

**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
FOR THE ERECTION OF A BLOCK OF 40 STUDIO STUDENT
APARTMENTS AND ASSOCIATED PARKING AND AMENITY SPACE
FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING PUBLIC HOUSE**

The Woodley Arms, Waldeck Street, Reading

Reference: BNL.0521

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning, design and access statement is prepared on behalf of Lainston Woodley Arms LLP. It supports an application for full planning permission for the demolition of the Woodley Arms Public House and the erection of a 2.5 storey block providing 40 student studio apartments including associated parking area, amenity area and associated facilities. Proposal's for the site have progressed through detailed stage 1 and 2 pre application discussions with Council Officers held between November 2013 and November 2014. These discussions assisted in the development of the proposals allowing agreement to be reached on a number of issues including the loss of the A4 use and the parking and transport strategy. In February 2016 a proposal for erection of a block of 40 student apartments was dismissed by an Inspector at appeal. In summary the first reason for dismissing the appeal was the impact of the proposal on the character of the area, with the roof bulk and height being of particular concern. The second reason being that the Inspector could not determine with the information submitted that the proposed garden area would not cause unacceptable disturbance to residents of adjoining ground floor rooms.

1.2 The current scheme for the erection of a block of 40 studio student apartments has been influenced by pre application discussions and the Planning Inspectors comments on the previous appeal. The proposed development responds to these issues by incorporating various amendments to the proposal, summarised as follows:

- Reduction in the proposal's overall scale including reductions in width and depth. The proposal also includes significant reductions in the proposal's overall height, and an amended roof design including far less bulk and mass.
- The studio closest to the shared garden area has been re-orientated so its window will no longer face onto the garden. Due to the new position of the laundry area on the ground floor the second closest studio to the garden area would be located away from the garden area. Users of the garden area will also be kept clear of the rooms adjoining the garden area by a dwarf brick wall, which will prevent undue disturbance to ground floor rooms

- Provision of 10 parking spaces to rear of the site along with Travel Plan measures to encourage use of sustainable modes of transport as set out in the transport statement

1.3 This statement will cover the background to the current application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It is intended to satisfy the Council's validation requirements, including but not limited to SUDS, planning policy, affordable housing, and S106 heads of terms. It will summarise the relevant planning policies and guidance and assess the proposal in light of these requirements. The conclusion reached is that National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.

1.4 A fee of £5005 was paid with the previous application (150134) for a development of the same type which was refused on 27th March 2015. Therefore no fee is required in accordance with Planning Fee regulations that allow for a 'free go' on an application for the same site within 12 months of the refusal of the previous application.

1.5 In addition to this planning, design and access statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following drawings:

- Drawing 01
- Drawing 03
- Drawing 04
- Drawing 13
- Drawing 14
- Drawing 15
- Drawing 16
- Drawing 17
- Drawing 18
- Air Quality Assessment
- Transport Statement from Peter Brett Associates
- Final Bat Survey
- Sustainability and Energy statement
- Argyll Environmental Report

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- 1.6 For information, of the technical reports outlined above were prepared for the previous proposal for 40 student studio apartments. Despite being accepted under previous applications, they are resubmitted to complete Officers assessment of the proposals. The principles of their content remain accurate and valid for the current proposals.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The appeal site is already developed and is occupied by the Woodley Arms public house. The Woodley Arms has an established A4 use, incorporating a managers flat on the ground and first floor. The main built form of the pub is of two storey height with a red brick appearance. To the side and rear however a contrasting lighter brick flat roofed element is provided. The public house building has a dilapidated and derelict appearance which has been evident for a considerable period. The existing pub building is set back from Waldeck Street and its ground floor level is approximately half a metre higher than the road. The overall depth of the existing built form on the site is 19.5 metres and 17.8 metres wide. Together with the associated car park to the rear of the existing pub buildings, the whole site represents previously developed land.
- 2.2 The application site is circulated by an access road which links to Charndon Close. The south, east and west boundaries of the site front onto this access road and the garage blocks it serves. This access road also serves the Woodley Arms car park to the south of the pub building. The nearest property to the east, 11 Waldeck Street is set off the west elevation of the existing pub building by 21.6 metres and to the east, number 20 Taynton Walk is set off the east side of the existing pub building by 14.8 metres.
- 2.3 Waldeck Street contains predominantly residential uses, save for the existing A4 use. The area has an urban character defined by dense terraced residential housing and flatted developments providing a high degree of plot coverage in the surrounding area. Waldeck Street features an absence of on-street parking controls. This gives rise to a significant level of on street parking, which is prominent in the streetscene and emphasises the urban character of the street.
- 2.4 The site is in a very sustainable urban location with excellent access to a diversity of local facilities. The Council classify the site as being within the 'Primary Core Area' meaning it lies within walking distance (up to 2km) from the Town Centre. In fact the site is notably more accessible than many other sites in the 'Primary Core Area'. The site lies within 0.6 miles walking distance of the town centre, 0.9 miles walking distance of the University of

Reading and 0.2mile walking distance from a bus stop on Southampton Street offering regular bus services on routes 6 and 7 to the town centre.

