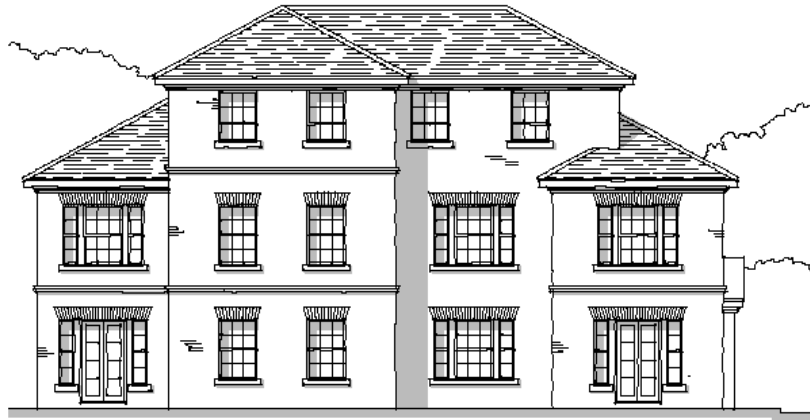


Planning, Design, Access and Sustainability Statement

39 BRUNSWICK HILL
READING



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Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of a planning application by Mr Eric Benjamin for the erection of a building comprising of 10No. flats, following the demolition of the existing buildings at 39 Brunswick Road, Reading.

The Design and Access element of the Statement has been produced in accordance with guidance published by the Commission for architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and covers the following:

- An analysis of the site as existing, the immediate area and the wider context.
- A description of the design process followed to reach the final design solution, covering the subjects of Use, Amount, Layout, Scale, Landscaping, and Appearance. It considers the constraints of the site and relevant local and national planning policies to demonstrate that the proposed scheme is well conceived with the aim of integrating with its surroundings.
- Considers accessibility within the site and the proposals relationship to transport links in the surrounding area, as well as inclusive access for the elderly and the disabled. It justifies the location of pedestrian and vehicular access points to the site and establishes accessibility to public transport.

The application is accompanied by the following reports:

- i) Planning, Design and Access Statement – Davis Planning Ltd
- ii) Ecological Survey – Arbeco Ltd
- iii) Tree Survey and AIA – Tree Management Consulting LLP
- iv) Viability Report – S106 Management

1 The Site and Surroundings

The site lies within the defined urban area of Reading in a highly sustainable location close to a range of services and transport links including Reading West Railway Station which lies approximately 500m to the south east of the site.

The site is located on the western side of Brunswick Hill, Reading and comprises of an existing dwelling of substantial scale, with a three storey gable on the front elevation and a two and a half storey element on its southern side. The existing building fronts onto Brunswick Hill and benefits from a vehicular access on its northern side. There is also a single storey garage on the northern side of the dwelling, within its curtilage. It also benefits from a relatively large rear garden which backs onto railway land. The railway is sunk into a cutting. There are a number of trees in the rear garden of the property. Land levels across the site drop from north to south.

The front boundary of the site is formed by a brick wall of varying height, with two sets of entrance gates. Other boundaries are defined by walls, fences, trees and hedges.

The surrounding area is highly mixed in character, comprising of 2 – 4 storey detached and semi-detached houses of varying styles including purpose built modern blocks of flats and a number of larger properties, some of which have been converted into flats. A feature of these higher density development is the accesses and parking arrangements which are often provided to the rear of the properties.

To the north of the site is No.35 Brunswick Hill which is a detached two storey dwelling which fronts Brunswick Hill. Beyond this are a number of semi-detached properties of varying age, architectural style and scale. To the south of the site are a number of mainly two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings. There is a large 3-storey flatted scheme on the western side of Brunswick Hill at its junction with Tilehurst Road. On the opposing corner, there is a further 3-4 storey flatted scheme. Overall the existing street scene is highly mixed in character and appearance. The current proposal is to create a flatted development of a high quality design.

