



Supporting Statement

Redevelopment to provide a retail unit
and a net increase of 8 residential units

AT

3 Prospect Street,
Caversham RG4 8JB

Reference:
3PS-180032

Date:
28 March 2018

1. Introduction

- a. This Supporting Statement has been prepared by Just Planning on behalf of Just Caversham Developments Limited to support a full planning application for the redevelopment of a site at 3 Prospect Street and 1a North Street in Caversham to provide 10 residential units (a net increase of 8) and a retail unit.
- b. The development will provide new high-quality new dwellings in a sustainable location in Caversham town centre, making a meaningful contribution to local housing supply.
- c. Following a description of the site and surrounding area, the report will consider relevant planning policies and provide an assessment of the proposed development.
- d. The application is supported by the following drawings and documents:
 - 1706 01 – Site Location Plan, Existing Block Plans & Floorplans
 - 1706 02 – Existing Elevations & Site Sections
 - 1706 03 – Proposed Site Plan
 - 1706 04 – Proposed Floorplans
 - 1706 05 – Proposed Floorplans
 - 1706 06 – Proposed Elevations & Site Sections
 - 1706 07 – Proposed Elevations & Site Sections
 - 1706 08 – Proposed Elevations & Site Sections
 - Sunlight and Daylight Assessment by Herrington Consultants
 - Noise Report by Sharps Gayler Acoustic Consultants
 - Ecological Survey by AA Environmental Limited

2. Site Description

- a. The application site has a frontage on Prospect Street and North Street. The Prospect Street frontage comprises a two-storey building with unusually deep, low-grade single-storey extensions occupying the full extent of the site. The extensions are formed of solid walls rising to a height of approximately 4m, with a flat roof. Figure 1, below, provides a satellite image of the site, showing the extent of the extensions to the restaurant.



Figure 1: Satellite image of 3 Prospect Street & 1a North Street

- b. The commercial unit at 3 Prospect Street was formally in use as a Chinese restaurant and has a 3 bedroom flat at first floor level, with dedicated access from the street. The building is close to the junction with North Street and is bounded by a tall corner building to the north, 5 Prospect Street, and a lower building to the south, number 1, which has a poor-quality mansard roof extension. Most of the buildings on this part of Prospect Street have three storeys. The ridge heights of the buildings along this part of Prospect Street generally lower in height from north to south. An image of the Prospect Street elevation is provided in figure 2, below.



Figure 2: Image of the street elevation of 3 Prospect Street

- c. The North Street frontage is occupied by a bungalow, sitting slightly forward of the building line and offset to the eastern boundary, leaving a gap in the frontage. The bungalow is an anomaly on the streetscene and this part of the street has a weak relationship with surrounding built form. An image of the North Street frontage is provided in figure 3, below.



Figure 3: Image of the street elevation of 1a North Street

- d. The dominant feature on this part of North Street is a block of flats at number 1, visible on the right hand side of the image in figure 3. Land levels slope down from west to east and the ridge heights of the building step down progressively. The eastern neighbour at number 3 North Street has a double-storey side extension projecting to the application site boundary.

- e. Prospect Street is the main road through Caversham, to the north of Reading city centre. It has commercial uses at ground floor level with flats and offices on upper floors.
- f. The properties on Prospect Street and North Street date from different eras and differ in terms of their size, siting and detailed design, giving the streetscene a diverse character and appearance.
- g. The site is located within Residents Parking Permit Area - Zone 01R. There are double yellow lines on Prospect Street and a limited number of residents' parking bays on North Street.
- h. The application buildings are not listed and the site does not lie within a designated conservation area.

3. Proposed Development

- a. The application proposes the demolition of the bungalow fronting North Street and the erection of a new building containing 4 residential units (3 x 2 bedroom, 1 x 1 bedroom), along with bin stores, cycle storage and pedestrian access to the rear of the site. Three parking spaces are provided, set partly beneath the building.
- b. The 2 bedroom flats in the new building fronting North Street each have a GIA of 72sqm. The 1 bedroom unit has a GIA of 40sqm. All of the units are dual-aspect and each has a balcony with a southerly aspect.
- c. The application also proposes the conversion of the single-storey extension to the existing restaurant to provide an additional 4 residential units (3 x 2 bedroom, 1 x 1 bedroom).
- d. The 2 bedroom units in the converted rear extensions have a GIA of between 61sqm to 68sqm. The 1 bedroom unit has a GIA of 52sqm. Each unit has a private external courtyard garden with a southerly aspect.
- e. The building at 3 Prospect Street is extended upwards to provide a third floor containing a 1 x 2 bedroom flat. The new flat has a gross internal area (GIA) of 68qsm.
- f. It is proposed to change the use of the commercial unit at 3 Prospect Street from use class A3 (restaurant) to use classes A1 (retail) or A2 (professional and financial services).

