



STUDENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
at 40-68 SILVER STREET by

SILVER STREET DEVELOPMENTS LTD

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

JUNE 2020

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1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports a full planning application by Silver Street Developments Limited for the erection of a student housing scheme to provide 71 student rooms at 40 Silver Street, Reading. This will operate as an extension of their scheme across the street at 79 Silver Street which is nearing completion. There will be a single student hall management of the combined sites, providing accommodation relating particularly to the needs of students based at the nearby London Road campus.
- 1.2 This document has been prepared by GW Planning with input from the developers Silver Street Developments Limited and from the project architects O'Connell East. It should be read in close relationship to the Design and Access Statement which is also submitted with this application.
- 1.3 The scheme now submitted follows a previous scheme, refused in September 2019 for the same site. It is a reduced proposal representing a revision of the refused scheme. It takes account of concerns raised by the Borough Council particularly in respect of the relationship of the scheme to adjoining residential property to the North.
- 1.4 The revised scheme will provide high quality studio rooms grouped in two blocks relating to a central lower level courtyard. The frontage building will present three main storeys with dormer windows and pitched roof attic storey above facing Silver Street. A rear block behind the courtyard will be two stories lower.
- 1.5 Compared to the previous refused scheme the proposal now submitted has a number of changes as more fully described by the Design and Access Statement. These include;
- Reduction in number of studio rooms from 78 to 71
 - Reduction in width of frontage block allowing space for parking to the North
 - Removal of 'link block' ground level accommodation at the North.
 - Redesigned frontage elevation to Silver Street
 - Reductions in shading and potential overlooking of properties to the North.
 - Incorporating previous (post submission) revisions to increase courtyard width

- 1.6 Other supporting documents include a Student Housing Needs Statement, Landscape Layout, Drainage Strategy, Daylight/Sunlight Assessment, Air Quality Assessment, Student Housing Management Plan and BREEAM pre-assessment.

Site Location

- 1.7 The application site lies to the South of Reading Town Centre, in very close proximity to the University's London Road campus and within walking or cycling of the main University of Reading Whiteknights campus (which is also accessible by frequent bus services).
- 1.8 The proposal seeks to deliver quality student accommodation in this very suitable location.



Application site (marked red)

Need for Student Accommodation

- 1.9 The national picture in respect of student housing is one of considerable recent and continuing investment in purpose built provision, arising from a combination of factors including;
- university expansion/ growth of student numbers
 - a need to update or replace ageing University owned stock to ensure higher standards (including structural condition and regulations compliance)-often achieved in partnership with the private sector
 - increasing quality expectations by students, with single rooms/ en-suite bathrooms widely regarded as essential
 - a closely related shift toward more demand for purpose built and managed student accommodation from second and third year undergraduates and from postgraduates who may in the past have moved on into the mainstream local housing market
 - the success of commercial models for private student accommodation provision including both mainstream and smaller 'niche' providers
 - planning authority support for the benefits of purpose built student accommodation in deflecting some pressure of student demands away from mainstream housing stock.
- 1.10 Private provision of student accommodation includes larger 'mainstream' providers typically targeting 250 room plus schemes for undergraduates and working closely with Universities who will refer students.
- 1.11 To widen the choice of accommodation at a range of price points there are an increasing number of smaller niche operators variously offering larger and/or 'studio' rooms, additional supporting services or a distinctive ethnic/ national community environment targeting overseas students. Such schemes can be smaller and more distinctive in their character but still need to be of sufficient scale to provide a critical mass sufficient to cover the costs of support services.
- 1.12 The University of Reading is the largest higher education provider in Reading and currently has around 17,000 students and over 4000 staff. It is one of the largest economic and employment generators in Berkshire with annual income/ expenditure of around £275m. The University adopted an ambitious strategy for growth, transformation and improvement under previous Vice Chancellor Sir

David Bell. This continues under the leadership of Robert Van de Noort, Vice-Chancellor since 2018. The approach emphasises positive "limitless" change. The summary of the University's Corporate Strategy states that;
"Our vision for 2026 is that the University of Reading will be a vibrant, thriving, sustainable, global and broad-based institution, responsive to, stimulated by and informing changes in the world around us. As a result, we will also be significantly larger in terms of students, global reach and presence, and revenue."

- 1.13 Reading University has been particularly successful in terms of attracting more students, and (as of 2018) had an increasing and urgent need of more than 1000 additional purpose built student accommodation rooms in order to meet its 'first year guarantee' of accommodating students starting their courses.
- 1.14 More than 5000 of the University's students in 2017/18 applied for but were unable to access purpose built student housing and had to find other accommodation within the mainstream housing market. Reading has seen a significantly higher than average growth in HMO (houses in multiple occupation) student rooms in recent years reflecting this shortage of provision and reducing the availability of existing homes for other local occupiers.
- 1.15 The University has a high proportion of postgraduates (around 33% of annual student intake) reflecting its strong research and business connections.
- 1.16 Apart from the University, other higher education providers in Reading which also generate needs for student accommodation include Reading College (based at the Kings Road campus) and OnCourse (a partnership between Cambridge Education Group and various universities including Reading) which provides pre-university preparatory programmes for international students from its base on the London Road Campus. OnCourse has been experiencing rapid growth in international student numbers, and are considering arranging for use of the Silver Street Hall by their students.
- 1.17 The need for student housing in Reading is expected to continue to rise at a rate above the national average if the successful growth in recent years continues into the future. A full report estimating future needs for further student housing in Reading and the suitability of the application site to meet these needs has been prepared by Knight Frank and is submitted in support of this application.

- 1.18 To help meet significant demands for student accommodation the proposal for 40-68 Silver Street is for 71 'studio' rooms (highest quality larger individual student units supported by communal facilities). The student rooms will operate as an extension to the 61 student rooms currently under construction at 79 Silver Street opposite with communal common room, laundry and other facilities.

Urban Design

- 1.19 The previous commercial buildings on the site (now demolished) were unsatisfactory in urban design and streetscene terms being an industrial portal framed building of poor appearance set back from Silver Street (with an area of vehicle parking dominating the street frontage) and a much altered Victorian building at the back of the Silver Street footway.
- 1.20 The proposals are based from a full analysis of the local context. They will restore the building line, enhancing Silver Street with a modern building of an urban scale that will be appropriate to the edge of town centre location.



