

PLANNING STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR A MINOR-MATERIAL
AMENDMENT TO APP. NO. 210885 FOR “ROOF ALTERATION AND
EXTERNAL ELEVATION WORKS”

ALEXANDER HOUSE, 205-207 KING’S ROAD,
READING, RG1 4LS

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

BMR PROPERTY GROUP

DECEMBER 2023

HCH LLP

Prepared by:
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This planning statement has been prepared by Hooper Curry Hamilton (HCH) LLP on behalf of BMR Property Group ("the Applicant"). It accompanies a planning application submission for a Section 73 Minor-Material Amendment (MMA) to planning application no.210885 "*Roof alterations and external elevation works*" at Alexander House, 205-207 King's Road, Reading RG1 4LS ("the Application site"). This is submitted to deliver a very high-quality residential building and the proposed minor changes to do this are listed below in Section 3 and
- 1.2. This statement takes the following form: a brief description of the Application Site and Surrounding Area in Section 2; Description of the Development in Section 3, Planning History in Section 4, Planning Policy is referenced in Section 5. Planning Consideration is provided in Section 6 and the Conclusion in Section 7.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1. Alexander House 205-207 King's Road, Reading RG1 4LS lies to the north of the King's Road adjacent to its junction with Rupert Street in Reading town centre. It is a short 10-minute walk from the main retail and leisure offering in the town centre at Broad Street and the Oracle shopping centre. Reading is a strategic regional town in the Thames Valley/ M4 corridor with a population of circa 200,000 people.
- 2.2. The town is located approximately 67km (42 miles) west of London, 44km (27.5 miles) south of Oxford and 27km (17 miles) east of Newbury and lies within an 8-minute drive of the M4. The property is situated approximately 1.6km (1.0 mile) to the east of Reading Railway Station which provides excellent links to the south-west of England, with regular fast services to London Paddington taking just 25 minutes and offering up to 16 trains per hour.



3. DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

3.1. The existing permission no. 210885 is for "Roof alterations and external elevation works", decision dated 24/08/21. This planning permission forms part of a suite of planning permissions and prior approvals, which cover the application site and allow for the comprehensive conversion of the existing office building to residential use. The permissions that cover the building are as follows:

3.1.1. *Prior Approval for the Main Building Floor Grd-1st - App. No. 230400*

Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 22 Flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Decision Date: 17/05/2023

3.1.2. *Planning Permission for Additional Residential Storey – App. No.210902*

Construction of new residential floor above existing roof level to create new residential use Class C3 to comprise 8 residential units. Decision Date 10/11/22

3.1.3. *Prior Approval for Roof Storey and Additional Residential Units at Grd/1st - App. No.: 210906*

Change of use from office use Class B1a to residential use Class C3 to create 13 new residential dwellings. These are created 11 within the roof-space of the building and a further 2 units on Ground and 1st Floor. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Decision Date: 28/07/2021. Allowed at Appeal 22/11/22.

3.2. This S73 MMA submission is made to deliver the following minor-material changes to the planning application no. 210885.

3.2.1. Replace and update the approach to the fenestration and with fixed glazed spandrel panels, which frame the proposed windows. This is proposed for windows on all floors (ground, 1st and 2nd/loft storey) The detail of this approach is provided on plans 2022-258-211 Rev A, 2022-258-212 Rev A and 2022-258-213 Rev A listed overleaf.

3.2.2. Introduce a buff brick banding on the proposed roof level floor, which aesthetically ties it into the existing banding on lower floors.



- 3.2.3. Correct a minor error on the existing building heights listed, due to an error on the building survey at the original planning stage. The error incorrectly labelled the existing loft floor at 6.600m when it should have been 7.600m. The proposed elevations have also been updated and with the roof alteration works in place, the final roof level will be 10.635m, rather the 9.400m annotated on the approved plan.
- 3.2.4. Amend the stair core to the proposed loft floor to align it with that approved under planning application no. 210902 for an additional floor on Alexander House. The approved loft floorplan for 210885 (AHR_PA1 104 Rev A enclosed) shows the stair core being extended to serve the new loft floor, but remaining the same width as there was no need to widen it for that application. However, the approved loft floor plan for planning application no. 210902 (AHR_PA2 104) shows the loft floor stair core widened to allow for a stair core to serve the new additional upper storey and that is now reflected here.
- 3.3. The application is being made under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Condition 2 of planning permission no. 210885, which lists the approved drawings. The drawings are listed below, with the proposed revised and additional drawings numbers represented in bold.

Approved Plans Listed on Decision Notice

AHR_PA1 001 received on 28 May 2021 Location Plan

AHR_PA1 101 received on 28 May 2021 Proposed Location Plan

AHR_PA1 102 received on 28 May 2021 Proposed Site Plan

AHR_PA1 104 Rev A received on 19 August 2021 replaced with 2022-258-312

AHR_PA1 105 received on 28 May 2021 Proposed Roof Plan replaced with 2022-258-205

AHR_PA1 106 received on 28 May 2021 Proposed Elevation A & B replaced with 2022-258-206

AHR_PA1 107 received on 28 May 2021 Proposed Elevation C & D replaced with 2022-258-207

AHR_PA1 108 received on 28 May 2021 Proposed Section AA & BB replaced with 2022-258-208

Additional Plans

2022-258-211 Rev A (Window Detail)

2022-258-212 Rev A (Window Detail)

2022-258-213 Rev A (Window Detail)

2022-258-311 Proposed Ground Floor Plan



- 3.4. This submission is made simultaneously with a further separate S73 Minor-material Amendment to 201902: *"Construction of new residential floor above existing roof level to create new residential use Class C3 to comprise 8 residential units"*. This is to deliver minor amendments to reflect the correct height of the existing building, to amend the approach to the fenestration and remove the proposed roof terrace.
- 3.5. It is also that Section 96a Non-Material Amendments (NMA) will be submitted to update the drawings attached to the prior approval application no. 210906 – *"Change of use from office use Class B1a to residential use Class C3 to create 13 new residential dwelling"* for the roof storey, and application no. 230400 – *"Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 22 Flats"* for ground and 1st floor of the existing building.

