1.
5128

THE MOUNT
~~CHRISTCHURCH ROAD~~
~~(North Side)~~

~~The Mount~~
No 59 (Uplands)

SU 7272 9/439

THE MOUNT

II GV

2.
On corner with Christchurch Road. House for manager at Huntley and Palmer's Factory. Decorative features face approach from Christchurch. 1876. 2 storeys gault brick with yellow brick cill and lintel bands and patterning to square corner turret. Moulded brick modillion eaves cornice. Hipped slate roof with fish-scale bands and 2 brick chimneys with cogged capping. Stop-moulded stone lintels. Plate glass sash windows with bracket cills. 4 bays to road, angle turret to left, canted bay with turret roof to right. Centre projecting porch with pointed arch entrance and high parapet with moulded brick rosettes (reminiscent of Joseph Morris's work) and 2 order archway with label and chamfered side piers with stone floral caps. Decorative panels to door with applied patterned lintel. Contemporary conservatory on ground floor on outer facet of turret, it has a hipped glazed roof, crested ridge and painted panes. Angled return to west. Railings, standards retained. Interior altered.

1.
5128

CHRISTCHURCH ROAD
(North Side)

Nos 85 to 89 (odd)

SU 7272 9/83

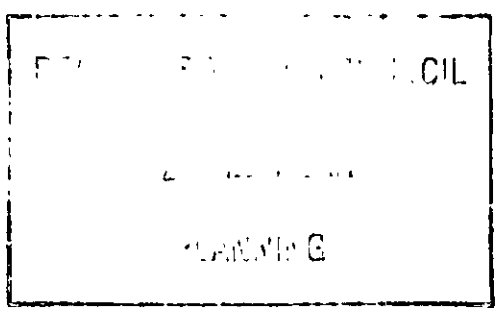
II

2.
Circa 1800. Formerly 2 pairs of cottages. 2 storeys. Red brick with silver grey headers. Old tile hipped roofs (Nos 87 and 89 half-hipped with central chimney). No 85 3 bays, Nos 87 and 89 2 bays. Flanking screen walls with curved coping (except to right of No 85) screening single storey lean-to of one bay. Glazing bar sash windows. No 85 central 6-panel door with radiating fanlight in arched recess. Nos 87 and 89 doors in side wings (outer doorways blocked), No 87 retains trellis porch.

041530

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO 72 REDLANDS ROAD AND 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING TO CREATE 5 ADDITIONAL FLATS, FORMAL CAR PARKING AREA WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING



August 2004

Christopher Strang Associates
Town & Country Planning Consultants
36 Donnington Square
Newbury
Berkshire RG14 1PP

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 We have been instructed by Mr A S Chima, the freehold owner of 72 Redlands Road, and 91 Christchurch Road, Reading, to prepare a planning statement in support of the proposal to extend the premises to create 5 additional flats. This planning statement should be read in conjunction with the application plans, drawings, and design statement prepared by the architects, Andrews Kalik Harris.

1.2 The planning statement and the design statement, demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable for the site and in the context of the surrounding area, including the Redlands Conservation Area. The planning statement also demonstrates that the proposals accord with both national and local planning policies.

2.0 PRE-APPLICATION INQUIRY

2.1 Draft proposals for this site were submitted to the Local Planning Authority earlier this year as a pre-application inquiry. The draft plans and drawings proposed a relatively large extension providing a total of 10 flats and an open car parking area to the rear of the site.

2.2 In April 2004 the architects received a response from the Local Planning Authority commenting on the draft proposals. The Planning Officer's letter dated 1 April 2004 suggested that the *'scale of the proposed extension and the number of units proposed is too much for the site'*. The Planning Officer referred to the site being in a conservation area, and as such went on to state, *'any proposal here will need to ensure that the dual aspect is given much consideration, perhaps by drawing any extension away from the boundary at the junction.'*

2.3 With regard to access and parking, the Planning Officer stated that it would be acceptable to use the existing access on Redlands Road to serve the parking area,

and suggested that garages along the boundary with 89 Christchurch Road would provide a buffer in terms of noise and disturbance, which is preferable to an open parking area. The Planning Officer also raised concern regarding the loss of trees if there is no space to replant. Finally, the Planning Officer referred to the need for financial contributions in respect of transport infrastructure improvements, improvement of leisure recreation facilities, and towards the provision of education.

2.4 The Local Planning Authority therefore agrees to the principle of extending 72 Redlands Road and 91 Christchurch Road to create additional flats. The proposals, as submitted, have taken on board the pre-application comments received from the Planning Officer. The scheme has been amended, particularly in respect of the scale of the proposed extension and the number of units proposed, alterations to the communal parking area and additional tree planting, together with ensuring that the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

3.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing garages and single storey extensions to the rear of the site. The proposals include remodelling the existing properties to the rear, modifying the bathrooms and kitchens of three of the existing flats, and in all creating in total nine flats.

3.2 The flats have either separate, private accesses or a communal hallway, shared between two flats. Two of the existing flats at the application site are spread over two floors at first and second floor level. The proposals provide a good variety of sizes and mixture of accommodation.

3.3 It is proposed to use the existing access from Redlands Road for the communal parking area serving all of the flats. The dangerous existing access on

Christchurch Road would be closed, and this area would be landscaped to provide an attractive garden area. A total of nine car parking spaces are provided, five of which are allocated within the carport area, which has an open frontage, brick side and rear walls and a tiled ridged roof. The proposals also include a secure, enclosed bicycle store and an area for bin storage.

3.4 The application plans show that a total of four trees would need to be removed from the site. However, the proposed plans also show significant replacement tree planting and landscaping which would provide an attractive landscaping scheme for the site.

3.5 The existing boundary walls, railings and hedges would be repaired where necessary and retained, and additional boundary planting is proposed. The principle of the new planting for the site is shown on the proposed site plan/floor plan.

3.6 The proposed elevational drawings and the design statement prepared by the architect, demonstrate that the external appearance and design of the proposed extension is in keeping with the existing Victorian properties, and provides an attractive extended building, which not only preserves but also enhances the character and appearance of Redlands Conservation Area.

4.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

4.1 The application site is located on the edge of the Redlands Conservation Area and is within easy walking distance of the shopping centre at Whitley Street and the town centre, as indicated on the Local Plan proposals map. The application site is directly opposite the Christchurch Green parade of shops. This site is located in a central position within Reading, and is close to a number of services and facilities, including the town centre itself, local shops, banks, schools, the university, the

hospital and parks and playing fields. These services and facilities are easily accessible by way of walking or cycling. Furthermore, the property is also served by good public transport links. Regular bus services run past the site and a bus stop is located adjoining the site at Redlands Road.

4.2 The site itself consists of a pair of two and half/three storey Victorian semi-detached properties, which have been converted and extended into four relatively large flats. In the 1960s a number of garages were granted permission and these have remained in situ for over 40 years. These garages are now dilapidated and are no longer used for parking purposes at the site. The site has two vehicular accesses one on Christchurch Road and one on Redlands Road. An informal car parking area exists to the rear of the site, covering most of the rear garden.

4.3 The site occupies a prominent position at the corner of Christchurch Road and Redlands Road. However, previous owners of the site have allowed the properties to appear rather run down, and over the years the properties, outbuildings and the grounds have not been particularly well maintained. The existing elevational drawings show that the properties have attractive, Victorian architectural features and design characteristics. However, the existing north elevation lacks these important architectural features and, together with the single storey rear extensions, the existing north elevation is not particularly attractive. A photo of the northern boundary is enclosed with the application papers.

4.4 The site boundaries comprise a number of different treatments including railings, walls and hedges. There are also a number of trees at the site.

4.5 A significant amount of residential development is taking place in the area, including new student accommodation being developed at St Georges Hall at Elmshurst Road. Furthermore, new houses and flats have recently been constructed at Cintra Close with a frontage along Christchurch Road, to the south west of the application site. Flats have also been developed opposite the

application site, Marlborough House on the corner of Northcroft Avenue and Shinfield Road.

4.6 **The Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area**

Redlands Conservation Area consists mainly of Victorian semi-detached houses especially along Elmhurst Road, Marlborough Avenue and New Road. The Conservation Area also includes university property, including Wantage Hall.

4.7 The majority of the Conservation Area is to the east of Redlands Road. However, a small section to the west of Redlands Road and the north of Christchurch Road, including the application site, is incorporated within the Conservation Area. This part of the Conservation Area includes the two large Victorian properties, at the application site, a row of four terraced houses to the north of the application site, and cottages to the west of the site.

4.8 The Conservation Area is residential in character, comprising mainly attractive Victorian properties of relatively high density, with limited or no front garden, but most have rear gardens which generally cannot be seen from public vantage points. Most properties do not have driveways or garages and therefore on street car parking is prevalent in the Conservation Area.

4.9 It is the application site, in our view, which is somewhat alien in character to the remainder of the Conservation Area. The application site has an area to the north, which comprises the communal, informal parking area, the dilapidated outbuildings and garages, and the run down single storey extensions, which are unattractive and out of keeping with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.10 The Conservation Area is also characterised by having a vibrant, busy atmosphere. Its location within close proximity to the university and hospital,

together with the local shopping areas and facilities, gives the area a lively 'student' and cosmopolitan feel with lots of activity.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 Of particular relevance to the application proposal, is application 91/0788/FD which proposed a three storey rear extension to form three, two bedroom flats at the site. This application went before the Planning Sub-Committee in October 1991, with a recommendation for conditional approval. The Planning Officer, in Committee report, stated:

"This is a highly prominent site in a Conservation Area, and any development must be in keeping with and positively enhance the character of the area. The scale of the development is substantial, but I am of the view that a three storey extension can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site, without detriment to either the setting of the building or the amenities of nearby residents. The elevations have been carefully detailed and the scheme has been amended to minimise overlooking of adjacent properties. The existing trees and the boundary will be retained (with the exception of some in the vicinity of the access).

The report goes on to state:

..... "I am of the view that this proposal will not be detrimental to the character of the area and no material loss of amenity will result. The development will enable the refurbishment/upgrading of the existing flats and will provide three new large flats. Amenity space is limited, but the removal of the access and garage in Christchurch Road will improve this."

5.2 Notwithstanding the Officer's recommendation for approval, the Committee Members deferred the application to seek a reduced density of development. This

scheme was therefore amended slightly to form two flats, rather than three. Planning permission was granted by the Council on 9 January 1992.

5.3 An application to renew the above permission was submitted to the Council in 1996, application no: 96/0900/FD, and this was approved by the Council on 16 January 1997.

5.4 Although planning permission was granted initially, some twelve years ago, to provide additional flats at the site, these consents were never implemented.

6.0 POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 The application site is located within a sustainable location, having easy access to existing infrastructure, open space, facilities and services, and public transport links. The proposals involve the demolition of existing unsightly outbuildings, and the single storey unattractive rear extensions. The proposed extension has been designed so it is in keeping with the existing Victorian properties and would use materials to match the existing, which would create an attractive larger property. The proposals efficiently utilise the existing space at the site, which would improve the physical and visual character and quality of the area.

6.2 The neighbouring property, no. 89 Christchurch Road, has no windows in its eastern elevation. The proposed replacement garages along the shared boundary with no. 89 Christchurch Road would provide a buffer to any likely noise and disturbance, therefore protecting the amenities of the occupiers of no. 89. The neighbours to the north of the site at no. 70 Redlands Road, would not be adversely affected by the proposals. There are no windows proposed above ground floor level, serving habitable rooms in the northern elevation. Furthermore, the proposed garages and bin and bicycle stores, and the neighbouring garage, all provide a buffer to the rear garden area of no. 70. Given

the distance between the site and the properties on the eastern side of Redlands Road and the southern side of Christchurch Road, no harm would be caused by way of overlooking or loss of privacy.

6.3 It is proposed to use the existing access to the site at Redlands Road. The existing parking area would not be extended in any way, but would be laid out to provide formal parking and turning areas in accordance with the Council's standards. There is an existing access to the site at Christchurch Road, and it is proposed that this access would be closed and the area landscaped. The closing of this access would improve highway safety at this busy junction.

6.4 The proposals use existing urban land efficiently, without compromising the quality of the environment, and ensure that there is adequate parking and garden amenity areas. A few rather poor trees would need to be removed in the vicinity of the access and parking area. However, this was accepted by the Council for the previous proposals in the 1990s. Furthermore, additional tree planting at the site would replace these lost trees and an attractive landscaping scheme would enhance the site and the surrounding area.

6.5 **Local Plan Policy**

Of particular relevance to the application proposals is Local Plan Policy HSG9, which refers to the location of residential development. The proposals accord with this policy as they have regard to the level of, and accessibility to, existing infrastructure, open space, facilities, service and public transport links. For the reasons set out above, the proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the physical and visual character and quality of the area; there would be no detrimental impact on adjoining properties; there would be a satisfactory and convenient access and adequate parking. Furthermore, the proposals do not take the form of tandem development; prevent a more rational and comprehensive

form of development; nor do they result in the loss of important trees or wildlife habitats.

6.6 Local Plan Policy CUD14 is a general policy referring to the standards of design in all development. The policy provides a number of criteria to which all development proposals must accord, including creating a safe and secure environment, using traditional materials compatible to the architectural tradition of the town; provide high quality landscaping; pay particular regard to the detailing of car parking areas; create attractive frontages; have regard to the treatment of rear elevations. The policy also states that all development including extensions and alterations to existing buildings should exhibit a high standard of design and be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding environment. For the reasons already given above, the proposal complies with the standards of design as set out in policy CUD14.

6.7 Local Plan Policy CUD7 is also relevant and refers to new development in Conservation Areas. The policy states that development in Conservation Areas should make a contribution to the area by respecting or enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and achieving a high standard of design. As stated previously, the existing buildings at the site and the site itself have been neglected over the years, and have not been particularly well maintained. The site includes a number of unattractive and unsightly garages and single storey rear extensions which neither, preserve, respect or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals would significantly improve the visual quality and attractiveness of the site by providing attractive pitched roof parking areas, and a rear extension using traditional materials, in keeping with the architectural design of the existing Victorian properties, at the site and within the Conservation Area as a whole.

6.8 **National Planning Policy**

Planning Policy Guidance Note No 3: Housing (PPG3)

Since planning permission was granted in 1992 and again in 1997 to provide additional flats at the site, national planning policy in respect of housing development has changed considerably. The Government's objectives as set out in PPG3 seek to provide sufficient housing, on previously developed sites, in sustainable urban areas. The Government requires a high density of housing development in sustainable urban areas, such as the application site.

6.9 The Government's household projections indicate, nationally that the majority of the projective growth will be in one person households. Paragraph 10 of PPG3 states that it is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. The proposals include 5, new two bedroom flats, which together with the existing larger flats at the site, efficiently develops land close to Reading town centre, providing much needed accommodation for single people or small households without children. PPG3 also places particular emphasis on the importance of integrating decisions from planning and transport in order to reduce the need for travel by car. The application site is within easy walking and cycling distance to shops, services and facilities, such as banks, health care, employment opportunities, recreational facilities and has good public transport links.

6.10 Paragraph 54 of PPG3 refers to good design and layout of new development. The proposals have been carefully thought out, so that they make best use of previously developed land, improving the quality and attractiveness of the surrounding residential area. The design and appearance of the proposals have regard to the immediate neighbouring buildings, but also the townscape of the wider locality. It is proposed to use traditional building materials, utilising existing architectural design features, which form part of the character of the

Redlands Conservation Area. The application therefore conforms with Government advice in PPG3.

6.11 Planning Policy Guidance No. 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15)

PPG15 sets out the Government's policy in respect of Conservation Areas. As stated previously, the Redlands Conservation Area is a predominantly residential area comprising relatively high density semi-detached Victorian housing. Given its location and proximity to the University of Reading and Reading town centre, the Conservation Area is vibrant and busy and has a cosmopolitan feel. Providing additional flats at the site makes efficient use of urban land as required by PPG3, but also respects the quality and attractiveness of the surrounding area, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Paragraph 4.16 of PPG15 states:

"Many conservation areas include the commercial centres of the towns and villages of which they form part. While conservation (whether by preservation or enhancement) of their character or appearance must be a major consideration, this cannot realistically take the form of preventing all new development: the emphasis will generally need to be on controlled and positive management of change. Policies will need to be designed to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous, and to avoid unnecessarily detailed controls over businesses and householders, but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with the area's special architectural and historic interest."

6.12 The demolition of the existing unsightly outbuildings and previous single storey rear extensions at the site, and the new extension has been carefully considered and designed using attractive, appropriate materials. The proposals would significantly visually improve the appearance of the site and therefore the

Conservation Area as a whole. The provision of additional flats in the area will add to the vibrancy and character of the area. The removal of unsightly outbuildings, the renovation and enhancement of the existing properties, the well designed and architecturally attractive rear extension, improved parking area and significant landscaping at the site, would not only preserve the site, but would also significantly enhance the site's visual quality and the character and appearance of the Redlands Conservation Area, in accordance with Government advice in PPG15.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The proposal has been carefully considered to ensure that its design and layout would have no adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining neighbours, or the surrounding area. The existing buildings would be renovated and visually enhanced. The rear extension has been designed to be in keeping with the existing Victorian semi-detached properties, incorporating architectural features and brickwork of traditional materials. The demolition of the existing unsightly outbuildings, the proposed landscaping and improvements and repairs to the existing boundary treatments, would significantly enhance the visual quality of the site, the surrounding area and the Redlands Conservation Area.

7.2 The closing of the access at Christchurch Road would improve highway safety. Additional tree planting and landscaping at the site mitigates against the loss of any existing trees. The site is currently run down and unattractive in appearance, especially when viewed from the north. The proposal would significantly enhance the northern elevation, providing attractive apartments in this prominent position within the Redlands Conservation Area.

7.3 The proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land in a sustainable urban area without compromising the visual quality of the surrounding area. The

proposal would not only preserve the Conservation Area, but would also significantly enhance its character and appearance. The proposal therefore accords with both local planning policy and national Government policy, as set out in PPG3 and PPG15.

STATEMENT OF CASE
OF CHRISTOPHER STRANG, BSc (Hons), MRTPI

APPEAL BY TONY CHIMA AGAINST THE REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION BY READING BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDING TO FORM FOUR NEW 2 BEDROOM FLATS AND ONE NEW 1 BEDROOM FLAT (as amended)

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF: APP/E0345/A/05/1179681

COUNCIL REF: 04/01530/FUL

July 2005

Christopher Strang Associates
Town & Country Planning Consultants
36 Donnington Square
Newbury
Berkshire RG14 1PP

My name is Christopher Strang, and I am a Chartered Town Planner with a Practice based in Newbury. I have had thirty three years experience in Town Planning, of which nine years were spent in local Government, dealing with development control matters. I have a BSc (Hons) in Town and County Planning, and I have been a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute since 1974.

I have viewed the site and its surrounding area, and have examined the relevant plans and documents for the purpose of this appeal.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement sets out the case in support of an appeal against the refusal of planning permission by Reading Borough Council for a proposed extension to 72 Redlands Road and 1 Christchurch Road, Reading, to create 5 additional flats, together with car parking and landscaping. Section 2 describes the application and refers to discussions and negotiations with the Council. Section 3 describes the site and surrounding area, and Section 4 refers to planning history. Section 5 refers to relevant planning policies, and Section 6 sets out the appellant's case. A separate Appendices is also produced with the statement.

2.0 THE APPLICATION

2.1 Pre-application discussions

Draft proposals for this site were first submitted to the Local Planning Authority in early 2004 as a pre-application inquiry. The draft plans and drawings proposed a relatively large extension providing a total of 10 flats and an open car parking area to the rear of the site.

2.2 In April 2004 the architects for the appellant received a response from the Local Planning Authority, commenting on the draft proposals. The Planning Officer's letter dated 1 April 2004, attached as Appendix 1, suggested that the *'scale of the proposed extension and the number of units proposed is too much for the site'*. The Planning Officer referred to the site being in a conservation area, and as such went on to state, *'any proposal here will need to ensure that the dual aspect is given much consideration, perhaps by drawing any extension away from the boundary at the junction.'*

2.3 With regard to access and parking, the Planning Officer stated that it would be acceptable to use the existing access on Redlands Road to serve the parking area, and suggested that garages along the boundary with 89 Christchurch Road would provide a buffer in terms of noise and disturbance, which would be preferable to an open parking area. The Officer also raised concern regarding the loss of trees if there was no space to replant. Finally, the Officer referred to the need for financial contributions in respect of transport infrastructure improvements, improvement of leisure recreation facilities, and towards the provision of education.

2.4 The Local Planning Authority were therefore accepting the principle of extending 72 Redlands Road and 91 Christchurch Road to create additional flats. The current proposals subsequently took on board the pre-application comments received from the Planning Officer.

2.5 **The application**

It is proposed to demolish the existing garages and single storey extensions to the rear of the site, and to extend the properties to provide five new flats. The proposals include remodelling the existing properties to the rear, modifying the bathrooms and kitchens of three of the existing flats, and in all creating in total nine flats.

2.6 The flats have either separate, private accesses or a communal shared hallway. Two of the existing flats are spread over two floors at first and second floor level. The proposals provide a good variety of size and mixture of accommodation. The detailed design of the extension is described in the Design Statement provided with the application.

2.7 The existing access from Redlands Road is to be used for the communal parking area serving all of the flats. The unsatisfactory existing access on Christchurch

Road would be closed, and this area would be landscaped. A total of nine car parking spaces are provided, five of which are allocated within the carport area, which has an open frontage, with brick side and rear walls and a tiled ridged roof. The proposals also include a secure, enclosed bicycle store and an area for bin storage.

2.8 The application plans show that a total of four trees would need to be removed from the site. However, the plans also show significant replacement tree planting and landscaping, which would provide an attractive landscaping scheme for the site.

2.9 The existing boundary walls, railings and hedges would be repaired where necessary and retained, and additional boundary planting is proposed. The principle of the new planting for the site is as shown on the proposed site plan/floor plan.

