



146A Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JL

Proposed single storey front extension (retrospective).

Planning Statement

Author:

Dariusz Kusyk BA BEng MSc - 1 Right Plan



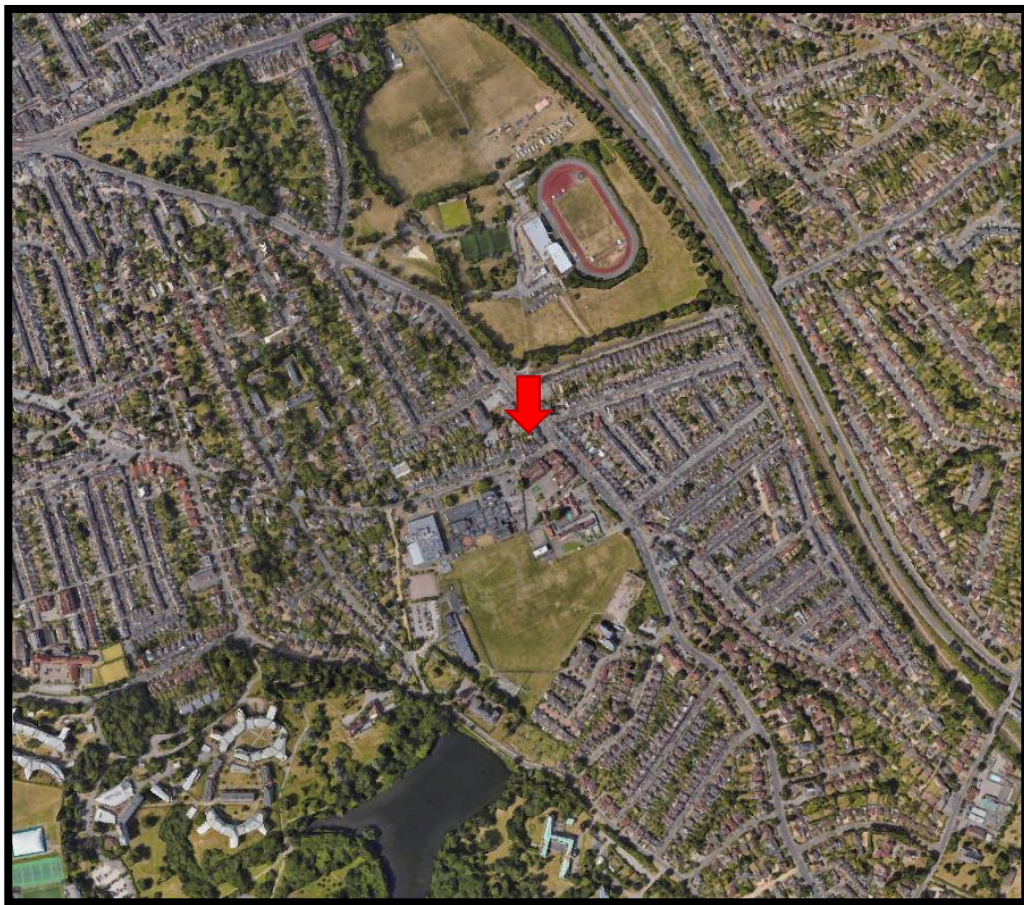
1. Introduction

1.1. Preface

This planning statement has been prepared in support of a Full application for the proposed single storey front extension at 146A Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JL.

The following statement covers the subject and information required for submission as set National Planning Policy Framework and Reading Borough Local Plan documents. This document will outline the application site history and the design strategy for the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

1.2. Site Location



Aerial photograph

1.3. Site Description

The application site is located on the corner of Wokingham Road and Crescent Road, within around 0.5km from the Reading Town Centre. The application site includes a building, located within a group of properties of diverse use, with commercial ground floor and residential upper levels or entirely



residential dwellings. Within close vicinity to the application site there are blocks of flats, shops, places of worship, educational facilities, therefore as a whole the surrounding area is considered to be significantly mixed in terms of the scale and design of the existing properties.





