



10 Holmes Road, Reading, RG6 7BH

Proposed two storey side extension and creation of a new end-of-terrace dwelling

Planning Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1. Preface

This design statement has been prepared in support of a Full application for the proposed two storey side extension and creation of a new end-of-terrace dwelling at 10 Holmes Road in Reading.

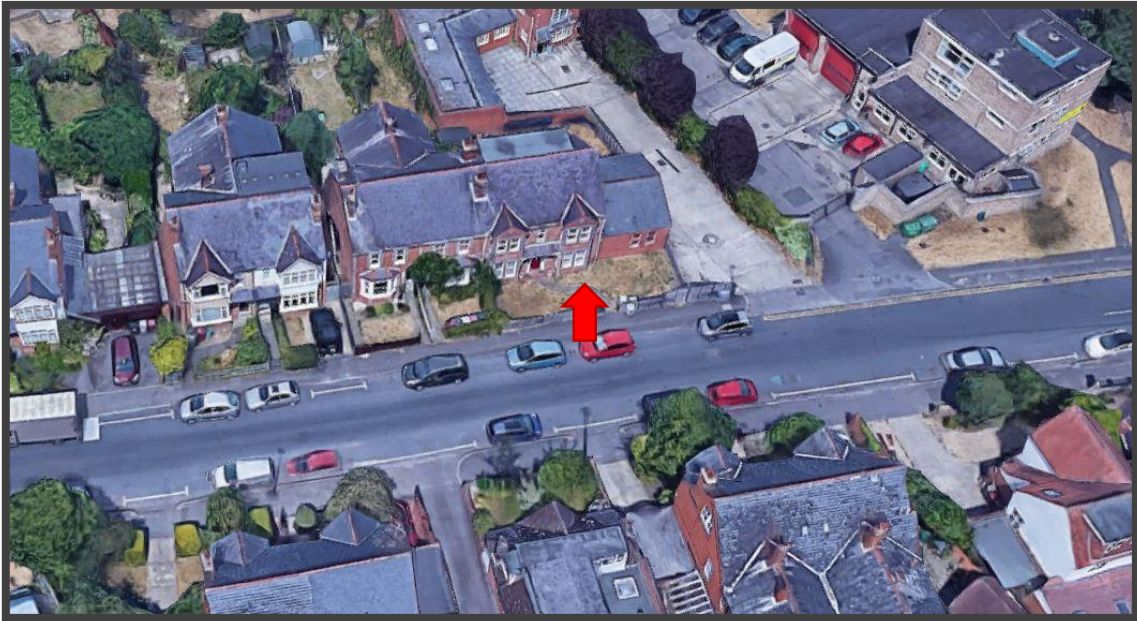
The following statement covers the subject and information required for submission as set National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Reading Borough Local Plan documents. This document will outline the application site history and the design strategy for the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

1.2. Site Location



1. Aerial photograph





2. Bird's eye photograph (front)



3. Bird's eye photograph (rear)

1.3. Site Description

The application site is located on the northern side of Holmes Road, on the corner plot. The application site is about 2.5km to the east from the Reading Town Centre. The application site is located within a group of numerous, distinctive in terms of their character and cohesive with their scale terraced

buildings. In itself only the original part of the dwelling no. 10 Holmes Road appears in keeping with the streetscene, however it includes a single storey dual pitched storage. This single storey element is unsympathetic and out of character, due to its different height, scale, fenestration details or architectural features.

The site is occupied by a two storey building, which is currently used as a HMO. The host building comprises significant outside amenity space with insignificant landscaping, in total around 90.0m² surrounded with a high brickwall in the back and partially close-boarded fence. The entire area of the application property is circa 297.0m², where the host building covers approximately 125.0m² footprint. The property benefits from off-street parking to the front and parking space to the side of the building. sufficient for 2x vehicles. Given its location and considerable separation distances, the side and front elevations are clearly exposed within the streetscene, therefore it is considered highly prominent in the surrounding area.

