

GRIFFIN PLANNING CONSULTANCY LIMITED

development planning consultants

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SINGLE STOREY DETACHED BUILDING AND THE ERECTION OF 2 X 2 BED DWELLINGS

at

LAND ADJACENT TO 2 NORTH STREET, CAVERSHAM, RG4 8JA

DESIGN AND ACCESS/SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Site description and review of planning history	3
3. Description of development proposed	4
4. Summary of relevant planning policies	5
Reading Borough Council Core Strategy	5
Sites and Detailed Policies Document	5
National Planning Policy	6
5. Acceptability of development proposed	8
Principle of development	8
Impact on local character	8
Impact on amenity	9
Transport and parking	9
Affordable Housing	9

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report supports a planning application for the demolition of an existing single storey detached building and the erection of 2 x 2bed dwellings on land adjacent to 2 North Street, Caversham, RG4 8JA. A full description of the proposal is set out in section 3 of this report.
- 1.2 This supporting planning statement sets out in detail why the proposed development is acceptable having regard to the policies of Reading Borough Council in addition to national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND REVIEW OF PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The site subject to this application is within the settlement of Caversham and currently occupied by an existing single storey commercial building set in a plot of approximately 194m². The building is currently vacant whilst the previous known use was as a yoga studio; access to the site is currently taken via North Street.
- 2.2 The front of the site faces south onto North Street with terraced dwellings opposite and to the immediate east. To the west of the site is an area of hardstanding used for car parking. To the north and north-west of the site is the rear of properties that front onto Prospect Street; these mainly comprise three storey terraced buildings with commercial uses at ground floor and residential at first and second floor. The rear of the building is attached to 23 Prospect Street.
- 2.3 The locality cannot be said to benefit from a standard architectural style although the buildings in the locality are predominately terraced.
- 2.4 The site is within the settlement boundary and the majority is within the Caversham District Centre as defined by Reading Borough Council's Proposals Map; this is considered further in section 4 of this report.
- 2.5 The site is not within a Conservation Area and the existing building which occupies the site is not listed and there are no listed buildings nearby.
- 2.6 The site is located within flood zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency's flood maps; it is therefore not considered to be at risk of any flooding.
- 2.7 An online search of Reading Borough Council's website revealed the following applications for the site:

Year	LPA Ref.	Description	Decision
2016	160418	Demolition of existing commercial building and erection 2 x 2 bedroom houses	Refused.
2017	171041	Demolition of existing commercial building and erection of 2no. two bedroom houses	Remains undetermined but with resolution to approve subject to legal agreement.

3. DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED

- 3.1 This planning application proposes the erection of 2 x 2 bed dwellings comprising the following accommodation:
- Kitchen/living room.
 - Utility.
 - Entrance hall.
 - Ground floor W/C.
 - Study.
 - Master bedroom with en-suite.
 - Second bedroom.
 - Bathroom.
- 3.2 Each dwelling will have a gross internal floor space of 74m², as such the proposals comfortably meet the Governments space standards for new dwellings¹.
- 3.3 Externally the dwellings will be constructed from brick with a slate roof tile. Brick detailing will be provided around the front windows and door to provide contrast. Materials for the windows and external doors are to be confirmed.

¹ Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (DCLG, March 2015)

4. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 When considering the merits of development that requires a planning application the Council, in its function as the local planning authority, has a requirement to determine that application in accordance with the policies of its Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise².
- 4.2 Therefore, in preparing this planning statement consideration has been had to relevant policies of Reading Borough Council's Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015) and Sites and Detailed Policies document (2012, altered 2015) as set out below. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) is also relevant.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY

- 4.3 The Borough's Core Strategy contains the following policies which are relevant to the proposed development.
- 4.4 **CS6: Settlement Boundary.** This policy specifies that new development will take place within the defined settlement boundary.
- 4.5 **CS7 Design and the Public Realm.** This policy requires proposals to be of high design quality that enhances the character and appearance of the area. It identifies a number of criteria in this respect that proposals will be judged against.
- 4.6 **CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix.** This policy states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by a number of criteria, including *inter alia*:
- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located.
 - The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 4.7 **CS24: Car/ Cycle Parking.** This states that maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

SITES AND DETAILED POLICIES DOCUMENT

² Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 38(6).