2. Planning Policy

2.1. NPPF

Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF emphasises that “*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*” and expands that in the paragraph 8, that it “*has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive:*

- **an economic objective** – *to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;*
- *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

Furthermore, a decision-making in favour of sustainable development is strengthened and its significant weight is confirmed in paragraph 38, which states that “*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible*”.

2.2. Local Development Framework (November 2019)

Accessibility

Number of Local Plan Policies relate to sustainable development, such as CC6 ‘Accessibility and the intensity of development’ part, which emphasises importance of sustainable location 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. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.”.

Policy CC6 explains in paragraph 4.1.25 that “...primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses”. Paragraphs 4.1.27 continues that good level of accessibility means - “to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service with a frequency of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.).”

The general health targets, accompanying appropriately located developments, mentioned in the explanation of this policy include:

- *“increased physical activity;*
- *decreased incidences of cardiovascular disease and obesity;*
- *reduced levels of stress caused by traffic noise and congestion;*
- *fewer cases of lung or heart disease associated with poor air quality;*
- *proximity to healthcare services;*
- *access to open space for recreation”.*

Design Quality

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. The various components of development form, including:

- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*
- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials”.*

The above components are linked with the subsequently highlighted urban design objectives, which should be enhanced by the proposals, inter alia:



- *“Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place;*
- *Continuity and enclosure;*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping;*
- *Ease of movement and permeability;*
- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand;*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time;*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs”.*

In addition, CC7 summarizes and encourages to ensure that proposed developments:

- *“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;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.”*

Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

The application site is within Key Frontage and Wokingham Road Major Local Centre location. Policy RL3 states that:

- a) *Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail or A2 financial and professional to other ‘centre uses’ will only be permitted where:*
 - *There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 or A2 retail use; and*
 - *The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 or A2 use would exceed the relevant proportion below:*
Wokingham Road Major Local Centre – 50%
- b) *Within district, major local and local centres, development will be permitted provided that:*
 - *There would be no more than 2 consecutive A5 takeaways, and no more than 30% of the length of the Key Frontage would be in takeaway use; and*



- *There would be no net loss of 'centre uses' for 'non-centre uses' at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors) except in exceptional circumstances. On upper floors, other uses including residential ('living over the shops') will be acceptable.*
- c) *Within and adjacent to district, major local and local centres, all new development should provide some 'centre uses' at the ground floor, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would not be possible or appropriate.*
- d) *Where the Key Frontages within a centre as identified on the Proposals Map are proposed to significantly change, or have already significantly changed, as a result of redevelopment, meaning that criteria a) and b) cannot be applied, proposals should ensure that a strong retail character is retained within the ground floor of the centre, and that ground floor concentrations of consecutive units not in A1 or A2 use, in particular A5 takeaways, are avoided.*

3. Appraisal

3.1. General concept

The overall aim of the proposal is to make efficient use of the existing site and its assets, by proposing to create a ground floor dining room unit, which would improve the overall layout and provide additional seating space for the restaurant, through the above proposal. The application property is characterized with a location within Reading settlement boundaries, which is significantly mixed in terms of the design or scale, where such commercial development is acceptable in principle.

3.2. Impact on the Character of the Area

The ground floor extension to the front of the building would result in a more efficient use of the premises, increase in activity of the site and visual and functional improvement in this part of the streetscene. The overall frontage appearance and front layout would be improved, arranged in a more neat way, in particular that the site is clearly visible within the streetscene and sited on the corner plot. The frontage would benefit from a more attractive commercial arrangement, which would replace former existing space – inadequate either for parking (due to too narrow and short space, blocking the entrance or overhanging the pavement) or a waste storage (exposed within the streetscene, adverse impact upon the character).

In general, it is considered that the project includes an in keeping external design, which would reflect the character of the area and provide much needed in this part of the Key Frontage – additional space for clients within a busy and vibrant area of Wokingham Road. Furthermore, it is proposed to remove part of the stickers/posters from the frontage of the building, in order to improve the overall design.



Below are photographs showing the previously neglected and unattractive appearance of the site from 2023 and 2022.



