



STUDENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
at 79 SILVER STREET by

CHAMBERWELL INVESTMENT SERVICES LTD

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

APRIL 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement supports a full planning application by Chamberwell Investment Services Ltd for the demolition of an existing commercial building (McQueen House) and the erection of a building of comparable maximum height (with lower frontage and rear elements) offering 54 student rooms at 79 Silver Street, Reading.
- 1.2 It has been prepared by GW Planning with input from the developers Chamberwell Investment Services and from the project architects O'Connell East. It should be read in close relationship to the Design and Access Statement which is also submitted with this application.
- 1.3 The scheme now proposed is amended following a previous application (ref no 161805) refused by Planning Committee in March 2017. This resubmission is reduced in terms of the amount of accommodation at the rear of the site and in other detailed respects to address all of the March reasons for refusal.
- 1.4 Technical supporting documents that are also submitted include a Landscape Report, Tree Survey and Tree Retention Details, Sunlight and Daylight Assessment, Drainage Strategy and a Student Housing Management Plan.

Site Location

- 1.5 The application site lies between Reading Town Centre and the University of Reading campuses at Whiteknights and London Road.
- 1.6 The proposal seeks to deliver quality student accommodation in this very suitable location between the University and Town Centre.



Application site (marked yellow)

Need for Student Accommodation

- 1.7 The national picture in respect of student housing is one of considerable recent and continuing investment in purpose built provision, arising from a combination of factors including;
 - university expansion/ growth of student numbers
 - a need to update or replace ageing University owned stock to ensure higher standards (including structural condition and regulations compliance)-often achieved in partnership with the private sector
 - increasing quality expectations by students, with single rooms/ en-suite bathrooms widely regarded as essential
 - a closely related shift toward more demand for purpose built and managed student accommodation from second and third year undergraduates and from postgraduates who may in the past have moved on into the mainstream local housing market
 - the success of commercial models for private student accommodation provision including both mainstream and smaller 'niche' providers

-planning authority support for the benefits of purpose built student accommodation in deflecting some pressure of student demands away from mainstream housing stock.

- 1.8 Private provision of student accommodation includes larger 'mainstream' providers typically targeting larger (300 room plus) schemes for undergraduates and working closely with Universities who will refer students.
- 1.9 In addition as part of a widening choice of accommodation at a range of price points there are an increasing number of smaller niche operators variously offering larger and/or 'studio' rooms, additional supporting services or a distinctive ethnic/ national community environment targeting overseas students. Such schemes can be smaller and more distinctive in their character but still need to be of sufficient scale to provide a critical mass sufficient to cover the costs of support services.
- 1.10 The University of Reading currently has around 17,000 students and over 4000 staff. It is one of the largest economic and employment generators in Berkshire with annual income/ expenditure of around £275m. The University has adopted an ambitious strategy for growth, transformation and improvement under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Sir David Bell. The approach emphasises positive "limitless" change. The summary of the University's Corporate Strategy states that;
"Our vision for 2026 is that the University of Reading will be a vibrant, thriving, sustainable, global and broad-based institution, responsive to, stimulated by and informing changes in the world around us. As a result, we will also be significantly larger in terms of students, global reach and presence, and revenue."
- 1.11 Reading University is proving to be particularly successful in terms of attracting students. As highlighted by the local and national press Reading was one of a number of hot spots across the UK at the start of the 2015/2016 academic year with shortages of accommodation for new students and various temporary emergency provisions needing to be arranged.
- 1.12 The University has a high proportion of postgraduates (around 33% of annual student intake) reflecting its strong research and business connections.
- 1.13 As a small contribution to meeting the significant demands arising for accommodation the proposal for 79 Silver Street is for a total of 54 units of 'studio' accommodation (highest quality larger individual student units

supported by communal laundry and gym/ cinema facilities). This would be supported by associated concierge and reception area at the street frontage.

Urban Design

- 1.14 The existing commercial building presents as a bulky flat roofed block stepped back from Silver Street and with a poor visual relationship to the Victorian terraced homes to the South.
- 1.15 The proposals are based from a full analysis of the local context. They will restore the building line and step down to make an appropriate transition in scale between commercial offices to the North and terraced housing to the South.



Silver Street frontage as proposed

- 1.16 Behind this the scheme proposes an efficient use of the brownfield site with student rooms around a well screened low level courtyard area:



Basement level courtyard

- 1.17 The layout and massing of the development will achieve an interesting building form with dormer windows adding to roofscape modelling and visual interest: In response to the concerns expressed by Planning Committee in March the rear part of the scheme has been reduced by a storey so that it now adopts a scale closely comparable with the frontage element and will be much less prominent in views from residential gardens to the South and East.
- 1.18 The scheme continues to present a building which is clearly modern in its style and detailing expressing its University-related function, but which respects and enhances the setting of traditional elements of its surroundings (including the adjacent conservation area) with brickwork and pitched roof forms including the stepping gable ends which are characteristic of terraced housing on Silver Street . These principles gained the general support of the Reading Design Review Panel in respect of the previous scheme, and the amended scheme includes a number of detailed refinements of the design as well as the substantial reduction in scale to the rear.



Overview Image

Access

- 1.19 The development will operate with 'no-car' leases precluding students from bringing a car to the site (or to central Reading). Cycle parking is provided. The previous scheme which included a retail use on the ground floor frontage and no off street parking generated some concern at possible 'passing trade' vehicles stopping on Silver Street and questions as to how vehicles for student removals at start and end of the academic year could best be accommodated. The revised scheme now deletes the retail unit and includes a paved forecourt that will usually remain car-free but can (under site management supervision) allow for up to three vehicles to service the site. The location where bins will be placed ready for (weekly commercial) collection is also now shown on the revised plans.

Environmental Effects

- 1.20 The existing offices on the site have large windows overlooking neighbouring gardens. By introducing a courtyard the scheme allows more space close to the nearest neighbour so windows on the new building facing South will be further away. These windows will also be treated with a special film so that downward views are obscured, and will have screen panels to direct views away from the rear of the terraced houses. The overall outcome will be a significant improvement in levels of privacy for the nearest neighbours compared to the option of re-using the existing building..

- 1.21 The courtyard arrangement will achieve comfortable living conditions for the majority of new residents who will be well protected from street noise and air pollution and will enjoy adequate levels of sunlight/ daylight.
- 1.22 The scheme will include a sustainable drainage strategy and the introduction of some new trees and limited areas of new greenspace, so as to reduce surface water flood risks and improve eco habitats compared to the existing wholly hard surfaced commercial site.