2.10 During the course of the processing of the application, the Council requested that the plans be amended, and these were provided. Relevant correspondence is also attached as Appendix 1. It was indicated initially that four flats would be acceptable to Officers, but subsequently reservations were expressed regarding that scale of development.

3.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

3.1 The application site is located on the edge of the Redlands Conservation Area and is within easy walking distance of the shopping centre at Whitley Street and the town centre. The site is directly opposite the Christchurch Green parade of shops. Generally, the site is located in a central position within Reading, and is therefore close to a number of services and facilities, including the town centre itself, local shops, banks, schools, the university, the hospital and parks and playing fields. These services and facilities are easily accessible by way of walking or cycling.

Furthermore, the property is also served by good public transport links. Regular bus services run past the site and a bus stop is located adjoining the site at Redlands Road.

3.2 The site itself consists of a pair of two and half/three storey Victorian semi-detached properties, which have been converted and extended into four relatively large flats. In the 1960s a number of garages were granted permission and these have remained in situ for over 40 years. These garages are now dilapidated and are no longer used for parking purposes at the site. The site has two vehicular accesses, one on Christchurch Road and one on Redlands Road. An informal car parking area exists to the rear of the site, covering most of the rear garden.

3.3 The site occupies a prominent position at the corner of Christchurch Road and Redlands Road. The properties appear rather run down, and over the years the properties, outbuildings and the grounds have not been particularly well maintained. The existing elevational drawings show that the properties have attractive, Victorian architectural features and design characteristics. However, the north elevation lacks these important architectural features and, together with the single storey rear extensions. This elevation is not particularly attractive.

3.4 The site boundaries comprise a number of different treatments including railings, walls and hedges. There are also a number of trees at the site.

3.5 A significant amount of residential development is taking place in the area, including new student accommodation being developed at St Georges Hall at Elmshurst Road. Furthermore, new houses and flats have recently been constructed at Cintra Close with a frontage along Christchurch Road, to the south west of the application site. Flats have also been developed opposite the application site at Marlborough House, on the corner of Northcroft Avenue and Shinfield Road.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Of particular relevance to the application proposal, is application 91/0788/FD which proposed a three storey rear extension to form three, 2 bedroom flats at the site. This application went before the Planning Sub-Committee in October 1991, with a recommendation for conditional approval. The Planning Officer, in the Committee report, attached as Appendix 2, stated:

> *"This is a highly prominent site in a Conservation Area, and any development must be in keeping with and positively enhance the character of the area. The scale of the development is substantial, but I am of the view that a three storey extension can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site, without detriment to either the setting of the building or the amenities of nearby residents. The elevations have been carefully detailed and the scheme has been amended to minimise overlooking of adjacent properties. The existing trees and the boundary will be retained (with the exception of some in the vicinity of the access)."*

The report goes on to state:

> *"...I am of the view that this proposal will not be detrimental to the character of the area and no material loss of amenity will result. The development will enable the refurbishment/upgrading of the existing flats and will provide three new large flats. Amenity space is limited, but the removal of the access and garage in Christchurch Road will improve this."*

4.2 Notwithstanding the Officer's recommendation for approval, the Committee Members deferred the application to seek a reduced density of development. This scheme was therefore amended to form two flats, rather than three. Planning permission was granted by the Council on 9 January 1992.

4.3 An application to renew the above permission was submitted to the Council in 1996, application no. 96/0900/FD, and this was approved by the Council on 16 January 1997.

4.4 Although planning permission was granted initially, some twelve years ago, to provide additional flats at the site, these consents were never implemented.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 The Council's refusal reasons refer to the policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998. Reference is also made to Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to space around dwellings. Relevant policies are attached as Appendix 3.

5.2 HSG5, as referred to in refusal reason no. 1 and 2, is a policy containing various criteria to which new residential development is normally expected to have regard. In particular, proposals should be of a scale and density which is "appropriate" to the character and quality of the surrounding area. Detailed considerations should include height, massing and materials, and the siting of individual buildings, as well as landscaping, parking layouts and similar.

5.3 These requirements are essentially repeated in CUD14, which sets out general design standards for all development. Paragraph 6.62 of the Plan states that the policy seeks to improve the quality of design of new development in the town, but is not intended as a complete set of rules, all of which will apply in every case. It needs to be applied flexibly, to encourage architectural quality and in appropriate cases innovation.

5.4 The appeal site lies within a Conservation Area, the Council's refusal reasons also refer to CUD7, relating to new development in Conservation Areas. Such

development should make a contribution to the area by respecting or enhancing its architectural and visual qualities, and achieving a high standard of design. Paragraph 6.26 sets out various examples of development that might be acceptable in a Conservation Area, including, for example, development which respects the character of the existing architecture in scale, grouping and materials, and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Similarly, materials to be used must be appropriate to the locality and sympathetic to nearby buildings. Views into and out of the Conservation Area must not be adversely affected.

5.5 The Council's third refusal reason refers to HSG9, in relation to the location of residential development. This policy contains various criteria for assessing new residential development, including a requirement that development proposals would not normally be permitted if they have a detrimental impact on the physical and visual character and quality of the area, or a detrimental impact on adjoining properties. There is also a requirement to provide satisfactory and convenient parking, avoid tandem development, or loss of important trees.

5.6 At paragraphs 3.62, the Plan observes that the character and density of Reading's built form is extremely complex, and can vary from street to street. For this reason, HSG9 does not attempt to define particularly sensitive areas or to prescribe rigid density standards; each case will be considered on its own merits, having regard to the density and average plot size of the surrounding area.

5.7 It is to be noted that the Council refer, in the "informatives" attached to the reasons for refusal, that account has been taken of HSG8, House Extensions. It is not, however, clear how that particular policy has relevance to the proposals. However, notwithstanding this, the Council have produced an extract of the plan containing HSG8 with their documentation. That policy refers to house extensions, and seeks to ensure that such development does not adversely affect neighbouring properties through loss of daylight and sunlight, or overlooking.

The character of neighbouring properties is also relevant, as is the appearance of an extension from the street. The retention of sufficient useable amenity space is necessary, and the loss of trees should be avoided.

5.8 Finally, the Council's fourth refusal reason refers to policies KEY3, TRN1 and LE13. These policies seek to secure financial contributions towards transport, education and leisure. In this connection, it is to be noted that the appellant has offered to pay these relevant financial contributions in correspondence with the Council during the processing of the application. However, no legal agreement was in place prior to the refusal of the application, hence the inclusion of refusal reason no. 4. The appellant anticipates providing a unilateral agreement in due course, addressing the need for financial contributions.

5.9 Section 6 of this Statement assesses the appeal proposals against the requirements of these Local Plan policies, and concludes that they are in compliance with the Council's Development Plan.

5.10 **Current Government Advice**

Planning Policy Guidance Note No 3: Housing (PPG3)

Since planning permission was granted in 1992 and again in 1997 to provide additional flats at the site, national planning policy in respect of housing development has changed considerably. The Government's objectives as set out in PPG3 now stress the importance of providing sufficient housing, on previously developed sites, in sustainable urban areas.

5.11 The Government's household projections indicate nationally that the majority of the projected growth will be in one person households. Paragraph 10 of PPG3 states that it is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. The appeal proposals, to include 5, new one and two bedroom flats, together with the existing larger flats at the site,

represent efficient development of land close to Reading town centre, providing much needed accommodation for single people or small households without children.

5.12 PPG3 also places particular emphasis on the importance of reducing the need for travel by car. The application site is within easy walking and cycling distance to shops, services and facilities, such as banks, health care, employment opportunities, recreational facilities and has good public transport links.

5.13 Paragraph 54 of PPG3 refers to good design and layout of new development. The proposals have been carefully thought out, so that they make best use of previously developed land, improving the quality and attractiveness of the surrounding residential area. The design and appearance of the proposals have had regard to the immediate neighbouring buildings, as well as the townscape of the wider locality. It is proposed to use traditional building materials, utilising existing architectural design features, which form part of the character of the Redlands Conservation Area. The application therefore conforms with Government advice in PPG3.

5.14 Planning Policy Guidance No. 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15)

PPG15 sets out the Government's policy in respect of Conservation Areas. As stated previously, the Redlands Conservation Area is a predominantly residential area comprising relatively high density, semi-detached Victorian housing. Given its location and proximity to the University of Reading and Reading town centre, the Conservation Area is vibrant and busy and has a cosmopolitan feel. Providing additional flats at the site makes efficient use of urban land as required by PPG3, but also respects the quality and attractiveness of the surrounding area, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Paragraph 4.16 of PPG15 states:

"Many conservation areas include the commercial centres of the towns and villages of which they form part. While conservation (whether by preservation or enhancement) of their character or appearance must be a major consideration, this cannot realistically take the form of preventing all new development: the emphasis will generally need to be on controlled and positive management of change. Policies will need to be designed to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous, and to avoid unnecessarily detailed controls over businesses and householders, but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with the area's special architectural and historic interest."

5.15 For reasons as further set out in Section 6 below, it is considered that the proposals would significantly visually improve the appearance of the site and therefore the Conservation Area as a whole. The provision of additional flats in the area will add to the vibrancy and character of the area. The removal of unsightly outbuildings, the renovation and enhancement of the existing properties, the well designed and architecturally attractive rear extension, improved parking area and significant landscaping at the site, would not only preserve the site, but would also significantly enhance the site's visual quality and the character and appearance of the Redlands Conservation Area, in accordance with Government advice in PPG15.

5.16 <u>PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development</u>

PPS1 was published earlier this year, and sets out the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning. It stresses the importance of sustainable development, and the need for good quality design. Paragraphs 33-39 refer in particular to the design aspects of new development. Key objectives should include ensuring that development optimises the potential of a site to accommodate development, and that development responds to its local context

and reinforces local distinctiveness. Good architects and appropriate landscaping are encouraged.

5.17 As further described in Section 6 below, the appeal proposals make best use of the appeal site, in terms of density, and the design has had regard to the importance of local distinctiveness.

6.0 THE APPELLANT'S CASE

6.1 In view of the refusal reasons put forward by the Council to these proposals, and having regard to the location of the site in a Conservation Area, the main issues in this appeal are:

(i) Whether the proposal will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

(ii) The adequacy of the amenity area for existing and future residents of the flats.

(iii) The effect of the proposal on the outlook and amenities of neighbouring properties.

6.2 Issue (i) – Effect on Conservation Area

The Council's refusal reason number 1 refers to the proposed development having an adverse effect on the Conservation Area, by virtue of its scale, massing and number of units proposed. They consider that the proposed development will be "visually intrusive", and "detrimental to the appearance of the street and the character of this Conservation Area".

6.3 Before considering further the relevance of these objections, it should be noted that the Council have indicated to the appellants that they would have no objection in principle to some form of extension to the appeal buildings.

Reference has already been made in Section 2 of this statement to correspondence between the architects for the appellants and the Case Officer dealing with the application on behalf of the Council. In a letter dated 13 January 2005 (Appendix 1) to architects for the appellants, the Council observed that the proposal presented an interesting elevation to the corner, and by having a straight frontage off the boundary, was considered to work quite well. There were, however, a number of concerns about the treatment of the east elevation, in relation to the proposed gable. The letter recommended that Flat 5 in the roof space should be deleted, to enable the overall height of the proposed ridge and gable element to be reduced. This would, in the view of the Council, also overcome concerns from neighbours of being overlooked from the west, facing third floor windows. Concern was also expressed about the proposed corner to Flat 3, where it joined car parking space 4, and amendments were required on that. Kitchen sizes needed to be larger, and the mixer windows on the east elevation changed. The letter concluded that:

> *"in principle, therefore, I feel that four additional dwellings on the site could be supported."*

6.4 While a subsequent letter of 2 February 2005 (Appendix 1), which commented on amended plans provided by the appellant's architects, appeared to change the Council's stance somewhat, by suggesting that the building occupied too much of the gap seen from the Christ Church Road/Redlands Road junction, it concluded that:

> *"clearly there is scope to develop part of the site".*

6.5 Finally, and in the same context, planning permission has been granted for a three storey extension to form two flats to the appeal buildings in 1992, renewed in 1997, albeit now lapsed. The Council are therefore accepting that the appeal buildings can be extended, and that some change in the character and appearance

of this part of the Conservation Area is therefore acceptable in policy terms. This is confirmed in the Officer's report to the Planning Committee, as contained in Appendix 4 attached, where the comment is made that:

> "The principle of using part of the site for additional residential use has been established by the previous planning permission for two additional flats, and this is still in accordance with current national and Local Plan policy. Some trees may be required to be felled to allow this to happen, but again this was acceptable in principle before, and the tree advisers comments do not change that opinion....The site is in a sustainable location within a short walk of bus routes and local amenities, and therefore its use for some additional development is considered acceptable in principle."

6.6 In order to assess the weight to be accorded to the Council's objections in relation to refusal reason no. 1, some appreciation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area generally, and in particular in relation to the area immediately around the appeal site, is necessary.

6.7 The appeal site lies at the southwestern corner of the Redlands Conservation Area. That area covers a relatively small number of primarily residential streets – Elmhurst Road, Marlborough Avenue, and New Road. There are three listed buildings within the area, Nos. 85, 87 and 89 Christchurch Road, the latter immediately adjoining the western boundary of the appeal site.

6.8 Apart from the university properties, including Wantage Hall at the northern end of the Conservation Area, the majority of properties within the Conservation Area are residential and mainly attractive Victorian properties, some of which are at a relatively high density, and in terraced form. Many of the properties do not have driveways or garages, and on street car parking is prevelant in the area. A number of the houses are two storey with a second floor in the roof, incorporating steep

pitched roofs, decorative gables, brick work and similar, comparable to the appeal buildings themselves. There are a number of trees throughout the Conservation Area, together with hedging and old railings to gardens, again similar to the appeal site itself.

6.9 The appeal site buildings occupy a prominent location at the junction of Redlands Road and Christchurch Road, as noted in the Design Statement produced with the application, and as contained in Appendix 5. The buildings were constructed by the Victorians with decorative brick work, sited so as to be viewed from the Christchurch Green location, an area of informal public open space at the junction of the two roads. The building has attractive polychromatic brickwork elevations, with vertical sliding sash windows, and a slate roof with decorative patterned slates.

6.10 In contrast, the land to the rear of the properties contains a number of lean-to buildings and modern garaging, together with informal car parking areas, all of which are prominent in views from Redlands Road.

6.11 As noted in the architect's Design Statement, the proposed extension is designed to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the appeal buildings, using similar decorative brickwork, and signalling the link between the new and old by means of a glazed entrance way. The proposed extension will complete the corner aspect of the location of the building, providing visual continuity around the Christchurch Green/Christchurch Road frontage, to the Redlands Road frontage. At the same time, a private and secure garden space will be formed at the rear of the property, to be shared by residents. It is also proposed to have some rationalisation of the internal layout of two of the existing ground floor flats.

6.12 Clearly, the issue of whether or not the proposed extensions are in keeping with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is a matter of opinion, and is best judged by a visit to the site. However, in general terms, the extensions will

be subservient to the existing house, achieved by ensuring that the height of the extension is below that of the existing buildings. Adequate space will remain around the extensions to the road frontage to Redlands Road, where landscaping is proposed. This will ensure that the site does not appear over-developed, and that the extensions do not over-dominate the site.

6.13 It is to be noted that the Council's own Conservation Officer was generally supportive of the proposals. He observed that:

> *"The two existing buildings, nos. 91 Christchurch Road and no. 72 on the adjacent road, both face Christchurch Road, and this means that their side and rear elevations are prominently displayed in the road to the rear.*
> *The construction of a wing northwards forms an L-shaped building, and could be said to handle this corner site quite well.*
> *Also, the design of a new wing, despite unnecessarily complex roof design, is in sympathy with the existing houses."*

6.14 The Conservation Officer went on to observe that the first floor jetty on the northern wing, i.e. for Flat 3, next to parking space 4, was an awkward detail which should be addressed. This was subsequently done in the amended plans.

6.15 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed extension will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and that the Council's reliance on conflict with Local Plan policies relating to the design and appearance, is not sufficient to justify a refusal. In particular, regard should be given to more recent and current Government advice as set out in PPS1 and PPG3, as previously described above. This advice stresses the importance of making best use of brownfield sites within urban areas, particularly where such sites are in sustainable locations, which is relevant for the appeal site.

6.16 **Issue (ii) - Provision of Private Amenity Space**

The Council's second refusal reason refers to inadequate amenity space being provided for both existing and future residents. There is reference to Supplementary Planning Guidance "Space around Dwellings". The Officer's report to the Planning Committee in relation to this issue states that 225 square metres of private amenity space should be provided, to comply with adopted guidance, but only 160 square metres is proposed. Officers note that no justification has been provided for the level of amenity space, which was considered to be inadequate.

6.17 The site plan shows that the private amenity space for the flat is to be on the western side between the flats and no. 89 Christchurch Road. A small garage is to be demolished to make way for the garden area. The garden area will have a southern aspect, and will therefore be reasonably light. It will not be overlooked by neighbouring properties. It will be sufficiently large so as to provide for the provision of a normal sitting out area, together with clothes drying areas and similar. The removal of a Yew Tree in the garden area, which has already been extensively cut back, might further assist in providing the garden area.

6.18 There are in addition further landscaped areas proposed around the eastern and southern boundaries of the appeal site. Furthermore, there are several public parks and areas of public open space relatively close to the appeal site. Finally, current Government advice states that the provision of facilities such as shared amenity areas for flats is a matter to be addressed by developers, rather than to be achieved through the application of rigid formulae. Clearly, some amenity area is required for the existing proposed occupiers of the flats, but it is considered that there is sufficient for the proposed scheme.

6.19 **Issue (iii) - Effect on neighbouring properties**

The Council's third refusal reason refers to the proposal adversely affecting the amenity of neighbouring residents, who will feel encroached upon by the structure. In addition, the proposed bin store and cycle store next to 70 Redlands Road is considered unacceptable. The Officer's report to the Planning Committee further observes that the bulk of the proposed new development will "obscure the easterly aspect" from the two adjacent properties. There is also reference to the felling of a lime tree next to the boundary of no. 70, which is worthy of retention for its contribution to the appearance of the site, and its screening value.

6.20 With regard to the objection in relation to the bulk of the development obscuring the easterly aspect of, presumably, no. 70 Redlands Road and no. 89 Christchurch Road, neither of these properties have an easterly aspect which is affected by the appeal proposal. No. 70 is orientated east/west. Its eastern aspect is directly onto Redlands Road. Its western and southern aspects will be unaffected by the appeal proposal. Similarly, no. 89 Christchurch Road is orientated north/south. The front, southern aspect will be unaffected by the proposal, as will the rear, northern aspect, in that the proposed extension is sufficiently distant from the rear garden so as to avoid any material loss of light or overshadowing.

6.21 With regard to the proposed bin store and cycle store, and the related loss of the lime tree, the Council's objections in relation to these aspects of the proposal are not clear. There is reference to noise and smell, but providing the bin store is correctly administered, this should not cause problems. Similarly, it is difficult to understand how a bike store can cause excessive noise.

6.22 The lime tree is set sufficiently far back into the appeal site to the extent that its appearance does not make any material contribution to the street scene generally. It is awkwardly placed in relation to No. 70, being a semi mature specimen,

which in due course will, because of its overall height and spread, cause excessive overshadowing to the rear garden of no. 70, and possibly damage to the brick wall, which it immediately adjoins.

6.23 Notwithstanding this, the appellants are prepared to discuss with the Council the relocation of the bin store, and the retention of the lime tree. This could be made subject to a condition on any planning permission for the proposal.

7.0 COMMENTS ON THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 The proposed development has attracted a large number of objections from residents in the area. Most of the concerns raised by residents have already been dealt with in the above statement, relating to, for example, the size and bulk of the building, and similar.

7.2 Particular reference is made to inadequate car parking and highway safety problems by residents. However, the Council's Highways Officer noted in his memo dated 21 January 2004 to the Planning Manager, that the site is very close to local facilities and public transport access, as well as being within walking distance of the university, hospital, etc. While some concern is expressed regarding the size of the cycle store, the Highways Officer considers that 9 car parking spaces is sufficient, given the location of the appeal site. In addition, he considers that access to the site and manoeuvring within the car park are adequate, and that the removal of the access to Christ Church road is also a positive benefit.

7.3 Reference is also made by third parties to loss of trees on the appeal site. Again, the Council's own Tree Officer has considered this aspect of the proposal, and in a memo dated 25 January 2004 to the Planning Officer, confirmed that no objection was raised to the removal of horse chestnuts and maple on the site, "as these were not particularly good trees".

7.4 He did, however, request that the lime tree be retained by the relocation of the bin store, and reference has already been made to this above. Finally, he observed that in view of the prominent location of the site, it was important to achieve adequate and quality landscaping. A condition imposed on any planning permission for the appeal proposal can require the submission of a landscaping scheme to the Council for their approval.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 There is agreement between the Council and the appellants that some form of extension to the appeal buildings is acceptable in principle, and will be in compliance with development plan policy and Government advice. It is considered that the size and scale of the proposals meet the requirements of the Council's policies, as set out in the Development Plan, and that the proposals comply with current Government advice. The scale, massing and number of units are appropriate to the appeal site, and the proposal will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.2 Adequate space will be provided for the amenity area within the appeal site. The outlook and amenities of neighbouring properties will not be adversely affected by the proposals. With regard to financial contributions for off site works, the appellant is prepared to meet these by means of unilateral agreement.

It is therefore requested that this appeal be allowed.

APPENDICES
OF CHRISTOPHER STRANG, BSc (Hons), MRTP

APPEAL BY TONY CHIMA AGAINST THE REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION BY READING BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDING TO FORM FOUR NEW 2 BEDROOM FLATS AND ONE NEW 1 BEDROOM FLAT (as amended)

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF: APP/E0345/A/05/1179681

COUNCIL REF: 04/01530/FUL

July 2005

Christopher Strang Associates
Town & Country Planning Consultants
36 Donnington Square
Newbury
Berkshire RG14 1PP

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APPENDIX 1

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Craig Anderson
Director of Environment

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Our Ref: S85/JW
Your Ref: AN/SGS/1561

RECEIVED
2 APR 2004
BY:.....

