

PLANNING & DESIGN STATEMENT

Upward extension to accommodate additional flat

AT

185 Oxford Road, Reading – RG1 7UZ



Muhtasham Qureshi (B.Arch)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preface

This design statement has been prepared in support of a Full application for an upward extension and addition of a residential flat at 185a Oxford Road in Reading – RG1 7UZ.

This document will outline the application site location, planning history and surrounding area and reviews and appraises relevant planning policy and guidance, Identifies and appraises relevant planning considerations and why the applicant wishes to add a floor and a residential flat. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

1.2. Site Location

It is situated on Oxford Road on the South side of the road in the mid of its junctions with Prospect Street and Bedford Road. The site is located within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road conservation area.



Site location (Courtesy Google Maps)



Rear view of the property (Courtesy Google Maps)

1.3. Site Description

The application site is a mid-terraced three storey property with a straight parapet. The ground floor is a commercial unit with residential flats on upper floors. The site is 0.2 miles (5 minutes' walk) from the nearest train station Reading West. The surrounding area is a mix of residential flats, commercial properties, dental practices, religious buildings etc.

The application site constitutes about 217.3m². The application property consists of a terraced three storey property. detached one & half storey with gable projections and cat slide roof to the front and rear elevations. There are no protected trees on the site. The site is designated in Flood Zone 1 by the Environment Agency and not at risk of any flooding event as a result of the proposed development.

1.4. Character of Surrounding

Oxford Road is characterised by a mixed type of development with varying roof profiles. The designs and elevation features are summed up as follows:

- Type (terraces built in different eras, detached properties with varying uses, including dental practices, church, converted warehouses);
- Elevations' materials (rendered, traditional brick, sash windows, bricks and stone window surrounds and hanging tiles);

- Roof forms (hipped, gable roof and flat);
- Varied in Scale/footprint/volume;
- Driveways (only available on the north side of Oxford Road) neighbouring properties to 185A Oxford Road have access to their respective car parking spaces via Prospect Street and Prospect Mews.

By virtue of significant diversity within the surrounding area, we consider that the proposed addition of roof would be perfectly fitted, well-designed and balanced. It would not result in any adverse impact upon the neighbourhood and the application site itself.

2. PLANNING

2.1 Planning History

Ref: 231139/FUL: Change of use of First floor into 2 no. Studio flats - **Approved**

2.2 Planning policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for RBC comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted on 4th November 2019. This document sets the borough's planning policies for development in Reading up to 2036, and is the main consideration in deciding planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the key material consideration which must be taken into account by planning decision-makers. The NPPF, which is expounded upon by the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development including where the Development Plan is silent, absent or the policies are out of date.

2.3 National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
- National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 (PPG) (onwards)
- National Design Guide 2019 (NDG)

Central Government policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012 with subsequent updates, the latest being in 2021.

The main NPPF sections, in so far as they relate to this proposal, are set out below

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

The NPPF identifies three key dimensions to which the planning system can contribute towards achieving sustainable development, namely:

- An economic role – by contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by creating a high quality built environment, and
- An environmental role – contributing to protecting/enhancing the natural and built environment, including minimising waste and pollution and mitigating climate change.

The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which the document identifies as a “golden thread” running through both plan-making and decision-taking. In terms of decision taking, paragraph 14 advises that local planning authorities (LPAs) should seek to approve development proposals which accord with the Development Plan without delay, whilst also granting permission for proposals in instances where the Development Plan is absent, silent or where relevant policies are out of date – unless any adverse impact in doing so significantly outweigh the benefits.

Additionally, the NPPF sets out core planning principles (paragraph 17) which should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The main core principles relevant to this proposal confirm that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- Encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land);
- Promote mixed use development and encourage multiple benefits from use of land in urban and rural areas, and
- Actively manage patterns of growth that make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus development which is, or can be made sustainable.

In addition to the core principles, the Framework sets out guidance relative to types of development and environmental considerations. The following is considered relevant.

2.3.1 Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

The NPPF advises that investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations. LPAs should, inter alia, support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting, and policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan.

2.3.2 Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

The NPPF seeks to promote the role of town centres, which should be recognised by LPAs, when preparing Local Plans, as representing the heart of their communities where policies should support their viability and vitality.

It is confirmed that LPAs should apply sequential tests to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan.

It advises that when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and LPAs should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale (paragraph 86).

2.3.3 Making effective use of land

The NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should 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. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land. (paragraph 119).

Paragraph 120 goes on to promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings and supports opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes.

2.3.4 Requiring Good Design

The NPPF advises that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 126).

It advises that decisions should aim to ensure that developments, inter alia:

- Function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses and support local facilities and transport networks;
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments, and
- Are visually attractive as a result of the architecture and appropriate landscaping (paragraph 130).

The guidance emphasises that whilst visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are important, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. As such, decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 20).

2.4 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

RBC Local Plan (LP) adopted 2019 contains planning policies to manage development in Reading up to 2036. The LP is accompanied by a Proposals Map, which shows the geographical extent of policies in the plan.