Silver Street frontage as proposed

- 1.21 Behind this positive frontage the scheme proposes an efficient use of the brownfield site with student rooms around a well screened low level courtyard. The generous proportions of the courtyard now proposed will achieve a characterful place encouraging social interaction between the student residents whilst achieving a degree of privacy for adjacent rooms.



Basement level courtyard viewing North

- 1.22 The layout and massing of the development will achieve an interesting building form with dormer windows adding to roof level interest: The revised proposals leave more space between buildings along the North boundary to avoid overshadowing adjacent flats and terraced housing or dominating their outlook. The new arrangement further reduces overlooking of neighbour properties. The rear block of the scheme will be two storeys lower than that on the street frontage allowing an improved outlook from Rimaud House. The only West facing windows here will be obscure glazed to corridors ensuring privacy for existing residents. With the retention of existing trees just outside the site boundaries and additional planting within the site the outlook for existing residents will be significantly improved as compared to the previous industrial buildings.
- 1.23 The scheme presents a building which is modern in its style and detailing expressing its University-related function, but which respects and enhances the setting of traditional elements in its surroundings with brickwork and pitched

roof forms. The scheme is designed to extend the recently approved development opposite at 79 Silver Street in providing a single high quality student hall (to either side of Silver Street) near the Town Centre.



New buildings relating to surrounding urban context

Access and Management

- 1.24 The development will operate with 'no-car' leases precluding students from bringing a car to the site (or to central Reading). Adequate secure covered cycle parking will be provided and full information will be given to new students detailing walking and cycling routes and public transport services.
- 1.25 The management of the combined student housing schemes at 79 and 40 Silver Street site will involve a single (full time) employee working across these two sites which are directly opposite each other. The employee will have support (notably in respect of controlling any inappropriate student behaviour) from

nominated student wardens (typically older/ postgraduate students) living within each site.

- 1.26 The four off-street parking spaces now proposed at no. 40 will supplement the three at 79 to allow for limited and controlled use by those working at or maintaining either of the sites and will also be utilised (in a closely programmed manner) for loading/ unloading by students at the start and end of the academic year.
- 1.27 These pre-planned arrangements will mostly be programmed on weekend and at off peak times when traffic pressures on Silver Street are lowest and some availability of on street parking can be anticipated.
- 1.28 The car parking in front of 40 is currently uncontrolled and on weekdays appears to be used in part by town centre workers/ visitors. The spaces are less heavily used on Sundays.
- 1.29 The applicants will work with the highway authority to resolve and fund any appropriate revisions to on-street waiting and loading restrictions along the site frontage and to adjust footway crossings to match the new parking bays.
- 1.30 The bin store location will be close to the frontage and allows for (weekly commercial) collection by refuse vehicles on Silver Street.

Environmental Effects

- 1.31 The previous premises on the site were used for industrial purposes and for equipment hire/ vehicle storage. This has involved some noise and fumes effects on nearby residents which will no longer be the case. By introducing a central courtyard the scheme allows most of the student activity to focus internally and at low level, well screened from neighbouring residents.
- 1.32 The courtyard arrangement will achieve comfortable living conditions for new student residents who will be well protected from street noise and air pollution and will enjoy adequate levels of sunlight/ daylight.

- 1.33 The scheme will include a sustainable drainage strategy and the introduction of new trees and areas of new greenspace, so as to reduce surface water flood risks and improve eco habitat compared to the former wholly hard surfaced commercial site. Trees on the street frontage will reinforce other recently planted and proposed new trees encouraging a 'boulevard' character for Silver Street. New planting within the courtyard will improve the outlook for student residents and for some neighbouring residents.

Summary

- 1.34 As explained fully in the following sections of this report and by the Design and Access Statement, the revised proposals now submitted are appropriate to the site and local context and overcome the neighbour concerns and lack of off street parking that were reasons for refusal of the previous scheme. They represent sustainable development in full accordance with national and local planning policies and will make a relevant and positive contribution to the further development and enhancement of Silver Street as part of Reading's established urban area.

2 SITE CONTEXT.

Location

- 2.1 The site is situated at the edge of Reading Town Centre on the West side of Silver Street. Adjacent land use is mostly residential, with modern flats to the North (Platinum apartments), to the South and to the West at an elevated level (Rimaud House). To the North West of the site is the end of a terrace of Victorian houses on Upper Crown Street. Commercial office buildings and residential flats are opposite the site on the East side of Silver Street.



- 2.2 The site is within walking or cycling distance of the University of Reading's main (Whiteknights) campus and is within 200m of the University's London Road site.

It is well served by frequent bus services to the main University campus using the Silver Street bus stops in close proximity to the site.

- 2.3 A full mapping of the extensive range of facilities within walking distance of the application site and analysis of the uses, streetscenes and building forms and materials forming the surrounding context is presented within the Design and Access Statement.

Previous Buildings

- 2.4 The previously existing commercial buildings comprised a) three bays of steel framed workshop structure with display and office frontage areas seen behind a tarmac forecourt fronting Silver Street, and b) a two storey Victorian building close to the street. Vehicle access into the workshop led to extensive covered vehicle maintenance and storage space within and around this building.
- 2.5 Neither the bland utilitarian designs nor the tarmac forecourt made a positive contribution to the previous streetscene:



Workshop (blue/grey) and Victorian building (yellow)

- 2.6 Both buildings have recently been demolished in accordance with demolition (prior notification) approvals which were subject to the implementation of

archaeological investigation in accordance with schemes that were agreed with Berkshire Archaeology. These investigations have been completed and do not raise any impediment to redevelopment.

Planning Applications History

- 2.7 The application site (40-68 Silver Street) was the subject of an application for 78 student studios (application ref 190449) refused in September 2019, for a number of reasons notably effects on the amenity of neighbouring properties to the North, lack of off street parking and insufficient evidence of student need. This scheme is currently the subject of an appeal to the Secretary of State which was lodged in March 2020.
- 2.8 Prior to this the majority part of the site (no. 40) was the subject of an application for 62 student rooms (application ref 172118) which was refused in February 2018. This was the subject of appeal (ref APP/E0345/W/18/3199747) dismissed in October 2018. The principle of student housing use was accepted but the scheme was criticised in terms of effects on the character and appearance of the area and effects on nearby residents. Concerns included the bulk and appearance of the then frontage block, constrained courtyard amenity space and overlooking/ shadowing effects for neighbours to the North.
- 2.9 This part of the site had a previous planning consent granted in March 2016 (ref 150885) for the development of 14 residential flats (a mix of 2 and 1 bedroom units) with 14 parking spaces to the rear. This approval followed the refusal or withdrawal of earlier applications which proved unacceptable for reasons of layout or design.
- 2.10 The remainder of the current application site (Nos. 62-68) was the subject of a planning application (submitted in 2017 by previous owners) to rebuild the existing structure to 4 stories in height and convert to 6 residential apartments. This application was not determined and was withdrawn. Prior to this there was approval in September 2012 for conversion of the existing building (as extended) to 16 student flats. This was not implemented and has now expired.