The application property constitutes an end-of-terrace building however, unlike the adjacent properties, it includes relatively intrusive side extension, forming a storage space. Due to contrasting and unsympathetic design and atypical scale, it appears out of keeping and visually disintegrated in relation to the adjacent buildings and the host property.

1.4. Planning history

Application ref. 83/TP/0843 – Double garage extension – Approved on 13/01/1984.

1.5. Existing appearance of the application site









1.6. Surrounding Area Description

The majority of the northern side of the Holmes Road streetscene is characterised by a relatively unified type of residential development, with some examples of groups of dwellings with cohesive design features and strongly uniformed roofscape with chimneys, consistent frontages appearance. The residential properties within the Holmes Road streetscene include several characteristic architectural features such as:

- Front bay windows;
- Front gable elements;
- Cohesive height;
- Strongly unified building line;
- Soft landscaping in the enclosed front gardens.

Within the closest proximity from the application property, there are also few buildings, diverse in terms of their use, scale and design. In particular the part single part two storey mixed use building to the back of the application site and the Fire Station on the corner of Homes Road and Wokingham Road appear significantly different in relation to the residential buildings along the highway. The presentation of adjacent properties within the surrounding area, has been presented on the below photographs.

Northern side of Holmes Road







Building to the rear of the application site



Fire Station



Southern (opposite) side of Holmes Road





2. Planning Policy

2.1. NPPF

Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF (2019) emphasises that *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”* and expands that in the paragraph 8, that it *“has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive:*

- *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;*
- *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

Furthermore, a decision-making in favour of sustainable development is strengthened and its significant weight is confirmed in paragraph 38, which states that *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.*

Residential redevelopment location

Paragraph 68 of the NPPF encourages to prioritise small development sites with regards to housing land provision and it emphasises that *“Small and medium sized sites 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:*



- *identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare;*
- *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”.*

Furthermore, an effective use of land is significantly highlighted in paragraph 71, which says that development suitable for first time buyers or entry-level sites should *“be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards”*, whereas paragraph 117 encourages Local Planning Authorities to *“promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”* and *“makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land”*. Additionally, paragraph 118 says that decisions should *“promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops”*.

Housing Quality and Design

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that the *“creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”* and 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”*.

Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 126 emphasizes an important role of the design codes and guides, which should *“provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design”* and that *“their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified”*.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF comprises a list, in terms of what decisions should ensure with regards to proposed developments, inter alia:

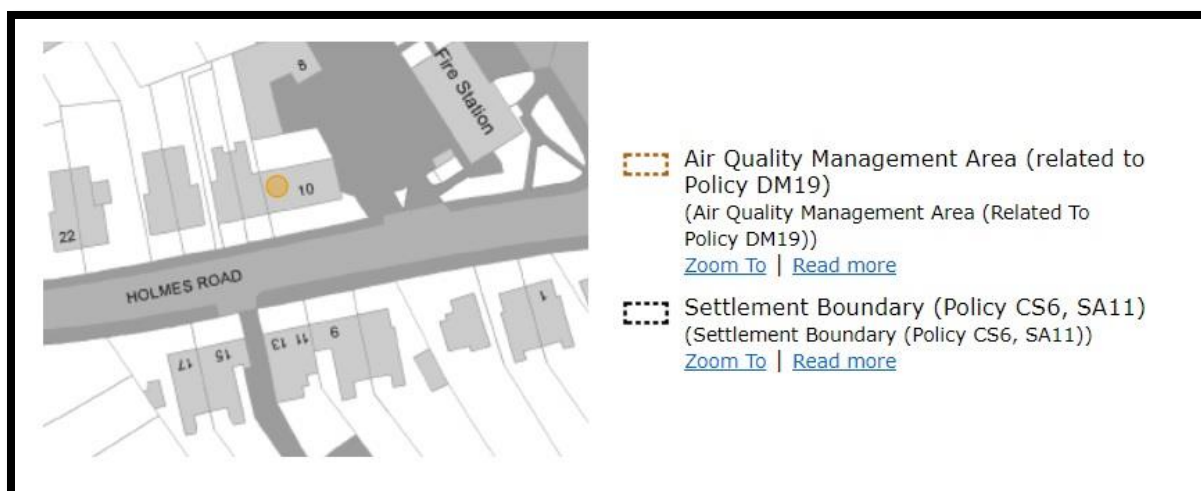
- *“function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*



