts fitted to the rainwater down pipes for watering the garden
- i) Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect and in particular comply with policies CC2 and H5 of the Local Plan.

Affordable Housing

- 5.27. In accordance with policy H3 of the Local Plan, it is understood a financial contribution will be required that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. It is assumed that this can be secured through a S106 legal agreement which the applicant is amenable to enter into with the Council.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 5.28. 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 would contribute an appropriate windfall site to the Borough's housing supply, without adverse effect on the character of the area, the amenity of

neighbouring residents or the safety and convenience of the local highway network.

- 6.3. Such development would provide a high standard of living for future occupants whilst providing a visual attractive form of development that would improve the visual amenities of the immediate locality.
- 6.4. 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.