

Planning Statement

**Fisherman's Cottage
Public House, 224
Kennet Side, Reading,
RG1 3DW**

Prepared For

Fisherman's Cottage Ltd

7697/RJ

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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

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CONTENTS

<u>1</u>	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>SITE & SURROUNDINGS</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>PLANNING HISTORY, PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>4</u>
	Planning History	4
	Pre-Application Advice	4
	Proposed Development	7
<u>4</u>	<u>PLANNING APPRAISAL</u>	<u>9</u>
	Planning Policy Context	9
	Principle of Development	9
	Design and Layout	10
	Relationship with Neighbouring Properties	12
	Heritage Impact	12
	Parking/Highways	13
	Flooding	14
	Landscape & Ecology	14
	CIL/Section 106	15
	Public Consultation	15
<u>5</u>	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	<u>16</u>



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement is written in support of an application for the erection of an extension to an existing listed public house to form 6 guest rooms to provide bed and breakfast accommodation as an ancillary use to the main public house.
- 1.2 The public house business has been struggling for many years and was purchased by the current owners from Fullers. The current owners have made significant investment in the site. They see the addition of offering guest rooms as a necessary part of their long term business plan to secure the future of the public house as a business and a community facility as well as ensuring a positive long term use for the listed public house building.
- 1.3 The proposals have been the subject of detailed pre-application discussions with the Council and have been amended in response to this. Various supporting reports have been prepared and are submitted as part of this application.
- 1.4 The application comprises the following documents:
 - Plans prepared by DLK Architects:
 - 1969/LP Location Plan
 - 1969/BP Block Plan
 - 1969/EX-P01 Existing & Proposed Plans
 - 1969/EX-P02 Existing & Proposed Elevations & Sections
 - Design and Access Statement prepared by DLK Architects;
 - Planning Statement prepared by Bell Cornwell;
 - Heritage Statement prepared by Forum Heritage Services;
 - Transport Technical Note prepared by RGP;
 - Green Link Appraisal and Landscape Proposals prepared by David Jarvis Associates;
 - Ecology Report prepared by EPR Ltd;
 - Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Simon Jones-Parry;
 - A Viability Appraisal and Business Plan prepared by the applicant.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement describes the site and its surroundings, summarises the relevant planning history and pre-application discussions and describes the proposed development. The proposal is assessed against the relevant planning policies to demonstrate how they have been addressed. The Council are accordingly invited to grant planning permission for the development.



2 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is located close to but outside the town centre of Reading, firmly within the built up area.
- 2.2 To the north it fronts on to the River Kennet with 3-4 storey flatted development on the opposite side of the river. The other three sides adjoin residential development.



- 2.3 A pedestrian footpath runs along the eastern boundary beyond which is 2-3 storey residential development, as can be seen in the photographs above. To the west is also a mix of 2-3 storey development. To the south, at the rear of the public house is the vehicular entrance to the car park, off Canal Way.
- 2.4 There is an area of public open space on the opposite side of Canal Way with mainly 2 storey development surrounding it but set at a higher level to the application site.
- 2.5 The natural topography of the land means that the existing public house building and beer garden is set at a lower level than much of the surrounding development, as is the proposed building. The car park for the public house and Canal Way which it joins, are set up at a higher level.
- 2.6 The listed public house building and application site is described in more detail in the Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement submitted with this application.



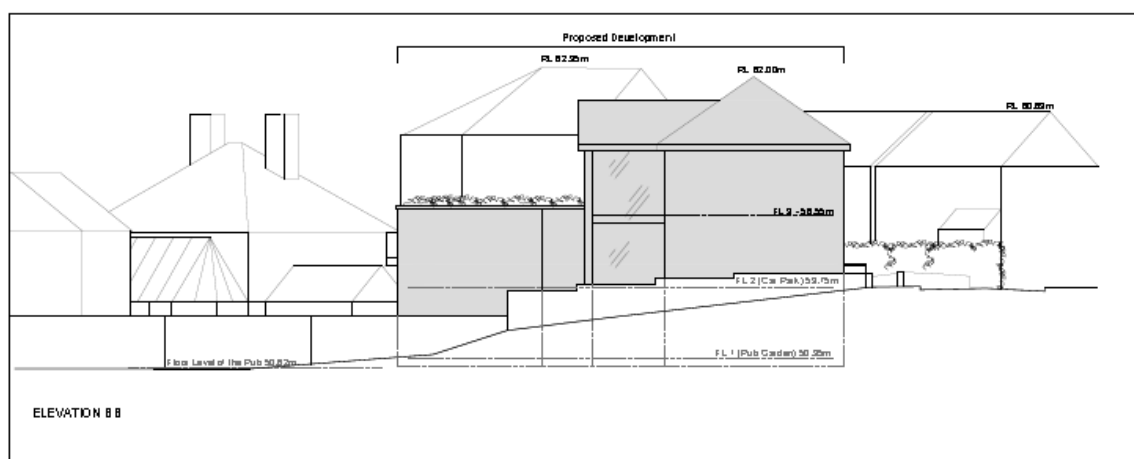
3 PLANNING HISTORY, PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The planning history on the Council's website relates to minor alterations and repairs to the building. There have not been any proposals of consequence to the consideration of this application.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