3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Use and Amount

3.1 The proposal is to demolish the Woodley Arms Public House and erect a block of 40 studio student apartments including associated parking facilities, amenity area and associated facilities. The public house is currently vacant, save for a flat occupied on the first floor. Officers will be aware that application 140524 approved the conversion of the public house into 4 flats. This permission which remains extant effectively accepts the existing A4 use is not viable and that the residential use of the site is appropriate in this sustainable location. The Council has confirmed during pre applications discussions that the loss of the public house would not conflict with Policy DM15.

3.2 The 40 studio apartments are arranged over 3 floors and all benefit from en-suite and kitchen facilities and at least one openable window providing a source daylight and ventilation. Communal laundry faculties are provided on both ground & first floors for convenience.

Layout and Scale

3.3 The accommodation block is 2.5 storeys high incorporating dormers in the roof, and is of significantly reduced bulk and mass than the appeal scheme. The block is sited towards the north of the site with the front elevation facing Waldeck Street. The side elevations of the block are set off the side elevation. To the rear of the site, a communal amenity area is proposed along with cycle and refuse storage.

Landscaping

3.4 The layout plan makes provision for the introduction of soft landscaping beyond the side and front of the accommodation block as indicated. The communal area to rear will also be landscaped to provide a functional and low maintenance area for outdoor seating. The front of the site which currently provides a dilapidated patio area will provide a soft landscaped

area. The front boundary will be marked by a low brick wall and railing which will be continued along the Charndon Close boundary and the alternate north east side boundary of the site.

Access and Parking

- 3.5 The existing vehicular access to the site will be retained to serve the proposed car park area which accommodates 10 parking spaces including one disabled space. Pedestrian access to the site is provided via Charndon Close where an entrance canopy is provided for convenience.

Appearance

- 3.6 The proposal has been designed to provide an active frontage towards Waldeck Street, Charndon Close and the access road serving the garages on the east side of the site. The overall design of the roof, including its height, profile and bulk have been significantly redesigned to address the concerns raised by the Inspector and Council. The main roof facing Waldeck Street is now provided with two distinct profiles. The eastern section is noticeably subordinate to the main roof form, reducing the visual prominence of the building when approached from the direction of Southampton Street, where site levels increase. The elevations incorporate staggered feature shallow gables, contrasting string courses, brick headers and a mix of brick and render creating visual interest and variety using features evident in the surrounding area.

4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 The site lies outside of the Countryside and is not within a designated conservation area. The following sets out relevant National and Local policies to the proposed development, and how the scheme addresses each of these requirements.

NPPF

- 4.2 The 'Golden Thread' running through the centre of guidance within the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 49 adds further support stating that *"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development"*.

- 4.3 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF clarifies that Local Planning Authorities *'should seek to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes... widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities by:*

- *planning 'for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes*
- *identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand'*

- 4.4 As a University town, students in full time education represent a substantial portion of Reading Borough Council's Housing need. In relation to this need, paragraph 021 of the NPPG (reference 2a-021-20150326) encourages Local Planning Authorities to identify different tenure types, including student accommodation when considering housing need. It states:

'Local planning authorities should plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus.

Student housing provided by private landlords is often a lower-cost form of housing. Encouraging more dedicated student accommodation may provide low cost housing that takes pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock. Plan makers are encouraged to consider options which would support both the needs of the student population as well as local residents before imposing caps or restrictions on students living outside of university-provided accommodation. Plan makers should engage with universities and other higher educational establishments to better understand their student accommodation requirements'

- 4.5 The NPPG offers support for the provision of dedicated purpose built student accommodation such as that proposed, in meeting student housing need. Despite this, pre application discussions with the Council have highlighted that they do not have specific planning policy targets relating to demand for purpose built student accommodation in the borough. Historically, a significant portion of student accommodation has been provided by private landlords converting family housing into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's), particularly in close proximity to the University. This has required the Council to introduce Article 4 directions amongst other policy measures such as policy DM8 which seek to restrict the proportion of HMO's in certain locations, with the aim of maintaining mixed and balanced communities. Paragraph 2.10 of the Council's Residential Conversions SPD explains this issue in more detail. It states:

'In certain parts of the Borough, there are high concentrations of flat conversions and houses in multiple occupation, in part reflecting the very high student population which is especially prevalent around the universities. In the vicinity of the universities, a high proportion of the housing accommodates students. Given that they are predominantly present during term time only, it can leave some roads and areas feeling quite dormant at other times, adding to the problems and issues arising from failing to achieve a mixed and sustainable community'.

- 4.6 As such catering for student housing need through high quality purpose built student accommodation as proposed gains significant support from the

NPPF and the NPPG. It will also reduce the evident pressure in the Reading Borough on meeting student housing need through the conversion of existing family housing, and the detrimental impacts the Council feels this causes to the character and housing mix in areas of close proximity to the University.

4.7 In addition to the NPPF's presumption in favour of housing applications, the principle of introducing student accommodation is particularly favourable given the site's settlement designation within Reading's Primary Core transport Area. As demonstrated in the Transport statement submitted with the full application, the site is ideally located for intended student occupants. It is within close walking distance of the town centre which provides major retail, employment and leisure opportunities as well as access to major transport hubs including the Reading Railway Station. The site is also in close walking distance of the University. More locally the site is within 0.2 miles of a local shopping parade and is 0.2 miles of bus stops offering regular bus services on routes 6 and 7 which connect with the Town Centre and routes 20, 21 & N21 which connect with the University.

4.8 In respect of sustainable transport, the NPPF provides clear support for land use planning that would facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport. Paragraph 34 states that *'decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised'*. Furthermore paragraph 35 states *'plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to:*

- *accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;*
- *give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;*
- *create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones*

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- 4.9 The site is ideally located to maximise use of existing and well developed sustainable transport links. Furthermore the proposed student occupants will favour sustainable modes of transport, clearly exploiting opportunities for pedestrian, cycle and bus movements. Uptake of these opportunities will be further enhanced by the proposed travel plan measures. On this basis it is clear the NPPF provides significant support for the development of site for the proposed use.
- 4.10 Paragraph 17 encourages *'the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value'*. The existing site is located in an area with an urban character and is already developed. The proposed development will make an effective and efficient use of this previously developed site in a sustainable location, and therefore gains added support from paragraph 17 of the NPPF.
- 4.11 In respect of design, paragraph 56 of the NPPF identifies that "Good design...is indivisible from good planning" although Local Authorities should not "attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes as they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles" (paragraph 60). Furthermore paragraph 9 adds that *'pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment...including replacing poor design with better design'*.
- 4.12 In addition paragraph 64 also importantly requires developments to *'take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'*. In this instance the Council accept that the existing building at the site is of *'no particular architectural merit'*. It is clear the site has been redundant for a considerable period and its dilapidated appearance has a negative impact on the visual character of the area. The proposed development would replace the existing poor design with a high quality sustainable development. In doing so it would bring activity and vibrancy to this urban location, realising opportunities for improving the function of the area as required by paragraph 64.

- 4.13 In terms of residential amenity, paragraph 17 of the NPPF requires the planning system to '*always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings*'. Furthermore noise pollution in particular is commented on in paragraph 109 which requires the planning system to '*contribute to and enhance the natural environment by...preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of...noise pollution*'. The proposal has been re-designed to ensure student occupiers enjoy high standards of amenity for occupants and specifically are not disturbed by use of the proposed amenity area.

Development Plan Context

- 4.14 The Council's Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (2008), The Reading Centre Area Action Plan (2009), Sites and Detailed policy document (2012), Proposals Map, Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Saved Waste Local Plan and a number of supplementary planning documents.

Proposals Map

- 4.15 The site lies outside of the Reading Centre Area Action Plan designation. The site does not lie within a restricted area on the proposals map and is within the settlement boundary. Consequently, the principle of introducing student accommodation to the site is favourable given its sustainable settlement designation, subject to consideration of the loss of the public house use, which is covered in a following section.

Core Strategy

- 4.16 The broad spatial vision of the borough encourages the re-use of previously developed sites, particularly where they are currently under utilised as in this case. The borough accepts that much of smaller scale residential development will be delivered on a piecemeal basis through the redevelopment of existing accommodation and change of use of commercial buildings as in this case.