- *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);*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; 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 users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

Delivering a decent level of design quality is comprised in paragraph 130 - “*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 and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents”.*

2.2. Local Development Framework (November 2019)



4. Local Plan Policies Map

Residential redevelopment location

The application property is located within the settlement limits of Reading, therefore it is considered to constitute a positive contribution towards target set out in the Local Plan Policy H1, which identified 230 dwellings shortfall.



The proposed dwelling would be accommodated within the settlement boundaries for Reading. Local Plan Policy H16 states that *“There is scope for some of Reading’s suburban residential areas to undergo renewal and regeneration that would achieve the following aims:*

- *Improve the local built environment;*
- *Improve and modernise the housing stock; and*
- *Deliver additional homes.”*

Policy H16 then continues that *“Where development would fulfil the above aims, it would generally be supported, subject to other policies in this plan and provided that:*

- *Any loss of undeveloped land would be outweighed by a qualitative improvement in open and green space and by the benefits of development to the community as a whole;*
- *Buildings and features that make a positive contribution to the area’s character are retained;*
- *There would be adequate community facilities to serve the resulting community; and*
- *There would not be an unacceptable impact on the highway network as a result of loss of parking areas or garages.”*

Effectively, due to residential character of the proposed development in the current application, Local Plan confirms a clear assumption in favour of such redevelopment, from private amenity space use, as described in this statement. Besides major development locations, small-scale housing development has been strengthened in Paragraph 4.4.108 states that *“...there may still be opportunities for smaller scale regeneration, renewal and reconfiguration of some of Reading’s suburban areas. The principle of this is generally to be welcomed, and the policy aims to provide support to such proposals where they do not result in unacceptable impacts on the existing area.”*

Local Plan Policy H11 ‘*Development of private residential gardens*’ includes rules which apply for the successful new development in residential private amenity spaces. The most important and relevant (for the purpose of this application) aspects of the proposed residential development quality appraisal are:

1. Positive contribution to the character of the area;
2. Adequate size, dimensions, spacing, setting, landscaping and highways impact;
3. Appropriate access;
4. No tandem development;
5. Minimising of exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
6. Neighbours impact (light, privacy, noise, safety);
7. Family-sized housing;
8. Appropriate impact upon the biodiversity and green network;



9. The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.

Accessibility

Number of Local Plan Policies relate to sustainable development, such as CC6 'Accessibility and the intensity of development' part, which emphasises importance of sustainable location of development – *“The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.”*.

Policy CC6 explains in paragraph 4.1.25 that *“...primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses”*. Paragraphs 4.1.27 continues that good level of accessibility means - *“to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service with a frequency of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.).”*

The general health targets, accompanying appropriately located developments, mentioned in the explanation of this policy include:

- *“increased physical activity;*
- *decreased incidences of cardiovascular disease and obesity;*
- *reduced levels of stress caused by traffic noise and congestion;*
- *fewer cases of lung or heart disease associated with poor air quality;*
- *proximity to healthcare services;*
- *access to open space for recreation”*.