Relevant Development Plan policies when assessing the proposal are as follows:

- Policy CC1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- Policy CC4: Decentralised Energy
- Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure
- Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- Policy EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
- Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- Policy EN15: Air Quality
- Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
- Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage
- Policy H5: Standards for New Housing
- Policy H8: Residential Conversions
- Policy TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
- Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
- Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- Policy RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

- Policy RL2: Scale and location of retail, leisure and culture development

3. APPRAISAL

3.1 General Concept

The application proposal seeks full planning permission for the construction of additional storey (Mansard Roof) to form a third floor to accommodate a new flat above the existing flats on first and second floor level. The existing layout is as follows

Ground Floor: Commercial Unit

First Floor: 2 No. Flats

Second Floor: 1 No. Flat

Access to the new flat would remain from the existing staircase and entrance opening at Oxford Road.

3.2 Proposal

The proposal will be designed to be in keeping with the rest of the building below, the street and the local area. The extension would incorporate similar materials as the existing building and incorporates certain architectural features from the existing building. The design approach is to built a mansard roof which has proven to be a useful design especially in conservation area and places where a delicate balance within the street view is required due to architectural or historical setting.

Policy CC7 states that 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. This includes layout, landscape, density and mix, scale (height and massing) and architectural details.

The Policy further notes that development must make a positive contribution to RBC's urban design objectives. Developments should also respond positively to their local context, create safe and accessible environments, be inclusive and visually attractive.

Policy CR2 is a specific design policy and notes a number of attributes that development should follow including respecting the existing grid layout structure; providing appropriate public spaces, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure; use of high quality materials and

incorporation of architectural detailing; and designed with consideration for the future development of neighbouring sites.

Policy CR3 encourages new development to make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm.

The proposed scheme has considered the overall height and massing compared to its neighbours. An appropriate design of mansard roof with three front dormer windows and two rear dormer windows will achieve the desired effect. The limited impact is achieved through the set back from the front and rear elevations, maintaining a respectful roof form. This enables a reduction in scale and mass and helps preserve the building's character and appearance.

The design approach seeks to respect the existing building and create a seamless addition to it. The addition of floor would incorporate complimenting materials as the existing building as well as incorporating certain architectural features from the existing building, such as the sash windows.

3.3 Impact on the Character of the Area

Residential amenity is assessed against Policy CC8 which requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety.

The proposed scheme has been carefully designed in response to the daylight assessment to respect the residential amenity of surrounding dwellings and to ensure that the residential amenities of future residents are also respected.

3.3.1 Overlooking

At roof level the dormers are high level and set back from the eaves. This substantially limits potential for overlooking. The higher-level position of the third floor windows also further increases distances compared to the approved flats located at lower levels in the building.

3.3.2 Harm to outlook

Given the reduced massing proposed by this scheme, it is not considered that the additional proposed development would have any material impact on the existing outlook from neighbouring properties.

The application property is characterised with a sustainable location and the proposed replacement dwelling itself would not detract from the character and vitality of the area and quality of the environment. Therefore, it is safe to believe there is no prevalent character of the properties within the street. However, they are providing an attractive appearance in its own regard.

3.4 Transport, Parking & Access

Policy CC6 sets out that the scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest development taking place in the most accessible locations.

Policy TR3 states that in determining proposals involving the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Development will only be permitted where it would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network.

The site is in a highly accessible location in Reading due to the availability of footways and cycle routes in the vicinity of the site and its proximity to a comprehensive network of public transport services, including train from Reading West Station and buses within walking distance of the site. The proposed new dwelling would not be a car-free development as private space would be available for the future resident.