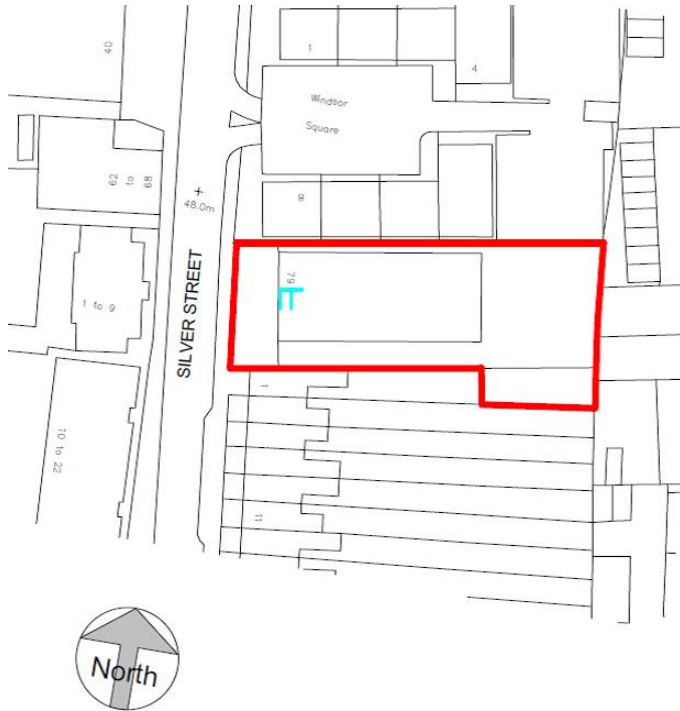
Summary

- 1.23 As explained fully in the following sections of this report and by the Design and Access Statement, the revised proposals have been carefully considered. They are appropriate to the site and local context and have responded to all points of concern raised in March in respect of a previous larger scheme. They represent sustainable development in full accordance with national and local planning policies and will make a relevant and positive contribution to the further development and enhancement of Reading's established urban area.

2 SITE CONTEXT.

Location

- 2.1 The site is situated at the Southern edge of Reading Town Centre on the east side of Silver Street. The surrounding land use is comprised of offices (Windsor Square) to the North, residential garage blocks and garden areas to the East and residential dwellings to the South and West;



- 2.2 The site is within walking or cycling distance of the University of Reading's main (Whiteknights) campus and is within 200m of the University's London Road site. It is well served by frequent bus services using Silver Street with bus stops in close proximity to the site.
- 2.3 A full mapping of the extensive range of facilities within walking distance of the application site and analysis of the uses, streetscenes and building forms and materials forming the surrounding context is presented within the Design and Access Statement.

Existing Building

- 2.4 The existing 3 storey commercial building has a ground floor shop (A1 use class) on Silver Street with offices (B1 use class) on two floors above. An access roadway leads to a hard surfaced parking area behind the frontage building.
- 2.5 The existing building is of bland post-war utilitarian design with relatively high commercial floor to ceiling heights. It is set behind a tarmac forecourt and does not make a positive contribution to the existing streetscene:



- 2.6 The existing building has large South facing office windows approximately 3m from the boundary and overlooking the adjacent rear gardens:



Neighbour gardens- view from existing 2nd floor office windows.

Planning Applications History

- 2.7 The application site was the subject of an application for a new-build student housing development (no 161805) submitted in September 2016. This application was refused in March 2017 for reasons which can be summarised as;
- overdominant in relationship to adjacent neighbouring property to the South (primarily due to height and massing to the rear).
 - details of parking and waste collection arrangements
 - effects on adjacent trees
 - lack of legal agreements in respect of employment and skills and limiting use to students.
- 2.8 The application now being made is a 'first revision' of the recently refused scheme with the following changes which specifically address the reasons for refusal;
- significant reduction in scale of rear parts of the development (in proximity to neighbouring rear garden) from 3 to 2 stories above ground. Associated reduction in number of student studio rooms proposed (was 67 now 54) with further adjustments to delete or relocate windows and to introduce additional screen panels which will further reduce overlooking.
 - introduction of (controlled use) parking bays on the forecourt to allow for start and end of year student moves and for maintenance vehicles and identification of collection point close to highway for waste bins.
 - details of proposed tree management ensuring retention of existing trees.
 - commitment to enter into relevant legal agreements.
- 2.9 Prior to 2016 this the application site had no history of planning applications for redevelopment. It was subject to an application in 2008 granting a certificate of lawful use confirming use of the ground floor as part A1 retail and part B1 office use and the upper floors as B1 office use. Prior to this the only applications in respect of the existing building were in respect of rooftop communications installations and shopfront changes.
- 2.10 The site vicinity has been the subject of a number of recent planning approvals, many of which have been implemented. There is a particular focus of new housing and student housing developments to the North and West of the application site including;
- 119 flats at 1-3 Silver Street/ London Road approved 2001 (implemented)
 - 21 flats (Platinum Apartments) at 32 Silver Street approved on appeal 2001 (implemented)

- 6 storey student flats at 132-134 London Street/ Crown Street approved May 2007 (implemented)
- Conversion of existing building to 16 student flats at 62-68 Silver St approved September 2012 (implemented).
- 14 flats to replace industrial building at 40 Silver Street approved March 2016
- 84 assisted living units at 20-22 Silver Street-updated scheme submitted May 2016 to supersede earlier approval for 86 units but withdrawn February 2017..

- 2.11 From the recent planning history it is clear that Silver Street has an established recent history of redevelopment and changes of use to achieve new housing (including student housing) mostly replacing older industrial and commercial use properties.

Environmental Considerations

Statutory Environmental Assessment

- 2.12 The proposal does not include any of the specific uses for which a Statutory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required, nor does it exceed the 0.5Ha threshold above which the question of whether EIA is appropriate has to be considered by applicant and planning authority.

Air Quality

- 2.13 The site falls within a designated Air Quality Management Area (extending along the main radial routes from the Town Centre including London Road and Silver Street) within which special attention is focused on reducing levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulates (PM₁₀) both primarily related to traffic emissions. Recent monitoring within the AQMA (including continuous automatic monitoring on London Road) indicates that conditions are currently being maintained at acceptably low levels of pollution.
- 2.14 The nature of the proposed development is such that it will provide living accommodation for students within very easy walking and/or cycling distance of a wide range of University and Town Centre facilities.
- 2.15 The scheme will not provide regular car parking. 3 forecourt spaces will be used only for occasional maintenance and disabled visitor use and for arrivals/ departures at the start and end of the academic year. Students will be required (by terms of lease) not to bring a car and not to apply for a residential parking permit in the vicinity. Sustainable development of this 'no-car' type which

reduces the need for vehicular travel and removes the parking spaces/commutor and visitor travel related to previous office, workshop and retail use will contribute positively to Air Quality Management.

