

Planning, Heritage, Affordable Housing and Sustainability Statement

LAND TO R/O 173-177 KINGS ROAD
READING, RG1 4EX



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Introduction

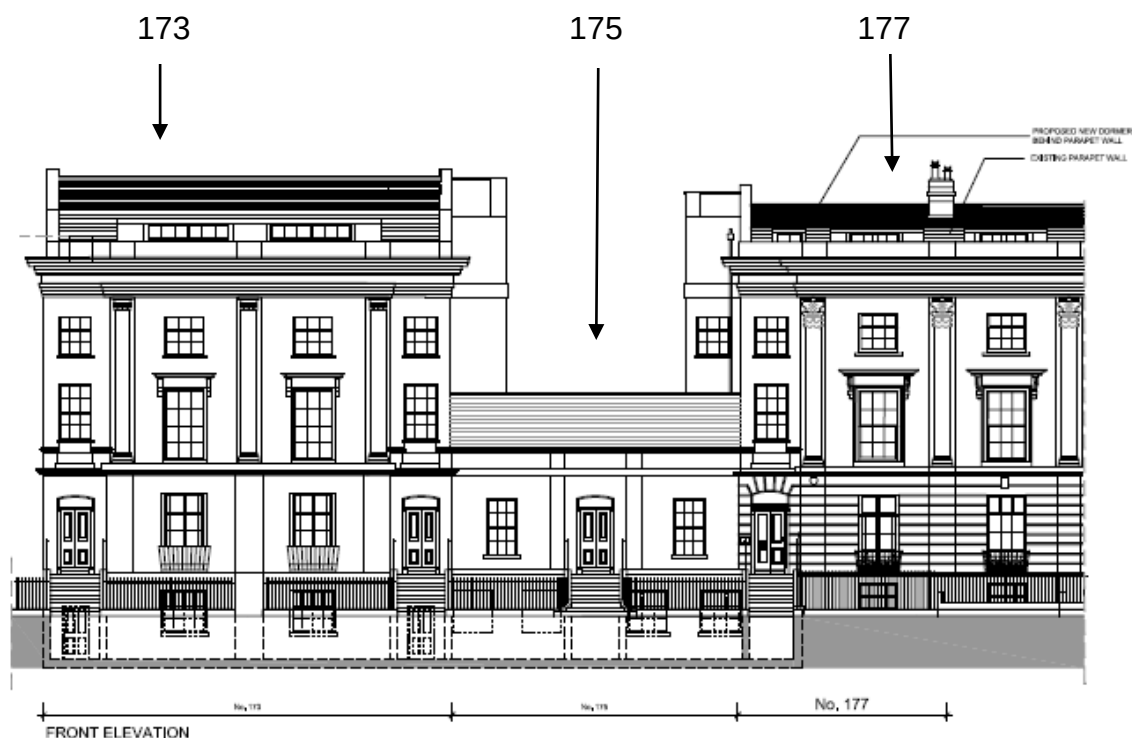
This statement is submitted in support of a planning application by Fitzwilliam Trustees No.1 Ltd c/o Christina Meyer, for the erection of a new building over five floors comprising of 9No. flats (1no. one bed, 6no. two bed and 2no. three bed).

The application is accompanied by the following reports:

- i) Planning Statement – Davis Planning Ltd
- ii) Heritage Statement – Davis Planning Ltd
- iii) Sustainability Statement – Davis Planning Ltd
- iv) Affordable Housing Statement – Davis Planning Ltd
- v) Tree Survey and AIA – Keen Consultants
- vi) Design and Access Statement – Jon Spires Architects
- vii) Air Quality Assessment - Aether

