



17 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TD

**Proposed erection of a part single part two storey rear extension and
conversion of the existing dwelling to 2x flats**

Planning Statement

Author:

Dariusz Kusyk BA BEng MSc - 1 Right Plan



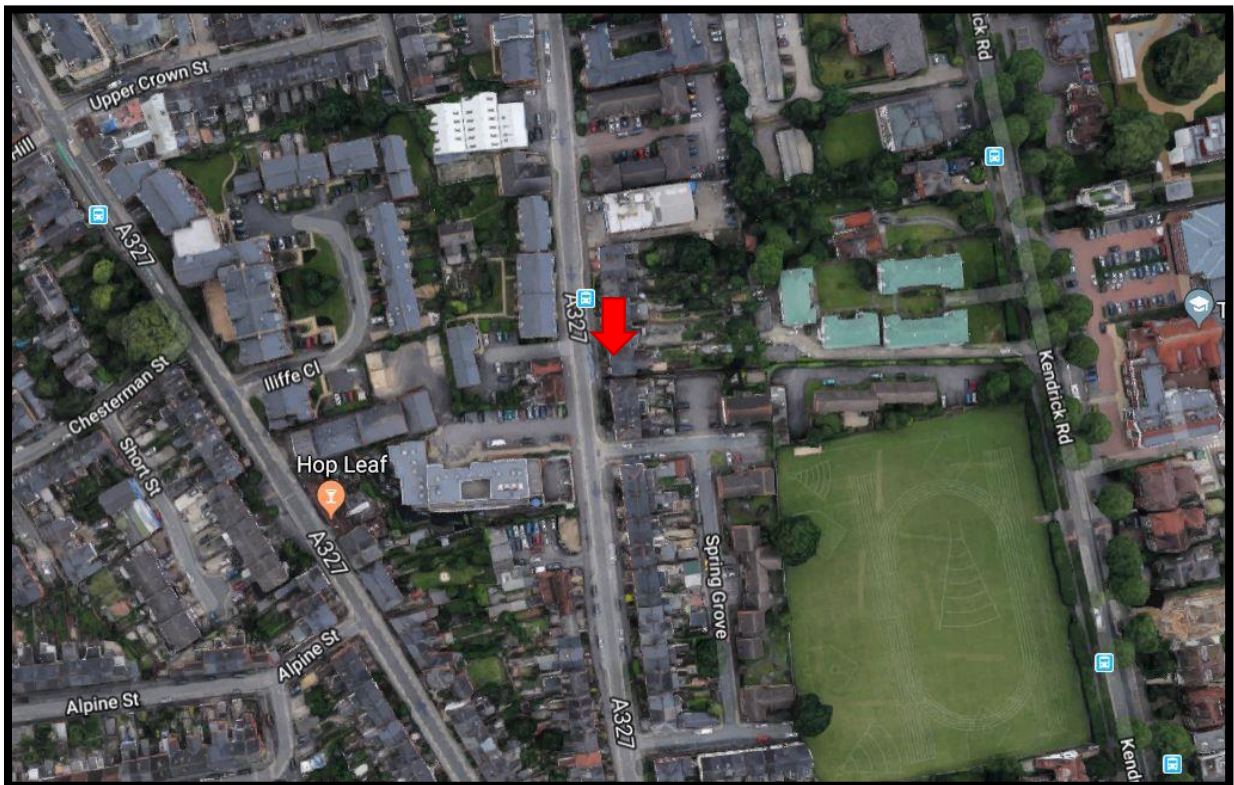
1. Introduction

1.1. Preface

This design statement has been prepared in support of a Full application for the proposed erection of a part single part two storey rear extension and conversion of the existing dwelling to 2x flats at 17 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TD.

The following statement covers the subject and information required for submission as set National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and Reading Borough Council Core Strategy, Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document. 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