- 2.16 Emissions from the modern heating, cooling and ventilation systems within the proposed building will be minimised by the use of high efficiency boilers, and are expected to be less overall than from the existing building/ previous use.
- 2.17 From an air quality perspective the principal issue in this case will not be the external effects of the scheme on its surroundings but rather the conditions experienced by new student residents, especially in respect of those rooms fronting onto Silver Street where the effects on air quality of traffic emissions are of greatest significance.
- 2.18 Silver Street carries moderate levels of two way (single carriageway) traffic including buses. It is fronted by existing residential property including Victorian homes adjacent to the application site and modern residential development opposite.
- 2.19 The proposed design provides for the majority of the new student accommodation to focus around a courtyard area set back into the site and well screened from Silver Street by a proposed frontage building. The majority of the development is protected from the effects of traffic on Silver Street and no special requirements in respect of controlled ventilation are considered likely to be necessary.
- 2.20 On the Silver Street frontage the ground floor (where air quality impacts from Silver Street traffic will be most evident) is proposed to have reception and services areas. Student residential accommodation will be at upper levels only.
- 2.21 In these circumstances conditions for future student residents within the building are expected to be acceptable in terms of acknowledged standards, subject to the appropriate detailed design of ventilation/ air handling specification.

Noise

- 2.22 The development is not expected to generate any significant external noise impacts of itself. The principal areas of communal student activity are located within and around the basement level central courtyard (including adjacent

laundry and games rooms) which will be well screened from neighbours or passers by. The reception area at ground floor is of modest scale.

- 2.23 The main external source of noise affecting the development site is traffic on Silver Street. There are no other significant sources of noise from neighbouring (office and residential) properties. The main issue in respect of noise will be to consider whether new residents will have an acceptable noise environment. The layout of the scheme with its courtyard focus is such that most new student residents will be well screened from traffic noise on Silver Street. Only a limited number of studio rooms will front onto the street, and for these high specification double glazing can ensure that internal noise levels within the studio rooms will meet the relevant World Health Organisation guidelines.

Natural Environment and Ecology

- 2.24 The application site is not within any statutorily or locally designated area of interest for nature conservation, landscape or special scientific interest.

Trees

- 2.25 The site does not of itself have any trees or significant other planting, being wholly covered by buildings and areas of hardstanding. There are, however, 2 substantial existing trees close to and outside the site boundary to the East with canopies partly overhanging the site. One of these is within a conservation area. The other whilst not having any specific protection is also worthy of retention. The trees have been surveyed. An initial arboricultural survey by PJC Consultancy and more recent detailed proposals for management of the tree canopies are submitted with this application accordingly.
- 2.26 The main effect of the scheme will be that areas of existing tarmac parking at the rear of the site will be replaced by soft landscaping allowing more water to reach the ground below improving conditions for tree roots. Careful consideration has been given in the design of the scheme to ensure that building works on the site will not prejudice the survival of the existing trees on adjacent land. Tree protection and tree management measures are proposed as part of the landscape details submitted. These include some limited local pruning of one of the tree canopies prior to new building construction so as to ensure there will be no damage during construction and to manage the future shape of the tree appropriately in its long term relationship with the new building. The reduced height of the rear parts of the new development as now

proposed has reduced the amount of tree canopy pruning required compared to the refused scheme. New trees will be planted on the street frontage to help 'green' Silver Street.

Ecology

- 2.27 The application site is wholly occupied by post-war buildings and associated tarmacadam parking areas. In these circumstances it is evident that the site does not currently offer any significant existing eco habitat other than those areas of the canopies of the trees rooted on adjacent land that overhang its Eastern boundary.
- 2.28 In 'scoping' consultation with planning officers it was agreed that a full ecology survey of the site is not necessary in this case and that attention should focus on the development of eco enhancement measures as part of the new proposals. As detailed in the landscaping section of the Design and Access Statement this can include limited street tree planting, small areas of planting within proposed courtyard and Eastern boundary landscaped areas, and also the provision of Hirundine boxes to encourage swifts and house martins.

Ground Conditions

- 2.29 As detailed by the heritage section of this supporting statement the application site was outside the mediaeval town and the known line of Reading's Civil War defences. It was probably first developed in the early Victorian period prior to redevelopment to construct the current buildings which date from the latter part of the 20th Century. There is no apparent evidence of any early industrial activity on the site prior to the current buildings but the general vicinity does have industrial uses so this possibility cannot be discounted. In any case the use of parts of the site by vehicles is likely to have introduced some localised areas of ground contamination.
- 2.30 The building is still partly occupied so it is envisaged that a full/ intrusive ground conditions survey would be carried out after the grant of planning consent as part of the demolition and site preparation process and all relevant requirements arising will be implemented. From the experience of recent redevelopment in the general vicinity no particular contamination, ground bearing or water source contamination issues are expected at this stage such as to preclude the principle of site redevelopment.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.31 The site is within the lowest flood risk Zone 1 as designated by the Environment Agency, and is not of such a size as to otherwise require the submission of a formal Flood Risk Assessment. In Zone 1 locations all applicants are encouraged to include sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) arrangements to manage surface water run off but no other flood assessment, flood prevention or flood mitigation measures are usually necessary.
- 2.32 The scheme will replace some areas currently covered by tarmac or buildings with permeable surfaces within the new courtyard and landscaped areas to reduce surface water run off from the site as described by the drainage strategy and indicative drainage layout design for the site submitted with this application.
- 2.33 The proposals include the construction of a basement (courtyard) level. The drainage strategy for the site will ensure that the drainage provisions in respect of this are robust in ensuring protection of the rooms around the courtyard from the highest potential levels of groundwater and from extreme storm (surface water) conditions.

Neighbour Amenities

- 2.34 The application site has existing residential neighbours to South, East and West. In these circumstances careful attention has been given to ensuring that neighbours will not suffer any significant loss of privacy, increased overlooking or loss of sunlight/ daylight.

Existing Situation and Alternative Uses

- 2.35 The existing office building has large windows at first and second floor levels overlooking neighbouring residential property to the South, East and West. To the West these windows face residential property across Silver Street which as a public street frontage would not normally be expected to achieve high levels of privacy. To the East the office windows overlook the long private rear gardens of houses on Kendrick Road. To the South the office windows overlook the closely adjacent private rear gardens of terraced houses on Mount Pleasant, from a position less than 3m from the site boundary.
- 2.36 The current extent of overlooking of the neighbouring gardens to the South is unusual and would not normally be regarded as acceptable in modern planning practice. As office developments can be intensively occupied (typically 1

worker per approx. 10m2), a considerable number of office workers would be overlooking the terraced house gardens in the event of continued use of the existing buildings if refurbished for office use. This situation (extant for probably over 50 years) is in this case the 'baseline' from which the comparative effects of a proposed redevelopment of the application site should be assessed.

