

PROPOSAL: SITE LOCATION:

Type : Full Application - Planning Submission

Location:

1015 Oxford Rd, Reading, RG31 6TL

Project Description:

Proposed erection of a new block of 9 flats, following demolition of the existing HMO dwelling.

Planning Statement

This document will outline the relevant information and planning policy used in the preparation of the submitted design.

A planning statement:

...identifies the context and need for a proposed development and includes an assessment of how the proposed development accords with relevant national, regional and local planning policies.

Note: See also the accompanying 'open space' and 'design access' statements.

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INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Padmore Design to support a planning application for the development of 9 apartments, on land at 1015 Oxford Road, Reading ("the site").

This document is produced as a statement in support of a Detailed Planning Application for the redevelopment of 1015, Oxford Road, Reading, RG31 6TL., which presently contains an 8 room HMO.

The Statement to be read in conjunction with the detailed design documentation submitted in support of the application and adjusted following the advice received within the pre-application advice dated 9th April 2020, reference number 192037/PREAPP by James Overall.

This Statement has due regard to the design policy objectives, together with the policies of sustainable development and that the design fully meets these conditions.

The proposed development comprises;

'Demolition of the existing structure to form 9 apartments. The site is fronted by Oxford Road the A329. Presently the site is occupied as an 8 bed HMO. The site is situated to the East of Reading Centre in the District of Tilehurst. The site is well within the Settlement Limit and is surrounded in the main by existing housing. Car parking including a turning head within the site will be formed to the frontage including communal bin stores. There will be pavements formed either gable leading to rear bicycle stores and an open communal garden area for the use of the 9 apartments.

A separate open space statement and a design access statement is also available to be read in conjunction with this planning statement which is to identify and assess areas of existing open space adjoining the application, how they are to be managed in the future and how they can be enhanced or integrated into the proposal.

These statements have been written with regard to the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), in conjunction with the Reading Borough Council's Planning Validation Checklist.

The council also have a series of adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

SITE CONTEXT

Generally, the area is residential in nature, albeit with several of the substantial buildings along the Oxford road operating as guest houses and offices, and with a car sales showroom / forecourt, parking, and rail station situated opposite.

LOCAL PLANNING HISTORY

The following planning applications relate to the current building occupying the site;

- o Dormer roof conversion providing two additional bedrooms - 02/00720/FUL – withdrawn
- o First floor side extension. - 02/01056/FUL – refused
- o First floor side extension and change of use - care home to residential use (retrospective) - 02/01365/FUL - approved
- o June 2009 : Outline application to demolish existing building and erect 12 x 2 bed apartments (access, layout and scale only) Note: Withdrawn application for the purposes of obtaining pre-app advice - 091205
- o Retrospective planning permission for change of use to large HMO - Granted - 190600 - July 2019
- o Pre-application advice dated 9th April 2020, reference number 192037/PREAPP

Immediately adjacent to the site, No. 1017, is Warren Dean Guesthouse, including a two storey rear extension erected under planning approval ref: 89/01397/FUL. No.1013 immediately adjacent to the opposite side, is a converted dwelling-house forming self contained flats, with an integral garage adjoining the shared boundary with the site.

Recent major development approvals within the locality (10 units / 0.5 Ha +);

- o Former Banter Public House Site Construction of part two and part three storey nursing home
- o 1025-1027 Oxford Road – 12x 2-bed apartments, arranged over 3-storeys.

Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019

New Local Plan

A new Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 4th November 2019. This document sets out our planning policies for development in Reading up to 2036, and is the main consideration in deciding planning applications.

The Local Plan replaces RBC previous development plans – the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and Sites and Detailed Policies Document – which no longer apply.

The Local Plan is accompanied by a Proposals Map, which shows the geographical extent of policies in the plan.

The new Local Plan contains policy content relevant to the application:

POLICY CONTEXT

Prioritisation of small development sites

Paragraph 68 of the NPPF encourages to prioritise small development sites with regards to housing land provision and it emphasises that “Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should: support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes”.