Andrews Kalik Harris
The Studio
101 London Road
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RG1 5BY

1st April 2004

Without Prejudice

Your contact is: Julie Williams, Planning and Transport

Dear Mr Andrews,

PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION ENQUIRY - 72 REDLANDS ROAD & 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING

I am sorry for the delay in contacting you about this site. I tried to get the previous plans restored from our microfische but as they are "so out of date" only one company does it locally and they wanted to charge £50!!

Anyway, from our meeting and the comments I had from the Team Leaders the conclusion is that the scale of the proposed extension and the number of units proposed is too much for the site. The previous consent was for an additional 2 x 2 bed flats, which was considered acceptable, and I suggest you make that scheme your starting point and I enclose a copy of the committee report for that application. You can look at the microfische for the plans yourself!!

This site is constrained, as you know, by being in a conservation area and by being in such a prominent location. The original building has dealt with its corner location by having attractive front and rear elevations. Any proposal here will need to ensure that the dual aspect is given much consideration, perhaps by drawing any extension away from the boundary at the junction.

Using the access on Redlands Road to serve the communal parking area was considered acceptable before and there is no reason to change that opinion, however that was in respect of the then proposed 5 spaces plus existing 4 garages. The garages also provided a buffer to adjacent properties whereas your scheme has car parking along this boundary, which is likely to lead to an unacceptable amount of noise disturbance. Similarly the loss of the four maples was also considered acceptable previously but in that scheme there was space to replant.

In principle, modest additional development at this site for residential use is acceptable but the scale of what you have suggested is considered unacceptable. If a more acceptable layout could be shown to work it is likely that a residential scheme in this location would be requested to meet infrastructure provision requirements by contributing towards local facilities likely to be used by residents of the new houses as established by Policy KEY 3 "The Role of Development in Improving the Town" of the Reading Borough Local Plan. This policy

requires that development proposals make an appropriate contribution towards necessary and relevant physical and social infrastructure in order to offset the costs of development and to benefit those who live in, work in or visit the town.

As it is considered that future occupants of the new dwellings will place additional pressure on the Borough's transportation system in accordance with Policy TRN1 (A Balanced Transport Strategy) of the Reading Borough Local Plan the Council would be seeking a financial contribution of £1,200 per dwelling created towards transport infrastructure improvements bought forward through the Reading Urban Area Package (RUAP). It is also considered that this proposal will increase pressure on local leisure and recreation facilities. Therefore, in line with Policy LEI3 (Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) the Council would be seeking £1,000 per dwelling towards the provision and improvement of such facilities. Finally, it is required that development proposals make an appropriate contribution towards necessary and relevant provision of education. Our education section will be consulted to establish the current situation with local schools and whether a contribution would be appropriate. If it is, this is calculated by applying a formula based on the number of primary school and secondary school children likely to be living in a 2 bedroom flat, which could result in a contribution of up to £1632 being sought per 2 bedroom flats proposed.

If you client is agreeable to the principle of such contributions we would need the following submitted at an early stage to meet an 8 week determination deadline:

(i) Please provide confirmation in writing that you agree to meet the requirements of policies KEY 3, LEI3 & TRN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan by means of a financial contribution and that you accept this requirement as the basis for a legal agreement to be completed prior to the issue of planning permission and payment made when the new flats are occupied index linked from the date of issue of planning permission.

(ii) Confirm that the applicant owns all of the land where "development" is proposed? If the applicant does NOT own all of the site, who else does and confirm that they have agreed to be a "party" to the agreement?

(iii) Please provide the Council's solicitors with a copy of the title deeds to the land. Please also confirm whether the land where "development" is proposed is subject to a mortgage.

(iv) Please provide confirmation in writing that the applicant agrees to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs whether or not the matter proceeds or is completed.

(v) Please provide the Council with the name and address of the applicant's solicitors.

As an authority we are under continual pressure from Central Government to process applications within eight weeks of registration. Therefore if the recommendation is for approval, the application is liable to be refused if the Section 106 agreement and all outstanding matters are not completed by or on 2 working days before final date. It will be your responsibility as agent in this matter to ensure that all parties, including the applicant and applicant's legal representative, are made aware of the deadline and the fact that failure to meet this deadline is likely to result in refusal. It is also your responsibility as agent to ensure that all parties adhere to this deadline. Ok Yes – RBC Legal Dept

This letter represents the informal opinion of Council officers and does not prejudice any decision that the Council may make should a formal application be submitted. It should also be noted that it is given in the context of the planning policies, regulations and guidance

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applicable at the present time. You are advised that this context could change over time and with it the material considerations. This may affect the above opinion and you are advised to check the position again unless immediately acting in accordance with the above advice.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this matter further and I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the site once you have had time to conclude your feasibility study and work up your preferred option.

Yours sincerely

Julie Williams
Senior Planning Officer

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Craig Anderson
Director of Environment

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Our Ref: 04/1530/FUL/JW
Your Ref: AMA/SGS/1802

13th January 2005

RECEIVED
17 JAN 2005
BY:.....

Andrews Kalik Harris
The Studio
101 London Road
Reading
RG1 5BY

Without Prejudice

Your contact is: Julie Williams, Planning and Transport

Dear Mr Andrews,

PLANNING APPLICATION - 72 REDLANDS ROAD & 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING

Thank you for your recent planning application for the above site, which follows on from pre-application discussions held in April of last year. At that time you were considering converting the existing property to 5 flats and adding 6 flats in an extension - 9 car spaces were shown. The current proposal is to retain the existing building as 4 flats and to extend at the rear to provide a further 5 flats. In my reply at that time I referred to the need to reduce the number of units on site to allow a better design of building in keeping with the prominence of the site and its location in a conservation area.

I am still awaiting comments from transport but thought it worth writing to raise some concerns about the proposed design and to establish what the S106 contributions should be.

Design:
Your proposal attempts to present an interesting elevation to the corner and by having a straight frontage off the boundary is considered to work quite well. The pre-app scheme was closer to the boundary and had a stepped pattern.

However, I have a number of concerns about the treatment of the east elevation. Although the original gable bay element is replicated it fails to sufficiently break up the horizontal impression of the extension overall. I am also concerned that the replica gable element competes too much with the "prettier" original by being sited closer to the boundary and by being almost as high. The solution might result in the deleting of flat 5 in the roof space to enable the overall height of the ridge and the gable element to be reduced. This would also overcome concerns from neighbours of being overlooked from the west facing third floor windows.

I am also concerned about the proposed corner to flat 3 where it adjoins car parking space 4. The proposed treatment of this corner with the first floor jutting out over the car parking area is unacceptable and should be reconsidered.

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Our environmental health team has considered the plans and have commented that the kitchen areas appear quite small (especially flats 1 & 2) so there is some doubt if the space will be adequate for usual facilities and safe working. Kitchens should have a minimum floor space of 7 square metres for a 2 bed dwelling. There is also some concern about the usable area in flat 5.

Finally, the mix of window sizes on the east elevation gives a confused appearance and not in keeping with proportions and pattern of windows on the original building. These windows should also be preferably sash hung to look appropriate to the style of building proposed.

Using the access on Redlands Road to serve the communal parking area was considered acceptable before and I note that you are proposing 4 spaces plus 5 in a car port to replace the existing garages. The car port should provide a buffer to adjacent properties to reduce the amount of noise disturbance. Similarly the loss of trees on site was also considered acceptable previously but in that scheme there was space to replant. You mention a comprehensive landscaping scheme in your submission and the intention to replant relocated trees - could we have these details before we determine this application?

In principle therefore I feel that 4 additional dwellings on the site could be supported. They would be required to meet infrastructure provision requirements by contributing towards local facilities likely to be used by residents of the new dwellings as established by Policy KEY 3 "The Role of Development in Improving the Town" of the Reading Borough Local Plan. This policy requires that development proposals make an appropriate contribution towards necessary and relevant physical and social infrastructure in order to offset the costs of development and to benefit those who live in, work in or visit the town. You raised the question of the timescales and the relevance of pre-app discussions before the SPG on S106 contributions was adopted in July 2004. We have taken the view that if discussions are on-going then previously agreed figures would be adhered to. In this case my last correspondence to you was 1st April and there was no further exchange including any acceptance of those figures. I must therefore resort to the adopted figures as my starting point - however at least the education contribution remains unchanged.

As it is considered that future occupants of the new dwellings will place additional pressure on the Borough's transportation system in accordance with Policy TRN1 (A Balanced Transport Strategy) of the Reading Borough Local Plan the Council would be seeking a financial contribution of £2,000 per dwelling created towards transport infrastructure improvements bought forward through the Reading Urban Area Package (RUAP). It is also considered that this proposal will increase pressure on local leisure and recreation facilities. Therefore, in line with Policy LEI3 (Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) the Council would be seeking £1,500 per dwelling towards the provision and improvement of such facilities. Finally, it is required that development proposals make an appropriate contribution towards necessary and relevant provision of education. Our education section will be consulted to establish the current situation with local schools and whether a contribution would be appropriate. If it is, this is calculated by applying a formula based on the number of primary school and secondary school children likely to be living in a 2 bedroom flat, which could result in a total contribution of £6528 being sought - £1,632 per 2 bedroom flats proposed.

If you client is agreeable to the principle of such contributions we would need the following submitted at an early stage to meet an 8 week determination deadline:

(i) confirmation in writing that you agree to meet the requirements of policies KEY 3, LEI3 & TRN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan by means of a financial contribution of £20,528 and that you accept this requirement as the basis for a legal agreement to be

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completed prior to the issue of planning permission and payment made when the new flats are occupied index linked from the date of issue of planning permission.

(ii) Confirmation that the applicant's solicitors are confirming that the applicant owns all of the land where "development" is proposed or who else does and that they have agreed to be a "party" to the agreement.

(iii) The Council's solicitors will need to be sent a copy of the title deeds to the land. Please also confirm whether the land where "development" is proposed is subject to a mortgage.

(iv) Please confirm in writing that the applicant agrees to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs whether or not the matter proceeds or is completed and provide the Council with the name and address of the applicant's solicitors.

As an authority we are under continual pressure from Central Government to process applications within eight weeks of registration. Therefore if the recommendation is for approval, the application is liable to be refused if the Section 106 agreement and all outstanding matters are not completed by or on 2 working days before final date.

I have requested a number of revisions to the scheme and if you should decide to agree with them I will need any amended plans by 28th January to allow time to re-consult before the 18 February - the eight weeks deadline. If you will have difficulty meeting this deadline I suggest that you consider withdrawing the application to allow time to work up a more acceptable scheme for your client and us.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this matter further and I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the site once I have had further comments from other Council consultees (transport & landscaping).

Finally, I have had one existing tenant contact me who is very distressed about these proposals. Could your client confirm what the intentions are for existing tenants - it appears that they will remain unchanged from these proposals but I do not want to give her inaccurate information. I have asked her to contact your client but I get the impression that she would rather not.

Yours sincerely

Julie Williams
Senior Planning Officer

AMA/JDF/1802

25 January 2005

The Planning Department
Reading Borough Council
PO Box 17
Civic Offices
Civic Centre
Reading RG1 7TD
fao Mrs J Williams

Dear Mrs Williams

72 REDLANDS ROAD & 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD READING

Thank you very much for your letter of 13 January, I appreciate your comments and we have endeavoured to address each point as you raised them.

We have modified the east elevation to simplify this a little and reduce the emphasis of the gable by the introduction of a small Dutch hip to the roof of this element, to reflect the same idea as that of the existing building facing Christchurch Road. I think this feature is a neat way of visually tying the two buildings together.

In order to overcome the matter of overlooking to the properties to the west, I have reduced flat 5 to 1 bedroom and omitted the bedroom facing the neighbouring garden. This has meant that we can reduce the roof on the rear of the elevation and simplify this element of the building.

Your concern about the cantilevered corner adjacent to flat 3 and car parking space no 4 – this we have modified to make a simple straight wall which again is reflected in the pattern of the roof.

The comments about the kitchen sizes we have addressed by rearranging the layout within flats 1 and 2, and increasing the footprint slightly.

I confirm that all the new windows to this extension will be a vertical sliding sash pattern with matching cills to reflect the style of the existing house.

In summary, I think the modifications you suggest improve the scheme. We have retained 5 units, but reduced the size of one of them and this has the benefit of giving a variety of sized dwellings on the site, suiting a greater number of occupants. I am

sure you are aware there is a great demand for small dwellings within this area, being so close to the University, hospital and other educational establishments. I think that this extension will contribute usefully to the housing stock within the area.

I confirm my Client is prepared to enter into a 106 Agreement for the Planning contributions you have outlined in your letter. The Client's Solicitor, Caporn Campbell, have been in touch with the Legal Department and I have forwarded copies of the ownership titles to start the legal process.

I confirm that the Legal Agreement will include a payment of £2,000 for transport, £1,500 for recreation, and £1,632 for education contribution for every 2 bedroom flat (4 in number), these figures are for each unit.

I enclose 4 copies of amended plans, drawing nos 1802/11A, 12B, 13A, 14A, 15A and 16A. Thank you very much for your help, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns that I can deal with at this stage.

My Client has spoken to the ground floor tenant and confirmed that she will not lose any habitable space, the small rooms at the rear of her unit that are being altered are currently used for no more than storage purposes, and as part of the scheme there will be refurbishment and improvements to the property generally throughout.

Yours sincerely
for Andrews Kalik Harris Partnership

A M Andrews

encl

cc Mr A Chima

0118 950 7700

Matt Andrews

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Reading BOROUGH COUNCIL

Anita Cacchioli
Director of Environment

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD
☎ 0118 939 0900
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Email: julie.williams@reading.gov.uk
Our Ref: 04/1530/FUL/JW
Your Ref: AMA/SGS/1802

RECEIVED
- 3 FEB 2005
BY:----------

Andrews Kalik Harris
The Studio
101 London Road
Reading
RG1 5BY

2nd February 2005

Without Prejudice

Your contact is: Julie Williams, Planning and Transport

Dear Mr Andrews,

PLANNING APPLICATION - 72 REDLANDS ROAD & 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING

Thank you for the recent amended plans - re-consultations are underway on them. Responses to the original and resubmitted application are substantial and all are objecting to the scale and design of the proposed new building - 33 so far. The local ward Councillor is also requesting that the application be determined by planning committee. I now have more responses from other officers in the Council to pass on to you.

Transport
9 parking spaces are considered acceptable and the turning space within the site is considered adequate. In response from concerns from the adjacent 70 Redlands Road it would be preferable to relocate the cycle store and bin store away from their boundary to minimise the potential for noise and smells disturbing those residents. No objections are raised in terms of traffic generation but many local residents are concerned about this aspect.

Some local residents have reported that on occasion as many as 7 cars are parked on the rear area of the site. It is not clear if these vehicles are owned by existing tenants in the 4 flats but if they are there will clearly be a problem for existing tenants who will not have sufficient space on site to park their vehicles.

Landscaping
The removal of the 2 horse chestnuts and maple is acceptable, however the Lime on the boundary to 70 Redlands Road should be retained. This is consistent with the advice given above about relocating the bin and cycle store and would enable the residents at 70 Redlands Road to retain the screening benefits of the tree. It is important in this prominent location in a conservation area that adequate land is set aside for landscaping and the landscaping is of good quality. It would be useful to have a calculation of how much amenity space is available on the proposed redeveloped site to see if it complies with our normal requirements for flats.

I must point out that many local residents are supportive of a scheme that will remove the eyesore of the rear parking area and I was dismayed with the condition of this part of the site

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and the existing garden areas when I visited it. I am not sure if this is a deliberate tactic by your client to render the site so unsightly that anything that removes the mess will be considered an improvement. If it is, I must advise that this has not worked on other sites in the Borough and will not work in this case.

Design:
Your amended proposal only proposes superficial changes to the development as its overall height remains the same and the proposal still gives the impression of being excessive for its site and context.

The team and objectors have also suggested that the building occupies too much of the gap as seen from the Christchurch Road/Redlands Road junction and therefore would have a detrimental impact on the appearance and character of this part of the conservation area and the setting of the building itself.

Clearly there is scope to develop part of the site and permission has been granted in the past for this in a format that was considered to comply with relevant policies at that time. Those policies are still in force in the adopted local plan and I remain concerned that what is being proposed now does not comply with current relevant policies.

In my previous letter to you I commented that 4 additional dwellings on the site could be supported on the site but in view of my continuing misgivings about accommodating the proposed building on the site I remain to be convinced that more than the previously approved 2 flats on the site can be developed on the site without causing harm to the character of the original and distinctive building and the appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Time has now run out to consider further amendments to this current scheme so unless I hear from you by the 17th February requesting that this application be withdrawn I will recommend to my manager that the application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

Julie Williams
Senior Planning Officer

RBC · Architect

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Town Planning Division

Speed Memo

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

My Ref: Date:

From: ANDREW HILL
CONSERVATION OFFICER

To: JULIE WILLIAMS

Extension:

Your Ref: Date: 7/1/05

The two existing buildings, Nos. 91 Christchurch Road and No 72 on the adjacent Road both face Christchurch Road and this means that their side and rear elevations are prominantly displayed in the road to the rear.

The construction of a wing northwards forms an 'L' shaped building and would be said to handle this corner site quite well.

Also the design of the new wing despite unnecessarily complex roof design is in sympathy with the existing houses.

One small point which is unresolved and spoils what is an otherwise acceptable scheme is the 1st floor "jettying" on the northern wing where the ground floor splays to avoid car spaces while the upper floors carry over in a straight line!

Surely in a new building this sort of awkward detail could be avoided.

Otherwise No adverse obs

Why is the App on Listed Building C. forms when it is no a LB

[signature]

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APPENDIX 2

WARD: Redlands

ITEM NO. 17

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE - 16 OCTOBER 1991 - Deferred
Re-submitted - 8 JANUARY 1992

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

91/0788/FD - 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD/72 REDLANDS ROAD
Three storey rear extension to form three, two bedroomed flats.

Introduction

1. Two large part two, part three storey semi-detached Victorian houses (occupied as 4 flats) on corner of Christchurch Road and Redlands Road. Prominent feature within Redlands Conservation Area with decorative features/brickwork. Existing accesses from Christchurch Road and Redlands Road. Rear garage court (5 garages).

Proposal

2. Construction of a three storey extension to the rear, with recessed link to principal building to form 2 flats. Demolition of out-buildings and detached garages and creation of parking area (9 spaces). This is an amended proposal following deferral of the application by you on 13 November 1991 (copy report attached at Appendix A) to seek a reduced density of development.

Planning History

3. 90/0726/OA - Extension and alterations to form 10 flats. Refused 20/9/90.

Consultations

4. Christchurch Road/Redlands Road Residents Association, 1-14, 13 Marlborough Avenue, 25, 62-72 Redlands Road, 1, 2 Shinfield Road, 85, 87, 89, 91, 72-82 Christchurch Road, 82 Elmhurst Road were consulted. Any observation received will be reported at the meeting.

Highways

5. The access arrangements are acceptable and the parking provision is reduced to 9 spaces as a result of the reduction in the number of units. A condition will be required to achieve the permanent closure of the access onto Christchurch Road.

The amended parking layout and access is acceptable. A condition should be imposed requiring the permanent closure of the access onto Christchurch Road.

Access for the Disabled

6. The layout has been amended to provide access to ground floor units. Design constraints make the installation of a lift difficult to achieve and given the need to retain the character of this important building in this location I feel that limited access is acceptable in this instance.

Appraisal

7. This is a highly prominent site in a Conservation Area and any development must be in keeping with and positively enhance the character of the area. The scale of the development is substantial, but I am of the view that a 3 storey extension can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site without detriment to either the setting of the building or the amenities of nearby residents. The elevations have been carefully detailed and the scheme

has been amended to minimise overlooking of adjacent properties. The existing trees on the boundary will be retained (with the exception of some in the vicinity of the access).

By reducing the scale of the development by one unit, the level of traffic generation will be reduced and a larger area of amenity space per unit, which is a significant benefit. The design and elevations remain largely as before with the exception of the removal of the dormer windows. These amendments have sought to address your concerns regarding the intensification of use of the site and I am of the view that the scale of the development is now wholly in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and the massing of the existing building.

Recommendation

8. GRANT

Conditions to include:

- Materials details to match existing building
- Detailed landscaping
- Completion of refurbishment of existing flats prior to occupation of new flats
- Hours of construction
- Provision of access and space for vehicles/materials during construction.

APPENDIX A

WARD: Redlands

ITEM NO. 35

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE - 16 OCTOBER 1991 — Deferred
Re-submitted - 13 November 1991

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

91/0788/FD - 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD/72 REDLANDS ROAD
Three storey rear extension to form three, two bedroomed flats.

Introduction

1. Two large part two, part three storey semi-detached Victorian houses (occupied as 4 flats) on corner of Christchurch Road and Redlands Road. Prominent feature within Redlands Conservation Area with decorative features/brickwork. Existing accesses from Christchurch Road and Redlands Road. Rear garage ocurt (5 garages).

Proposal

2. Construction of a three storey extension to the rear, with recessed link to principal building to form 3 flats. Demolition of out-buildings and detached garages and creation of parking area (11 spaces). Amended plans were submitted with minor alterations to elevations and parking layout. Residents have been reconsulted.

Planning History

3. 90/0726/OA - Extension and alterations to form 10 flats. Refused 20/9/90.

Consultations

4. Christchurch Road/Redlands Road Residents Association, 1-14, 13 Marlborough Avenue, 45, 62-72 Redlands Road, 1, 2 Shinfield Road, 85, 87, 89, 91, 72-82 Christchurch Road, 82 Elmhurst Road were consulted. 15 letters of objection and 1 of support have been received.