Multiple flat development up to 4 storeys in height on corner of Brunswick Hill



3 storey modern flats in Brunswick Hill with frontage and rear parking



Access to garage court directly opposite the application site



3-4 storey building on corner of Brunswick Hill/Argyl Road



3 Planning History

The planning history of the site is as follows:

05/00886/OUT – Demolition of nos.35-39 and erection of 5no. 4-bed town houses. Refused on 1st November 2005 on the following grounds:

- Failure to recognise the individuality and mixture of properties in the area;
- Overbearing impact on no.33;
- Insufficient density (i.e. below 30dph);
- Dominating impact of hardstanding at the front of the site;
- Failure to enter into a S106.

891317 /891318 – Demolition of existing house and garage, construction of 10 flats with associated car parking. Refused.

4 Relevant Planning Policies

Government Guidance

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

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

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

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;

- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 60 confirms that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

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

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

The following policies are considered relevant:

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

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

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

Policy CS15 – Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix. States that density and mix will be determined by location. Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing types and tenures.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

Policy SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development – States that a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that

reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF.

Policy DM4 – Safeguarding Amenity. States that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking; access to sunlight and daylight; visual dominance and overbearing effects; noise and disturbance; artificial lighting; vibration; dust and fumes, smell, crime and safety. The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important.

Policy DM5 – Housing Mix. States that on new developments for 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, planning decisions will ensure that over 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, and the majority of dwellings will be in the form of houses rather than flats, having regard to all other material considerations.

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

- On sites of 10-14 dwellings - 30% provision

Policy DM10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space States that flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens. The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing.

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

4 The Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of a building comprising of 10 No. flats.

Principle of Development

The site of 0.14 hectares (0.35 acres) is in a highly sustainable location, being only a short distance away from Reading West Railway Station and a range of shops, services and local facilities. It is located within the urban area of Reading, in a location which is free from environmental or heritage constraints (e.g. Green Belt, conservation areas, listed buildings) where the principle of redevelopment for residential purposes is acceptable. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and paragraph 7 identified that there are

three dimensions to sustainable development comprising (i) economic, (ii) social and (iii) environmental. The proposal meets with all of these roles, as follows:

i) An economic role

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

- It provides 10no. flats assisting to meet defined housing needs and the national requirement to demonstrate and maintain a 5 year housing land supply;
- It would result in local employment opportunities in the construction industry. For every new home built, up to two jobs are created for a year (as set out in the Government Housing Strategy for England (2011);
- Provides contributions to the Council in the form of the New Homes Bonus that can be spent on local infrastructure enhancements;
- The new residents resulting from the scheme will help to sustain the key services in the area.

ii) A social role

Wider benefits to the wider community include:

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

iii) An environmental role

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

- The site is sustainable located within the urban area of reading, with public transport links and services located in close proximity;
- The scheme responds positively to local context, respecting the character and appearance of the area;
- Secures a landscaping scheme, to the benefit of the site and the surrounding area.

By meeting the economic, social and environmental goals the proposed development accords with the sustainable development principles contained within the NPPF and the proposal is acceptable in principle. The scale and density of the development meets the objectives of Policy CS4.

Impact on the street scene and local character

The context of the application site and the surrounding area has been carefully analysed and fully taken into account in designing the application proposal. In particular, the design of the proposal is informed by the local context. In designing the proposal, regard has been had to the relevant development plan policies and in particular the Core Strategy and Site and Detailed Policies Document. The result is an integrated and distinctive development that reflects adjacent properties and also responds positively to local character in the form of building designs, materials, layout and landscaping.

The proposed building has had regard to the scale and proportions of the existing building on the site to be demolished as well as neighbouring dwellings. It has been designed with a higher central element, with lower two storey wings on either side which significantly reduce its bulk and mass and provides a suitable transition to the dwellings on either side. The ridge height of the building is considerably lower than the existing building on the site. The building is set back from Brunswick Hill a similar distance to the existing building to be demolished, broadly in line with the neighbouring properties. The street scene is highly mixed in character and appearance and the proposal is considered appropriate. The mixed character was an issue identified when the 2005 application for town houses was considered with one of the refusal reasons being that the design was overly uniform. The location of the parking to the rear of the site with an access alongside No.35 (incorrectly stated as No.33 on the refusal reason) also deals with two of the other refusal reasons (i.e. overbearingness and extent of hardstanding at the front of the site).