- 2.37 It is also relevant in terms of 'baseline' to note that Government provisions to bring forward more housing allow as 'permitted development' the conversion of existing office buildings to residential use. As noted by the Design and Access Statement this possibility is available in the case of the application site and would (if actioned) replace overlooking by a considerable number of office workers mostly during the working day with overlooking by a lower number of new residents at a wider range of times.
- 2.38 The student housing scheme as refused in March 2017 arranged the new development so that almost all new windows would be further from the boundary than those of the existing building. Some windows in the rear part of the proposed development (up to 3 stories above ground) would however have overlooked the rear of the adjacent house at a distance of approximately 20m.
- 2.39 This part of the development (which was regarded as overdominant by the Planning Committee in March 2017) has now been reduced to two storeys above ground (where facing the neighbours) and with revised window positions and screens to minimise overlooking. The arrangement as now proposed is closely comparable to normal planning standards in respect of spacing between rear walls in new two storey housing development layouts.
- 2.40 In overall terms the proposals are now considered likely to represent an improvement on the existing situation (use of existing building as housing or residential) in terms of overlooking the rear gardens of terraced housing to the South.

Design for Context

- 2.41 In pre-application discussions with planning officers during 2016 a number of options for the layout of a redevelopment scheme were explored. The arrangement now proposed emerged as the most appropriate for a number of reasons;
- Accommodation in a rear block (facing East) is well separated by distance from properties on Kendrick Road and windows in this block facing primarily to the East will not significantly alter privacy or overlooking conditions for these residents.

- The introduction of a courtyard area within the site adds distance between a South facing link element of new building and neighbouring gardens. A high walled boundary treatment (which being to the North will not significantly shade gardens) and obscured areas of glazing so that downward views are precluded will also help to improve privacy.

- The introduction of a basement/ courtyard level enables the lower parts of the development including the external student garden, communal facilities and some of the student rooms to be completely screened from neighbours.

- The frontage to Silver Street is kept low in scale to reflect the context of adjacent/ opposite dwellings and is aligned with the building line of the adjacent terrace to improve the streetscene..

- 2.42 The relationships of the proposed scheme to adjacent properties are fully explained and illustrated within the Design and Access Statement and by submitted illustrations from relevant viewpoints.

Sunlight and Daylight

- 2.43 The scheme proposals are to the North of existing homes on Mount Pleasant. This, coupled with the inset courtyard, ensures that there should be no undue effects in terms of loss of sunlight/ daylight for the closest residential properties.
- 2.44 On Silver Street the proposals will be closely comparable in height to the existing building and to the housing opposite so no significant change is involved in terms of shadows cast to the West and North-West.
- 2.45 To the North and East shadows cast by the rear parts of the new development will be significantly less than would have been the case with the refused scheme. There will be some limited shadowing of external areas behind the neighbouring commercial property, and the garage blocks and parking areas behind blocks of flats on Kendrick Road. In neither case will living accommodation be directly affected.
- 2.46 To the East and South East shadows cast by the proposals will introduce some late afternoon/ evening shadowing of the ends of existing private gardens but (due to the length of these gardens) will have no effect on areas close to the houses on Kendrick Road. These limited effects are significantly less for the reduced scheme now proposed than would have been the case for the refused scheme.

- 2.47 Within the development itself the South facing courtyard arrangement will allow adequate levels of daylight and sunlight to reach the basement studio rooms, ensuring acceptable conditions for new residents as demonstrated by the Design and Access Statement.
- 2.48 A desktop assessment of the effects of the scheme in terms of daylight and sunlight at the closest residential neighbouring property (1 Mount Pleasant) has been carried out by Delva Patman Redler (Chartered Surveyors) and is submitted with this application. This assessment concludes that the scheme as now revised does not raise any concerns (in relation to national guidance) in terms of daylight or sunlight effects.



3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National

- 3.1 The 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced a considerable number of former Planning Policy Statement (PPS), Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Minerals Planning Guidance documents as well as Circular 05/2005 (Planning Obligations) and numerous advice letters to local planning authorities. The NPPF represents distillation rather than significant alteration of most previous guidance with additional emphasis on neighbourhood planning following the new provisions of the Localism Act 2012.
- 3.2 The government also provides the online National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) which assists in the application and interpretation of the NPPF. This supersedes a considerable volume of previous technical supporting documentation.
- 3.3 Aspects of the NPPF relevant in this case include;

Paras 6-16 Achieving Sustainable Development-Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development clarify the role of planning to help achieve a strong, responsive and competitive economy, strong, vibrant and healthy communities providing housing and a high quality built environment with accessible local services, and to protect and enhance natural, built and historic environment and biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy. The NPPF asserts a presumption in favour of sustainable development as a 'golden thread' to run through plan-making and decision taking. For decision taking, the presumption means "approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay" and "where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits....or specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted."

Para 17 Core Planning Principles reasserts the 'plan-led' approach to planning, urging the empowerment of local people, up to date plans and predictable and efficient decisions on planning applications. Plans must "take account of market signals". Planning should seek to secure high design quality, and should be "promoting the vitality of our main urban areas". It should "encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings" as part of a transition to a low carbon future, and be

"reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land)": "promote mixed-use developments", conserve heritage assets and "make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable".

Paras 29-41 Promoting Sustainable Transport seek to locate significant development "where the need for travel can be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised", and "aim for a balance of land uses.....so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities".

Paras 47-55 Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes require plans to meet the "full, objectively assessed needs" for market and affordable housing, allocating for a (annually updated) 5yrs supply plus a 5% buffer amount. Planning applications for housing "should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development". Local Authorities should "plan for a mix of housing", and "identify the size, type tenure and range that is required in particular locations". Where affordable housing is needed, they should "set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site contribution of broadly equivalent can be robustly justified". Para 50 states that local planning authorities should plan for the needs of "different groups in the community".

Paras 56-68 Requiring Good Design include the guidance 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". Developments should "function well and add to the overall quality of the area...", "optimise the potential of the site to sustain and appropriate mix of uses", "establish a strong sense of place" "create safe and accessible environments", respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, which not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation" and "be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping". Planning "should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes". It should "address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment" and "great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard.....".

Paras 69-78 Promoting Healthy Communities encourage community based neighbourhood planning underpinning the positive provision and shared use of community facilities, schools and recreation and open space. Para 72 encourages education developments to meet needs of existing and new

communities and to widen choice in education. Planning authorities “should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.” Para 73 encourages assessments to determine the needs for open space, sports and recreational facilities and opportunities for new provision.