1 The Site and Surroundings

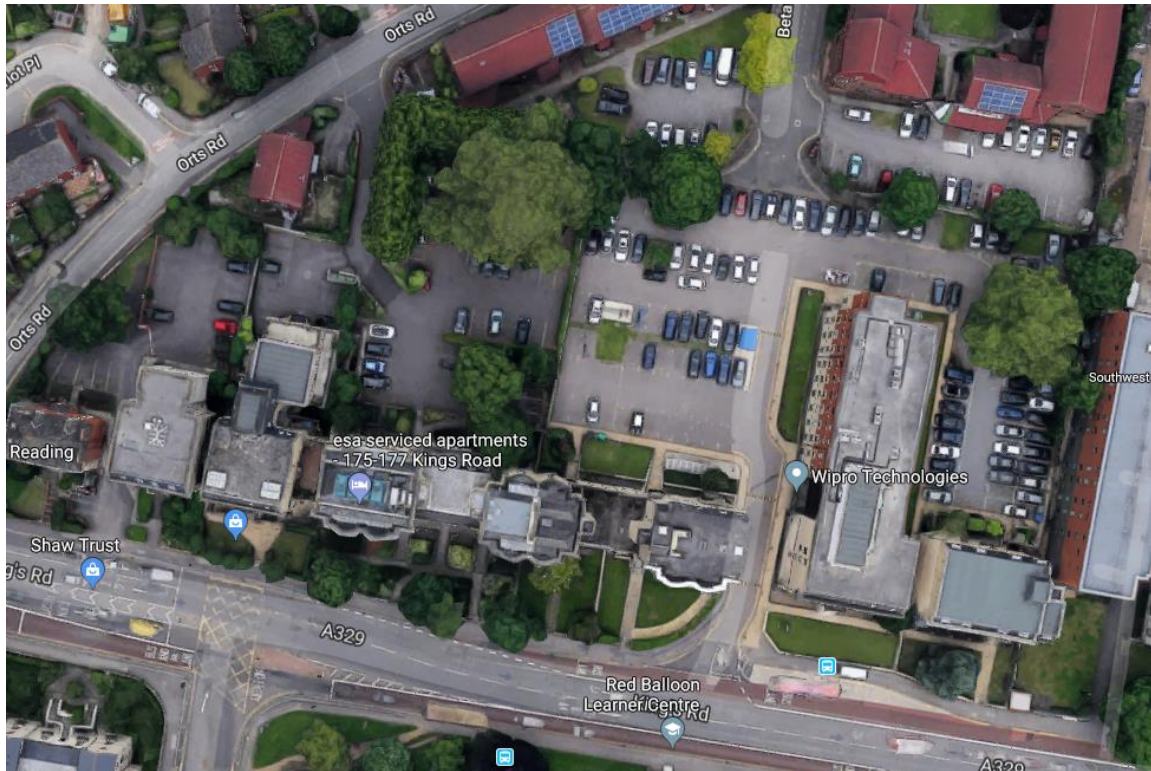
The application site is located to the north of a row of Grade II* listed buildings fronting on Kings Road (Nos.173-177) dating from 1832. The site forms part of large communal area of hardstanding which serves the parking requirements of the frontage properties which have recently undergone refurbishment and a change of use from B1(a) offices to residential apartments (151116/FUL and 160749/FUL). The buildings are constructed from Bath Stone with slate roofs. The buildings are relatively high restricting views to the rear carpark. No.173 is five storeys in height with a lower ground floor and roof level; no.175 is lower and forms a link between Nos.173 and 177. Like No.173, No.177 is also three storeys in height (again with a lower ground floor level and roof level accommodation) – see front elevation below



The parking area is accessed from Orts Road immediately to the north of the application site. The site contains a large Plan Tree which is protected under TPO 95/06. The impact on this tree is discussed within the Tree Survey and report produced by Keen Consultants. The site also falls within the Eldon Square Conservation Area which is centred to the south of the A4 and a Air Quality Management Area (see Air Quality Assessment). The Conservation Area Appraisal refers to the important vistas along Kings Road towards them.

The site lies a short distance to the east to the east of the town centre. The site fall with Zone 2 within the Parking Standard SPD which is acknowledged as the

second most accessible location after the Central Core Area. The SPD states that most of these areas are within walking distance of either main railway station or Reading West railway station and generally well served by public transport. This site is within the inner part of this zone so is particularly accessible to the town centre which is only a short distance to the west.