The objections relate to:

Loss of lock-up garages
Over-development, out of character in Conservation Area
Impact on setting of existing building
Increased traffic constitutes traffic hazard
Dangerous access - lack of visibility
Lack of parking
Surface of car park out of keeping
Loss of privacy/overlooking
Noise and disturbance from use of car park
Oppose flats in principle - effect on existing community
Excessive height and massing of proposed building

Civic Society - scale of development appropriate
essential to match styling and materials precisely
loss of garages to be regretted
good landscaping essential

Architects Panel - support the scheme in principle but stress importance of matching floor to ceiling heights and materials.

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Highways

5. The amended parking layout and access is acceptable. The bin store near Christchurch Road should be relocated and a condition imposed requiring the permanent closure of the access onto Christchurch Road.

Access for the Disabled

6. The layout has been amended to provide access to ground floor units. Design constraints make the installation of a lift difficult to achieve and given the need to retain the character of this important building in this location I feel that limited access is acceptable in this instance.

Appraisal

7. This is a highly prominent site in a Conservation Area and any development must be in keeping with and positively enhance the character of the area. The scale of the development is substantial, but I am of the view that a 3 storey extension can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site without detriment to either the setting of the building or the amenities of nearby residents. The elevations have been carefully detailed and the scheme has been amended to minimise overlooking of adjacent properties. The existing trees on the boundary will be retained (with the exception of some in the vicinity of the access).

The access and parking arrangements are acceptable although the proposed surface material is not and the location of the bin stores require amendment. This could be dealt with by condition.

Whilst I understand the residents concerns, I am of the view that this proposal will not be detrimental to the character of the area and no material loss of amenity will result. The development will enable the refurbishment/upgrading of the existing flats and will provide three new large flats. Amenity space is limited but the removal of the access and garage on Christchurch Road will improve this.

Recommendation

8. GRANT

Conditions to include:

- Materials details to match existing building
- Detailed landscaping
- Completion of refurbishment of existing flats prior to occupation of new flats
- Hours of construction
- Provision of access and space for vehicles/materials during construction

pts23/com.report/planning/692oct/MM/dmn

APPENDIX 3

HSG 5: RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

3.40 **IN ADDITION TO THE CRITERIA IN POLICY CUD 14 PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL NORMALLY BE EXPECTED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

THE CHARACTER, DENSITY AND DESIGN SHOULD BE OF AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD AND APPROPRIATE TO THE SURROUNDING AREA:

THE LAYOUT AND DESIGN SHOULD CREATE A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY:

WHERE APPROPRIATE ADEQUATE PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR PLAY SPACE AND OPEN SPACE:

THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT SHOULD ENSURE THAT NOISE NUISANCE IS MINIMISED AND THAT ALL PRIVATE LIVING AREAS HAVE ADEQUATE PRIVACY BOTH FROM OTHER DWELLINGS AND FROM PUBLIC AREAS:

SCHEMES SHOULD PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY MAINTAINABLE LANDSCAPING WHICH PRESERVES AND INCORPORATES EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

CAR PARKING PROVISION SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS:

ALL ASPECTS OF HIGHWAY PROVISION, INCLUDING ADEQUATE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTES, SHOULD BE OF AN ACCEPTABLE DESIGN AND LAYOUT:

THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT SHOULD BE FULLY ACCESSIBLE WITHIN THE TERMS OF POLICY HSG 10:

PROPOSALS SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO ISSUES OF SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES.

Reason for the Policy

3.41 Planning Policy Guidance makes it clear that the appearance of development and its relationship to its surroundings are material considerations which should be taken into account when assessing development proposals. The design and landscaping of housing developments should be of a high quality and be appropriate to the people who use it.

3.42 Proposals should be of a scale and density which are appropriate to the character and quality of the surrounding area. Such detailed considerations should include height, massing and materials, the siting of individual buildings, as well as landscaping, lighting, pedestrian/cycle routes and parking layouts.

3.43 All housing developments should be designed with the users in mind. For example, adequate and safe play space should be included for family accommodation. Public areas should be overlooked to create a safer environment. The needs of the car should not be at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists.

How it will be carried out

3.44 Through the Council's development control powers. The criteria in this policy should be considered as additional to the more general design principles set out in Policy CUD 14. The Council will have regard to the supplementary planning guidance on Space Around Dwellings and the Green Developers Guide.

POLICY HSG 8: HOUSE EXTENSIONS

3.54 A. **APPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSIONS TO HOMES WILL NORMALLY BE APPROVED IF THEY:**

i) **DO NOT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT ENJOYED BY NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES AND THE PROPERTY TO BE EXTENDED;**

ii) **DO NOT INVADE THE PRIVACY OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES THROUGH OVERLOOKING FROM WINDOWS OR BALCONIES;**

iii) **DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES THROUGH SITING, EXCESSIVE BULK, ILL-MATCHING MATERIALS OR INCONSISTENT DESIGN;**

iv) **DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE APPEARANCE OF THE STREET OR AREA BY USING ILL-MATCHED MATERIALS, GLAZING AND DETAILING;**

v) **COMPLEMENT THE ORIGINAL BUILDING THROUGH THE USE OF MATCHING MATERIALS AND BY REFLECTING THE DESIGN, SCALE AND PROPORTIONS OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING;**

vi) **DO NOT REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF USABLE AMENITY SPACE FOR THE PROPERTY TO AN UNACCEPTABLE DEGREE;**

vii) **DO NOT REQUIRE THE LOSS OF TREES IN THE GARDEN OR PUT SIGNIFICANT TREES AT RISK;**

B. **PROPOSALS FOR THE ERECTION OF GRANNY ANNEXES (SELF-CONTAINED BEDSITS OCCUPIED BY A RELATIVE) WILL BE ACCEPTABLE IF:**

i) **THEY ARE PHYSICALLY CONNECTED TO THE MAIN PROPERTY;**

ii) **THEY REMAIN ANCILLARY TO IT AT ALL TIMES, WHICH MAY REQUIRE LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO PREVENT THE ANNEXE FROM BEING LET OR SOLD SEPARATELY;**

iii) **THEY FULFIL THE REQUIREMENTS GIVEN IN A. ABOVE.**

Reason for the Policy

3.55 To provide basic guidance to residents who are considering building an extension, as to what will be acceptable to the Council. Extensions, whilst providing useful space for the occupier, can ruin the appearance of an area through bad design, lack of consideration for neighbours and their property, and insensitive use of materials. The Council has prepared more detailed

guidance notes for house extensions which should be consulted before submitting an application to extend.

How it will be carried out

3.56 Through the Council's development control powers.

POLICY HSG 9: LOCATION OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

3.57 **IN ASSESSING PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE LEVEL OF, AND ACCESSIBILITY TO, EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE, OPEN SPACE, FACILITIES, SERVICES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS.**

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED IF THEY:

WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF THE AREA;

WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON ADJOINING PROPERTIES;

CANNOT PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY AND CONVENIENT ACCESS AND ADEQUATE PARKING;

TAKE THE FORM OF TANDEM DEVELOPMENT;

PREVENT A MORE RATIONAL AND COMPREHENSIVE FORM OF DEVELOPMENT;

RESULT IN THE LOSS OF IMPORTANT TREES OR WILDLIFE HABITATS.

Reason for the Policy

3.58 A significant element of the total housing provision in policy HSG 1 is expected to be achieved through conversions, changes of use, redevelopment of existing buildings and the development of suitable vacant land within the built-up area. Recent Planning Policy Guidance makes it clear that in order to meet the requirement for new housing it is important to strike a balance between making full and effective use of vacant land in existing urban areas and the adverse effects of town-cramming and the loss of valuable open space. In particular, the guidance stresses the need for sensitive planning control in order to ensure that the cumulative effects of development do not damage the character and amenity of established residential areas. It is, therefore, necessary for the Council to set out the criteria by which proposals for residential development will be judged.

3.59 Reading's capacity to accommodate further housing growth is very limited, not only in terms of developable land, but increasingly in terms of available services and infrastructure. It is, therefore, important, and in accordance with Government guidance, that future growth is best located in terms of access to employment areas, infrastructure, local facilities and services. There are some areas of the town which are already densely populated and which do not have full access to adequate services, public open space and associated facilities to serve the population.

3.60 Furthermore, some areas of the town are not well-served by transport infrastructure. In particular, the lack of convenient and safe pedestrian and

cycle routes, as well as efficient public transport services may make certain areas unsuitable for further development, unless inadequacies can be addressed.

3.61 While the Council accepts that further residential development within the urban area is desirable in strategic environmental terms and can help to sustain local services, it is very concerned that future development should not destroy the local residential environment as a result. Development proposals, both singly and cumulatively, should not have a detrimental effect on the physical and visual character and environmental quality of an area or neighbourhood. In particular, the cumulative effects of development should not result in the loss of valuable and accessible open space. Policy LEI 3 in Chapter 7 outlines the Council's approach to open space and leisure facilities within the context of further development.

3.62 The character and density of Reading's built form is extremely complex and in some areas it can vary from street to street. For this reason, the policy does not attempt to define particularly sensitive areas or to prescribe rigid density standards; each case will be considered on its own merits, having regards to the density and average plot size of the surrounding area.

3.63 Established vegetation cover, particularly mature trees and important wildlife habitats, contributes significantly to the character and visual quality of an area. Trees and pockets of vegetation are particularly important in the more densely built-up areas of the town where private gardens and areas of open space are limited. Chapter 10 sets out the Council's approach toward balancing development and the natural environment.

3.64 It is important that, where opportunities do exist to provide additional housing in appropriate locations, piecemeal development should not inhibit future development of adjoining land, for example, by restricting the preferred access or creating a "ransom strip". In appropriate circumstances the Council may provide further guidance.

3.65 Generally, development should not result in a loss of amenity of adjoining properties. In particular, "tandem" development, where one or more houses are located immediately behind another and the access is shared, can often lead to disturbance and loss of privacy for adjacent properties.

How it will be carried out

3.66 Through the Council's development control powers. Under certain circumstances and subject to other policies in this Plan the provision of, or improvement to existing infrastructure and/or facilities may be appropriate and, therefore, where relevant and necessary to the development the Council may seek to enter into an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, or other relevant legislation.

POLICY CUD 7: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

6.25 **AS APPROPRIATE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS SHOULD MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE AREA BY RESPECTING OR ENHANCING ITS ARCHITECTURAL AND VISUAL QUALITIES AND ACHIEVING A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN. DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE THE PARTICULAR HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA WILL BE PRESERVED AND THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD OF HARM BEING CAUSED TO THE AREAS CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE.**

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL AS APPROPRIATE SEEK TO PRESERVE THE EXISTING BALANCE OF USES IN CONSERVATION AREAS.

Reason for the Policy

6.26 To ensure that new buildings and their surroundings are an asset to the Conservation Area. Good quality building design should be the norm everywhere in the town, but Conservation Areas are selected as areas, the special character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Council will therefore expect developers to contribute to this end by improvements to the site and, in appropriate cases, by contributing to the enhancement of the Conservation Area. The Council will, therefore, expect applications for new development in a Conservation Area to be accompanied by details of how the development will relate to its Conservation Area context, eg elevations of adjoining buildings and streetscape, plus details of how it will help to achieve wider Conservation Area objectives, as appropriate. Examples of development which might be acceptable in a Conservation Area include:

(i) development which respects the character of the existing architecture, in scale, grouping and materials, and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area;

(ii) development which helps to preserve or restore, where appropriate, the historic street pattern of Reading;

(iii) the use of building materials appropriate to the locality and sympathetic to those of nearby buildings including walls, gates and fences of a kind traditionally used in the locality;

(iv) development which does not generate excessive traffic or parking, noise or environmental objections (existing uses of this nature will not normally be allowed to expand or intensify and where possible the Council will encourage their relocation);

(v) development adjacent to a Conservation Area designed to be in harmony with the size, form and materials of that Conservation Area;

(vi) development which ensures that views into and out of a Conservation Area remain unspoilt;

(vii) advertisements properly related to the design of the buildings where they are displayed or, if free standing, to that of adjacent buildings.

6.27 The town's existing Conservation Areas display different characteristics. All but two are predominantly residential in character and it is important that this character is not undermined by the incursion of commercial uses. The remaining two, St. Marys Butts/Castle Street and Market Place/London Street (both to be amended/extended under policies CUD 8 and CEN 1) have a mixture of retail, residential, office and other commercial uses giving particular visual interest at ground floor level, which the Council wishes to retain. The proposed Conservation Area based on the University/Hospital sites off London Road (CUD 8) requires more precise attention based on the existing uses.

How it will be carried out

6.28 Through the Borough Council's development control powers. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a responsibility on the local authority to draw up enhancement schemes, and the Borough Council will seek contributions to these, secured as necessary by the execution of a Section 106 Agreement. Outline applications will not normally be accepted in Conservation Areas in order to ensure new developments meet design requirements. The Council will therefore exercise its powers under the General Development Order and require a detailed application in appropriate cases.

POLICY CUD 14: STANDARDS OF DESIGN IN DEVELOPMENT

6.61 **WHERE APPROPRIATE ALL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, WILL NORMALLY BE REQUIRED TO EXHIBIT A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN AND BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT, AND WILL NORMALLY BE EXPECTED TO:**

CREATE A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL USERS WITHOUT DETRACTING FROM THE INTEREST AND EXCITEMENT OF THE DESIGN;

USE LIGHTING AS A DESIGN FEATURE;

USE TRADITIONAL MATERIALS, PATTERNED BRICKWORK, TILES, AND STONE TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE MAIN ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION OF THE TOWN OR OTHERWISE DEMONSTRATE THAT THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS WILL FIT INTO THE SURROUNDING TOWNSCAPE;

CONSIDER PROVISION OF PUBLIC ART ON SITE OR NEARBY WHEN THE DEVELOPMENT IS LARGE SCALE, ACCESSIBLE TO OR HIGHLY VISIBLE BY THE PUBLIC AND WHERE PUBLIC ART CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE AMENITIES OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;

TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE ATTRACTIVE AND USABLE OUTDOOR SPACES AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC USE SUCH AS COURTYARDS, PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS, ETC. TO LINK WITH EXISTING PROVISION IN THE TOWN;

INCORPORATE WHEREVER POSSIBLE EXISTING LISTED BUILDINGS AND IMPORTANT BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND COMPLY WITH CUD POLICIES 4,6, AND 7.

PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY MAINTAINABLE LANDSCAPING WHICH PRESERVES AND INCORPORATES EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES.

PAY PARTICULAR REGARD TO THE DESIGN AND DETAILING OF CAR PARKING AREAS;

COMPLY WITH THE COUNCIL'S STREET FURNITURE POLICY;

CREATE ACTIVE AND ATTRACTIVE FRONTAGES;

HAVE REGARD TO THE TREATMENT OF REAR ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS PARTICULARLY WHERE THESE ARE OPEN TO VIEW AND/OR FACE THE TOWN'S RIVERS.

WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES HOMES, BUILDINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND BUILDINGS USED FOR EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION PURPOSES, THEY SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SUITABLE ACCESS AND FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AS CUSTOMERS, VISITORS AND EMPLOYEES. THE COUNCIL WILL NOT NORMALLY PERMIT PROPOSALS WHICH DO NOT MEET SUCH STANDARDS.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL ALSO BE EXPECTED TO BE DESIGNED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF ENERGY CONSERVATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS AS SET OUT IN POLICY KEY 2A, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE FOR MATERIALS RECYCLING AND HAVE REGARD TO THE GENERATION AND DISPOSAL OF WASTE AND MAKE PROVISION FOR WASTE MINIMISATION RE-USE AND RECYCLING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WASTE LOCAL PLAN FOR BERKSHIRE

Reason for the Policy

Design - General

6.62 This policy seeks to improve the quality of design of new development in the town and is not intended as a complete set of rules all of which will apply in every case. It needs to be applied flexibly to encourage architectural quality and, in appropriate cases, innovation.

6.63 The quality of design of new development and its surroundings has a major impact upon townscape. The Borough Council wants new development in Reading to make a positive contribution to the town and will encourage buildings where creativity, sensitivity and good craftsmanship combine to enrich the environment. The pace of change within Reading provides development opportunities which should be used to add quality, variety and interest and to remove buildings which currently detract from the street scene. In areas where the existing quality of the built environment is either poor or of variable quality, a new building and its surrounds should create a design high point to set standards for future developments.

Heights of Buildings

6.64 Apart from a handful of exceptions, Reading is a low rise town and the higher buildings which do exist are found in the town centre. This situation should prevail because :

(i) in design terms the restriction of higher buildings to the core denotes the importance of the centre;

(ii) tall buildings, particularly when erected in isolation, can have adverse effects on views to existing landmarks, the streetscene generally and on the town's microclimate.

6.65 Proposals for tall landmark buildings will only be considered favourably where they are a visual asset, well designed, distinctive and located in appropriate positions such as on corners or to close views, thereby contributing towards the environment of the town centre.

Roofscapes

6.66 Special attention should be paid to the design of roofscapes because of their high visibility in Reading, where the hilly terrain affords good views of the tops of buildings eg in the town centre. Consideration should be given to a well designed finish, especially to larger buildings, to ensure that their roofscapes do not appear as a clutter of added-on boxes to accommodate plant and machinery, lift shafts, etc. but rather are an integral part of the building. As importantly, groups of smaller buildings can present broken and interesting roof lines, particularly on hilly ground. Wherever possible traditional materials should be used.

Safety and Security

6.67 For the average person, the guarantee of an environment in which to go about their business safely and comfortably without fear of hazards or crime takes an even higher priority than aesthetic considerations. Buildings and their surroundings can be designed to reduce the risk from dangers such as moving vehicles and from criminals. The Borough Council wishes to promote this approach within Reading to safeguard its community. The Borough Council also has responsibility for street lighting and is fully aware of the importance of its role in creating a secure environment.

Lighting as a Design Feature

6.68 As well as being perceived as a safe place at night, central Reading in particular should be a source of attraction. The Council has taken the lead in decorative lighting at the Town Hall and wishes others to follow its example in both existing and new developments.

6.69 Entertainment buildings are the key to the night time use of the town and would benefit from appropriate lighting, as would buildings of architectural quality. Water and light together produce an especially attractive night-time

spectacle and buildings adjacent to the town's waterways could make a particularly valuable contribution. The use of upwardly directed spotlights on major buildings would also contribute.

6.70 Along the shopping streets of the town, individual units can contribute towards the general security and appeal of the area by leaving their fascia lights on after closing as long as this does not disturb people living nearby.

6.71 The Council will also encourage the use of low energy bulbs to reduce consumption and suitable designs to restrict light pollution and wastage.

Materials

6.72 As a prosperous town, Reading has experienced rapid development which has eroded the unique market town character and replaced it with buildings of varying standards which could be found in any modern centre. Many of these are constructed from steel and glass and do not reflect the town's architectural heritage. The Borough Council wishes to encourage the return of Reading's individuality and believes that the use of traditional materials can best contribute towards the achievement of this aim. Materials such as brick and stone, moreover, are to be preferred because they are good insulators and cope well with the British climate. However, the use of preferred materials by themselves will not ensure good design, and the two must go hand in hand. The aim of this policy is not to stifle architectural creativity and the Council is prepared to relax its preference for traditional materials where a developer can demonstrate that an alternative approach will fit into the surrounding townscape.

6.73 The Council recognises that outside the traditional built-up areas of the Borough there are relatively few "green field" sites such as at Worton Grange and Reading Business Park where a more modern vernacular is appropriate. Nevertheless, these areas will be expected to exhibit a high standard of design and materials, given the prominence of such sites at entrances to the town, rather than the bland form which business/warehouse sheds have been known to take.

6.74 The quality of materials used in external spaces is also equally as important as those used in buildings themselves, in both traditional and non-traditional areas. External treatments should be regarded as an integral part of the whole development scheme and not as an afterthought.

Public Art

6.75 There is growing recognition by both the public and private sector that Public Art has a positive role to play in developments, particularly where the artist is part of the development team working alongside architects and designers. Public Art can help to make an area more pleasing and human, can contribute

to the creation of a distinctive and unique identity for the town and can create a sense of pride and place.

6.76 Reading Borough Council has published an Arts Strategy which confirms its commitment to a whole range of arts activities in Reading, including Public Art. Public Art generally means unique works of art commissioned for a specific site - either inside or outside - which is used by or accessible by the public. These can be stand alone works that enhance the environment such as sculpture, murals, hangings, flags, mosaics etc or can be functional, such as specially commissioned windows, furniture, pavings, railings, etc, therefore using a variety of materials, although the use of water is a particularly attractive and generally relaxing medium which lends itself to both environmental enhancement and functional works. The Council will, therefore, in appropriate cases, encourage the provision of new works of art as part of development schemes. Further information on public art is given in Appendix 5.

Space and Connections

6.77 The Borough Council wishes to encourage attractive outdoor spaces in the town.

6.78 Too frequently in the past buildings have been designed in isolation or at most with reference to the style of adjacent buildings, whilst the spaces around them have been a neglected by-product. It is important that the design and layout of new developments relate to the surrounding area and that, where spaces are created external to buildings, they should also relate to the surrounding area. Wherever possible, they should be usable by the public, either in relation to the activity of the building or to surrounding public thoroughfares.

6.79 It is also the Borough Council's wish to extend the pedestrian network to enable better pedestrian movement around the town, an increased separation of people from vehicles and a more pleasant town centre experience for people on foot. New developments need to link into the existing townscape and, wherever possible, should be regarded as opportunities to add to the pedestrian network, especially along the Kennet and the Thames where the opening up of these water courses to pedestrians will be a requirement of development.

Existing Landscape Features

6.80 Every effort should be made to safeguard existing natural features on or adjoining development sites as an integral part of any proposals. Such features contribute to the character of a site, its surroundings and the Borough generally. Judged in isolation, such features may appear insignificant but their cumulative loss would create a dull and featureless town. This should be read in conjunction with policies NE3, NE4, NE5, NE6 and NE7 of Chapter 10 Natural Environment.