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- 4.17 In respect of scale and intensity of development, Policy CS 4 requires this to be related to the level of accessibility by walking and other sustainable means to a range of services and facilities. As mentioned previously the site is within the Primary Core Area in respect of transport accessibility and is within comfortable walking distance (0.2 miles) of a local shopping parade and benefits from a sustainable location. The proposal represents a scale and intensity of development that would be entirely appropriate for its sustainable location, in close proximity to the town centre and University of Reading. The Council have accepted that the site is within a sustainable location in respect of the intended.
- 4.18 Policy CS36 requires development to protect features of biodiversity found within the application site. Pre application guidance suggested a Bat Survey should be submitted with this application to demonstrate the impact any protected species. The current application is submitted with a Bat Survey prepared by David Leach Ecology Ltd. incorporating an Emergence and Activity Survey confirming no evidence of bats at the property

LDF: Sites and Detailed Policies Document

- 4.19 Policy DM15 of the Sites and Detailed Policies document sets the Council's approach to dealing with the retention of community facilities. It states:
- (i) Within a defined district, major local or local centre, development involving the loss of a leisure facility or public house will not be permitted where it is the only facility of that type in the centre;*
- (ii) Development involving the loss of leisure facilities or a public house not covered in (i), will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:*
- a. There is no need for this type of facility in this area; or*
- b. The function of the facility can be adequately fulfilled by an existing facility, or a facility proposed as part of the development, where that facility would be at least as accessible to the same catchment; or*

c. The impacts on amenity of residents of retaining the facility could not be dealt with through other measures, and would be so severe as to outweigh the benefits to the wider community of retaining the facility.

Subtext to the policy DM15 provides the following detail on the loss of public houses outside of defined districts, major or local centres:

'Criterion (ii) deals with those uses not covered by (i), meaning facilities outside centres, and those within centres where there are other such facilities in the same centre. It seeks to resist the loss of facilities unless there is a strong justification. Evidence to show that there is no need for the facility (a), will need to be based on clear, long-term issues and trends rather than short-term economic circumstances or lack of viability due to poor management. Any alternative facilities identified to comply with (b) must have sufficient capacity to adequately serve the existing catchment, and must be at least as accessible by public transport, foot and cycle to the majority of the catchment as the facility to be lost. The purpose of (c) is to ensure that facilities are not lost where there are alternative measures under powers such as licensing and environmental health that could resolve amenity issues whilst retaining the use, and that amenity impacts are intrinsic to the use rather than how the use has been managed – this is particularly relevant to public house's.

4.20 In this respect, this application is supported by the evidence submitted with previous application 140524 which gained approval for the conversion of the public house use to residential accommodation. This includes a letter from Savills who were the commercial letting agents managing the marketing of the site. This letter is provided within appendix 1. It confirms a number of methods of marketing were employed during a substantial 18 month marketing period for the site. No interest was received from parties interested in maintaining the existing A4 use and the 3 offers received during the marketing period were all from developers. It is the conclusion of a qualified surveyor at Savills that the distinct lack of interest in the site throughout the marketing period results from the existing A4 use not representing a viable and sustainable investment. This provides evidence as required by policy DM15 that the existing public house is not viable.

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- 4.21 The site is outside of a defined district, major local or local centre and therefore paragraph 'ii' of policy DM15 is most relevant to assessing the loss of the public house use in this instance. It introduces 3 tests that proposals should satisfy when considering the loss of community facilities. These include demonstrating a lack of demand for the A4 pub use, the ability of any demand to be satisfied by a facility that would be as accessible or the impact on amenity of the existing use justifying its loss. Each test is followed by the word 'or', meaning policy DM15 requires proposals involving the loss of a public house to satisfy one of the tests, independently of the others.
- 4.22 Criteria 'a' and 'b' of policy DM15 are interrelated in that there is unlikely going to be a need for a facility where its function is being adequately performed elsewhere in a similarly accessible location. In this respect there are a number of alternative public houses within a close proximity of the site as shown on map in appendix 2. The 'Pheasant' is the closest pub to the site and is within a 130m walking distance of the site. The second closest is the 'Hop Leaf' which is within 180m walking distance of the site. The Pheasant and Hop Leaf serve primarily the local drinking market as the Woodley Arms would have, opposed to the larger drinking establishments located within the Town Centre which have wider appeal and are also easily accessible from the application site.
- 4.23 They offer similar facilities to the Woodley Arms, with the Pheasant providing a pub garden/patio area and parking and the Hop Leaf providing an outdoor patio area. Given the substantial period the Woodley Arms has been vacant, it is clear that the pubs identified in the immediate vicinity have sufficient capacity to serve the surrounding catchment and have been doing so adequately since its closure. Had existing facilities not been able to satisfy demand for pub facilities in the local catchment sufficiently, greater demand would have been expected for the Woodley Arms to operate as an A4 use during the marketing period.
- 4.24 The Pheasant and the Hop Leaf are as accessible as the Woodley Arms site from public transport being located within the Primary Core Area of the Borough's accessibility model. They benefit from access to regular local bus services and are served by route 6 and 7 and are closer to bus stops than