Effective use of Land

Furthermore, an effective use of land is significantly highlighted in paragraph 71, which says that development suitable for first time buyers or entry-level sites should “be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards”, whereas paragraph 117 and encourages Local Planning Authorities to “promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”.

Achieving Appropriate Densities

Paragraph 122 in the ‘Achieving appropriate densities’ part of NPPF, emphasises that “Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, considering:

...the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it.

Local market conditions and viability:

...the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use.

...the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive, and healthy places.

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that the “creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve” and that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.

Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 126 emphasises an important role of the design codes and guides, which should “provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design” and that “their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified”.

The current lawful use of the site is as a large Sui Generis HMO. The proposal would provide additional dwellings to the Borough’s housing stock - the principle of which aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting meeting annual housing targets. The application site is also situated within a predominately residential area, whereby its location and accessibility is considered to accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development). The need for housing is considered to outweigh the need for HMO’s and as such it is likely that the loss of the current use of the site would be acceptable in policy terms.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Saved policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan referred to;

- o DP5 - Quality of urban and suburban areas.
- o EN1 – Landscape protection, particularly designated areas.
- o H3 – priority given to using previously developed land within settlement boundaries
- o H6 – Encourage densities in excess of 30 DPH, prioritising sites offering good accessibility to local facilities

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Reading Borough Council LDF - Adopted Core Strategy / Saved Local Plan Policies

CS1/ NRM11: Sustainable construction & design

We include a commitment to securing measures to provide at least 10% on-site renewable energy generation, a 25%+ improvement in thermal efficiency compared with current building regulations requirements, measures to limit water consumption and surface water run-off . The Code for Sustainable Homes has superseded the former eco-homes BREEAM rating system, whereby detailed design shall achieve code level 3 – 4.

CS2: Waste minimisation – facilities for recycling and storage are provided for, potentially incorporating suitable composting facilities subject to detailed landscaping design, in addition, the effective management of construction waste shall be ensured, in accordance with the code for sustainable homes.

CS3: Social Inclusion & Diversity – requires good access to facilities and for developments to contribute towards local distinctiveness

CS4: Accessibility & intensity of Development - scale and density of development to be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.

CS5: Inclusive access – buildings to be designed to be physically accessible to all.

CS6 / KEY 4: Development to be within the defined settlement boundary

CS7 / CUD 14: Design & the public realm - All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

Proposed improvements to the public realm include reducing the area the hard-standing currently covering the entire site frontage, introducing areas of soft landscaping including front boundary hedging / tree in-fill and planted borders to front of building.

Policy BE1/CUD 14: Promotes resource efficient, flexible and adaptable accommodation, with attention given to reducing crime.

Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities – financial contributions towards upgrading and providing necessary infrastructure and facilities are offered as S.106 financial contributions, in accordance with the Councils' SPG.

CS14: promotes the development of 572 dwellings p.a. including windfall sites of previously developed land. The core spatial strategy encourages development within areas of high accessibility to central Reading, while respecting the character and built form of the locality.

The RSS adopted 6th May targets 611 dwellings p.a.

CS15/BE2: Location, Accessibility, density & housing mix – The site falls within the definition of 'accessible suburban' as defined by the core strategy document, being situated where higher density housing is indicated as being appropriate referring to the 'Key Diagram'.

CS16: Affordable housing is currently only applicable to residential developments of 15+ dwellings, in accordance with PPS3.

CS20: Implementation of the Reading transport strategy – financial contributions towards upgrading and providing necessary infrastructure and facilities are offered as S.106 financial contributions, in accordance with the Councils' SPG.

CS23: Sustainable travel – secure covered bicycle storage facilities provided for, coupled with good access to public transport, including the regular bus services operating along the Oxford Road, and train services via Tilehurst Rail station.

