

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ROOF AND SIDE
EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDING TO PROVIDE
A RESIDENTIAL-LED SCHEME WITH ASSOCIATED
LANDSCAPING, PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS,
ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING VEHICULAR
ACCESS AND CAR PARKING AND PROVISION OF
CYCLE PARKING AND WASTE STORAGE**

PLANNING STATEMENT

**RIVERSIDE CENTRAL, DUKE STREET, READING,
RG1 4SA**

ON BEHALF OF LIPMAN PROPERTIES

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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CONTENTS:

Page No:

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	SITE CONTEXT	1
3.	PLANNING HISTORY	3
4.	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	4
5.	ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY	7
6.	CONCLUSION	19

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Planning Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, forms part of a suite of documents submitted to Reading Borough Council for consideration in support of the applicants' (Lipman Properties Ltd) proposals for residential-led extensions to Reading Central (formerly Dukesbridge House, Duke Street, Reading).

1.2 Structure of the Report

1.2.1 The purpose of the Statement is to provide further detail of the proposed scheme, and to assess its merits against the development plan and other relevant material considerations. The Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides the context for the development through a description of the application site, the surrounding area and its planning history;
- Section 3 provides details of the proposed development for which planning permission is sought;
- Section 4 assesses the current development proposals in the context of the development plan and relevant material considerations;
- Section 5 provides an overall summary and conclusion to the report.

2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 Site Location and Description

2.1.1 The Site is located at the former Dukesbridge House, situated on the east side of Duke Street with the River Kennet immediately to the south.

2.1.2 The site is bounded by office and retail units to the west on Duke Street, offices to the south and a mixture of offices, retail and residential to the north and east.

2.1.3 The existing building currently comprises a former nightclub at lower ground floor level (which ceased trading in 2008) a restaurant unit at ground floor level currently occupied by Subway, and office units arranged over basement, ground and four upper floors.

2.1.4 The application site is located within an Area for Architectural Potential, on an identified cycle route, within the Reading Central Area, but outside of the tall buildings, central and office cores and within the Market Place/London Street

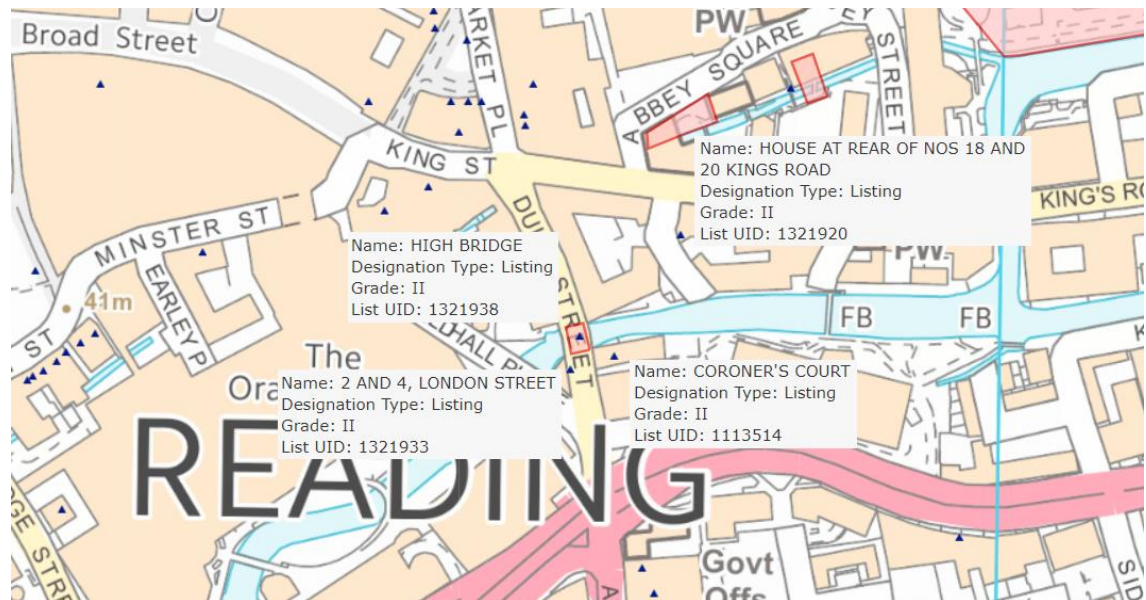
Conservation Area as defined by the Local Plan proposals map, November 2019. The whole of the Reading Central Area is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).