- 2.11 Prior to the recent redevelopment proposals there was a history of applications relating to uses of and adjustments to the existing industrial/commercial buildings. The most recent of these for no.40 granted in August 2006 permitted a change of use from a tool hire business to light industrial use.
- 2.12 The wider site vicinity has been the subject of a number of recent planning approvals, many of which have been implemented. There is a particular focus of new housing and student housing developments around the application site including;
- 61 new build student flats at 79 Silver Street approved October 2017 (under construction)
 - 119 new build flats at 1-3 Silver Street/ London Road approved 2001 (implemented)
 - 21 new build flats (Platinum Apartments) at 32 Silver Street approved on appeal 2001 (implemented)
 - 6 storey new build student flats at 132-134 London Street/ Crown Street approved May 2007 (implemented)
 - 84 assisted living units at 20-22 Silver Street-updated scheme submitted May 2016 to supersede earlier approval for 86 units but withdrawn February 2017.
- 2.13 From the recent planning history it is clear that Silver Street has an established recent history of redevelopment and changes of use to achieve a range of new housing types (including student housing) mostly replacing older industrial and commercial use properties.
- 2.14 It should be noted that the proposal will have a close relationship to the recent approval granted at 79 Silver Street. The promoters of both projects are appointing a single student housing operator who would manage the two sites in a closely co-ordinated manner with sharing of management, maintenance, security and student support functions.

Environmental Considerations

Statutory Environmental Assessment

- 2.15 The proposal does not include any of the specific uses for which a Statutory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required, nor does it exceed the area

threshold above which the question of whether EIA is appropriate has to be formally considered by applicant and planning authority.

Air Quality

- 2.16 The site falls within a designated Air Quality Management Area (extending along the main radial routes from the Town Centre including London Road and Silver Street) within which special attention is focused on reducing levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulates (PM₁₀) both primarily related to traffic emissions. Recent monitoring within the AQMA (including continuous automatic monitoring on London Road) indicates that conditions are currently being maintained at acceptably low levels of pollution.
- 2.17 The nature of the proposed development is such that it will provide living accommodation for students within very easy walking and/or cycling distance of a wide range of University and Town Centre facilities.
- 2.18 The scheme will not provide parking on site. Students will be required (by terms of lease) not to bring a car and not to apply for a residential parking permit in the vicinity. Sustainable development of this 'no-car' type which reduces the need for vehicular travel and removes the parking spaces/commuter and visitor travel related to previous office, workshop and retail use will contribute positively to Air Quality Management.
- 2.19 Emissions from the modern heating, cooling and ventilation systems within the proposed building will be minimised by good thermal insulation and use of high efficiency boilers, and are expected to be less overall than from the previous buildings/ previously authorised uses at the site which have included high levels of vehicle access associated with hire services and some light industrial activity generating related emissions.
- 2.20 From an air quality perspective the principal issue in this case will not be the external effects of the scheme on its surroundings but rather the conditions experienced by new student residents, especially in respect of those rooms fronting onto Silver Street where the effects on air quality of traffic emissions are of greatest significance.

- 2.21 Silver Street carries moderate levels of two way (single carriageway) traffic including buses. It is fronted by existing residential property including homes adjacent to the application site and modern residential development opposite.
- 2.22 The proposed design provides for the majority of the new student accommodation to focus around a courtyard area set back into the site and well screened from Silver Street by the proposed frontage building. The majority of the development is protected from the effects of traffic on Silver Street and no special requirements in respect of controlled ventilation are considered likely to be necessary.
- 2.23 An air quality assessment for the application site has been carried out and is provided in support of this application. It indicates that student homes can be provided here without the need for any unusually onerous mitigation measures. In these circumstances conditions for future student residents within the building are expected to be acceptable in terms of acknowledged standards, subject to the appropriate detailed design of ventilation/ air handling specification.

Noise

- 2.24 The development is not expected to generate any significant external noise impacts of itself. The principal areas of communal student activity are located within and around the basement level central courtyard which will be well screened from neighbours or passers by.
- 2.25 The main external source of noise affecting the development site is traffic on Silver Street. There are no other significant sources of noise from neighbouring (office and residential) properties. The main issue in respect of noise will be to consider whether new residents will have an acceptable noise environment. The layout of the scheme with its courtyard focus is such that most new student residents will be well screened from traffic noise on Silver Street. Only a limited number of studio rooms will front onto the street, and for these high specification double glazing can ensure that internal noise levels within the studio rooms will readily achieve the relevant World Health Organisation guidelines.

Natural Environment and Ecology

- 2.26 The application site is not within any statutorily or locally designated area of interest for nature conservation, landscape or special scientific interest.

Trees

- 2.27 The site itself does not have any trees or significant other planting, having been wholly covered by buildings and areas of hardstanding. There are trees outside and partially screening the site boundaries notably to the North and West. Some of these partially overhang the site. All these trees will be retained and some additional trees and shrubs will be added within the site boundaries.
- 2.28 The main effects of the scheme will be that new trees proposed on the East (street) frontage will provide some 'greening' of the street frontage of the site. Additional tree and shrub planting within the site will also reinforce the 'greening' of the site.

Ecology

- 2.29 The application site has been wholly occupied by buildings and associated tarmacadam parking areas. In these circumstances it is evident that the site does not currently offer any significant existing eco habitat.
- 2.30 In 'scoping' consultation with planning officers it was agreed that a full ecology survey of the site is not necessary in this case and that attention should focus on the development of eco enhancement measures as part of the new proposals. As detailed in the landscaping strategy and details this can include tree planting, planting within proposed courtyard and boundary landscaped areas, and also the provision of Hirundine boxes to encourage swifts and house martins.

