

UNION4 PLANNING

Brett Property Group

Land to the rear of 17-29 Newcastle Road,
Reading, RG2 7TN

Proposed development comprising the demolition of No. 19 Newcastle Road and construction of 9 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), together with car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, hard and soft landscaping, and associated works.

PLANNING STATEMENT

July 2023 - Revised



UNION4
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Executive Summary

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Union4 Planning on behalf of Brett Property Group ('the Applicant') in support of a full planning application to Reading Borough Council. The planning application proposes the demolition of the existing residential dwelling at No. 19 Newcastle Road and construction of 9 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), together with car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, hard and soft landscaping, and associated works.

The application site is part of a wider site allocation for residential development (Ref: SR4b) with an overall indicative capacity of 18-27 new dwellings. The application site covers the eastern portion of the site allocation, with the remaining area to be considered at a later stage.

The application site was subject to pre-application consultation with Officers at Reading Borough Council, which has informed the detailed design of the proposed development and the scope of documents supporting the planning application. The pre-application advice confirmed that the development of residential dwellings on the site is acceptable in principle. In addition, the proposed dwelling mix and density, together with the design and materials, were considered to be acceptable.

The proposed development comprises two terraces with four dwelling houses in each of the terraces. The ninth house is proposed on the plot to the south of the terraces. The development comprises the following mix of residential accommodation:

- 5 no. four-bedroom houses; and
- 4 no. two-bedroom houses.

The proposed development will be accessed via a new internal road which will be located in place of the existing dwelling at No. 19 Newcastle Road. The proposed access has been subject to careful consideration by the transport consultants, with vehicle racking undertaken at an early stage of the design process. It has been demonstrated that the access road will provide sufficient manoeuvring space, along with space for two passing vehicles. The design of the access road has also taken account of the future development potential of the adjoining lands and can be extended to the east or west to allow further development to come forward in the future.

The proposed development is of a height and scale that is consistent with the character of the surrounding area which is broadly comprised of a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings. Similarly, the plot widths and sizes are reflective of those along Newcastle Road, ensuring that the new dwellings will exhibit a similar urban grain and will sit comfortably within the existing urban context.

Each of the proposed dwellings will comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards and will be provided with generous private amenity space in the form of rear gardens. Following the receipt of pre-application advice, the proposed terraces have been realigned and the rear gardens extended southwards to ensure that maximum levels of daylight are received by the windows on the rear facades of the houses. The alignment of the proposed houses also safeguards the root protection zones of existing trees within the adjoining Cintra Park.

The proposed dwellings have also been orientated in a manner which will ensure that existing levels of privacy and outlook are maintained by occupants of the existing residential properties along Newcastle Road. In particular, the relationship between the proposed detached dwelling on Plot 9 has been carefully considered with reference to the existing residential properties at Nos. 23 – 29 Newcastle Road. The windows on the southern façade of the dwelling on Plot 9 will include obscured glazing to ensure that no views are afforded of the rear gardens or windows on the properties to the south at Nos. 23 – 29 Newcastle Road.

The planning application is supported by a range of technical and specialist assessments, including ecology, arboriculture, archaeology, contamination, transport, drainage, landscaping and reptile surveys. These specialist reports have helped to inform the design development process, thereby resulting in a scheme which is sensitive to its surroundings and the environmental complexities of the adjoining lands.

In summary, we consider that the proposed development accords with the relevant adopted planning policies and associated guidance at the local and national level. We would also respectfully submit that the proposed development is consistent with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, and that planning permission should be granted.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Union4 Planning on behalf of Brett Property Group ('the Applicant') in support of a full planning application for the proposed development of land at the rear of 17-29 Newcastle Road in Reading.

1.2 The planning application proposes the demolition of No. 19 Newcastle Road and the construction of 9 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), together with car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, hard and soft landscaping, and associated works.

1.3 The application site is part of a wider site allocation for residential development (Ref: SR4b) which has an indicative capacity of 18-27 new dwellings. The proposals therefore cover approximately half of the allocation, with the remaining dwellings to come forward at a later stage.

1.4 The application site was subject to pre-application consultation with Officers at Reading Borough Council, which has informed the detailed design of the proposed development and the scope of documents supporting the planning application.

1.5 The Council's pre-application advice was issued on 21 October 2021 (Ref: 211367/PREAPP) and considered the principle of residential development to be acceptable. The pre-application advice also highlighted a number of matters for review, namely relating to the layout and scale of the proposed scheme and to the proposed private amenity space.

1.6 In addition to this Planning Statement, the application comprises the following documents:

- Application Form and Certificates;
- CIL Questions Form;
- Covering Letter;
- Plan Drawings;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Computer-Generated Images.

1.7 In addition, the planning application is supported by a range of specialist reports and inputs including the following:

- Phase 1 Ecology Report; Bio Diversity Report and Net Gain Calculations
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment;
- Contamination Report;
- Transport Statement;

- Drainage Report;
- Sustainability Report;
- Landscaping Scheme.
- Reptile Surveys.

Structure of this Planning Statement

1.8 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of the site location and description, including details of the relevant planning history;
- Section 3 describes the proposed development;
- Section 4 sets out the policy context pertaining to the proposals;
- Section 5 outlines the planning and environmental considerations;
- Section 6 provides a summary and conclusions.

2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1 The application site ('the Site') is located to the rear of Nos. 17-29 Newcastle Road in Reading. In this regard, the Site is located to the north of the existing row of dwellings which front onto Newcastle Road.

2.2 The Site comprises approximately 0.26 hectares of what is effectively undeveloped garden land, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Site Location (boundary approximate)



Source: Google Maps (June 2022); annotated by Union4 Planning

2.3 The existing residential property at No. 19 Newcastle Road ranges from single storey to two storeys in height, which is characterised by a roof extension to the existing property.

2.4 The neighbouring property at No. 17 Newcastle Road is located to the west of No. 19 and is a two-storey red brick dwelling. The properties at Nos. 23-29 comprise two-storey semi-detached dwellings. Although the prevailing height is two storeys along this part of Newcastle Road, there is a degree of variance in the character of the dwellings. The varying and steep roof pitches mean that the buildings step up in height from west to east, with Nos. 27 and 29 sitting at a higher level than No. 17, as illustrated in Figure 2 below overleaf.