Landscaping

6.81 Good landscaping is an important and integral part of development. It should be treated as such, rather than as an afterthought. For this reason, the Borough Council will expect landscaping proposals to be submitted as part of the main planning application, rather than left to be dealt with by conditions. The Council will also expect that such landscaped areas should be easy to maintain. This requirement should be read in conjunction with policy NE7 of Chapter 10 Natural Environment.

6.82 In general terms a low maintenance layered approach to landscaping is sought (including in some cases replacement of existing high maintenance areas) promoting good ground cover, shrubs and trees.

Car Parking

6.83 The impact of the car on existing and new developments is very important. There is a need for a high standard of design and detailing to car parking access and layout to ensure integration with the total external space of a building, rather than using every inch of space for car parking alone.

Street Furniture

6.84 Some of the most significant elements of the street scene are items of street furniture such as seating, litter bins and the choice of surfacing materials. It is essential that careful consideration is given to the selection, design and location of street furniture and paving if it is to make a positive long-term contribution to the quality of the environment. A proliferation of ill-matched and high-maintenance street furniture and paving will cause clutter and adversely affect the character of an area. Wherever possible, functions should be integrated to reduce the number of items required. The Council's Street Furniture Policy is set out in Appendix 4.

Frontages

6.85 In traditional urban development, all buildings form the edges of streets, squares or spaces, creating easily recognisable and intentional public and private areas. Modern developments can sometimes neglect building lines and corners and create a random arrangement of spaces which feel confusing or threatening to the user. The Borough Council wishes to reintroduce the pedestrian-friendly quality of the traditional street form to the town with development which defines a definite pavement edge.

6.86 Apart from their arrangement, some modern buildings have tended to have bleak frontages at street level which deaden the area around and create a hostile environment. Ground level is where buildings react with people and it is here that the opportunity exists to create a stimulating and active frontage, giving life to an otherwise dull route. Special care with frontages needs to be

encouraged, particularly in the case of large buildings which are otherwise completely out of scale with pedestrians.

Rear Elevations

6.87 Most towns have examples of buildings which are spoiled by the lack of attention given to their rear elevations. These need to be designed with care, not just where they are currently visible to the public but recognising the possibility that future development of neighbouring sites may open them up to public view. With regard to Reading's Waterways, reference should also be made to Policy WAT 9, Waterways Design Objectives.

Equal Opportunities and Access

6.88 This Council is determined to ensure that people with access difficulties are not prevented from playing a full role in the life of the community due to the design of the environment and are able to participate in and contribute to all community activities, whether as residents, employees or visitors to the area.

6.89 Mobility difficulties affect an increasing number of people including some who would otherwise be considered able-bodied, such as parents with toddlers/push chairs/prams; adults with significant amounts of shopping; any person with a temporary or permanent disability and the elderly. The Council is therefore committed to ensuring improved accessibility of land and buildings.

6.90 Section 76 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires the local planning authority when granting planning permission to draw the attention of the applicant to sections 4 and 7 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. That Act requires developers of specified types of buildings to provide suitable means of access, parking and toilet facilities to meet the needs of people with disabilities, where practicable and reasonable, and the Building Regulations also seek to ensure that suitable provision is made where it is a reasonable requirement. The types of buildings to which the Act applies are buildings open to the public, places of employment, education buildings; and most types of building other than residential ones.

6.91 The "Code of Practice for Access for the Disabled to Buildings", British Standard Institution code of Practice BS5810:1979 sets out the minimum standards with which access provision should comply. However the BSI are currently reviewing these standards in the light of developments in access design. Developers will therefore be encouraged to design to higher standards than presently stated in BS 5810. The Council will adopt the revised standards of BS 5810, when they are available, as planning guidance.

Waste Minimisation, Re-Use and Recycling

6.92 Waste minimisation, re-use and recycling are components of the Waste Management Strategy and the Council has an important role in implementing relevant policies within the Borough. When considering development

proposals the Council will have regard to the policies contained in the Waste Local Plan on securing waste minimisation and recycling through the control of development.

How it will be carried out

6.93 Through the Borough Council's development control powers in considering planning applications and as appropriate secured by Section 106 Agreements. Pre-application advice will be given in the form of design and development briefs for individual sites using appropriate advice from a number of sources. Examples include advice from the Leisure Services Manager on Public Art, where the Council promotes a Per Cent for Art scheme under which developers in both the public and private sectors will be invited to invest a small percentage of the contract sum in sponsoring works of an artistic nature; from Thames Valley Police on security; from the Town Centre Manager and Chamber of Commerce; from Building Services on landscaping and street furniture; from the Council's Access Officer and Building Control on access requirements; from Building Control on energy conservation; and from the Council's Environmental Care Unit on The Green Developer's Guide, waste minimisation, re-use and recycling. Information on mobility standards for housing and more detailed guidance for all developments is contained in the Council's Access Guidance notes.

6.94 Further, the Council will expect every application to consider the whole site, ie buildings and external spaces together. In order to ensure that new development meets the requirements of this policy, the Borough Council will exercise its powers under Article 3(2) of the Town and Country Planning General Development Procedure Order 1995 to require additional details with an outline submission in appropriate cases. In particular the Council wishes to ensure that landscaping details are considered as an integral part of development proposals. With respect to development which may have implications for the waterways of the Borough due regard should be paid to Policy NE 8 and policies in the Waterways Chapter.

6.95 The Council will carry out enhancement schemes on its own land incorporating the principles contained in this policy, subject to available funding, and will also seek partnership schemes with developers both for implementing and maintaining such schemes. In these cases Section 106 Agreements will sometimes be appropriate.

POLICY KEY 3: THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT IN IMPROVING THE TOWN

1.38 **THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MAKE AN APPROPRIATE CONTRIBUTION TO NECESSARY AND RELEVANT PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ORDER TO OFFSET THE COSTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND TO BENEFIT THOSE WHO LIVE IN, WORK IN OR VISIT THE TOWN.**

Reasons for the Policy

1.39 To enable the achievement of an acceptable balance of uses in line with the main objectives of the plan. To enable development which meets those objectives to go ahead without causing loss of local amenity or resource and with the provision of necessary and relevant facilities and infrastructure. To take account of the cumulative impact of development upon the environment, facilities and infrastructure of Reading when individual proposals are assessed.

How it will be carried out

1.40 Through the policies set out in the remaining chapters of this Plan and in particular EMP 1, 3, 10, LEI 3, COM 9, CEN 7, 13, WAT 1, RET 1, HSG 1, 2, CEN6. Using the Council's development control powers and where necessary and relevant, seeking appropriate agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 or other legislation. The Council will also build upon the practice it has established, of working in partnership with existing local employers, owners of property and statutory undertakers, to carry out improvements which will benefit both their own interests and the general public. Where necessary, development may be phased in order to allow for the provision of utilities (in a way that is consistent with the environmental policies of the Plan).

The choice of areas for development

1.41 Greater Reading has been at the centre of a rapidly expanding region for over 2 decades. Areas where the Reading built up area meets the contryside are of importance as green wedges between the town and other settlements in Berkshire. For this reason, the Council produced a statutory plan in the 80's to protect the Kennet Valley from inappropriate development and ensure that a green lung was retained in this densely populated area. This approach is now applied to the whole of the area in the Council's jurisdiction.

1.42 Once boundaries were defined, the starting point for the Plan was to look at the growth which has already taken place in the town, the growth with planning permission which is about to take place, and how this will affect the balance between housing, jobs and transport in the area. In looking at this, the Council has considered not just the administrative area of Reading Borough but the built-up area of Greater Reading. There are some important changes taking place on the Borough's borders which will have profound consequences for Reading. Although the Council has no direct jurisdiction over these as

planning authority, it will seek to ensure that the authorities responsible make decisions which are consistent with the principles laid down in this plan.

1.43 The area has seen a substantial growth in employment in recent years and an equally large expansion in jobs is planned. There are enough planning permissions already granted in the Greater Reading area to create an estimated further 40,000 jobs. To put this figure into context, the total number of people working in Greater Reading in 1987 was only 105,000.

1.44 By comparison the amount of new housing being built in the area is relatively small. The area is largely built-up and the opportunities for increasing the working population within Greater Reading area are fairly limited. This means that the vast majority of any additional workforce will commute to the area from outside.

1.45 This will put a substantial additional strain upon the transport network within Greater Reading. The highway investment which is planned for the area is not designed to provide capacity for further growth. It is only adequate to cope with existing commitments and with the increase in car ownership and usage among the existing population. To do even this will require a substantial shift by travellers out of private cars and into other forms of transport. The achievement of this would go against national trends and the strategy for achieving it is not yet fully worked out.

POLICY LEI 3: THE PROVISION AND IMPROVEMENT OF LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

7.26 **THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE NECESSARY AND RELEVANT PROVISION OR IMPROVEMENT OF LEISURE OR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, INCLUDING AREAS OF OPEN SPACE, FROM THOSE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH INCREASE PRESSURE ON EXISTING FACILITIES.**

Reason for the Policy

7.27 It is acknowledged that in the urban context of Reading, achieving a "standard" of recreational provision across the Borough would be unrealistic. However, it follows that each additional dwelling or employment development which brings more people into the Borough to live or work has the potential to add to the pressure on existing open spaces and facilities. Where a proposal for development is likely to have implications for neighbouring recreational facilities and open spaces ways in which the development can assist in maintaining the existing level of recreational provision will be examined.

How it will be carried out

7.28 Through the Council's Development Control powers and its control as landowner where applicable. Policy LEI 4 identifies those facilities in the Borough where concentrated investment would result in a better overall service for the neighbourhood.

7.29 The Council, through its Arts and Leisure Strategy, will identify leisure improvements required in more detail. The Council will encourage applicants to liaise with officers of the Council to ensure that facilities provided or improvements made are in accordance with the Council's guidelines and requirements and in accordance with advice contained in Government guidance, especially PPG 1. Negotiated provision will be secured either by condition or, where necessary and relevant, by appropriate Section 106 Agreements or by way of voluntary or other agreements in partnership schemes.

POLICY TRN1: A BALANCED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

4.8 **THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL USE ITS PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POWERS, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO ENSURE THAT A BALANCED TRANSPORT STRATEGY IS IMPLEMENTED WHICH SEEKS TO RESTRICT THE GROWTH OF CAR USAGE AND TO MAKE ALTERNATIVES TO THE USE OF PRIVATE CARS SUCH AS PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLING AND WALKING ATTRACTIVE, PARTICULARLY IN CONGESTED CONDITIONS.**

Reason for the Policy

4.9 To help ensure that Reading develops a balanced transport strategy that will minimise congestion and enable people and goods to move around the town.

How it will be carried out

4.10 Through the other policies in this Plan, through the Council's powers as planning and highway authority and where necessary and relevant by means of appropriate Section 106 Agreements. The Berkshire Transport Policy and Programme and Reading Urban Area Package (summarised in Appendix 8) include a variety of proposals designed to help achieve a balanced transport strategy. The Council will continue to work with the relevant bodies, to ensure that these proposals are put into practice. The Council will seek developer contributions towards the implementation of these proposals.

APPENDIX 4

COMMITTEE REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 26

WARD: Redlands

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 9th March 2004

Application number: 04/01530/FUL & 04/01532/CON

Address: 91 Christchurch Road and 72a Redlands Road, Reading

Proposal: Extension to existing buildings to form five new 2 bedroom flats. (Amended to 4no.2 beds and 1no.1 bed flats).

Applicant: Tony Chima

Date received: 24th December 2004

Minor 8 week application target date: 18th February 2005

RECOMMENDATION

04/01530/FUL REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development by virtue of its scale, massing, and number of units proposed constitutes an over development of the site, which is visually intrusive and detrimental to the appearance of the street and the character of this conservation area. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
2. The proposed development provides inadequate amenity space for the number of units proposed, which would be detrimental to the amenities of existing and future residents and would add to the perception of the over development of the site. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), adopted supplementary planning guidance on "Space around dwellings" and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
3. The proposed development by virtue of its size and siting will lead to a reduction in the amenity of neighbouring residents, who will feel encroached by the structure. The proposal also locates a bin store and cycle store adjacent to a neighbouring property to the detriment of the amenities of residents at that property. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG9 (Location of residential development) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards transport, education and leisure the proposal is contrary to Policies KEY3 (The Role of Development in Improving the town), TRN 1 (Balanced Transport Strategy) & LEI3 (The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

Informative
In reaching the above decision the Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (Housing) and recently published Planning Policy Statement 1. The most relevant Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 policies are HSG5 (residential design standards), HSG8 (House extensions), HSG9 Location of residential development), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of design in development) and supplementary planning guidance on space around dwellings and house extensions and found to not comply.

04/001532/CON - REFUSE conservation area consent for the following reasons:
1. The proposed development for the site (04/01530/FUL) is not considered acceptable and therefore it would not be expedient to allow the proposed demolition to proceed without a scheme for the site first being approved in order to comply with policy CUD6 (demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

Informative
In reaching the above decision the Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 policy CUD6 (demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas) and CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and found to not comply.

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site is located at the signalised junction of Redlands Road, Shinfield Road and Elmhurst Road. The character of the area is mixed with shops on the south side of Christchurch Road, the University campus to the east and residential properties to the north and west. The existing buildings are sub-divided into 4 flats and there is some communal amenity space immediately to the front and rear of the property. There is a car parking area with 5 garages accessed from Redlands Road with no clear evidence of who uses it, although a number of cars are parked there most days.

The site measures 0.12 hectares and is mainly level. There are a few trees on site but none of any particular individual merit although together they contribute to the appearance of this area known as Christchurch Green. The site lies in the Redlands Road Conservation Area but the building, which has unusual decorative features and brickwork, is not listed.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

90/0726/OA	Extension and alterations to form 10 flats	Refused 20/9/90
91/0788/FD	Three storey rear extension to form 2no. two bedroom flats.	Granted 9/1/92
96/0900/FD	Renewal of 91/0788	Granted 16/1/97

3. PROPOSAL

The proposal is to erect a three storey extension to the rear of the building to create 5 2 bedroom apartments with 9 car parking spaces marked out at the rear (the garages to be demolished). Cycle parking is also proposed. The external treatment attempts to be in keeping with the style and details of the original houses.

Following the case officer's concerns about the design and scale of the original submission and environmental health officer's comments on internal room sizes amended plans were submitted. These amended the proposal to 4no 2 bed flats and 1no 1 bed flat and made some changes to the external appearance.

The conservation area application has been submitted to cover the small amount of demolition required (part of an existing ground floor extension and the garages) to enable the proposed extension to proceed.

4.CONSULTATIONS

Letters were sent to 85-91a & 72,72a 82 Christchurch Road; 64-70, 72 & 72a Redlands Road; 1,3,2,4 Marlborough Avenue; 1 Shinfield Road and all Marlborough House, Northcourt Avenue residents. A site notice was posted and press advert published.

12 letters were received objecting to the original submission and then a further 28 letters following the consultation on the amended scheme. Most letters refer to both applications. Councillor Kayes has also objected. The objections are based on the following:

- Design of the buildings is unacceptable in this conservation area and dominates the design of the original house
- The dilapidated appearance of the site is no excuse for allowing a poor new development
- Dominate the street scene at this prominent corner
- Too many flats
- Effect upon / loss of trees
- Inadequate car parking provision/traffic problems
- Loss of amenity to adjacent residents from over looking and the location of the bin store and cycle shed.

The Planning Section's Tree Advisor has commented that the removal of the 2 horse chestnuts and maple is acceptable, however the Lime on the boundary to 70 Redlands Road should be retained.
Building Control had no objections and environmental health had no objections subject to some of the room sizes being increased and the bin store being relocated.
The Council's Consultant Conservation officer commented that the proposal attempts to present an interesting elevation to the boundary, which faces the street.

5. TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

This proposed development is very close to local facilities and public transport access as well as being within walking distance of the University and RBH etc.
The proposed plan shows the 9 total dwellings being provided with 9 car parking spaces, which is adequate given its location. The plan also shows a cycle store but there is some concern that this may not be big enough to accommodate the 9 cycles that would be required (not 4 as shown on the application form). It may be that a small extension to the west would allow sufficient space for 4 Sheffield stands and a wall bracket, and the bin store could be relocated. This could mean that the bike store could be a small separate building from the car port and would allow retention of the mature tree where the proposed bin store is shown.
Access to the site and turning space within the car park are adequate and the removal of the access to Christchurch Road is also a positive benefit although it doesn't appear to have been used for vehicles recently.
The applicant should be asked to review how the required level of cycle parking is to be provided before the application is considered.

RUAP contributions

The proposed development will contribute to the need for additional transport facilities. The existing Borough transport systems are unable to cope with peak demands and the Borough Local Transport Plan sets out a programme of transport measures (the Reading Urban Area Package - RUAP) to provide the necessary additional capacity to cope with growth in demand due to development and to economic growth. Accordingly this development should contribute to the costs incurred in implementing the RUAP.

6. ACCESS IMPLICATIONS

The proposed ground floor flats could be designed to be capable of being used by those in wheelchairs or with other disabilities.

7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

PPG3 requires Local Authorities to encourage developers to make efficient use of sites in urban areas for housing by achieving densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare and at least 50 per hectare in particularly well served areas. The site is in an established residential area within a short walk of bus routes and local shops on Christchurch Road and services on Northcourt Avenue so an increase in density would be sustainable.

8. APPRAISAL

These applications have been considered in the context of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (Housing) and recently published Planning Policy Statement 1. The most relevant Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 policies are HSG5 (residential design standards), HSG8 (House extensions), HSG9 Location of residential development), CUD6 (demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas), CUD7

(new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of design in development) and supplementary planning guidance on space around dwellings and house extensions.

The main issues to be examined in considering this application are:
(a) The principle of increasing the number of dwellings on the site,
(b) The design and impact of the proposal on the original buildings and the character of the conservation area
(c) The impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties
(d) Infrastructure

(a) PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT
The principle of using part of the site for additional residential use has been established by the previous planning permission for two additional flats and this is still in accordance with current national and local plan policy. Some trees may be required to be felled to enable this to happen but again this was accepted in principle before and the tree advisors comments above do not change that opinion.

The site is in a sustainable location within a short walk of bus routes and local amenities and therefore its use for some additional development is considered acceptable in principle.

(b) THE DESIGN AND IMPACT ON CHARACTER
The original pair of houses have a very distinctive appearance with unusual but attractive design details. They occupy a prominent corner site so the rear elevations to Christchurch Green is as decorated as the frontage on to Christchurch Road. There is a brick boundary wall but this does not obscure views of the site from most aspects.

The planning application has attempted to replicate the design features of the original buildings and to create an attractive frontage to Christchurch Green and this is acknowledged in the comments on the design from the consultant conservation advisor. However, adopted planning guidance on house extensions requires that these should adhere to the general principle of keeping extensions to houses subservient to the original house. The proposed addition fails to achieve this as it is too high and occupies too much of the site. It therefore competes with the original house and over-dominates the site, which is detrimental to the positive contribution that this site makes to the open character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. This perception is borne out by the many letters of objection from local residents concerned about the impact on the conservation area.

PPG15 requires that planning decisions for development in conservation areas must give high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. PPG3 supports the efficient use of urban land in order to promote regeneration and to minimise the amount of greenfield land being taken

up for development but supports the rejection of proposals with poor design where this is backed up by adopted local plan policies and guidance. PPS1 places a strong emphasis on the need to promote good design. "Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development".

The number of properties proposed on the site should be served by 225 square metres of private amenity space to comply with adopted guidance on space around dwellings. The actual area of amenity space not adjacent to the busy junction is nearer to 160 square metres equating to just under 18 square metres per dwelling. No justification has been provided for the level of amenity space proposed, which is considered inadequate and serves as an indication that this proposal for 5 flats is an overdevelopment of the site.

Local plan policies CUD 7 and CUD 14 respectively support the need for good design to protect the character of conservation areas and for new development generally to be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding area. By seeking to develop the site for 5 flats the proposal overwhelms the site and the original buildings and fails to comply with these policies.

CUD6 discourages the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas unless detailed plans for redevelopment are approved and a contract for carrying out works has been entered into to ensure that appearance of the conservation area is not harmed. In this case the demolition of the garages would normally be acceptable but they provide a screen for adjacent properties and their removal should be refused permission until it is agreed what should go in their place.

The application includes many references to the benefits to the appearance of the conservation area of getting the site tidied up through allowing this development. The site is not maintained by the owner and undoubtedly is a cause for concern for neighbours. However, this argument is not an acceptable justification for allowing inappropriate development anywhere and is rejected.

(c) THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

The adjoining properties are 89 Christchurch Road and 70 Redlands Road. The relative siting of these properties to the application site are such that I do not consider that loss of privacy would arise or that the setting of no.89, a listed building, will be harmed. The east flank elevation of no. 89 would be about 10 metres distant from the proposed new building, which has bedroom windows in the nearest elevation so only oblique views might be possible over a distance of almost 15 metres. The nearest windows to the gardens of both properties serve the staircase so could be obscured glazed and fixed shut.

However, the bulk of the proposed new development will obscure the easterly aspect from the two adjacent properties to an extent that is considered to be unreasonable and contrary to policy HSG9 (Location of residential development).

Finally the amended site plan still shows the bin store and cycle store abutting the boundary to no.70 where they could lead to unacceptable disturbance for residents at that property from noise and smells. This siting also requires the felling of a tree identified as being worthy of retention for its contribution to the appearance of the site and its screening value. This is considered detrimental to the amenities of neighbours and contrary to policy HSG9 Location of residential development).

(d) INFRASTRUCTURE

The applicant has agreed to the request for infrastructure contributions but a formal agreement has not been entered into. Consequently, if Members decide to refuse this application the failure to make an acceptable contribution towards transportation, education, leisure or affordable housing provision would make the application contrary to policies KEY3 (The Role of Development in Improving the town), TRN 1 (Balanced Transport Strategy) and LE13 (The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

9. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposal for 5 flats is unacceptable for this site. The Council's adopted guidance on house extensions is that these should be subservient to the main building in terms of height and mass. The proposed building would be too high and out of balance with the main house and there is insufficient amenity space to serve the number of dwellings existing and proposed.