Ground Conditions

- 2.31 As detailed by the heritage section of this supporting statement the application site was outside the mediaeval town and the known line of Reading's Civil War defences. It was probably first developed in the early Victorian period prior to redevelopment to construct the current buildings which date from the latter part

of the 20th Century. There is no apparent evidence of any early industrial activity on the site prior to the current buildings but the general vicinity does have industrial uses so this possibility cannot be discounted. In any case the use of parts of the site by vehicles is likely to have introduced some localised areas of ground contamination.

- 2.32 A full/ intrusive ground conditions survey was carried out after implementation of demolition works and all relevant recommendations arising will be implemented. From the experience of recent redevelopment in the general vicinity no particular contamination, ground bearing or water source contamination issues are expected at this stage such as to preclude the principle of site redevelopment.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.33 The site is within the lowest flood risk Zone 1 as designated by the Environment Agency, and is not of such a size as to otherwise require the submission of a formal Flood Risk Assessment. In Zone 1 locations all applicants are encouraged to include sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) arrangements to manage surface water run off but no other flood assessment, flood prevention or flood mitigation measures are usually necessary.
- 2.34 The scheme will replace some areas currently covered by tarmac or buildings with permeable surfaces within the new courtyard and landscaped areas to reduce surface water run off from the site as described by the drainage strategy and indicative drainage layout design for the site submitted with this application.
- 2.35 The proposals include the construction of a basement (courtyard) level. The drainage strategy for the site will ensure that the drainage provisions in respect of this are robust in ensuring protection of the rooms around the courtyard from the highest potential levels of groundwater and from extreme storm (surface water) conditions.

Neighbour Amenity

- 2.36 There are residential neighbours to North, West and South, so careful attention has been given to ensure that neighbours will not suffer significant loss of

privacy, increased overlooking or loss of sunlight/ daylight. The revised scheme now submitted increases the distance between the proposed buildings and the Platinum Apartments to the North so that effects in terms of shadowing are significantly reduced compared to the previously refused scheme.

Pre-Existing Situation

- 2.37 The previous commercial buildings presented an industrial face toward neighbouring residential property all around the site. The larger shed building with its high single storey steel portal frame was equivalent in terms of ridge height to many two storey residential buildings. The neighbouring flats to the West (which are on higher ground) had a previous outlook dominated by large areas of commercial roof.
- 2.38 Most windows on the Platinum Apartments to the North of the application site face East or West rather than across the application site but a limited number of secondary windows on the gable end do overlook the site.
- 2.39 An end terraced house on Upper Crown Street and its associated small rear garden adjoin the North of the application site. This house has its main windows oriented facing East and West but does have a number of secondary windows facing the site.
- 2.40 Other existing properties to the South and South East of the site also have some windows which overlook the site.

Design Response

- 2.41 The scheme responds to protect neighbour amenities in this complex local context by adopting a number of key layout principles to mitigate effects on neighbours:
- Most student rooms face into a central courtyard where external activity within the site is concentrated.
 - The new building avoids any windows facing directly out towards existing neighbours to the North, South or West hence minimising any potential overlooking.

- The scheme is now set further away from the North site boundary so as to reduce the effects of shadowing and loss of daylight/ sunlight on the Platinum Apartments. In these respects the scheme is closely comparable to (and indeed a slight improvement from) the effects of the 2016 approval for residential development of the application site.
- The only windows facing West toward Rimaud House are obscure glazed corridor windows avoiding overlooking.
- The height of the new building as seen from Rimaud House is low and will cause no significant effects in terms of loss of daylight or sunlight.
- The overall scale and intensity of the scheme has now been reduced from 78 to 71 rooms. It will fit in with and not dominate its surroundings visually.
- High quality traditional materials and new landscaping will enhance the outlook across the site for most neighbours in comparison to the pre-existing industrial buildings.



Increased spacing now proposed from Platinum Apartments

Shadowing Effects

- 2.42 A detailed shadow analysis is provided within the Design and Access Statement. This illustrates that the effects in terms of shadows cast by the scheme will not

be unreasonable. The height of the proposed buildings and the set back from the North site boundary are such as to limit and loss of sunlight and daylight. The shadowing effects of the revised scheme are demonstrably less than for the previous refused scheme.

Daylight/ Sunlight

- 2.43 A full assessment of the effects of the previous refused scheme in terms of daylight and sunlight at the closest residential neighbouring properties was carried out by Delva Patman Redler (Chartered Surveyors). This assessment was based from an accurate 3d Z-Mapping model of the site and neighbouring buildings and tabulated the effects on every individual window of the neighbouring properties. The assessment covered all 3 common methods of assessment and concluded that the previous scheme did not raise undue concerns (in relation to national guidance) in terms of daylight or sunlight effects.
- 2.44 The assessment confirmed that there will be no significant loss of daylight or sunlight arising for the Rimaud apartments which have principal rooms looking directly at the site. The assessment did note some moderate reduction in light for 3 of the lowest gable end windows on the Platinum Apartments. However the primary windows for these rooms face Silver Street and enjoy good light levels so the rooms involved still enjoy good overall levels of light for an urban context and the noted effects on secondary side windows could reasonably be discounted in planning terms.
- 2.45 Similarly the assessment did note effects of the scheme on one ground floor side window on the adjacent end terraced house at 69 Upper Crown Street. This house does however still enjoy reasonable overall levels of lighting to its ground floor from larger windows facing to front and rear, and from other side windows to the open plan living space.
- 2.46 The revised scheme now submitted has a further reduced bulk and allows more distance between the main frontage block and Platinum Apartments.. Further assessment of the revised scheme and comparison to the previous one now shows a significant improvement on an outcome that was previously demonstrated to meet national guidance standards. Reduced shadowing now

demonstrated within the Design and Access Statement is also indicative of the degree of improvement in terms of daylight/ sunlight effects.

Outlook from Neighbouring Properties

- 2.47 The relationships of the proposed scheme to adjacent properties are fully explained and illustrated within the Design and Access Statement which includes illustrations of the scheme as it will appear from relevant neighbour viewpoints and comparisons of the effects of the revised scheme compared to the effects of the previously approved 2016 residential scheme and the effects of the pre-existing commercial buildings. The effects on outlook from surrounding properties is significantly improved as a result of the scheme reductions/ design amendments, notably less dominant in views from neighbours to the North.