Paras 150-185 Plan Making focus on the positive preparation of local plans, using a ‘proportionate’ evidence base and “reflecting the vision and aspirations of local communities”. Para 173 headed ‘Ensuring Viability and Deliverability’ asserts that “Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan –making and decision taking”.

Paras 186-207 Decision Taking state that “Local Authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development”. They “should look for solutions rather than problems” and “should work pro-actively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.” Pre-application dialogue and proactive approaches by statutory consultees and other consenting bodies is encouraged.

Paras 203-206 Planning Conditions and Obligations state that Planning obligations should only be sought where these are “necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms”, are “directly related to the development”, and are “fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development” and that planning conditions “should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects”.

Assessment of the proposals in respect of the National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.4** *The overall thrust of the NPPF encourages positive change and ‘sustainable development’.*
- 3.5** *79 Silver Street is previously developed land within an urban area forming part of Reading. It is within easy walking distance of University and town centre activity and well served by public transport. The provision of new student accommodation in such a location will support town centre and university facilities relevant to economic progress and to social and environmental sustainability.*

- 3.6** *The NPPF requires planning authorities to give “great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools”, adding a further presumption in support of the development proposed in the case of this application which will support the further development of the University of Reading. It also requires planning authorities to plan for the needs of different groups within the community-in this case specialist housing for students is proposed in a particularly relevant location.*
- 3.7** *The proposals take full account of design, heritage and environmental considerations as required by the NPPF. They will provide a new building which will make appropriately intense use of a highly accessible location and will significantly enhance its surroundings when compared to the existing unsatisfactory site appearance. The proposals give due attention to those particular issues of local context that will require appropriate attention including the retention of trees adjacent to the site boundary and enhancing the setting of a Conservation Area.*

Statutory Development Plan

- 3.8** The adopted statutory development plan for Reading comprises the adopted Core Strategy (2008 with alteration adopted 2015) and the adopted Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).

Core Strategy

- 3.9** The Core Strategy sets out the strategy and principles for development in the Borough until 2026. It sets a vision for significant and sustainable growth, to develop the role of Reading as a significant growth point within its sub-region.
- 3.10** Core Strategy policies relevant to this planning application include;
- Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design). This states that new development will be acceptable where design of buildings and layouts uses energy, water, minerals, materials and natural resources appropriately efficiently and with care and takes account of climate change;
- Policy CS1 sets minimum standards of Eco-Homes ‘Very Good’ or BREEAM ‘Very Good’ and requires water conservation measures, sustainable drainage and (for larger projects) on site generation, CHP or energy efficiency measures to offset at least 20% of Carbon Dioxide emissions;

Policy CS2 (Waste Minimisation) requires developments to demonstrate how waste will be minimised and managed in construction and use of buildings;

Policy CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity) requires accessibility to services and facilities and to consider and contribute to the distinctiveness of the social and cultural diversity of the community context;

Policy CS4 (Accessibility and The Intensity of development) encourages the scale and density of development to be proportionate to the site's levels of pedestrian and public transport accessibility to centres and services;

Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access) requires suitable access for all users including disabled people;

Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires high design quality that maintains or enhances character and appearance of its locality, and achieves urban design objectives of character, continuity and enclosure, quality of public realm, ease of movement and permeability, legibility, adaptability and diversity;

Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing) targets an average of at least 572 dwellings per annum in 2006-2016 and 521 per annum in 2016-2026;

Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) encourages response to local context with a preference for higher density development in the most accessible locations;

Policy CS22 (Transport Assessments) requires proposals to ensure adequate accessibility and safety by all modes of transport but particularly by public transport, walking and cycling;

Policy CS24 (Car/cycle Parking) establishes maximum parking standards and cycle parking standards responsive to the accessibility of locations by sustainable modes;

Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources) precludes development that would suffer unduly from or contribute to flood risk, water noise or air pollution and requires appropriate mitigation for contaminated land;

Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands) protects trees and encourages additional tree planting.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document

3.11 The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) adopted in 2012 allocates a number of specific sites for development and sets out detailed policies for development management.

3.13 The SDPD does not schedule any specific land use change allocation for the application site, but other detailed policies of general relevance to this application include:

Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) reinforces the NPPF and confirms a positive approach to planning, with planning applications that accord with the development plan being approved without delay unless material circumstances indicate otherwise;

Policy DM1 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires development to demonstrate design to adapt to climate change, including orientation for natural heating and ventilation, resistance and resilience, use of trees and other planting to improve microclimates, and minimising surface water run-off.

Policy DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) requires appropriate contributions through planning obligations and/or CIL for relevant local infrastructure.

Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to protect the living environment of existing and new residential property in terms of avoiding undue overlooking/ loss of privacy, loss of sunlight/ daylight, dominance, noise, dust, vibration, fumes or crime.

Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that dwellings should be provided with relevant, functional private or communal open space.

Policy DM18 (Tree Planting) requires provision for new tree planting on or off site to improve the amount of tree coverage, provide for biodiversity and help adapt to climate change.

Policy DM19 (Air Quality) requires attention to improving air quality and mitigating air pollution effects notably within Air Quality Management Areas

Overall assessment in respect of Compliance with Development Plan

- 3.14 *The proposals do not conflict with any allocations or proposals scheduled by the Development Plan. They fully reflect principles for sustainable development (CS1, SD1) and will make full use of a highly sustainable previously developed site (CS4, CS22) thus contributing to the overall vision for the growth of Reading. The provision of 'sui generis' student accommodation will provide a consequential benefit in terms of meeting overall housing needs by absorbing some of the pressure of student housing demand that would otherwise compete for mainstream housing accommodation.*
- 3.15 *As detailed elsewhere in this Planning Statement and by the Design and Access Statement the proposals take full account of the relevant development management policies. They respond to a full analysis of the local physical and social context (CS3, DM4). The proposed density and scale of development as now amended is appropriate to the location (CS4, CS14, CS15), and relevant to help meet needs for more purpose built student housing supporting the further development of the University's contribution to growth and social progress, whilst taking full account of local environmental considerations (CS34, CS38, DM19).*
- 3.16 *The proposals are of high design quality (CS7), and have been carefully considered in terms of the quality of living conditions provided for new residents and maintaining amenity for existing neighbours (DM4, DM10). They take full account of sustainability design principles (CS1, CS2, CS34, DM1) and make appropriate provision for sustainable modes and disabled access (CS3, CS5, CS22, CS24). They will retain and protect existing trees and include additional tree planting (DM18).*

4 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Overview

- 4.1 National planning policies require careful attention to be given to the protection and enhancement of 'heritage assets'. NPPF Para 128 states that;

"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require a applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary..."