the Woodley Arms. Therefore the pubs identified in the immediate surrounding area which are catering for demand from the Woodley Arms, have better access to public transport than the Woodley Arms site. The Pheasant and the Hop Leaf also benefit from greater passing trade making them more suited to providing an A4 use than the Woodley Arms.

- 4.25 Considering the substantial measures undertaken to market the site as an A4 use and the availability of alternative facilities in the immediate vicinity, it is considered the loss of the A4 use would satisfy tests A and B of policy DM15. This assessment has demonstrated that there is a clear lack of demand for the site to provide an A4 use and demand is being adequately catered for by existing and more suited public houses in the area. The proposal would therefore not affect the ability of the community to meet its day to day needs in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 70 of the NPPF. The release of the site from its current A4 use is lent further support by the NPPF's emphasis on the planning system responding to market signals (paragraph 17), which in this case have confirmed the operation of the existing A4 use is not viable. The Council have already confirmed the proposal is not in conflict with Policy DM15 and the loss of the A4 use will not be resisted, and the Inspector raised no concern about the loss of the A4 use.
- 4.26 Policy DM4 requires developments to respect the amenity of existing residents. Officers confirmed at pre application stage that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbours through overlooking. Due to its separation, the proposal would not be overbearing when viewed from neighbouring properties. The Inspector raised no concern about the proposals impact on residents outside of the site.
- 4.27 The Inspector in the previous appeal advocated the Council's concern about the potential harmful impact that the amenity space could have on the residents of adjacent ground floor studios. The studio apartment closest to the shared garden area has been re-orientated so its window will no longer face onto the garden. The garden area will therefore have a brick wall facing the amenity space which would reduce the potential for noise transference and prevent disturbance to the resident of this room. In addition, the repositioned laundry means the second closest studio apartment to the

garden area would be located a sufficient distance from the garden area. In addition users of the garden area will also be kept clear of the rooms adjoining the garden area by a dwarf brick wall, which will avoid undue disturbance to ground floor rooms.

- 4.28 Policy CS7 requires developments to be of high quality design that enhance the character and appearance of the area. Policy CS7 sets out criteria by which the quality and character of new developments will be assessed including layout, urban grain, scale, architectural details and materials and responding positively to their local context. The following assessment will consider the amended proposals with reference to policy CS7 and the Inspectors comments from the previous appeal which are a material consideration for assessing the current application.
- 4.29 The existing urban grain of Waldeck Street consists predominately of Victorian terrace dwellings with a strong building line. The Woodley Arms as a detached public house is an exception to the existing pattern of development as noted by the Inspector. With this in mind, both the position of the site on Waldeck Street and its layout, confined by a road on all four sides, lends itself to development of detached, stand alone built form. The Inspector raised no concern that the detached form of the building would have an adverse impact on the character of the area and confirms it would not be in conflict with the existing pattern development in Waldeck Street.
- 4.30 The Council have previously accepted that the proposed architectural detail and materials are compatible with the character of the area and local context. The Council stated *'notwithstanding the unacceptable scale and proportions of the building [assessed at pre application], the proposed detailing, including measures to articulate the form, are considered to result in a building that acceptable in purely visual terms'*. The Inspector raised no concern about the architectural style or materials of the building in the context of Waldeck Street.
- 4.31 The Inspector also confirmed that the building line of the proposed development, set further forward than the public house and the proposals distance from side boundaries would be acceptable and would not conflict with the established character of the area. As a result, the Inspector makes

it clear in paragraph 6 of the decision what is of concern in relation to the design and visual appearance of the building. He states:

*'The proposed building would be set forward of the existing public house, which in itself would not conflict with the prevailing pattern of development, neither would its proximity to the site boundaries. However its **steep pitched roof**, containing second floor accommodation, truncated by a substantial flat roof area, would introduce a building of noticeably **greater bulk and massing** than those existing properties either side and opposite, despite architectural features intended to break this up. In such a prominent forward position, **accentuated on the approach from Southampton Street** by the upward slope of the street in that direction and **its overall height above the adjacent road level**, it would be a dominant and jarring feature of the street scene'*