Figure 2: View of Nos. 17 - 29 Newcastle Road



Source: Google Maps (June 2022)

2.5 The northern boundary of the Site is characterised by a number of mature and semi-mature trees with dense areas of planting along the northern and eastern boundaries. The interior of the Site is generally comprised of scrubland with limited landscape value, although it has some value in terms of biodiversity.

2.6 To the north of the Site is Cintra Park which comprises areas of open land and sports pitches. To the east is an area utilised for allotments, and to the south and west are rear gardens of properties along Newcastle Road.

2.7 The immediate surroundings are predominantly residential in nature, with some other local uses such as food shops and restaurants. Further afield is the University of Reading, approximately 1km to the east of the Site. There is an extensive retail and industrial park approximately 1km west of the Site, followed by large swathes of open green land. Reading City Centre is located approximately 2.3km to the north.

2.8 The Site is served by bus stops on Newcastle Road, approximately 65 metres to the west with routes towards Central Reading and to Whitley Wood. Reading Railway Station is approximately 2.5km to the north, serving routes via CrossCountry Trains, South Western Railway, Great Western Railway and TfL Rail.

2.9 The Site is part of an area allocated for residential development (Ref: SR4b) in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The allocation covers a larger parcel of land to the rear of Nos. 3 – 29 Newcastle Road, as illustrated in Figure 3 overleaf.

2.10 The western extent of Newcastle Road also comprises an existing or proposed Green Link.

Figure 3: Site Allocation SR4b



Source: Reading Borough Council (2019)

Planning History

2.11 There is a limited planning history for the Site due to its undeveloped nature. There are also few applications relating to properties along this section of Newcastle Road.

2.12 Outline consent was granted on 21 June 2005 for demolition of Nos. 11 and 13 and construction of 13 dwellings with access from Newcastle Road (Planning Ref: 04/00889/OUT).

2.13 On 20 May 2014, planning permission was granted for redevelopment of No. 17 Newcastle Road to provide 3 residential flats with associated parking (Planning Ref: 131690).

2.14 On 16 October 2015, planning permission was granted at 29 Newcastle Road for change of use to a 9-bedroom HMO with part single storey and part two storey side and rear extensions (Planning Ref: 151171). The application was a resubmission of a previous application with reference number 150287.

2.15 On 28 June 2021, planning permission was refused at No. 27 Newcastle Road for erection of a single storey rear extension and rear dormer window to create an 8-person HMO (Planning Ref: 210127). This proposal was subsequently allowed on appeal on 11 April 2022 (PINS Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3279894).

Pre-Application Consultation (Ref: 211367/PREAPP)

2.16 A request for pre-application advice was submitted to the Reading Borough Council in August 2021 in respect of the current application site. The pre-application submission proposed the following development:

"Demolition of No. 19 Newcastle Road and erection of 9 new dwellings with associated landscaping and parking to rear of Nos. 17-29 Newcastle Road."

Figure 4: Site Layout for the Pre-Application Proposals



Source: DHA Architects (August 2021)

2.17 Reading Borough Council issued a pre-application response on 21 October 2021 (Pre-App Ref: 211367/PREAPP). A copy of the pre-application response is provided under Appendix A of this Planning Statement.

2.18 The pre-application response confirmed that the principle of residential development was acceptable and emphasised that any redevelopment of the Site should not prejudice development of the wider allocation.

2.19 The pre-application response provided feedback and advice on a number of other matters, which are summarised under the relevant sub-headings below.

Density, Mix and Affordable Housing

2.20 The site covers just over half of the wider site allocation and, as such, the principle of providing 9 dwellings is in line with the indicative capacity of the overall site.

2.21 The proposed unit mix was considered to be acceptable and reflected the need for family-sized homes. The pre-application submission proposed 5 no. three-bedroom houses and 4 no. four-bedroom houses.

2.22 It was also highlighted that an affordable housing contribution would be required which will enable the equivalent of 20% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. This equates to 10% of the gross development value (GDV) of the development and would be secured via a Section 106 Agreement.

Scale, Massing and Layout

2.23 The pre-application response advised that further work would be required in terms of the proposed layout, which was considered to result in a cramped form of development with limited rear amenity space retained by Nos. 23 – 29 Newcastle Road. Amenity space for both future and existing occupiers was considered to be insufficient and did not reflect the large gardens within the area. Furthermore, the proposed gardens at 90-degree angles to each other were considered to be out of character.

2.24 It was advised that further details would be required regarding the garden area and amenity space of No. 17, as it was unclear whether the details shown on the plans were “as existing”.

2.25 There was concern about the siting of the plots labelled ‘C’ as they would create an overbearing form of development to occupiers of Nos. 23-29, and particularly for Nos. 23-25 who would have an outlook to a blank two and a half storey façade. It was suggested that plots ‘C’ be removed to address the above issues, as well as to allow for additional tree planting within the site.

2.26 The remaining seven dwellings were sited parallel to the existing dwellings and were considered to retain a good degree of separation to the retained dwellings.

2.27 The pre-application response advised that further work would be required in terms of the sizing of rear gardens which appeared to be small and subject to significant tree cover along the rear boundary. It was suggested that the row of dwellings be pulled forward to allow larger private garden spaces to be provided.

2.28 Due to changing site levels of approximately 1 metre and predominantly two-storey surrounding houses, it was advised that the proposal two-and-a-half storey dwellings might appear dominant compared to the existing surrounding built form.

2.29 The proposed architectural style and materials included red brick, white painted weatherboarding and grey tile roofs with architectural details such as gable pitched roofs, brick detailing, corbelling and decorative pitched roof porches which were considered to integrate appropriately with the mixed character of the area.

2.30 It was advised that the two plots labelled ‘E’ should be reconsidered as they showed side dormers facing towards the east and west boundaries, thereby relying on the adjacent land for outlook and daylight.

The response noted that this had the potential to prejudice future development of the remaining site allocation and, as such, the dormers should either be removed or shown to serve non-habitable rooms or obscure glazing.