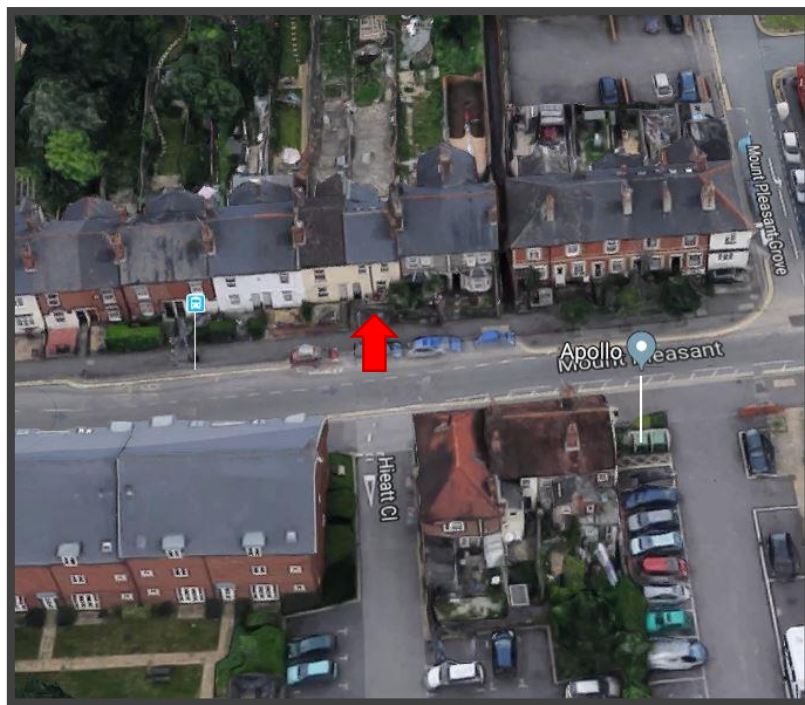


1. Aerial photograph





2. Bird's eye photograph (neighbourhood)



3. Bird's eye photograph (closest vicinity)

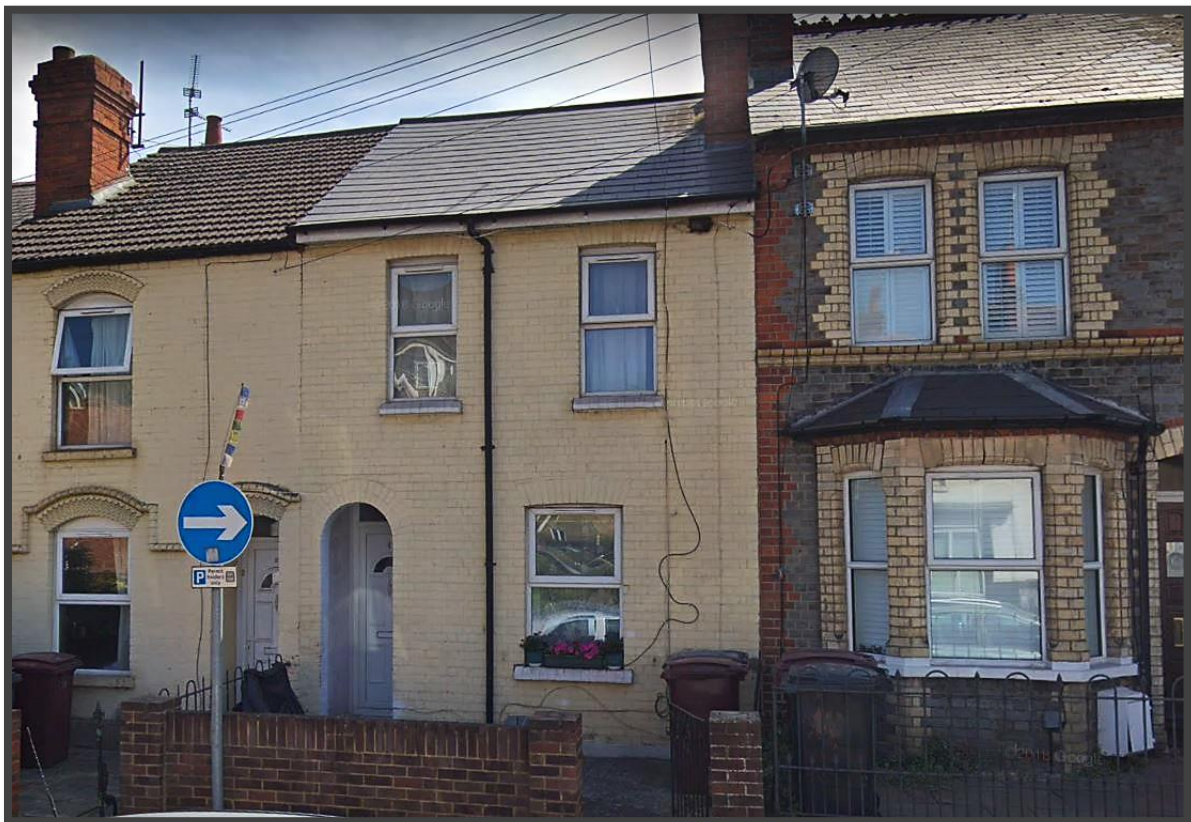
1.3. Site Description

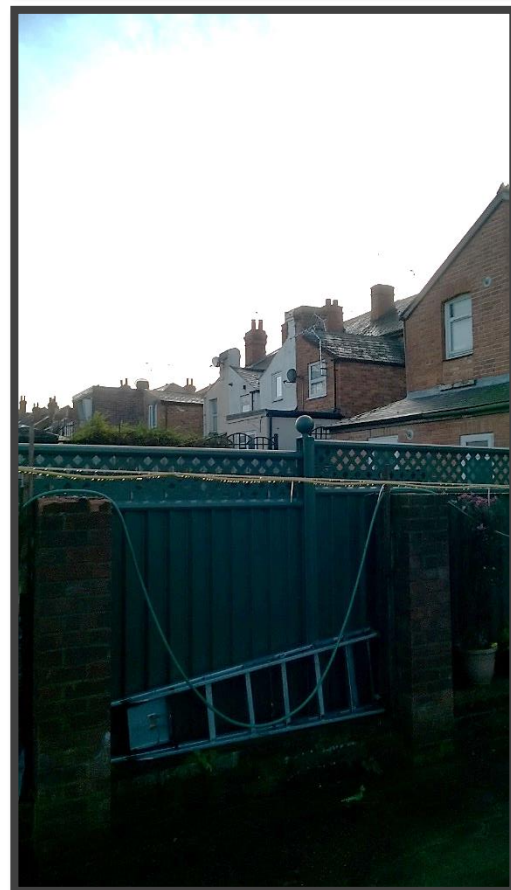
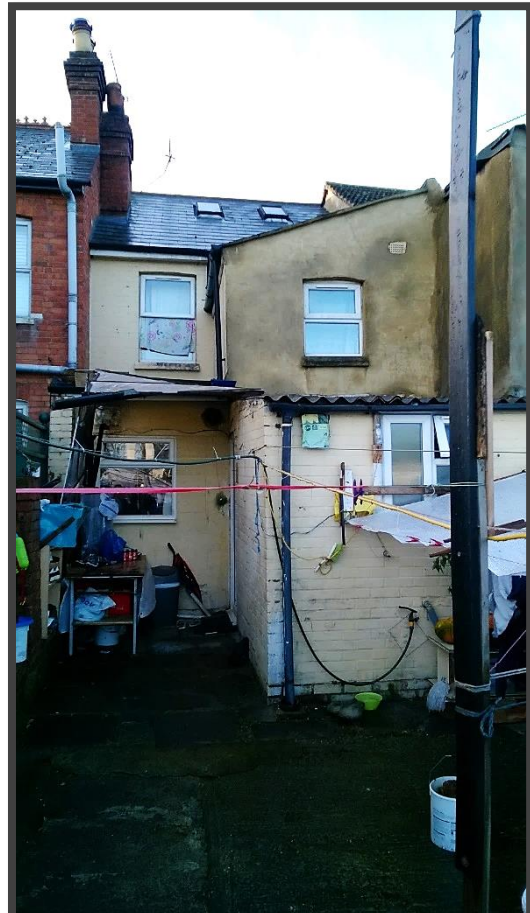
The application site is located opposite to Heatt Close and in the middle of long terrace sited on Mount Pleasant, about 600.0m to the south from the Reading Town Centre. The application site is located within a group of 11x terraced dwellings, which are relatively mixed in terms of their front appearance, design or architectural details. Notwithstanding that, the rear elevations of the surrounding dwellings include numerous consistent and similar two storey gable/dual pitched elements of a fairly similar height and depth.



The site is occupied by a two storey building, which is currently rented as a single dwellinghouse – Class C3. The host building comprises deep and narrow rear amenity space with insignificant landscaping, in total around 170.0m². The entire area of the application property (dwelling + front and rear garden) is circa 240.0m², where the host dwelling includes approximately 56.0m² footprint. The property benefits from on-street parking and given its exposed front elevation and close distance from the highway, it is considered to be clearly visible within the Mount Pleasant streetscene.

