

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
Planning Statement

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DEVELOPER

Chesters Place Limited

DEVELOPMENT AT

1029 Oxford Road
Tilehurst
Reading
RG31 6TL

Development of new building to provide 2no.1 bedroom and 6no. 2 bedroom flats along with the creation of 8 parking spaces and associated landscaping.
Following the demolition of the existing building.

PREPARED BY

C Thorpe

16th January 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full application by Chesters Place Limited for the following:

“Development of new building to provide 2 x 1 bedroom and 6 x 2 bedroom flats along with the creation of 8 parking spaces and associated landscaping following the demolition of the existing building”

1.2. The remainder of this statement is divided into 4 main sections dealing with the following issues:
Site and Surrounding Area

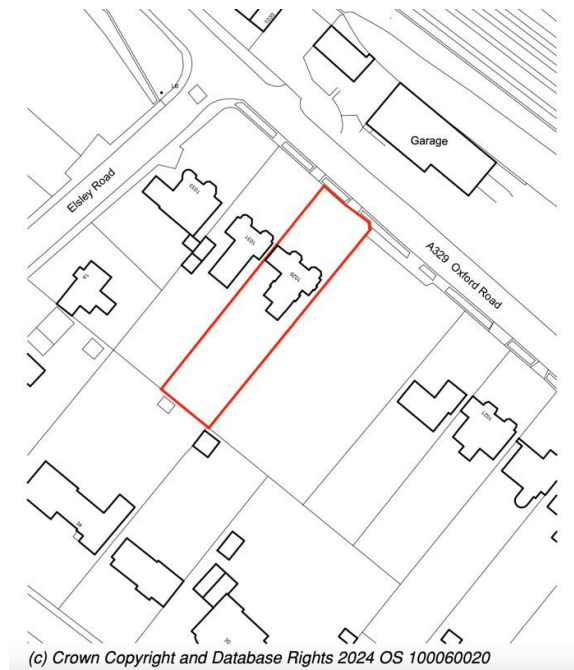
- Site and surrounding area
- Planning Policy Context
- The Proposal
- Summary and Conclusions

1.3. This statement will confirm that the proposal would not be contrary to national or local policy guidance. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the submission is sustainable and will make an important contribution towards the Council’s windfall site provision. The application is accompanied by the following supporting consultant reports:

- Design and Access Statement
- CMS
- Transport Statement
- Air quality assessment
- BNG assessment
- Ecology assessment
- Energy statement
- Noise assessment

2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Location



2.1 The application site is situated within a well-defined residential area characterized by a mix of **semi-detached** and **detached dwellings**. The properties along this section of **Oxford Road** feature a variety of plot sizes, contributing to the diversity of the area.

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2.2 The surrounding neighbourhood exhibits a mixed character and appearance, comprising buildings of varying **heights, architectural designs, and uses**, further emphasizing the eclectic nature of the area.

Existing view of the site – Looking South



Existing view of the site – Looking North



2.3 Looking North of the site

2.3.1 To the north of the site is Charters Garage, a disused former car sales garage and currently subject to an application (PL/24/1500) for 32 dwellings over 3 blocks.

Currently



Proposed elevations for application PL/24/1500



2.4 Looking East of the site

2.4.1 Immediately to the east of the site are two vacant plots at **1027 and 1025 Oxford Road**. These plots historically accommodated two detached properties that have since been demolished, leaving the site overgrown for several years.

2.4.2 Planning history for the site includes application **06/00561/OUT** and associated appeal reference **APP/E0345/A/06/2024818**.

2.4.3 More recently, a **Certificate of Lawfulness** for the proposed use, development, and implementation of the historic permission has been approved under reference **PL/23/1537**.

2.4.4 Given this approval, it can reasonably be assumed that the development will be constructed in accordance with the permissions granted in 2006.

Currently



The approved designs for 1027 & 1025 Oxford Road 06/00561/OUT



2.5 Looking South of the site

2.5.1 To the south of the site lies **Clevedon Avenue**, characterized by a diverse mix of detached single-family homes and apartment blocks, each situated on large plots. The rear boundary with Clevedon Avenue is heavily screened by established trees and hedgerows, ensuring that no overlooking will occur for these properties.

Looking South



2.6 Looking West of the site

2.6.1 As the sole neighbour affected by the planned development, the property at 1031 Oxford Road has been given careful attention in the design of the development layout.

2.6.2 Significant thought has been applied to the design of the building's frontage to ensure it harmonizes with the characteristics of 1031 Oxford Road. This includes incorporating two large bays and gable detailing, mirroring architectural elements to maintain visual cohesion.

2.6.3 In addition, the placement of windows has been carefully planned to avoid creating any new overlooking concerns, ensuring the privacy of neighbouring property is preserved.

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1031 Oxford Road



3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework – July 2021

3.1 Paragraph 7 of the revised NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that in achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. Paragraph 10 states that *'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11)*. The guidance states at paragraph 11 that for decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to date development plan without delay.