Figure 1 – Local Plan Proposals Map, November 2019 extract

- 2.1.5 Vehicular access to the site is via Highbridge Wharf which runs along the east of the site. The application site can be directly accessed by pedestrians from Duke Street, Highbridge Wharf or Kennet Side.
- 2.1.6 The application site is ideally located adjoining Reading Central Core and is therefore highly sustainable in terms of access to shops, leisure, community services and public transport. It is 50m from the primary shopping core and immediately abuts the office core.
- 2.1.7 The site is approximately 600m from Reading Station which provides direct rail links to London, the South West, Wales and the Midlands. Also, many of Reading's main bus routes, including direct links to Heathrow Airport, go via the station. Within the local area, various bus routes are also accessible on Duke Street and Kings Road, both of which are in immediate proximity to the site, providing significant public transport connectivity.

- 2.1.8 In addition to its location within a Conservation Area, the site is proximate to a number of heritage assets, including listed buildings and structures, as set out below:



3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1.1 Under application reference 190602, Prior Approval was granted on 6 June 2019 for the conversion of offices at lower ground floor, ground floor, first, second, third and loft floors to 77 dwellings under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). This is referred to on the plans and within this statement as the 'PD scheme'.
- 3.1.2 On 22nd August 2019, a planning application, ref: 191393, for 'Replacement of grills with windows at lower ground floor level on east and south elevations; new windows at ground to second floor on north elevation; new external cycle parking and bin storage within courtyard area and various other associated alterations to facilitate the implementation of prior approval 190602' was submitted to the Council. Further to the submission of revised plans and detail responding officers' comments, the scheme was granted consented in March 2020. The 'façade and fenestration' scheme sought to amend the appearance of the building, so that it represented itself as a residential building.

- 3.1.3 No further planning history exists on Reading Borough Council's online system, meaning that all planning history in relation to the building as it stands today is pre-1988.

3.2 Pre-application Consultation

- 3.2.1 To date the proposals have been subject to initial discussions with the following groups, and resulted in a number of changes particularly in relation to height and bulk of the building:

- Abbey Ward Members
- Reading CIC
- Caversham GLOBE/Tree Wardens
- Reading Civic Society
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee

- 3.2.2 The formal pre-application process has also been followed with RBC. Two pre-application meetings were held with the council planning officers Jonathan Markwell and Matthew Burns, and the proposals have been discussed at one Design Review Panel meeting. The key points taken from these meetings which have guided the application scheme proposals, are as follows:

- A wholesale redevelopment of the site, including the Duke Street corner, was needed;
- Greater uniformity of design, particularly in terms of fenestration between old and new to create a comprehensive approach should be provided;
- Removal of the brick fins, which were considered to be dominating;
- Reductions in height of the building towards Duke Street to reduce perceived impact from London Street and Market Place; and
- Reorientation of massing towards the east of the site to reduce dominance on Duke Street.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1.1 The proposed development seeks to extend the existing building in order to provide a residential-led development, comprising that previously granted Prior Approval under application 190602 (to be updated by a separate Prior Approval application), with 36 further residential units provided within the side and roof

extensions, alongside one new commercial unit which is anticipated to operate as a café. Additional commercial units will be reprovided from the existing site and are anticipated to accommodate a Gym and retail uses

- 4.1.2 The proposals maintain the integrity of the original PD scheme, with new build being provided above and on the western and eastern sides of the building.

4.2 Description of Development

- 4.2.1 The description of the proposed development at Reading Central is:

'Roof and side extensions to existing building to provide a residential-led scheme with associated landscaping, public realm improvements, alterations to the existing vehicular access and car parking and provision of cycle parking and waste storage'.