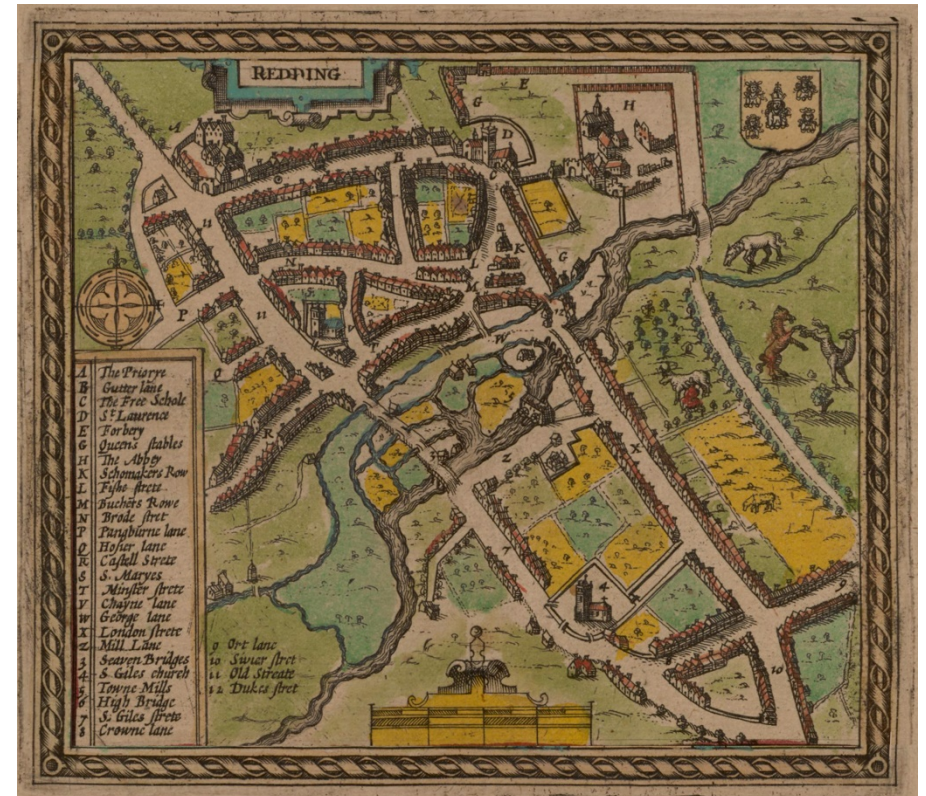
- 4.2 In this case reference has been made to the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. The application site does not include any statutorily designated heritage assets (ie it does not include any designated ancient monuments or listed buildings nor is it within a conservation area).
- 4.3 The nearest listed building is at 30 Silver Street. This is on the West side of the street and at some distance from the application site, although for the avoidance of any doubt effects of the scheme on the setting of this building are considered by this assessment.
- 4.4 In more immediate proximity, the Eastern site boundary of the application site adjoins the edge of the adjacent Kendrick Road Conservation Area. There will be no direct effect in terms of any loss of buildings or trees within the conservation area but (in accordance with NPPF guidance) it is appropriate to consider if the application site is of any significance in terms of the setting of the conservation area and if so whether the development have any adversely effects on this setting.

Site History General Summary

- 4.5 Reading may have existing in the Roman period as a trading point on the Thames but firm evidence of the town dates back to Saxon records of a battle (against Danish invaders) at the town in 871 AD.

- 4.6 The 1086 Domesday Book records 6 mills owned by the King and by Battle Abbey, and Reading Abbey was founded by Henry 1 in 1121.

- 4.7 By 1525 Reading was the largest town in Berkshire and the 10th largest in England (based on tax returns). The Abbey was largely destroyed by Henry VIII in 1538 who also granted a new charter allowing burgesses to elect a mayor in 1542. By 1611 the town had a population of over 5000 and was known as a rich centre of cloth trading. The town was significantly affected by battles and a siege during the Civil War. During this time a defensive wall was in place for the town (destroyed in 1644). Evidence of the location of this was confirmed by an archaeological excavation North of the application site at 32-38 Silver Street (HER reference RD15704) placing the application site approx. 50m outside the town wall at this time.



1611 map of Reading

- 4.8 Industry in Reading in the 18th Century included significant ironworks and breweries, and the town retained significant roles as a market and as a coaching stop on the turnpike roads. By 1801 the population was about 9,400. Opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810 allowed barges from the town through to the Bristol Channel, and the Great Western Railway in 1841 was the first of three railway companies serving the town by 1856. The town expanding rapidly to a population of 59,000 by 1900 with extensive areas of terraced housing constructed.



Ordnance Survey Map of Reading in 1830

- 4.9 Infrastructure improvements made in the 19th Century including sewer, water and gas supplies, market, hospital and swimming baths and Reading became a borough in 1835.
- 4.10 Further rapid expansion of the town continued throughout the 20th Century, notably southward as far as the new M4 motorway. In 1999 the Oracle Shopping Centre opened, symbolic of a new focus on regeneration of the Town Centre after a period of mostly out of centre office and retail developments.
- 4.11 The application site is not within the area of the mediaeval town, and appears to have been first developed during the Victorian period. It is not within an area of any particular archaeological interest in respect of potential earlier settlement remains.

- 4.12 The site vicinity includes some surviving late Victorian buildings notably the Rising Sun closer to the Town Centre (see below) and terraced housing immediately to the South of the application site.
- 4.13 The post war commercial buildings that currently occupy the application site are of a utilitarian style with no particular reference to their local context and are not regarded as heritage assets of any significance.

Effects on Listed Buildings

- 4.14 The former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern (now a local arts centre) is listed at Grade II. This building is approximately 75m N of the application site on the opposite side of Silver Street.



Rising Sun Building 30 Silver Street

- 4.15 The Historic England listing record for this building is as follows;

*READING SILVER STREET SU 7172 NE (west side)
Number 30 (former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern) II*

Former temperance tavern. Dated 1877. For St Giles Parish Council. Grey brick in English bond with red brick quoins, arches, bands, and decorative features; ashlar plinth band, sills, lintels, and bands (claspings rainwater pipes).