3 Planning History

The planning history of the site is relatively long and complex and broadly split between Nos.173-175 and No.177 Kings Road. The recent history of each of these is set out below:

Nos.173-175 Kings Road

151116 – Change of use from office (Class B1a) to 13 residential units (Class C3) and associated works. Approved 30.10.2015.

160775 & 160776 – Change of use from office (Class B1a) to 15 (4x1, 10x2 and 1x3 bed) residential units (Class C3) and associated works, including fenestration alterations.

No.177 Kings Road

160749/FUL & 160750/LBC – Change of use from office (Class B1a) to 6 residential units (Class C3) including 2no. studios, 3no. two bedroom and 1no. one bedroom flat plus new front dormer and associated works.

4 Relevant Planning Policies

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework - This guidance states at paragraph 14 that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision-taking. The NPPF identified three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

In paragraph 17, the NPPF sets out twelve 'core planning principles'. These indicate that proposals that involve the effective and efficient re-use of land, and which prioritise previously developed sites over Greenfield land should be encouraged.

Paragraph 56 concerns good design. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decision should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 60 confirms that 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. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Chapter 12 concerns conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 129 states that Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage's asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 131 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Paragraph 197 states that *"...In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

The following policies are considered relevant:

Policy CS1 – Sustainable Construction and Design. Requires the design and site layouts to use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

Policy CS4 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development. States that the scale and density of development within the Borough will be located to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.

Policy CS7- Design and the Public Realm. Requires all development to be of high quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of reading within which it is located. The following components of development will be assessed: Layout, urban structure & urban grain; landscape; density and mix; scale, height and massing; and architectural detail and materials.

Policy CS9 - Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities. States that proposals will not be permitted unless the local planning authority is satisfied that infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary will be provided.

Policy CS15 – Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix. States that density and mix will be determined by location. Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing types and tenures in accordance with the findings of a housing market assessment. Net densities below 30dph will not be acceptable. Indicative density ranges are as follows:

Town Centre: Above 70dph

Urban: 40-75dph

Accessible suburban: 35-55dph

Less accessible suburban: 30-50dph

Policy CS33 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment. Confirms that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment including their settings will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. These includes listed buildings, conservations areas and other features of local or national designation. Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets or their setting

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

Policy SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development – States that a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained with the NPPF.

Policy DM3 – Infrastructure Planning. Requires that proposals for development make appropriate provision for infrastructure, services, resources and amenities. Such provision to be secured through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Policy DM4 – Safeguarding Amenity. States 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; noise and disturbance; artificial lighting; vibration; dust and fumes, smell, crime and safety. The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important.

Policy DM6 – Affordable Housing. States that on sites of less than 15 dwellings, the following proportions of affordable housing provision will be provided:

- On sites of 5-9 dwellings - 20% provision

Policy DM10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space States that 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 similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing.

Policy DM12 – Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters. States that consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.

Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009)

Policy RC5 – Design in the Centre. Sets out a series of requirements for design in new developments within the central area. These include:

- Respect for the existing grid pattern structure of the central area;
- Appropriately designed public spaces and other public realm;
- High quality architectural details and materials;
- Contribution towards the diversity of the central area and capability of adaption over time.

Policy RC9 – Living in the Centre. This policy is concerned with new residential development in the central area. It states that developments will be assessed against the following criteria:

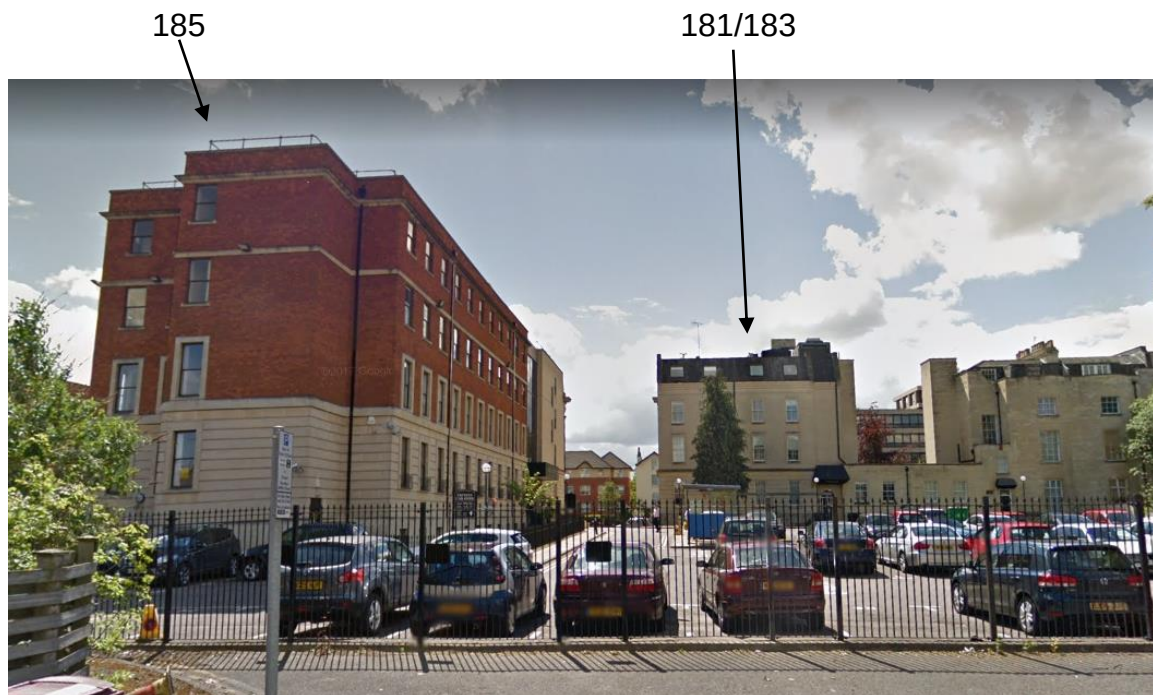
- Contribution towards a mix of different size units, measured by the number of bedrooms. Ideally this should be a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. More specific guidance is applied to developments of 15 dwellings or more;
- Noise disturbance from neighbouring land uses and other sources should be considered and where necessary mitigated;
- Contribution towards affordable housing in line with Policy CS16;
- Where a need for additional community facilities is required, mitigation measures will be required;

4 The Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of a building comprising of 9No. flats.

Principle of Development

The site of 0.14hectares (0.35acres) is in a highly sustainable location, being only a short distance away from Reading town centre, the main Railway Station and a range of shops, services and local facilities. It is located within the urban area of Reading, in a location which is free from environmental constraints (e.g. outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3). Whilst the host buildings are statutorily listed and also within the Eldon Square Conservation Area, this does not rule out redevelopment to the rear of the site in principle subject to meeting development plan policies and national planning policy advice. The site itself currently represents an underused resource and an inefficient parking layout. The surrounding area is already by development forms at significant depth in the form of very large rearward projections. This includes 185 Kings Road (see photograph below).



The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and paragraph 7 identifies that there are three dimensions to sustainable development comprising (i) economic, (ii) social and (iii) environmental. The proposal meets with all of these roles, as follows:

i) An economic role:

The proposed development provides a number of material benefits to the local economy:

- It provides 9 no. flats assisting to meet defined housing needs and the national requirement to demonstrate and maintain a 5 year housing land supply;
- It would result in local employment opportunities in the construction industry. For every new home built, up to two jobs are created for a year (as set out in the Government Housing Strategy for England (2011));
- It will provide contributions to the Council in the form of the New Homes Bonus that can be spent on local infrastructure enhancements;
- The new residents occupying the development will help to sustain key services in the area.

ii) A social role

Wider benefits to the wider community include:

- Providing high-quality residential accommodation which represents a high standard of design that enhances the character of the area;
- Increases opportunities for home ownership;
- Increase the number of residents in the locality to support local community facilities.

iii) An environmental role

The scheme provides a number of benefits to the wider environment such as:

- The site is sustainable located within central Reading, with public transport links and services located in close proximity;
- The scheme responds positively to local context, respecting the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the Listed Buildings to the south;
- Secures a landscaping scheme, to the benefit of the site and the surrounding area. The Tree Report demonstrates that the protected London Plane can be retained.