Design Quality

Policy CC7 states that *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:*

- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*



- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials”.*

The above components are linked with the subsequently highlighted urban design objectives, which should be enhanced by the proposals, inter alia:

- *“Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place;*
- *Continuity and enclosure;*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping;*
- *Ease of movement and permeability;*
- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand;*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time;*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs”.*

In addition, CC7 summarizes and encourages to ensure that proposed developments:

- *“Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.”.*

3. Appraisal

3.1. General concept

The overall aim of the proposal is to make efficient use of the existing site and its assets, by proposing extension of the existing two storey end-of-terrace building and erection of a two bedroom family dwellinghouse of improved design and sustainability, through the above proposal. The application property is characterized with a location within Reading settlement boundaries, which is partially fairly unified and partially mixed in terms of the design or scale, where such residential development is acceptable in principle. The proposal also includes an extension to the side, which would contain a consistent and sympathetic two storey enlargement with rearrangement of the front and back garden.



3.2. Impact on the Character of the Area

The proposed development would include external extensions to the side of the dwelling, where its appearance and layout would be significantly improved and clearly visible within the streetscene. Furthermore, the existing single storey side element, which currently serves as a storage, would be replaced at the application property, effectively resulting in a significant improvement in terms of the overall appearance. The project includes an in keeping external design, which would reflect the relatively distinctive character of the area, but also upgraded to a high-quality design and standard of living internally. The proposal includes some additional fenestration elements installed within the existing building, in order to provide a more appropriate and residential character and improve quality of living of both, the future occupiers and neighbours of the application site. The proposal includes installation of sympathetic windows and doors on the ground floor and attractive bay windows to the front both, on the ground and first floor. The proposed development contains cohesive fenestration details and architectural features, in order to provide a perfectly sympathetic and in keeping design, fully suitable for this prominent property. There are no modern, contrasting additions or contemporary architectural forms, therefore the proposal would entail positive impact upon the character of the streetscene. In addition, the applicants are aware of the surrounding circumstances and established pattern and scale of the adjacent terraced dwellings, therefore there is no loft conversion or higher number of habitable rooms proposed, besides two bedrooms on the first floor. It is considered that such arrangement would provide a relatively more affordable dwelling, suitable for a young family.

Notwithstanding the above, there would be two most crucial advantages of the proposed development. First one is replacement of the existing single storey side element. It is considered that the current arrangement is highly incongruous, the existing roof form and overall scale of this storage extension is significantly too bulky, massive. Due to an enormous scale, the existing single storey side enlargement fails to appear subservient or sympathetic in relation to the host dwelling and the Holmes Road streetscene. Second important aspect of the proposed development is partial screening of the unusual and out of character building, sited to the rear of no. 10. This example of backland development results in an incongruous mixed used unit, poorly fitted within the neighbourhood. Its design and location does not reflect the established arrangement, therefore by virtue of the proposal, the attention of the users of the Holmes Road would be more dragged towards the attractive view of the wide, residential street and less towards ordinary and out of keeping backland development.





5. Existing and proposed elevations

3.3. Impact on neighbours

Loss of Light and Overbearing

Due to the proposed dwelling's situation, overall scale and form of the proposed development and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overbearing and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to arise. The dwelling is sited adjacently to access road to the building in the back and the Fire Station to the east, therefore no adverse impact would occur.

Overlooking

Due to the proposed dwelling's situation and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overlooking arrangement would be considered to arise as well. The proposed rear windows would be installed in almost identical distance from neighbouring buildings, with no unacceptable impact upon their users' amenity.



Noise

The proposal would also entail a significant enhancement in terms of insulation between units, in accordance with Approved Document E - Resistance to the passage of sound (amended 2015). This internal improvement would result in reduced noise disturbance and higher quality of the living environment.

3.4. Transport, parking and access

The proposed site is located in the eastern part of Reading, on the northern side of Holmes Road. Given close proximity from Wokingham Road (50.0m - about a minute walk), the application property benefits from an extensive bus service including routes 15, 15a, 16, 17 and 143 with frequent links to Reading Centre and Wokingham Town Centre. Furthermore, Earley Station is located around 1.0km (12 min walk) to the east.

