

GEORGE STREET
PLANNING STATEMENT
FOR READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAY 2018

George Street

Planning Statement
May 2018

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Project Brief

LDA Design have been commissioned by Reading Borough Council to prepare planning application for land at adjacent to No. 94 George Street at grid reference: 470557 (eastings), 173744 (northings) (referred to in this document as 'the site') in Reading, Berkshire. The planning application is for a residential development of 4 affordable dwellings including hard and soft landscaping.

Reading Borough Council has held a long-standing commitment to ensuring a supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs. The Council has retained its housing stock and currently owns circa 7,000 homes and as part of its commitment to increasing the new affordable housing supply, Reading Borough Council is developing its own programme of new build housing.

Reading Borough Council considers that the site provides an opportunity to develop quality homes for the residents of Reading.

1.2. Structure of document

This Planning Statement provides a thorough assessment of the relevant issues under the following headings:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Site Context
- 3) The proposals
- 4) Planning policy and guidance
- 5) Planning assessment
- 6) Conclusion

Appendix:

- 1) Drawing Register
- 2) Dwelling Schedule

The Planning Statement is informed by, and should be read in conjunction with, the following additional submissions:

- The planning application form, notices and certificates
 - Design and Access Statement (DAS), including Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 - Noise and Vibration Assessment
 - Arboricultural Report
 - Phase 1 Contamination Land Assessment
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- Air Quality Report
- Drainage Strategy
- Planning Application Drawings Schedule

1.3. Approach to planning application

A full detailed planning application has been prepared to secure the development of the site for affordable housing. A pre-application meeting with RBC planning Officers was held on 18th August 2017 with Richard Eatough and Ralph Chakadya to discuss the scheme. This meeting and subsequent correspondence has helped to inform the scope and content of information required to support the planning application, and the approach to planning obligations. Design advice provided during this meeting is discussed in the Design and Access Statement.

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2.0 Site context

2.1. Location

The site occupies a plot, measuring 366sqm, at the northern end of the residential street of George Street, located in central Reading (see the Location Plan, drawing: 7870_PL_001). The site lies within the administrative area of Reading Borough Council. The site comprises a vacant, overgrown area of land with evidence of development previously having been on the site.

The site is situated on the edge of a predominantly residential area. To the south of the site are terraced properties of George Street, to the west of the site on the opposite side of the road is Fairview Youth and Community Centre. To the north of the site beyond a bund, is a railway and rail siding. To the west of the site, and to the rear of properties along George Street and Cambridge Street, is an area of allotments. These are accessed from George Street via a path that runs along the north-west edge of the site.

2.2. Site ownership

The site is owned by Reading Borough Council, who are also the applicant.

2.3. Planning History

There is no record of any planning applications for this site contained on RBC's online register. However, the review of historical maps that is contained in the Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment submitted with this application, reveals that there were previously two dwellings on the site (number 96 and 98). It appears that number 98 George Street was demolished first, during some point in the 1990's, with number 96 being demolished after this. No record of any demolition (or any other references to the addresses 96 or 98 George Street) can be found from RBC's online planning register.

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3.0 The Proposals

This section provides a brief description of the proposals. Further detailed information can be found within the DAS which should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement.

3.1. Scheme description

Full details of the scheme design and the materials to be used are set out in the Design and Access Statement. The key features of the scheme are as follows:

- Provision of 4no. new affordable homes comprising 2no. 1 bedroom ground floor flats and 2no. 2 bedroom maisonettes;
- Buildings that are of their time, whilst the scale, massing, materiality, fenestration and rhythm of the front elevation all reflect the character of its immediate context within a Victorian terraced street;
- Private walled gardens to the ground floor flats to the rear of the dwellings, along with a larger, lawned communal garden beyond;
- Proposed tree planting in the rear garden along the north west boundary to reinforce the green corridor and provide some visual and acoustic screening;
- Landscaping to the front to create defensible space in front of the ground floor windows, and to help reinforce the rhythm of the street;
- Provision of 4no. cycle storage spaces within a secure communal cycle store.

3.2. Consultation

At the early stages of the design process proposals were submitted to the local authority planning team for comment and discussion, this was followed by a meeting and further submissions of the proposal amended to reflect the comments and suggestions of the local authority planning team. This enabled us to arrive at a proposal for the site that was agreed in principle with the local authority.