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1. The enclosed proposals have been considered against the following relevant planning policies.

Reading Borough Local Plan November 2019

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Affordable Housing SPD (2013) / Draft Affordable Housing SPD (October 2020)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015)



5. PLANNING HISTORY

5.1. The relevant planning history of the application site is as follows.

App. No.: 231062

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 7 (Noise assessment) of application 210902.

Decision Date: 29/08/2023

App. No.: 230905

Discharge of condition 15 (habitat enhancement scheme) of planning permission 210902, as granted on 10/11/2022.

Decision Date: 23/08/2023

App. No.: 230819

Discharge of condition 5 (Design stage SAP submission) of planning permission 210902, as granted on 10/11/2022.

Decision Date: 15/08/2023

App. No.: 230671

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 (schedule of materials) of Application 210902.

Decision Date: 16/05/2023

App. No.: 230656

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 (Construction Environmental Management Plan and Construction Phase Plan) of Application 210902.

Decision Date: Under Consideration

App. No.: 230400

Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 22 Flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Decision Date: 17/05/2023



App. No.: 162057

Erection of basement and 4 - 7 storey building comprising 56 (30x1, 18x2 & 8x3-bed) residential units (Class C3) with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing basement and 2 storey office building (Class B1a).

Decision Date: 17/05/2017

App. No.: 901103

Erection of two storey office block with semi-basement car park for 50cars and a two storey block of 7 flats with associated parking.

Decision Date: 23/08/1990

App. No.: 190160

Demolition of existing office building and construction of new 182 bed student accommodation development, over 7 storeys of accommodation plus lower ground floor, together with ancillary landscaping, parking, and amenity space,

Decision Date: 17/07/2019

App. No.: 210902

Construction of new residential floor above existing roof level to create new residential use Class C3 to comprise 8 residential units.

Decision Date: 10/11/2022

App. No.: 210885

Roof alterations and external elevation works.

Decision Date: 24/08/2021

App. No.: 230820

Non-material amendments to permission 210902 (granted on 10/11/22 to provide 8 residential units above the existing roof level) to increase the height of the building by 1.7m, provide a further fire escape access point at roof level adjacent to the north elevation of the Rupert Street elevation and alter all windows and doors to all floors of the building.

Decision Date: 24/07/2023 WITHDRAWN



App. No.: 210536

Change of use from office use Class B1(a) to use Class C3 to comprise 22 residential units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Decision Date: 25/06/2021

App. No.: 210906

Change of use from office use Class B1a to residential use Class C3 to create 13 new residential dwellings. These are created 11 within the roof space of the building and a further 2 units on Ground and 1st Floor. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Decision Date: 28/07/2021



6. PLANNING CONSIDERATION

- 6.1 The proposed minor-material amendment is to change the approach to the fenestration and the framing of the windows on Alexander House and the alteration to the brick banding on the roof storey. The principal issue to consider is what impact this has on the design and character of the building and whether that alteration remain acceptable within the existing character of the area.
- 6.2 This section does not consider whether the alteration to the building height is acceptable as this is not a physical change to the building just a correction to the survey.

Design, Impact on the Character of the Area, and Street Scene

- 6.3 Policy CC7: Design requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 6.4 The proposed amendment to the external works application is to introduce alternative approach to the fenestration and framing of the windows. Specifically, fixed glazed spandrel panels will be introduced to allow the building to achieve the required buildings regulations SAP calculations.



Image 1: Proposed Front Elevation of Alexander House



- 6.5 While the window areas have been reduced, this does not compromise the amount of internal daylight that the office use, and potentially proposed residential use, will receive. Indeed, these works are part of the ongoing works to convert this building to residential use and the revised approach to the windows is more suitable to the residential building that Alexander House will become. The proposed use of spandrel glazed fixed panels is architecturally appropriate, will contribute the high-quality finish of the building as demonstrated by the images below, will appear externally as glazing.



Image 2: Example images of spandrel glazed panels.

- 6.6 The second proposed amendment is to the facing material of the roof storey works. This brickwork did not include the appropriate banding, which it now does to tie into the building below.
- 6.7 While the cumulative impact of these external amendments is considered material, it does help the building present a more residential design to the street, which is now reflective of the internal proposed use. It is, therefore, considered that these amendments do not undermine the conclusions of the existing planning permission and that the completed building will still be appropriate to the surrounding character and acceptable within the street scene.



- 6.8 The correction to the height has come to light following internal inspection of the building. It is not clear how the error occurred, but the impact is that the loft floor base for the roof alteration works is approximately 1m higher than previously approved. This height adjustment does not strike at the heart of the existing permission and the amended plans, while considered a minor material change, do not make the works themselves unacceptable in planning terms.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. On the basis of the enclosed information, it is considered that the proposed minor amendments to the external elevation of the building are considered to be acceptable in planning and design terms.
- 7.2. Importantly, the combination of the new approach to the windows and the introduction of the red banded buff brick clearly creates a building of design quality that remains appropriate to its context.
- 7.3. The enclosed proposals are compliant with both the adopted Development Plan policy CC7 and the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and should be granted planning permission.