Standard of Accommodation and Sustainability

2.31 The pre-application response advised that the standard of accommodation proposed was shown to be in line with the Nationally Described Space Standards and achieved at least a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate, as required by Policy H5 of the Local Plan.

Transport

2.32 The pre-application response set out a number of requirements in terms of vehicular access and pedestrian routes. It was advised that the pedestrian footway should continue along the road to ensure that there is sufficient footway provision for any further backland development adjoining the Site.

2.33 It was advised that the radii should be reduced to 4 metres at the junction to reduce vehicle speeds into the Site and visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 70 metres should be provided at the entrance of the new access off Newcastle Road.

2.34 The proposed access reflected the linear development patterns surrounding the Site and was considered to be logical, particularly given the limited space available. It was also noted that the access was sited so that it would not prejudice the development of the rest of the land within the allocation. However, the access road/footway should be shown to extend to the edge of the site boundary to prevent future development being restricted by third party land ownership.

2.35 The pre-application response outlined that the car parking provision was in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD which requires the provision of two spaces for three-bedroom and four-bedroom dwellings.

2.36 It was advised that further details regarding waste storage and refuse collection, including tracking diagrams, should be provided with any forthcoming planning application.

Natural Environment

2.37 The Site is located on a designated green link and is considered to be a positive contributor in its current form. The pre-application response noted some concern that development of gardens within overgrown areas may pose a risk to priority habitats and protected and priority species. For this reason, an ecological assessment (Phase 1 Habitat and Species Scoping Survey), bat surveys of buildings and trees and any Phase 2 surveys are required. The response also stated that it should be demonstrated that the proposed development results in a biodiversity net gain.

Archaeology

2.38 The pre-application response noted that the Site has potential to be of archaeological significance and the site allocation states that this must be taken into account. It was noted that an assessment of archaeological potential is required.

Environmental Protection

2.39 It was highlighted that a Phase 1 Desk Study should be submitted to give an indication as to the likely risks of contamination and to determine whether further investigation is required.

Community Infrastructure Levy

2.40 It was advised that the prospective development of the Site would be liable for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) based on the current charging schedule of £156.71 per square metre.

Trees

2.41 A separate note was provided by the Council's Natural Environment Officer on 24 November 2021 in respect of arboricultural matters. A copy of these response is provided under Appendix B of this Planning Statement.

2.42 It was highlighted that a full tree survey should be provided, plotting all trees, shrub masses, hedges, hedgerows and stumps, and identifying any trees for removal. It was advised that any future planning application should also provide landscape principles, including demonstration of a net gain in tree numbers and ensure it meets the aims of the Council's Tree Strategy and BAP.

2.43 The comments from the Natural Environment Officer also advised that future proposals should move the dwellings out of the root protection area (RPA) of a significant off-site oak tree.

3.3 The proposed development comprises the following mix of residential accommodation:

- 5 no. four-bedroom houses; and
- 4 no. two-bedroom houses

3.4 The proposed dwelling houses are two storeys in height and the internal layouts comply with the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards. The following table summarises the accommodation being provided in each dwelling house:

House Number	Description	Size	Floorspace
Plot 1	End Terrace	4-bedroom house	132.72 sqm
Plot 2	Mid Terrace	4-bedroom house	132.72 sqm
Plot 3	Mid Terrace	4-bedroom house	132.72 sqm
Plot 4	Mid Terrace	2-bedroom house	78.4 sqm
Plot 5	End Terrace	2-bedroom house	78.4 sqm
Plot 6	End Terrace	2-bedroom house	78.4 sqm
Plot 7	Mid Terrace	2-bedroom house	78.4 sqm
Plot 8	Mid Terrace	4-bedroom house	132.72 sqm
Plot 9	End Terrace	4-bedroom house	132.72 sqm

3.5 Each of the proposed dwelling houses will be provided with front and rear gardens. The proposed site layout places an emphasis on the provision of generous and usable private amenity space in the rear gardens, which range in size from 60 sqm to 132 sqm.

3.6 The internal layout and configuration of the dwellings will allow for satisfactory levels of internal daylight. The proposed dwellings in the terraces are dual aspect, with the windows provided on the front and rear facades. Moreover, the proposals do not include windows on the flank elevations of Plots 1 and 9. This is in response to the pre-application advice, which stated that windows on those elevations would rely on the adjoining land for outlook and could prejudice the future development of the adjoining land.

The proposed development will utilise the natural gradients within the Site to ensure that the new dwellings do not become overly dominant or appear uncharacteristic in height. Figure 6 overleaf provides a computer-generated image (CGI) of the proposed terraces of 8 dwellings, whilst Figure 7 provides a CGI of the proposed detached dwelling.

Figure 6: CGI View of Proposed Terraces of 9 Dwellings



Source: PM Creative Limited (July 2023 – updated)

3.7 The site layout has sought to ensure that the proposed dwellings are provided with ample private amenity space, whilst protecting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, a critical consideration in the layout and configuration of the proposed development concerns the protection of existing trees near the northern boundary of the Site and within the adjoining Cintra Park. To this end, the proposed dwelling houses are located outside of the root protection areas (RPAs) of the existing trees.

3.8 The design of the dwellings and palette of materials have been informed by the surrounding context. The terraced dwellings exhibit similar characteristics to the existing houses at Nos. 23 – 29 Newcastle Road, which includes the use of pitched roofs.

3.9 The proposed dwellings will have a combination of red brick and white weather boarding to complement the dwellings to the south which comprise a mixture of red brick, yellow brick and white rendered facades.

3.10 A new access road is proposed in place of the existing residential dwelling at No. 19 Newcastle Road. The road will run north-south off Newcastle Road and then extend along an east-west alignment to provide access to each dwelling. The road will have a minimum width of 4.8 metres and can also be extended in the future, to allow for access to any additional dwellings delivered within the wider site allocation.

3.11 The proposed development comprises a total of 18 car parking spaces (two spaces per dwelling). The car parking spaces will be 5 metres in length by 2.5 metres in width and will be provided at the front of each dwelling. The car parking spaces will be constructed with brick paving to distinguish them from the internal access road.

