



PLANNING STATEMENT

JUNE 2025

R L Planning

**NURSERY BUILDING, SHED,
REPLACEMENT FENCES AND
GATES PLUS ANCILLARY
OUTDOOR SPACE**

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 88
KNIGHTS WAY
EMMER GREEN
RG4 8RH**

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The Site

- The Application Site comprises a rectangular plot of land measuring approximately 0.03 ha, along with the shared access route to the public highway
- This access leads to garages and the rear of the nearby block of flats
- It also provides a service road to the retail premises in Grove Road
- The access heads Northwards from a dropped kerb in Knights Way, between no. 86 and 88, close to the junction with Evesham Road
- Until relatively recently, there was a structure on the Site - a small community hall / storage space which has been leased from the Council since the mid-1960s
- The Site has been vacant for a number of years and now just includes an area of hardstanding (where the building was), modified neutral grassland and scattered trees
- Notably, the trees are all self-set and poorly formed

Its Surroundings

- The Site is located in the suburban area of Caversham, with a variety of dwelling types, densities and land uses with a local centre for day-to-day needs
- The dwellings predominantly comprise two storey semi-detached pairs and terraces
- Many have been extended over the years with a variety of single and double storey additions

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- Hipped roofs are a common feature
 - To the South and West are pairs of semi-detached houses with their rear garden boundaries abutting the Site
 - Garden trees provide some softening screening, with those nearby illustrated on the accompanying **Arboricultural Impact Assessment Drawing**
 - To the North is a Day Nursery (run by the Applicant), an old electricity sub-station (outlined in blue on the Location Plan) and a three-storey flatted development
 - To the East of the access road (which is included in the red Application line to confirm the route to the public highway) is the row of garages and further housing
 - This area lies within Flood Zone 1

Transport and parking

- The nearby residential properties provide off-street parking within their frontages
- Unrestricted on-street parking is also available
- The Site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted **Parking Standards and Design SPD** - typically these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre, major supermarkets and other local centre facilities
- Local bus stops ensure that the Site is accessible by public transport, with routes covering the centre of Caversham and Reading

Current Nursery provision by the Applicant

- The existing Nursery is registered for 88 children daily under the age of five years
- Currently there are 30 staff on roll
- As it provides childcare for working parents, it is open 49 weeks per year Monday to Friday 8am-6pm
- There is off-street parking for three cars, as well as safe and secure storage for buggies and up to 17 bikes
- The facility has five playrooms as well as outdoor play space

THE PROPOSAL

- A new Nursery building is proposed, along with a shed, replacement fences and gates plus ancillary outdoor space
- **Supporting paragraph 4.7.1** in the Local Plan emphasises that *“The provision of sufficient good quality community facilities is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and continue living”*
- The Council’s Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled **‘Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)’** and **Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)** have been taken into account during the design process
- The proposed building has a design that reflects its intended use and careful consideration has been given to the Council’s general principles

THE NURSERY BUILDING

Profile and dimensions

- Overall, the proposed building has rectangular footprint but there are two small protruding sections at both ends
- Its maximum height would be limited to 2.84m and the Gross Internal Area (GIA) is under 100sqm
- In terms of its profile, it is to have a very shallow mono-pitched roof (falling North to South)
- A modest overhang of 0.3m is included into the design at the front
- The building itself will be appropriately set in from the boundaries by at least 0.5m

Use

- The new building will be used as a Day Nursery, complementing the existing provision to the North (summarised above on **page 4**)
- It would allow for an additional 30 children (under threes) who fall into the Government's new Early Years Funding entitlements
- Staffing will increase by three (as the existing staffing levels exceed the legal ratio requirement)
- The proposed opening hours are 8am – 6pm

Sustainable design and construction

- Sustainability is embedded into the proposal
- The building will use natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care, whilst taking the effects of climate change into account
- The design maximises opportunities for natural ventilation and water conservation measures for the wcs will be put in place
- **Paragraph 4.1.4** of the Local Plan recognises that some types of development, such as schools, might find it more difficult to meet the BREEAM excellent standard
- Having regard to the type of building being proposed, it is considered that the details of its simple design are sufficient in demonstrating its environmental qualities
- A formal assessment, especially at this stage of the process, would be unduly onerous and - along with the substantial BNG costs – is likely to affect viability
- Wildlife friendly landscaping, at a scale appropriate for the children eg bug hotels and log piles will be incorporated into the scheme

