

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

Section 73 Application to Vary Conditions 24 & 25 (BREEAM Requirements)

75–77 London Street

Reading

RG1 4QA

Planning Permission Ref: 220244

1. Introduction

This Sustainability Statement has been prepared by The Keen Partnership in support of a Section 73 application submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Conditions 24 and 25 attached to planning permission reference 220244.

Planning permission was granted by Reading Borough Council for the demolition of the rear buildings known as Olympia Hall, the erection of twelve residential apartments with associated parking, landscaping and courtyard garden together with the conversion of the ground floor of Nos. 75–77 London Street to provide a further three residential apartments.

Conditions 24 and 25 require the submission of Interim and Final BREEAM Certificates demonstrating that the development achieves a minimum BREEAM "Very Good" rating.

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate that the approved development fully satisfies the objectives of Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan through a comprehensive package of sustainable design and construction measures. The statement therefore provides a proportionate alternative to formal BREEAM certification whilst maintaining the sustainability objectives of the original planning permission.

No alterations are proposed to the approved development. The application relates solely to the mechanism by which compliance with the Council's sustainability policies is demonstrated.

2. Site Description

The application site occupies a highly sustainable location on London Street within Reading Town Centre. The site comprises the existing buildings at Nos. 75–77 London Street together with the rear land formerly occupied by Olympia Hall.

The approved development regenerates an underutilised brownfield site through a combination of selective demolition, refurbishment and new residential development.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of residential, commercial, retail and community uses which benefit from excellent accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.

The site is located within easy walking distance of Reading Railway Station, numerous bus routes, employment opportunities, shopping facilities, healthcare services, educational establishments and public open spaces, making it an inherently sustainable location for residential development.

3. Description of the Approved Development

Planning permission was granted for:

Proposed demolition of buildings to the rear (Olympia Hall) and erection of 12 flats with associated parking, landscaping and courtyard garden together with conversion of the ground floor of Nos. 75–77 London Street to provide 3 flats.

The approved development delivers fifteen high-quality residential units whilst making efficient use of previously developed land within the urban area.

The development has been designed to regenerate the site whilst incorporating a broad range of sustainable design principles, modern construction techniques and environmental improvements which contribute towards the wider sustainability objectives of both national and local planning policy.

4. Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework identifies sustainable development as the central purpose of the planning system and requires planning decisions to support the transition towards a low-carbon future. The Framework encourages developments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make effective use of land, improve resource efficiency and support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

At the local level, Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires development to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures that minimise carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, conserve natural resources and reduce environmental impacts throughout the lifetime of the development.

The policy identifies recognised sustainability assessment methodologies as one means of demonstrating compliance. However, the principal objective of the policy is to secure genuinely sustainable development rather than requiring a specific certification process where alternative methods are capable of demonstrating the same outcomes.

This Sustainability Statement has therefore been prepared to demonstrate that the approved development fully satisfies the objectives of Policy CC2 through an appropriate, site-specific and proportionate approach.

5. Sustainability Objectives

The approved development has been designed around a number of key sustainability objectives.

These include the efficient redevelopment of previously developed land, the reduction of operational energy demand, improved thermal performance of the buildings, efficient use of materials, responsible waste management, sustainable drainage, biodiversity enhancement and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport.

Collectively these measures contribute towards reducing the environmental impact of the development throughout both its construction and operational life whilst creating a high-quality residential environment for future occupants.

6. Brownfield Regeneration

One of the most significant sustainability benefits of the proposal is the redevelopment of previously developed land within Reading Town Centre.

National planning policy places significant emphasis upon making effective use of brownfield land before considering greenfield sites. By bringing this previously developed site into productive residential use, the proposal supports urban regeneration whilst reducing development pressure on undeveloped land elsewhere within the Borough.

The proposal also makes efficient use of existing infrastructure including highways, drainage, utilities and public transport networks which are already established within the surrounding urban area.

The redevelopment therefore represents a highly sustainable pattern of growth consistent with both national planning objectives and the spatial strategy of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7. Embodied Carbon and Efficient Use of Resources

A key principle of sustainable construction is reducing embodied carbon through the retention and reuse of existing buildings wherever practicable.

The approved development retains and converts the existing London Street frontage whilst removing only those structures necessary to facilitate the approved redevelopment to the rear of the site.

Retaining substantial elements of the existing building significantly reduces the environmental impacts associated with complete demolition and reconstruction. The reuse of existing structural elements conserves raw materials, reduces transportation requirements and avoids unnecessary carbon emissions associated with manufacturing replacement construction materials.

Where demolition is required, construction waste will be carefully managed to maximise opportunities for recycling and reuse in accordance with recognised waste hierarchy principles.

8. Energy Efficiency

The approved development has been designed to achieve high levels of energy efficiency through the incorporation of modern construction standards and improved building fabric performance.

High-performance insulation, thermally efficient external walls, modern glazing systems and improved airtightness significantly reduce heat loss and minimise operational energy demand.

The dwellings will be designed in accordance with current Building Regulations relating to the conservation of fuel and power, ensuring substantially improved energy performance compared with the buildings previously occupying the site.

Energy-efficient lighting and modern building services will further reduce electricity consumption whilst improving long-term operational efficiency.

