

# **PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Proposed two storey extension to the  
side of 3 Modbury Gardens to create 2 x  
2-bedroom flats**

**3 Modbury Gardens, Reading, RG2 7PD**

**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 erection of a two-storey side and rear extension to create 2no 2-bedroom flats. This follows the grant of outline (access and scale) planning permission ref. 191015 for a commensurate extension to provide a 2-bedroom semi-detached dwelling.
- 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:
- PL-01-Location Plan
  - PL-03-Existing and Proposed Block Plan
  - PL-04-Proposed Site Plan
  - PL-05-Existing Plans
  - PL-07-Proposed Plans
- 1.4 The relevant application fee of £924 will be submitted by the applicant separately.

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

- 2.1 Modbury Gardens is a cul-de-sac comprising of a mix of semi-detached and terraced dwellings.

- 2.2 The property itself is a former Local Authority housing estate property comprising of traditional brick elevations and pitched tiled roofs. The property is unique in that it has an expansive side garden compared with the traditional front and back arrangement of other properties.

### **3. Planning History**

- 3.1 Application Ref 191015 - Outline planning permission for access and scale for a single (two- bed) semi-detached residential dwelling, including alterations to the existing dwelling – Approved November 2019.
- 3.2 This outline approval agrees the principle of redeveloping the existing garden of 3 Modbury Gardens to create additional residential accommodation. The scale of the building which could be accommodated was also agreed and thus the current application solely seeks to alter the internal accommodation to provide for 2no flats.
- 3.3 Application Ref 181120 - Two storey extension to the side of 3 Modbury Gardens to create a 1 x 1 bedroom flat and 1 x 2 bedroom flat – Refused August 2018.
- 3.4 This application was refused for 4no. reasons. The first related to the size, appearance and design. It is considered that by mirroring the scale and design of approved application ref. 191015 the current proposal overcomes this reason for refusal. The second related to inadequate internal living space. Again, the current proposal complies with the nationally described space standards and thus this reason for refusal is considered to be overcome. The third reason for refusal related to parking. The current scheme includes 4no parking spaces which is in line with local planning policy and thus again this reason for refusal is overcome. The final reason for refusal related to a lack of affordable housing contribution. The applicant is willing to provide the required affordable housing contribution and thus this reason for refusal also falls away.

- 3.5 Application Ref 050690 - The erection of a two-bedroom end-of terrace dwelling (Renewal of planning permission 99/01193) – Approved May 2005
- 3.6 Application Ref 992167 - Erection of two-bedroom end-of terrace dwelling – Approved March 2000

#### **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 as residential accommodation is already established both through the prevailing character of the street and the previous approval for an additional dwelling. The increase in the number of dwellings from the approved semi-detached property to 2no. flats is considered de minimis.

##### *Layout and Scale*

- 4.4 The proposed layout and scale follow the approved scheme ref. 191015. This provides for ample private amenity space and car parking and is both commensurate with the other properties in the cul-de-sac and the neighbouring roads thus respecting the character and appearance of the area

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

*Landscaping*

- 4.6 Existing trees can be retained and protected through the demolition and construction process. New planting can be accommodated within the curtilage and is proposed for control via condition.

*Appearance*

- 4.7 The proposed extension has been designed as a seamless extension to the existing property. It utilises the same materials to ensure it will assimilate into its surroundings.
- 4.8 The extension will enhance the appearance of the street scene by mirroring the existing layout of properties on the opposite side of the road. The proposed roof form, fenestration detailing, and overall design of the property have all been carefully considered to create a proposal which will appear entirely in keeping with neighbouring properties.

*Access and Parking*

- 4.9 The proposed access arrangements have already been approved under outline planning application ref. 191015. In addition, 4no. parking spaces are provided which is considered ample for the location, given the sustainability of the site and good access to public transport.
- 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 principle of residential development on this site has already been established by the previous planning consents and the sites location with the defined settlement boundary. Notwithstanding this, the proposal is considered to fully comply with Local Plan Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) in that the site is of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the proposed development whilst making a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of the relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area.