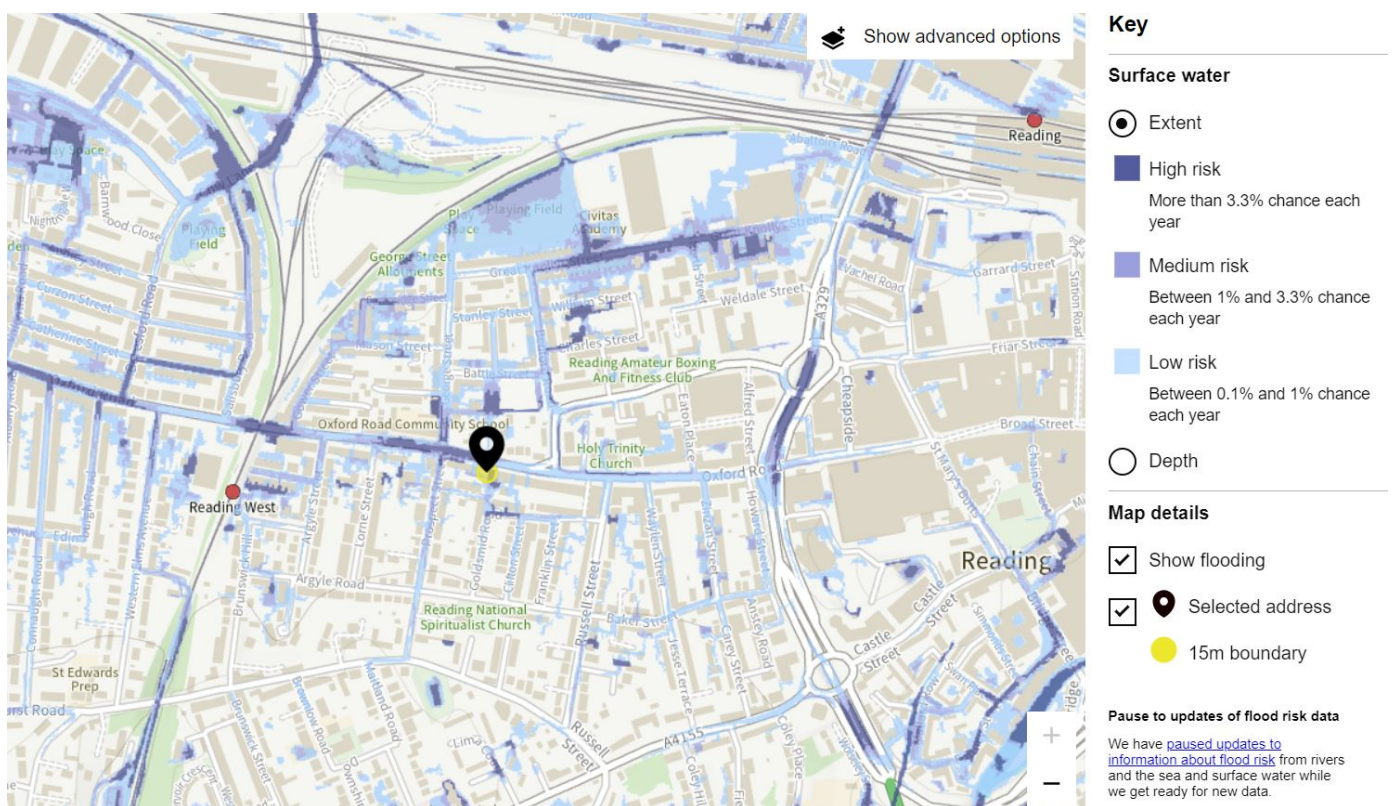
Reading West Station is located approximately 0.2m (5-minute walk) to the west of the site. Reading West station is situated on the Great Western Main Line, which provides access to key destinations including London Paddington and London Waterloo, as well as local services to Newbury, Swindon, Oxford, Basingstoke and Twyford.

3.6 Waste & Recycling Storage

Internal waste collection storage area is provided to facilitate the flats. The bins would be taken to the point of collection on the designate days.

3.7 Flooding Risk

The Site falls within very low risk of flooding as per Environment Agency, the Surface Water Risk is 'High', however due to the location of the proposal on the thrid floor, it is our understanding that the Environmental Agency will not object this proposal.



Surface water flooding map (from Environment Agency)

As the development is for the addition of a new floor comprising 1 flat above the existing building, the site impermeable surface around the site remains as existing. As such, the development has a neutral impact on the existing flood risk.

In conclusion, the future occupants and users of the proposed development will be safe from flooding and there will be no detrimental impact on third parties. The proposal complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policy with respect to flood risk and is an appropriate development at this location.

4. CONCLUSION

The development has been sympathetically designed to complement the character and appearance of the existing building, with the design approach guided by the LPA's feedback on the pre-application advice ref # 240245. As demonstrated by this statement and the supporting documents, the scheme complies with the relevant Development Plan policies and would have no material impact upon surrounding residential properties. As set out in this statement and there would be no impact upon the amenity of the existing neighbouring and neighbouring premises including overlooking, privacy and the loss of light.

Flood map for planning

Your reference
185A Oxford

Location (easting/northing)
470619/173376

Created
11 Aug 2024 21:29

Your selected location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

You will need to do a flood risk assessment if your site is **any of the following:**

- bigger than 1 hectare (ha)
- In an area with critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency
- identified as being at increased flood risk in future by the local authority's strategic flood risk assessment
- at risk from other sources of flooding (such as surface water or reservoirs) and its development would increase the vulnerability of its use (such as constructing an office on an undeveloped site or converting a shop to a dwelling)

Notes

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. It doesn't include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments.

This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. The map is updated regularly and is correct at the time of printing.

Flood risk data is covered by the Open Government Licence **which** sets out the terms and conditions for using government data. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

Use of the address and mapping data is subject to Ordnance Survey public viewing terms under Crown copyright and database rights 2022 OS 100024198. <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/os-terms>

Flood map for planning

Your reference
185A Oxford

Location (easting/northing)
470619/173376

Scale
1:2500

Created
11 Aug 2024 21:29

-  Selected area
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 2
-  Flood zone 1
-  Flood defence
-  Main river
-  Water storage area