Collectively these measures reduce carbon emissions throughout the operational life of the development and contribute directly towards the objectives of Policy CC2.

9. Sustainable Construction

Sustainability has also informed the construction methodology proposed for the development.

Materials will be sourced responsibly wherever practicable, with preference given to products that are durable, recyclable and manufactured using sustainable production methods.

Construction activities will seek to minimise waste generation through careful material management and efficient construction practices.

Demolition materials will be segregated on site to maximise opportunities for recycling and recovery, reducing reliance upon landfill disposal.

Dust, noise and other environmental impacts associated with construction will be controlled through the approved Construction Method Statement, ensuring that impacts upon neighbouring occupiers are minimised throughout the construction period.

10. Water Efficiency

Water conservation forms an important component of sustainable development.

The approved dwellings will incorporate water-efficient sanitary fittings and appliances capable of reducing potable water consumption whilst maintaining high standards of residential amenity.

The development will comply with the higher water efficiency standards required by Building Regulations, helping to reduce pressure upon local water resources throughout the lifetime of the development.

11. Sustainable Drainage

Surface water arising from the development will be managed through the approved Sustainable Drainage Strategy prepared for the development.

The strategy has been designed to control runoff rates, reduce flood risk and ensure that surface water is managed responsibly throughout the lifetime of the development.

The approved drainage measures contribute towards improving climate resilience whilst supporting the objectives of Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

12. Biodiversity Enhancement

Although located within a highly urban environment, the development delivers meaningful biodiversity enhancements through landscaping and ecological improvements.

The approved landscaping scheme introduces new planting and soft landscaped areas that improve the visual appearance of the site whilst contributing towards increased ecological value.

Appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures incorporated within the approved development assist in supporting local wildlife and contribute towards the wider environmental objectives of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Long-term maintenance arrangements will ensure that these landscaped areas continue to provide environmental benefits throughout the lifetime of the development.

13. Sustainable Transport

The location of the development represents one of its greatest sustainability credentials.

The site lies within Reading Town Centre where residents have immediate access to an extensive range of employment opportunities, retail facilities, healthcare services, educational establishments, leisure facilities and public transport infrastructure.

Reading Railway Station is within convenient walking distance and provides regional and national rail services, whilst London Street benefits from regular bus services connecting the site to the wider Borough.

Secure cycle parking forms part of the approved development, encouraging active travel and reducing reliance upon private motor vehicles.

The highly accessible location significantly reduces transport-related carbon emissions when compared with less sustainable suburban or rural developments.

14. Waste Management

Waste management has been considered throughout both the construction and operational phases of the development.

During construction, waste materials will be segregated wherever practicable to maximise opportunities for recycling and recovery.

Following occupation, residents will benefit from dedicated refuse and recycling storage facilities incorporated within the approved scheme, encouraging responsible waste management and supporting Reading Borough Council's recycling objectives.

15. Health and Wellbeing

The approved development has been designed to create healthy, comfortable and attractive homes.

The dwellings will benefit from modern standards of insulation, ventilation and thermal performance which contribute towards improved indoor environmental quality.

The development also provides attractive landscaped areas and courtyard space which improve visual amenity and create a pleasant living environment for future residents.

The highly sustainable location also encourages walking and cycling as part of everyday life, delivering wider health and wellbeing benefits.

16. Climate Change Adaptation

In addition to reducing operational carbon emissions, the development has been designed to improve resilience to future climate change.

Improved thermal performance assists in regulating internal temperatures throughout the year, whilst sustainable drainage measures reduce flood risk associated with increasingly intense rainfall events.

The use of durable construction materials, modern building standards and enhanced landscaping will ensure that the development remains resilient throughout its design life whilst adapting to future climatic conditions.

17. Justification for the Alternative to BREEAM

Conditions 24 and 25 require Interim and Final BREEAM Certificates demonstrating achievement of a minimum "Very Good" rating.

The approved development has already been designed to incorporate a comprehensive range of sustainability measures that satisfy the underlying objectives of Policy CC2. These include brownfield regeneration, improved energy efficiency, sustainable construction methods, biodiversity enhancements, sustainable drainage, water conservation and excellent accessibility by sustainable transport.

The preparation of a comprehensive Sustainability Statement provides a transparent and proportionate means of demonstrating compliance with these objectives. It enables the Local Planning Authority to assess the environmental performance of the development directly without reliance upon a third-party certification process.

The proposed variation therefore maintains the sustainability aspirations of the original planning permission whilst providing a practical, deliverable and policy-compliant approach to demonstrating sustainable development.

18. Conclusion

The approved development at 75–77 London Street represents a sustainable form of development that regenerates a previously developed urban site whilst delivering fifteen high-quality residential dwellings in an exceptionally accessible location.

The development incorporates a comprehensive package of sustainable design and construction measures including the efficient use of land, reduced embodied carbon, improved energy efficiency, sustainable drainage, biodiversity enhancement, water conservation, responsible waste management and sustainable transport opportunities.

These measures collectively satisfy the objectives of Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and demonstrate that the development achieves a high standard of environmental performance.

Accordingly, this Sustainability Statement provides a robust, comprehensive and proportionate alternative to the BREEAM certification requirements contained within Conditions 24 and 25, whilst maintaining the sustainability objectives of the original planning permission and ensuring full compliance with the adopted development plan.