The application property is a mid-terrace dwelling, similar and strongly unified in relation to adjacent buildings nos. 15, 13 and 11, however because of diverse levels and different fenestration details and materials, it appears disintegrated with terraced houses nos. 19 and 21. The host property is similarly residential in use, however nos. 5-11 include some more prominent soft landscaping to the front, which are adding more visual interest and increase attractiveness of this part of the street.







1.4. Surrounding Area Description

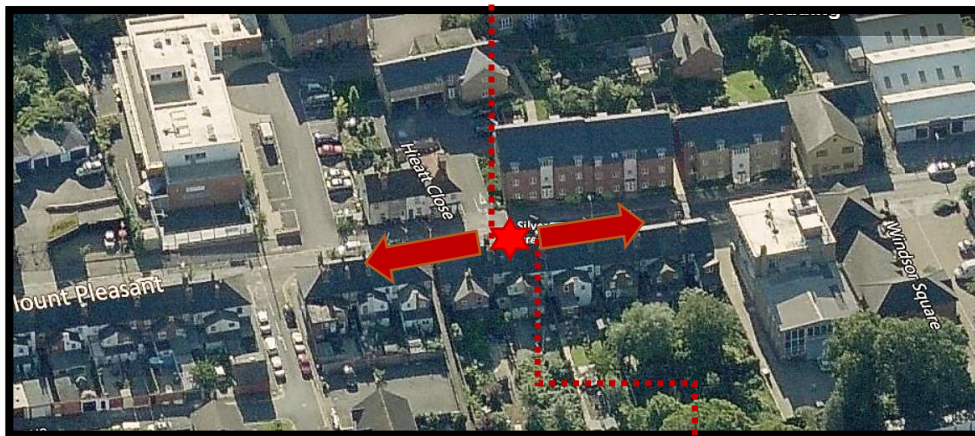
The majority of the Mount Pleasant streetscene is characterised by a relatively mixed type of development, with some examples of groups of dwellings with repeatable design features and strongly uniformed roofscape with consistent frontages arrangement and cohesive appearance.

Within the closest proximity from the application property, there are numerous of buildings, diverse in terms of their:

- use (residential);
- type (terraced; block of flats; backland development);
- fenestration and architectural details;
- roof forms;
- scale/footprint/volume;
- landscaping;
- distance from the highway, boundary treatment and driveways.

The presentation of variety of adjacent residential properties design within the Mount Pleasant streetscene, has been presented on the below diagram.





4. Mount Pleasant streetscene



2. Planning Policy

2.1. NPPF

Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF (July 2018) 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:

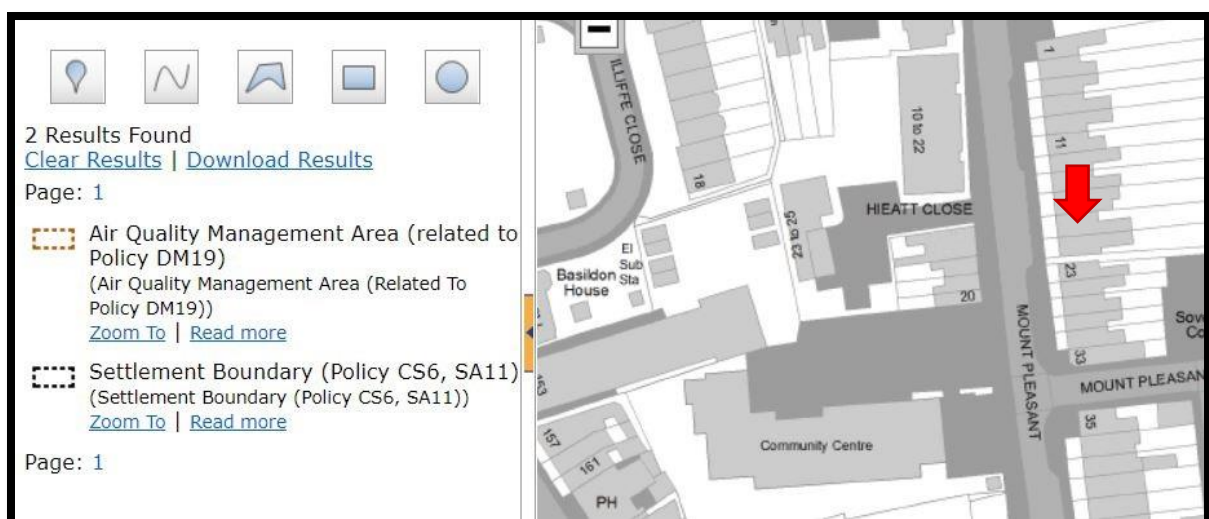
- *“function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*