Rear of red brick. Plain tile roof with crested ridge tiles. Brick stacks at left end and to ridge of rear wing. 2 storeys with attic, 4 bays; wing to rear right of 2 storeys, 2 bays. Windows, other than to ground floor at front, have wooden

mullions and transoms, stone sills and lintels, and brick relieving arches; those of left return and rear have leaded upper lights with coloured glass. Entrance front; chamfered plinth. Step up to entrance, on right, which has door of 9 raised and fielded panels, overlight, and hollow moulded surround. Entrance and ground-floor windows all segmental arched below continuous hoodmould, the windows with vertical glazing bars (lower parts boarded up). Projecting

double-sided metal tavern sign, some letters missing. 3-light windows to 1st floor, with decorative brickwork to tympana. Brick modillions to eaves. 2-light attic windows rising through eaves, those at centre paired in dated, pilastered, gable with stepped, logged, eaves; outer windows below finished hipped roofs. Left return; 2 bays. 2-light windows except for 1-light attic windows which flank corbelled external stack. Corbelled attic pilasters support stepped, logged, eaves. Rear; two 1st-floor windows (of 2 and 3 lights); 1 attic window. Wing return has door of left of paired 1-light windows, and 3-light windows over. Interior; not inspected, but reported to retain original stair, fireplaces, and some ceiling cornices.

Listing NGR: SU7190572801

- 4.16 This building is primarily of interest as a significant example of a Victorian public building type. The heritage asset of primary interest is the building itself and this interest is not particularly dependent on or enhanced by the surrounding (including modern residential and commercial) buildings on Silver Street.
- 4.17 Other buildings around and opposite provide an immediate setting for the listed building that includes modern apartment buildings. The application site is only just glimpsed in long street views as part of the background context for the listed building.
- 4.18 On Silver Street the proposed new building will present a more varied roofscape and better transition to the lower scale Victorian terraced housing adjacent. The frontage line as proposed will remove an anomaly and restore the established Victorian building line on Silver Street. In these respects the proposals will achieve a very slight enhancement of the setting of the listed building.

Kendrick Road Conservation Area

- 4.19 The Kendrick Road Conservation Area features a number of historic buildings characteristic of the 18th Century, 19th Century and 20th Century (interwar University Buildings).

- 4.20 Statutorily listed buildings within the area are mainly concentrated along London Road. On Kendrick Road itself there are a number of late Victorian and Edwardian houses, many of which are 'locally listed' as of townscape merit in contributing to a characteristic streetscene that gives the Conservation Area its name.



Application site (marked orange) in relation to local list buildings (green)

- 4.21 The largest of the Victorian and Edwardian houses on Kendrick Road, and the Abbey School, are to the East. On the West side of Kendrick Road, and partly adjoining the application site, blocks of post war flats are excluded from the Conservation Area, but the Conservation Area Boundary extends to include the very long (almost 60m) rear gardens of a semi-detached pair of 3 storey Victorian villas at 26/28 Kendrick Road immediately abutting the application site. South of this the Conservation Area includes no.30 a 2 storey Edwardian house set well back from Kendrick Road and an adjacent group of interwar modernist style white rendered buildings with green tiled roofs (Kendrick Court);



Application site (red) in relation to conservation area (yellow)



28 and 30 Kendrick Road view toward application site



View into rear gardens within Conservation Area from application site boundary

Effects on the Conservation Area

- 4.22 The application proposals will have no direct effect on the Conservation Area, An existing tree within the Conservation Area and close to the application site boundary will be retained (as detailed by the submitted landscape and tree protection information).

Effects on the setting of the Conservation Area

- 4.23 The application proposals will be visible from within the Conservation Area so the question of whether they will adversely affect its 'setting' falls for consideration. In this case it is necessary firstly to establish whether any aspect of setting provided by the site is currently significant or not to the character of the conservation area and (if it is) to then assess the effects of change in the setting arising from the proposed development.
- 4.24 The setting of the Kendrick Road Conservation Area (as for many urban conservation areas) is that it is embedded within a surrounding urban area, some of which is visible in views out from it. The existence of later (and in some cases higher) buildings around is a matter of fact and not necessarily a cause of any concern unless the scale and proximity of proposed adjacent development would be so dominant as to adversely affect the notable qualities of the Conservation Area itself.
- 4.25 Along the West side of Kendrick Road the Conservation area abuts more modern development, typically of 3/4 storeys. Some of this impinges directly onto Kendrick Road (where modern flats are excluded from the Conservation Area Boundary) whilst at the top of Kendrick Road flats of up to six storeys are visible as the backdrop to historic buildings. Taller modern buildings are also evident behind historic frontages on the East of Kendrick Road.
- 4.26 The application site is at a considerable distance (over 90m) from Kendrick Road being at the end of long gardens and well screened by trees. It is currently occupied by a flat roofed office building which is higher than adjacent Victorian housing but lower than modern commercial and residential buildings further up Silver Street. The site is only really visible from the Conservation Area from the rear of houses or from within their private gardens. It plays no role in providing a setting for the streetscene character of Kendrick Road.
- 4.27 The application proposals will replace the existing commercial property with student accommodation of a height comparable to adjacent modern offices on

Silver Street. Although the new building will be slightly closer to the Conservation Area boundary and wider in elevation it will be in a similar alignment in terms of its 'rear building line' to existing buildings to the North on Silver Street (Windsor Square offices) achieving a more consistent backdrop of medium scale modern buildings around the Conservation Area edge.

- 4.28 Although it may be possible to glimpse the new building from Kendrick Road it will be at such a distance as to appear as a tree screened backdrop which imposes no significant effect on the streetscene.
- 4.29 The new building is proposed to be constructed of light coloured brick with a pitched roof featuring dormer windows. This choice of materials and form helps ensure that the elevation as seen from houses/ garden areas within the Conservation area and as may be glimpsed from Kendrick Road will achieve an overall enhancement in the presentation and appearance of the application site.
- 4.30 The previous refused application (which was a storey higher at the rear) was not judged by the planning authority to have any significant effect on the Conservation Area. The current proposal which is a storey lower in respect of the East elevation facing the Conservation area and with a more varied overall massing will be of even less significance in terms of any effects on the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 4.31 Taking all of the above into account the application proposals are considered to have a negligible or very slight positive effect on the setting of the Kendrick Road Conservation Area.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic

5.1 The proposals for 79 Silver Street Parkside will exemplify sustainable development as described by the National Planning Policy Framework and by Reading's Local Planning Policies for a number of reasons including;

- Locating new investment appropriately using previously developed land within an established urban area
- More intensive and efficient use of urban land making use of existing infrastructure.
- Sustaining the significant educational, social, cultural and economic roles of Reading Town Centre.
- Locating new development where it is highly accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport and where there will be minimal need for vehicular traffic.
- Adding an element of visual identity and design quality to a prominent streetscene experienced by a large number of citizens.
- Enhancing air quality, drainage and eco conditions.

Building

Fabric and Passive Design

5.2 The new building is targeted to achieve or exceed BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. The principles to be adopted are summarised within the Design and Access document and will be detailed through the detailed design and implementation stages.