The application dwelling's close vicinity to Wokingham Road also provides vehicle access to the A329 and links with the M4 for towards the east to London and Wales to the west. The broad road networks around the site also provide huge choice and possibilities of cycle routes and walking paths in and around the area. As per the 'Cycle routes network map', the application site is conveniently location in close vicinity from the R20 and R30 routes, which easily link Woodley and Wokingham with the Holmes Road neighbourhood.

There are also easily accessible local amenities on the junction of Wokingham Road and Church Road and around 10 min walk from shopping parade on Wokingham Road (between junctions with St Peter's Rd and Palmer Park Avenue). Both retail locations include wide range of services such as grocery shops, churches, temples, pharmacy, cafes, pubs, educational facilities, hospital or nursery. Range of services located within walking distance from the application site, makes it highly appropriate and sustainable for a residential development.

No. 10 Holmes Road benefits from an off-street parking on the driveway in the south-eastern corner of the plot. This arrangement would be retained within the proposed scheme. Additionally, the proposal includes lockable bike storage in the back.





6. Cycle routes network map

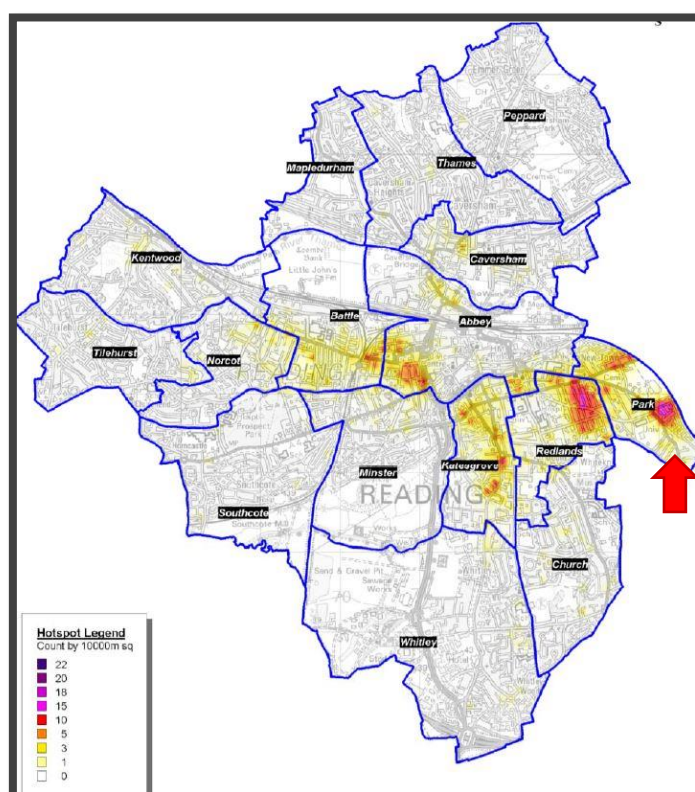
3.5. New residential development

Policy H5 of the Local Plan confirms that in case of proposal for new residential development, it is required that:

- outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard;
- will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations;
- will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations;
- will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3).



It is considered that, as a result of the proposed development, the application property would stand in accordance with the Local Plan Policy H5. The proposal would comply in terms of the above-mentioned requirements. Its internal usable floorspace would be considered spacious and sufficient, providing a family designed, affordable residential unit, ideally suitable for young family or couple. The proposed two bedroom dwelling would result in increased number of more affordable units, positively contributing to the Council's target and in compliance with the NPPF. Furthermore, the application dwelling's location is considered extremely suitable to provide higher density of independent residential units, due to noticeable rate of existing HMOs within the close vicinity, due to Reading University Campus in walking distance (see below picture 'Distribution of HMOs across the Borough').



7. Distribution of HMOs across the Borough.

In addition, below picture presents proposed floorplans of the application property. The application site is considered suitable for such extension and redevelopment. Furthermore, the proposed internal space of about 74.5m², would be sufficient and appropriate for a two bedroom single dwelling, which includes two, considerable size bedrooms.