- 3.2 An initial pre-application submission was made in January 2015 for a three storey building containing eight rooms. Extracts from the submitted plans are provided below:



- 3.3 A written response was provided by Jonathan Markwell in April 2015. In summary the response was as follows:
- Clarification was sought as to the use class of the accommodation proposed as this will affect how it is assessed against planning policies.



- Consideration should be given to ensuring that the proposed development will not harm the viability of the pub business by reducing the garden space available for customers.
- The height, scale and siting of the building were considered to be too high for the area and out of keeping with the urban grain. It was recommended that this be reconsidered.
- Concern was raised that the building would have an unacceptable relationship with neighbouring properties. This needs to be addressed within any formal submission.
- It was identified that the site is within a Green Link identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map.
- Parking spaces on the roof of the rear extension needs to be given more detailed consideration.
- A roof garden would not be acceptable in terms of the relationship with neighbouring residents but a ground level amenity space would be welcomed.
- A Construction Management Statement would be required in due course to demonstrate how Environmental Protection matters would be dealt with during construction.
- The use class of the accommodation will dictate the car parking provision required. Reference should be made to the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.
- Separate refuse and cycle storage areas should be provided.
- Section 106 contributions and CIL may be payable on the application.
- The site is within Flood Zone 2. A Flood Risk Assessment will be needed to accompany the application.

3.4 Following the written response a pre-application meeting was held with Jonathan Markwell (JM) at the Council offices in July 2015. The following points were discussed and agreed, as per meeting notes provided to the Council by the applicant:

Use Class

- 3.5 The proposed use class was discussed. It was confirmed that the intention was for the accommodation to be ancillary to the public house use and, therefore, an A4 use class. This clarification immediately removed some of the comments raised if the use class had been C2 or C3 use class.
- 3.6 JM advised that if it is an A4 use, the application submission and the design and layout of the proposal should demonstrate that relationship. This could include:



1. showing integration within the layout in terms of access to the buildings;
2. removing the fencing between the parts of the site;
3. identifying a clear reception area for the accommodation;
4. considering how out of hours use would be provided for the accommodation;
5. confirming that breakfast would be served in the existing pub building;
6. suggesting the wording of a condition to tie the two uses together, ensuring it would be enforceable.

Character/Amenity

- 3.7 JM commented that the spacing to the front of the site was important as was the green corridor designation.
- 3.8 The main feature of the public house is the front elevation. On that basis, JM advised that the impact of a modest ancillary development at the rear is likely to be acceptable in respect of impact on the setting of the listed building.
- 3.9 JM advised that the proposed development will need to include clear landscaping proposals which demonstrate wildlife benefits, consider use of green roofs and new tree planting.
- 3.10 JM reiterated his concern that a three storey building was too large for the site, would be too visually dominant and would be too close to the neighbouring properties.
- 3.11 The precedent of other three storey buildings in the locality was discussed. However, JM felt that the mass of building proposed was too much for the site, particularly because of the listed building. JM advised that there is no specific separation distance for the relationship between habitable room windows and a flank wall. We just need to get a balanced scheme that works on the site.
- 3.12 A ground floor structure and a smaller first floor with no second floor was discussed. The first floor section could be quite centrally located within the site to be directly behind the public house building and with good separation distances to the neighbouring properties.
- 3.13 JM felt that there was definitely merit in exploring this further. He commented that a proposal for two storey development would need to demonstrate an improvement to the street scene. Surrounding development is largely set back from street frontages but there are some flank walls up to the road frontage and frontages enclosed with 1.8m solid fencing, which are also considerations. Our proposals need to consider this context and take the opportunity to enhance the street scene.

Parking

- 3.14 JM confirmed that by being in an A4 ancillary use the parking requirements could be more relaxed. He recommended that we seek further advice from the highways officer before formal submission. He would be able to forward on further plans and justification for the highways officer to consider.



