



UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAMME

Redevelopment of St Patrick's Hall Student Accommodation

University of Reading, St Patrick's Hall, Northcourt Avenue,
Reading

Planning Statement

November 2017



Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 APPLICATION CONTENT	1
2.0 The Site and the Proposed Development	2
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	2
2.3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	2
2.4 APPLICATION PROPOSALS	3
2.5 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS	5
3.0 Planning Policy Context.....	6
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....	6
3.3 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	9
3.4 SUMMARY	12
4.0 Planning Analysis.....	14
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	14
4.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT	14
4.3 SCALE AND MASSING.....	17
4.4 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY	19
4.5 PARKING PRESSURE	20
4.6 HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS	22
4.7 DESIGN	23
4.8 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT	23
4.9 ECOLOGY	24
4.10 ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATIONS AND LANDSCAPING	25
4.11 SUSTAINABILITY	25
4.12 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE.....	25
4.13 SECTION 106 AGREEMENT	26
5.0 Conclusions.....	27

Appendix A – Pre-application Discussion Notes

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by WYG on behalf of University Partnerships Programme (UPP). It supports a full planning application submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking permission for the redevelopment of St Patrick's Hall, Northcourt Avenue, University of Reading.
- 1.1.2 This revised application follows a previously withdrawn application at the same application site. The withdrawn application was submitted in June 2016 for the demolition of St Patrick's Hall of residence buildings, Pearson's Court, the Northcourt reception/bar building and university residences at 1, 2, 3 & 4 Sherfield Drive. It proposed the construction of residences for students, a cafeteria/bar, bin and bike stores, sub-station and energy centre, together with a new access link and landscaping, as well as minor alterations to the elevations of the existing office building (ref no. 161182). In November 2016, Reading Borough Council confirmed that Pearson's Court met the heritage criteria to be locally listed. Thus, in consideration of the listing the applicant withdrew the application on 24 November 2016.
- 1.1.3 Since the withdrawal of the previous application, the applicant has sought to develop an alternative scheme within the same application area that satisfies the University's objectives to respond to the growing demand for bespoke, on-campus accommodation, whilst preserving the campus' heritage. This revised application proposes to retain Pearson's Court and will redevelop the remainder of the site, providing 884 new student bedrooms with associated catering and social facilities.
- 1.1.4 This statement provides a review of the application proposal, relevant planning history and planning policy for the site. It then considers the town planning merits of the proposal when assessed against both relevant policies in the development plan and other material considerations.

1.2 Application Content

- 1.2.1 This statement is structured as follows:

Section 2:	provides details of the application site, planning history and the proposed development;
Section 3:	describes the relevant town planning policy context for the proposed development at national and local levels;
Section 4:	assesses the merits of the proposed development when considered against other relevant development plan policies and other material considerations; and
Section 5:	sets out the conclusions.

2.0 The Site and the Proposed Development

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section of the statement provides a description of the application site, its surroundings, relevant planning history and the application proposals.

2.2 Site and Surroundings

- 2.2.1 The application site is located to the west of the main Whiteknights campus on the south-western side of Northcourt Avenue. It forms part of the University residential campus, now occupied by St Patrick's Hall, Benyon Hall, Sherfield Hall and a variety of other smaller residential buildings of varying ages. Sherfield Hall buildings lie to the west and south-west, Benyon Hall to the north-west and the Edwardian houses along Northcourt Avenue to the north-east. The Edwardian houses are situated on the street frontage and are sited amongst a number of mature trees.
- 2.2.2 The entrance to the main Whiteknights campus is only 400m away with the London Road site about 1km to the north. The surrounding area includes Cintra Park and residential areas of varying age and density. On the opposite side of Northcourt Avenue is a row of early 20th century houses.
- 2.2.3 The application site itself comprises approximately 3.6 ha, which includes the original St Patrick's Hall, referred to as Pearson's Court, the warden's lodge, New Court and the cafeteria. Pearson's Court is well set back from Northcourt Avenue and faces into a courtyard, with the rear elevations visible from the street. New Court, similar to Pearson's Court, is a three storey block but is set behind the Edwardian houses and not readily visible from the street.
- 2.2.4 There are two vehicular accesses to the site off Northcourt Avenue with an area of hard standing for car parking located adjacent to the southernmost entrance. Several pedestrian entrances to the site are also available, the principal route being from the entrance between 12b and 14 Northcourt Avenue.

2.3 Relevant Planning History

- 2.3.1 As mentioned above, an application was submitted in June 2016 for the demolition of St Patrick's Hall of residence buildings, the Northcourt reception/bar building and university residences at 1, 2, 3 & 4 Sherfield Drive and the construction of residences for students (comprising 1,024 new student bedspaces), a cafeteria/bar, bin and bike stores, sub-station and energy centre, together with a new access link and landscaping, as well as minor alterations to the elevations of the existing office building (ref no. 161182).

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- 2.3.2 In November 2016, Reading Borough Council confirmed that Pearson's Court (located on the application site and due to be demolished as part of the proposals) met the heritage criteria to be locally listed. Thus, in consideration of the listing the applicant withdrew the application on 24 November 2016.

2.4 Application Proposals

- 2.4.1 Following the withdrawal of the previous application, a detailed design review of the previous scheme has been undertaken. This revised application seeks to satisfy the University's objectives of responding to the growing demand for bespoke, on-campus accommodation, whilst preserving the campus' heritage.
- 2.4.2 The intended operator of the student accommodation, UPP, was established in 1998 and has a strong track record in partnerships, working with 15 universities across the country with over 30,000 rooms under management and development. UPP will manage the development and operation of the new accommodation as part of their long-term partnership with the University of Reading. UPP has worked in partnership with the University since 2001 and now operates all of the University accommodation on campus, taking responsibility for the cleaning, maintenance, refuse and recycling on behalf of the University.
- 2.4.3 The revised application retains Pearson's Court and redevelops the remainder of the site, providing 884 new student bedrooms with associated catering and social facilities.
- 2.4.4 In short, the main changes between the previous 2016 application and the current proposals are as follows:
- The demolition of the original Pearson's Court building no longer forms part of the plans for redevelopment.
 - The withdrawn application proposed 1024 new student bedspaces and 6 no. three bedroom flats for families, resulting in a net increase of 726 bedspaces. The revised application provides 884 new bedspaces and would retain 116 existing bedspaces within Pearson's Court. This results in a net increase of 702 bedspaces at the site (24 fewer bedspaces than the withdrawn application).
 - New accommodation is now proposed above the Hub building and to the rear of the site, where the bar, café and dining facilities will be relocated.
 - The two low-rise buildings previously proposed in the southern part of the site have been removed in response to concerns raised regarding the proximity of the buildings to the nearby house.
 - The Combined Heat and Power (CHP) energy centre has been relocated further away from the southern boundary.

- Warden accommodation and an updated Student Management Plan have been introduced as part of the revised application.

In common with the withdrawn application:

- The Sets building to the south of the Pearson's courtyard will be removed and replaced with new, high-quality accommodation, this element of the scheme has been redesigned to complement the retained courtyard.