3.2 Paragraph 38 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

3.3 Paragraph 64 states that affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments (i.e. 10 or more homes or on sites of 0.5 hectares or more).

3.4 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 119 states that planning policies and decision 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.

3.5 Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account

- 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 gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

3.6 Chapter 12 is concerned with achieving well designed places. Paragraph 126 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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. Paragraph 130 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments;

The Development Plan - Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

3.7 The most relevant policies are summarised below:

3.8 Policy CC1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development. States that a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which means that proposals can be approved wherever possible.

3.9 The policy continues by stating that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.10 Policy CC5 – Waste Minimisation and Storage. States that development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composition.

3.11 Policy CC6 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development. 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 and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations.

3.12 Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm. States that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form include: layout; landscape; density and mix; scale (height and massing); and architectural details and materials. These will be assessed to ensure that the development makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives:

- Character;
- Continuity and enclosure;
- Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping;
- Ease of movement and permeability;
- Legibility;
- Adaptability;
- Diversity.

3.13 Development will be assessed to ensure that they, amongst other matters:

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

3.14 Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity. Requires that development does not result in a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of development.

- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety.

3.15 The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate.

3.16 Policy CC9 – Securing Infrastructure. Proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.

3.17 Policy H1 – Provision of Housing. States that provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 – 2036. The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to ensure that the shortfall of 230 dwellings that cannot be provided within Reading will be met over the plan period.

3.18 Policy H2 – Density and mix. States that the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:

- The character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;
- Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- The need to achieve high quality design;
- The need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and
- The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

3.19 Indicative densities are set out in figure 4.5 of the Local Plan. The application site has an urban context and therefore the suggested density range is 60-120 dwellings per hectare. The policy also states that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6 of the Local Plan. This confirms that of market dwellings, 10.3% should be 1 bed and 29.6% should be 2 bed properties which is the second highest demand size. The minimum 50% 3 bed requirement is only applicable for sites of 10 or more dwellings.

3.20 Policy H3 – Affordable housing. As this site has **a net gain of 4 dwellings**, sites of between 1-4 dwellings, will require a financial contribution equivalent to 10% of the housing to be provided. Where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open book approach will be taken with the onus on the applicant to demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.

3.21 Policy H5 – Standards for New Housing. States that new built housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:

- a) All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.
- b) All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building regulations;
- c) All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.
- d) All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.
- e) All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3).
- f) On development of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

3.22 Policy H10 – Private and Communal Open Space. States that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space.

3.23 The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity and should not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.

3.24 Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters. In determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.

4.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposed development is to provide 2no. 1-bedroom apartments and 6no. 2-bedroom apartments, along with the creation of 8 parking spaces and associated landscaping, following the demolition of the existing building.

4.2 The key considerations are therefore considered to be as follows:

- The principle of development;
- Design, character and appearance;
- Housing density, type and mix
- Amenity of adjoining occupiers and new occupants;
- Access and parking provision;
- Planning balance and conclusions.

i) Principle of development

4.3 The application site is within an existing urban area, a location which is free from environmental or heritage constraints (e.g. Flooding, Green Belt, conservation areas, listed buildings). The location is sustainable, and close to a range of services and public transport links. The Tilehurst train station is just 7 minute's walk away and Oxford Road has regular bus services to Reading town centre and the surrounding areas

4.4 In terms of sustainability, the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 identifies three objectives to sustainable development comprising (i) economic, (ii) social and (iii) environmental. These are interdependent but need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The proposal meets with all of these roles, as follows:

i) Economic objective

- It would result in local employment opportunities in the construction industry. For every new home built, up to two jobs are created for a year (as set out in the Government Housing Strategy for England (2011));
- Provides contributions to the Council in the form of the New Homes Bonus that can be spent on local infrastructure enhancements;
- The new residents resulting from the scheme will help to sustain the key services in the area and would spend in the local economy.

i) Social objective

- The proposal provides for an additional 4 flats (**8 in total, 4 in use currently**) assisting in meeting identified housing needs and the national requirement to demonstrate and maintain a 5 year housing land supply;
- Providing high-quality residential accommodation which represents a high standard of design;
- Increases opportunities for home ownership;
- Increase the number of residents in the locality to support local community facilities.

ii) An environmental objective

- The site is sustainable and located within the urban area of Tilehurst, with public transport links and services located in close proximity;
- The proposal makes effective use of site;
- The scheme responds positively to local context, respecting the character and appearance of the area;

4.5 By meeting the economic, social and environmental objectives the proposed development accords with the sustainable development principles contained within the NPPF.
Design, Character and Appearance

4.6 The context of the application site and the surrounding area has been carefully analysed and fully considered in designing the application proposal. In designing the proposal, regard has been had to policies within the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 as well as the NPPF. The result is an integrated and distinctive development that reflects and responds positively to local character in the form of building design, scale, layout and materials.