3.12 The proposed development will also comprise cycle parking, with each dwelling to be provided with secure and covered cycle parking within the rear gardens.

3.13 Secure durable bin storage areas will be provided at both the eastern and western ends of the internal access road, which will provide ease of access for residents and the Council's waste collection vehicles.

3.14 An internal pedestrian link will be provided within the centre of the Site between Plots 4 and 5, which will provide the residents of four of the dwelling (Plots 2 to 6) with direct access to their rear gardens.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 This section considers the planning policies and legislative framework which together provide the context against which a planning application may be considered. It identifies the national and local policies which are contained within statements of Government policy and the Development Plan for the area, or which may otherwise be material to the consideration of the proposed development.

4.2 The overall planning policy context is set by the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and by the Development Plan which comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). The relevant policies are set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021 and promotes the delivery of sustainable development that meets the needs of the community.

4.4 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three overarching objectives to sustainable development which are: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

4.5 The NPPF retains a *"presumption in favour of sustainable development"*, with Paragraph 11 stating that *"for decision-taking this means... approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay"*.

4.6 There are a number of key paragraphs contained within the NPPF which are relevant to the proposals and are summarised in brief below.

4.7 Paragraph 69 refers to small and medium sites for new housing and highlights that *"small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly"*. It further states that local authorities should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare and support the development of windfall sites.

4.8 Section 9 of the NPPF refers to sustainable transport and Paragraph 111 states that *"development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe"*.

4.9 Paragraph 119 encourages planning policies and decisions which promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

4.10 Section 12 refers to achieving well designed places with Paragraph 130 seeking to ensure, *inter alia*, that developments will function well and add to the quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, optimise the potential of the site and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being and provide a high standard of amenity.

4.11 Paragraph 154 states that new development should be planned in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

4.12 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and contains the policies that set out how Reading will develop up to 2036.

4.13 Upon adoption, the Local Plan replaced all existing development plans in Reading including the Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2015), Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015).

4.14 The Local Plan identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided. The policies contained in the document provide the main consideration in the determination of planning applications in Reading.

4.15 The policies contained within the Local Plan which are relevant to the proposed development are as follows:

- Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction;
- Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change;
- Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development;
- Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm;
- Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity;
- Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network;
- Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland;
- Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources;
- Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage;
- Policy H1: Provision of Housing;
- Policy H2: Density and Mix;
- Policy H3: Affordable Housing;
- Policy H5: Standards for New Housing;
- Policy H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens;

- Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters;
- Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging;
- Policy SR4: Other Sites for Development in South Reading.

4.16 In addition to the aforementioned policies, it should be noted that the application site is part of a larger site allocation in the Reading Borough Local Plan. The allocation is for residential development at the rear of Nos. 3 – 29 Newcastle Road. The wider site covers an area of 0.47 hectares and has an indicative capacity of 18-27 dwellings.

4.17 The Local Plan outlines that development on the site allocation should:

- Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and
- Take account of potential archaeological significance.

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.18 Reading Borough Council has published a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to provide further guidance in relation to various matters such as affordable housing, design and parking. Those which are relevant to the proposed development include the following:

- Affordable Housing SPD (March 2021);
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011);
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (April 2015);
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (December 2019).

Other Material Considerations

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)

4.19 The Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard document was published in March 2015 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It sets out the requirements for the gross internal (floor) area of new dwellings at defined levels of occupancy, along with floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.

5.0 Planning and Environmental Considerations

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that, if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 This section of the Planning Statement assesses the planning and environmental considerations that are relevant to the planning application. The pertinent considerations are set out under the following sub-headings:

- Principle of Development;
- Residential Mix and Density;
- Height, Scale and Massing;
- Design and Materials;
- Residential Amenity;
- Daylight and Sunlight;
- Highways and Parking;
- Energy and Sustainability;
- Archaeology;
- Ecology and Biodiversity;
- Trees and Landscaping;
- Contamination and Drainage;
- Section 106 Matters.

Principle of Development

5.3 The proposed development comprises the demolition of No. 19 Newcastle Road and the construction of 9 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), together with car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and associated works. The proposed development will, therefore, provide for a net increase of 8 houses on a site which is allocated for housing.

5.4 Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan highlights a need for at least an additional 15,847 new homes within the Borough between 2013 and 2036, which is equivalent to 689 new homes per annum. Paragraph 4.4.1 of the Local Plan also outlines that there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area. The proposed development would contribute to meeting the Council's housing target, whilst also providing new residential accommodation where there is a clear demand.

5.5 The Site is part of a larger allocation (Ref: SR4b) for residential development with an indicative capacity of 18-27 dwellings. The principle of residential development is, therefore, supported by the policies contained in the Local Plan and is in line with the Council's aspirations for the Site.

5.6 The pre-application response confirmed the acceptability of the Site for residential use, stating as follows:

"The site is garden land but forms part of an area of land allocated for residential development to the rear of Nos. 3-29 Newcastle Road under Policy SR4b of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. Therefore, the principle of the proposed redevelopment of the site for residential purposes is accepted but this is still subject to consideration in respect of other more details policies of the Local Plan."

5.7 The provision of new homes on small to medium sites is also supported by the NPPF, with Paragraph 69 highlighting the important contribution that these sites can make in meeting the housing requirements of an area. It goes on to state that local authorities should identify sites to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare.

5.8 Whilst the Site does not comprise residential gardens, the pre-application response highlighted that the Site was considered to be garden land and Policy H11 of the Local Plan therefore applies. The policy outlines a number of key criteria relating to garden development, each of which are set out and analysed below.

1) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:

- ***The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;***
- ***A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;***
- ***Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;***
- ***Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;***
- ***The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/or complementary;***
- ***The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.***

5.9 The layout and design of the proposed development has taken cues from the surrounding area. Plot widths, building heights, separation distances and the orientation of dwellings are reflective of the existing plots and dwelling houses along Newcastle Road. The proposed plots are generally long and narrow and will contain two-storey dwellings with a small setback from the street frontage and generous rear gardens. In this regard, the proposed development exhibits a similar urban grain to that of the surrounding area.

5.10 Hard landscaping is proposed within the Site in the form of tarmac and brick paving in a manner that differentiates between vehicle and pedestrian areas. A significant amount of soft landscaping is also proposed to provide greening within the Site, whilst also creating new opportunities for biodiversity.

2) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;

5.11 As highlighted above, the layout of the proposed development is reflective of existing plot sizes in the area. The site allocation has an area of 0.47 hectares and is identified in the Local Plan as having an indicative capacity of 18-27 dwellings. The proposed development comprises 9 dwellings on a site area of 0.26 hectares, which is at the lower end of the density range identified in the Local Plan.

5.12 The new access road will replace the demolished No. 19 Newcastle Road and will also allow for future access to the remainder of the site allocation.

3) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;

5.13 The proposed access remains in line with the pre-application scheme which the case officer considered to be acceptable. Further details regarding highways are discussed under the 'Highways and Parking' sub-heading below.

4) The proposal does not lead to tandem development;

5.14 The application site does not provide an opportunity for tandem development to the front or to the rear of the proposed dwellings. Whilst future dwellings may be constructed to the west and east of the Site, the area forms part of site allocation SR4b and is considered suitable for future development.

5) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;

5.15 The majority of the Site is setback from Newcastle Road and, as such, it is not in an area that is utilised by the public. Whilst the rear gardens will back onto Cintra Park, they will be fully secured by perimeter fencing and screened by the dense row of trees along the northern site boundary.

6) The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;

5.16 The Site provides a sufficient amount of space to allow for the new dwellings to be set back substantially from the rear gardens of the existing dwellings at Nos. 17-29 Newcastle Road. The proposed terraces would sit approximately 20+ metres north of the existing rear boundaries and approximately 35+ metres north of the rear windows of the existing houses, which is considered a sufficient distance to avoid any impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

5.17 The proposed dwelling on Plot 9 is offset from the eastern boundary of the site by approximately 2m+ giving good spatial separation from the users of adjoining land.

7) The emphasis is on the provision of family sized housing;

5.18 The proposed development comprises 5 no. four-bedroom houses and 4 no. two-bedroom houses, all of which are family-sized homes. Moreover, the proposed dwelling houses meet and exceed the minimum floorspace requirements set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards, which means that a high quality of residential accommodation is being proposed to serve the intended family needs of the future residents.

8) The development provides biodiversity net gain where possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network;

5.19 The proposed development will include a significant amount of planting and the use of wildflower grasses to provide greening to the Site and create opportunities for new habitats and biodiversity. In this regard, the landscaping scheme provides careful consideration of opportunities to achieve a biodiversity net gain.

9) The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.

5.20 The proposed layout and access road has been designed with careful consideration of the remainder of the site allocation and will ensure that future development to the west can come forward at a later date.

5.21 The pre-application advice highlighted that the proposed access would indeed allow for a link to the eastern and western boundaries to allow for future development of adjacent land without the need for separate access. This advice has helped to inform the proposed layout of the dwellings and alignment of the access road. The proposed dwellings are also orientated in a manner that would allow for the continuation of the new street, which could be achieved along the same building line.

5.22 Having regard to the above points, we would submit that the principle of residential development on the Site is acceptable and in line with the Council's aspirations for the wider site allocation.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the proposals represent a suitable form of development, in accordance with Policy H11 of the Local Plan.

Residential Mix and Density

5.23 The proposed development comprises a total of 9 residential dwellings of which there are 5 no. four-bedroom dwellings and 4 no. two-bedroom dwellings. Policy H2 of the Local Plan highlights that residential development should contribute towards meeting the Council's specified housing needs, and particularly for family homes of three or more bedrooms. In this regard, the proposals will provide 9 family-sized homes to help meet a clear and demonstrable need.

5.24 The proposed residential mix is similar to what was proposed as part of the pre-application scheme. The pre-application response advised that the unit mix was acceptable and in line with Policy H2, again highlighting the need for family-sized dwellings, and in particular for three-bedroom units.

5.25 With regard to density, Policy H2 suggests an indicative density range of 30-60 dwellings per hectare (dph) in suburban areas. The Site comprises an area of approximately 0.26 hectares and, as such, the proposal for 9 dwellings would provide a density equivalent to approximately 34 dph.

5.26 The wider site allocation suggests an indicative capacity of 18 to 27 dwellings on an overall site of 0.47 hectares. The proposed density is, therefore, at the lower end of the density range that is considered suitable for the Site. Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that the density is reduced by the need to provide the internal access road, which should ultimately benefit the development of the wider site allocation. Moreover, the density is informed by the need to safeguard the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties and the protection of existing trees along the northern site boundary.

5.27 As highlighted within the pre-application advice, the Site covers approximately half of the allocation and, as such, the provision of 9 dwellings is in line with the indicative density for the Site.

Height, Scale and Massing

5.28 Newcastle Road and the wider surrounding area is characterised by two-storey dwellings with pitched roofs. There is also a small number of single storey dwellings. Due to the roof pitches, the majority of houses appear as two-and-a-half storeys in height.

5.29 The design of the proposed dwellings has been informed by the pre-application advice and the existing context of the area. The proposed dwellings are two storeys with pitched roofs. The four-bedroom dwellings utilise the space within the roof to provide a second floor, which is used for the purpose of the fourth bedroom, thereby making efficient use of the space.

5.30 The pre-application advice cited concern about the building height due to the increase in levels towards the rear of the site. In order to address this concern, the proposed dwellings in the terraces follow the existing topography of the site to reduce the perceived height and mass when viewed from Newcastle Road, thereby ensuring that the new dwellings will not become overly dominant or intrusive within the

street scene. The height and scale of the proposed dwellings is in keeping with that of the existing houses along Newcastle Road, as shown in the CGI view in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: CGI View of Proposed Development from Newcastle Road



Source: PM Creative Limited (September 2022 - updated)

5.31 The Design Team has carefully considered the relationship of the proposed development with its surroundings and sought to design a proposed scheme, which is sensitive to the existing context. This is again shown in Figure 9 below, which provided a CGI view of the proposed development from a viewpoint to the southeast of the site along Newcastle Road.