Oxford Road is a classified road and is a main transport corridor located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the councils adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically these areas these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency

'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 0.25 spaces per bedroom, this therefore equates to a minimum provision of 5 car parking spaces. Submitted application form states that 9 parking spaces are to be provided which is in excess of these current standards. Plans are supplied illustrating provision and layout including access details. Parking spaces will be independently accessible and be a minimum of 2.4m x4.8m.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 0.5 cycle parking spaces for each unit should be provided in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store. This therefore equates to a minimum of 5 cycle parking spaces for the development. Cycle storage has been illustrated on the plans as a covered store.

Bin storage has been illustrated on the proposed plans; the developer will engage and take the advice of The Waste Management Team to ensure the correct capacity of bins is provided for the development.

CS24: Car / cycle parking – levels of provision are required to be appropriate to the location.

CS30: Access to public space

CS32: Impact on community facilities – financial contributions towards upgrading and providing further facilities are offered as S.106 financial contributions, in accordance with the Councils' SPG.

CS35: Flooding – the site falls outside of the EA flood map risk zones.

CS36: Biodiversity & geology – the site contains few natural features. Biodiversity shall be enhanced through the introduction of native plant species secured through a detailed landscaping plan at reserved matters or condition of consent stage. In addition bird boxes and Bat boxes will be located within the grounds as advised by an ecological report.

In addition to statutory obligations, Reading Borough Council has planning policies to protect biodiversity, namely, Local Plan NE6 and Core Strategy Policy CS36.

All Bats are protected under the 1981 Wildlife Countryside Act as amended and their roosts are protected under this legislation.

The existing building is potentially suitable for use by roosting bats which is a protected species. Prior to any works being undertaken an appropriately qualified surveyor will undertake a habitat survey for Bats to assess the current situation and advise on any action required under the law.

Sustainable Design & Construction SPG

Financial Contributions towards Infrastructure SPG

Design Principles to be utilised

Re-use of previously developed land

Redevelopment contained within the settlement boundary

Reflect the nature of detached buildings forming a linear pattern, set back from the highway.

Create an energy efficient development, with careful consideration of sound and thermal insulation.

Inclusion of renewable energy sources within the built form such as PV solar.

Incorporate crime prevention measures to current standards and advice.

Respect for nature of development in the area and settlement pattern.

Affordable Housing Strategy

Affordable Housing Units would normally be required on a site proposed of this density, however the management of such units in a block such as is proposed in this application would prove difficult. The social landlord would have to pay the Management Company a share of the total running costs of the site each year. The Council in its pre-application advice is proposing a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing off site. The client is willing to enter into a section 106 agreement which will enable financial contribution to the area.

Section 106 Agreement

Reading Borough Council have an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule in place which explains that CiL monies will be used for. As such, any financial contributions are to be agreed through Section 106 Agreement between the developer and the planning authority.

Through the agreement, there is an opportunity for the facilities to be improved, for example, by improved leisure facilities within Arthur Newbury Park and/or McIlroy Park, as defined and set out within the Local Plan. This could be undertaken through the inclusion of a financial contribution within any Section 106 agreement pursuant to the proposed development.

Proposed Heads of Terms

Payment is intended upon practical completion / prior to occupation of the development. This can be secured via a unilateral undertaking under S.106 agreement. We confirm our Clients willingness to undertake to pay the Councils Legal costs for drawing up such agreement.

CONCLUSION

The statement has identified and assessed that the application represents the appropriate re-use of a site already containing a substantial building footprint.

The site was formally occupied as a care home and then an HMO. Improvements in terms of replacement housing stock, providing for present and future housing demands, landscaping and the public realm would be secured, in a location offering good accessibility to local facilities and the town centre via alternative modes of transport as identified within Reading Borough Council Local Plan.

This statement has demonstrated how the proposed development can enable the community through a S106 agreement improve for instance the open space provision within Reading.

This provision will serve both residents of the proposed development, and also existing residents around the site.

end of statement