

**578 OXFORD ROAD**

**READING**

**RG30 1EG**

## **PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

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### **1 SUMMARY:**

- 1.1 Planning consent was granted on appeal (application 12/01735/FUL refers) for the demolition of existing rear buildings, the erection of a two storey extension to 578 Oxford Road and the construction of two x one-bedroom dwellings to the rear, by notice dated 21 November 2013. That consent has not been implemented but was effectively renewed in January 2018 by virtue of application reference 171466.
- 1.2 The application now submitted is for full planning consent for the building as approved at 578 Oxford Road and to provide two studio flats to the front on ground and first floor and with a one bedroom duplex flat to the rear utilising the approved first floor extension.
- 1.3 The site is on the corner of Oxford Road and Gordon Place and extends along Gordon Place. The site is within the settlement boundary and falls within an accessible suburban location on a brown field site.
- 1.4 The application is considered to propose an appropriate addition to the housing stock in the borough that would be suitable for a range of occupiers in a sustainable location. For the purposes of this statement however it is now important to set out the development context.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

- 2.1 The site is on the north side of Oxford Road and consists of a two storey end of terrace building with shopfront on the ground floor. The applicants own the freehold of the properties 580, 582 & 584 Oxford Road together with 578 and the ancillary buildings to the rear.
- 2.2 The character of local area is defined primarily by two storey residential terraced development with some commercial uses at ground floor level along Oxford Road.
- 2.3 According to the Local Plan Proposals Map, the site is not within a conservation area or part of the identified District Centre but is within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which covers the entirety of the Oxford Road and streets either side.
- 2.4 The site is within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Councils Revised Parking Standards and Design SPG 2011 which characterises this area as containing a variety of land uses, within 400m walk of high frequency bus services.
- 2.5 This is an established residential area within the settlement boundary and there are good transport links within walking and cycling distance of the site as well good links to local shops and services. The site has previously been found appropriate for the general form of development now proposed and it is not considered that any significant changes to the Development Plan have been made since January 2018 such that the development would now be considered unacceptable.

## **3 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 As noted, there is an extant planning consent to demolish the existing rear buildings, to erect a two storey rear extension to 578 Oxford Road and the construction of two x one-bedroom dwellings over two floors fronting Gordon Place.

- 3.2 The extension to the rear of 578 remains as approved but also with fenestration changes to facilitate the use as residential in the form of two studio flats to the front on ground and first floor and with a one bedroom duplex flat to the rear. Those changes include removal of the shop fronts and signage panels and the insertion a new window to the ground floor Oxford Road elevation, together with the blocking up of two existing windows at ground and first floor along the Gordon Place elevation, a new entrance door and the shifting of a first floor window also along that elevation and new door with window above on the rear, north elevation.
- 3.3 Access to the two studios would be from the doors along the Gordon Place elevation and to the duplex flat via the door on the rear elevation.
- 3.4 There is considered to be a genuine need for smaller housing in the borough which is adaptable and suitable for a range of end users either through the sales or private rental markets. The existing use of the site is no longer viable and not particularly appropriate in the context of the residential nature of the road and the potential comings and goings associated with a commercial use of the site.
- 3.5 This is a brownfield site within a sustainable location where the principle of the development should be considered acceptable subject to compliance with development plan policies.

#### **4. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 4.1 The Development Plan for the area is made up of national planning guidance and the documents adopted as part of the Local Development Framework particularly, in this case, the Core Strategy document and the Sites and Detailed Policies document.
- 4.2 One of the main principles of national policy is to concentrate development in sustainable locations and the provision of housing to meet the needs of a sustainable and buoyant economy is also a principle theme.

- 4.3 In terms of the Local Plan context the following policies are considered relevant to this application:
- 4.4 **Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)** states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of climate change.
- 4.5 **Policy CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)** states, inter alia, that the scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.
- 4.6 **Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access)** states that all buildings should be located, sited and designed to provide suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily.
- 4.7 **Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)** requires 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.
- 4.8 **Policy CS11 (Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses)** notes that outside the Core Employment Areas the loss of employment land for other uses will need to be balanced against a number of factors including the effect of continuing the existing use on the amenity and character of a residential area and the need for alternative uses over the retention of the existing use.
- 4.9 **Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)** states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by: -

- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
- Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;
- The need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and
- The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

4.10 **Policy CS24 (Car/ Cycle Parking)** 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.

4.11 **Policy DM8 (Safeguarding Amenity)** seeks to ensure that development does not have a significant detrimental impact on the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of, among other things:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development.

4.12 **Policy DM6 (Affordable Housing)** requires the provision of 10% affordable housing on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, subject to viability.

## **5 POLICY APPRAISAL**

5.1 With regard to national policy the proposal is considered to be an appropriate response to national requirements in design terms where the proposed development would integrate well into the existing urban form and where the site is within a highly sustainable location where national policy encourages residential development to occur.

5.2 Local Plan policies considered relevant to this application largely make the aspirations of national policy more local.

- 5.3 The development would be constructed to high environmental standards as required by **Policy CS1** and the current Building Regulations but with the 2015 Deregulation bill having received Royal Assent in March 2015 new planning consents from that date can no longer include a condition to comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 5.4 With regard to **Policy CS4** the proposal would seem to be well located for new residential development in terms of the sites accessibility to a range of services and facilities by means other than the private motor car and would be wholly appropriate with regard to the prevailing density in the area.
- 5.5 The development would conform to Part M of the Building Regulations with respect to disabled access and it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with respect to **Policy CS5**.
- 5.6 **Policy CS7** reiterates, to a large extent, the guidance contained in the old Policy CUD14 and it is considered here that the proposal complies with that guidance in that the form, scale and proportions of the building would not be materially different to that which has stood in the street scene for many years.
- 5.7 The site is not located within a Core Employment Area and the established use is not one that sits particularly comfortably within a predominantly residential area. This is a stand-alone site and the loss of the existing use would not result in a piecemeal loss of employment uses and, on balance, it is considered that the proposal represents a better use for the site in a sustainable location and would comply with **Policy CS11**.
- 5.8 The internal layout has been arranged to prevent opportunities for overlooking to other properties and where the form and scale of the building does not materially alter the proposal is considered to comply with **Policy DM8** in terms of impacts around loss of daylight or overbearing effects.

- 5.9 **Policy DM6** seeks to secure affordable housing contributions for new development in the borough however, it is understood the policy excludes development involving the conversion of an existing property.
- 5.10 Notwithstanding that, this is thought to be a well-considered scheme proposal and one that takes full account of the established characteristics of the area. Given the sites location in close proximity to the local services and facilities and public transport connections it is considered that a residential development is acceptable. The overall design is considered to be acceptable and in the context of development in the area the relationship between the proposed and existing houses is also considered acceptable. Given this we consider that the proposal complies with the development plan context for the area and where this is considered to be a sustainable form of development it is hoped it will have the support of the local planning authority.

August 2018