Figure 9: CGI View of Proposed Development from the Southeast along Newcastle Road



Source: PM Creative Limited (September 2022 - updated)

5.32 We would submit that the proposed dwellings accord with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan, which requires all development to be of high quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located, having regard to layout, landscape, density and mix, scale, height and massing, and architectural detail and materials.

5.33 As highlighted in this Planning Statement, the plot sizes, widths and density are reflective of the surrounding area. The plots sit broadly in line with those to the south, to ensure that the existing general appearance of the street scene is maintained. Similarly, the proposed terraces and single detached dwelling are reflective of the surroundings which contain a mixture of detached, semi-detached, and terraced properties. To this end, the proposed development will sit comfortably within the existing suburban context and ensure that the new dwellings maintain the character of the wider area.

Design and Materials

5.34 The design of the proposed dwellings and the palette of materials have taken cues from the surrounding context which is somewhat mixed in nature and characterised by a mixture of red and yellow brick and white rendered facades.

5.35 The proposed terraces comprise a similar style to Nos. 23 – 29 Newcastle Road with pitched roofs, whilst the single detached dwelling will comprise a traditional design with a pitched roof.

5.36 In terms of materials, the dwellings will be constructed of red brick with white painted weatherboarding and grey tile roofs. They will also feature brick detailing, corbelling and decorative pitched roof porches, which will enhance the articulation and ensure a richness to the architectural style.

5.37 The general approach to design and materials was considered acceptable in the pre-application response, which highlighted that the proposals provided a good level of architectural detail that would integrate appropriately with the mixed character of the surrounding area.

5.38 Having regard to the above matters, it is considered that the proposals accord with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that developments respond positively to the local context and have regard to matters including layout, landscape, architectural details and materials and other criteria.

Residential Amenity

5.39 The proposed development has sought to protect the amenity of existing residents, whilst providing appropriate levels of amenity to the future occupiers of the new homes. Policy CC8 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to protect the living environment of existing residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, sunlight and daylight, noise and other matters.

5.40 The policy highlights that the position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces is particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate; however, this will be determined based on circumstances and in some cases, a closer distance may be acceptable without a detrimental effect on privacy.

5.41 The proposals do not include any back-to-back facing windows and the habitable rooms are generally orientated to the rear of the dwellings, thereby reducing any potential overlooking to existing rear gardens to the south.

5.42 As noted above, the proposed terraces will sit approximately 20+ metres north of adjacent rear boundaries and over 25+ metres north of any facing windows to properties along Newcastle Road, which is considered a sufficient distance to avoid any impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, thereby adhering to the 20-metre guideline.

5.43 The proposed dwelling on Plot 9 is offset from the eastern boundary of the site.

5.44 The proposals will also maintain existing levels of daylight and sunlight, particularly given that existing rear gardens are orientated in a north-facing direction. There are no anticipated impacts in terms of overshadowing to existing gardens or dwellings.

5.45 The siting of the proposed dwellings will also ensure that the amenity of future occupants is acceptable. Rear gardens are generally facing towards Cintra Park which provides screening in the form of large, mature trees along the northern boundary of the Site. In this regard, there are no views afforded into the proposed rear gardens.

5.46 The pre-application advice highlighted concern about overshadowing to proposed rear gardens due to the large tree canopies to the north. In order to address this concern, the Design Team has realigned the terraces of proposed housing further south, thereby moving the houses away from the trees and adding to the depth of the rear gardens.

5.47 The proposed dwelling houses are all family-sized homes and have been carefully designed to optimise the quantum and quality of internal floorspace. The following table illustrates how the floorspace within each unit meets and exceeds the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Unit No.	Unit Type	Minimum Requirement (2 storey dwellings)	Proposed Internal Floorspace	Difference (+/-)
1	4-bed 7-person	115 sqm	132.72 sqm	17.72 sqm
2	4-bed 7-person	115 sqm	132.72 sqm	17.72 sqm
3	4-bed 7-person	115 sqm	132.72 sqm	17.72 sqm
4	2-bed 3-person	70 sqm	78.4 sqm	8.4 sqm
5	2-bed 3-person	70 sqm	78.4 sqm	8.4 sqm
6	2-bed 3-person	70 sqm	78.4 sqm	8.4 sqm
7	4-bed 7-person	70 sqm	78.4 sqm	8.4 sqm
8	4-bed 7-person	115 sqm	132.72 sqm	17.72 sqm
9	4-bed 7-person	115 sqm	132.72 sqm	17.72 sqm

5.48 In summary, the proposed development will safeguard the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties, while also providing a high level of amenity for the proposed residential dwellings. We therefore consider that the proposed development accords with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan.

Daylight and Sunlight

5.49 The planning application is supported by a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment, which was prepared by T16 Design under a previous scheme. A new assessment has not been commissioned as the amended design has been improved and the comments below are further improved by repositioning the previously detached unit.

5.50 The report assesses the proposed development in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing matters, having regard to industry standard guidance. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the new BRE Guidance – ‘Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice’, which was published in June 2022.

5.51 The existing residential properties along Newcastle Road were assessed using the Vertical Sky Component, with a total of 23 windows assessed for both the existing and proposed conditions. All windows retain in excess of 80% of their current values. The scheme is therefore compliant with BRE recommendations in relation to daylight impacts.

5.52 The assessment includes the calculation of Target Daylight Factor (DFT) values for the habitable rooms in a selection of the proposed new dwellings, in accordance with BRE and BS EN 17037:2018 methodology.

5.53 The calculations have assumed a white ceiling, cream walls and mid-grey carpet or wooden floor using reflectance values taken from the BS EN 170437 Guidance.

5.54 The BRE Guidance allows for assessing only “worst case” units, where it can reasonably be assumed that other similar types would perform no worse than those tested. As a result, only Plots 2, 3 and 9 need to be tested. It can be assumed that the other plots will perform at least as well as these units.

5.55 The DFT results demonstrate that all assessed habitable rooms meet and exceed the minimum levels of internal daylight.

5.56 No overshadowing of gardens will occur due to the orientation of the site relative to its neighbouring properties. The scheme is therefore compliant with BRE guidance in relation to sunlight impacts.

5.57 The Daylight and Sunlight Assessment concludes that the proposed development is entirely acceptable for planning, in daylight and sunlight terms.