- 2.4.5 The proposals will create accommodation in a variety of room types to suit a range of budgets and a variety of student cohorts. The rooms will be arranged as cluster flats and townhouses and will include ensuite rooms or shared bathrooms (1 per 2 students), as well as fixed furniture with high quality finishes and modern styling. All new proposed accommodation will have a shared kitchen/lounge/dining room which is particularly important for first year undergraduates as this aids their transition from home to university life.
- 2.4.6 The associated facilities will be focused at the centre of the accommodation, providing a café, dining facility and bar. The layout has specifically been designed in order to ensure that the development is sensitive to the nearby neighbours. Reduced storey heights are proposed at the perimeter of the site to a domestic scale of three storey townhouses. Accommodation more suited for post-graduate students would be located at the periphery of the site, whilst undergraduate development has been focused at the centre of the site, along with the social space, where buildings will rise to a maximum of six storeys.
- 2.4.7 Externally, the buildings will be constructed of quality materials which reflects the local character. The buildings will reference the local character in materials and style utilising brick as the dominant facing material. Windows will have a vertical emphasis and feature cladding will be used on projecting elements, as well as the attic storey treatment to help reduce the massing.
- 2.4.8 Regarding access, it is proposed to construct an additional section of road within the site and the north-west access will be upgraded, thereby reducing pressure on the existing southern access off Northcourt Avenue, particularly during construction activities. The improved access and new road connection will be promoted as a dedicated, safe, night-time route for students arriving from campus, buses or the town centre. The development will also include one cycle parking space per 4 no. students and one cycle parking space per 3 no. members of staff.
- 2.4.9 In terms of vehicular parking, there are currently 240 parking bays within the Northcourt Group halls of residence area, of which 158 spaces are within the red line boundary of the application site. There will be 149 spaces in total once the site has been developed, 48 spaces retained within the red line boundary, 19 proposed new spaces, and 82 spaces on the rest of the site.
- 2.4.10 It should be noted that students living within the proposed development will not be permitted to bring cars to the accommodation or the immediate area. Students are only allowed to bring cars with

permission and purchase of a permit under exceptional circumstances. This is discussed in further detail in Section 4.

2.5 Pre-Application Discussions

- 2.5.1 Prior to the submission of this revised application, the applicant has carried out pre-application discussions with Reading Borough Council. On 7 September 2017, a meeting took place with planning officers where the retention of Pearson's Court was welcomed. Notes of the pre-application meeting are provided at **appendix A**. Officers confirmed that the proposals were acceptable in terms of elevation design and storey heights. It was also noted that the proposal would be supported as this demonstrated that the benefits of the scheme outweighed the loss of the Sets building. Officers agreed with the applicant when it was concluded that the proposal was now in a position to achieve support.
- 2.5.2 In addition, various consultation events and meetings have taken place with interested parties, including local residents and the residents' group NARA. These events, the feedback received and responses are described within the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 This section of the Planning Statement considers the planning policy context relevant to the proposed development as contained in the Development Plan and other policy documents material to the application's determination.

3.2 The Development Plan

- 3.2.1 The statutory development plan for Reading currently comprises the following:
- Core Strategy (adopted January 2008, altered January 2015)
 - Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted January 2009)
 - Sites and Detailed Policies (adopted October 2012, altered January 2015)
- 3.2.2 Given the site is not located within the area covered by the Reading Central Area Action Plan, for the purposes of this application the policies contained within the Core Strategy and the Sites and Detailed Policies document have been focused on.
- 3.2.3 On the Proposals Map, the site is located within the settlement boundary and there are existing and potential Green Links running along the northern part of the site (see Proposals Map extract below). However, the site is not covered by any other environmental or landscape designations. As mentioned previously, it is pertinent to note that the Council has a list of locally important buildings of which Pearson's Court is included.
- 3.2.4 In light of the above, the relevant policies contained within the Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies document are set out below.

Reading Core Strategy

- 3.2.5 The Reading Core Strategy was adopted in January 2008 and subsequently altered in January 2015. The document sets out the overall planning strategy and important principles for development in Reading. It is noted that the Core Strategy seeks to maximise development opportunities within the built up area of Reading to deliver the overarching objectives of the plan.

3.2.6 Of particular note is that one of the spatial strategy key principles acknowledges that the vast majority of any future development in the urban area of Reading will be in the form of redevelopment and regeneration of previously developed land. It is stated that *'in particular, there are areas or sites that are currently under-utilised, and/or are visually and environmentally detrimental which need to be brought forward for mixed-use schemes and developed at an appropriate density with appropriate infrastructure provision'*.

3.2.7 In terms of the proposals, the following policies are considered of most relevance:

- **Policy CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design** – seeks to ensure that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care. To meet these requirements, it is noted that (amongst other criteria):
 - On larger developments, the Council will seek to ensure that 50% of the provision meets the most up to date Eco-Homes and BREEAM 'Excellent' standards;
 - All new developments maximise the use of energy efficiency and energy conservation measures in their design, layout and orientation to reduce overall energy demand;
 - Larger developments must incorporate on-site generation of energy from renewable sources and energy efficient design measures (including the use of CHP where appropriate) to off-set at least 20% of predicted carbon dioxide emissions from the estimated energy usage of the completed and occupied development.
- **Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development** – the scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.
- **Policy CS6: Settlement Boundary** – no development will be permitted outside the settlement boundary.
- **Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm** – all development must be of a high quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- **Policy CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix** – notes that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by:
 - An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;

- Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
 - The need to achieve high quality design; and
 - The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- **Policy CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans** – planning permission will not be granted for major development proposals unless there is a commitment to implement measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities, such as through provision to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
 - **CS24: Car and Cycle Parking** – maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.
 - **Policy CS29: Provision of Open Space** – all new development should make provision for the open space needs of the development through appropriate on or off-site provision, or through contributions towards the provision or improvement of leisure or recreational facilities, including open space.
 - **Policy CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities** – proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel. It is also noted in the supporting text to the policy that the Council should continue to work internally and with its partners (of which the University of Reading is noted as being a key partner) to keep the need for community facilities.
 - **Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment** – states 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. This includes features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens. Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings.

Reading Sites and Detailed Policies

- 3.2.8 The Reading Sites and Details Policies document was adopted in October 2012 and subsequently altered in January 2015. The document sets out detailed policies the Council use when considering planning applications and identifies sites for development and protection. In terms of the development proposals, the following policies are considered to be of most relevance:

- **Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** – the Council will take a positive approach to considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.
- **Policy DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change** – all development will need to demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.
- **Policy DM2: Decentralised Energy** – notes that larger developments will be required to demonstrate how consideration has been given to securing energy for the development from a decentralised energy source, including CHP.
- **Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity** – development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of (amongst other criteria): privacy and overlooking; access to sunlight and daylight; visual dominance and overbearing effects; noise and disturbance; crime and safety.
- **Policy DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters** – requires accesses to be safe and avoidance of adverse impacts on the functioning of the transport network.
- **Policy DM16: Provision of Open Space** – notes that the provision of open space shall satisfy the most urgent needs in terms of the type of open space to be provided in a particular location.
- **Policy DM17: Green Network** – new development shall demonstrate how the location and type of open space, landscaping and water features providing within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network (which includes both existing and potential Green Links) and contribute to its consolidation.

3.3 Other Material Considerations

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.3.1 The criteria for considering appropriate levels of car parking in new developments is based on differing zonal areas. St Patrick's Hall is just within the boundary of Zone 2. The following criteria applies in respect of parking provision:
- 1 per member of FTE staff and no parking for students
- 3.3.2 In regards to cycle storage the development must provide as a minimum:
- 1 space per 3 staff; and
 - 1 space per 5 students.

Emerging Development Plan Policy

- 3.3.3 The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will replace the above statutory development plan documents once adopted. The Council undertook a consultation on the Draft Local Plan (May 2017) earlier this year and it is anticipated that a revised draft for consultation will be produced in late 2017.
- 3.3.4 It is pertinent to note that on the Draft Local Plan Proposals Map, shown in **figure 1** below, shows that the application site has been identified (circled red) for development or change under draft Policy ER1(e).