4. Planning Policy

- a. The development plan for the area comprises the adopted Core Strategy (2008, with alterations 2015) and the adopted Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- b. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) sets out the government's national planning policies and how these policies should be applied. It identifies a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development is sustainable when it meets the economic, social and environmental needs of a community.
- c. The Ministerial Foreword sets out that development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay - a presumption in favour of sustainable development is the basis for every plan, and every planning decision. Paragraph 14 states that for decision-making this means:
 - i. *Approving development proposals that accord with development plan without delay and;*
 - ii. *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - 1. *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as whole; or*
 - 2. *Specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted.*
- d. Paragraph 17 sets out the core principles. Those particularly relevant to this application are:

Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.

Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (Brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.

- e. A key theme of the NPPF is growth. Paragraph 19 states:

"The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system

does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system."

- f. Section 6 relates to the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes. Paragraph 47 states that LPAs should:

"Use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period;

*Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of **5%** (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved from forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;*

Identify a supply of specific developable sites or broad location for growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;

For market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target; and

Set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances."

- g. Paragraph 49 states:

"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development..."

- h. According to Paragraph 56:

"The Government attaches great importance to the design of the

built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."

i. Paragraph 60 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles."

Core Strategy DPD (2008)

j. The Core Strategy sets out the strategy and principles for development in the Borough until 2026. It sets a vision for significant and sustainable growth, to develop the role of Reading as a significant growth point within its sub-region.

k. Core Strategy policies relevant to this planning application include:

- Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design). This states that new development will be acceptable where design of buildings and layouts uses energy, water, minerals, materials and natural resources appropriately efficiently and with care and takes account of climate change;
- Policy CS4 (Accessibility and The Intensity of development) encourages the scale and density of development to be proportionate to the site's levels of pedestrian and public transport accessibility to centres and services;
- Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access) requires suitable access for all users including disabled people;
- Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing) targets an average of at least 572 dwellings per annum in 2006-2016 and 521 per annum in 2016-2026;
- Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) encourages response to local context with a preference for higher density development in the most accessible locations;
- Policy CS22 (Transport Assessments) requires proposals to ensure adequate accessibility and safety by all modes of transport but particularly by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Policy CS24 (Car/cycle Parking) establishes maximum parking standards and cycle parking standards responsive to the accessibility of locations by

sustainable modes;

- Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources) precludes development that would suffer unduly from or contribute to flood risk, water noise or air pollution and requires appropriate mitigation for contaminated land;
- Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands) protects trees and encourages additional tree planting.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document DPD (2012)

- I. The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) adopted in 2012 allocates a number of specific sites for development and sets out detailed policies for development management. The relevant policies are:
 - Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) reinforces the NPPF and confirms a positive approach to planning, with planning applications that accord with the development plan being approved without delay unless material circumstances indicate otherwise;
 - Policy DM1 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires development to demonstrate design to adapt to climate change, including orientation for natural heating and ventilation, resistance and resilience, use of trees and other planting to improve microclimates, and minimising surface water run-off.
 - Policy DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) requires appropriate contributions through planning obligations and/or CIL for relevant local infrastructure.
 - Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to protect the living environment of existing and new residential property in terms of avoiding undue overlooking/loss of privacy, loss of sunlight/daylight, dominance, noise, dust, vibration, fumes or crime.
 - Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that dwellings should be provided with relevant, functional private or communal open space.
 - Policy DM18 (Tree Planting) requires provision for new tree planting on or off site to improve the amount of tree coverage, provide for biodiversity and help adapt to climate change.
 - Policy DM19 (Air Quality) requires attention to improving air quality and mitigating air pollution effects notably within Air Quality Management Areas.

5. Assessment

- a. Core Strategy policy CS14 sets the Council an ambitious target for the supply of new housing. Policy CS15 promotes development in the most sustainable, town centre locations. The proposal provides much needed new dwellings in an existing urban area, within reach of local facilities and transport links, and is acceptable in principle.