- 4.32 It can reasonably be interpreted that it is the bulk and mass of the building, its roof form and particularly how this would appear when you approach the site from Southampton Street that would not be compatible with the streetscene. The current proposal incorporates significant amendments to the roof form and height to specifically address the Inspector's concerns over bulk and mass.
- 4.33 The proposed building dismissed at appeal was symmetrical when viewed in its front elevation with a hipped roof at 10m high. It also included two front facing gables and dormer windows at the same height in relation to each other. This approach created a significant amount of roof bulk and as the Inspector noted, would appear prominent when viewed from Waldeck Street and particularly on the approach from Southampton Street which is set at a much lower level.
- 4.34 The proposed building retains the building's overall style and architectural features which have been accepted as being compatible with the character of the area by the Council and Inspector, but makes significant amendments to the roof design. The overall roof height of the building has been significantly reduced from 10m to between 8.5m to 8.9m as illustrated on the proposed plans.

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- 4.35 The roof profile on the eastern part of the building is now set 0.7m lower than the main roof to reflect the decreasing site levels at this point of Waldeck Street. The eaves and dormer windows on the eastern side are also set at a lower level to reduce the appreciable bulk and mass of the building, and particularly its roof when approached from Southampton Street. The reduced building height and revised roof profile actively responds to the site levels of Waldeck Street and would address the concerns about the building appearing dominant in the streetscene or jarring as approached from the Southampton Street direction.
- 4.36 In addition to the significant reductions in bulk and mass of the roof form, the overall width and depth of the building have been reduced to emphasise the reduction in the buildings overall scale and bulk. Together the proposed amendments have addressed the Council's and Inspectors concerns with the previous proposal's. The proposals incorporate scope for landscaping, outdoor amenity space, parking, refuse and cycle storage without causing conflict with neighbouring properties. The proposal makes an efficient use of the plot which is welcomed by the NPPF, whilst the proposed design would improve the character of the area as welcomed by Core Strategy policy CS7.
- 4.37 The Borough has an Affordable Housing SPD which sets out required provision for development proposals. Point 4.2 clarifies that affordable housing policies CS16 and DM6 will not be *'applied to student accommodation unless this is being developed on an allocated housing site or a site where residential development would have been anticipated'*. As such the proposal does not incorporate affordable housing provision and this approach has been confirmed by Officers at pre application stage.
- 4.38 Policy DM10 sets out that dwellings should be provided with functional private or communal open space although provides no exact standard to be achieved for student accommodation. The proposed area of amenity space is consistent with that of previous applications where the Council were satisfied with the area provided, despite the reduced number of rooms now proposed. The proposal also incorporates an area of designated refuse storage in accordance with policy DM10.

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- 4.39 Policy DM12 relates to access and traffic related considerations. The proposed development utilises the existing vehicular access to the site and will provide 10 parking spaces to the rear of the site along with generous cycle provision of 1 space per apartment. The Transport Statement submitted with this application sets out the proposed approach to parking which has developed through pre application discussion with the Council. In addition to onsite parking, the Transport Statement sets out a number of Travel Plan measures which will allow student occupants to exploit opportunities for sustainable travel. These measures will also ensure the development does not increase the demand for on-street parking in the area surrounding the site. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be compliant with policy DM12.
- 4.40 Policy DM19 requires that where development would have a detrimental impact on air quality, this impact is mitigated. An air quality Assessment is submitted in support of this statement to fully address the requirements of policy DM19. The conclusion reached is that the mitigation measures set out within the assessment will be sufficient to ensure the proposal has an acceptable impact on air quality as required by policy DM19.
- 4.41 Policy DM1 requires developments to adapt to climate change including minimising the effect of surface water runoff through the design of the drainage system. The proposed development incorporates the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) through making provision for a SUDS soakaway to the rear of the site. This soakaway will achieve significant benefits for the existing drainage of the site by increasing the permeable area of the site from 55 square metres as existing to 171 square metres as proposed.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

- 4.42 The Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD sets out the relevant sustainability standards to be achieved for different developments types. This application is submitted alongside a Sustainability and Energy Statement demonstrating how the principles of sustainable development have, and will continue, to influence the design, construction and operations

of the proposed scheme in order to meet the requirements of policy CS1 and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