Prior to submission of the planning application Local Ward Councillors were briefed on the proposed development and the draft proposals were sent out in a Public Consultation newsletter that was distributed to around 100 local residents and neighbours on the 10th April, this set out the proposal for the site and invited them to provide their thoughts and comments so that these could be considered and reflected in the design where appropriate prior to planning submission.

There were no comments received during the two week public consultation.

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4.0 Planning policy and guidance

The following policy review assesses how this proposed scheme performs against national and local planning policy objectives and the Development Plan.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires an application to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate to the contrary.

Material considerations include, amongst other matters, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance, and other policy documents, the views of the statutory consultees and the views of the public.

This statement will highlight the most relevant policy and seeks to deliver a coherent argument that demonstrates the proposed scheme's compliance with various policy documents.

4.1. The Development Plan

The Development Plan for Reading comprises the following policy documents:

- Core Strategy (adopted January 2008 with Alteration Adopted 27th January 2015)
- Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted January 2009)
- Sites and Detailed Policies Document (Adopted October 2012 (altered January 2015))

The site falls just outside of the area to which the Reading Central Area Action Plan relates. The relevant policies of the Core Strategy and the Sites and Detailed Policies document are outlined below.

Reading Core Strategy

The Core Strategy sets out Reading Borough Council (RBC)'s overall planning strategy. It was originally adopted in 2008 and subsequently altered to update Policy CS16 following RBC's review of their affordable housing policies, in conjunction with introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy. The alterations were adopted on 27th January 2015.

The policies that are relevant for the purposes of this application are outlined below:

Under Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) proposals for new development 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 the effects of climate change.

Policy CS2 (Waste Minimisation) requires development to demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management.

Policy CS3 requires new housing development to be collocated with a range of accessible facilities or appropriately planned and located to ensure that access to such facilities is provided.

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Policy CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development) requires development to be at a scale, density and intensity related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.

Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access) requires all buildings to 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.

Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) expects development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities) will not permit proposals for development unless the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is satisfied that infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided or re-provided at the appropriate time. Planning obligations will be required to secure the enhancement of additional physical and social infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets.

Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing) specifies that provision will be made for the completion of an average of at least 521 dwellings per annum in the period 2016-2026.

Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) seeks to provide an appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough, informed by the characteristics of the area, level of accessibility, the need to achieve high quality design and the need to minimise environmental impacts.

Policy CS16 (Affordable Housing) states that all developments of 15 dwellings and above will provide 30% of the total number of dwellings in the form of affordable housing to meet the needs of the area.

Policy CS22 (Transport Assessments) states that planning permission will not be granted unless development proposals 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, in accordance with an agreed transport assessment submitted as part of the application.

Policy CS24 (Car/ Cycle Parking) applies maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements in relation to the accessibility of locations to sustainable transport facilities.

Policy CS29 (Provision of Open Space) requires all new developments to make provision for the open space needs of the development through appropriate on or off-site provision, or through contributions. On sites of less than 50 dwellings new open space provision/ improvements/ enhancements will be sought through appropriate contributions.

Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources) will only permit development where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution; where it would preserve or ideally enhance ground and surface water quality; and where existing water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure are adequate to support the proposed development. Development will be permitted on land affected by contamination where it can be demonstrated that the contamination can be satisfactorily remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use.

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In line with Policy CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology), development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest found within the application site into their schemes.

Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) seeks to protect individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands from damage or removal and to extend the Borough's vegetation cover.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (October 2012)

Policy DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change requires all developments to demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change, and lists the measure that should be incorporated into development. These include orientating buildings to maximise natural heating and ventilation; using trees and landscaping to provide shading; and minimising the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system.

Policy DM3: Infrastructure Planning requires proposals to make appropriate provision for infrastructure, services, resources and amenities through planning obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy as relevant.

Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity ensures that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; or Crime and safety.

Policy DM5: Housing Mix seeks to ensure that all new-build dwellings in any location will be built to 'Lifetimes Homes' standards, having regard to all other material considerations.

Policy DM10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space requires dwellings to be provided with functional private or communal open space that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens. The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.