- *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.Core Strategy



5. Local Plan Policies Map



Residential redevelopment location

The application property is located within the settlement limits of Reading, therefore it stands in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS6 ‘Settlement Boundary’, which states that *“No development will be permitted outside the settlement boundary as defined on the Proposals Map”*. Also, by virtue of its typically residential character, Core Strategy includes a clear assumption in favour of such redevelopment from industrial use, as described in this statement. Paragraph 3.26 states that *“In addition to the major development areas outlined above, development will continue to occur on previously developed land throughout the urban area in accordance with national government policy. Residual areas will be considered for allocation for redevelopment for mixed use or residential purposes”*.

Besides large developers’ investments, small-scale housing development has been strengthened in para 3.29, which emphasises that *“Although the spatial strategy focuses on the location of major development and the role of different areas of Reading, much of the development that occurs in the Borough is relatively small-scale and piecemeal and this is particularly true for housing development. A significant proportion of new homes result from infill and back land development, redevelopment of existing accommodation (both residential and commercial), conversion of larger properties to flats and the change of use of commercial buildings. The strategy expects this type of development to continue throughout the built-up area”*. Furthermore, it continues that *“National government policy seeks to enable this development to continue to make efficient use of urban land and to reduce the need to use greenfield sites.”*

Residential Conversions

The Core Strategy Policy CS18 is strictly about conversions for residential use. It has been confirmed in para 6.31 that such residential conversion *“does benefit the housing supply and mix of dwellings in the Borough”* and that the proposals should be appropriately justified in terms of *“the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking, and the treatment of bin storage areas”*.

Accessibility

Number of Core Strategy Policies relate to sustainable development, such as CS3 and ‘Accessibility’ part or CS4 ‘Accessibility and the Intensity of Development’. Policy CS3 emphasises importance of sustainable communities – *“Planning has a key role to play in reducing the need to travel, in terms of shaping the pattern of development, and influencing the location, scale, density, design”* or in



paragraph 4.27, which encourages to *“promote accessibility by alternative modes of transport, and reduce the need to travel by car”*.

Policy CS4 explains in paragraph 4.30 what 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.). In many parts of Reading (particularly the central area), it will be important to ensure that access to a range of facilities is unimpeded, and not affected by existing barriers (such as the River Thames, IDR and railway).”*

Design Quality

Policy CS7 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”*.

In addition, CS7 continues and encourages to ensure that proposed developments will *“positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character”* and *“are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping”*.

2.3. Reading Borough Council – ‘Residential Conversions’ Supplementary Planning Document (November 2013)

Residential Conversions SPD comprises a detailed assessment methodology, based on 26 points included in the checklist. The most important and relevant (for the purpose of this application) aspects of the proposed residential development quality appraisal are:

1. Sympathetic design;
2. Avoid of unacceptable reduction of amenity space;
3. Housing mix (ensuring that a single family housing remains the dominant form of dwelling in the vicinity of the application site);
4. Neighbours Impact (light, privacy, noise, safety);



5. Sufficient internal space;
6. Encouraging to use alternative modes of transport (bike storage, location close to public transport, services within walking distance).