Design & Appearance

- b. As the image in figure 3, on page 4 of this document, shows, the existing ground floor rear extensions at 3 Prospect Street are outsized, low grade and have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the rear streetscene. As figure 2 shows, the bungalow on the North Street frontage differs in size, shape and detailed design to its neighbours, sits forward of the building line and is offset to the eastern boundary, leaving a gap in the frontage.
- c. The development significantly improves the appearance of the interior of the site by replacing the existing extensions with a more sensitive design response. Large parts of the extension are removed to provide the new dwellings with private external courtyards. The perimeter walls around the courtyard areas are lowered in height from a current height of 4m to a less-imposing 2m. The dwellings have new roofs, with varied maximum heights and higher-quality materials.
- d. The new building at 1a North Street replaces the existing bungalow and completes the North Street frontage. The new buildings follow the slope of the street, stepping down from 1 North Street, a block of flats immediately to the west, to 3 North Street, an extended terraced house immediately to the east. The new building integrates with the surrounding pattern of development and relates well to its neighbours in terms of its size, scale and proportions.
- e. The application building is one of the few buildings on this row rising 2 storeys, rather than 3 storeys. The new floor above the commercial premises rises no higher than the ridge of the northern neighbour, 5 Prospect Street. The properties to the south step down from the ridge over the new extension. The design of the new extension incorporates an attractive front gable feature and uses materials to match the existing building. The extended building will integrate comfortably with the surrounding built form, especially given the variety in the size and style of neighbouring buildings.

Standard of Accommodation

- f. All of the units exceed the minimum gross internal areas (GIAs) set out in the

government's Technical Housing Standard – Nationally Described Space Standard.

- g. The 4 units fronting North Street and the new unit above the commercial premises on Prospect Street are dual-aspect, with generous proportions and good light, outlook and ventilation. The North Street units have south-facing balconies.
- h. The 4 units converted from the ground floor extensions are generously proportioned with large floor-to-ceiling glazed windows and doors opening onto private courtyards, which face south.
- i. The development has been carefully designed to ensure that the new units do not suffer a harmful impact from neighbours in terms of overlooking or a loss of privacy. Proposed Section D-D on submitted drawing 1706 07 shows that there is no direct line of sight from the rear windows in the existing neighbouring building at 1 North Street into the new ground floor dwellings.
- j. Proposed Section B-B shows that there will be no direct views from the new flats fronting North Street onto the easternmost of the new ground floor dwellings. Privacy screening is proposed for the outside amenity space to Unit 1.
- k. There is a substantial separation distance between the new units and the rear elevations of the properties fronting South Street, to the south of the site. In addition, the deepest parts of the houses fronting South Street (their outriggers) do not have rear-facing windows, creating no opportunities for overlooking.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

- l. The ground floor units to the rear of 3 Prospect Street are formed out of existing extensions and, as they do not create new built form, will not lead to an increased impact on neighbours.
- m. As part of the development, a 4m-high wall located immediately behind rear-facing ground floor habitable windows in the existing block of flats at 1 North Street is reduced in height to 1.8m. This substantially improves the quality of accommodation enjoyed by these existing neighbouring flats, as shown in figure 4, below.

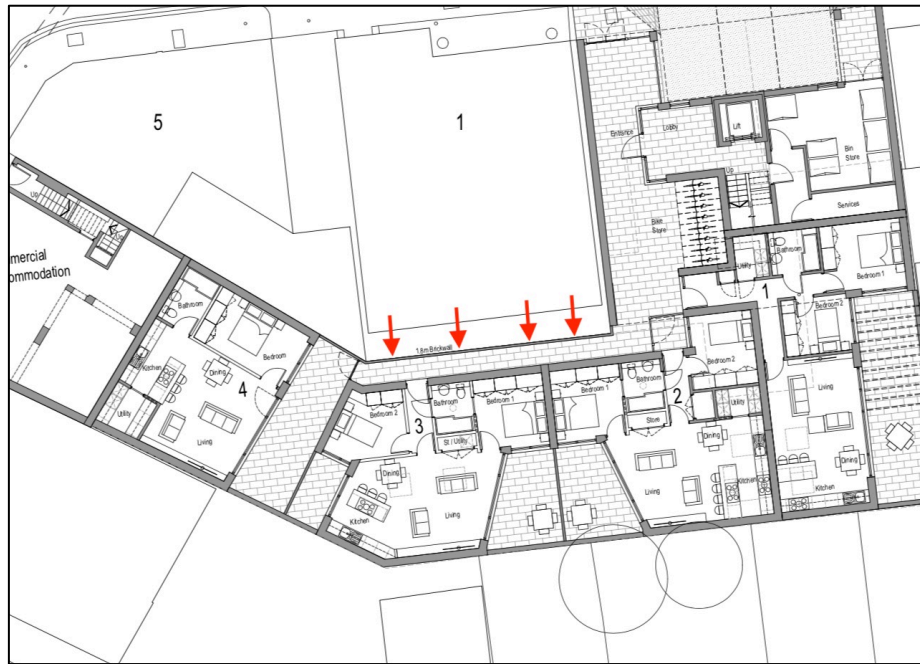


Figure 4: Ground floor flats at 1 North Street currently look directly onto a 4m wall. The development reduces this in height to 1.8m