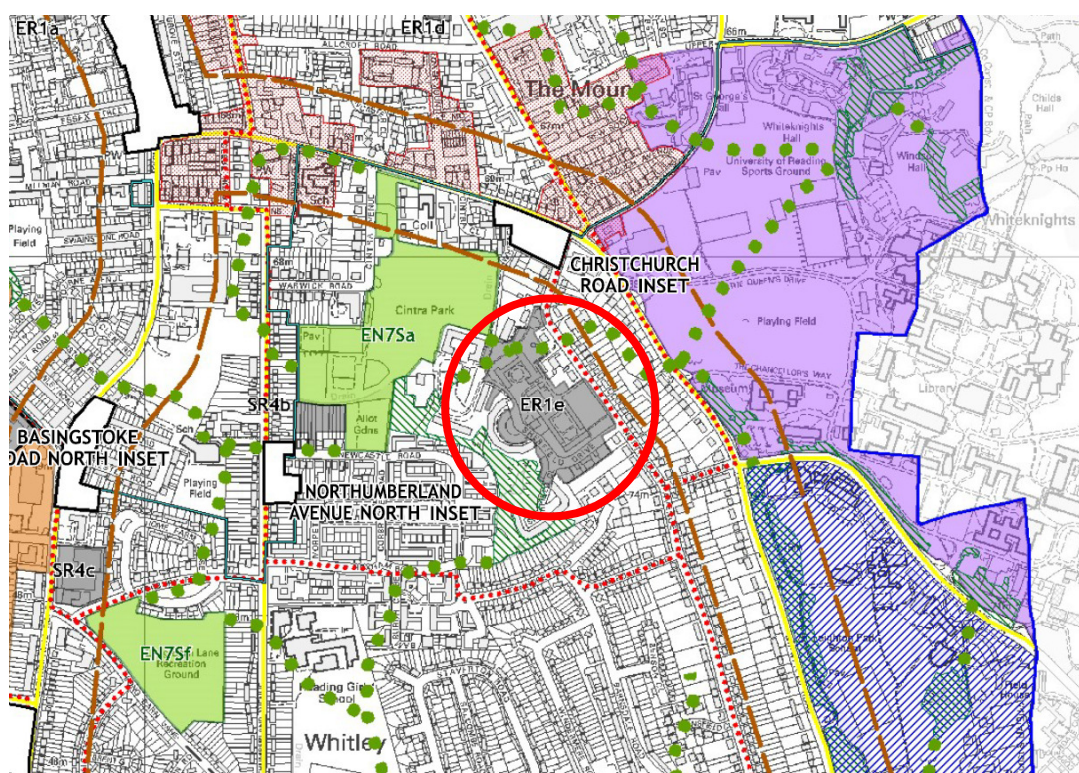


Figure 1: Draft Local Plan Proposals Map Extract

- 3.3.5 Draft Policy ER1 sets out sites for development in east Reading and how they should be developed according with the principles set out in the policy. Part (e) of Policy ER1 specifically relates to St Patrick's Hall and requires development to intensify the provision of student accommodation on site, with retention of locally-listed Pearson's Court. It states that development should:
- Retain the locally-listed building and additional development should enhance its setting;
 - Take account of potential archaeological significance;
 - Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;
 - Take account of the potential for biodiversity interest, including bats; and

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- Enhance the green link across the northern boundary of the site.

- 3.3.6 The supporting text to the policy should be noted as it is acknowledged the capacity of the sites will ultimately depend on various factors that will need to be addressed at application stage, including detailed design and layout.
- 3.3.7 The Draft Local Plan also contains a policy which relates to the provision of student accommodation and states the following *'new student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation'* (Policy H11).

Whiteknights Campus Development Plan

- 3.3.8 In July 2008, the University published the Whiteknights Campus Development Plan (WCDP). This document was intended to provide a robust platform for future investment and was prepared in a manner that aligned the University's strategic vision with the two Local Planning Authorities' (Reading Borough Council and Wokingham District Council) emerging local development framework, and the planning process generally.
- 3.3.9 One of the key elements of the WCDP was to replace and upgrade the halls of residence on the campus, three of which were reaching the end of their economic life and provided unattractive accommodation to students. A phased programme of redevelopment was brought forward to replace the accommodation, which sought to minimise the loss of student accommodation during the construction period and maximise the number of additional bedrooms that could be provided once complete.
- 3.3.10 This halls replacement programme was completed between 2009 and 2014, and enabled the provision of 2,500 higher quality self-catered rooms in place of the previous halls.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.3.11 The NPPF was published in March 2012 and replaces the previous suite of Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements together with other guidance documents.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 3.3.12 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development; it identifies three facets of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, noting that they should not be considered in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Paragraph 14 sets out for decision taking, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan, and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF.

Requiring Good Design

- 3.3.13 The NPPF outlines that the Government places great importance on design, which is a key aspect of sustainable development. It recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. It further notes that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider development schemes.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 3.3.14 Paragraph 133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits or where criteria are met. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.3.15 In March 2014, the Government published the Planning Practice Guidance website. The NPPG provides further context to the NPPF and the sections outlined above. It should be read alongside the NPPF and is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

3.4 Summary

- 3.4.1 The statutory development plan for Reading currently comprises the Core Strategy, the Reading Central Area Action Plan; and the Sites and Detailed Policies. Given the site is not located within the area covered by the Reading Central Area Action Plan, for the purposes of this application the policies contained within the Core Strategy and the Sites and Detailed Policies document have been focused on.
- 3.4.2 On the Proposals Map, the site is located within the settlement boundary and there are existing and potential Green Links running along the northern part of the site. However, it has no other environmental or landscape designations. The Core Strategy seeks to maximise development opportunities in the built up area of Reading in a sustainable way, and acknowledges that in the predominantly urban character of Reading, future growth will be in the form of redevelopment and regeneration of previously developed land.
- 3.4.3 It is also particularly relevant to note that policy ER1(e) of the emerging Draft Local Plan proposes to allocate St Patrick's Hall for development involving the intensification of student accommodation on site, with the retention of locally-listed Pearson's Court. It acknowledges that it is appropriate to intensify the provision of student accommodation on site, with the precise level of accommodation to be addressed at the application stage. Draft Policy H11 states that new student accommodation will be provided on or

adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation.

- 3.4.4 Other material considerations relevant to the application proposals include the NPPF and NPPG. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which means approving development proposals that accord with the development, and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF.
- 3.4.5 Having regard to the above prevailing development plan and national policy, it is considered that the matters of most relevance to the application proposals are: the principle of development; scale and massing; residential amenity; parking pressure; heritage considerations; design of the proposed development; and accessibility and impact on the highway network. Each of these matters (as well as other relevant matters, such as ecology and arboricultural implications) are addressed in turn within Section 4 below.

4.0 Planning Analysis

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The principal planning matters associated with the proposals are considered to be:

1. Principle of Development
2. Scale and Massing
3. Residential Amenity
4. Parking Pressure
5. Heritage Considerations
6. Design
7. Transport and Movement
8. Ecology
9. Arboricultural Implications and Landscaping
10. Sustainability
11. Flood Risk and Drainage
12. Section 106 and CIL

4.1.2 Each of the above is considered in turn below. Section 4.2 firstly discusses the principle of development, with subsequent sections reviewing the three main issues raised by the residents' group NARA (scale and massing, residential amenity and parking pressure). Other general planning considerations relevant to the proposals are then discussed.

4.2 Principle of Development

4.2.1 This application proposes the redevelopment of the St Patrick's Hall student accommodation, Northcourt Avenue, University of Reading. On the Local Plan Proposals Map, the site is situated within the settlement boundary and there are existing and potential Green Links running along the northern part of the site.