*Density and Mix*

- 5.8 Reading Borough Council (RBC) Local Plan Policy H2 states that the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, the need to achieve high quality design and the need to maximise the efficiency of land use (amongst other things). It further states that densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be considered acceptable.

- 5.9 It is considered that by proposing a scheme of 2no. dwelling units rather than the 1no. dwelling already approved, this application makes the most efficient use of land in line with local planning policy. Furthermore, by providing 2-bed units, the scheme accords with the housing requirements outlined in the local plan.

*Character and Appearance of the Area*

- 5.10 Local Plan Policy H11 states that proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where the proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area.
- 5.11 In this instance a scheme has been designed which allows for a layout which integrates with the surrounding area in terms of the built coverage of each plot, respecting the existing building line and rhythm of plot frontages whilst providing suitable areas for parking of vehicles and appropriate boundary treatments.
- 5.12 Furthermore, although not strictly a conversion, given the extant planning approval for a semi-detached dwelling of the same scale and footprint as the proposed, it could also be considered that the application remains to be determined under the same guidance as if the building were already built and then subsequently converted.
- 5.13 Local Plan Policy H8 states that proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats will be acceptable where the proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design.
- 5.14 In this instance the design has been carefully considered to ensure that the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features remain in keeping with the street scene and thus the proposal is considered to comply with policy in this regard.

- 5.15 In addition, the extension to the existing property is in line with Local plan Policy H9 which seeks to ensure that the built development respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design.

*Residential Amenity – internal space*

- 5.16 The proposed flats fully comply with the nationally described space standards and thus are acceptable in this respect.

*Residential Amenity – external space*

- 5.17 Local Plan Policy H10 requires that new dwellings are provided with functional private or communal open space. It states that whilst houses should have private outdoor space, flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.

- 5.18 The proposal retains suitable private amenity space for the existing property at 3 Modbury Gardens, creating a layout more in keeping with other properties along the road. In addition, a private garden is provided for flat no.1 over and above the requirements of local planning policy. Flat no.2 also benefits from functional outdoor amenity space at ground floor level both to the front and rear of the property.

- 5.19 All outdoor amenity space has been designed to respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, with all private and communal spaces clearly identified. It is considered that the proposal therefore complies with policy in this respect.

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

- 5.20 The proposal will have no detrimental impact upon neighbour amenity in terms of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact.

### *Trees and Landscaping*

- 5.21 The proposed scheme provides an opportunity to deliver appropriate hard and soft landscaping at the site boundaries to improve the appearance of the site. This includes a variety of trees, hardstanding, lawns and hedges. The provision of additional landscaping will result in a net gain for biodiversity in line with Local Plan Policy EN12.

### *Transport and Parking*

- 5.22 Local Plan Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities. 4no. parking spaces are provided which is considered ample for the amount of development proposed especially given the sustainability of the site and good access to public transport.

### *Refuse & Cycle provision*

- 5.23 Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard and located at ground floor to enable easy access.

### *Drainage/SUDs*

- 5.24 The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 – an area with the lowest probability of flooding. A surface water drainage scheme can be secured by condition to limit any risks from surface water flooding

### *Contamination*

- 5.25 Given the existing use of the site as a private residential garden there is very little likelihood that the site will be contaminated.

### *Sustainability/Energy*

- 5.26 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future.

5.27 The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished; however it is proposed that the development would comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy H5 as well as 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
- d) 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.
- e) Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service
- f) Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport
- g) 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings
- h) 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision
- j) Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

#### *Ecology*

5.28 The councils' ecologist has provided no objections to previous applications at the site as the site is not located near to any suitable habitats. The proposal will therefore have no detrimental impact on ecology.

*Affordable Housing*

- 5.29 Local Plan Policy H3 requires 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.
- 5.30 The applicant is willing to sign a Section 106 agreement to this effect.

*Community Infrastructure Levy*

- 5.31 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 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.