By meeting the economic, social and environmental goals the proposed development accords with the sustainable development principles contained within the NPPF and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle. The scale and density of the development meets the objectives of Policies CS4 and CS15. The indicative density range set out with Policy CS15 advocates a density range of 40-75 dph for an urban situation. This proposal achieves a density of 64dph which is comfortably within this range.

Impact on the street scene and local character (see Design and Access Statement)

The context of the application site and the surrounding area has been carefully analysed and fully taken into account in designing the application proposal. In particular, the design of the proposal is informed by the local context which includes development at depth such as to the east at no.185.

The proposed building has had regard to the scale and proportions of the existing frontage buildings on the site. It has been designed with a higher central element, with lower outer wings on either side which reduce its bulk and mass and provides a suitable transition to the rear of the adjacent Listed Buildings to the south. The contemporary design with its flat roof is lower than the ridge height of the host buildings along Kings Road. In conjunction with its smaller footprint and built coverage, it will maintain a level of subservience to the Kings Road buildings. Its physical detachment from the rear elevation will ensure that its built form will be read differently to these properties and as a result its external appearance is unlikely to compete with the elaborate design of the listed properties.

Impact on neighbouring dwellings

The siting of the proposed building has taken into account the siting of the adjacent dwellings and window positions and ensures that no loss of amenity will occur as a result of loss of light. Care has been taken in positioning windows within the proposed building, with no habitable room windows proposed on the flank elevations. Policy DM4 is therefore met as there would be no significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing properties.

Housing Mix

The proposal provides for the following housing mix:

- 1 x 1-bed
- 6 x 2-bed
- 2 x 3-bed

The proposed mix is considered appropriate in this highly sustainable location. 2no. three bed flats are proposed (22%) which is an appropriate balance between making the best use of the site within a highly sustainable location whilst having regard to the aims and objectives of Policy RC9 of the Reading

Central Area Action Plan which does not in itself lay down a minimum target for three bedroom units. As the site is located within the central area and is for fewer than 10 dwellings, the requirements of Policy DM5 (housing mix) to provide a minimum 50% 3 bedroom units are therefore not applicable to this development.

Affordable Housing Statement

Policy DM6 (Affordable Housing) states that on sites of between 5-9 units, affordable housing should be provided at a ratio of 20% provision. The application is not in conflict with the NPPF/NPPG which state that contributions should not be sought on sites of greater than 10 units or 1,000sq.m. This application is therefore below the Government threshold contained within the NPPG. Should the Council request affordable housing, the applicant's preference would be that this is applied on the basis of a financial contribution. The applicant reserves the right to consult with an affordable housing viability consultant in this event.

Trees

The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey which address these issues in detail. The tree survey confirms that the protected London Plane can be protected and retained within the proposed layout without harm or future pressure for removal/lopping of branches.

Access and Parking

The proposal reconfigures the existing layout to the rear of Nos.173-177 making better use of the space and as a result providing a total of 35 no. spaces for the existing and proposed apartments. The existing apartments and the proposed apartments provide for the following total mix of dwelling sizes:

Studios and 1 bed flats – 7 flats

Two bed flats – 16 flats

Three bed flats – 5 flats

The total requirement when assessed against the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) is for a provision of 31 spaces with Zone 2 locations. The layout indicates that there will be 35 spaces which complies with the adopted parking standards (Zone 2) and this level of parking provision is considered appropriate given the sustainable location of the site, being only a short walk from Reading Station and close to a range of bus services.