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- 4.2.2 It is noted in the Core Strategy that the Council will seek to maximise development opportunities within the built-up area of Reading and of particular note is that one of the spatial strategy key principles acknowledges that the vast majority of any future development in the urban area of Reading will be in the form of redevelopment and regeneration of previously developed land. Furthermore, draft Policy H11 in the emerging Local Plan states that *'new student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation'*.
- 4.2.3 Thus, the principle of the development is clearly acceptable here as the proposal seeks to redevelop the site of an existing halls of residence for new purpose-built student accommodation at the University campus, making better use of the site in terms of density. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms that planning permission should be granted for sustainable developments that accord with the development plan without delay unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 4.2.4 The University of Reading is growing, and it is vital that this growth is matched in terms of the provision of quality student accommodation within easy access of the main campus. The University has had waiting list in excess of 700 bedspaces made up of undergraduates and postgraduates. In 2017 the University also had to enter into nomination agreements with local accommodation providers to provide accommodation for their students.
- 4.2.5 A student Demand and Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the proposals that identifies the following key statistics:
- The University has grown full-time student numbers by 18% over the last five years, increasing the demand for accommodation bed spaces
 - There has been a 59% increase in the number of students aged 20 or under over this period, with University accommodation allowing the institution to offer good levels of pastoral care and eliminate the behavioural impacts of young students in the local community
 - The University has increased non-UK students by 49% over the last five years and there is a need to deliver on campus accommodation to suit their particular needs
 - Private purpose-built accommodation is expensive and does not solve the problem – 98% of Reading's existing accommodation is priced below even the least expensive bed space at Reading's newest student development, CityBlock
 - There is no incentive for students to move from the housing market into such expensive accommodation

- Reading has seen a 16% increase in the number of students living in HMOs over the last five years, double the national average increase of 8%
- Reading Borough Council's own research (HMO Article 4 Review 2015) shows that the growing student population is "having deleterious impacts on local residential areas"

- 4.2.6 This under supply of accommodation is driving the University to provide more accommodation to manage its growth. If not resolved, this deficit will generate a new and challenging demand on the town's private rental sector and negatively impact on the University's ability to attract the best students from the UK and around the world. The University has always sought to accommodate as many of its students as possible on or close to the campus, recognising that historically the University was not situated in a large metropolitan area so the majority of students would be from outside the area and accommodation in the town is limited.
- 4.2.7 The halls development programme at Whiteknights, which was established as part of the Whiteknights campus Development Plan (WCDP), identified potential development sites for the provision of student accommodation. All of the identified sites have been subsequently developed, meaning that additional sites are required to make up the current shortfall of accommodation. The redevelopment of St Patrick's Hall is the next logical opportunity towards to increase the provision of student accommodation in a sustainable location close to the main University campus.
- 4.2.8 Supporting text to Policy DM8 (Residential Conversions) in Sites and Detailed Policies document notes that *'in certain parts of the Borough, there are high concentrations of flat conversions and houses in multiple occupation, in part reflecting the very high student population which is especially prevalent around the universities. In the vicinity of the universities, a high proportion of the housing accommodates students. Given that they are predominantly present during term time only, it can leave some roads and areas feeling quite dormant at other times, failing to achieve a mixed and sustainable community'*.
- 4.2.9 Thus to avoid this situation being exacerbated further, the proposed development will ensure further accommodation is provided on site to accommodate the growing number of students.
- 4.2.10 Draft Policy ER1(e) contained within the emerging Local Plan specifically relates to St Patrick's Hall and requires development to intensify the provision of student accommodation on site, with retention of locally-listed Pearson's Court. The accompanying text to the policy states that *the capacity of sites will ultimately depend on various factors that need to be addressed at application stage'*.

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- 4.2.11 The draft Local Plan acknowledges that the University of Reading is a vital part of Reading's economy and life, and there will be a need for development to support that role at its main Whiteknights campus. As such, the Council will support such development, where it does not result in significant adverse effects. It is recognised that an increase in purpose-built accommodation is needed, but this should preferably be on the existing university sites, both to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and so that key sites elsewhere deliver much needed general housing rather than student accommodation.
- 4.2.12 Turning to the specific criteria listed as part of policy ER1(e), the development will retain the locally-listed building and enhance its setting by providing high quality, modern accommodation which will replace the dated, existing accommodation at the site.
- 4.2.13 In terms of the policy ER1(e) criteria relating to archaeological significance, effect on trees, biodiversity interest, and enhancing the green link across the northern boundary of the site, subsequent sections below describe how these matters are appropriately addressed.
- 4.2.14 It is clear that the proposal will deliver much needed new accommodation at the University in a location and manner which will not give rise to any adverse planning impacts. In light of this, it is considered that the revised proposals fully accord with prevailing development plan and national policy, as well as the provisions of the emerging local plan. The remainder of this section will examine the three main issues raised by the residents' group NARA (scale and massing, residential amenity and parking pressure), as well as other matters relevant to the proposals.

4.3 Scale and Massing

- 4.3.1 As mentioned previously, this application follows a previously withdrawn application at the site for the redevelopment of St Patrick's Hall of residence buildings. Following a detailed design review, extensive discussions, and an assessment of the feedback received during the course of the previous application, the applicant has sought to address as many of the concerns raised as possible in developing the revised proposals.
- 4.3.2 Through detailed discussions with NARA it is apparent that one of its main concerns is the massing of the proposed 5 and 6 storey buildings that it considers to be out of character with the surrounding area. In response to this concern it should be noted that the taller buildings are centrally located within the site, with buildings of a more domestic scale located at the boundaries. The site also benefits from mature hedges and trees at sensitive boundaries that are proposed to be supplemented through a comprehensive landscape planting strategy. In order to respond to the character of Pearson's Court, the larger buildings have also been sited in courtyard arrangements.
- 4.3.3 In addition, the existing villas (Crooksbury, Chedworth and no. 16) which are set in a mature landscape setting and the adjoining parkland bordering Northcourt Avenue will be retained as part of the proposed development, thus providing further screening. The withdrawn application also proposed three new

buildings to the south boundary of the site adjacent to the boundary 24 Northcourt Avenue. Two of these buildings are omitted from the revised application and the third building redesigned to take on board comments received as part of the previous application.

- 4.3.4 By proposing a rise in building heights to the centre of the site, the development creates a variety of roofscapes. A variety of cross section drawings through the site are submitted, which demonstrate that at street level the taller 6 storey buildings within the centre of the site would be largely hidden by smaller buildings nearer the boundary. This concept is illustrated in **figure 2** below.