3. Appraisal

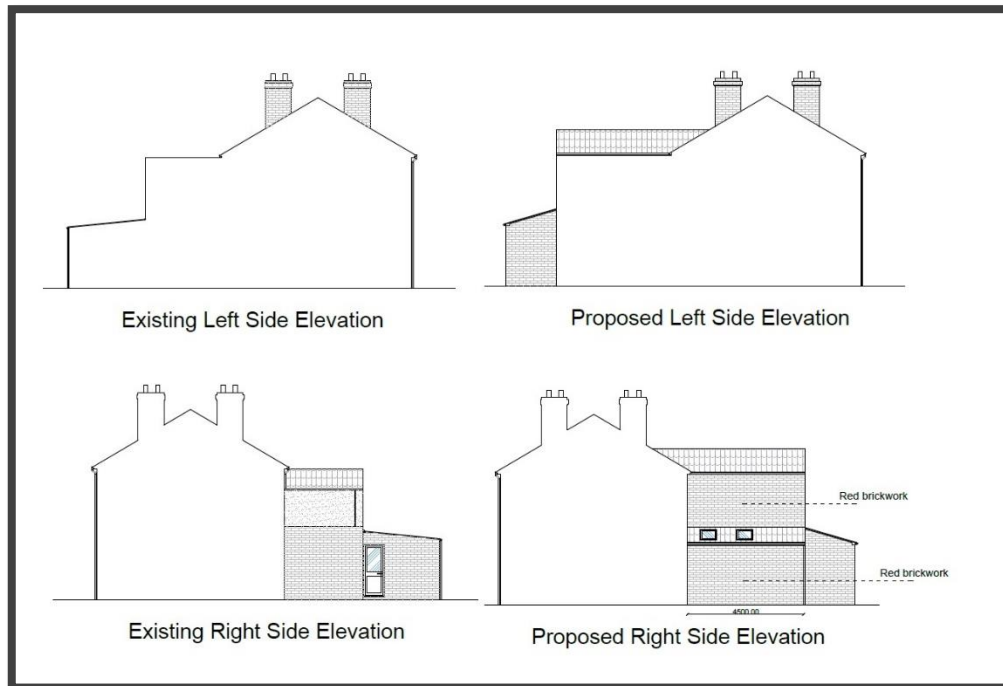
3.1. General concept

The overall aim of the proposal is to make efficient use of the existing site and its assets, by proposing extension and conversion of the existing two storey terraced dwellinghouse to 2x flats of improved design and sustainability, through the above proposal. The application property is characterized with a location within Reading settlement boundaries, which is relatively unified in terms of the design, where such residential conversions are acceptable in principle. A crucial factor for the proposed enlargement of the property is a fact that a materially very similar extensions, were approved in several neighbouring properties, as can be seen in the above photograph in section 1.3 of this statement.

3.2. Impact on the Character of the Area

The proposed development would result in a part single part two storey rear extensions, however its appearance and layout would be significantly improved, providing a sympathetic design, in keeping roof form with a reasonable scale. The proposal includes some additional fenestration elements installed to the rear of the building, in order to provide a more appropriate, better quality and residential character and improve quality of living of both, the future occupiers and neighbours of the application site. The proposal includes replacement of the single and two storey rear elements, which are in a poor condition (internally and externally) and require immediate actions in order to restore its usability as a residential unit. More contemporary rooflights installed within the roof of a single storey element, would serve as an additional source of light for the habitable accommodation to ground floor flat no. 1. The proposed brickwork with windows and bi-folding doors would be considered in keeping with the existing fenestration details, however again, the most crucial advantage of such change would be removal of uncharacteristic and atypical single storey rear elements, significantly detrimental and at odds in relation to the surrounding area's overall character. The unsympathetic and neglected rear additions would be removed and replaced, providing more sympathetic appearance from the back garden perspective. In relation to similar appearance of the adjacent houses, the proposal would appear well-balanced and more in keeping with the overall character of the Mount Pleasant terraces nos. 1-21. The proposed alterations would be considered to successfully blend in within the residential character of the surrounding area.





6. Existing and proposed side elevations



7. Existing and proposed front and rear elevation



3.3. Impact on neighbours

Loss of Light and Overbearing

Due to the proposed development situation, overall scale and form of the enlargement and similar scale of the implemented extensions within the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overbearing and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to arise. The overshadowing arrangement is considered to be similar as to the rear of adjacent dwellings and no further, detrimental loss of light would arise as a result of the proposed development.

Loss of Privacy and Overlooking

Due to the proposed dwelling's situation, extension's scale, positioning of the new windows and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties to the rear, no adverse changes to current overlooking and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to occur.

Noise

Additionally, the proposal would redevelop the existing single dwelling, what would entail a significant improvement in terms of noise disturbance provision of appropriate insulation, in accordance with Approved Document E - Resistance to the passage of sound (amended 2015).