- 4.43 The Boroughs Employment Skills and Training SPD was adopted in 2013 and requires major developments to demonstrate measures to enhance social inclusion in terms of access to a range of services and employment. The SPD confirms that there are 2 key areas of employment, the first is the construction phase and the second is the end user stage, the latter applying to large commercial developments. The proposed development is not a large commercial development and would not create end user employment opportunities. As such a S106 payment is not considered necessary to enhance the skills of end users. The accommodation would be occupied solely by students whose main purpose for residing in Reading would be to complete self funded education at the University. As such no financial contribution is proposed towards the end user stage.
- 4.44 The construction phase would draw from the skills of the local labour force through the choice of local contractors where practicable. Due to the scale of the proposed development, the most appropriate method of supporting construction skills will be through the provision of a financial contribution as welcomed by the Boroughs SPD. The approach to this contribution is outlined in a following section and is consistent with previous applications at the site.
- 4.45 The Borough has an Affordable Housing SPD which sets out required provision for development proposals. Point 4.2 clarifies that affordable housing policies CS16 and DM6 will not be *'applied to student accommodation unless this is being developed on an allocated housing site or a site where residential development would have been anticipated'*.

Proposed S106 Heads of Terms

- 4.46 The Council's s106 Obligations SPD sets the boroughs approach to calculating financial contributions. The SPD aims to conform to the following tests set out by the NPPF in paragraph 204, relating to situations in which obligations should be sought:
- *Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms*
 - *Directly related to the development;*

- *Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development*

4.47 Officers have confirmed at pre application stage that financial contributions for a development of student accommodation would be towards leisure, employment and transport infrastructure. Since pre application discussions were held, the Council has commenced CIL charging and therefore the CIL addition information form has been completed. In this case, S106 remains the mechanism for securing site specific Travel Plan measures, as well as employment skills contributions where required, which are commented on below.

4.48 In respect of the Travel Plan measures, a Traffic Management Contribution has been previously agreed with the Council of £8,000. The applicant is willing to enter into a similar agreement subject to the contribution.

4.49 In terms of employment skills, the proposal is not a commercial development creating end user employment opportunities. Furthermore occupants of the accommodation would be self financing their education. As such a financial contribution towards end user employment and skills development is not considered to be necessary, directly or fairly and reasonably related to the development in accordance with paragraph 204 of the NPPF. No end user contribution is proposed as agreed during pre application discussions. This approach is consistent with previous applications at the site and remains in line with the principles of the legal agreement submitted alongside the previous appeal.

4.50 Once Officers have confirmed their support for the application and the s106 heads of terms proposed have been agreed, a s106 agreement will be submitted to progress alongside the application.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This statement has highlighted the social, economic and environmental benefits to the local area of the proposed redevelopment. The proposal has been significantly amended following the Inspector's comments about the appeal scheme, to specifically address the area of highlighted concern. The building is now of significantly reduced height, bulk and mass and would be in keeping with the character and scale of the surrounding area. Recycling the use of this previously developed site is encouraged by the NPPF and

Development Plan policies and will improve the character of the area, support local business and boost the supply of purpose built student accommodation. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

6. APPENDIX 1: SAVILLS MARKETING INFORMATION

7 March 2014

The Savills logo, featuring the word "savills" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with the 's' and 'v' in a darker shade than the 'a', 'i', 'l', 'l', 's'.

Mr Richard Burlton
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savills.com

Dear Richard

RE: WOODLEY ARMS, READING

I write further to our telephone conversation whereby you requested clarification from Savills on the general interest that was expressed during the marketing of the above public house.

I can confirm that the property was marketed openly (For Sale board erected, marketing details sent to over 1000 pub and restaurant applicants, advertising on EG Property Link and Savills.co.uk) from the 23 January 2012 until June 2013, when the property was placed 'under offer'. Therefore a total of 18 months marketing.

The property was marketed with a guide price of £275,000, which we felt was realistic at the time and would not have discouraged parties from coming forward and enquiring. We later reverted to an 'offers invited' basis in order to encourage prospective buyers to offer.

We received a total of 3 offers, all from developers. The property was put under offer with one of the parties however the sale fell through and the property was placed back on the market. A deal was subsequently agreed with yourselves in June 2013.

I am able to confirm that as a result of our experience of marketing the property that we received negligible interest from public house and restaurant users. The majority of interest received was from developers looking to convert the property into a residential dwelling. We carried out a total of 8 viewings although we expect this figure is higher as some would have inspected informally.