4.3 Quantum of Development

- 4.3.1 The new build residential units would be provided between the 1st-7th floors, as shown, with 36 units currently proposed overall.
- 4.3.2 The lower ground and ground floor of the eastern side extension would comprise a relocated and orientated substation with the proposed commercial unit occupying two floors. The western corner extension would similarly provide for the proposed commercial floors space in the form of a gym at lower ground level and retail at ground level. These units in the western extension are essentially re-provision of existing floorspace proposed to be demolished.
- 4.3.3 The proposals seek to better utilise the River Kennet frontage, which currently suffers from neglect and problems of anti-social behaviour. In this manner, the current ramp arrangement will be realigned to make the approach more accessible, legible and inviting. Proposed uses at river level within the side extension and removal of the current substation wall will help to reinvigorate this area of riverside, through addition of greater surveillance and activity associated with the proposed use.
- 4.3.4 It is also proposed to significantly increase greening along this frontage to soften the current hardscape and to increase biodiversity. Proposals are in their infancy, but alongside proposals for green/brown roofs and increased appropriate planting at river level, there is potential opportunity to include green walls at lower levels

of the scheme given the available south-facing aspect, as successfully implemented at the Oracle.

4.4 Mix of development

4.4.1 Currently it is proposed to provide 36no. residential units, plus 1no. commercial units in the following arrangement:

- River Level – Commercial Unit linked to the ground floor
- Ground Level – Commercial Unit
- First Floor – 1no. 1 bed; market unit
- Second floor – 1no. 1 bed; market unit
- Third floor – 1no 1 bed; market unit
- Fourth floor – 2no. studio, 3no. 1 bed, 3no. 2bed and 1no. 3bed; affordable units
- Fifth floor – 3no. studio, 4no. 1 bed and 2no. 2bed; market units
- Sixth floor – 2no. 1 bed, 3no. 2bed and 1no. 3bed; market units
- Seventh floor – Duplexes linked to floor below (2no. 2bed; market units)

4.4.2 All of the units to be provided are proposed as market housing; no affordable housing is proposed. The reasoning for this is addressed later in this statement.

4.5 Massing and Scale

- The 'new build' elements of the scheme would comprise the following:
- Part five, part six storey extension to the south east side of the building.
- Part three, four and five storey western corner extension, following demolition of the existing corner block.
- Part two and part three storey roof extension above existing building.

4.5.1 Although the new build elements that form part of this application are described separately for clarification purposes, the building would appear as one once constructed, with the extensions rising in height on the west and east sides to meet the rooftop extension.

4.5.2 The area to the south of the building fronting the river would be redesigned and public realm enhanced to ensure appropriate defensible space to the PD scheme,

whilst enabling improvements to accessibility, landscaping and perception. This will include a reconfigured ramp for access between the riverside and Duke Street to replace the existing which appears cluttered and illegible.

4.6 Access and Parking

- 4.6.1 Access for vehicles would remain as existing, from Kings Road via Highbridge Wharf to the existing service yard and parking areas at the rear of the building. Six parking spaces are to be provided; four spaces for wheelchair accessible units and the remaining three spaces to be allocated for the commercial uses. Refuse collection would be from this area. Access for emergency services would either be via the lobby from Duke Street or from the courtyard to the rear.

4.7 Cycle Parking and Waste Storage

- 4.7.1 As part of the proposals, it is anticipated to formalise current provisions, so that 62 cycle spaces are provided in a 'Josta' two-tier stacking system, located within the north-east section of the car park. A waste storage block, identified to hold up to 21 1,100l bins is proposed to wrap around the southern section of the Courtyard.

5. ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1.1 The Development Plan for Reading Borough Council relevant to the proposals currently comprises the Local Plan (Adopted November 2019).
- 5.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and outlines how these are expected to be applied to both plan-making and decision-making. The NPPF was introduced in March 2012, where it superseded the vast majority of Planning Policy Statements and guidance into one consolidated document. In its current, revised form, published in July 2018 and subsequently revised in February 2019, it is a material consideration in the determination of this development proposal.

5.1.4 At the heart of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Sustainable development, as defined at Paragraph 8 of the NPPF, includes three dimensions; economic, social and environmental.

5.1.5 For decision-making, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, this means approving development without delay where it accords with the Development Plan. Where Development Plan is out of date this means granting planning permission unless:

'Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this framework indicate that development should be restricted.'

5.1.6 Paragraph 117, of the NPPF outlines significant emphasis in the NPPF on making 'an effective use of previously developed land' for housing and other uses. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF gives substantial weight to the value of encouraging multiple benefits from urban land including through mixed-use schemes and by achievement of net environmental gains.

5.1.7 There is also considerable support for seizing opportunities to use the airspace above existing commercial premises. In this manner, Paragraph 127 of the NPPF includes that decisions should ensure that developments:

"b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)"

5.1.8 The NPPF's focus on making an effective use of land in urban areas for mixed-use schemes provides significant support to the current proposals which realise these aims by providing not only much-needed additional homes, but genuine economic, environmental and social uplift as a consequence of the proposals, ancillary retail uses and wider public realm and environmental improvements.