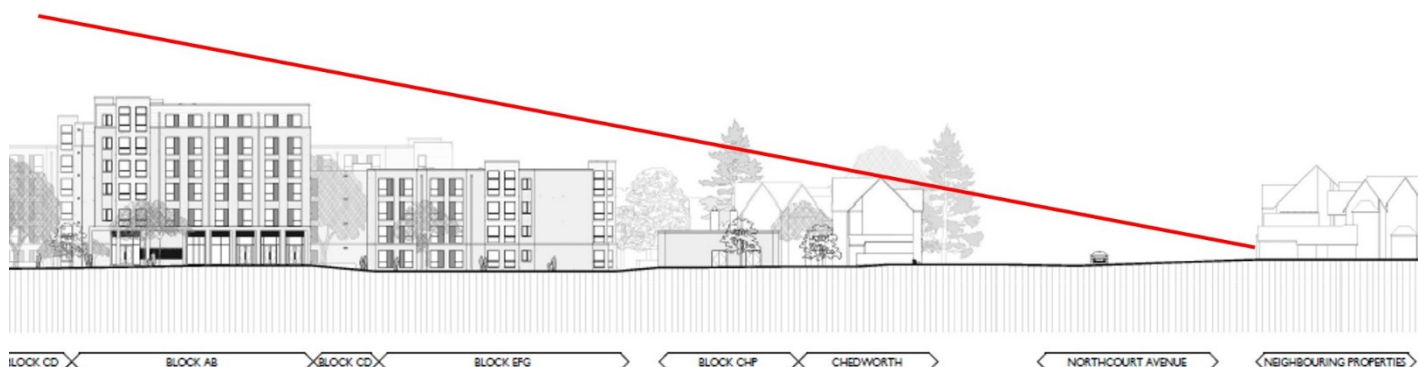


Figure 2: Cross Section from Northcourt Avenue

- 4.3.5 The red line shown in figure 2 above demonstrates that the eye line view at certain points within Northcourt Avenue will mean that smaller buildings will prevent views of larger ones behind them. It would not be correct to say that none of the taller buildings would be seen at all, however, due to the proposed design approach to the massing of the buildings, such views would be limited to glimpses only.
- 4.3.6 Account should also be taken of the fact that St Patrick's Hall is a well established part of University residential campus, with Pearson's Court providing purpose built student accommodation since 1913. The provision of student accommodation at this site is therefore very much in accordance with the established character of this site.
- 4.3.7 It is concluded that the 5 and 6 storey buildings compliment the established character of the site and that any visual impact is mitigated through the design approach of locating taller buildings within the centre of the site. In this context, if any negative impact is considered to occur, it would result in minor levels of harm only. This should be balanced against the presumption in favour of this sustainable development in planning policy terms, the benefits of a site that is within walking distance of the main campus and the need to address the growing waiting list for student accommodation in appropriate locations.
- 4.3.8 By contrast, a scheme that does not make efficient use of a brownfield site such as this would result in a missed opportunity in seeking to address the accommodation shortfall when limited other sites are available. The knock on effect of not providing suitable levels of accommodation as part of this

development is continued pressure to provide student accommodation in undesirable locations that can cause imbalance within those communities.

- 4.3.9 The proposed massing and scale of buildings proposed is therefore in accordance with Policy CS4 with regard to the intensity of development in sustainable locations and Policy CS7 in terms of a design that is appropriate for the brownfield student accommodation campus where it is located.

4.4 Residential Amenity

- 4.4.1 The visual impact of the taller 5 and 6 storey buildings is considered in the above section. There is no assertion that these proposals would give rise to any overlook or overbearing impact upon the amenity of residential neighbours to the site given the significant separation distances involved.
- 4.4.2 As described previously, the proposals provide only 3 storey development near the boundary of the site, namely blocks H and I, as shown on the submitted drawings. Block H would provide accommodation in the roof space and is of a similar scale to the adjacent property 22 Northcourt Avenue, a University owned property, which is separated by Sherfield Drive. Block I is similar in proportion to surrounding University properties.
- 4.4.3 Furthermore, and in response to the concerns raised regarding the proximity of buildings to 24 Northcourt Avenue, the revised application has also removed the two low rise buildings previously proposed along the southern boundary and relocated the CHP energy centre further away from neighbouring residential properties on the southern boundary. Both of these changes will also further protect the amenity of nearby neighbours, as well as the character of the local built environment.
- 4.4.4 The proposals do not therefore bring about any unacceptable impact upon residential amenity through the physical provision of the buildings in accordance with Policy CS15.
- 4.4.5 A key concern raised by NARA related to the management of student behaviour, especially off the site at night, and the impact this has on residential amenity. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that this revised application is now proposing designated warden accommodation as part of the proposals and an on-site 24 hour security team. This will ensure that there is a representative on site at all times for local residents to contact should there be any issues. Furthermore, an improved access and new route through the site will be promoted as a dedicated, safe, night-time route for students arriving from campus, buses or the town centre. The natural desire line for the majority of the site will be via this main route and, as such, will reduce the number of students using the southern section of Northcourt Avenue minimising the impact on neighbouring residential amenity.
- 4.4.6 The applicant is also seeking to agree an updated Student Management Plan as part of the Section 106 Agreement which will set out the management regime which will be in operation and proposals for regular ongoing engagement with the local community, recognising the site is within a predominantly

residential area. Arrangements for day to day management and 24 hours site security are also included and it is noteworthy that points of contact will be maintained with the local community.

4.4.7 It should be noted that the existing accommodation at the site, which comprises 1,105 bedspaces, has no formalised student management agreement via any form of planning control. The proposals therefore offer an opportunity to better manage the behaviour of students across the campus.

4.4.8 In addition to the above measures, through consultation and discussions with NARA leading up to the submission of this application, the University has committed to a number of additional general commitments irrespective of this planning application:

- Establishing a regular meeting between the University and NARA with student attendees.
- Once the proposed development has been built, the University will establish neighbourhood mentors (made up of student residents) who will attend meetings with NARA and be responsible for establishing student lead 'good neighbour' schemes, e.g. a litter pick after Union nights.
- Providing a 24 hour manned security office at the St Patrick's site.
- Gather lifestyle choice intelligence from student hall applications with a view to steering 'quieter lifestyle' choices to the St Patrick's accommodation.
- Initiating a poster campaign reminding students they are in a residential area.
- More regular contact with Police Community Liaison Officers.

4.4.9 The submitted management plan provides comprehensive measures that seek to promote good relations between student occupants of the site and neighbouring residential properties. The development also provides a number of on-site facilities such as a café, bar and other services that aid the self-containment of the site. These initiatives ensure that environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers is appropriately mitigated in accordance with Policy CS15.

4.5 Parking Pressure

4.5.1 As part of continued consultation, NARA has raised concerns that students have been parking cars on streets surrounding the application site. Common with many universities and the policy of the University of Reading, given the sustainable location of St Patrick's Hall, parking spaces for students are only provided to meet disability needs or for the rare occurrences where a student requires a vehicle to aid

their specific degree course. Where these circumstances apply, students need to apply for a parking permit from the University.

- 4.5.2 As a default, the tenancy agreements of each student prohibit them from bringing a car to the University. This has been beneficial in ensuring that students living in halls do not contribute to traffic congestion and travel sustainably.
- 4.5.3 The Universities approach to limiting parking spaces for students fully accords with Policy CS24 and the adopted Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD that require zero parking for students in zone 2 where St Patrick's Hall is located. This recognises the sustainable location of the site.
- 4.5.4 Notwithstanding these parking restrictions, following the development there will be 149 parking spaces available at the St Patrick's Hall campus. Currently there are 158 parking spaces within the red line boundary, 48 of which will be retained and there will be 19 new spaces provided for essential use only. A total of 82 spaces outside of the application boundary, but still within the St Patrick's Hall site, would be retained. The total of 149 spaces across the St Patrick's Hall site is considered more than adequate based upon the University's experience of the need for parking spaces generated at this campus and at the Whiteknights campus.
- 4.5.5 Provision has also been made for taxi and delivery lay-bys and accessible parking is available for disabled students and visitors within the courtyards and throughout the site. Secure cycle stores will be provided across the site that related as closely as possible to the buildings they serve.
- 4.5.6 The development provides a significant level of secure bike storage at a ratio of one space per 4 students and one space per 3 members of staff. This accords with the BREEAM requirements that exceed those standards applied by Policy CS24 and the Revised Parking Standards SPD. This initiative significantly reduces the need for students to use private vehicles.
- 4.5.7 Car ownership among students is normally lower than most other residential populations. Given the self-containment of the site in terms of services provided, bike storage provision, the close proximity of the main campus and good access to public transport, the need for students to bring a car to St Patrick's hall is significantly reduced.
- 4.5.8 In order to understand the existing situation with regard to parking pressure on local streets, day and night time parking surveys were undertaken prior to the previously withdrawn application being submitted. One date was during term time and the other was out of term, the purpose of the survey being to identify whether there was any significant change in number of cars parked on the street between the two dates. Following submission of the withdrawn application the findings of the surveys were queried by NARA and the Council's highway team. In response, a further independent night time survey was therefore commissioned, which found similar parking patterns to the first survey. With the benefit of the two surveys, the Council's highway team were satisfied that overnight parking remained

consistent in and out of term time, indicating that parking stress was not necessarily attributed to students residing in University accommodation. The surveys are described in greater detail within the submitted Transport Statement.