4.7. The proposed building has been thoughtfully designed, incorporating varying aspects from surrounding properties. To the front elevation, there are two large bay windows with stone detailing, topped with domed lead roofs. The two front gables are in line with 1031 Oxford Road and the surrounding character of the development.

The proposed building is of a high-quality design and sustainability.

4.8. The proposal is appropriate in terms of its size, scale, bulk, mass and height. The building is two-storey in appearance with the upper floor located within the roof space, served by gable windows and roof lights.

4.9. In conclusion, the proposal would fully integrate with the surrounding area and in providing for a high standard of design, the proposal would comply with Policies CC7 and H2 of the adopted local plan as well as the general design objections set out in the NPPF.

iii) Amenity of adjoining occupiers and new occupants

4.10. The siting of the proposed building has been carefully considered to avoid any overlooking or loss of amenity to existing or proposed properties.

The proposed building is adjacent to 1031 Oxford Road. This property is a single residential home. There are several windows in the east flank elevation of the building at first floor level, but these are understood to be bathrooms.

4.11. The proposed building will be two storey in height, with additional accommodation provided within its roof space. The front aspect of the property has retained the original siting of the existing property and the majority of the increase in size has been formed at the rear.

4.12. All of the flats meet the internal space standards set out within the National Technical Housing Standards and would offer future residents a high-quality internal living environment. The proposal therefore complies with LP Policy H5 in this regard

4.13. The site is located within an existing urban area, where residents can access recreational space within the local vicinity. Arthur Newbery Park is located 0.6 miles, 15 minutes walk away. Kentwood Grove is 0.8 miles, 16 minutes walk away. Flats 2 and 3 have private external amenity space available on the ground floor. The 6 remaining flats will have access to the rear garden to enjoy, which remains a large area at over 380m²

4.14. Policies H2, H5 and CC8 of the LP and paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF are therefore met as there would be no significant detrimental impact to the living conditions of the existing or future occupiers.

iv) Housing density, type and mix

4.15. The proposal provides for the following housing mix:

- 2no. 1 bedroom flats
- 6no. 2 bedroom flats

4.15. The proposed mix is considered appropriate in this sustainable location and there is no requirement to provide 3 bed properties for developments below 10 dwellings. Policy H2 of the LP states that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6 of the Local Plan. This confirms that of market dwellings, 10.3% should be 1 bed and 29.6% should be 2 bed properties which is the second highest demand size. Having regard to the location, the proposed housing mix would reflect existing character and would make the most efficient use of the site.

4.16. A S106 agreement will be provided to secure the required financial contribution towards off-site affordable housing, as required under Policy H3.

v) Access and Parking provision

4.17. The proposal would provide 8 parking spaces (i.e. 1 space per flat) within the front of the property. This level of parking provision is considered to be appropriate having regard to the sustainable location. It is also consistent with the current parking arrangements of 1 space per flat. The proposal also provides cycle parking provision to a level which would exceed the Council's standards.

4.18. This issue is addressed in more detail in the Transport Statement which accompanies the application submission.

vi) Planning Balance and Conclusions

4.19. The application proposal is for the demolition of the existing building, containing 4 old, outdated flats. To be replaced with a new purpose-built block of 8 highly efficient, modern flats in a sustainable location. It will provide local jobs (during construction). The proposal will also encourage sustainable modes of transport.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. The application proposal is for the demolition and erection of a building containing 8 new flats. The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- A. The site is in a highly sustainable location, where development, is encouraged under Policies CC1, RL3 and H1 of the LP and the NPPF.
- B. The proposal has been designed to reflect the scale, proportions and spacing of existing development within this location and regard has been given to the design process including the evaluation of the site and surrounding area as set out within the CABE guidance 'Design and Access Statements'. The proposal provides for a form of development that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area in terms of its size, scale, layout, height and design and complies with LP Policies H2 and CC7 and the design objectives of the NPPF.
- C. The proposal would provide a suitable housing mix at a density that is appropriate to the urban area in which it is located, as required by Policy H2. A S106 agreement will be entered into to provide the required financial contributions towards affordable housing in accordance with LP Policy H3.
- D. The siting of the proposed building has taken into account the positioning of adjacent property and ensures that the proposal would not result in a material loss of amenity to occupants of adjoining properties. The proposal would also provide a high quality living environment for future occupiers. All proposed habitable windows will have an open and unrestricted outlook. The proposal therefore accords with Policies H2, H5 and CC8 of the LP and paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF in this regard.
- E. The proposal makes suitable provision for parking having regard to its sustainable location (i.e. 1 space per flat). Cycle parking provision exceeds the standards. The proposal does not raise any highway safety issues and complies with LP Policy TR3. The proposed development will retain the existing vehicle entrance and the current ratio of parking to flats is continued at 1/1