5.2 Site Designations

- 5.2.1 The site is located in the settlement boundary, within the Reading Central Area, Central Core and Primary Shopping Area. It is also located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. It is just outside of the Office Core, the southern boundary of which reaches Kings Road directly to the north of the site.

5.3 Principle of Development

- 5.3.1 The site is located within Central Reading Area as defined by Policy CR1 (Definition of Central Reading) of the Local Plan. For the purposes of application of the sequential test for main town centre uses, Policy CR1 defines the following:

'Retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area;

- Major office development of over 1,000 sqm will take place in the office core; and*
- Other main town centre uses will take place in the Central Core'*

- 5.3.2 In this instance, it is not considered that the sequential test applies: the site upon which development will be added has prior approval for residential uses which is in the process of being implemented; the new build is limited in scale at ground floor level where it would be reasonably expected to provide main town centre uses and proposed uses at this level are consistent with policy. In addition, the location of other new build development at higher floors is entirely appropriate as residential, this being consistent with the approach taken throughout Central Reading.

- 5.3.3 Policy CR2 (Design in Central Reading) provides guidance to identify the need to integrate built form and layout with the surrounding urban grain and identify means to engage and enhance the public realm and greening. Policy CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading) builds upon this guidance, in particular directing that developments will be required to enhance the appearance of watercourses and to provide active elevations. Policy CR7 (Primary Frontages in Central Reading) seek the provision of mixed, non-residential uses at ground floor level within the Central Area in order to contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre and provide visual interest.

- 5.3.4 The development proposes two distinct uses. The primary use proposed would be the residential development, which would fall under Class C3 of the Town and

Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). A single commercial unit, occupying lower ground and ground floor level within the side extension is also proposed, which would fall under Classes A1-A3 of the Use Classes Order. For the reasons given above, the proposed development is considered appropriate to the location of the site within the Central Core.

- 5.3.5 Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) states that all proposals for residential development within the central area will be required to contribute towards a mix of different sized units within the development. This will be measured by the number of bedrooms provided within individual units. Ideally, a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units should be provided. The development complies with policy in this manner, providing the following mix:

Unit Mix

- Studio – 3 units (8%)
- 1 bed – 20 units (56%)
- 2 bed – 11 units (31%)
- 3 bed – 2 units (5%)

- 5.3.6 Of the 36 units proposed, some four units (11%) would be wheelchair adaptable units.
- 5.3.7 Policy CR10 (Tall Buildings) defines tall buildings as 10 storeys of commercial floorspace or 12 storeys of residential (equating to 36 metres tall) or above. Tall Buildings will only be appropriate within the 'areas of potential for tall buildings' as defined on the Proposals Map. The development proposes a maximum of ground, plus 7 storeys of residential and ancilliary floorspace.
- 5.3.8 On account of the heights proposed, the rooftop and side extensions are not contended to form a tall building as defined by policy, particularly as the massing is significantly broken up and therefore does not present itself as a single, large mass making it comparable to Riverside House and Kennet House in this regard. Accordingly, the criteria set out within Policy CR10 are considered not to apply and it is contended that the proposals sit within the parameters of established waterfront development within the town centre.
- 5.3.9 Policy CR3 (Public Realm) identifies important areas of public realm to be protected from development. The proposals do not affect any of these areas. The

proposals are adjacent to the River Kennet and are considered against policy in a later section which welcomes improvements to the public realm in riverside locations.

- 5.3.10 The planning application scheme proposes redevelopment of a site located within the settlement boundary which would be appropriate development in this location and not contrary to relevant policies of the Local Plan. As such the principle of the development is considered acceptable subject to consideration of detailed design issues which will be commented on in following sections.