3.4. Transport, parking and access

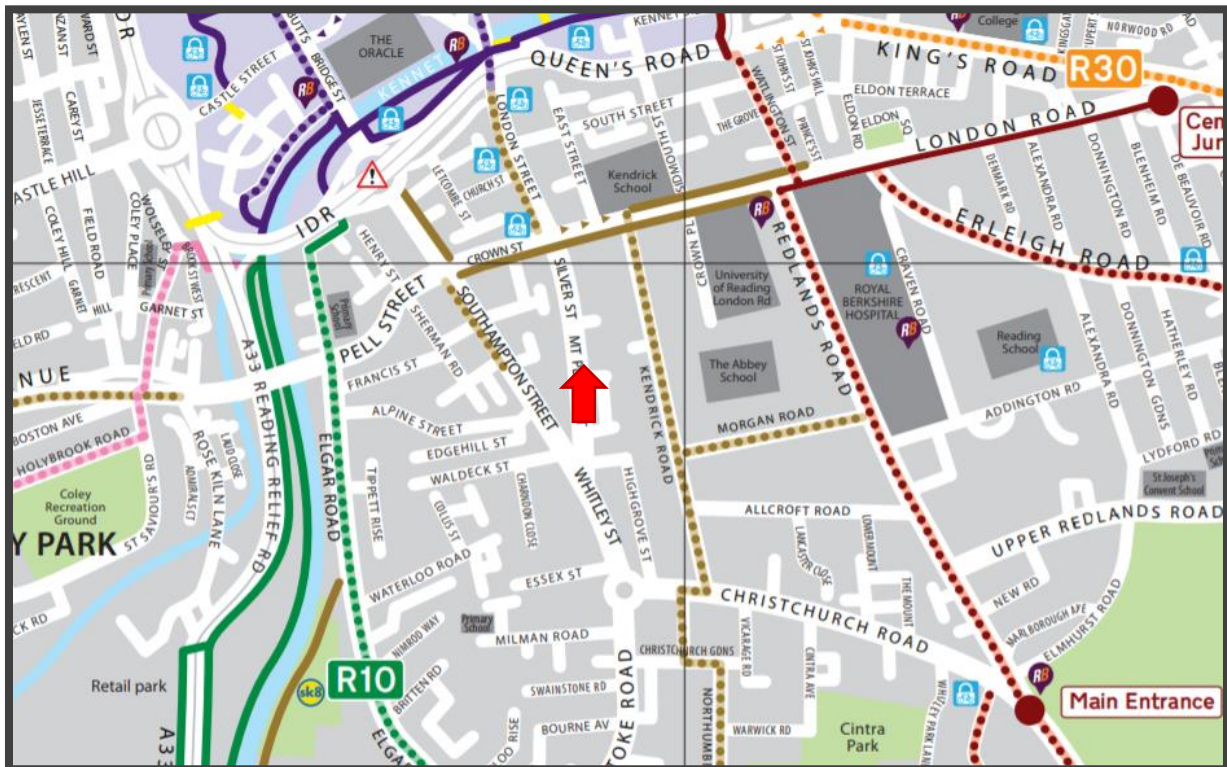
The proposed site is located to the south from of Reading Town Centre, on western side of Mount Pleasant. Given close proximity from adjacent bus stops on Mount Pleasant, Kendrick Road or London Road (about 5 min walk), the application property benefits from an extensive bus service including routes 5, 6, 6a, 7, 9, 10, 11, 19 and 21 with frequent links to Reading Centre and Wokingham Town Centre, Swallowfield, Three Mile Cross, Shinfield and Spencers Wood.

The application dwelling's close vicinity to London Road, which provides vehicle access to the A329 & A327 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, from local amenities on Basingstoke Road (south), London Road to Reading Town Centre (both to the north), which include wider 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, as presented on the below cycle routes map.

No. 17 benefits from an on-street parking on Mount Pleasant and adjacent streets. Additionally, the proposal includes lockable bike storage in the back for up to 4x bikes. No 17 Mount Pleasant is



benefited from easy cycle access to the town centre and direct access to few main cycle routes including R10 and R30.



8. Cycle routes network map

3.5. Housing Mix

Policy DM8 of Sites and Detailed Policies Document confirms that in case of proposal for self-contained flats conversions, it is required that, inter alia:

- “The property to be converted has four or more bedrooms or measures more than 120 m²;
- At least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms;
- Individual units provide appropriate minimum internal floor standards and headroom in accordance with the Council’s adopted minimum internal floorspace standards”.

Furthermore, ‘Residential Conversions SPD’ emphasises that “Any residential conversion must contribute to achieving an appropriately mixed and sustainable community by providing an acceptable housing mix, ensuring that, as appropriate, single family housing remains the dominant form of dwelling in the vicinity of the application”.