Existing



Previously Approved



Proposed

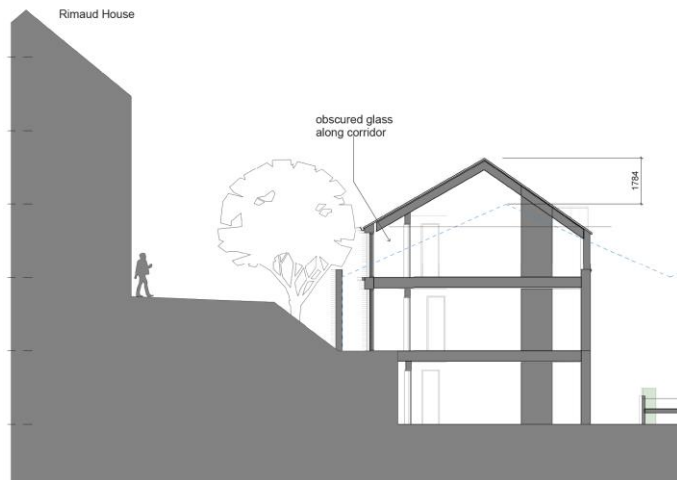


Views comparison from Platinum Apts car park

- 2.48 Although the scheme will be higher than the pre-existing commercial buildings it will present better quality brick buildings with an increase in landscaping so as to improve the outlook across and appearance of the site compared to the pre-existing commercial properties.



Scheme in context of neighbouring properties-view from South



Section showing relationship of rear block to Rimaud House (to L)

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in 2018/
- 3.2 The NPPF has since 2012 represented a distillation rather than significant alteration of most previous guidance with additional emphasis on neighbourhood planning and housing delivery following the provisions of recent Localism, Housing and Planning Acts.
- 3.3 The government is updating relevant sections of the online National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which has been published from March 2014. This replaced the majority of previous supporting planning technical guidance which has now been withdrawn.
- 3.4 Prior to the NPPF it was not always easy to discern the balances to be struck as between the many issues covered by planning advice produced at different dates and with differing emphasis. The NPPF document provides more focus. Although the central concept of 'sustainable development' is repeated from previous guidance it is adjusted to emphasise delivering growth and positive economic, social and environmental change.
- 3.5 NPPF guidance relevant in this case includes;
Paras 7-14 Achieving Sustainable Development-Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development clarify the role of planning to help achieve a strong, responsive and competitive economy, strong, vibrant and healthy communities providing housing and a high quality built environment with accessible local services, and to protect and enhance natural, built and historic environment and biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy. The NPPF asserts a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It encourages planning authorities to "plan positively" and to act by "approving proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay"

Paras 38-58 Decision-Making state that "Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.....work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the areaand....Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.""

Paras 59-79 Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes require plans to support the Government's objective of "significantly boosting the supply of homes" informed by a local housing needs assessment. Within this context "the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes" Para 68 notes the importance of small and medium sized sites which "can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly". To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should take actions including "Support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions-giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes."

Paras 80-84 Building a Strong, Competitive Economy require that "planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development" They should "set out a clear local economic vision and strategy"; "set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment"; "seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment", and "be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances".

Paras 85-90 Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres urge planning policies and decisions to support the role that town centres at the heart of local communities

by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. locations before other locations could be considered appropriate in terms of a 'sequential test'.

Paras 91-101 Promoting Healthy Communities encourage healthy, inclusive and safe places, which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles, including encouraging walking and cycling. They should also "give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools"...

Paras 102-111 Promoting Sustainable Transport requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making. "Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of travel modes", and "support an appropriate mix of uses across an area.....to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities"

Paras 117-123 Making Effective Use of Land requires "an 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". Policies and decisions should (amongst other actions) "give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land" and "support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and forms of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene...". This section of the NPPF goes on to press for higher density in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport: "standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate" and "local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework in this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making

efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)".

Paras 124-132 Achieving Well-Designed Places include the guidance 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." Developments should "function well and add to the overall quality of the area...", be "visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping", be "sympathetic to local character and history....whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)". "establish or maintain a strong sense of place" ..optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development".....and "create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users". Para 130 states that "permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.....but also states that "Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision taker as a valid reason to object to development.". Para 131 requires that "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."

Paras 184-202 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment requires local plans to set out "a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of heritage assets". Planning applicants should "describe the significance of any heritage assets affected..." and "The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance". As well as considering "the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets" planning authorities should also take account of "the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness".

Assessment of the proposals in respect of the National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.4 *The overall thrust of the NPPF encourages positive change and 'sustainable development'. The 2018/19 update gives extra impetus to encourage making more effective use of land in urban areas with higher density new developments.*
- 3.5 *40-68 Silver Street is previously developed land within an urban area forming part of Reading. It is within easy walking distance of University and town centre activity and well served by public transport. The provision of new student accommodation in such a location will support town centre and university facilities relevant to economic progress and to social and environmental sustainability.*
- 3.6 *The NPPF requires planning authorities to give "great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools", adding a further presumption in support of the development proposed in the case of this application which will support the further development of the University of Reading. It also requires planning authorities to plan for the needs of different groups within the community including students-in this case specialist housing for students is proposed in a particularly relevant location.*
- 3.7 *The proposals take full account of design, heritage and environmental considerations as required by the NPPF. They will provide a new building which will make appropriately intense use of a highly accessible location and will significantly enhance its surroundings when compared to the existing unsatisfactory site appearance. The proposals give due attention to those particular issues of local context that will require appropriate attention including local character and amenity considerations.*

Statutory Development Plan

- 3.8 The adopted statutory development plan for Reading comprises the recently adopted Reading Local Plan (adopted November 2019). This supersedes the previous Core Strategy (2008 with alteration adopted 2015) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).

- 3.9 The Local Plan sets out the strategy and detailed allocations for development in the Borough until 2036. It sets a vision for significant and sustainable growth, to develop the role of Reading as a significant growth point within its sub-region.

- 3.10 Borough-wide Local Plan cross-cutting (CC) policies relevant to this planning application include;

Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) reinforces the NPPF and confirms a positive approach to planning, with planning applications that accord with the development plan being approved without delay unless material circumstances indicate otherwise;

Policy CC2 (Sustainable Construction and Design). This states that new development will be acceptable where design of buildings and layouts uses energy, water, minerals, materials and natural resources appropriately efficiently and with care and takes account of climate change. It sets expectations of BREEAM 'Excellent' for major non-residential developments, for water conservation, for grey water recycling and for rainwater harvesting.