5.4 Economic Benefit

- 5.4.1 The proposals for 36 residential units and a commercial unit will generate employment primarily during the construction phase, with some minor employment, considered to be in the range of 3 FTE employees on the basis of the Employment Densities Guide (2nd Edition) being generated by the commercial unit.
- 5.4.2 It is also relevant that the predominance of jobs sustained during the construction phase will be filled by people living in Reading area and wider region. Best endeavours to directly employ a localised labour force, as well as a number of local sub-contractors will ensure that a greater proportion of salaries and expenditure arising from the construction phase is retained in the local economy in line with the Council's Economic policy.
- 5.4.3 In addition, there will be a number of secondary and spin-off benefits associated with the proposals, primarily related to the supply chain. The proposed development will result in the refurbishment of a redundant office building to provide new dwellings. The future occupiers of the completed homes will patronise local shops and facilities, and in so doing contribute to the viability and vitality of businesses in London Street and the Town Centre.

5.5 The Application Site

- 5.5.1 Local Plan Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development) states that 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.

- 5.5.2 The development proposals will ensure an adequate level of accessibility by all modes of transport, particularly public transport, walking and cycling. In this manner, the site is located within a highly accessible location, which benefits from excellent access to services, amenities and public transport. There are a number of shops in the immediate locale including the Oracle shopping centre which is located approximately 75m to the west of the site. Additional services in Reading Town Centre are also easily accessible on foot and by cycle.
- 5.5.3 The site has excellent public transport links, with strategic bus routes running along both Duke Street and Kings Road to the west and north of the site. Reading Railway Station is within reasonable walking distance, approximately 0.5km to the north of the site. The proposed redevelopment of this site is therefore consistent with Local Plan Policy TR1.

5.6 Design, Scale and Massing

- 5.6.1 Policy CR2 states that the architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site and further determines that development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area.
- 5.6.2 The existing building provides a rather bland and blank façade which fails to make use of the opportunity for activity and vibrancy that the riverside and location adjacent to the Oracle provides. The proposals therefore aim to realise those opportunities and an appropriate bookend to the retail zone, providing an improved and semi-active river frontage in the form of a residential units fronting onto the Kennet Side to provide greater surveillance, supported by improvements at the corner of Highbridge Wharf to remove the existing substation wall, provide a proposed café with associated external amenity area and couple this with a much-improved façade in terms of design and materiality and associated landscaping and public realm improvements.

- 5.6.3 Policy CR3 iii) encourages improvements to legibility, public realm and continuous movement at sites adjacent to Reading's Watercourses. The proposed improvements to the frontage of the riverside and pedestrian movement is therefore strongly supported by the Local Plan.
- 5.6.4 In terms of massing, the building rises to 7-storey peak, providing an acceptable focal point when viewed from London Street to the south, Duke Street to the north and the Oracle Riverside to the west, as shown in the submitted views. The lower height of the eastern side takes cues from the massing of the adjacent Mayflower Court and other riverside buildings outside of the tall buildings area, providing an appropriate graduation in scale towards the central retail area of the Riverside.
- 5.6.5 The design of the building is shown in the accompanying Design & Access Statement. It features a banded approach to materiality, which grades from darker tones to lighter tones with height to create a unique and striking appearance within the streetscape that is fitting of Reading's increasing status as a growing and vibrant economic and social destination.
- 5.6.6 Horizontal articulation is provided through differing window types, with more glazing at the upper floors to break up the building's bulk and mass. It is considered the bulk, mass and scale of the building and its layout reinforce the existing pattern of development and provide a positive enhancement to an important riverside location.

5.7 Heritage

- 5.7.1 A new suite of Heritage policies within the Local Plan protect historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings. This includes both listed buildings and conservation areas. Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings.
- 5.7.2 Although none of the buildings on the application site are listed, two listed buildings and the listed Duke Street Bridge are located in close proximity of the site to the south. Furthermore, the site is located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- 5.7.3 Given the nature of the proposals and the proximity to heritage assets, significant consideration has been given to how to bring forward development that can

rejuvenate the existing tired and low-quality frontages currently presented on Duke Street and at the Kennet side, provide significant enhancements in terms of pedestrian connectivity and meet stated aspirations to green the river corridor and improve tree cover and biodiversity, whilst ensuring a sensitive and respectful approach to built form in the context of nearby heritage assets.

5.7.4 It is considered that the proposals strike an appropriate balance in this regard, allowing a site that would otherwise remain in its current form to come forward and, on balance, meet a number of policy objectives as set out within this document.

5.7.5 Montagu Evans has considered heritage assets and guided the development evolution in this regard. Together with EAA, a model was produced to enable assessment of the context in which views were taken from around the site. The conclusions of this work, which have been central to defining an appropriate scale and massing of development, are set out in the Heritage Report supporting this submission.