Policy DM18: Tree Planting requires new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site, or off-site where appropriate.

Policy DM19: Air Quality requires development to have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce effects of poor air quality. The Policy also requires that where a development that introduces sensitive uses (such as residential) into an Air Quality Management Area, detrimental effects on that use will be mitigated.

4.2. Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The core theme of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As per paragraph 14, in terms of decision taking for local planning authorities this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay; and

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- Where the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against policies in this framework as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted.

Annex 1: Implementation of the NPPF sets out the degree of weight that should be given to relevant policies in Development Plans published prior to the NPPF. Paragraph 215 confirms that, *“due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”*

Decision-takers may also give weight to policies in emerging plans depending upon their stage in preparation, level of objections received and degree of consistency with the NPPF (para 216).

The NPPF acknowledges that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, environmental and economic. Paragraph 7 outlines the roles that planning should play in respect of each element of sustainable development. The social role of the planning system is outlined as, *‘supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations’*.

Paragraph 9 clarifies that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in improving people’s quality of life, which includes widening the choice of high quality homes.

Paragraph 49 clarifies that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, NPPF paragraph 50 expects local authorities to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community, and further states that *‘where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site’*.

The NPPF defines affordable housing as *‘Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market’* (Annexe 2).

New Local Plan

RBC are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan was published for consultation between 30th November 2017 – 26th January 2018. A number of the policies remain broadly similar to those in the adopted Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document. Notable updates to policies that are relevant for the purposes of this application include the new draft Policy H1 (Provision of Housing), which stipulates that provision will be made for an additional 15,433 homes for the period 2013 – 2036, which equates to an average of 671 homes per annum). This effectively updates Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy.

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Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (July 2013)

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is intended to provide users of the planning service in Reading with an appropriate framework for determining the size, type, form and content of affordable housing that will be sought in considering whether planning applications for development accord with various local planning policies that form part of the development plan for the Borough. The guidance contained in the SPD is largely geared towards schemes for which there is a proportion of affordable housing, as opposed to schemes such as the Proposed Development which proposes only affordable housing.

Section 3.0 confirms that ‘various assessments over the years have pointed to a very high level of need for affordable housing in the borough’.

The SPD advises that in order to meet identified priority needs for affordable housing, new developments providing affordable housing in compliance with policies CS16 and DM6 shall include a range and mix of types and sizes of affordable housing (as appropriate depending on site size).

The SPD identifies priority affordable housing needs in Reading. These include 1 bed flats in blocks of not more than 6 for vulnerable singles, as well as pepper potted small flats on section 106 sites. It is confirmed that other needs and priorities will from time to time be detailed and changed through the Council’s Housing Strategy.

Community Infrastructure Levy (January 2015)

RBC have an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule which sets the borough wide CIL rate for residential development at £120 per m². As a 100% affordable housing scheme, it has been agreed with the Local Authority that the scheme will be exempt from CIL charges, in line with the regulations.

Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (April 2015)

The SPD sets out the Council’s approach towards seeking planning obligations, alongside the introduction of the Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July 2011)

The SPD aims to promote high standards of Sustainable Design and Construction, providing detail on how to comply with development plan policies set out in the Core Strategy. It aims to assist applicants in ensuring that relevant information is submitted at the appropriate stage of an application to comply with the requirements of Reading’s sustainability policies and national guidance.

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011)

The SPD provides guidance on the levels of car and cycle parking required for new developments. A zonal approach has been adopted. This considers accessibility to sustainable forms of transportation and in the case of residential parking, the distance to local facilities and services.

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5.0 Planning assessment

5.1. The principle of the development

RBC have confirmed that the principle of residential development at this site is considered acceptable.

The Site is located within an established residential area which is well served by a range of facilities and services including schools, health facilities and local shops. The site is under 1km from the main City Centre. The location of the site accords with the principles outlined in Core Strategy Policy CS14 in being in an area of high accessibility and having access to efficient and effective public transport. The centre of the Site is located around 320m from the bus stops along Oxford Road, which are served by Skyblue and purple bus services, both providing access to Reading City Centre. The site is approximately 500m from Reading West station, while Reading railway station is under 1km from the Site and provides mainline links to London Paddington and Oxford.