- 4.5.9 The surveys found that the difference in levels of night time parking between the in and out of term dates was minimal. Evidence also demonstrated that the daytime parking on Northcourt Avenue was due to commuters, visitors to surrounding properties, shoppers and health centre users, many of whom may be associated with the University, but not with the existing Northcourt Group halls of residence. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the students resident at the site are not abusing the restriction on car use at the site by parking cars in the surrounding streets.
- 4.5.10 This was reiterated by Reading Borough Council's Transport Team during the course of the previous application where it was concluded that based on the survey result, the proposed development would have minimal impacts with regards to on-street parking and therefore has been deemed acceptable.
- 4.5.11 As previously described, students are currently prohibited from bringing a car to the University. Currently this is a voluntary initiative undertaken and controlled by the University with no form of planning control. As part of this application, this initiative will also form part of the Student Management Plan and S106, thus formalising this currently voluntary provision.
- 4.5.12 The principle of minimising the availability of parking for students as part of the development and encouraging alternative means of transport such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport wholly accords with Policy CS23. These principles also accord with national policies within the NPPF that support sustainable development.

4.6 Heritage Considerations

- 4.6.1 As mentioned previously, this revised application follows a previously withdrawn application for the redevelopment of the site. One of the most significant changes between the previously withdrawn application and the revised proposals is the retention of Pearson's Court. Reading Borough Council confirmed that Pearson's Court met the heritage criteria to be locally listed in November 2016. Thus, in consideration of the listing the applicant withdrew the previous application.
- 4.6.2 The Council's list of locally important buildings and structures document notes that the northern, eastern and western ranges of Pearson's Court were built in 1913 and they are the second oldest, surviving, purpose-built halls of residence still in use at Reading University. Pearson's Court is considered to be representative of a style of 'red brick' buildings that were characteristic of the University of Reading in the early 20th century. The document further acknowledges that although Pearson's Court is not especially noteworthy for its architectural styling, it is well-built and a serviceable building which is constructed in

red and russet brick with limestone dressings. Little attention is paid to the southern range (the Sets building), which is merely noted as *'the later southern range forms a single storey pedimented block'*.

- 4.6.3 The NPPF sets out the definition of designated heritage assets, of which locally listed buildings do not apply. As such, paragraphs 133 and 134 relating to substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets is not applicable. Of note, however, is paragraph 135 which states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset (such as Pearson's Court) should be taken into account in determining the application. It further notes that in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.6.4 The accompanying heritage statement describes that the impacts of the development range in magnitude from none to slight, giving rise to effects ranging from neutral to minor on the setting and hence the significance of the retained parts of the locally listed Pearson's Court. Some positive benefits are recorded through the provision of more appropriately designed buildings within the setting of Pearson's Court.
- 4.6.5 The benefits of the scheme are considered to far outweigh any harm caused to the heritage assets that are to be retained as part of this revised application in accordance with paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

4.7 Design

- 4.7.1 The design rationale is described in more detail within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. In a planning context, we have already described how the massing of the buildings has been sensitively designed to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- 4.7.2 The layout of the development creates two courtyards which responds to the current site layout. Similar to the previously withdrawn application, the communal buildings and social/study facilities are sited centrally and the accommodation for mature students/families around the edge. As mentioned above, higher density has been achieved largely by using the existing developed areas more intensively and only raising building heights away from Northcourt Avenue. In the central area of the site, 5 and 6 storey buildings are proposed which decreases to 3 storey buildings around the periphery of the site, reflecting the scale of adjoining development. This layout will ensure the impact on views from the nearby residential properties is negligible, particularly as there is an existing buffer of mature trees surrounding the majority of the site.

4.8 Transport and Movement

- 4.8.1 This statement has already described the principles of a car free student accommodation development, save for those who require a car for essential use. The impact of the development in terms of parking on

surrounding road has also been discussed. Both of these matters are discussed in more detail within the submitted Transport Statement.

- 4.8.2 The development also introduces a one way vehicular loop arrangement, retaining access from Northcourt Avenue to the south, with access through the site emerging to the northern access. The current central access will only be used for pedestrian use and service vehicles.
- 4.8.3 A Travel Plan is also submitted that identifies sustainable measures which will be implemented in order to promote and encourage use of available sustainable modes of travel. Travel Plan aims for student travel by car to not exceed existing levels. A series of objectives will support and guide the Travel Plan towards achieving this aim.
- 4.8.4 In transport terms the development accords with car and cycle parking standards within Policy CS23 and encourages sustainable forms of travel in accordance with policies CS4 and CS24.

4.9 Ecology

- 4.9.1 The submitted Ecological Impact Assessment describes that a suite of ecological surveys has been undertaken to inform this assessment, starting with an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and data search, followed by dedicated surveys for bats (both roosting and activity) and great crested newts. Monitoring of an identified badger sett was also undertaken.
- 4.9.2 The majority of works associated with the proposed redevelopment of the site will focus on habitats of low ecological value, although a number of trees will be lost to the redevelopment. No roosts were found in any trees or buildings on site. No great crested newts were found using any of the waterbodies in proximity to the site.
- 4.9.3 A number of bat surveys have been undertaken that show low level of bat activity on the site, no emerging bats were recorded and no activity suggesting that any of the buildings on site were being used by roosting bats.
- 4.9.4 The development proposals include the creation of a new Northern Green Access Corridor to the north of the site, designed to increase habitat connectivity in the local area and to provide new habitat for notable and protected species.
- 4.9.5 The Ecological Impact Assessment describes that provided the proposed recommendations are implemented, the ecological enhancements that are proposed should increase the biodiversity of the site. The development therefore accords with Policy CS36 that relates to the biodiversity of development sites.

4.10 Arboricultural Implications and Landscaping

- 4.10.1 The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment describes those trees to be retained and those trees that are to be removed as part of the development. No grade A trees are to be removed and the development respects the tree root protection areas of retained trees. Tree protection measures would be incorporated during the construction phase to ensure their protection.
- 4.10.2 The proposals would see significantly more trees planted than removed. The landscape strategy for the site describes the creation of five key landscaped areas at the hub and central avenue, the north courtyard, the south courtyard, the northern green access corridor, open space and buffer areas.
- 4.10.3 It should be noted that the provision of the northern green access corridor is a requirement of draft Policy ER1(e) that proposes to allocate the site for intensified student accommodation provision.
- 4.10.4 The development is considered to provide an appropriate balance between increasing the accommodation at the site, retaining as many trees as possible, retaining the highest category trees and provision of a comprehensive landscape scheme for the site that will provide an attractive living environment for students in accordance with Policy DM17.

4.11 Sustainability

- 4.11.1 A sustainability statement and BREEAM pre-scheme report is submitted in support of the application that describe how the relevant standards of the Council's Revised Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) are met.
- 4.11.2 The measures proposed include passive options, such as increased thermal insulation, good practice energy saving technology, such as high efficiency boiler/water heaters and low/zero carbon technology in the form of an on site Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system.
- 4.11.3 The sustainable credentials of the development therefore fully accord with Policy CS1 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD that supersedes some of the policy CS1 requirements.

4.12 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 4.12.1 The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding. Given the site size is over 1ha, the revised application will be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy to demonstrate how the equivalent to greenfield runoff surface water rates will be achieved. On this basis the development is not anticipated to cause flooding elsewhere.
- 4.12.2 The drainage proposals also incorporate surface water from the retained Pearson's Court that currently discharges directly to a storm drain. As surface water from Pearson's Court will now be attenuated, the scheme would deliver betterment compared to the drainage regime of the existing site, potentially

reducing the risk of flooding elsewhere. Accordingly, the proposed development accords with Policy CS35.