Impact on neighbouring dwellings

The siting of the proposed building has taken into account the siting of the adjacent dwellings and window positions and ensures that no loss of amenity will occur as a result of loss of light. Care has been taken in positioning windows within the proposed building, with no habitable room windows proposed on the flank elevations. The proposed building only projects a short distance beyond the rear elevation of No.41 Brunswick Road and is set in from the boundary with No.35 Brunswick Road due to the location of the new driveway. This will ensure that the proposed building will not be overbearing when viewed from adjacent dwellings. Policy DM4 is therefore met as there would be no significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing properties.

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

The proposal provides for the following housing mix:

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

The proposed mix is considered appropriate in this highly sustainable location. 2no. three bed flats are proposed (20%) which is an appropriate balance between making the best use of the site within a highly sustainable location whilst having regard to the aims and objectives of Policy DM5.

The application is accompanied by an Affordable Housing Viability report produced by S106 Management. This confirms that no contribution is justified on viability grounds. There is therefore no conflict with the NPPF/NPPG and Policy DM6. It is also material to the consideration of this application that the dwelling numbers and floor space are both below the Government threshold contained within the NPPG.

Trees / Ecology

The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and Ecological Survey which address these issues in detail. The tree survey confirms that the trees proposed to be removed are mainly domestic fruit trees with remaining trees being of low quality. The 4no. trees to be retained are all within the C category. The ecology report has not identified any ecological potential for the site.

Access and Parking

The proposed flats will be accessed from Brunswick Hill via the existing access which will be widened. A driveway is proposed on the northern side of the building, leading to a parking courtyard, comprising of 13no. spaces. The proposal complies with the Council adopted parking standards (Zone 2) and this level of parking provision is considered appropriate given the sustainable location of the site, being only a short walk from Reading West Station and close to a range of bus services along the nearby Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road.

5 Design

In summary:

- The scheme will provide for 10No. flats (2 x 1-bed, 6 x 2-bed and 2 x 3-bed) in a highly sustainable location.
- The building will be between 2½ and 3 storey in height, with a ridge height that is lower than the existing building on the site.
- The proposal respects the established building lines along Brunswick Hill.

- The building respects the amenity of adjoining properties and is of a high quality traditional design.
- A private and secluded area of amenity space is provided to the rear of the building.
- There are 13 parking spaces allocated to the development. It is within a short walk of Reading west railway station and also a range of bus routes along the nearby Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road as well as local shops and services.

(a) Use

The existing building is in a residential use. The proposal is also for a residential development, comprising of 10No. flats.

(b) Amount

The proposal is for 10No. flats (2 x 1bed, 6 x 2 bed and 2 x 3 bed).

This equates to a density of 71 dph which is considered appropriate given the context of the site and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The 2005 application was rejected in part on the grounds that the density was too low.

(c) Layout

The proposed building is located in a similar position within the site as the existing building to be demolished. It does not extend any closer to Brunswick Hill than the existing building to be demolished or the adjacent dwellings to the north and south. Whilst the depth of the proposed building is greater than that of the existing building, this would not be readily apparent in the street scene.

The proposed building is set in from both of the side boundaries. A distance of 1.08m is provided between the flank elevation and the southern boundary and 6.45m provided to the northern boundary. The siting of the proposed building and spacing between the building and existing dwellings reflects the spatial standards that are prevalent in the surrounding area. The building has also been designed with subservient elements on both side elevations which effectively reduces its bulk and mass.

Care has been taken to ensure that the proposed new building does not result in any harm to the amenity of adjacent residents. The siting of the building fully respects the positioning of the adjacent properties and would not result in any loss of light. Habitable room windows are located on the front and rear elevations and would not introduce any material overlooking of neighbouring dwellings.

