

PLANNING STATEMENT

Continued use of the property in D1 Use Class (Non-residential institution)

**Orwell House, 23 Craven Road,
Reading, RG1 5LE**

On Behalf of: Berkshire Health Ltd

Report Prepared By: Toby Cowell, MA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Site Location and Description	3
3. Planning History	3
4. Policy Assessment	4
5. Conclusion	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the continuous use of the property as a non-residential institution (D1 Use Class).
- 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 The property has operated as The Forbury Clinic, a private medical practice (D1 Use Class) since 2013, with planning permission having been granted in 1988 for a change of use from nurses' quarters to a child guidance clinic (D1). Moreover, no further change of use of the property has been granted with the use having never been abandoned. It is noteworthy that a Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use (CLE) application has recently been submitted to confirm the lawful use of the premises is D1.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding this however, in order to fully assure that the use of the property is/remains lawful from a commercial standpoint, this planning application has been submitted as a 'belt and braces approach'.
- 1.5 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 document:
 - 1:1250 Site Location Plan
 - 1:500 Block Plan
- 1.6 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site comprises a 3-storey detached building dating from the Victorian era and associated car park located on the corner of Craven Road (west) and Reading School Terrace (north); directly opposite to the Royal Berkshire Hospital site to the west.
- 2.2 Based on the planning history available for the site, it is understood the Local Planning Authority consider the property, by virtue of its age and architectural significance, to constitute a non-designated heritage asset.
- 2.3 The property is currently being used by The Forbury Clinic as a private medical centre (Use Class D1), which has been in operation since its purchase from Reading Borough Council in 2013.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 12/00026/FUL - Change of use from Educational Support Services to student accommodation, conversion of existing building and proposed side extension for student accommodation. Total 25 units – Refused (Dismissed on Appeal)
- 3.2 11/01443/FUL – Change of use from educational support services to house in multiple occupation and new three storey side extension for use as house in multiple occupation - Withdrawn
- 3.3 88/TP/821 – Change of use from nurses’ hostel to a child guidance clinic (D1) with associated car parking and revised access. Reg 4 – Approved
- 3.4 88/TP/377 – Renewal of application 85/TP/507 – Approved
- 3.5 85/TP/507 – Temporary change of use from nurses’ hostel to centre or training. Reg 4 – Approved
- 3.6 96/21923 – Convert houses into nurses’ quarters – Approved (18/11/1966)

4. Policy Assessment

National Guidance

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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".

Principle of Development

- 4.3 The provision of a healthcare facility (Use Class D1) within this particular location, within close proximity to the commercial heart of Reading and directly adjacent the Royal Berkshire Hospital is considered to be acceptable in principle in accordance with policy OU1 of the Local Plan.
- 4.4 Moreover, the property has been operating as a private medical clinic in its current form since 2013, and therefore the purpose of the application is to confirm that the continued use of the premises for D1 purposes is fully lawful.

Character and Appearance of the Area and Impact on Non-designated Heritage Asset

- 4.5 No internal or external alterations are proposed to the property, thereby ensuring the character and built vernacular of the property would be

preserved in its current form. Consequently, it is not considered that the submission of a Heritage Impact Assessment would be required in accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF. Likewise, the existing character of the immediate locality would also be preserved.

Residential Amenity

- 4.6 The Forbury Clinic has been operating in its current form for the last 6 and a half years, with opening hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Such hours of operation are typical for a private medical practice of this nature and are not unsociable, thereby not materially impacting the amenities of residential properties to the south (Nos. 25-27a Craven Road).
- 4.7 In addition, the property has been operating in a D1 use since 1988, when planning permission was granted for a change of use to a child guidance clinic.

Transport and Parking

- 4.8 The application site is located within Zone 2 for parking purposes, with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD, with respect to health clinics (D1), requiring a total of 2.5 spaces per consulting room plus 1 space per 1.0 FTE staff.
- 4.9 The property comprises a total of 4 consulting rooms plus 2 treatment rooms (therefore in effect 6 consulting rooms), plus 6 FTE staff members. In accordance with the Council's parking standards this would necessitate a total requirement of 21 parking spaces. The current level of parking provision present at the site includes 22 standard parking spaces in addition to 2 disabled parking spaces at the front of the property. Such level of provision fully accords with the Council's parking standards and has proved to be more than sufficient over the last 6 and a half years with regards to the operations of The Forbury Clinic.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.10 The proposed development is not CIL liable. The relevant forms have been completed and submitted with the application.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This statement has demonstrated that the existing use of the property is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land, without detriment to the character of the host property or the wider locality, the amenities of nearby residential properties or unduly impacting the safety and convenience of the local highway network.
- 5.2 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.