5 Heritage Statement

The NPPF identifies Heritage Assets as including places or areas that have a degree of significance (i.e. conservation areas). The main points in the NPPF are as follows:

- The applicant should describe the significance of the heritage asset affected including any contribution made by their setting;
- The LPA should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset;
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation;
- Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm, LPA's should refuse consent. Where it would result in less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits.

Nos.173-177 form part of row of Grade II* Listed Buildings extending between nos.173-183 (odds). They contain landscaped front gardens and a large open hard surfaced area to the rear used as a communal car park for the recently completed apartments. The site also fall within Eldon Square Conservation Area and specifically within Area 1: Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square.

The listing description describes the row as follows:

KINGS ROAD1.5128 (North Side) Nos.173 to 183 (odd) SU 7273 7/141 22.3.57. II GV2. After 1832. The principal houses in the former Waterloo Place. Three separate blocks of 2 houses each joined together by single storey links of varying design. Similar design apart from applied order. Modified Doric for nos 173/175 and 181/185, composite nos.177/179. Each block 3 storeys and basement, Nos.173-179 with attics. Bath stone. Slate roof with central chimney stack with many pots. Channelled ground floor with moulded string, entablature and blocking course with corner and central pilasters framing two 3 storey bows, each with 1 windows. 4 bays, glazing bar sashes (cornices on 1st floor), centre break with bows. Ground floor has two windows (French casements) with balconies and contemporary cast-iron rails and decoration. Doors in outer bays have segmental heads and 2 panels. No 169 linked to No 171 and No 183 linked to No 185 by recessed Ionic porticoes in antis with parapets. To rear: Nos 177/179 have full height bows; Nos 181/183 have ground floor bows. Interiors: No 173 contemporary staircase with moulded rail and stone steps, delicate undercut cornices (similar to contemporary ones in Cheltenham). No 183 contemporary staircase.*

Conservation Area Appraisal Plan and Key



Key to townscape appraisal map

-  Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed additions
-  Listed Buildings
-  Buildings of Townscape Merit
-  Important views
-  Important trees
-  Important tree groups
-  Focal buildings
-  Significant open space

The officer report to application ref.151116/FUL and 151117/LBC (conversion to 13 apartments) noted that, following a site visit, very little of the internal features were still present:

'The buildings are Grade II listed, as part of a list entry that covers 173 to 183 Kings Road (odd). It was apparent from the officer site visit at the time of the 2014 applications that many of the original features within the building had gone. The original staircases have been replaced and most of the internal walls and partitions have been removed to form a modern open plan layout. Most floors and ceilings had also been replaced.'*

Given that the new apartment block will be located to the rear of the listed terrace, and will be totally detached from the existing rear elevation, it is considered that the proposal will not have a harmful impact on the historic significance of the listed buildings or the conservation area. The site is dominated by hard surfacing and contributes little by way of positive setting to the rear elevation or the conservation area in general. Views from the public domain from Orts Road and the northern boundary of the conservation area in general are heavily screened by conifer trees and modern development along the Orts Road street frontage (see photograph below). These views are not considered to be of significance and is not a positive feature referred to within the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Views from Orts Road into the conservation area are obscured by trees and buildings



The main elevation of significance is considered to be the Kings Road frontage which will be unaffected. The 'Grandeur' of these properties is recognised within the Appraisal. The Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the principal views as being horizontal along Kings Road (see Appraisal plan above). The proposal would not impact on these views as the new apartment block will be located to the rear

The new building will have a contemporary design with a modern materials palate. This contrasting design will ensure that the new building does not in any way compete with the classical/Italianate design of the neighbouring listed buildings.

5 Access and Sustainability

(a) Access

The proposed new flats will be accessed via the existing access onto Orts Road.

The new parking area will be finished in a material which will minimise any noise disturbance and its impact on neighbouring properties. 35No. spaces will be provided to the rear, in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards (for zone 2) to provide for existing and proposed dwellings.