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires building orientation to allow for natural heating and ventilation and design to consider solar gain/ shading and thermal mass, tree and other planting and reduced levels of surface water run-off

Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) requires consideration of decentralised energy for major developments.

Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage) requires developments to demonstrate how waste will be minimised and managed in construction and use of buildings;

Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development) requires the scale and density of development to be related to a location's accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires high design quality that maintains or enhances character and appearance of its locality, and achieves

urban design objectives of character, continuity and enclosure, quality of public realm and green infrastructure, ease of movement and permeability, legibility, adaptability and diversity;

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to avoid detrimental living environments for existing and new residents in terms of avoiding undue overlooking/ loss of privacy, loss of sunlight/ daylight, visual dominance, harm to outlook, noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, vibration, dust, fumes/smell, crime or (for developments over 8 storeys) wind.

Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) requires development to contribute (when necessary) to infrastructure needs and impacts arising from it.

3.11 Environment (EN) policies of relevance include;

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) encourages new development to include additional tree planting, particularly on street frontages and to enhance character and biodiversity

Policy EN15 (Air Quality) requires attention to air quality effects (including mitigation where necessary) when considering 'sensitive uses' (including residential) within the air quality management area.

Policy EN16 requires attention to ensure that any contaminated land is suitably remediated.

Policy EN17 sets a standard of low impact for any noise-generating equipment.

Policy EN18 requires major development to include Sustainable Drainage Systems.

3.12 Employment Policy EM3 generally protects employment uses from change but allows for circumstances where change can be acceptable including where such uses are no longer viable, affect a residential area, or where the need for other uses is stronger than the need to retain a commercial use.

3.13 Housing Policies of relevance include;

Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) targets 15,847 new homes (averaging 689 per annum) for Reading between 2013 and 2036, an increase of over 30% from the previous plan target annual rate for 2016-2026.

Policy H2 (Density and Mix) encourages response to local context with a preference for higher density development in the most accessible locations.

Policy H12 (Student Accommodation) states that;

New student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation.

There will be a presumption against proposals for new student accommodation on other sites unless it can be clearly demonstrated how the proposal meets a need that cannot be met on the above sites.

3.14 Relevant Transport (TR) policies include;

Policy TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) urges development to emphasise and support sustainable travel modes of walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) requires development to avoid or mitigate effects on the functioning or safety of the transport network.

Policy TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) requires car and cycle parking appropriate to the location. It references the 2011 supplementary planning document (detailed standards for specified zones).

3.15 The Local Plan sets a more detailed (and in some cases site specific) vision for Reading, dividing the Borough into sub-areas for these purposes. The application site is within East Reading as so defined, close to the boundary with Central Reading. East Reading includes the University of Reading and the plan includes a specific policy ER2 guiding development of the min Whiteknights Campus.

3.16 The application site is not identified for any particular development allocation by the plan. The student housing at 79 Silver Street is noted as a previously approved scheme.

Overall assessment in respect of Compliance with Development Plan

- 3.17 *The proposal is an extension of an existing student hall and will provide accommodation to meet needs for student accommodation that cannot otherwise be met within or immediately adjoining the London Road Campus particularly. As such the proposal complies with the requirements of policy H12 in respect of student accommodation.*
- 3.18 *The proposal does not conflict with any allocations or proposals scheduled by the Development Plan. It fully reflects principles for sustainable development (CC1) and will make full use of a highly sustainable previously developed site thus contributing to the overall vision for the growth of Reading. The provision of student accommodation will provide a consequential benefit in terms of meeting overall housing needs (H1) by absorbing some of the pressure of student housing demand that would otherwise compete for mainstream housing accommodation.*
- 3.19 *As detailed elsewhere in this Planning Statement and by the Design and Access Statement the proposals take full account of the relevant development management policies. They respond to a full analysis of the local physical and social context (CC7). The proposed density and scale of development as now amended is appropriate to the location (CC6, H2), and relevant to help meet needs for more purpose built student housing supporting the further development of the University's contribution to growth and social progress, whilst taking full account of local environmental considerations..*
- 3.20 *The proposals are of high design quality (CC7), and have been carefully considered in terms of the quality of living conditions provided for new residents and maintaining amenity for existing neighbours (CC8), as fully explained within paras 2.36-2.47 of this statement. They take full account of achieving BREEAM 'excellent' sustainable design (CC2) and make appropriate provision for sustainable modes and disabled access (T2). They will retain and protect existing trees and include additional tree planting (EN14).*

4 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Overview

- 4.1 National planning policies require careful attention to be given to the protection and enhancement of 'heritage assets'. NPPF Para 189 states that;

"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require a applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary..."

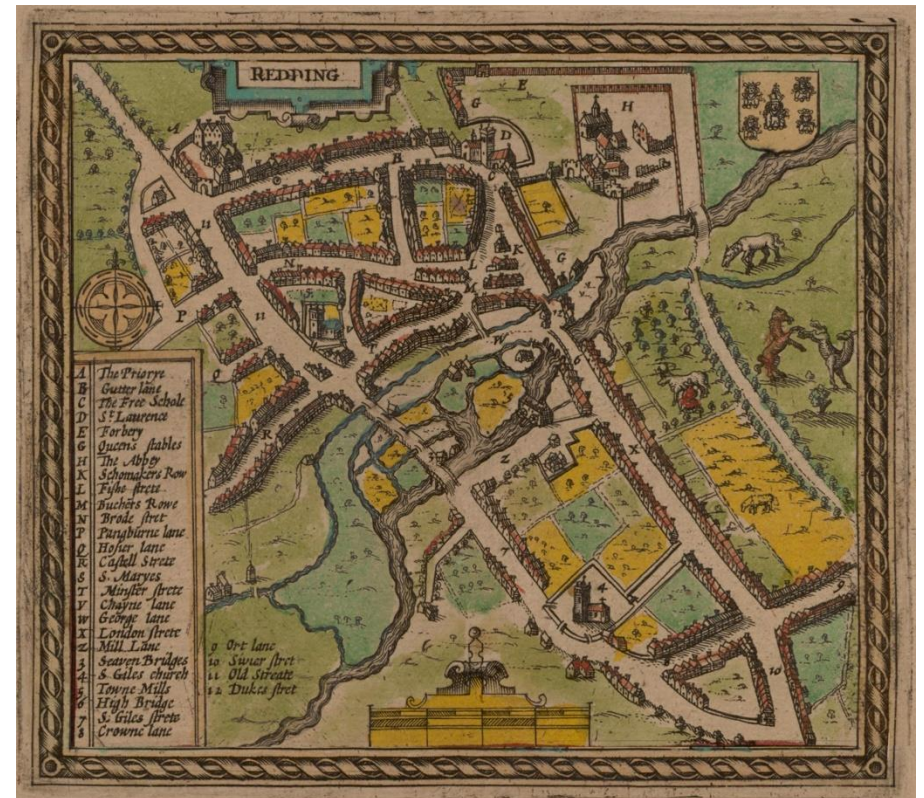
- 4.2 In this case reference has been made to the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. The application site does not include any statutorily designated heritage assets (ie it does not include any designated ancient monuments or listed buildings nor is it within a conservation area).
- 4.3 The nearest listed building is at 30 Silver Street. This is on the West side of the street and at some distance from the application site, although for the avoidance of any doubt effects of the scheme on the setting of this building are considered by this assessment.
- 4.4 The Kendrick Road Conservation Area is within the general vicinity of the site to the East. The application site is not of any significance in terms of the setting of the conservation area and the development will have no effects on this setting.

