

PLANNING STATEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTERNAL AMENDMENTS TO
CREATE WINDOW OPENINGS AT BASEMENT FLOOR

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

ON BEHALF OF BMR PROPERTY GROUP

HCH PROJECTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by HCH Projects on behalf of the applicant, BMR Property Group. It accompanies a planning application for external works to Alexander House 205-207 King's Road, Reading RG1 4LS to introduce windows to the basement floor of the existing building.

1.2 The following information is submitted to accompany this planning application:

- 1.2.1 Completed Application Form
- 1.2.2 CIL Form
- 1.2.3 Planning Statement
- 1.2.4 Location Plan
- 1.2.5 Site Plan
- 1.2.6 Existing Elevation A B
- 1.2.7 Existing Elevation C D
- 1.2.8 Existing and Proposed Basement Plan
- 1.2.9 Proposed Elevations Existing Building
- 1.2.10 Proposed Elevations Extended Building

1.3 This statement will take the following form: a brief description of the 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.



2.0 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.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application is made to Reading Borough Council (RBC) for the following external works.

"External works to basement floor to create new window openings".

- 3.2 As described above, the enclosed proposal is to introduce additional basement level windows to the existing building. This accompanies a separate application for prior approval Class MA change from the existing class E (Office) use to class C3 (Residential) of this enclosed space.



4.0 PLANNING POLICY

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

Reading Borough Local Plan 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

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 The relevant planning history of the building is as follows.

App. No.: 231801

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 210902 (granted on 10/11/2022 for construction of new residential floor above existing roof level to create new residential use Class C3to comprise 8 residential units) to alter windows and doors on all floors and elevations, provide brick banding detailing below the new floor, removal of the permitted roof terrace, provision of 9 air source heat pumps and 2 opening vents at roof level, revised escape staircase, amendments to the height of the building and various other associated works.

Decision Date: 23/05/2024



App. No.: 231792

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 210885 (granted on 24/08/2021 for roof alterations and external elevation works) to alter windows and doors on all floors and elevations, provide brick banding detailing at the newly created floorlevel, increase in width of the addition on the northern elevation, amendments to the height of the building and associated works.

Decision Date: 04/06/2024

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: 16/04/2024

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



5 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

Principle of Development

- 5.5 The proposed physical works in this application will introduce additional natural light into the existing basement area of Alexander House.
- 5.6 The NPPF states that LPAs should “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value”. These works would allow the effective use of this existing space and should therefore be considered acceptable.

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

- 5.7 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. The proposed external alterations to Alexander House are considered to be minor within the overall elevation of both the existing building and the building following its loft floor and additional floor extensions.
- 5.8 The proposals would not adversely harm the character of the surrounding streetscape or give rise to an overly dominant or incongruous addition to the immediate area such to warrant a refusal and is compliant with Policies CC8, H10 and H11.

Biodiversity Exemption Statement

- 5.9 The enclosed planning application does not include the disturbance of any external habitat whatsoever. In this regard, it benefits from a De Minimis exception.



6 CONCLUSION

- 6.5 On the basis of the enclosed information, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and in design terms.
- 6.6 This conclusion is also in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and would not appear incongruous within the existing or extended elevations of Alexander House. Therefore, planning permission should be granted for the proposed additional windows.