5.8 Residential Amenity

5.8.1 Policy CC8 of the Local Plan states that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to daylight and sunlight, and visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development.

5.8.2 The submitted proposals have been designed to consider potential impact from built form and in this manner, the layout has sought to ensure that:

- There is no unacceptable, adverse impact on daylight and sunlight. The range of detailed analyses undertaken, as submitted with this pre-application package, are considered to demonstrate no material effects to daylight and sunlight amenity enjoyed by occupants of properties neighbouring the proposed development.
- There is no direct overlooking from windows within the new build that would unacceptably impact upon adjacent properties.
- Massing is located to ensure that it is graded down to adjacent property, where appropriate.
- The approach to design and layout can enable significant improvements to local amenity, particularly that arising from improvements in biodiversity and air quality associated with greening of the riverside and roofscape and improvements in safety of the river corridor area aligned to the proposals

to provide active frontage and improved legibility/accessibility between Highbridge Wharf and Duke Street along the Kennet frontage.

- 5.8.3 The application is accompanied by a Sunlight and Daylight Assessment that considers the impact of the proposed scheme on surrounding residential properties. The proposed development has been carefully tailored to best address daylight/sunlight to the surrounding residential properties within the intended flexibility of the BRE Guidelines. It concludes that the vast majority of windows retain levels of VSC that are commensurate with an urban grain and widely considered acceptable across most urban areas.
- 5.8.4 Overall, the scheme is considered to relate well with the surrounding residential properties in terms of daylight and sunlight amenity and demonstrate adequate compliance with BRE Guidance.
- 5.8.5 A further assessment shows that scheme demonstrates a good level of compliance with BRE Guidance in terms of internal daylight amenity.

5.9 Noise, Disturbance and Vibration

- 5.9.1 Policies CC8 and CR6 requires development to not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance or vibration.
- 5.9.2 Accordingly, to support design development a Noise Survey has been undertaken to review the existing noise levels at the proposed development. The report, which is accompanies the application, concludes that the noise climate outside the proposed new habitable rooms will not give rise to significant adverse effects on health and quality of life. Further, based on the surrounding noise climate, it is concluded that the provision of conventional products (glazing and ventilators) will protect future occupants from environmental noise intrusion in line with national policy on noise.

5.10 Air Quality and Sustainability

- 5.10.1 The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area. Policy EN15 states that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality. Development that would detrimentally affect air quality will not be permitted unless the effect is to be mitigated. With regard

to air quality, the applicant commissioned an Air Quality Assessment to accompany this planning application.

- 5.10.2 The client is aware of the recent announcement of a climate emergency by the Council and is therefore seeking to provide a highly sustainable scheme that meets policy requirements and local aspirations.
- 5.10.3 In this regard, it is proposed to provide a car-free development, the parking shown within the courtyard on the plans being that related to existing parking demand for residents and business on Duke Street. Alongside this, a travel plan to encourage travel to central Reading by means other than the private motor car will form part of the submission and consequent planning conditions within any consented scheme is built out and operated.
- 5.10.4 In addition, the scheme seeks to re-use existing built form, adding to this through provision of an exo-skeleton, rather than seeking to demolish and re-build what is otherwise structurally sound. Alongside this, proposals to incorporate significant greening and energy reduction and renewable energy measures, the basis of which is set out in the supporting Sustainability Report, set the context for a much-improved local position than that currently associated with the site.
- 5.10.5 The Air Quality Assessment confirms that the site can be considered suitable for the proposed development without the need for specific mitigation in relation to air quality. There will be a reduction in traffic generated by the site with the proposed development in place, compared to the exiting site use. It is therefore considered that potential impacts on air quality from road traffic associated with the development will not be significant and no further assessment is required.
- 5.10.6 The construction works associated with the proposed development have the potential to create dust. However, a package of mitigation measures can be put in place to minimise the risk of elevated PM10 concentrations and dust deposition in the surrounding area. These measures are standard construction practice for most sizeable construction projects including wheel-washing and water assisted dust sweepers. With mitigation in place the construction impacts are judged as being not significant.

- 5.10.7 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the requirements of relevant local and national guidance, policy and legislation in relation to Air Quality.