- 4.8 The Council's Sites and Detailed Policies Document contains the following policies which are relevant to the proposed development.
- 4.9 **DM4: Safeguarding Amenity.** Policy DM4 requires new development to not cause a significant detrimental impact on the living environment of existing or new residential properties in respect of (*inter alia*):
- Privacy and overlooking.
 - Access to sunlight and daylight.
 - Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development.
 - Artificial lighting.
- 4.10 **DM6: Affordable Housing.** This sets a requirement for new housing development to make a contribution towards affordable housing. For developments of 1 to 4 dwellings this represents a financial contribution equivalent to 10% of the housing to be provided elsewhere in the Borough.
- 4.11 It clarifies that in all cases where proposals fall short of the policy targets as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 4.12 The Government's national planning policies are set out in the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF).
- 4.13 Paragraph 7 establishes the overriding principle that the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development. Paragraph 8 explains that there are 3 strands to sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. In relation to social it includes the following reference to housing:
- "...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..."*
- 4.14 Paragraph 11 identifies the importance of the concept of 'sustainable development' and that in terms of decision making this means, *inter alia*:
- "...approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay..."*

- 4.15 In relation to applications for planning permission, paragraph 47 refers to these being determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.16 In the context of delivering a sufficient supply of homes, paragraph 59 refers to the importance of a sufficient amount and variety of land coming forward where it is needed.
- 4.17 Para.68 recognises the importance of small and medium sized sites by stating 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.”*
- 4.18 Paragraph 131 considers design and states that:

“In determining applications, 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.”

5. ACCEPTABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED

- 5.1 Having regard to the Council's planning policies, in addition to national planning policy, it is apparent that the main planning considerations in relation to this development relates to:

- Principle of development.
- Impact on local character.
- Impact on amenity.
- Transport and parking.
- Affordable housing.

- 5.2 An assessment of these issues in light of the Council's planning policies, in addition to national planning policy, is as follows.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.2 The site is within the defined settlement boundary of Caversham, where the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in accordance with policy CS6.
- 5.3 The scale of the development proposed is also commensurate with the level of facilities and services within Caversham which is a sustainable location. Accordingly the site is a sustainable location being on the edge of the define district centre of Caversham and approximately 20 minute+ walk to Reading Town Centre, including the rail station.
- 5.4 In addition, it is highlighted that the proposal will make a small but valuable contribution towards meeting the Council's housing target.
- 5.5 Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Development Plan policy having regard to consideration of the principle of the development.

IMPACT ON LOCAL CHARACTER

- 5.8 The surrounding character comprises a mix or retail and residential development, the buildings that form these uses are predominately terraced and comprise a mix of two and three storey. The housing along North Street, to the east and south of the site is terraced two storey residential of a similar size to the development proposed; the majority have a red brick external finish. The proposal will replace a single-storey building that is unattractive with no architectural value. As such it is considered that the proposed development will be in keeping with and enhance the character of the area in accordance with policy CS7.

IMPACT ON AMENITY

- 5.9 The two plots have been sited to avoid impact on the light to neighbouring properties by virtue of shadowing. When making this judgement attention is drawn to the similarity of the siting of the proposed plots to the plan submitted with planning application 171041 which has been assessed to be acceptable in this respect. In addition the proposed dwellings will not introduce of existing neighbouring properties.
- 5.10 With regard to amenities of the new dwellings, the proposed houses exceed the Government's national standards for a two bedroom dwellings; both plots will also have an adequate private garden.
- 5.11 A noise impact assessment for the site has also been undertaken to inform the proposals and a copy of this report has been provided with the application. This concludes that there will be no adverse effect of the environment of the occupiers of the new development from existing noise sources.
- 5.12 For these reasons it is considered that there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours and that the standards of amenities for the occupants of the new houses will be high. Accordingly the development is in accordance with policy DM4.

TRANSPORT AND PARKING

- 5.13 The proposal site is accessible by public transport, with the nearby train station and bus stops within walking distance. It is also within walking distance of local shops and services in Caversham.
- 5.14 Given the constraints of the site no parking is proposed. It is noted that the Council's response to a pre-application enquiry to this scheme confirmed that the principle of a car free development in this location is acceptable due to the location of the site and existing parking restrictions in the vicinity.
- 5.15 For these reasons the development is considered to accord with policy CS24.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.16 The requirements of policy DM6 in respect of affordable housing is noted. A separate report setting out how the development considers these requirements has been submitted with the proposal.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This report has highlighted that the proposed development, subject to this application for planning permission, is in accordance with the Council's adopted planning policies. This is due to the fact that the development:

- Is acceptable in principle due to its location within the settlement of Caversham.
- Has been designed to be in keeping with and not have a harmful effect on its surroundings.
- Will not have any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity and will provide a high standard of amenity for occupiers.
- Is in a sustainable and accessible location and will not have any adverse impact on the transport network.

6.2 For the above reasons the development is also sustainable development and in accordance with national policy.

6.3 Therefore, in the absence of any other material considerations to justify otherwise it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for this proposed development.