The Site is therefore considered to be in conformity with the principles of Core Strategy Policy CS14.

5.2. Affordable Housing Provision

As outlined in the supporting text to Policy CS16 and in the Affordable Housing SPD, RBC have identified a significant need for affordable housing provision and views this as a high priority.

The proposed development positively contributes to the overall affordable housing supply in the Borough. The scheme proposes 4no affordable apartments, comprising 2no. 1 bed apartments and 2no. 2 bed apartments. The provision of smaller apartments responds to needs identified in the Affordable Housing SPD and in discussion with Local Authority Housing Officers, for smaller accommodation of 1 or 2 bedrooms.

5.3. High quality design

The Proposed Development has been designed to ensure that it responds sensitively to the existing context, is accessible, sustainable, and attractive. The DAS that supports this application provides detail on the design principles that have informed the Proposed Development.

Responding to Local Character

The Development Plan requires development to ensure that it responds positively to its local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness. The DAS provides an analysis of the site and the existing built context. The scheme aims to respond to its context and enhance distinctiveness in an appropriate way by:

- Creating a 2.5 storey development that maintains a consistent eaves level of the neighbouring properties on George Street and reflects the scale and massing of the locality;
- Replicating the rhythm of the street through the alignment and size of windows and doors across the facade;

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- Using a palette of materials to reflect the materials and character of the surrounding built context, being predominantly red brick with slate roof coverings. The proposed development uses a modern brick pattern of projecting brick courses arranged in panels to reinforce the concept of the terraced house;
- Creating a development with a good sense of place which achieves a contemporary aesthetic whilst referencing the Victorian character of the existing terrace.

Housing Mix and Density

Policy CS15 and Policy DM5 require an appropriate density and mix of residential development to be provided. The housing mix proposed has been developed in consultation with RBCs housing team. Reading continues to experience a shortage of all types of housing, and affordable accommodation is particularly in demand. With thousands of people on the Housing Register and an increasing number of families presenting as homeless there is a clear requirement for both houses and flats, of all sizes, at affordable rent levels. Analysis indicates that the sized property most required are 2 bed units. Requests for this sized property make up 40% of the housing register (bands A-E) and is the property size in most demand when you compare the number of families in need of that sized property and the number of units of that size let per year. The Proposed Development contributes to meeting this demand.

The density of the Proposed Development is reflective of the density of existing housing along George Street, and in the surrounding terraces. It is therefore considered appropriate given the area's existing characteristics, in line with Policy CS15.

Safeguarding Amenity

The layout of the Proposed Development has been designed to help safeguard the amenity of existing residents of the surrounding buildings as well as future occupiers of the Proposed Development as required by Policy DM4.

The Proposed Development is designed at a scale that reflects the existing built context and is therefore not overbearing or visually dominant.

The existing front building line, set by the terrace, will be maintained. The rear building line is slightly extended past the existing line however this will have little effect on the neighbouring properties due to the orientation of the site which ensures that no overshadowing will be created. The 2 storey rear projection extends less than the single storey extensions of the neighbouring properties and is set back from the side boundary wall to prevent any obstruction of the views from the rear windows of the neighbouring property.

A Noise and Vibration Assessment has been undertaken. Noise levels at the site are currently characterised by the railway bordering the site to the north. Noise levels are not considered high in absolute terms. Furthermore based on vibration analysis from the data obtained in the survey it is concluded that the site is not affected by vibration as the levels obtained are well below the relevant limits. Design measures have been incorporated into the Proposed Development in order to protect new occupants from potential noise impacts from the nearby railway. It is proposed that a mechanical ventilation system with heat recovery (MVHR) will be used. This type of centralised ventilation system will allow the building to be air tight and still have adequate ventilation providing a healthy internal environment. This

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system should also reduce the need to open windows in turn reducing any potential noise impacts from the adjacent railway line.

Tree planting along the north western boundary of the rear communal garden is proposed to provide some acoustic screening.

Sustainable Design

The proposed development provides the opportunity to address climate change through design measures and building construction. Sustainable design principles are proposed to be incorporated into the proposed development to ensure that it adequately takes account of the effects of climate change, through building construction and site layout.