- n. The new building fronting North Street aligns with the neighbours at 1 and 3 North Street. The building projects deeper than the neighbour at number 3 North Street but its closest windows are non-habitable and the eastern rear corner of the new building is cut away so that there is no overbearing impact on this neighbour.
- o. The application is accompanied by a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment prepared by Herrington Consultants. The report considers the impact of the development on sensitive receptors in neighbouring buildings on Prospect Street and North Street and concludes that there will be no meaningful impact on neighbours in terms of overshadowing or a loss of light. The report confirms that some neighbouring windows will enjoy a material increase in levels of daylight as a direct result of the development.

Highways & Parking

- p. Policy CS24 sets maximum car parking standards and requires that developments make adequate provision for the storage of bicycles. The Council's maximum provision for 1-2 bedroom units is 1 parking space per unit. The Council has indicated that it does not object to reduced car parking provision, or a car-free development, in this location.
- q. The site is sustainably located for town centre facilities, bus routes and Reading railway station. The application proposes 3 off-street parking spaces on the North Street frontage, using the existing crossover. Dedicated bicycle storage for 8 cycles is provided, accessed from North Street. This exceeds

Council's minimum standard of 0.5 cycles per residential unit.

Refuse & Recycling

- r. The submitted plans show the provision of refuse and recycling storage accessed from North Street. Residents of the new development may access the refuse store through the lobby of the new flats. There are separate doors providing access to the street, for quick and easy collection by the Council. Access to the bin store is within 15m of the highway, in line with Council standards.

Retail Unit

- s. The application proposes a change in the use of the existing restaurant (use class A3) to a use in retail (A1) or professional and financial services (A2), including the removal of the extractor flue and other ventilation equipment. An A1 or A2 use is likely to have less impact on the surrounding area in terms of noise, fumes and odours.
- t. The retail unit is not likely to generate large volumes of waste and it is intended that it be serviced from Prospect Street.

Noise

- u. The applicant has commissioned a Noise Assessment by Sharps Gaylor Acoustic Consultants. The assessment is submitted with this application. The report recommends construction techniques to reduce noise transmission between units and glazing to limit noise from Prospect Street. The applicant will accept a planning condition requiring that the development follows the recommendations set out in the assessment.

Ecology

- v. The applicant has commissioned an Ecological Survey by AA Environmental Limited. The survey is submitted with this application. The survey concludes that the site is of overall low ecological value with no evidence of the presence of bats.

6. Conclusions

- a. The NPPF seeks to make better use of sites in existing urban areas, close to transport links. The Core Strategy sets the Council ambitious targets for the provision of new homes and directs new development to town centres. The applicant's proposal provides high-quality new dwellings in a sustainable location and thereby represents sustainable development.
- b. The existing single-storey rear extension to the Chinese restaurant occupies the entire site, rises 4m above ground level and is unsympathetic in terms of its design and choice of materials. The replacement of the extension with a modest, more carefully designed structure will materially improve the site's visual amenities. By reducing wall heights around the perimeter of the site, the rear extensions are less oppressive and greater volumes of light reach rear-facing windows in the existing block of flats at 1 North Street. The removal of the flue and the permanent closure of the restaurant will also improve living conditions for local residents.
- c. The demolition of the bungalow at 1a North Street and the completion of the North Street frontage will improve the relationship between this part of the site and the street and materially improve the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- d. The new flats exceed the government minimum GIA standards, have good light and outlook and benefit from access to balconies and courtyards. They will provide future occupiers with a very high quality of living accommodation.
- e. The new units will not be overlooked by neighbours and will not themselves have a harmful impact on neighbours. The development is cut away to mitigate any impact on 3 North Street and a report by a Daylight and Sunlight Consultant shows no loss of light affecting close neighbours. Sections provided by the architect demonstrate that neighbours will not have intrusive views into the new dwellings.
- f. For these reasons, the applicant contends that the proposal represents sustainable development and respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.



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