Site History General Summary

- 4.5 Reading may have existing in the Roman period as a trading point on the Thames but firm evidence of the town dates back to Saxon records of a battle (against Danish invaders) at the town in 871 AD.

- 4.6 The 1086 Domesday Book records 6 mills owned by the King and by Battle Abbey, and Reading Abbey was founded by Henry 1 in 1121.

- 4.7 By 1525 Reading was the largest town in Berkshire and the 10th largest in England (based on tax returns). The Abbey was largely destroyed by Henry VIII in 1538 who also granted a new charter allowing burgesses to elect a mayor in 1542. By 1611 the town had a population of over 5000 and was known as a rich centre of cloth trading. The town was significantly affected by battles and a siege during the Civil War. During this time a defensive wall was in place for the town (destroyed in 1644). Evidence of the location of this was confirmed by an archaeological excavation North of the application site at 32-38 Silver Street (HER reference RD15704) placing the application site approx. 50m outside the town wall at this time.



1611 map of Reading

- 4.8 Industry in Reading in the 18th Century included significant ironworks and breweries, and the town retained significant roles as a market and as a coaching stop on the turnpike roads. By 1801 the population was about 9,400. Opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810 allowed barges from the town through to the Bristol Channel, and the Great Western Railway in 1841 was the first of three railway companies serving the town by 1856. The town expanding rapidly to a population of 59,000 by 1900 with extensive areas of terraced housing constructed.



Ordnance Survey Map of Reading in 1830

- 4.9 Infrastructure improvements made in the 19th Century including sewer, water and gas supplies, market, hospital and swimming baths and Reading became a borough in 1835.
- 4.10 Further rapid expansion of the town continued throughout the 20th Century, notably southward as far as the new M4 motorway. In 1999 the Oracle Shopping Centre opened, symbolic of a new focus on regeneration of the Town Centre after a period of mostly out of centre office and retail developments.
- 4.11 The application site is not within the area of the mediaeval town, and appears to have been first developed during the Victorian period. It is not within an area

of any particular archaeological interest in respect of potential earlier settlement remains.

- 4.12 The site vicinity includes some surviving late Victorian buildings notably the Rising Sun closer to the Town Centre (see below) and terraced housing on Mount Pleasant 50m to the South of the application site.
- 4.13 The commercial buildings that recently occupied the application site were of a utilitarian style with no particular importance to their local context and could not be regarded as heritage assets of any significance.

Effects on Listed Buildings

- 4.14 The former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern (now a local arts centre) is listed at Grade II. This building is approximately 60m N of the application site on the same side of Silver Street.



Rising Sun Building 30 Silver Street

4.15 The Historic England listing record for this building is as follows;

*READING SILVER STREET SU 7172 NE (west side)
Number 30 (former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern) II*

Former temperance tavern. Dated 1877. For St Giles Parish Council. Grey brick in English bond with red brick quoins, arches, bands, and decorative features; ashlar plinth band, sills, lintels, and bands (clasping rainwater pipes).

Rear of red brick. Plain tile roof with crested ridge tiles. Brick stacks at left end and to ridge of rear wing. 2 storeys with attic, 4 bays; wing to rear right of 2 storeys, 2 bays. Windows, other than to ground floor at front, have wooden

mullions and transoms, stone sills and lintels, and brick relieving arches; those of left return and rear have leaded upper lights with coloured glass. Entrance front; chamfered plinth. Step up to entrance, on right, which has door of 9 raised and fielded panels, overlight, and hollow moulded surround. Entrance and ground-floor windows all segmental arched below continuous hoodmould, the windows with vertical glazing bars (lower parts boarded up). Projecting

double-sided metal tavern sign, some letters missing. 3-light windows to 1st floor, with decorative brickwork to tympana. Brick modillions to eaves. 2-light attic windows rising through eaves, those at centre paired in dated, pilastered, gable with stepped, logged, eaves; outer windows below finialled hipped roofs. Left return; 2 bays. 2-light windows except for 1-light attic windows which flank corbelled external stack. Corbelled attic pilasters support stepped, logged, eaves. Rear; two 1st-floor windows (of 2 and 3 lights); 1 attic window. Wing return has door of left of paired 1-light windows, and 3-light windows over. Interior; not inspected, but reported to retain original stair, fireplaces, and some ceiling cornices.

Listing NGR: SU7190572801

- 4.16 This building is primarily of interest as a significant example of a Victorian public building type. The heritage asset of primary interest is the building itself and this interest is not particularly dependent on or enhanced by the surrounding (including modern residential and commercial) buildings on Silver Street.
- 4.17 Other buildings around and opposite provide an immediate setting for the listed building that includes modern apartment buildings. The application site can only just be glimpsed in long street views as part of the background context for the listed building.
- 4.18 On Silver Street the proposed new building will present a positive addition to the modern setting of the listed building. The frontage as proposed will help to restore a coherent streetscene on Silver Street. In these respects the proposals will achieve a very slight enhancement of the setting of the listed building.