A secure cycle store is also proposed, to the rear of the site in accordance with adopted standards close to Orts Road.

(b) Sustainable Design and Construction

(i) Sustainable Design

The proposal is to construct 9No. new flats.

The proposal has been designed to potentially accommodate any of the following:

- Air source heat pumps and/or solar thermal panels where appropriate
- Heat Recovery System
- Under Floor Heating

(ii) Energy Efficiency

To minimise heat loss from the proposed building and to maximise the efficiency, the proposal will incorporate the following:

- Insulated roofs, walls and floors
- Double glazed windows
- Ventilation incorporated onto the design to avoid condensation

- Energy efficient lighting
- Natural daylight to all habitable rooms

Domestic appliance ratings will aim to comply with the following:

A+ Fridge Freezer
A rated dishwasher & washing machine
A rated tumble dryer

(iii) Water Resource Management

To minimise the use of water, the proposal will incorporate the following:

- Water saving devices, such as dual flush /low flush toilets
- Rainwater harvesting such as water butts and storage tanks

(iv) Flood Risk Management

The application is not situated in an area known to be at a risk of flooding and is within Flood Zone 1. To minimise the surface run off and promote permeability, the following will be incorporated:

- Soakaways for surface water drainage
- Permeable surface driveway

The development will incorporate the requirements of SUDS hierarchy, by disposing of as much storm water drainage on-site as possible. Any shallow infiltration available will be utilised by the provision of the permeable road surfaces and the run off from the proposed building will be dispersed via soakaways located on site at a depth determined by the best available percolation rate. The run off rate achieved will be in accordance with stipulated EA requirements.

(v) Biodiversity

The application is to redevelop existing hard surfaced space which has no ecological value.

(vi) Waste Recycling

The proposal will encourage responsible waste recycling in the following ways:

- Adequate space exists for storage of waste and recycling containers within the site with a refuse and recycling collection point provided near the site entrance.

(vii) Sustainable Transport

The application site is located within a highly sustainable location within easy reach of Reading Railway Station and a number of bus routes along Kings Road.

(viii) Sustainable Construction

Materials will be, as far as possible, environmentally friendly and the 'Green Guide' and BRE publication 'Methodology for Environmental Profiles of Construction Materials' will be consulted. Timber will be obtained, where possible, from certified sources. A waste separation and disposal policy will be operational for the duration of the site construction.

7 Summary and Conclusions

The planning application provides for the redevelopment of the site to provide 9 No. new flats. The proposal meets in full the Council's adopted policies and should be supported for the following reasons:

- The proposal makes the optimum use of a site in a sustainable location well related to key facilities and railway and bus services and as such receives strong support from national and local policy (NPPF and Policies CS4 and CS15). The existing car park which overprovides for the apartments represents a poor and inefficient use of land within an accessible location.
- The proposal is designed to reflect the scale, proportions and spacing of existing development within this location and regard has been given to the design process including the evaluation of the site and surrounding area. The local area is characterised by development at depth behind the street frontage either in the form of extensions to existing Listed Buildings (i.e. no.185) or buildings designed with a significant degree of depth such as No.191. The existing Listed frontage properties are already in use as residential apartments.
- The proposal provides for a mix of dwellings in line with Policy RC9 which is not prescriptive. Policy DM5 (housing mix) is not applicable as the application is for fewer than 10 dwellings.
- The siting of the building has taken into account the positioning of adjacent dwellings and ensures that the proposal would not result in any loss of amenity to occupants of adjoining properties along the Kings Road frontage. Policy DM4 is met.
- The proposal provides for a form of development that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area in terms of its size, scale, layout, height and design. Hardstanding is restricted to areas that

are already characterised by open parking. The large London Plan tree which is protected is retained and incorporated into the scheme. This is demonstrated through a tree survey and AIA.

- The site is accessible to public transport modes and provides for adequate car parking and secure cycle storage within proposed layout in accordance with the requirements for a Zone 2 site (Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, 2011).
- There are no air quality management issues arising from the redevelopment of this site.