- 3.15 We should consider monitoring the car park usage and how much is associated with the use of the public house. If the current car park is under used, this will assist in allowing flexibility. We could agree the scope of such a survey with the highways officer.

Viability

- 3.16 It was reemphasised that the trigger for the proposal is seeking an additional stream of income to support the public house business. This should be taken into account in weighing up the issues for consideration in the determination of the application.

Other Issues

- 3.17 It will be necessary to consider the layout in relation to the flood zones and make a case for this.
- 3.18 Some public consultation with local residents should be carried out prior to formal submission of the application. Support for the proposed development, not just the public house use, are important.
- 3.19 JM confirmed that no CIL payment is due on A4 uses.
- 3.20 In summary it was agreed that there was no objection in principle to development on the land at the rear and the need for this development to support the public house as a business and community facility was recognised. The application needs to provide a comprehensive case for the development and address the key issues that have been identified.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.21 The proposed development has been amended in response to the advice provided by the Council at the pre-application stage. The main changes are as follows:
- The use of the proposed rooms is confirmed as guest bed and breakfast rooms ancillary to the main A4 public house use.
 - The Viability Report accompanying this application explains the background to the proposals and how this relates to the business plan for the site. In accordance with the pre-application advice from the planning officer consideration has been given to ensuring that the proposed development will not harm the viability of the pub business. The size of the beer garden for customers will remain unchanged. The proposal seeks to make more efficient use of the underutilised part of the site. This is in the long term interests of the public house as a business and community facility within a listed building.
 - The reception for the rooms will be in the main bar, all food would be served in the bar and the normal access to the rooms will be via the bar. An out of hours access will be provided for residents once they have checked in for when the public house is close.



- The proposed new building is now more centrally located within the rear part of the site to increase the separation distances from the neighbouring properties and ensure an acceptable relationship with the listed public house building. This is demonstrated by the submitted application drawings.
- The number of rooms proposed has been reduced from 8 to 6 and the number of floors of accommodation has been reduced from 3 to 2. A mezzanine floor is proposed to provide 3 additional car parking spaces to serve the public house and the residents of the guest rooms.
- No usable roof garden is proposed but the scheme includes significant new landscaping at various levels including at ground level.
- The Landscaping Scheme, Green Link Appraisal Report and Ecology Report all demonstrate the significant enhancement to biodiversity offered by this scheme.
- The amended location of the building and its reduced size ensures that it will not harm the continued use of the beer garden to the public house, which is an important feature for the public house and, having been recently invested in, does contribute positively to the business.
- The car parking provision is proposed to be increased from 8 spaces to 11 spaces. A parking survey was undertaken and is outlined in the accompanying Transport Technical Note.
- Provision is made within the scheme for the storage and collection of refuse as well as the secure storage of bicycles.
- The Heritage Statement submitted with this application confirms that the proposal will have an acceptable relationship with the listed building.
- A Flood Risk assessment has been carried out and is submitted with this application to confirm the proposed development will not be at risk from flooding and will not give rise to increased flood risk elsewhere.

3.22 All of the matters raised at the pre-application stage have been fully addressed by the final plans. How these comply with the relevant planning policies is set out in the following Section.



4 PLANNING APPRAISAL

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are of relevant to the consideration of this application.
- 4.2 At the local level, the Development Plan for the purposes of the assessment of this planning application is comprised of:
- Core Strategy (CS) (adopted January 2008); and
 - Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) (adopted October 2012).
- 4.3 A review of the Development Plan is currently underway. However, it is at the very early stages and so cannot be given significant weight at this time.
- 4.4 The Local Plan Proposals Map shows the site as being within a Green Link. An identified cycle route runs alongside the river tow path to the front of the site. The public house building is listed. The site is not subject to any other designations or allocations that would affect the consideration of this application.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 4.5 The application site is within the built up area of Reading and so is in compliance with Policy CS6, which seeks to resist development outside the settlement boundary.
- 4.6 Policy CS25 sets out requirements for the scale and location of retail, leisure and culture development and seeks to direct it towards the town centre of Reading. However, that policy is aimed at major development and freestanding hotel accommodation, which this scheme is not. This proposal is for a minor development in a use that is ancillary to the existing use. There is, therefore, no conflict with Policy CS25.
- 4.7 Policy CS31 encourages the provision, extension or improvement of existing community facilities, which includes public houses. They are particularly encouraged in sustainable locations. This facility is located close to the town centre and within a residential area, enabling many of its customers to walk or cycle to it. The ancillary guest accommodation on the same site will further enhance its sustainability and role as a community facility in accordance with Policy CS31.
- 4.8 This proposal offers the opportunity to ensure the viability of the business, as is demonstrated by the accompanying Viability Report, which will in turn secure the protection of this important community facility and enable further investment in the fabric and long term future of the listed building.



DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- 4.9 Policy CS7 covers the issue of design and the public realm. It sets out a number of criteria against which development proposals must be assessed. These are considered in turn below.

Layout: Urban Structure & Urban Grain

- 4.10 In response to the pre-application advice the layout of the development has been amended to locate the proposed building more centrally in the site. This, along with the reduction in scale, ensures that it will fit in well with the existing building on the site and the surrounding urban grain.

Landscape

- 4.11 The landscaping proposals submitted with the application have been carefully considered to ensure the maximum benefit in terms of enhancement of both biodiversity and visual amenity.

Density & Mix

- 4.12 For the use proposed, mix is not a consideration. The density of the development is relevant for ensuring that the site is not over developed. The reduced scheme now proposed ensures an appropriate building for the site whilst still securing sufficient accommodation to achieve the contribution to the viability of the business.

Scale: Height & Massing

- 4.13 The reduced scale to only two storeys of accommodation with a reduced footprint ensures an acceptable relationship with the adjacent neighbouring properties and the existing public house building.

Architectural Detail & Materials

- 4.14 The architectural detailing has been designed to be a simple modern building that will sit comfortably alongside the listed public house and will not conflict with the modern residential development that surrounds it.

Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place

- 4.15 The proposed layout and landscaping scheme contribute towards achieving a high quality development that is appropriate for the site and its location.

Continuity & Enclosure

- 4.16 The landscaping scheme and proposed boundary treatments ensure that the development will relate well to the listed building without turning its back on the Canal Way frontage.



Quality of the Public Realm

- 4.17 The location of the development means that its main relationship with the public realm is on the Canal Way frontage, which is the rear of the public house site. At present that boundary of the site is characterised by solid fencing and car parking. To either side, the residential development presents solid fencing and blank flank walls to the road.
- 4.18 This proposal offer the opportunity to locate a building with some active frontage on the road frontage, which will enhance the existing visual amenity of the site and the surrounding area.

Ease of Movement & Permeability

- 4.19 The proposals have been designed to ensure easy connectivity throughout the site and to the surrounding road and tow path for customers.

Legibility - clear image and easy to understand

- 4.20 The layout of the new building and appropriate signage will ensure it is clear to resident guests and other customers how to access the building.

Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time

- 4.21 For the use proposed there is no requirement for the accommodation to be any more adaptable than its initial design.

Diversity

- 4.22 The proposed development does not have any adverse impact on supporting diversity.

Respond Positively to Local Context

- 4.23 The proposed development will enhance the Canal Way frontage of the site and ensure the long term viability of the business and community facility.

Create Safe & Accessible Environments

- 4.24 The proposal has been designed to ensure safety and security have been taken into account.

Address the needs of all in society

- 4.25 The proposal seeks to be inclusive as far as is possible within the constraints of the existing site and listed building to identified needs.

Good High Quality Built Forms & Spaces

- 4.26 The aim of the proposed development is to create a high quality development that will enhance the existing business and the setting of the listed building.



RELATIONSHIP WITH NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- 4.27 The requirements of Policy DM4, which seeks to safeguard amenity, have been fully addressed by the proposals.
- 4.28 As can be seen from the proposed plan for the scheme now proposed, which shows the second level of guest accommodation, the separation distances and relationship with the windows of neighbouring properties ensures an acceptable scheme.



HERITAGE IMPACT

- 4.29 Policy CS33 deals with the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. It requires historic features, such as listed buildings, to be protected and where appropriate enhanced.
- 4.30 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal. This is covered by the accompanying Heritage Statement, which concludes:



“The proposal to create a new block of letting rooms to the rear of the public house linked to the principal building by the existing modern cellar is considered to not represent any harm to significant fabric or the setting of the listed building (particularly when the substantial harm already caused by the modern housing development is taken into account) other than it may reduce the visibility of the rear elevation of the public house to some degree when viewed from the south. It is considered that this view to the building is not of particular significance or value such that it may not be altered in any way.

It is argued that the development will bring financial security to the business, allowing the public house to continue trading as such – probably its original function – and so secure its optimum viable and appropriate use.”