In view of the barrellage information, letting history and our marketing efforts, I form the conclusion that the lack of interest from the pub and restaurant industry has come about due to the business being unable to provide an operator with a viable and sustainable return.

I hope this brief note clarifies our experience and thoughts on this matter, however if you require further clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

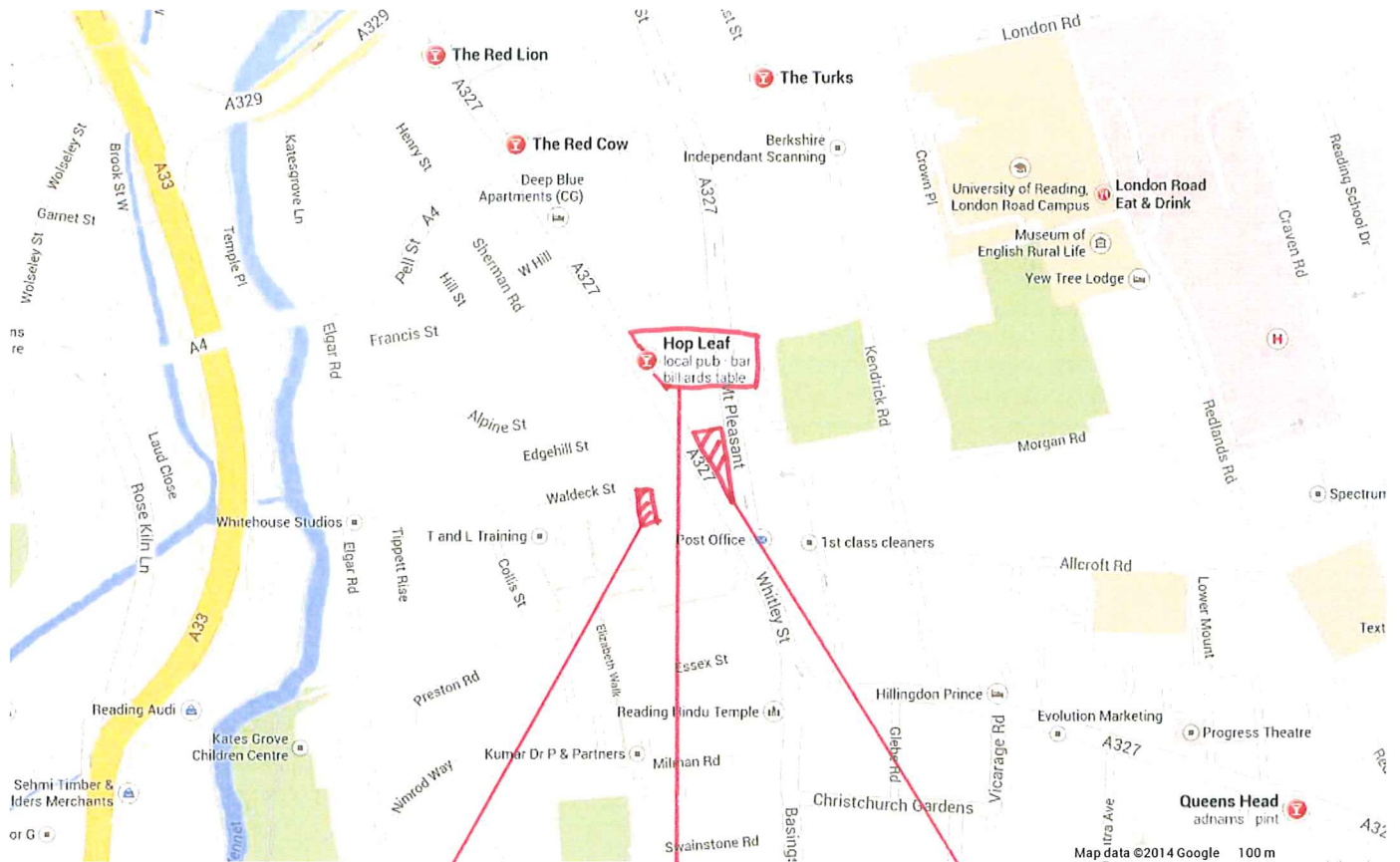
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Bullas", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Bullas PGDip Surv MRICS
Associate Director

Sent on behalf of Savills (UK) Limited

7. APPENDIX 2: A4 USES IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE SITE



Proposal site
Woodley Arms

'The Pheasant', closest
public house to the
site at 130m walking
distance

The 'Hop leaf'
public house with
200 metres of the site
walking distance.