The proposed new apartments would be accessed from Brunswick Hill, via the existing access which will be improved and widened. 13No. parking spaces are

proposed to the rear of the site. The site layout provides for secure cycle storage to the rear of the building and for bin storage to the front of the building. The principle of access points leading to rear parking courts is well established in the immediate vicinity and will ensure that hardstanding does not dominate the frontage.

A generous amount of private and secluded amenity space is proposed to the rear of the building. Landscaping around the plot is to be retained and enhanced where necessary whilst hard surfaced areas have been kept to a minimum.

(d) Scale

The proposed building is of a similar size and scale to other existing buildings in the immediate area and has been designed to assimilate into the street scene. There are a number of flatted developments in the immediate area, including at the junction of Brunswick Road and Tilehurst Road. Some buildings in the area are up to a 4 storey height.

The overall ridge height of the building is lower than that of the existing building to be demolished. The central part of the building will have a more dominant 3 storey scale to reflect the height and vertical emphasis of the existing front gable. The site elements would be lower to reduce dominance close to the site boundaries. The scale of the building is therefore appropriate having regard to the context of the site.

(e) Appearance

The proposed new building would significantly enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The main central element of the building will retain a strong prominence in the street scene whilst the side elements have been designed so as to appear subservient in scale and form when compared to the central element. The proposed building incorporates detailing such as contrasting detailing above the windows, horizontal banding, attractively proportioned windows and other openings and a low pitch roof. The design maintains the individuality of the site and the mixed character of the area as recognised under the 2005 application.

All materials will be of high quality and will be subject to the approval of the LPA.

(f) Landscaping

The application is accompanied by a Tree Report which assesses its impact on existing trees. The proposal makes provision for a significant amount of new landscaping to be provided, particularly along the northern boundary, adjacent to the new access and around the proposed car park. The trees to be removed are mainly of a C or U category.

5 Access and Sustainability

(a) Access

The proposed new flats will be accessed via the existing access onto Brunswick Hill which will be widened.

The new driveway will be finished in a material which will minimise any noise disturbance and its impact on neighbouring properties. 13No. spaces will be provided to the rear, in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards (for zone 2).

A secure cycle store is also proposed, to the rear of the building in accordance with adopted standards.

(b) Sustainable Design and Construction

(i) Sustainable Design

The proposal is to construct 10No. new flats with parking and amenity space.

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

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

(ii) Energy Efficiency

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

- Insulated roofs, walls and floors
- Double glazed windows
- Ventilation incorporated onto the design to avoid condensation
- Energy efficient lighting
- Natural daylight to all habitable rooms

Domestic appliance ratings will aim to comply with the following:

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

(iii) Water Resource Management

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

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

(iv) Flood Risk Management

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

- Soakaways for surface water drainage
- Permeable surface driveway

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

(v) Biodiversity

The application is accompanied by an ecology reports that does not highlight any constraints to redeveloping the site.

(vi) Waste Recycling

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

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

(vii) Sustainable Transport

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

(viii) Sustainable Construction

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

7 Summary and Conclusions

The planning application provides for the redevelopment of the site to provide 10 No. new flats. The proposal meets in full the Council's adopted policies and should be supported for the following reasons:

- The proposal makes the optimum use of a site in a sustainable location well related to key facilities and railway and bus services and as such receives strong support from national and local policy (NPPF and Policy CS4)
- The proposal is designed to reflect the scale, proportions and spacing of existing development within this location and regard has been given to the design process including the evaluation of the site and surrounding area. The local area is characterised by various design including flatted developments up to a 4 storey height, often with rear parking courtyards.
- The proposal provides for a mix of dwellings in line with Policy DM5.
- The siting of the building has taken into account the positioning of adjacent dwellings and ensures that the proposal would not result in any loss of amenity to occupants of adjoining properties. Policy DM4 is met.
- The proposal provides for a form of development that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area in terms of its size, scale, layout, height and design. Hardstanding is restricted to the rear of the site and the new driveway will keep the massing of the building away from the boundary with no.35.
- The site is accessible to public transport modes and provides for adequate car parking and secure cycle storage.