It is considered that, as a result of the proposed development, application property no. 17 Mount Pleasant would stand in accordance with Residential Conversions SPD, SDPD Policy DM18 and Core

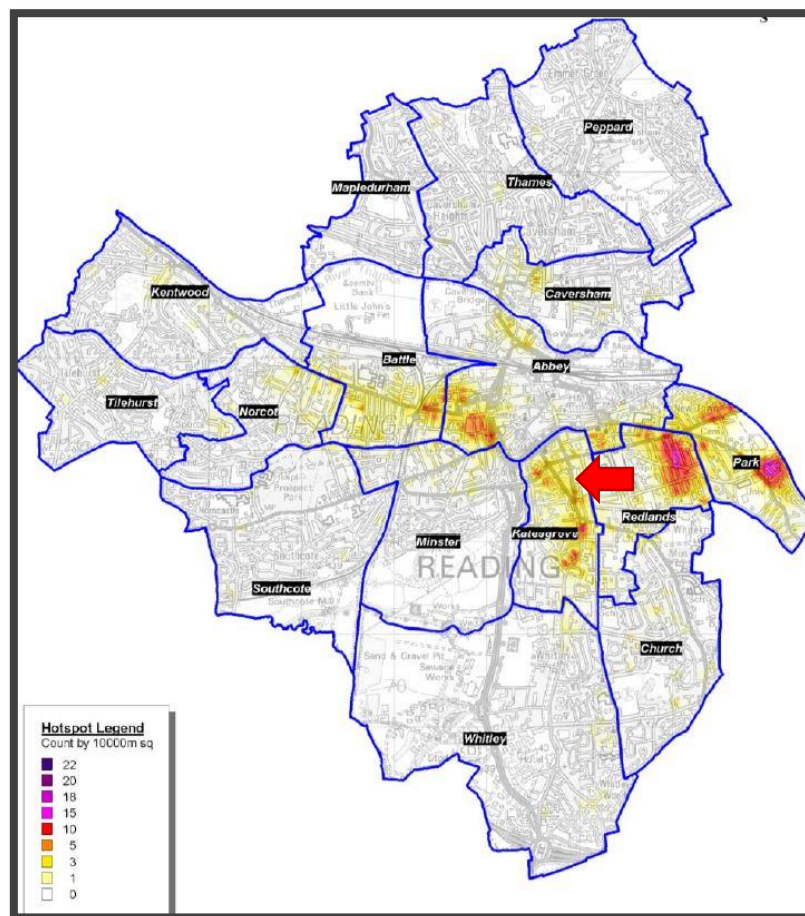


Strategy Policy CS18, as it includes 4x bedrooms as per original dwelling. The proposal would comply in terms of housing mix guidance and requirements, due to provision of a family suitable residential unit (first floor flat) and smaller ground floor flat, however more affordable and also positively contributing to the Mixed Housing Council's Policy and in compliance with the NPPF. Furthermore, the application dwelling's location is considered extremely suitable to provide more family units, due to one of the highest rate of existing HMOs within the closest vicinity (see below picture no. 9).

In addition, picture no. 10 presents proposed floorplans of the application property. As required in Policy DM8 of Sites and Detailed Policies Document, the host building includes an internal space of about 107.5m², which is considered sufficient and appropriate for 2x flats:

- Flat 1; 1-bedroom – 53.5m² (ground floor);
- Flat 2; 2-bedrooms – 54.0m² (first floor and loft).

The layout provides appropriate level of privacy and living quality, due to appropriate internal ground and first floor arrangement. The proposal would also successfully meet requirements in terms of minimum height, storage area, bedrooms internal area and outdoor amenity space.



9. Distribution of HMOs across the Borough (Appendix 2 of Residential Conversions SPD).





10. Proposed floorplans.

3.6. Amenity Space

It is acknowledged that currently the application property comprises a significant outdoor rear amenity space of around 170.0m², which would be slightly reduced to circa 160.0m². It is considered that it would stand in compliance with the Residential Conversion SPD, which states that any unacceptable reduction of amenity space should be avoided. Notwithstanding the above, the application site is located within close proximity of numerous green public spaces accessible within 15 min walk. All recreational areas are of high quality, large and offering extensive activities (various sports, playgrounds, lake, or green open grass areas), such as:

- River Kennet walk;
- Waterloo Meadows;



-
- Green Open Spaces at University of Reading Campus;
 - Coley Park;
 - Forbury Gardens in the Town Centre.

4. 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 Core Strategy, Sites and Detailed Policies Document and with Residential Conversions SPD, therefore we kindly appeal, to approve the submitted application.

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1 Right Plan