The following measures are proposed to be incorporated into the design:

- Taking a Fabric First approach to the design of buildings, with a well insulated building envelope and high levels of air tightness, as the primary strategy for reducing energy use;
- Utilisation of low carbon technologies, such as the use of a mechanical ventilation system with heat recovery, which will reduce the energy required to heat the homes through heat recovery;
- Installation of a photo voltaic (PV) or combined PV and solar thermal panel array on the flat roof of the rear projection and/or the rear west facing roof slope;
- Use of low flush toilets to reduce water usage;
- Proposed new tree planting along the north western boundary of the site;
- Provision of cycle storage within the proposed development;
- Designed to meet and exceed National Space Standards and the provision of accessible bathrooms at ground floor level in the two ground floor flats;
- The detailed design of the scheme will be required to meet with existing Building Regulation requirements, higher levels of insulation, energy efficient heating systems and energy generating devices could add to the energy efficiency of the scheme and should be explored during the detailed design process.
- Responsible sourcing of materials during the construction process and minimisation of waste

Accessibility

The proposed development will be accessed via George Street.

The proposed development is in a highly accessible location. It is located close to existing community facilities and amenities, with local schools, shops and transport links all within a short walk of the site. The city centre is about a 20 minute walk from the site. As outlined in section 5.1, the site is within 500m of the bus stops along Oxford Road, and is within a kilometre of two train stations. The use of cycling will be encouraged through the provision of a secure communal cycle store within the proposed development.

In terms of providing for inclusive access, the proposed development includes the development of two ground floor flats, both of which have level access through the front

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entrance of the property, and to the garden to the rear. The flats have adaptable bathrooms that have the ability to have level showers installed rather than a bath.

Open and Green Space and Trees

The proposed development incorporates an area of communal green space to the rear of the dwellings, which will provide a meaningful and positive amenity space to serve the development in line with Policy DM10.

A tree survey has been completed and an Arboricultural Report is included in the application documents submitted. A total of three arboricultural features were surveyed. These comprise two moderate quality groups of trees and a single low quality individual. The identified arboricultural impacts can be successfully mitigated through the implementation of appropriate tree protection fencing.

Landscaping proposals are outlined in the DAS. They include proposed low level planting within the front garden areas to provide a bit of defensible space in front of windows, as well as planting of a row of trees in the rear garden along the north-western boundary of the site.

Parking provision

Given the site's good accessibility and proximity to the city centre, it has been agreed with RBC highways team that the proposed development will not provide any designated parking. This departure from the maximum parking standards in the- Revised Parking Standards and Design - SPD- Final (31st October 2011) is considered appropriate given the localised circumstances of the site and existing on street parking arrangements for residents along George Street, and the fact that the RBC Housing Department can house tenants that don't require parking.

The Proposed Development, does provide for cycle parking through the provision of a secure communal cycle storage which will provide 4no. cycle storage spaces. This meets the requirement contained in the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.

Waste Storage

The Proposed Development includes adequate provision of waste storage as required by Policy CS2. A communal bin store is provided to the north of the dwellings, which opens onto the pavement to allow for convenient refuse collection.

In light of all the above, it is considered that, in respect of delivering high quality design the Proposed Development is compliant with: Core Strategy Policies CS1, CS2, CS7, CS24, CS29 and CS38 as well as the following policies from the Sites and Detailed Policies Document: DM1, DM4, DM10, DM16, DM18.

5.4. Transport and Highways

Core Strategy Policy CS22 requires proposals to make 'appropriate provision' for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport. The proposed development will have a negligible impact on the local highway network given the size of the development and opportunities for journeys on foot, by bicycle and by public transport. It is considered that with regard to traffic impact, the Proposed Development is in compliance with Policy CS22.

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5.5. Ecology and Biodiversity

A Phase 1 habitat survey has been undertaken to provide information on the ecological resources present or potentially present at the site. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) that is submitted with this application presents the findings. The majority of the site consists of hardstanding and bare ground which offers little potential to support species of nature conservation importance. The areas of scrub on site have potential to be used by nesting birds in the breeding season. Should any vegetation removal be carried out during the nesting bird season (March – September inclusive) then a nesting bird check would need to be carried out no earlier than 24 hours prior to the commencement of works. The habitat on the site was not suitable for bats, however the site sits within a wider landscape which has suitable habitat for foraging and commuting.