4.13 Section 106 Agreement

4.13.1 The applicant is willing to discuss entering into a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to provide the following requirements:

1. Employment and Skills Training – The University is to provide a catering staff training programme for local people to gain employment and skills training.
2. Pedestrian Crossing – A transport contribution is to be provided to provide for enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities or other highway works as required.
3. Tree Planting – A financial contribution is to be provided for the provision and ongoing maintenance of 4 street trees on the eastern side of Northcourt Avenue opposite the site.
4. Student Management Plan – The submitted plan will be incorporated within the S106 Agreement for the site.
5. Local Wildlife Site management Plan – As advised by the Council’s Ecologist, a green link runs across the north boundary of the site. A management plan will be required and incorporated within the S106 Agreement to mitigate the impact upon this ecology corridor.

4.13.2 The precise nature of these measures will be discussed during the course of the planning application. Any additional measure will be considered where they are demonstrated to be required to make the development acceptable in planning terms and meet the tests set out in Regulation 122(2) Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (Part 11).

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.0.1 This statement describes the planning policy context of this revised full planning application for the redevelopment of the St Patrick's Hall site, providing a net increase of 702 student bedspaces and the retention of the locally listed Pearson's Court.
- 5.0.2 The principle of the development is clearly acceptable as the proposal seeks to redevelop the site of an existing halls of residence for new purpose built student accommodation at an established University residential campus, making better use of the site in terms of density.
- 5.0.3 The proposals seek to address the growing annual waiting list for accommodation, in excess of 700bedspaces, in a highly sustainable location within walking distance of the main University campus in accordance with adopted Core Strategy Policies SD1 CS4 and CS15.
- 5.0.4 The emerging draft Local Plan Policy ER1(e) seeks to allocate the St Patrick's Hall site for intensified provision of student accommodation. This complements draft Policy H11 that requires new student accommodation to be located on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation.
- 5.0.5 These emerging policies reflect the need to meet demand for purpose built student accommodation in the right locations, thus reducing the pressure upon the housing stock in less sustainable areas of Reading to provide student accommodation.
- 5.0.6 Whilst the principle of increasing the density of the site is accepted in planning policy terms, care and attention has been taken during the design stage to ensure that the massing and design of the buildings maintains the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 5.0.7 This is achieved by locating buildings at the boundary of the site of a similar scale to adjoining buildings. The massing of the buildings graduates in scale towards the centre of the site ensuring that the tallest buildings are set back an appropriate distance from the boundary of the site. The existing mature hedges and trees are to be retained and are supplemented through a comprehensive landscape planting strategy.
- 5.0.8 Whilst contemporary in design, the external treatment of the buildings incorporates a pallet of materials designed to complement the character of the area and creates an attractive and safe environment for students to live.
- 5.0.9 St Patrick's Hall is a long established residential campus, in a sustainable location and is located close proximity to the main University campus with excellent transport links. In this context, parking provision is limited to only those with an essential need for car use in accordance with Policy CS24 and Policy CS23 that encourages measures to promote walking, cycling and use of public transport ahead of car travel.

-
- 5.0.10 As a result of extensive public consultation with neighbours to the site, a number of new measures have been introduced and added to the proposed Student Management Plan that would be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. The existing accommodation at the site does not benefit from this level of management control. In addition to the Student Management Plan, and separate the planning process, the University has committed to regular meetings with local residents to engage with issues such as student behaviour and on street parking control.
- 5.0.11 In addition to the above benefits, the proposed development performs a number of economic, social and environmental sustainable roles that are recognised by the NPPF. These sustainable roles are summarised as follows:
- High quality student accommodation is essential to maintaining the status of the University that in turn has economic benefits for Reading.
 - Purpose built student accommodation at the campus reduces pressure to convert family homes in the less sustainable locations of Reading.
 - The development reuses a brownfield site and redevelops accommodation that is no longer fit for purpose.
 - Secure cycle spaces are provided that exceed the minimum standards required by Policy CS24 are proposed together with other measures to secure sustainable travel.
 - A travel plan will be linked to the wider requirements of the University campus.
 - The Council's requirement for BREEAM construction are met.
 - Passive design measures, good practice energy saving technology and an on-site Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system are proposed. A reduction in surface water discharge from Pearson's Court through incorporation with the overall drainage strategy that provides SUDS attenuation.
- 5.0.12 This planning statement describes that the proposed development is considered to comply with all relevant adopted Reading Core Strategy policies, including parking standards in relation to student accommodation, emerging Local Plan policies, supplementary planning guidance national policies within the NPPF and national guidance with the PPG.

Appendix A – Pre-application Discussion Notes

RBC Meeting - St Patrick's Hall

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 08 September 2017,

Attendees:	RBC	Stephen Vigar	SV
	RBC	Jonathon Mullis	JM
	UoR	Katherine Thomas	KT
	UoR	Janis Pich	JP
	Grover Lewis	Philip Grover	PG
	UPP	Andrew Cockerell	AC

Circulation:	WYG	Robin Upton
	WIA	Andrew Iles

Agenda Item	Notes	Action
1 Introductions	1.1 AC confirmed that the meeting was intended for UoR/UPP to update the LPA of our progress since our last meeting in March 2017 and to obtain LPA support for the design proposals. Particular focus would be placed on the retention of Pearson's Court and the proposed replacement for the Sets building.	
2 Pearson's Court	2.1 PG explained the rationale for the retention of the greater part of Pearson's Court and the design approach for the replacement to the Sets building, including the distance from the existing buildings, the building height at four storeys, the symmetrical response to the quad through the treatment of the projecting central bay, and the treatment of the mansard roof with metal cladding. 2.2 The set back of the roof surface from the face of the brick wall below was also discussed and AC confirmed that it was UPP's intention to broadly align the external finish of the roof structure with the internal light gauge steel frame partition of the third floor. SV confirmed that this was the typical level of set back he would be looking to achieve. It was agreed that more detail regarding the corbelling would be shared with SV going forward. 2.3 The landscaping to the courtyard was also discussed. AC confirmed that this had not yet been advanced but would follow the principles of the initial application and would be sympathetic to the existing soft landscaping within the	AC

	courtyard. The existing trees would be retained as recognised by the planning committee members. 2.4 AC confirmed that it was not the intention to provide lifting sash windows to the replacement for the Sets building and the drawings were indicative and subject to more detailed review in terms of statutory requirements for ventilation. 2.5 In summary JM concluded that the proposals were acceptable in terms of elevation design and storey heights. It was also confirmed that the proposal would be supported as this demonstrated that the benefits of the scheme outweighed the loss of the Sets building.	
3 Further design update	3.1 AC went on to explain the proposed storey heights of the scheme remained as tabled in March 2017. The proposed five storeys to blocks C & D was accepted, however JM confirmed that he would require verified views from the Listed Farmhouse to support the Heritage Statement and SV would also require an update to the views previously completed from Cintra Park and Nortcourt Avenue. It was also agreed that views of the hub from Northcourt Avenue would be provided as before. 3.2 PG confirmed that the original setting of the listed farmhouse had largely been lost with the exception of the pond. What had once been a rural setting had been long since been transformed into that of a university campus. The wider setting therefore contributed relatively little to the heritage significance of the farmhouse. JM also asked that the impact of the proposed development on the setting and significance of the listed farmhouse be clearly addressed in the revised Heritage Statement. 3.3 Block I was also discussed and AC confirmed that the ground level was almost a metre lower than around the Sets building. AC pointed out the challenges of lowering this building further as the ground falls away considerably toward the south-west of the site. It was agreed that UPP would look at a split level slab to take advantage of the change in levels. It was also agreed that Sections through the building would be issued as part of the planning application. 3.4 UPP also agreed to increase the number of new more mature trees to the boundary behind block I and ensure that there would be c.10m separation from the boundary to the rear of block I. 3.5 AC confirmed that the metal cladding to the elevations would be in line with the previous application, although in light of recent events a separate commentary relating to fire resistance of cladding would be issued with the application. SV asked that consideration be given for the finish of the	AC AC AC AC AC