5.11 Land Contamination

- 5.11.1 Given the nature of the end use, the applicant has commissioned a Geo-environmental Desk Study/Preliminary Risk Assessment to determine the nature and where possible the extent of contaminants potentially present at the site; to establish the presence of significant pollutant linkages; and to assess whether the site is safe and suitable for the proposed development or can be made so by remedial action.
- 5.11.2 The Phase 1 Survey concludes that the site for new development further ground investigation to confirm underlying conditions is required. This is likely to require deeper cable percussive drilling due to the likely requirement for piled foundations. The works should include a range of chemical analysis covering a range of determinants including, heavy metals, PAH's, asbestos, TPH and PCB's as a minimum. Volatile Organic Compounds, Semi Volatile Organic Compounds may also be required, subject to ground observations. The installation of gas monitoring standpipes with six monitoring visits undertaken over two or three months may also be required depending upon the proposed scheme.
- 5.11.3 Taking into consideration the above, advice is requested regarding the timing of any Phase 2 investigation. It is considered that this should be undertaken once proposed massing and layout has been discussed and refined, with the submission of details also potentially held for consideration post-consent via submission of planning conditions.

5.12 Parking and Highways

- 5.12.1 Policy TR5 states that developments 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.
- 5.12.2 The accompanying Transport Statement confirms that the proposed development would have no material impact on the local highway network, and that the proposals should be considered favourably from a transport perspective as they would:

- Capitalise on the extensive sustainable travel opportunities available to the application site;
- Provide a development layout that would ensure safe access for all residents, staff and visitors, including the refuse collection and delivery vehicles;
- Discourage the use of single occupancy car use through the absence of car parking; and
- Provide cycle parking provision that reflects RBC standards.

5.13 Flood Risk and Drainage

5.13.1 Policy EN18 states that planning permission will not be permitted for development in an area identified as being at high risk for flooding, nor shall development be allowed to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

5.13.2 The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the future occupants and users of the proposed development will be safe from flooding and there will be no detrimental impact on third parties. The proposal complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policy with respect to flood risk and is an appropriate development at this location.

5.13.3 The FRA confirms that the EA modelled flood data has shown that the site lies outside of the 1 in 100 annual probability +25% and +35% allowance for climate change scenarios. In case of flooding in more severe events, the proposed mitigation strategy, which took a precautionary approach of +35% annual probability, demonstrates the development is safe through a number of measures as follows:

- Residential units at ground floor level and above (minimum 39.50m AOD) are significantly above all reference flood levels by more than 2m;
- The new commercial elements in the south-eastern part of the site will have thresholds above the design 1 in 100 annual probability +35% allowance for climate change flood level and flood resistant/resilient measures will be incorporated as appropriate at lower ground floor level;
- Continuous safe access is available from residential units over the site onto Duke Street at a level more than 1m above the design flood level. Safe access for the commercial units in the south-eastern part of the site is provided via Highbridge Wharf.

5.13.4 The amount of impermeable area at the site will not change as a result of the proposed development, however it is proposed to incorporate a blue green roof

to reduce the rate and volume of surface water runoff as far as is reasonably practicable and provide a betterment over the existing scenario

5.14 Affordable Housing

5.14.1 Policy H3 of the Local Plan sets the affordable housing thresholds for all sites proposing additional residential dwellings. For sites on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing. The policy also states that *"in all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution."*

5.14.2 The proposed development does not provide any affordable housing; all 36 units proposed are market housing. This is as a result of the significant build costs associated with the proposed scheme. As such, in order to meet the requirements of Policy H3, a Viability Report is being prepared and will be submitted early in the application process to verify that affordable housing is not viable in this scheme.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1.1 In combination with that set out in this report and the supporting documentation submitted for the Council's assessment, it is considered that the revised proposals make effective use of a sustainable town centre site to provide an appropriate mixed-use development that will deliver substantial economic, environmental and social benefit. Therefore, the principle of development is strongly supported by the NPPF.

6.1.2 The proposal would redevelop an important riverside site which currently makes a limited contribution to the area in terms of character, providing significant improvements to the public realm, legibility, vibrancy and pedestrian movement in this riverside site as significantly supported by local policy.

6.1.3 The proposals provide information to allow assessment of the scale, mass and layout of the building as well as our considered inputs in respect of heritage and impact on neighbouring uses. Accordingly, comments are welcomed from officers to help positively mould the development proposals during this pre-