Highways and Parking

5.58 The planning application is supported by a Transport Statement, which was prepared by RGP Consultants.

5.59 The proposed development includes the provision of a new access road running along a south-to-north alignment off Newcastle Road. The entry and egress point will be situated in place of the existing property at No. 19 Newcastle Road following demolition of the building.

5.60 In terms of public transport links, the Site is located within Zone 2, Primary Core Area, as set out within the Council’s Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011). The SPD sets out maximum parking requirements within each zone, stipulating that for residential uses in Zone 2, a maximum of two spaces should be provided for dwellings comprised of three bedrooms and above.

5.61 The proposed dwellings comprise a mixture of two-bedroom and four-bedroom dwellings, thereby requiring a maximum of 18 car parking spaces. Each dwelling will be provided with two car parking spaces, which will provide a combined total of 18 spaces in accordance with the Council’s requirements above. The

proposed car parking spaces will also include provision for electric vehicle charging points in accordance with Policy TR5 of the Local Plan.

5.62 The Council's Parking Standards also stipulate that a minimum of two cycle parking spaces is required for each dwelling. The proposed dwellings will therefore include secure and lockable cycle storage in the rear garden, with space for a combined total of 18 bicycles across the development.

5.63 With reference to the TRICS database, the Transport Statement outlines that the proposed development is anticipated to generate a total of 39 two-way vehicle movements over the course of a typical weekday. This would comprise 4 two-way vehicle movements during each of the conventional AM and PM peak hours.

5.64 When the existing traffic from No. 19 Newcastle Road is taken into account, the proposed development would generate a net increase of 34 two-way vehicle movements over the course of a typical weekday, including 4 additional two-way movements during each of the conventional peak hours. This increase in traffic is not considered to be substantial and would have no material impact on the operation of the local highway network.

5.65 Policy TR3 of the Local Plan refers to access, traffic and highway related matters and requires that proposed developments will not be detrimental to highway safety and would not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network.

5.66 The proposed access road measures 4.8-metre in width with 4-metre kerb radii, which would be sufficient to allow for two vehicles to pass each other and was confirmed to be acceptable in the pre-application response. A 2-metre footway would continue along the western side of the proposed site access road, providing a link from the existing footway on the northern side of Newcastle Road into the Site. Dropped kerbs with tactile paving would be provided across the bellmouth at the site access.

5.67 Whilst the Council's pre-application advice suggests that visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 70 metres should be provided at the new site access, the precise design speed and visibility requirements have been established based by way of a week-long ATC speed survey, which was undertaken between 10 and 17 June 2022.

5.68 The ATC survey identifies flows of approximately 900 two-way movements per day, which are relatively low and reflective of flows from the TRL report into Manual for Streets guidance (many of which experienced in excess of 1,000 daily two-way flows). This therefore confirms that the characteristics of Newcastle Road are reflective of the survey sites from the Manual for Street guidance. As a result, it is considered that the application of Manual for Streets in this location is appropriate rather than the more onerous Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, which primarily applies to the trunk road network.

5.69 The Transport Statement confirms that visibility splays of 32.4 metres in both directions are required based on Manual for Streets guidance. Drawing No. 2022/6478/004 in the Transport Statement confirms that these splays are achievable in both directions from the site access.

5.70 The Transport Statement concludes that the proposed development would not have a demonstrable impact on the local highway network and so there are no impediments on transport and highway grounds that should prevent the granting of planning permission.

Energy and Sustainability

5.71 The proposed development has been carefully designed with a view to optimising the energy efficiency and sustainability credentials of the new dwellings.

5.72 Policy H5 of the Local Plan requires all non-major new build housing to achieve at a minimum, a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. Policy CC3 of the Local Plan also requires developments to demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.

5.73 The Design Team has carefully considered the aforementioned policies and the guidance contained in the Council's adopted Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019).

5.74 The proposed development seeks to optimise the use of available land by providing family-sized homes in an accessible location. The new dwelling houses will be up to current Building Regulations standards.

5.75 A sustainable drainage system will be provided for the hardstanding parking areas, details of which can be confirmed by planning condition. The waste management strategy for general site set-up, wheel washing, parking and working hours can also be adhered to as part of conditions.

5.76 The proposed development will use sustainable construction methods and materials. Furthermore, energy efficiency can be achieved through the following measures:

- The use of thermally efficient windows;
- Reduction of air permeability;
- Reduction in demand by utilising low energy lighting and appliances, and efficient condensing boilers;
- Reduction in water consumption per person per day through controlled water flow from taps, dual flush w/c, and reduced volume dishwasher and washing machine;
- Improved sound insulation;
- Dedicated waste storage and recycling;
- Clothes drying space;
- Dedicated cycle storage;
- Flexible home working space.

5.77 In summary, the proposed development accords with Policy H5 of the Local Plan and with the guidance set out in the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

Archaeology

5.78 The application site is considered to be of potential archaeological significance and the site allocation requires that this must be taken into account. The planning application is supported by a Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation, which was prepared by Ecus Ltd.

5.79 The report considers the archaeological potential of the site and surrounding area. There are no designated archaeological remains within the Site.

5.80 The available data reviewed suggests that the potential of the Site is as follows:

- low to moderate potential for prehistoric remains most likely comprising stray finds, remains associated with Bronze Age and Iron Age farming and settlement activity surviving as pockets between later disturbance should not be ruled out. Any such remains would constitute non-designated heritage assets of low to medium heritage significance;
- low to moderate potential for Romano-British remains comprising stray finds and remains associated with agricultural and land management practices. The presence of sedentary remains associated with a small farmstead surviving as pockets between later disturbance should not be ruled out. Any remains would constitute non-designated heritage assets of low to medium significance;
- low potential for early medieval and medieval remains associated with agricultural and land management practices. These would comprise non designated heritage assets of low heritage significance;
- high potential for post-medieval and twentieth century remains relating to the nineteenth century allotment activity and twentieth century residential development. Nineteenth century remains associated with allotment activity would likely be considered non designated heritage assets of negligible heritage significance. Remains associated with the twentieth century development of the Site hold no heritage significance.

