

C5012

146-168 Hexham Road and 199-211 Newcastle Road

Planning, Design and Access Statement

The application intends to gain full planning permission for external refurbishment to improve the building performance and occupant comfort. This includes altering the external appearance of the building.

Works include the following:

- the complete replacement of non-loadbearing elevations including rendered external wall insulation
- the complete replacement of external windows and communal doors and entrance canopies
- the complete replacement of the roof covering and replacement gutters, fascias and soffits
- the replacement of existing gas boilers with air source heat pumps

As Reading Borough Council is the applicant, it is expected that the application is to be referred to the Planning Applications Committee for a determination.

The need for the design is largely driven by the need to repair and renovate ageing building stock and climate change. The proposals improve comfort of the residents and improve building performance.

Planning

PROPERTY AND SITE

The existing buildings are located among others of a similar nature. Each block has 12 flats each with two-bedroom, bathroom, living space and separate kitchen. The local authority maps do not identify and specific designations on the site.

SITE HISTORY

There is no record of previous development at the site.

SITE CONTEXT

The buildings are located on Hexham Road and Newcastle Road and surrounded by some similar blocks and terrace houses. There are other three storey blocks of flats in the local area, all of which are of similar size and style. Some of the blocks are already undergoing refurbishment of a similar nature.

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RELEVANT POLICY

1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019
2. The local Plan for Reading 2019 (replacing the Reading Borough Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document). This is consistent with the NPPF.

The following cross-cutting policies apply:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

Appraisal of Proposal

The following considers the proposal in relation to the above policies:

PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- The application is to be judged in accordance with the policies of the development plan and any relevant neighbourhood plans.

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- The need to improve building performance is a key driver in justifying the proposed scheme. Enhancements are required to improve user comfort and futureproof the building considering climate change.
- Reduction of heating demand will be achieved through upgrades to the building fabric; external wall insulation and replacement windows and doors will greatly improve thermal performance.
- The replacement of existing gas boilers with the installation of air source heat pumps to all flats is intended to provide a more sustainable primary energy source.
- The improved U-value of the building fabric will keep out excess heat.
- Windows positions are retained throughout and the arrangement of the flats benefits from being dual aspect to provide cross ventilation.
- No changes are proposed to the surface water runoff.
- Solar PV is proposed to the buildings which will enable occupants to benefit from renewable energy.

DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- Layout, landscape, density and scale are to remain as existing. In order to achieve the improvements to fabric performance, however, the introduction of an external wall insulation solution is required. This provides an opportunity to enhance the quality of design within the current context.
- The proposed external design is a departure from the existing, however it better reflects the newly developed character created by recent developments in the immediate area. Multiple neighbouring buildings have undergone similar refurbishment schemes, which include the following:
 - (app. ref: 131792) Rothbury Court, Stanhope Road (2014)
 - (app. ref: 151231) Kershope Court, Bamburgh Close (2015)
 - (app. ref: 161771) Kielder Court, Hexham Road (2016)
 - (app. ref: 180185) Redesdale Court, Bamburgh Close (2018)
 - (app. ref: 190808) Denton Court, Hexham Road (2019)
 - (app. Ref: 221649) 56 Bamburgh Close (2022)
- The proposal intends to create an identity and sense of place for the existing building, by introducing subtle differences in the finishes, which will result in a more modern design.
- The proposed design provides a pleasant, uniform appearance with sectional vertical divisions to break up mass. These also help to define the communal entrances and improve accessibility.

SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

- Existing residential amenity or accommodation of the neighbouring properties and those properties within the proposed building itself will not be adversely affected as a result of the proposal.
- The size and positions of openings remain the same, therefore there is no impact on privacy and overlooking.
- Overall, the use and positions of rooms remain exactly as existing, resulting in no impact to the neighbouring properties.
- A restriction on hours of work for construction and demolition would be appropriate to further protect the amenity of the neighbours temporarily during construction.
- Entrance canopies have been amended to give better surveillance both from and to the building entrances, whilst still providing the necessary cover.

Design



USE

Both the buildings existing use is twelve flats with two communal staircases for access. It is proposed that the building's existing use and layout will remain the same. The proposed works only impact the external materials of the building to improve the comfort of the residents whilst improving the building's performance.

SCALE

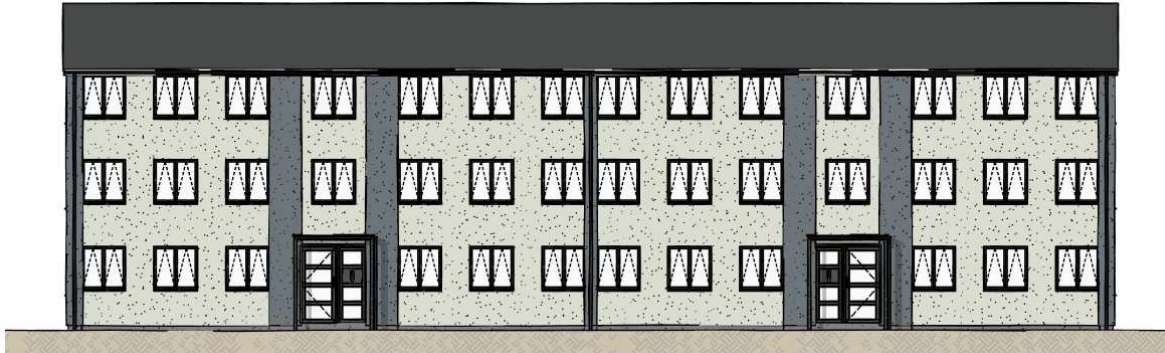
The existing structure is to remain as it is, resulting in the building's size remaining as it is. The proposed change of external material will not affect the scale of the building.

It is proposed that the existing porches at the building's entrances be demolished and replaced with modern canopies over the new doors. This will result in a modern design and shelter at the entrance of the building.

LANDSCAPING

Where possible the existing landscaping on the site will remain untouched. If the landscaping is impacted as a result of the renovations the contractor will be responsible to make good the landscaping.

APPEARANCE & MATERIALS



In the site's locality, there is evidence of other upgraded blocks of flats, including Bamburgh Close, which has undergone a similar refurbishment.

It is proposed that all elevations are to be rendered. The building will be rendered in 'PermaRock Silicone K Finish' (1.5mm)—Agave 25, a light cream colour, and 'PermaRock Silicone K Finish' (1.5mm)—Arctis 10, grey, resulting in a modern finish.

To improve the building's performance, all doors and windows are to be replaced with new triple glazing. The existing windows are also proposed to be replaced with RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey windows. All windows are to be top-hung and openable to improve ventilation. The front and rear doors will be updated to a modern style and colour, RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey. They are to be glazed to allow a more welcoming entrance.

The existing brick porches to the front elevation will be demolished and replaced by smaller, modern canopies to improve the entrances. These canopies will be RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey to match the proposed windows and doors.

The roof tiles of the existing building are to be dismantled and replaced with reconstituted grey roofing slates. These will provide a contemporary and modern feel, in line with the local area's architectural trends.

Twelve proposed ASHP are to be located to the rear of each building. Each of the ASHP will provide a flat with its main source of heating.

Access

VEHICULAR / PARKING

The proposals do not impact the existing road or parking arrangements at the site.