



Woolf Bond Planning

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22 September 2025

Planning Department
Reading Borough Council

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Dear Sir / Madam,

Application under Section 73 to vary Planning Permission LPA Ref. 230814:

Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated re-use of frame with basement level used for car parking and servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access.

at

9 Upper Crown Street, Reading, RG1 2SS

Introduction

On behalf of our client, we submit an application for variation to the above referenced planning permission under Section 73 of the Planning Act 1990 as amended. The requested variation is to vary plans listed in condition 2 of the permission.

The Section 73 application is accompanied by the following:

- CIL Form
- This Planning Letter Statement
- Application Form
- Updated Drawing Pack (detailed below)
- Viability Report, prepared by Turner Morum

S73 Application

This S73 application seeks to replace some of the approved drawings set out in condition 2 with updated drawings showing minor amendments to the approved scheme as follows:

- Dormers added to the front elevations of B1 (terrace houses) to improve top floor en-suites.
- Additional dormers added to the top floor of B2 (central block) to improve internal layouts.

- Ensuite added to a number of the 2b3p units in B2.
- Minor adjustments / improvements to the layouts of all three buildings.
- 2 tandem spaces added to the basement - these will include EV charging.

The amendments made follow the principles established through the grant of the original permission and result in no breach of any of the Council's design or housing related policies.

The changes respond to the changing demands of the market and take into consideration the cost of delivering certain elements of the development. Alongside this rationalisation of the design, the applicant has commissioned a review of the financial viability of the scheme as a whole. This has highlighted that unfortunately the scheme as approved is no longer viable, and as such is seeking to remove the affordable housing contribution. This would ensure that the application as now proposed is viable and can be delivered, thus securing the provision of 46 new apartments in a highly sustainable location close to the town centre.

Drawing nos. with associated changes are set out below:

- Site Plan – P008 Rev 5
- Basement – P009 Rev 7
- Ground Floor – P010 Rev 5
- First Floor – P011 Rev 5
- Second Floor – P012 Rev 5
- Third Floor – P013 Rev 5
- Fourth Floor – P014 Rev 5
- Roof Plan – P015 Rev 5
- Building 1 Floor Plans – P016 Rev 4
- Building 1 Floor Plans – P017 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P018 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P019 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P020 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P021 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P022 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P023 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P024 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P025 Rev 4
- Site Elevations Sheet 1 – P026 Rev 5
- Site Elevations Sheet 2 – P027 Rev 5
- Site Elevations Sheet 3 – P028 Rev 5
- Site Elevations Sheet 4 – P029 Rev 4
- Site Sections Sheet 1 – P030 Rev 4
- Building 1 Elevations – P031 Rev 4
- Building 1 Sections – P032 Rev 4
- Building 2 Elevations – P033 Rev 4
- Building 2 Elevations – P034 Rev 4
- Building 2 Elevations – P035 Rev 4
- Building 2 Sections – P036 Rev 4
- Building 3 Elevations – P037 Rev 4
- Building 3 Elevations – P038 Rev 4
- Building 3 Sections – P039 Rev 4
- Indigo House Stairs – P040 Rev 4

- GIA Basement – P041 Rev 4
- Landscape Principles and External Lighting Strategy – P090 Rev 5

New drawings submitted also comprise:

- Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 1 – P042 Rev 2
- Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 2 – P043 Rev 2
- Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 3 – P044 Rev 2
- Areas – NDSS Schedule – P045 Rev 2

These drawings are submitted for information purposes only and do not need to be reference in the revised condition 2.

These changes can all be considered to represent minor amendments, particularly given the scale of the overall scheme. The architectural design, scale and appearance of the building will remain the same.

The S73 application seeks to vary condition 2 of planning permission 2230814. A copy of the proposed condition (and approved drawings through this application) are detailed below (amends shown in underlining):

Existing condition 2:

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Existing and Proposed Drawings (P001 – P008, PO10 - PO41 & P090) received 12/06/2023 & PO009 received 29/08/2023.

Proposed condition 2:

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Existing and Proposed Drawings (P001 – P007) received 12/06/2023 and (P008 – P041, P042 – 045 & P090) received 22 September 2025

Planning History

The application site benefits from approved application (LPA Ref: 230814) for re-development of the site to provide 46 dwellings in 3 buildings. The decision notice was issued on 29th May 2024, and condition 1 imposes the standard 3 year timeframe for commencement of the approved development.

The application as approved was accompanied by a signed Unilateral Undertaking (“UU”) for the provision of a policy-compliant level affordable housing (30%).

The viability of this site was first considered in 2018, when the economy and other market factors were quite different to today’s situation. Since that time, the market has dropped, alongside which the construction industry has seen a significant increase in the cost of materials. Taking these factors together the viability of this redevelopment scheme has been adversely impacted.

The Turner Morum Viability Report is comprehensive in that it sets out the existing use value, costs for delivering the scheme (including build costs, labour, professional fees) and abnormal costs. The basement car park of itself, whilst being an efficient use of land, is an expensive part of the construction process.

Many of the items in the viability report are fixed costs that cannot be reduced. The provision of a building to accommodate 14 affordable housing units is a significant cost associated with the project, which renders it unviable in today's financial climate.

The report considers a number of scenarios in which a contribution is made towards affordable housing. However as can be seen in the conclusion, a 0% provision of affordable housing is necessary.

We understand that the Council will seek an independent review of the submitted Viability Report. Please advise on the cost in due course.

Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") Implications

The GIA of building 3 which was previously proposed to be provided as affordable housing is 952sqm. A revised CIL form 1 is included in this submission which reflects the intention to provide the scheme as a 100% market scheme.

Summary

The minor changes proposed by this S73 application will not fundamentally alter the appearance and objectives of the sustainable design approach. The development proposal retains the positive features previously identified and assessed in the officer's report for the application. It will provide a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats, as well as 3 bedroom houses for the local housing market, and make more efficient use of an under-utilised site near the town centre and its associated facilities.

In conclusion, the proposal remains policy compliant and can be supported as one consistent with the development plan and continues to offer high quality design for redevelopment which has been previously been supported by officers at the local level.

We trust that this application is acceptable and would appreciate approval at the Council's earliest convenience. However, should any concerns or queries occur during the process we formally request that we are informed prior to any determination.

Should you have any queries, please contact me on the details below.

Yours faithfully

Woolf Bond Planning

Woolf Bond Planning Ltd.
Encs.