The details have tried to replicate those used on the main building but this, along with the size of the proposed building adds to the way the proposed extension competes with the character of the original house.

The site is in a prominent location in a conservation area within which adopted policy requires that new development does not cause harm to the character or appearance of the area. The proposed development is judged to fail this requirement.

Without an approved redevelopment scheme for the site it would be inappropriate to proceed with any demolition on the site.

Finally, although the applicant has agreed to the Council's request for contributions towards relevant infrastructure provision a formal agreement has not been reached so this is also included as a reason for refusing the application.

PLANS

Drawings: 1802/7 Existing ground floor
1802/8 Existing first floor
1802/9 Existing second floor
1802/10 Existing elevations

1802/11A Location & Block plan
1802/12B Proposed site plan/ground floor plan
1802/13A Proposed first floor plan
1802/14A Proposed second floor plan
1802/15A Proposed elevations east/north
1802/16A proposed elevations west

Case officer: Julie Williams

APPENDIX 5

AMA/SGS/1802

22nd December 2004

DESIGN STATEMENT

72 REDLANDS ROAD & 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING

INTRODUCTION

The site lies at the junction of Redlands Road and Christchurch Road adjacent to the university area in the south-eastern part of Reading. It has been in my Client's ownership for several years, the existing building which is a pair of semi-detached being used as self-contained flats.

The building is of Victorian vintage and is on the edge of the Christchurch/Redlands Road conservation area, probably built in the 1890's.

The aim of the application is to remove the untidy parking, garaging and hard standing to the Redlands Road frontage and construct an extension to the building to house an additional 5 flats and to rationalise and tidy up the car parking and immediate landscaping/amenity space.

SITE & ITS SURROUNDINGS

The site is a prominent corner location at the highway junction of Redlands, Elmshurst, Shinfield, Northcourt Avenue and Christchurch Roads. It was built by the Victorians with decorative brickwork, clearly to be viewed from the Christchurch Green location. Its Redlands Road elevations and aspect to the site are poor and neglected having probably originally been the enclosed rear gardens of these two semi-detached houses.

The building has an attractive polychromatic brickwork elevations with vertical sliding sash windows and a slate roof with decorative patterned slates, making it an attractive corner building within the location of the university district.

Adjoining the remainder of the boundary wall to the Redlands Road frontage is some old railings to the Christchurch Road frontage. Hedging forms the boundaries between the site and the neighbouring properties, which also have wooden fencing.

There is one or two rather neglected and poor specimen trees on the site, several of which we are proposing to remove and replant as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The proposal is to extend the building along the Redlands Road frontage, at the same time removing the poor quality single storey extensions at the rear of the property. Rationalising the entrance to the side of the building, access directly off the footpath to Redlands Road and re-using the vehicular access off Redlands Road to form a formalised car park with a partially enclosed car port giving shelter and privacy to both the site and its neighbours. At the same time we intend closing off the vehicular access to the Christchurch Road and continuing the railings to this road frontage.

The extension proposed is a 2-storey with part 3rd storey in the roof using similar decorative brickwork and clearly indicating the link between the new and the old with this glazed entranceway.

This will complete the corner aspect of the building's location visually continuing it around from the Christchurch Green/Christchurch Road frontage to the Redlands Road frontage at the same time forming a private and secure garden space at the rear of the property to be shared by all the residents.

As part of the design proposal there is a small rationalisation of the internal layout of two of the existing ground floor flats.

The aim of the external design is to produce a sympathetic extension to this building and at the same time complementing any part of this corner of the conservation area which at present is not a 'pretty sight'.

APPEAL DECISION Report

BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & SPORT
READING THE BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 11th October 2006

Ward:	Redlands
App No.:	04/01530/FUL
Site:	72a Redlands Road & 91 Christchurch Rd
Development:	Extension of existing building to form 5 new flats and car parking
Method:	Informal Hearing
Decision:	Dismissed
HPT Recommendation:	Refuse
Delegated/Committee:	Committee

REASONS FOR REFUSAL:

- The proposed development by virtue of its scale, massing, and number of units proposed constitutes an over development of the site, which is visually intrusive and detrimental to the appearance of the street and the character of this conservation area. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
- The proposed development provides inadequate amenity space for the number of units proposed, which would be detrimental to the amenities of existing and future residents and would add to the perception of the over development of the site. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), adopted supplementary planning guidance on "Space around dwellings" and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
- The proposed development by virtue of its size and siting will lead to a reduction in the amenity of neighbouring residents, who will feel encroached by the structure. The proposal also locates a bin store and cycle store adjacent to a neighbouring property to the detriment of the amenities of residents at that property. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG9 (Location of residential development) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
- In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards transport, education and leisure the proposal is contrary to Policies KEY3 (The Role of Development in Improving the town), TRN 1 (Balanced Transport Strategy) & LEI3 (The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE INSPECTOR:

1. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal building and surrounding area;
2. whether adequate living conditions could be provided especially open amenity space; and
3. the effect of the proposed development on neighbours

INSPECTOR'S FINDINGS:
The Inspector described the appeal site as being a substantial and attractive property with a significant area to the rear with a number of attractive trees providing a spacious and verdant setting for the appeal property. He found that the extension in to this space would result in the loss of the trees with little scope remaining for replanting. The loss of the space and tree cover would detract from the setting of the building. The proposed development would be out of keeping with the immediate surroundings of the conservation area within which many of the larger buildings are in large well landscaped grounds.

The Inspector noted that the loss of trees on the site had not been referred to in the reasons for refusal but he noted that many residents had objected to their loss and he strongly shared their view.

The Inspector considered the substantial length of the proposed extension to be insufficiently subordinate to, and out of proportion with, the existing house. It would detract from the imposing eastern elevation of the house. Attempts to reduce the scale of the extension with details results in devices out of keeping with the design of the main building and an unduly complicated roof design.

Therefore on the first issue the Inspector concluded that the proposed development would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area contrary to local policies and Government guidance that new development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

On the second issue the Inspector noted that the site was close to an area of public open space (it was not clear in the report if this referred to Cintra Park) and that the Council's guidance allowed for some discretion to be used. He therefore concluded that the deficiencies in amenity space would not conflict with the broad objectives of the development plan.

On the third issue the inspector concluded that the orientation of the proposed development to existing houses would not lead to an unacceptably overbearing effect. Conditions could be used to secure improved siting and details for the cycle and bin stores and there was no clear case that existing residents would be unreasonably disturbed by noise, smells or visual impact arising from the proposed development.

Nevertheless, in conclusion, the Inspector found that his concerns identified on the first issue outweighed his findings on the other two.

HPT COMMENTS ON THE DECISION:
A welcome decision upholding the decision and the policies of the Council with regards to design and the setting of new buildings in Conservation Areas. It also usefully acknowledges the views expressed by members of the public regarding the loss of trees on site either in written objections or as expressed at the hearing.

Case Officer: Julie Williams

Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 19 July 2006
Site visit made on 19 July 2006.

by R J Marshall LLB Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN
☎ 0117 372 6372
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date
22 AUG 2006

Appeal Ref: APP/ E0345/A/05/1179681
72A, Redlands Road and 91, Christchurch Road, Reading, RG1 5HU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Tony Chima against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
- The application Ref 04/01530/FUL/JW, dated 23 December 2004, was refused by notice dated 11 March 2005.
- The development proposed is extension of existing building to form 5 new flats.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

1. It was agreed that the application plans are those listed as Plan A at the end of this decision. Superseded Plans are listed as Plan B.

2. The Council's initial concerns about the lack of a financial contribution towards educational, leisure and transport facilities have been overcome by the appellant's provision of a Unilateral Undertaking. These matters are therefore no longer before me.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:

   first, the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area;

   second, whether adequate living conditions would be provided for occupants of the proposed development with special regard to open amenity space; and

   third, the effect of the proposed development on neighbouring occupiers with special reference to visual impact, noise and disturbance, and smell.

Planning Policy

4. The development for the area includes the Berkshire Structure Plan 2000-2016 (2005) and the Reading Borough Local Plan 1991-2006 (1998).

5. The Structure Plan seeks to promote sustainable alternative modes of travel to the private car (T4).

6. The Local Plan has a similar objective (TRN1). New development should be of a high standard of design and compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding environment (CUD14). In Conservation Areas new development should preserve or

enhance those areas (CUD7). In assessing new development regard will be had to the accessibility of sites, and impact on character and appearance and adjoining properties (HSG9). House extensions should complement the existing building in terms of design scale and proportion and protect neighbours' living conditions (HSG8). Where appropriate adequate provision should be made for play space and open space (HSG5).

7. The Council also has Supplementary Planning Guidance on Space Around Dwellings and House Extensions which expands upon some of the above Policies. The weight that may be attached to them has increased by the fact that they are cross-referenced to the development plan, have been adopted, and have been subjected to public consultation.

Reasons

First issue (character and appearance)

8. The appeal site lies in the Redlands Conservation Area. This is a busy area fairly close to the town centre and on the fringes of the University. The area is predominantly residential in character and contains a variety of Victorian style properties. Some of the area is fairly intensively developed with terraced and semi-detached houses close to the road, and a terrace of houses fronts Redlands Road to the north of the site. However, in an attractive contrast to this many of the larger properties throughout the area are set in mature well landscaped grounds. This is a feature in evidence in the vicinity of the appeal site which is at a prominent road junction. At this junction substantial roadside verges add to the feeling of spaciousness.

9. The appeal building is a substantial and attractive Victorian style property with a slightly rundown appearance. It fronts onto Christchurch Road and has a return frontage along Redlands Road. A significant area to the rear of the site abutting the latter road is open and undeveloped and contains a number of attractive trees. This area provides an attractively spacious and verdant setting for the appeal building.

10. The proposed extension to the rear of the appeal property and associated car parking area would extend substantially into this area. All of the major trees in this area would be lost and there would be limited room for any replacement planting. The loss of spaciousness around the appeal building and the loss of much of the existing tree cover would detract from its setting. It would cause the proposed development to be out of keeping with the immediate surroundings of the Conservation Area and to the wider area within which many of the larger properties are in large well landscaped grounds.

11. With regard to the loss of trees I accept that the Council has raised no objection subject to the retention of one of the trees shown to be removed. However, all that I saw has led me strongly to the view outlined above which is also held by many local residents. I accept that minor revisions to the proposed development could result in the retention of one major tree. However, that alone would not make the proposed development more acceptable.

12. I am also concerned that the substantial length of the proposed extension would result in a structure that would be insufficiently subordinate to, and out of proportion with, the existing house. As such it would detract from the imposing eastern elevation of the existing property The provision of a small glazed link between the 2 structures does not give a degree of separation that would be sufficient to overcome this. On more detailed design matters, attempts to reduce the scale of the proposed extension have resulted in the provision of a

semi-hipped gable facing the road which is out of keeping with the design of the main building. In addition, the roof design of the north elevation is unduly complicated and out of keeping with the character and appearance of the existing house. I accept that the proposed development would remove some unsightly structures at the rear of the appeal site and obscure the present rather unattractive rear elevation of the appeal building. However, such considerations do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

13. On the first issue, I conclude that the proposed development would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area. As such it would conflict with those policies of the development plan that seek to prevent such harm and with Government guidance that new development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

14. I have arrived at this view on the merits of the case before me. I accept that the Council has previously permitted smaller extensions to the appeal property and has no objection to the provision of some additional flats. However, neither this, nor Government guidance on making the best use of previously developed land in sustainable locations such as this, outweighs the harm that I have found.

Second issue (living conditions for future occupants)

15. The appellant accepts that the proposed development would provide 18 square metres of usable amenity space compared to the 25 square metres sought in the Council's SPG. However, the Council's guidance is written in a way that enables some discretion to be used. In this case a substantial public open space would not be too far from the proposed development. Given this I do not consider that the limited shortfall in open space provision would result in unacceptably unsatisfactory living conditions.

16. On the second issue, I conclude that the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants of the proposed development with particular regard to amenity open space provision. As such, although not fully according with the Council's SPG if would not conflict with the broad objectives of the development plan.

Third issue (living conditions of neighbours)

17. Given the orientation of neighbouring properties and their windows to the appeal site the proposed extension would not have an unacceptably overbearing effect when seen from neighbouring properties.

18. A separate cycle shed/bin store that is proposed would be likely to appear overbearing when seen from No.70 Redlands Road. However, a revised siting for this structure, that could have been sought by an amending condition had I been minded to allow the appeal, would have resolved this. This would also have resolved the, albeit in my view unfounded, local concerns on the effect of the structure on the occupants of No. 70 with regard to noise, disturbance and smell.

19. On the third issue, I conclude that the proposed development need not detract from the living conditions of neighbours with special regard to visual impact, noise and disturbance and smell. As such, it would not conflict with those policies of the development plan that seek to prevent such harm.

Other matters

20. Given Government guidance seeking to limit the provision of on-site car parking, and the lack of any professional highway evidence that the proposed development would make inadequate provision for car parking, I do not consider that the local concerns on this matter should stand against the proposed development. Nor, in the absence of professional evidence to the contrary do I consider that the proposed access point would be unacceptably hazardous. However, such considerations do not outweigh the other harm I have found

Conclusions

21. Drawing together my conclusions on the main issues I consider that the harm identified on the first issue outweighs the lack of harm on the second and third issues.

22. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the fact that there would be no harm to the setting of 2 adjoining listed buildings in Christchurch Road and that an existing unsatisfactory access on that road would be closed, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Formal Decision

23. I dismiss the appeal.

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr Strang BSc (Hons) MRTPI	Of Christopher Strang Associates
Mr Tony Chima	Appellant

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Miss Julie Williams BSc MRTPI	South West Area Planning Manager

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Mr P Toye	66, Elmhurst Road, Reading, RG1 5HY
Cllr P Kayes	16, College Road, Reading, RG6 1QB
Mr Sowan	24, New Road, Reading

DOCUMENTS

Document	1	Letter of notification of hearing and those notified.
Document	2	Extract from listed building register.
Document	3	Committee report on proposed Conservation Area.
Document	4	Copy of Policy T4.
Document	5	Council's notes on new Structure Plan and other matters.

PLANS

Plan A The application plans being:
- 1802/7-10 inclusive
- 1802/11A
- 1802/12B
- 1802/13A-16A inclusive

Plan B Superseded plans being:
- 1802/11
- 1802/13-16 inclusive

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78

Appeal by Mr Tony Chima

Department of Environment, Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Reference: APP/E0345/A/05/1179681

Reading Borough Council Reference: 04/01530/FUL

UPDATE TO COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

Site at 72 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5HU

July 2006

Julie Williams for the
Head of Planning & Transport Strategy
Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Reading
RG1 7TD

The purpose of this update statement is to clarify the current policy background and to provide a response from the Council to the appellant's submitted amended site layout drawing (1802/12C).

1. Current Policy Status

1.1 Section 3 of the Council's original statement refers to policies in the then current Berkshire Structure Plan, adopted in 1995. Para.3.2 explains that the Structure plan was in the process of being reviewed. The reviewed Berkshire Structure Plan was adopted on 15th July 2005 with the period for formal challenge finishing on 23rd September 2005. The policies referred to (DP4 & T4) remained unchanged.

2. Response to Amended Plan

2.1 The amended plan sought to resolve part of reason for refusal 3, which raised concerns for the amenities of neighbours, in particular with regards to the siting of the cycle store and bin store on the boundary with 70 Redlands Road. This siting also could compromise the long term retention of the lime tree, which ideally we would like to see retained.

2.2 The amended plan shows the car port roof redesigned to shorten and hip the roof to give clearance to the tree canopy and relocates the bin store to adjacent to parking bay 4. The cycle store is reduced slightly in size but remains adjacent to the boundary wall.

2.2 Bin store

2.2.1 Our current advice is that new flatted developments should be provided with a 1100 litre bin per 6 units so space is required for 2 bins on the site. The dimensions of the bins are as follows:

Height	Width	Depth
1370mm (closed lid)	990mm	1260mm

These containers cannot negotiate steps and access paths should be at least 1.5m in width with a gradient not exceeding 1 in 10. A suitably screened, ventilated and maintainable area should be provided for storage.

2.2.2 In addition, bin storage areas for flats should ensure that they have double doors with a clear opening of at least 1500mm and a facility to hold doors open during collection. Bump strips should also be provided to prevent damage to doors from loaded bins. A further 150mm buffer is required between the bin and the wall, and other bins. This is to allow users access to the bins, as well as enabling the collectors to empty the bins with ease.

2.2.3 Refuse collection vehicles must be able to stop within 25 metres of the bin storage area of flats. The vehicle should not be expected to reverse over a distance in excess of 12m and the maximum distance a resident should carry bagged rubbish to the store is 30m measured horizontally.

2.2.4 The amended drawing shows 3 bins relocated adjacent to the proposed new flats, which is preferable to the original location, and in an area where most of the requirements could be met, subject to approval of details. However, not all of the residents would be within 30 metres of the store. This would suggest that an alternative location should be found for the second bin to serve the flats fronting Christchurch Road.

2.3 Cycle Store

2.3.1 Firstly, the proposed cycle store is not large enough to accommodate 9 bicycles and 'Sheffield' type stands.

2.3.2 Secondly the proposed cycle store is too remote from the entrances to the majority of the flats and potentially at risk of break-in as there is little natural surveillance from the new flats. These factors will limit their use by residents. It would be more appropriate for cycles to be stored in individual secured units within close proximity to each of the entrances and may include facilities within the units themselves. However, this may have implications for the external appearance of the site and the internal layout design of the flats so is not something that we can agree to without seeing alternative options first.

3. Conclusion

3.1 It was hoped that the Council and the appellants could agree that drawing 1802/12C overcame some of the Council's concerns and that it should therefore supersede drawing 1802/12B for the purpose of the hearing. However in view of the above comments this does not appear possible. If the Inspector is minded to allow the appeal a further condition or an amendment to suggested condition 4 is requested requiring details of amended locations and specifications for the bin stores and cycle store to be approved before the development is implemented.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78

Appeal by Mr Tony Chima

Department of Environment, Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Reference: APP/E0345/A/05/1179681

Reading Borough Council Reference: 04/01530/FUL

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Site at 72 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5HU

July 2005

Julie Williams for the
Head of Planning & Transport Strategy
Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Reading
RG1 7TD

1. Introduction

1.1 The application site is located at the signalised junction of Redlands Road, Shinfield Road and Elmhurst Road. The character of the area is mixed with shops on the south side of Christchurch Road, the University campus to the east and residential properties to the north and west. The existing buildings are sub-divided into 4 flats and there is some communal amenity space immediately to the front and rear of the property. There is a car parking area with 5 garages accessed from Redlands Road with no clear evidence of who uses it, although a number of cars are parked there most days.

1.2 The site measures 0.12 hectares and is mainly level. There are a few trees on the outside boundary of the site, which although not of any particular individual merit when seen together contribute to the appearance of this area known as Christchurch Green. There is also a lime tree on the boundary to 70 Redlands Road which has been identified as being worthy of retention and which provides a significant screen for residents at that property. The site lies in the Redlands Road Conservation Area but the buildings, which have unusual decorative features and brickwork, are not listed.

1.3 The appeal proposal (as amended) is for the erection of a three storey extension to the rear of the original buildings to create 4no 2 bed flats and 1no 1 bed flat with 9 car parking spaces marked out at the rear in place of the existing garages (to be demolished). Cycle parking is also proposed.

1.4 It has been noticed that the decision notice was not updated to reflect the amendment to 4no 2 bed flats and 1no 1 bed flat and we apologise for any confusion caused by this oversight. For clarity, the relevant drawings are:

1802/11A Location & Block plan
1802/12B Proposed site plan/ground floor plan
1802/13A Proposed first floor plan
1802/14A Proposed second floor plan
1802/15A Proposed elevations east/north
1802/16A proposed elevations west

1.5 The appellant had originally requested that the appeal be determined by written representation. However, in view of the considerable public interest in the proposal (copies of objection letters have already been sent to the Inspectorate) the local ward Councillor asked if it could be considered by a hearing instead. The Inspectorate accordingly has agreed to our request that an informal hearing should be held in this case, to allow interested parties to hear and contribute to the discussion.

2. Relevant Site History

90/0726/OA	Extension and alterations to form 10 flats	Refused 20/9/90
91/0788/FD	Three storey rear extension to form 2no. two bedroom flats.	Granted 9/1/92

96/0900/FD	Renewal of 91/0788	Granted 16/1/97
05/01532/CON	Conservation area consent to demolish garages etc	Granted 11th March 2005

3. Policy Background

3.1 The policy background to this appeal is contained in the Berkshire Structure Plan and in the Reading Borough Local Plan. The Berkshire Structure Plan was adopted in November 1995. The policies relevant to this appeal are:

LD6: Provision of Infrastructure, Services and Amenities

3.2 The Structure Plan is currently being reviewed by the 6 Berkshire Unitary Authorities and an initial deposit draft was published in March 2002. A second deposit draft was published at the end of March 2003. An EIP has taken place in September 2003 and as a result of the EIP a Deposit Draft incorporating proposed modifications was published in March 2004. The Structure Plan is now awaiting adoption and as such is relevant and has considerable weight in this appeal. The relevant policies from the review of the Structure Plan are as follows:

DP4: Provision of Infrastructure, Services and Amenities
T4: Travel Impacts

3.3 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 14th October 1998. The policies relevant to this appeal are:

KEY3: The Role of Development in Improving the Town
HSG5: Residential Design Standards
HSG8: House Extensions
HSG9: Location of Residential Development
TRN1: A Balanced Transport Strategy
CUD7: New development in conservation areas
CUD14: Standards of Design in Development
LEI3: The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities

3.4 The Reading Borough Local Plan was reviewed during 2003. An Issues Paper and Draft Spatial Strategy were published in February 2003 and a community engagement exercise was carried out during February, March and April 2003. The results of that exercise were published in 2004 and we are currently holding public consultation meetings.

