

55 Vastern Road  
Reading RG1 8BU

Appeal

Rebuttal to the Proof of Evidence of  
Mr Bruce Edgar

13 October 2021

**Reading Borough Council Planning Application:**

Planning Application Reference: 200188

*Demolition of existing structures and erection of a series of buildings ranging in height from 1 to 11 storeys, including residential dwellings (C3 use class) and retail floorspace (A3 use class), together with a new north-south pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road*

**Client:**

Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Ltd

- 1.1. This Rebuttal respond to a point made by Mr Edgar in his Proof of Evidence (September 2021). Other matters raised in his Proof can be adequately covered by my own Proof of Evidence and the forthcoming cross-examination.

### Interior features

- 1.2. In paragraph 2.5 Mr Edgar discusses the heritage value of the building and mentions interior features including nibs remaining from historic walls, as well as chimneybreasts and cornices. First of all it should be noted here that the interior is not a relevant consideration inasmuch as the Council has no means of exercising heritage control over the interiors of locally listed buildings, due to their relatively low status in comparison, say, to a building that is statutorily listed.
- 1.3. Notwithstanding this key fact, it is also the case that the interiors of this building are unremarkable and greatly altered, while those original decorative features that do remain are fairly standard items found in any number of cellular offices, or indeed houses, of the period. Unlike the front façade, the interiors do not have any consciously designed 'public' parts and no interior is noteworthy for its character. In addition it is apparent from a site visit that 10 out of the original 13 internal doorways have been blocked up or removed; the original doors have all gone apart from one that has been re-hung and had potentially original panels replaced with modern glazing; 12 new doorways have been inserted; the original staircase has been removed; no chimneypieces appear to be present; at least 4 original walls and internal subdivisions have been lost; and 5 new subdivisions have been inserted. The interior does not have notable heritage value on its own terms, nor in comparison to the altered front façade.

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