Finally, despite of front projection, it is considered that the project includes an acceptable impact upon this part of the streetscene of Wokingham Road. When approaching from the west, it is not visible and effectively it is resulting in an uncontentious impact, appropriate with regards to wider character of the area, as per below photographs.





3.3. Impact on neighbours

Privacy, Loss of Light and Overbearing

Due to the host building's situation, despite of additional front projection, overall reasonable scale and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to arise.



Noise and Smell

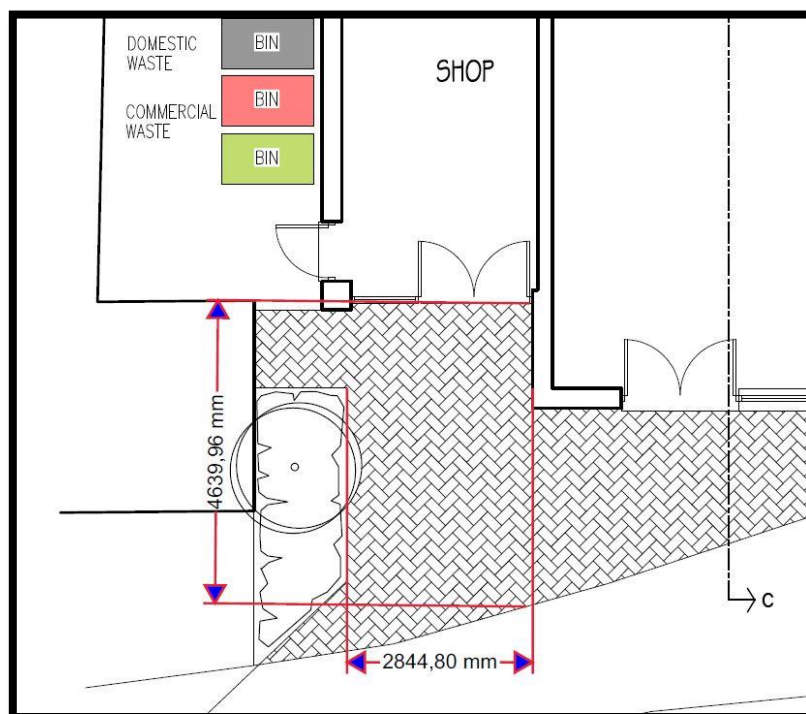
The proposed development would not change the existing arrangement in terms of the noise or smell, as the additional space and proposed design would serve as additional space for customers, effectively with no unacceptable impact in terms of noise or odour as a result of the proposed development.

3.4. Transport, parking and waste

Parking

The application site currently does not benefit from any off-street parking for vehicles as per the photographs. The former arrangement prior to erection of the front extension also did not provide any adequate parking space that would meet the minimum standards. As per below extract from the site plan from the historical application, the space measured circa 4.6m in depth (below minimum standard) and this space could not be counted as an appropriate parking.

Nevertheless, thanks to a highly sustainable location, close to the town centre, the proposal would be considered acceptable and uncontentious with regards to this aspect.



Waste

The proposed development would retain space to the side, which would remain as waste storage area for the commercial and residential properties.

Transport



The proposed site is located in the eastern part of Reading, on the southern side of Wokingham Road. Given close proximity from the town centre and within Key Frontage boundaries, the application property benefits from an extensive bus service including numerous routes with frequent links to Reading Centre and to the east towards Wokingham.

The application property is sited in close vicinity to road which also provide vehicle access to the A33 and links with the M4 for towards the east to London and Wales to the west. The broad road networks around the site also provide huge choice and possibilities of cycle routes and walking paths in and around the area. As per the 'Cycle routes network map', the application site is conveniently location in close vicinity from the R3, R20 and R30 routes, which easily link Reading Town Centre or Reading University and surrounding towns.

There are also easily accessible local amenities along the road within walking distance including wide range of services such as grocery shops, churches, temples, pharmacy, cafes, pubs, educational facilities, surgery or nursery. Range of services located within walking distance from the application site, makes it highly appropriate and sustainable for the proposed development.

8. Conclusion

By virtue of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that it would comply with the relevant parts of NPPF, Reading BC Local Plan, therefore we kindly appeal, to approve the submitted application.