- 4.31 This proposal offers the opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the site by securing the comprehensive development of the rear part of the site in a sensitive way without any unacceptable harm to the setting of the building.
- 4.32 In line with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, if the proposal is considered to result in any harm to the significance of the heritage asset in relation to its setting, the public benefit of the protection of the public house business, the community facility and the long term use of the listed building would firmly outweigh any perceived harm.

PARKING/HIGHWAYS

- 4.33 Policy CS22 requires planning applications to *“make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling”*.
- 4.34 Policy CS24 advises 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”*.
- 4.35 The river tow path is an identified cycle route to which Policy SA14 applies. This seeks to ensure that such routes will be maintained and enhanced.
- 4.36 Policy DM12 also sets out a number of criteria on access, traffic and highway related matters that proposed development must consider.
- 4.37 The proposed vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will not change. Given its minor nature, there will be no significant impact on highway safety.
- 4.38 The Transport Technical Note submitted with the application confirms that the objectives of all of these policies are satisfied by the proposed development. It concludes:



“As shown by the parking surveys, there are on average 3 existing spaces free based on the existing surveyed use, this combined with the additional 3 spaces within the hotel extension would provide a reasonable number of spaces to accommodate future hotel patrons particularly given its proximity to the town centre and sustainable travel options.”

FLOODING

4.39 Policy CS35 covers the issue of flooding. It states:

“Planning permission will not be permitted for development in an area identified as being at high risk of flooding, where development would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.”

4.40 The Flood Risk Assessment accompanying this application addresses this matter and concludes that:

“The flood risk to the minor development proposed at The Fisherman’s Cottage is satisfactory and does not constrain the grant of planning consent. Flood related planning conditions are unnecessary.”

LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGY

4.41 The site is identified within a Green Link on the Local Plan Proposals Map. Paragraph 8.2.4 of the SDPD defines this as an area where there is desired connectivity for wildlife between ecologically important areas. In this instance, the Green Link is between the open space to the south of the site and the river to the north.

4.42 Policy CS36 requires development to *“retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes.”*

4.43 Policy DM17 requires that these Green Links shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Achievement of this objective has been demonstrated by the Green Link Appraisal report, landscaping proposal and Ecology report submitted with this application.

4.44 The Green Link Appraisal concludes:

“The existing off site Green Link offer limited biodiversity credentials. In addition, the site also currently offers very little ‘Green’ benefit due to a mass of slate tiled roofs and tarmac hardstanding over the car park. Furthermore the isolated pockets of self-seeded grass and weeds to the rear of the site provide a poor ecological ‘Link’.



Proposals for the site include widening and improving the Green Link along the eastern boundary. To facilitate this, new green areas will be planted including two Ivy vegetated walls, native hedging and flowering species such as Lavender, Cornus, Amelanchier lamarckii and Nepeta. In addition, green roofs have been incorporated, potentially broadening the width of the Green Link by providing 'stepping stones' to green areas west of the site.

We are of the opinion that the proposed landscaping scheme would enhance and improve the Green Link and the flora and fauna in the locality."

4.45 The Ecology report advises that:

"In summary, the Site currently supports features with limited biodiversity value and it does not currently enhance the value of the Green Corridor. However, with the implementation of the above recommendations the biodiversity value of the Site would be enhanced and bring additional value to the Green Corridor. With the above recommendations, I consider that the development will be able to proceed in accordance with the legislation and the planning policies listed above, particularly in relation to Policy DM 17 for enhancing Reading's Green Network."

CIL/SECTION 106

4.46 The planning officer's pre-application advice confirmed that the proposed ancillary A4 use would not be CIL liable. We are not aware of any other Section 106 requirements.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4.47 The local population have been very supportive of the public house and the service it provides. The business' Facebook page receives regular positive reviews and has a high number of followers.

4.48 Prior to the submission of this application there has been no explicit public consultation regarding the proposals. However, the plans will be made available in the bar to enable customers and local resident to view and comment on them during the course of the consideration of the application.



5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This application seeks approval for a modest development of 6 guest rooms to support the existing public house business.
- 5.2 The ultimate objective is to secure a long term sustainable financially viable future for the business, the community facility and the listed building.
- 5.3 The Statement has reviewed the pre-application advice provided by the Council and explained how the comments raised have been addressed in the application.
- 5.4 The application is accompanied by extensive supporting reports dealing with a number of technical aspects. They all conclude that there are no issues that would prevent planning permission and listed building consent being granted.
- 5.5 We invite the Council to accordingly consider these proposals and grant planning permission and listed building consent.