5.3 The structure will be mostly be naturally ventilated with high thermal insulation standards. A number of low energy and passive strategies are adopted in order to reduce demands for heating and mechanical ventilation and air conditioning systems. These include:

- Avoiding undue solar gain/ cooling needs by solar control on South facing windows.
- Minimising electrical lighting requirements by achieving good daylight to all studio rooms
- Enhanced glazing specification with good U-value (insulation) and G-value (solar absorption) performance
- High standards of air tightness for heated areas

Mechanical & Electrical Systems

5.4 Energy efficiency measures proposed for the building include the following:

- Using low energy lighting and efficient lighting controls;
- Use of high efficiency condensing gas boilers for heating.
- Providing heat recovery on mechanical ventilation systems
- A Building Management System to reduce energy wastage (including shutting off heating/ lighting to unoccupied rooms) and to monitor building service performance to highlight problems should they occur

Carbon Reduction

5.5 In comparison with the existing buildings to be demolished a reduction of 40% of carbon usage is expected for the building in its operational phase.

Water Saving and Ecology

5.6 Measures on and around the building that will minimise water use and achieve some habitat enhancement include:

- Rainwater harvesting and attenuation of surface water run-off by use of underground water storage tank and water butts.
- New soft landscaping areas.
- Water saving sanitary ware in toilets.

Materials Use, Recycling and Waste Management

5.7 Measures to reduce the impact of materials used in the building and to reduce water and ensure recycling include:

- Avoidance of uPVC
- Proportion of use of sustainable timber, recycled and other materials appropriate to sustainability
- Waste management plans for construction and use of the building

6 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 Consultations with officers of Reading Borough Council took place during 2015 and 2016 in respect of the original (refused) scheme and subsequently in respect of resolving the revised scheme now submitted. This included advice from Conservation, Transportation and other internal consultees as well as guidance from planning officers in respect of planning policies.
- 6.2 Preliminary advice received was supportive in principle of the use of the site for student housing and has focused primarily on the layout, scale and form of development. The arrangements proposed (including a lower scale frontage element on Silver Street and arrangement around a courtyard so as to set new building away from the Southern site boundary), have been informed by a this dialogue and have been further developed following more detailed analysis of the site context..
- 6.3 Pre-application contact with local residents and with neighbouring businesses in 2016 included a detailed information sheet describing the original proposals and inviting comments. This was sent to 98 addresses on Silver Street, Mount Pleasant and Kendrick Road and to all Ward Councillors in early September and ensured full local awareness of the scheme.
- 6.4 In response only one neighbour (a business owner operating from premises in Windsor Square adjacent to the application site) responded to the applicants expressing some concern at the scale of the proposals and at the possibility that new student residents might try to make use of the limited car and cycle facilities on private land at Windsor Square (this can be precluded by appropriate management as set out within the Student Accommodation Management Plan which accompanies this application).
- 6.5 Neighbour consultations in respect of student housing schemes can expose significant local opposition to such developments. The lack of more significant response to consultation in this instance may be assumed to reflect a degree of local acceptance of the proposals as appropriate to the context in this case.
- 6.6 Objections were made to the planning authority by the immediate adjoining residential neighbour (at 1 Mount Pleasant) during formal consideration of the original scheme. Following discussion of the scheme at Planning Committee it was evident that some of the neighbour's concerns relate to property matters (ownership and maintenance of the boundary wall) and others to the scale and proximity of new development and anticipated effects.

- 6.6 Direct discussion has since taken place between the applicants and the adjoining neighbour and it is appreciated that the reduction in scale at the rear of the scheme as now proposed will achieve a greater degree of openness at the rear of 1 Mount Pleasant and within most of its garden than either the existing situation or the refused proposal. The applicants are confident that they do own the boundary wall and have the rights (in property terms) to abut the existing end wall of the terrace without restriction. Partly to ensure long term confidence that there will be no maintenance commitments or concerns for the neighbour they now propose to rebuild the boundary wall (on its existing alignment) at an increased height as part of the improved treatment of their boundary with the most immediate neighbour.
- 6.7 The neighbour at 1 Mount Pleasant remains concerned that new building abutting the existing end terrace may have the effect of changing perceptions of this to a mid-terrace with some resultant effect on property value. Effects on property values are not however of relevance to considering amenity aspects of planning. In townscape terms the existing blank gable end of 1 Mount Pleasant (which is overpainted with black bitumen paint) is not a positive feature of the streetscene and it is preferable in urban design terms to extend the line and respect the scale of the terrace with new building as proposed. This will also allow the existing gable end to be sheltered and (if desired) insulated allowing sustainability benefits in terms of energy saving. It will also provide a considerable degree of screening of the proposed new courtyard and existing neighbour garden from traffic noise on Silver Street thus improving the amenity enjoyed by these areas.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed student housing development at 79 Silver Street represents a positive investment in accommodation that will complement and support University of Reading and Reading Town Centre activity.
- 7.2 The new building has been reduced from an earlier refused proposal, now being lower at the rear ensuring a more open aspect from the neighbouring garden. It will provide 54 high quality studio rooms providing convenient and attractive accommodation in the heart of the urban area.
- 7.3 The new building will be of high architectural quality. It will provide a positive enhancement of the street environment of Silver Street/ Mount Pleasant and an appropriate backdrop to the nearby Kendrick Road Conservation Area.
- 7.4 The proposals clearly represent 'sustainable development' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.5 The new building is designed to achieve high standards of sustainability in terms of its specification and management.
- 7.6 The proposals are in full accordance with Reading's adopted planning and development management policies. They will enhance the area and will improve conditions for the most immediate neighbours by reducing the currently high levels of overlooking from the existing building.
- 7.7 Full consideration has been given to heritage (conservation area) and to ensuring the protection of adjacent trees with detailed proposals for their protection and management. The revised scheme has given further consideration to mitigate aspects of the local urban environmental context so that new and existing residents will have a suitable residential environment within the new and existing buildings, and within courtyard and neighbour garden areas.
- 7.8 Adjustments to scheme detail now allow for 3 parking spaces for supervised occasional service, delivery and disabled use and identify a stacking area for bins awaiting collections.
- 7.9 The applicants are willing to enter into relevant planning legal agreements to guarantee that occupation will be limited to students and to engage with local training and recruitment processes.

- 7.9 This is a carefully considered proposal which is in full accordance with the Development Plan and offers a further step forward in the development and improvement of Reading's urban centre. As now reduced and amended the revised scheme responds to all points of concern made by Planning Committee in March and It is appropriate to grant planning consent accordingly.

GW Planning April 2017