3.5 Also relevant to this appeal are three Supplementary Planning Guidance notes. The first is *Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990,* which was adopted by the Council on 12th July 2004, after consultation carried out, as stated in paragraph 1.5 of that

document. The document was subsequently amended in September 2004 to remove a paragraph relating to affordable housing (a copy is included with this statement). The second, *Guidance on Space around Dwellings* was consulted on as part of the currently adopted Local Plan process but, on the advise of the Local Plan Inspector, made into separate supplementary planning guidance. The third, *A Design Guide to House Extensions*, was adopted in March 2003 following consultation held in 2002 (a copy is included with this statement. Copies of other relevant policies have already been sent to the Inspectorate.

3.6 The following government guidance documents are also relevant to this appeal:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Communities, 2005.
PPG3: Housing, 2000
PPG15: Planning and the historic environment
Circular No. 5/2005: Planning Obligations

4. The Council's Case

4.1 The appeal proposal was refused for the following reasons:

- The proposed development by virtue of its scale, massing, and number of units proposed constitutes an over development of the site, which is visually intrusive and detrimental to the appearance of the street and the character of this conservation area. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
- The proposed development provides inadequate amenity space for the number of units proposed, which would be detrimental to the amenities of existing and future residents and would add to the perception of the over development of the site. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), adopted supplementary planning guidance on "Space around dwellings" and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

- The proposed development by virtue of its size and siting will lead to a reduction in the amenity of neighbouring residents, who will feel encroached by the structure. The proposal also locates a bin store and cycle store adjacent to a neighbouring property to the detriment of the amenities of residents at that property. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG9 (Location of residential development) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

- In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards transport, education and leisure the proposal is contrary to Policies KEY3 (The Role of Development in Improving the town), TRN 1 (Balanced Transport Strategy) & LEI3 (The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

4.2 The appealed application was considered in the context of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (Housing) and the recently published Planning Policy Statement 1. The most relevant Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 policies are HSG5 (residential design standards), HSG8 (House extensions), HSG9 Location of residential development), CUD6 (demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of design in development) and supplementary planning guidance on space around dwellings, house extensions and planning obligations.

4.3 The main issues were considered to be:
(a) The principle of increasing the number of dwellings on the site,
(b) The design and impact of the proposal on the original buildings and the character of the conservation area
(c) The impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties
(d) Infrastructure

4.4 (a) Principle of development
The principle of using part of the site for some additional residential use has been accepted by the Council when it approved the previous planning permission for two additional flats. The site is in an urban location within a short walk of bus routes and local amenities and therefore its use for some additional residential development complies with PPG3 guidance. PPG3 supports the efficient use of urban land in order to promote regeneration and to minimise the amount of greenfield land being taken up for development but endorses the rejection of proposals with poor design where this is backed up by adopted local plan policies and guidance. PPS1 underlines the growing concern that the efficient use of land promoted by PPG3 should not be at the expense of jeopardising good design. "Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development".

4.5 (b) The design and impact of the proposal on the original buildings and the character of the conservation area
The importance of design as an issue when assessing this appeal proposal is given weight by the status of the locality as a conservation area. PPG15 requires that planning decisions for development in conservation areas must give high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

4.6 Basic principles require that extensions to properties should be designed to be subservient to the original or host building so as not to over dominate the original building or over-develop the site. The proposed extension by virtue of its height and massing, is considered too big for the site and therefore fails to comply with criteria in policy HSG5 (Residential design standards) and HSG8 (House extensions) and adopted supplementary guidance on house extensions.

4.7 The number of properties proposed on the site should be served by 225 square metres of private amenity space to comply with adopted guidance on space around dwellings. The actual area of usable amenity space is nearer to 160 square metres equating to just under 18 square metres per dwelling. The discrepancy serves as a further indication that this proposal for 5 flats is an overdevelopment of the site.

4.8 Policies CUD 7 and CUD 14 respectively support the need for good design to protect the character of conservation areas and for new development generally to be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding area. By seeking to accommodate 5 flats on the site the design overwhelms the site and the original buildings and fails to comply with these policies.

4.9 The impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties
It was accepted in the assessment of the application that the relative siting of the application site to adjacent properties 89 Christchurch Road and 70 Redlands Road would be such that a loss of privacy would not arise or that the setting of no.89, a listed building, would not be harmed.

4.10 However, the bulk of the proposed new development will obscure the easterly aspect from the two adjacent properties to such an extent that it is considered to be unreasonable and contrary to policy HSG9 (Location of residential development).

4.11 Finally the amended site plan shows the bin store and cycle store abutting the boundary to no.70 where they could lead to unacceptable disturbance for residents at that property from noise and smells. This also requires the felling of the lime tree identified as being worthy of retention for its contribution to the appearance of the site and its screening value. This is considered detrimental to the amenities of neighbours and contrary to policy HSG9 (Location of residential development).

4.12 (d) infrastructure
RUAP Contribution
The local transport network is in need of substantial improvement to cater for extra movements brought about by new development. The Reading Borough Council Local Transport Plan sets out a wide range of proposed improvements for the period up to 2006. A new Transport Strategy is currently being evolved, that will be translated into a new Local Transport Plan over the next twelve months. In order to assist the funding of transport improvements, the Council seeks contributions from all development towards transport improvements under the Reading Urban Area Package (RUAP).

4.13 The required contributions are set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on *Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. The requires that £2,000 per additional 1/2 bedroom flat is paid to off set the impact of the development, and this should be secured by a legal agreement or unilateral undertaking under section 106. In the absence of such an agreement to make such a payment, the appeal proposal fails to make provision to deal with its transport impacts and

therefore fails to meet the requirements of Policies LD5 and LD6 of the Berkshire Structure plan 1991-2006 and Policy Key 3 and TRN11B of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

4.14 Education Contribution

Policy KEY 3 of the Local Plan requires that development proposals *make an appropriate contribution to necessary and relevant physical and social infrastructure*. This supports Policies LD6 of the current structure plan, and DP4 of the emerging structure plan, which states that Local Planning Authorities can seek contributions to provide additional infrastructure where that is made necessary by the development.

4.15 The Appeal site is in the Central and East area of the Borough, which is facing the following challenges at primary and secondary levels:

Primary

4.15.1 Parental preference means that pressure is continuing to be applied to popular, over-subscribed schools. This puts pressure not only on the popular schools, but also the schools required to accept the over-spill pupils. This area is also close to the University, and as such schools in this area are subject to sudden influxes of pupils. The area is also under pressure from an increasing number of housing developments.

4.15.2 A significant number of the classrooms in the Central and East Reading area are not large enough to accommodate standard classes. Adding even one extra pupil into rooms that are already too small to accommodate a class will make a substantial difference. Many school buildings also have serious accessibility problems that need to be addressed.

4.15.3 The majority of schools in this area are very old stock and require refurbishment and continual maintenance in order to maintain their capacity and to meet the demands of modern teaching.

Secondary

4.15.4 At the secondary phase Maiden Erleigh and Bulmershe Schools are both popular schools located out of the Borough. In instances where children from Reading addresses cannot be offered places, as has increasingly been the case, the responsibility falls to Reading LEA to provide secondary education. In addition, many pupils from outside the Borough attend the two Grammar Schools in this area, which are maintained by Reading Borough Council.

4.15.5 A substantial number of the classrooms are temporary, and the existing infrastructure needs internal restructuring in order to meet modern teaching requirements. A significant number of the classrooms are not suitable to accommodate standard classes. A significant amount of general infrastructure is also in need of attention. Popular schools in this area are operating at capacity and pupils unable to be admitted put pressure on other Schools in Reading.

4.16 There is pressure on educational resources in this area and we believe that the developers should contribute towards providing space for pupils who will come into the area as a result of new housing development. The level of contribution is calculated using the following formula; Net increase in family dwellings x pupil yield factor x DfES cost multiplier x regional allowance. Based on figures derived from the Study of the Pupil Product of New Housing in Berkshire, 2001, the pupil yield is: **0.17** (primary schools) and **0.07** (secondary schools), while the DfES cost multiplier is **£5,635** (primary) and **£7,514** (secondary). The regional allowance is **1.10**.

Primary School = 4 x 0.17 x 5635 x 1.1	= £4,215
Secondary School = 4 x 0.07 x 7514 x 1.1	= £2,314
	= £6,529

4.17 In the absence of a legal agreement or unilateral undertaking to secure these contributions the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy LD6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006, Policy DP4 of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan 2001-2016, and Policy KEY3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

4.18 Leisure Contribution

In accordance with Policy LEI3 of the Local Plan financial contributions were also sought to off set the impact of the development on Leisure facilities within the Borough. The rationale for the specific contributions sought is set out in section 4 of the SPG on planning obligations. As such a contribution of £1,500 per additional dwelling has been sought. A number of projects to improve leisure facilities in the east of the Borough are currently ongoing. Given its close proximity it is likely that any contributions made in respect of this proposal would go towards essential improvement works being carried out at Cintra Park.

4.19 In the absence of a legal agreement or unilateral undertaking to secure these contributions the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy LD6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006, Policy DP4 of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan 2001-2016, and Policies KEY3 and LEI3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

5. Response to Grounds of Appeal

5.1 There is a discrepancy in paragraph 1 in that it refers to the appeal proposal being for 5no 2 bedroom flats. In fact the scheme was amended (see letter attached as appendix 1 dated 26th January 2005 from Andrews Harris Kalik) to 4no 2 bed flats and 1no. 1 bed flat. As explained in para.1.4 above this could be as a consequence of the oversight in the decision notice but it would be useful if the appellant could confirm that the amended scheme is the subject of this appeal.

5.2 The Council accepts the principle of some additional development on the site and agrees with Paragraphs 1 and 2 in the appellant's grounds of appeal. However, we are clearly at odds on paragraph 3 in that it is considered that

the design and scale of the appeal proposal fails to complement the original building and detracts from the character of the buildings and the area generally.

5.2 In response to paragraph 4 the principles of PPG3 do not condone the approval of schemes that fail to respect the character of the area. Paragraph 56, of PPG3 states that new housing development of whatever scale should not be viewed in isolation. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context having regard to not just neighbouring buildings but the townscape and landscape of the wider area. This is a prominent site at the boundary of a conservation area and thereby sets the context for this part of the conservation area. Any new development here needs to show much more consideration of this context. In this case the provision of sufficient amenity space is not only considered important in terms of the amenities of existing and future residents but also in terms of providing the substantial property with the setting that it deserves.

5.3 In respect of the points made in paragraph 5 we remain concerned about the proximity of the bin and cycle stores to adjacent properties. A scheme with fewer flats proposed could easily relocate these facilities to less sensitive locations within the site. We have not raised an issue with the principle of flats on this site.

5.4 Finally, further justification for the infrastructure contributions requested are set out above. The appellant confirmed (see appendix 1) by letter, via his agent, willingness to enter a legal agreement for the sums requested, which are in total £24,029. Therefore reason for refusal 4 would be overcome by the submission of an acceptable Unilateral Undertaking at or before the hearing.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The principle of some additional development at the appeal is site is accepted but the scale and design of the appeal proposal is not considered acceptable. This prominent location in this conservation area deserves a better scheme.

6.2 The Inspector is asked to consider our case and to agree on balance that the appeal should be dismissed. However, if the appeal is allowed, the Council requests that the conditions, attached as Appendix 2, should be imposed.

04/01530/FUL

AMA/JDF/1802

(reconsult neighbours.
modifications to east elevation
(facing Redlands Road).
Flat 5 reduced to 1 bedroom.
Roof and internal modifications
2 weeks.

25 January 2005

ANDREWS KALIK HARRIS
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS
THE STUDIO 101 LONDON ROAD READING RG1 5BY
TEL 0118 9507700 FAX 0118 9568642

The Planning Department
Reading Borough Council
PO Box 17
Civic Offices
Civic Centre
Reading RG1 7TD
fao Mrs J Williams

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
23 JAN 2005
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Dear Mrs Williams

72 REDLANDS ROAD & 91 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD READING

Thank you very much for your letter of 13 January, I appreciate your comments and we have endeavoured to address each point as you raised them.

We have modified the east elevation to simplify this a little and reduce the emphasis of the gable by the introduction of a small Dutch hip to the roof of this element, to reflect the same idea as that of the existing building facing Christchurch Road. I think this feature is a neat way of visually tying the two buildings together.

In order to overcome the matter of overlooking to the properties to the west, I have reduced flat 5 to 1 bedroom and omitted the bedroom facing the neighbouring garden. This has meant that we can reduce the roof on the rear of the elevation and simplify this element of the building.

Your concern about the cantilevered corner adjacent to flat 3 and car parking space no 4 – this we have modified to make a simple straight wall which again is reflected in the pattern of the roof.

The comments about the kitchen sizes we have addressed by rearranging the layout within flats 1 and 2, and increasing the footprint slightly.

I confirm that all the new windows to this extension will be a vertical sliding sash pattern with matching cills to reflect the style of the existing house.

In summary, I think the modifications you suggest improve the scheme. We have retained 5 units, but reduced the size of one of them and this has the benefit of giving a variety of sized dwellings on the site, suiting a greater number of occupants. I am

Directors (Operating): *David McKnight: Abdullah Naweed B.Sc.Arch M.Phil.B.S: Gary Humphreys BA(Hons) Dip Arch*
Directors: *Paul S. Mitchell BA Dip Arch RIBA: Michael J. E. Schorah BA Dip Arch RIBA,*
Consultants: *Matt Andrews RIBAFFB: Stojan Kalik Dip Arch RIBA:* **Building Surveyor:** *Keith Walker FRICS ACIArb*

Reg. Office: 2 St. Johns North, Wakefield. Andrews Kalik Harris Partnership Limited. Reg. No. 1645300

sure you are aware there is a great demand for small dwellings within this area, being so close to the University, hospital and other educational establishments. I think that this extension will contribute usefully to the housing stock within the area.

I confirm my Client is prepared to enter into a 106 Agreement for the Planning contributions you have outlined in your letter. The Client's Solicitor, Caporn Campbell, have been in touch with the Legal Department and I have forwarded copies of the ownership titles to start the legal process.

I confirm that the Legal Agreement will include a payment of £2,000 for transport, £1,500 for recreation, and £1,632 for education contribution for every 2 bedroom flat (4 in number), these figures are for each unit.

I enclose 4 copies of amended plans, drawing nos 1802/11A, 12B, 13A, 14A, 15A and 16A. Thank you very much for your help, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns that I can deal with at this stage.

My Client has spoken to the ground floor tenant and confirmed that she will not lose any habitable space, the small rooms at the rear of her unit that are being altered are currently used for no more than storage purposes, and as part of the scheme there will be refurbishment and improvements to the property generally throughout.

Yours sincerely
for Andrews Kalik Harris Partnership

A M Andrews

encl

cc Mr A Chima

Appendix 2 - Suggested conditions

Conditions set out below assume that off site transport works, and contributions towards education, leisure and the Reading Urban Area Package will be secured by means of a Unilateral Undertaking.

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date on which the permission was granted. Reason: to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, and in accordance with Section 91(1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The applicant is advised that all works to which this permission relates must be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed above and other relevant supporting material submitted as part of this application and hereby approved. The local planning authority must be immediately advised of any proposed variation from the approved documents and the prior approval in writing of the Council must be obtained before any such works are carried out on the site. . Reason: As the amended scheme has been approved as it was assessed to comply with the requirements of policies HSG5 (residential design standards) and CUD14 (Standards of design in development) in the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

3. No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: as no details of the materials have been submitted and in the interests of ensuring that the new development appears in keeping with the existing building in accordance with Policies HSG5, HSG9, CUD7 and CUD14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

4 No dwelling in the extension shall be occupied until the parking spaces, turning space, cycle parking and bin storage facilities have been constructed in accordance with the approved drawing and in compliance with the requirements of the Local Planning Authority. Reason: In the interests of road safety and residential amenity and in accordance with Policies HSG6 and HSG9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

5. A temporary parking area and turning space to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and maintained, concurrently with the development of the site, in a position to be agreed, until such times as the proposed development has been constructed. Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities during the construction period in order to minimise the incidence of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users in accordance with Policies HSG6 and HSG9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

7. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme for both hard and soft landscaping. The submitted details shall include any pedestrian and

vehicle circulation areas, surfacing materials, structures and ancillary objects (refuse bins, lighting columns etc). For schemes involving soft landscaping the submitted details should include schedules of plants giving the species, plant sizes, proposed numbers/densities and an implementation and maintenance programme as well as means to protect trees to be retained. Other details shall ~~include the provision where appropriate of fencing, walling and other means of enclosure and screening, the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks.~~ Following approval by the local planning authority the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before any of the development is occupied and all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Reason: in the interest of ensuring that the redevelopment of this site enhances the visual local environment in accordance with Policies HSG5, HSG9, CUD7 and CUD14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

8. In connection with the implementation of this permission the demolition and construction works shall not take place outside the hours of 8am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays or 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. Works shall not take place at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays without the prior written approval of the local planning authority. Reason: to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbances from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policies HSG5 and HSG9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

— Crumpian Condition re highway works on Christchurch Rd.

Informatives

1. The Council's Highways section should be contacted at 2-4 Darwin Close, Reading, RG2 0RB, telephone: 0118 939 0204, to agree the access construction details and to grant a licence before any work is carried out within the highway. A formal application should be made allowing at least 4 week's notice to obtain details of underground services on the applicants' behalf.

2. The applicant is advised that all works to which this permission relates must be carried out strictly in accordance with the plans, drawings and other relevant supporting material submitted as part of this application and hereby approved. The local planning authority must be immediately advised of any proposed variation from the approved documents and the prior approval in writing of the Council must be obtained before any such works are carried out on the site. Failure to comply with this advice may render those responsible liable to enforcement proceedings which may involve alterations and/or demolition of any unauthorised building or structures and may also lead to prosecution.

RESPONSE TO APPELLANT'S STATEMENT

1.1 In response to the appellant's sections 1-5 the Council has made it clear in correspondence, committee reports and our statement that it considers that some additional residential development could be accommodated on the application site. However it is the Council's opinion that the appealed proposal seeks to put too much additional development on the site.

1.2 The appellant's case set out in their section 6 addresses the effect on the conservation area, the provision of private amenity space and the effect on neighbouring properties. In para 6.13 reference is made to the comments provided by the Council's Conservation Officer. The person referred to is in fact a consultant to the Council who advises on design and conservation matters. His advice is useful to planning officers when assessing planning applications but does not preclude officers from having a different opinion when making their final recommendation on a planning application. The appeal proposal clearly attempts to replicate features on the original building and create a frontage to Redlands Road but the design was still considered to be inappropriate in scale and height to fit the site and its context.

1.3 In response to the argument on amenity space provision in para.s 6.16-6.18 there is still no figure provided for the amount of amenity space to be provided. Inadequate amenity space is not only detrimental to the wellbeing of existing and future residents but can indicate that a site is over-developed by failing to provide an appropriate area of landscaped setting for a property. In this case the prominence of the corner site and the scale of the original building makes the provision of adequate amenity space all the more important.

1.4 The effect of the appeal proposal on the neighbouring properties and how they relate to the appeal site will be judged during the site visit. The Council's (and resident's) concerns about the potential for disturbance to neighbours by having the bin and cycle stores adjacent to the shared boundary are dealt with in a dismissive way in the appellant's statement para. 6.21. The point is that a better, less over-developed scheme would be able to locate these facilities closer to those who will make use of them, the residents in the proposed scheme, and away from those who could be disturbed by their use. The neighbour has also identified the Lime tree as being of particular value to her for the visual screen it provides and its general contribution to the character of the area supported by the Council's tree advisor, its retention should therefore be secured. The Council has included a landscaping condition in its suggested list of conditions should the appeal be allowed. However, if the appeal is dismissed and a subsequent application is submitted to overcome our reasons for refusal the Council would require landscaping details as part of the planning application submission to ensure that the design takes on board good landscaping principles.

1.5 The Inspector is asked to consider the above responses and agree that the Appellant's statement has failed to identify why the Council's reasons for refusing planning permission should not be upheld.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78

Appeal by Mr Tony Chima

Department of Environment, Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Reference: APP/E0345/A/05/1179681

Reading Borough Council Reference: 04/01530/FUL

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Site at 72 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5HU

July 2005

Julie Williams for the
Head of Planning & Transport Strategy
Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Reading
RG1 7TD

1. Introduction

1.1 The application site is located at the signalised junction of Redlands Road, Shinfield Road and Elmhurst Road. The character of the area is mixed with shops on the south side of Christchurch Road, the University campus to the east and residential properties to the north and west. The existing buildings are sub-divided into 4 flats and there is some communal amenity space immediately to the front and rear of the property. There is a car parking area with 5 garages accessed from Redlands Road with no clear evidence of who uses it, although a number of cars are parked there most days.

1.2 The site measures 0.12 hectares and is mainly level. There are a few trees on the outside boundary of the site, which although not of any particular individual merit when seen together contribute to the appearance of this area known as Christchurch Green. There is also a lime tree on the boundary to 70 Redlands Road which has been identified as being worthy of retention and which provides a significant screen for residents at that property. The site lies in the Redlands Road Conservation Area but the buildings, which have unusual decorative features and brickwork, are not listed.

1.3 The appeal proposal (as amended) is for the erection of a three storey extension to the rear of the original buildings to create 4no 2 bed flats and 1no 1 bed flat with 9 car parking spaces marked out at the rear in place of the existing garages (to be demolished). Cycle parking is also proposed.

1.4 It has been noticed that the decision notice was not updated to reflect the amendment to 4no 2 bed flats and 1no 1 bed flat and we apologise for any confusion caused by this oversight. For clarity, the relevant drawings are:

1802/11A Location & Block plan
1802/12B Proposed site plan/ground floor plan
1802/13A Proposed first floor plan
1802/14A Proposed second floor plan
1802/15A Proposed elevations east/north
1802/16A proposed elevations west

1.5 The appellant had originally requested that the appeal be determined by written representation. However, in view of the considerable public interest in the proposal (copies of objection letters have already been sent to the Inspectorate) the local ward Councillor asked if it could be considered by a hearing instead. The Inspectorate accordingly has agreed to our request that an informal hearing should be held in this case, to allow interested parties to hear and contribute to the discussion.