	metal cladding be considered to give a more natural appearance.	
4 Application Process	4.1 AC advised that it was the University and UPP's intention to issue a revised planning application in Oct/Nov 2017. A letter from Landmark was also issued to confirm that in their opinion the habitat surveys previously undertaken should be considered acceptable in support of the application. SV agreed to issue the letter to Giles Sutton to obtain his approval that no further ecological surveys would be required.	SV
	4.2 It was also confirmed that no change would be made to Pearson's Court with the exception of the demolition to Sets and any repairs necessary following the removal of the adjoining buildings to the northern elevation. These repairs/alterations to the external façade would be made clear in the revised planning application.	
	4.3 SV confirmed that a PPA was not necessary for the revised application, but it would be up to UoR and UPP to decide. He also confirmed that the Section 106 had been prepared in draft form for the last application. A revised schedule of accommodation should also be issued with the application as this had been a useful document previously.	AC
	4.4 SV also asked that a blue line be drawn around the University owned properties on Northcourt Avenue and Sherfield Drive on the redline planning boundary drawing.	AC
	4.5 In conclusion AC advised that he considered that the proposal was now in a position to achieve support from the planning officers. SV confirmed that this was also his opinion.	

From: Vigar, Stephen [mailto:Stephen.Vigar@reading.gov.uk]
Sent: 02 November 2017 09:58
To: Andrew Cockerell <Andrew.Cockerell@upp-ltd.com>
Cc: Karen Thomas (k.l.thomas@reading.ac.uk) <k.l.thomas@reading.ac.uk>; Jonathan.Mullis@jacobs.com
Subject: RE: St Patrick's Hall Planning Meeting

Morning Andy

I'm happy to agree the attached meeting notes, as amended/clarified by subsequent emails - also attached.

Kind regards

Steve Vigar
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Section | Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

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From: Andrew Cockerell [<mailto:Andrew.Cockerell@upp-ltd.com>]
Sent: 02 November 2017 09:13
To: Vigar, Stephen
Subject: FW: St Patrick's Hall Planning Meeting

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

Morning Steve,

A brief update as we ran the public consultation for St Patrick's Hall last week which was very well attended. I will call later today to give you general feedback from the stakeholders.

I have just been reviewing my emails and note that we did not receive a confirmation that the notes of our last meeting were accepted. Could you please confirm?

Kind regards

Andy

From: Andrew Cockerell
Sent: 14 September 2017 08:14
To: 'Vigar, Stephen' <Stephen.Vigar@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Karen Thomas (k.l.thomas@reading.ac.uk) <k.l.thomas@reading.ac.uk>; Janis Pich <j.l.pich@reading.ac.uk>; 'Philip Grover' <philip@groverlewis.co.uk>
Subject: St Patrick's Hall Planning Meeting

Morning Steve,

Thank you for your time and that of Jon's last Wednesday.

As discussed we will advise you as soon as we are able to commence the planning process and public engagement. Our discussions last week were very encouraging in this regard.

I have attached some notes of the meeting. If you could review and let me know if you have any further comments.

Kind regards

Andy

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Transaction Director

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From: Vigar, Stephen <Stephen.Vigar@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 October 2017 10:28
To: Ben Martyr
Subject: RE: St Patrick's Supplementary material - Without Prejudice

Ben

Thanks for your email and attached document.

The new mesh vent window arrangement looks acceptable for the majority of the site. It does seem less suitable for the SETS replacement in terms of proportions, but I can see how the design benefits future occupiers and it may be worth proposing them initially and revert to the initial design if concerns are raised by others during the application process.

At our last meeting we discussed the possibility of introducing a contrasting, textured brick panel where the cladding is being replaced to retain visual interest. For instance where windowless end panels are shown. The image below is simply an attempt at explaining the approach that I am referring to. I am not necessarily suggesting this exact colour or pattern would suit.

Within areas of brickwork containing windows, a good quality contrasting brick, perhaps without the pattern might be more appropriate to avoid an overly fussy appearance?



Building H - do the rooflights need to project as far beyond the plane of the roof?

I'll give you a quick call to discuss.

Kind regards

Steve Vigar
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Section | Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices, Level 1 North
Bridge Street
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RG1 2LU

0118 937 2980

Mob. 07855 125 872

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From: Ben Martyr [mailto:ben.martyr@upp-ltd.com]
Sent: 11 October 2017 09:50
To: Vigar, Stephen
Cc: Andrew Cockerell
Subject: St Patrick's Supplementary material

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Steve

Following on from your recent discussion with Andrew Cockerell, please find attached a booklet of supplementary information which we would really appreciate you comment on.

The attached booklet provided clarification information on the Sets attic storey detail and proposed details of windows and brickwork.

Please can we arrange a call, at your earliest convenience this week to discuss this information and seek you feedback, if you consider this necessary.

Kind regards

Ben

Ben Martyr
Transaction Manager
UPP Projects Limited

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M: +44 (0) 7720 086435
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University Partnerships Programme, 40 Gracechurch Street, London EC3V 0BT

www.upp-ltd.com

E-mail sent for and on behalf of a member of the UPP Group in the UK which includes:

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robin.upton

From: Vigar, Stephen <Stephen.Vigar@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 November 2017 09:44
To: Robert Thorley
Cc: Ben Martyr (ben.martyr@upp-ltd.com); Andrew Cockerell (Andrew.Cockerell@upp-ltd.com)
Subject: RE: 0616 Typical detail through Sets building

Robert

Thanks for your email and attached drawing.

The detailing seems reasonable. Clearly anything you can do to set the mansard further back would be good, but I appreciate that there may be technical constraints.

Kind regards

Steve Vigar
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Section | Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

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From: Robert Thorley [mailto:robert.thorley@willmoreiles.com]
Sent: 30 October 2017 13:13
To: Vigar, Stephen
Subject: 0616 Typical detail through Sets building

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Good afternoon Steve,

As discussed please see attached pdf showing the typical detail through the mansard and dormer window on the Sets building at St Patrick's Hall for comment.

If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Robert Oliver Thorley RIBA
Architect
for Willmore Iles Architects

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Hotwells

Bristol BS84SF

t: 01179450962

e: robert.thorley@willmoreiles.com

w: www.willmoreiles.com



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From: Vigar, Stephen <Stephen.Vigar@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 October 2017 10:34
To: Ben Martyr
Cc: Jonathan.Mullis@jacobs.com; Andrew Cockerell (Andrew.Cockerell@upp-ltd.com)
Subject: RE: St Patrick's Supplementary material - Without Prejudice -

Dear Ben

I have shown the proposals to Jon Mullis. He is comfortable with the new mesh window design, including for SETS, and agrees with my comments re. bricks below.

During my phone call yesterday I offered to look at a cross section drawing for the SETS façade if that would help you in your design process.

Thinking about 'Building I' - did you manage to move it further from the neighbour's boundary? - we discussed the possibility at our last meeting. Also the need for increased boundary planting to help screen it from the neighbour.

Kind regards

Steve

Steve Vigar
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Section | Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

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Sent: 11 October 2017 10:28

To: 'Ben Martyr'

Subject: RE: St Patrick's Supplementary material - Without Prejudice

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Kind regards

Ben

Ben Martyr
Transaction Manager
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