The PEA sets out a set of recommendations for achieving ecological enhancement which have been taken into account in the design development of the scheme. Measures include:

- installation of two Schwegler rFF or equivalent bat boxes and bird boxes on new buildings;
- sensitive/low UV lighting;
- naturalistic/wildlife planting using insect-attracting native species;
- climbers on the walls/fences to the rear of the proposed dwellings.

Additionally, the PEA recommends that, given the suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats present in the surrounding area, any proposed use of lighting on the site should be designed in a sensitive manner so as to avoid disturbance. The PEA suggests that direct illumination of trees and buildings in the surrounding area should also be avoided. To achieve this, lighting should be directed to where it is needed and spillage avoided via the use of accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres. Light levels should be as low as guidelines allow, with lighting used only where and when necessary. Proposed external lighting is limited to provision within each entrance porch. The lighting is likely to operate on motion sensors and timers. This will minimise light spill and ensure that lighting is only used as and when needed.

With the inclusion of the above measures it is considered that the proposed development is in compliance with Policy CS36.

5.6. Air Quality

The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area. An Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted with the application. Based on a review of local air quality data for the area in which the site is located, and the proposed development proposals, it can be concluded that future residents will not be exposed to poor air quality, and that no mitigation measures specifically for air quality in the operational phase are required. The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Policy DM19.

5.7. Ground Risk

The site is located close to a railway and has some evidence of previous development that has since been demolished. A Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted with the application. The assessment found that the ground conditions beneath

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the site are expected to comprise deposits of Made Ground (associated with previous land use and demolition), underlain by superficial alluvial deposits and Taplow Gravel (Secondary A Aquifer). The solid strata comprise Chalk Formation (Principal Aquifer). The site does not appear to be in an environmentally or archaeologically sensitive area. The assessment indicates that Moderate to High risks have been identified to end users. If present, these potential pollutant linkages may be broken through the incorporation of design mitigation measures which would function to remove the pathway and reduce the risk. Very Low to Low risks have been identified to controlled waters. The Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment recommended that intrusive ground investigation at the site be undertaken in order to confirm the ground conditions, investigate the potential pollutant linkages identified in the assessment and confirm potential liabilities. Such investigation may comprise advancement of boreholes and/or excavation of exploratory holes that should extend through the Made Ground and into the soft alluvial deposits and locate the underlying chalk strata. Such ground investigation could be secured via a planning condition.

5.8. Sustainable communities

As outlined above the site is in an intrinsically sustainable location being close to existing services and amenities, and close to public transport. The nature of the Proposed Development in delivering a quantum of affordable housing fulfils social sustainability objectives by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations, thereby enhancing access to suitable housing.

In light of the above it is considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with Core Strategy Policies CS3, CS4, CS5, CS9 and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM3.

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6.0 Conclusions

The proposed development will deliver a benefit in respect of affordable housing provision, and is supported through national guidance and specific local policies.

The scheme will deliver the provision of 4 new affordable dwellings, helping to meet an identified local need for smaller 1 and 2 bed affordable units. The proposed development has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is well integrated with the existing built environment of George Street and respecting the local vernacular

As identified in this statement and the other supporting information, the development is considered to be a wholly appropriate for the site and its context, which has been justified in accordance with the planning policy requirements.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that the proposals have been informed by, and are developed in accordance with, national, regional and local planning policies. The overriding social, economic and environmental impacts of the scheme are positive, and where, potential impacts have been identified, suitable mitigation measures have been deployed to either remove or minimise the significance of potential effects. The proposal acceptability in planning policy terms provides a clear route for consenting the scheme in line with the normal development management process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Drawing Register

PL_001 Local Plan
PL_002 Proposed Site Plan
PL_003 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
PL_004 Proposed First and Second Floor Plan
PL_005 Proposed Street Elevations
PL_006 Proposed Rear and Side Elevations

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Appendix 2. Dwellings Schedule

Unit	Typology	Storeys	GIA (m2)
1	2B4P Apartment	2	83
2	1B2P Apartment	1	56
3	1B2P Apartment	1	55
4	2B4P Apartment	2	83
Totals			277