2. Relevant Site History

90/0726/OA	Extension and alterations to form 10 flats	Refused 20/9/90
91/0788/FD	Three storey rear extension to form 2no. two bedroom flats.	Granted 9/1/92

96/0900/FD	Renewal of 91/0788	Granted 16/1/97
05/01532/CON	Conservation area consent to demolish garages etc	Granted 11th March 2005

3. Policy Background

3.1 The policy background to this appeal is contained in the Berkshire Structure Plan and in the Reading Borough Local Plan. The Berkshire Structure Plan was adopted in November 1995. The policies relevant to this appeal are:

LD6: Provision of Infrastructure, Services and Amenities

3.2 The Structure Plan is currently being reviewed by the 6 Berkshire Unitary Authorities and an initial deposit draft was published in March 2002. A second deposit draft was published at the end of March 2003. An EIP has taken place in September 2003 and as a result of the EIP a Deposit Draft incorporating proposed modifications was published in March 2004. The Structure Plan is now awaiting adoption and as such is relevant and has considerable weight in this appeal. The relevant policies from the review of the Structure Plan are as follows:

DP4: Provision of Infrastructure, Services and Amenities
T4: Travel Impacts

3.3 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 14th October 1998. The policies relevant to this appeal are:

KEY3: The Role of Development in Improving the Town
HSG5: Residential Design Standards
HSG8: House Extensions
HSG9: Location of Residential Development
TRN1: A Balanced Transport Strategy
CUD7: New development in conservation areas
CUD14: Standards of Design in Development
LEI3: The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities

3.4 The Reading Borough Local Plan was reviewed during 2003. An Issues Paper and Draft Spatial Strategy were published in February 2003 and a community engagement exercise was carried out during February, March and April 2003. The results of that exercise were published in 2004 and we are currently holding public consultation meetings.

3.5 Also relevant to this appeal are three Supplementary Planning Guidance notes. The first is *Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990,* which was adopted by the Council on 12th July 2004, after consultation carried out, as stated in paragraph 1.5 of that

document. The document was subsequently amended in September 2004 to remove a paragraph relating to affordable housing (a copy is included with this statement). The second, *Guidance on Space around Dwellings* was consulted on as part of the currently adopted Local Plan process but, on the advise of the Local Plan Inspector, made into separate supplementary planning guidance. The third, *A Design Guide to House Extensions*, was adopted in March 2003 following consultation held in 2002 (a copy is included with this statement. Copies of other relevant policies have already been sent to the Inspectorate.

3.6 The following government guidance documents are also relevant to this appeal:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Communities, 2005.
PPG3: Housing, 2000
PPG15: Planning and the historic environment
Circular No. 5/2005: Planning Obligations

4. The Council's Case

4.1 The appeal proposal was refused for the following reasons:

- The proposed development by virtue of its scale, massing, and number of units proposed constitutes an over development of the site, which is visually intrusive and detrimental to the appearance of the street and the character of this conservation area. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.
- The proposed development provides inadequate amenity space for the number of units proposed, which would be detrimental to the amenities of existing and future residents and would add to the perception of the over development of the site. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), adopted supplementary planning guidance on "Space around dwellings" and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

- The proposed development by virtue of its size and siting will lead to a reduction in the amenity of neighbouring residents, who will feel encroached by the structure. The proposal also locates a bin store and cycle store adjacent to a neighbouring property to the detriment of the amenities of residents at that property. As such the proposal is contrary to policies HSG9 (Location of residential development) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

- In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards transport, education and leisure the proposal is contrary to Policies KEY3 (The Role of Development in Improving the town), TRN 1 (Balanced Transport Strategy) & LEI3 (The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

4.2 The appealed application was considered in the context of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (Housing) and the recently published Planning Policy Statement 1. The most relevant Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 policies are HSG5 (residential design standards), HSG8 (House extensions), HSG9 Location of residential development), CUD6 (demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas), CUD7 (new development in conservation areas) and CUD14 (Standards of design in development) and supplementary planning guidance on space around dwellings, house extensions and planning obligations.

4.3 The main issues were considered to be:
(a) The principle of increasing the number of dwellings on the site,
(b) The design and impact of the proposal on the original buildings and the character of the conservation area
(c) The impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties
(d) Infrastructure

4.4 (a) Principle of development
The principle of using part of the site for some additional residential use has been accepted by the Council when it approved the previous planning permission for two additional flats. The site is in an urban location within a short walk of bus routes and local amenities and therefore its use for some additional residential development complies with PPG3 guidance. PPG3 supports the efficient use of urban land in order to promote regeneration and to minimise the amount of greenfield land being taken up for development but endorses the rejection of proposals with poor design where this is backed up by adopted local plan policies and guidance. PPS1 underlines the growing concern that the efficient use of land promoted by PPG3 should not be at the expense of jeopardising good design. "Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development".

4.5 (b) The design and impact of the proposal on the original buildings and the character of the conservation area
The importance of design as an issue when assessing this appeal proposal is given weight by the status of the locality as a conservation area. PPG15 requires that planning decisions for development in conservation areas must give high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

4.6 Basic principles require that extensions to properties should be designed to be subservient to the original or host building so as not to over dominate the original building or over-develop the site. The proposed extension by virtue of its height and massing, is considered too big for the site and therefore fails to comply with criteria in policy HSG5 (Residential design standards) and HSG8 (House extensions) and adopted supplementary guidance on house extensions.

4.7 The number of properties proposed on the site should be served by 225 square metres of private amenity space to comply with adopted guidance on space around dwellings. The actual area of usable amenity space is nearer to 160 square metres equating to just under 18 square metres per dwelling. The discrepancy serves as a further indication that this proposal for 5 flats is an overdevelopment of the site.

4.8 Policies CUD 7 and CUD 14 respectively support the need for good design to protect the character of conservation areas and for new development generally to be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding area. By seeking to accommodate 5 flats on the site the design overwhelms the site and the original buildings and fails to comply with these policies.

4.9 The impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties
It was accepted in the assessment of the application that the relative siting of the application site to adjacent properties 89 Christchurch Road and 70 Redlands Road would be such that a loss of privacy would not arise or that the setting of no.89, a listed building, would not be harmed.

4.10 However, the bulk of the proposed new development will obscure the easterly aspect from the two adjacent properties to such an extent that it is considered to be unreasonable and contrary to policy HSG9 (Location of residential development).

4.11 Finally the amended site plan shows the bin store and cycle store abutting the boundary to no.70 where they could lead to unacceptable disturbance for residents at that property from noise and smells. This also requires the felling of the lime tree identified as being worthy of retention for its contribution to the appearance of the site and its screening value. This is considered detrimental to the amenities of neighbours and contrary to policy HSG9 (Location of residential development).

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RUAP Contribution
The local transport network is in need of substantial improvement to cater for extra movements brought about by new development. The Reading Borough Council Local Transport Plan sets out a wide range of proposed improvements for the period up to 2006. A new Transport Strategy is currently being evolved, that will be translated into a new Local Transport Plan over the next twelve months. In order to assist the funding of transport improvements, the Council seeks contributions from all development towards transport improvements under the Reading Urban Area Package (RUAP).

4.13 The required contributions are set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on *Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. The requires that £2,000 per additional 1/2 bedroom flat is paid to off set the impact of the development, and this should be secured by a legal agreement or unilateral undertaking under section 106. In the absence of such an agreement to make such a payment, the appeal proposal fails to make provision to deal with its transport impacts and

therefore fails to meet the requirements of Policies LD5 and LD6 of the Berkshire Structure plan 1991-2006 and Policy Key 3 and TRN11B of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

4.14 Education Contribution

Policy KEY 3 of the Local Plan requires that development proposals *make an appropriate contribution to necessary and relevant physical and social infrastructure.* This supports Policies LD6 of the current structure plan, and DP4 of the emerging structure plan, which states that Local Planning Authorities can seek contributions to provide additional infrastructure where that is made necessary by the development.

4.15 The Appeal site is in the Central and East area of the Borough, which is facing the following challenges at primary and secondary levels:

Primary

4.15.1 Parental preference means that pressure is continuing to be applied to popular, over-subscribed schools. This puts pressure not only on the popular schools, but also the schools required to accept the over-spill pupils. This area is also close to the University, and as such schools in this area are subject to sudden influxes of pupils. The area is also under pressure from an increasing number of housing developments.

4.15.2 A significant number of the classrooms in the Central and East Reading area are not large enough to accommodate standard classes. Adding even one extra pupil into rooms that are already too small to accommodate a class will make a substantial difference. Many school buildings also have serious accessibility problems that need to be addressed.

4.15.3 The majority of schools in this area are very old stock and require refurbishment and continual maintenance in order to maintain their capacity and to meet the demands of modern teaching.

Secondary

4.15.4 At the secondary phase Maiden Erleigh and Bulmershe Schools are both popular schools located out of the Borough. In instances where children from Reading addresses cannot be offered places, as has increasingly been the case, the responsibility falls to Reading LEA to provide secondary education. In addition, many pupils from outside the Borough attend the two Grammar Schools in this area, which are maintained by Reading Borough Council.

4.15.5 A substantial number of the classrooms are temporary, and the existing infrastructure needs internal restructuring in order to meet modern teaching requirements. A significant number of the classrooms are not suitable to accommodate standard classes. A significant amount of general infrastructure is also in need of attention. Popular schools in this area are operating at capacity and pupils unable to be admitted put pressure on other Schools in Reading.

4.16 There is pressure on educational resources in this area and we believe that the developers should contribute towards providing space for pupils who will come into the area as a result of new housing development. The level of contribution is calculated using the following formula; Net increase in family dwellings x pupil yield factor x DfES cost multiplier x regional allowance. Based on figures derived from the Study of the Pupil Product of New Housing in Berkshire, 2001, the pupil yield is: **0.17** (primary schools) and **0.07** (secondary schools), while the DfES cost multiplier is **£5,635** (primary) and **£7,514** (secondary). The regional allowance is **1.10**.

Primary School = 4 x 0.17 x 5635 x 1.1	= £4,215
Secondary School = 4 x 0.07 x 7514 x 1.1	= £2,314
	= £6,529

4.17 In the absence of a legal agreement or unilateral undertaking to secure these contributions the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy LD6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006, Policy DP4 of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan 2001-2016, and Policy KEY3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

4.18 Leisure Contribution

In accordance with Policy LEI3 of the Local Plan financial contributions were also sought to off set the impact of the development on Leisure facilities within the Borough. The rationale for the specific contributions sought is set out in section 4 of the SPG on planning obligations. As such a contribution of £1,500 per additional dwelling has been sought. A number of projects to improve leisure facilities in the east of the Borough are currently ongoing. Given its close proximity it is likely that any contributions made in respect of this proposal would go towards essential improvement works being carried out at Cintra Park.

4.19 In the absence of a legal agreement or unilateral undertaking to secure these contributions the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy LD6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006, Policy DP4 of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan 2001-2016, and Policies KEY3 and LEI3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

5. Response to Grounds of Appeal

5.1 There is a discrepancy in paragraph 1 in that it refers to the appeal proposal being for 5no 2 bedroom flats. In fact the scheme was amended (see letter attached as appendix 1 dated 26th January 2005 from Andrews Harris Kalik) to 4no 2 bed flats and 1no. 1 bed flat. As explained in para.1.4 above this could be as a consequence of the oversight in the decision notice but it would be useful if the appellant could confirm that the amended scheme is the subject of this appeal.

5.2 The Council accepts the principle of some additional development on the site and agrees with Paragraphs 1 and 2 in the appellant's grounds of appeal. However, we are clearly at odds on paragraph 3 in that it is considered that

the design and scale of the appeal proposal fails to complement the original building and detracts from the character of the buildings and the area generally.

5.2 In response to paragraph 4 the principles of PPG3 do not condone the approval of schemes that fail to respect the character of the area. Paragraph 56, of PPG3 states that new housing development of whatever scale should not be viewed in isolation. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context having regard to not just neighbouring buildings but the townscape and landscape of the wider area. This is a prominent site at the boundary of a conservation area and thereby sets the context for this part of the conservation area. Any new development here needs to show much more consideration of this context. In this case the provision of sufficient amenity space is not only considered important in terms of the amenities of existing and future residents but also in terms of providing the substantial property with the setting that it deserves.

5.3 In respect of the points made in paragraph 5 we remain concerned about the proximity of the bin and cycle stores to adjacent properties. A scheme with fewer flats proposed could easily relocate these facilities to less sensitive locations within the site. We have not raised an issue with the principle of flats on this site.

5.4 Finally, further justification for the infrastructure contributions requested are set out above. The appellant confirmed (see appendix 1) by letter, via his agent, willingness to enter a legal agreement for the sums requested, which are in total £24,029. Therefore reason for refusal 4 would be overcome by the submission of an acceptable Unilateral Undertaking at or before the hearing.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The principle of some additional development at the appeal is site is accepted but the scale and design of the appeal proposal is not considered acceptable. This prominent location in this conservation area deserves a better scheme.

6.2 The Inspector is asked to consider our case and to agree on balance that the appeal should be dismissed. However, if the appeal is allowed, the Council requests that the conditions, attached as Appendix 2, should be imposed.

Appendix 2 - Suggested conditions

Conditions set out below assume that off site transport works, and contributions towards education, leisure and the Reading Urban Area Package will be secured by means of a Unilateral Undertaking.

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date on which the permission was granted. Reason: to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, and in accordance with Section 91(1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The applicant is advised that all works to which this permission relates must be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed above and other relevant supporting material submitted as part of this application and hereby approved. The local planning authority must be immediately advised of any proposed variation from the approved documents and the prior approval in writing of the Council must be obtained before any such works are carried out on the site. . Reason: As the amended scheme has been approved as it was assessed to comply with the requirements of policies HSG5 (residential design standards) and CUD14 (Standards of design in development) in the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998.

3. No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: as no details of the materials have been submitted and in the interests of ensuring that the new development appears in keeping with the existing building in accordance with Policies HSG5, HSG9, CUD7 and CUD14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

4 No dwelling in the extension shall be occupied until the parking spaces, turning space, cycle parking and bin storage facilities have been constructed in accordance with the approved drawing and in compliance with the requirements of the Local Planning Authority. Reason: In the interests of road safety and residential amenity and in accordance with Policies HSG6 and HSG9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

5. A temporary parking area and turning space to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and maintained, concurrently with the development of the site, in a position to be agreed, until such times as the proposed development has been constructed. Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities during the construction period in order to minimise the incidence of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users in accordance with Policies HSG6 and HSG9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

7. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme for both hard and soft landscaping. The submitted details shall include any pedestrian and

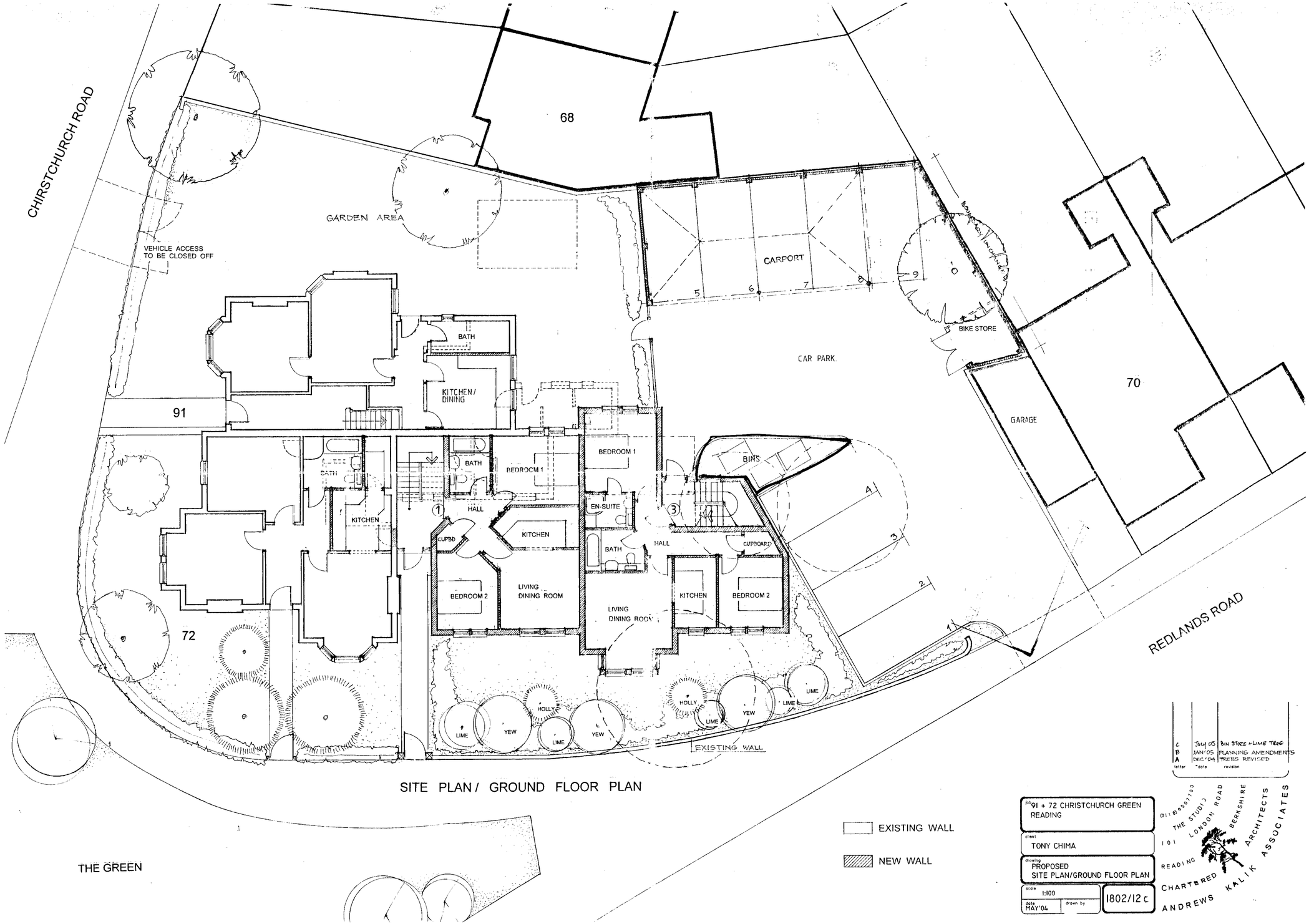
vehicle circulation areas, surfacing materials, structures and ancillary objects (refuse bins, lighting columns etc). For schemes involving soft landscaping the submitted details should include schedules of plants giving the species, plant sizes, proposed numbers/densities and an implementation and maintenance programme as well as means to protect trees to be retained. Other details shall include the provision where appropriate of fencing, walling and other means of enclosure and screening, the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks. Following approval by the local planning authority the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before any of the development is occupied and all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Reason: in the interest of ensuring that the redevelopment of this site enhances the visual local environment in accordance with Policies HSG5, HSG9, CUD7 and CUD14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

8. In connection with the implementation of this permission the demolition and construction works shall not take place outside the hours of 8am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays or 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. Works shall not take place at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays without the prior written approval of the local planning authority. Reason: to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbances from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policies HSG5 and HSG9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 1998.

Informatives

1. The Council's Highways section should be contacted at 2-4 Darwin Close, Reading, RG2 0RB, telephone: 0118 939 0204, to agree the access construction details and to grant a licence before any work is carried out within the highway. A formal application should be made allowing at least 4 week's notice to obtain details of underground services on the applicants' behalf.

2. The applicant is advised that all works to which this permission relates must be carried out strictly in accordance with the plans, drawings and other relevant supporting material submitted as part of this application and hereby approved. The local planning authority must be immediately advised of any proposed variation from the approved documents and the prior approval in writing of the Council must be obtained before any such works are carried out on the site. Failure to comply with this advice may render those responsible liable to enforcement proceedings which may involve alterations and/or demolition of any unauthorised building or structures and may also lead to prosecution.



SITE PLAN / GROUND FLOOR PLAN

EXISTING WALL

NEW WALL

letter	date	revision
C	JULY 05	BIN STORE + LIME TREES
B	JAN'05	PLANNING AMENDMENTS
A	DEC'04	TREES REVISED

job 91 + 72 CHRISTCHURCH GREEN
READING

client
TONY CHIMA

drawing
PROPOSED
SITE PLAN/GROUND FLOOR PLAN

scale 1:100

date MAY'04

drawn by

1802/12 c

(0118) 9507700
THE STUDIO
101 LONDON ROAD
READING
BERKSHIRE
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS
ANDREWS KALIK ASSOCIATES

CHIRSTCHURCH ROAD

68

GARDEN AREA

VEHICLE ACCESS
TO BE CLOSED OFF

CARPORT

5 6 7 8 9

BIN STORE

BIKE STORE

CAR PARK

70

GARAGE

91

BATH

KITCHEN/
DINING

BATH

BEDROOM 1

BEDROOM 1

HOLLY

BATH

KITCHEN

1

HALL

CUPBD

KITCHEN

EN-SUITE

3

HALL

CUPBOARD

BATH

BEDROOM 2

LIVING
DINING ROOM

LIVING
DINING ROOM

KITCHEN

BEDROOM 2

72

A

3

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
26 JAN 2005
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

REDLANDS ROAD

HOLLY

LIME

YEW

HOLLY

LIME

YEW

LIME

HOLLY

LIME

YEW

LIME

EXISTING WALL

THE GREEN

SITE PLAN / GROUND FLOOR PLAN

EXISTING WALL

NEW WALL

041530

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
AMENDED PLAN

letter	date	revision
B	JAN'05	PLANNING AMENDMENTS
A	DEC'04	TREES REVISED

91 + 72 CHRISTCHURCH GREEN
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scale 1:100

date MAY'04 | drawn by IS

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