Kendrick Road Conservation Area

- 4.19 The Kendrick Road Conservation Area is within 100m to the East of the site. It features a number of historic buildings characteristic of the 18th Century, 19th Century and 20th Century (interwar University Buildings).
- 4.20 Statutorily listed buildings within the area are mainly concentrated along London Road. On Kendrick Road itself there are a number of late Victorian and Edwardian houses, many of which are 'locally listed' as of townscape merit in contributing to a characteristic streetscene that gives the Conservation Area its name.

Effects on the Conservation Area

- 4.21 The application proposals will have no direct effect on the Conservation Area



Application site (marked red) in relation to listed building and Conservation area

Effects on the setting of the Conservation Area

- 4.22 The application site is separated from the Conservation Area by substantial buildings on the East side of Silver Street and will not be visible from it. As such the application site does not form part of the setting of the Conservation Area and the proposed development will not affect the setting of the Conservation Area.

Strategic

- 5.1 The proposals for 40-68 Silver Street will exemplify sustainable development as described by the National Planning Policy Framework and by Reading's Local Planning Policies for a number of reasons including;
- Locating new investment appropriately using previously developed land within an established urban area
 - More intensive and efficient use of urban land making use of existing infrastructure.
 - Sustaining the significant educational, social, cultural and economic roles of Reading Town Centre.
 - Locating new development where it is highly accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport and where there will be minimal need for vehicular traffic.
 - Adding an element of visual identity and design quality to a prominent streetscene experienced by a large number of citizens.
 - Enhancing air quality, drainage and eco conditions.

Building

Fabric and Passive Design

- 5.2 The new building is targeted to achieve high standards of thermal and energy efficiency. The principles to be adopted are summarised within the Design and Access document and will be detailed through the detailed design and implementation stages. A BREEAM pre-assessment is also submitted demonstrating the that the scheme is on target to achieve an 'Excellent' rating.
- 5.3 The structure will be mostly be naturally ventilated with high thermal insulation standards. A number of low energy and passive strategies are adopted in order to reduce demands for heating and mechanical ventilation and air conditioning systems. These include:
- Avoiding undue solar gain/ cooling needs by solar control on windows.
 - Minimising electrical demand by achieving good daylight to all studio rooms
 - Enhanced glazing specification with good U-value (insulation) and G-value (solar absorption) performance

- High standards of air tightness for heated areas

Mechanical & Electrical Systems

- 5.4 Energy efficiency measures proposed for the building include the following:
- Using low energy lighting and efficient lighting controls;
 - Centralised community heating system
 - Providing heat recovery on mechanical ventilation systems
 - A Building Management System to reduce energy wastage (including shutting off heating/ lighting to unoccupied rooms) and to monitor building service performance to highlight problems should they occur

Water Saving and Ecology

- 5.5 Measures on and around the building that will minimise water use and achieve some habitat enhancement include:
- Attenuation of surface water run-off by use of underground water storage capacity.
 - New soft landscaping areas.
 - Water saving sanitary ware in toilets.

Materials Use, Recycling and Waste Management

- 5.6 Measures to reduce the impact of materials used in the building and to reduce water and ensure recycling include:
- Proportion of use of sustainable timber, recycled and other materials appropriate to sustainability
 - Waste management plans for construction and use of the building

6 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 Pre-application consultations with officers of Reading Borough Council in respect of the previous scheme took place during 2018 and 2019 and were also informed by the earlier dialogue in respect of earlier proposals for a smaller site and by the previous consideration of the scheme for 79 Silver Street which is almost directly opposite.
- 6.2 Preliminary advice received on the previous scheme was supportive in principle of the use of the site for student housing and focused primarily on the layout, scale and form of development. The arrangements proposed (including two blocks around a low level courtyard) were resisted for reasons of potential effects on neighbouring properties and concern that the internal environment within the proposed courtyard may feel too cramped for student residents.
- 6.3 These concerns were partially addressed by a number of refinements made to the scheme as first submitted in 2019 but the subsequent refusal of that scheme has focused the current attention to see if agreement can be achieved on a reduced scheme which has greater separation from neighbours, improved courtyard width, reduction of bulk and introduction of on-site car parking spaces.
- 6.4 Neighbours have been consulted on the previous application for the site. Further response to the concerns from residents to the North of the site has been a significant driver for the revised scheme, increasing space between the new building and Platinum Apartments as now proposed.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed student housing development at 40-68 Silver Street will be an extension of the student hall at 79 Silver Street. It represents positive investment in accommodation that will complement and support University of Reading and Reading Town Centre activity. It will be particularly relevant to meet the growing need for student accommodation arising in close proximity to the London Road campus (as demonstrated by the Knight Frank report), reducing pressures for student use of existing residential property in this vicinity..
- 7.2 The revised design for the building has been carefully reconsidered to step away from the North site boundary so as to reduce effects on neighbour amenity. It will provide 71 high quality studio rooms providing convenient and attractive student accommodation specifically targeted to meet significant and increasing needs for upper years and postgraduate student accommodation located in the heart of the urban area with good access to the University of Reading
- 7.3 The new building will be of high architectural quality. It will provide a positive enhancement of the street environment of Silver Street with a building that restores a frontage building line and with street trees adding to a 'boulevard' character for this busy Town Centre street. .
- 7.4 The proposals clearly represent 'sustainable development' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework, and particularly exemplify making effective use of land as required by the NPPF..
- 7.5 The new building is designed to achieve high standards of sustainability in terms of its specification and management.
- 7.6 The proposals are in full accordance with Reading's adopted planning and development management policies. They will enhance the area and will replace previous inappropriate industrial and commercial uses surrounded by residential property with new buildings and landscaping that will improve the street and the outlook from many neighbouring properties.

- 7.7 Full consideration has been given to heritage considerations (nearby listed building) and to achieving new trees on the street frontage. The scheme has given full consideration to mitigate aspects of the local urban environmental context so that new and existing residents will have a suitable residential environment within new and existing buildings, and within new courtyard and surrounding neighbour amenity areas.
- 7.8 Students at the site will be subject to 'no car' leases and the site will be managed (in combination with no 79 opposite) as highest quality student accommodation.
- 7.9 The applicants are willing to enter into relevant planning legal agreements to guarantee that occupation will be limited to students and to engage with local training and recruitment processes.
- 7.10 This is a carefully considered proposal which represents highly sustainable development and offers a further step forward in the development and improvement of Reading's Town Centre and surroundings. It is appropriate to grant planning consent accordingly.

GW Planning June 2020