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- Two bat boxes and five bird boxes will also be provided on Site (please see the **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain** document for more details)

- **Main materials**

- The elevations are to be clad in timber - Scandinavian Redwood (shiplap profile)
- This will have a light brown wood stain preservative added
- The roof will have a dark rubber (EPDM) finish

Fenestration

- The fenestration comprises a number of windows and five doors
- The glazing will have uPVC frames, grey in colour
- The Southern (rear) and Western elevations will be blank and no rooflights are proposed

Groundworks and drainage

- No level changes are proposed
- Pile foundations will be used for the base of the proposed building
- Foul and surface water will be dealt with via the mains sewer and a soakaway (please see the **Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report** for more details)

Travel

- Vehicular access will only be for emergency access
- Additional movements will be limited to pedestrians and cycles

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- This would be similar to the situation when the community building was on the Site

ANCILLARY OUTDOOR SPACE, THE SHED AND REPLACEMENT BOUNDARY TREATMENT

- The outdoor space includes a mix of paving and artificial grass in the central area and a slabbed pathway to the East
- A shed, domestic in scale and appearance, will be erected in the North West corner for the storage of equipment for games and maintenance etc
- A new mesh fence and gate will be erected along the Eastern boundary – please see **Sheet 03 and Appendix A** for more details
- This will be of the standard school design
- A replacement close boarded timber fence, with connecting gate, will be erected along the Northern boundary

ADHERENCE WITH POLICY

- The proposed Nursery building is proportionate to the overall plot size
- The timber cladding has a soft appearance, respecting the garden trees nearby
- There would be no overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing issues
- While giving rise to a degree of change, the proposed scheme would not result in an adverse impact in this mixed area, which already has a Nursery facility adjacent to the Site, run by the Applicant
- The project will not have a detrimental impact on the health and longevity of the retained trees, as confirmed in the **Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report**
- The proposal is in accordance with the adopted **Parking Standards and Design SPD**
- For day nurseries with flexible pick-up and drop off times, Zone 3 sets maximum parking standards of 1 per 2 FTE staff and 1 drop off space per 10 pupils
- In terms of cycle parking, there should be 1 space per 2 FTE staff
- The development will generate non-motor movements at an appropriate level and sufficient, dedicated cycle and buggy storage already exists at the facility

Biodiversity and Ecology

- The proposed works are not expected to have any impacts on designated sites, priority habitats or notable flora species, and no invasive or notifiable flora were observed on Site during the April survey

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- It was found to be of low ecological value, offering limited potential for wildlife
 - Scattered trees on-site offer low-level opportunities for nesting birds and foraging and roosting bats
 - Although the Site lies within a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone, it is isolated from suitable aquatic habitats, and significant impacts on this species are considered unlikely
 - With regard to the Government's BNG requirements, it is not possible to get a 10% gain on site and meet the trading rules, and gains will have to be made off-Site
 - More details on this can be found in the **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain** document

Local Plan

- The proposal meets the fundamental objectives of **Policies CC2, CC3, CC5, CC6, CC7 and EN18** in terms of sustainability, accessibility and quality design
- In addition, the Application adheres to the amenity requirements of **Policy CC8**
- The accompanying **Ecology and Tree Reports** confirm compliance with **Policies EN12 and EN14**
- **Policy OU1** states that proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable
- Whilst this proposal involves a new adjacent site, it is also noted that on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools, will be supported

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- It is also relevant that the Policy accepts that some developments may result in the loss of open areas and that this can be acceptable where the impact is minimised and the area has no specific use
 - The Policy requires new community facilities to be located where this a choice of means of travel, including walking and cycling
 - The car-free development is considered to be appropriate and there is no conflict with **Policies TR1, TR3, TR5**
 - The **SPD** states that, in Zone 3, walking and cycling can play an important role in these areas

NPPF

- The aims and objectives of these local Policies are reflected in the 2024 NPPF
- In particular, **criterion c of paragraph 135** states that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change
- **Paragraph 100** emphasises that:-

It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.

They should:-

a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications (emphasis added)