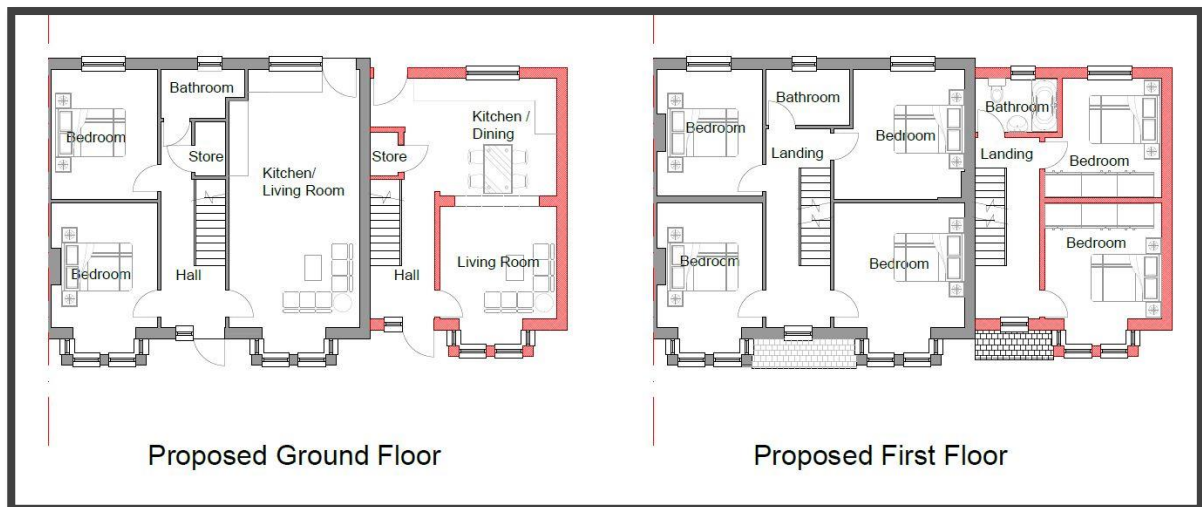
The layout provides appropriate level of privacy and living quality, due to appropriate internal ground and first floor arrangement with spacious loft storage, accordingly with the Local Plan Policy H5(a). It is also confirmed by the attached below table 'Internal Space Standards', which includes minimum standards for habitable areas in residential units. It is therefore clear that the proposed dwelling would



be considered acceptable when compared with the 'Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard' adopted by Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2015. The proposal would also successfully meet requirements in terms of minimum height, storage area, bedrooms internal area and it would propose appropriate outdoor amenity space.

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

8. Internal Space Standards (Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard, March 2015)



9. Existing (grey) and proposed (red) floorplans.

3.6 Private and outdoor amenity space

It is considered that the application property comprises a sufficient for a single dwelling outdoor amenity space, in compliance with Policy H10 of the Local Plan. Despite of less sizeable garden, it is acknowledged that the proposal would comprise a similar private amenity space to numerous properties within close vicinity of no. 10 Holmes Road. These residential properties have been highlighted on the below aerial photograph entitled 'Map of properties with relatively similar private gardens'.



Notwithstanding the above, the application site is located within close proximity of the Sol Joel Park (within approximately 100.0m) and numerous green public spaces accessible within 20min walk, presented on the below map. All recreational areas are of high quality, large and offering extensive activities (various sports, playgrounds, lake, or green open grass areas) and include:

1. Reading University Campus public open areas;
2. Sol Joel Park;
3. Palmer Park;
4. Maiden Erleigh Local Nature Reserve.



10. Map of properties with relatively similar private gardens.

8. Conclusion

By virtue of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that it would comply with the relevant parts of NPPF, Reading BC Local Plan, therefore we kindly appeal, to approve the submitted application.

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