5.81 Whilst the archaeological potential has been identified above, this must be considered in relation to the extent of previous impacts which the Site has been subject to. The report outlines that these are likely to have compromised archaeological remains, if/where present, although the full extent of such impacts is currently unknown.

5.82 The Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation includes a trenching plan to maximise the retrieval of archaeological information and to ensure that the significance of the archaeological resource is understood to a level of detail proportionate to its importance.

5.83 The monitoring programme for the Site will include the notification of the Council's archaeological officer at least 10 working days prior to the commencement of fieldwork. Access will be permitted to the archaeological advisor to the Council to monitor any fieldwork, as well as the progress of any agreed post-fieldwork analysis and reporting programmes.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Reptile Survey

5.84 The Site is located to the rear of a Green Link which runs along the western extent of Newcastle Road. Green Links are described within the Local Plan as crucial assets which link or have potential to link to one another. They include both private and public land and may comprise trees, riverbanks, road verges, well vegetated gardens and other features.

5.85 Policy EN12 of the Local Plan requires that the key elements of identified Green Networks are maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced and new development should demonstrate that links to the existing Green Network are retained. On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity; development should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.

5.86 The planning application is supported by a Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report prepared by ECUS LTD, which provides details of the existing habitats within the Site. The report confirms that the proposed development is not anticipated to give rise to any adverse impacts on protected species.

5.87 The Design Team has also carefully considered the proposed layout of the Site, with a view to retaining and supplementing the existing soft landscaping to optimise the biodiversity within the site.

5.88 The Bio diversity report together with net gain calculations enclosed completed by ECUS Ltd has calculated a gain of 24.51 % in Habitat Units means the proposed development achieves a quantitative no net loss of biodiversity in its present design, therefore no further recommendations are required at this stage.

5.89 Reptile surveys were also commissioned on the site between the period of April – June 2023 during the reptile season. The report produced was commissioned to present an initial assessment of the potential ecological constraints and opportunities relating to reptiles and advising of potential ecological constraints and opportunities for reptiles.

5.90 As documented in the enclosed report completed by Chase Ecology Consultants, no activity from reptiles (or amphibians) were recorded during each visit.

5.91 We would therefore submit that the proposed development is consistent with Policy EN12 of the Local Plan.

Trees and Landscaping

5.92 As detailed in this Planning Statement, the Site is located adjacent to Cintra Park and the northern boundary of the Site is characterised by existing mature trees.

5.93 The planning application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement, which have been undertaken by Harrison Arboriculture. The report identifies a mix of trees along the northern site boundary, which include Common Oak, Field Maple and Hawthorn. The report categorises the trees in accordance with the standards set out in BS5837, with a total of six B-category tree and two C-category trees identified.

5.94 The scheme drawings submitted as part of the pre-application consultation showed some of the dwellings partially extending over the RPA of Tree No. 1 which is a Common Oak. This was raised as a concern in the comments provided by the Council's Tree Officer, who noted that the proposals could cause potential harm or damage to the tree and recommended that dwellings were moved outside of the RPA. The proposed dwellings have therefore been realigned and moved southwards to avoid any impact on the RPAs of the existing trees.

5.95 The identification of the existing trees' root protections areas (RPAs) has helped to inform the siting and layout of the proposed dwelling houses. In this regard, the siting of the dwellings and any associated built development is underpinned by the objective of avoiding any encroachment into the RPAs of the existing trees.

5.96 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment concludes that no tree removals are required to facilitate the proposed development. The report also confirms that the proposals will not have adverse impacts on the long-term vitality of the retained trees, providing the methodology set out in the report is followed.

5.97 The planning application is also supported by a Landscaping Scheme, which includes details of supplementary landscape and wildflower planting, which will strengthen the landscape structure of the Site and provide for an enhancement in biodiversity. The Landscaping Scheme is provided on Drawing No. 18762-LD-01 and is supplemented by detailed planting specifications, soil requirements and maintenance information.

5.98 In summary, the proposed development will strengthen the landscape structure of the Site and accords with Policies EN12 and EN14 of the Local Plan.

Contamination and Drainage

5.99 The planning application is supported by a Stage 1 Contamination Report, which assesses the potential for contamination within the Site and any associated risks to the proposed development. The report confirms that the proposed development accords with Policy EN16 of the Local Plan, which states that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or pollution.

5.100 The planning application is also supported by a Drainage Strategy, which is based on a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS). Policy EN18 of the Local Plan refers to flooding and sustainable drainage systems and encourages new development to incorporate sustainable drainage (SuDS) features where

possible. Moreover, the policy states that runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and must be no greater than the existing conditions of the Site.

Section 106 Matters

5.101 Policy H3 of the Local Plan sets out the affordable housing requirements for residential development. For proposals which provide between 5 and 9 dwellings, a financial contribution is required that will enable the equivalent of 20% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

6.1 In summary, the planning application proposes the demolition of No. 19 Newcastle Road and construction of 9 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), together with car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, hard and soft landscaping, and associated works.

6.2 The application site is part of a wider site allocation for residential development (Ref: SR4b) with an overall indicative capacity of 18-27 new dwellings.

6.3 We would respectfully submit that the proposed development represents sustainable development based on the following reasons and considerations:

- The principle of residential development accords with the site allocation in the Local Plan and the proposed density is in line with the Council's aspirations for the Site.
- The proposed development will provide 9 new family-sized homes and represent a net increase of 8 homes, which will help to address the need for housing in the Borough.
- The proposed dwelling mix is in line with the site allocation and Policy H2 of the Local Plan and was considered acceptable in the Council's pre-application response.
- The proposed design and materials have been informed by the surrounding context to ensure that the new dwellings will sit appropriately within the area, complementing and enhancing the existing character and townscape features.
- The dwellings are sited in a manner which safeguards existing residential amenity, with the terraces set back sufficiently from existing properties to maintain levels of privacy.
- All flank windows in the newly designed houses will be obscure glazed to ensure that there is no potential for overlooking to rear gardens or neighbouring windows.
- The proposed access/egress and internal road layout allows for sufficient manoeuvring and parking, as well as future-proofing the Site to provide for any future development on the adjoining land to the east or west.
- The design of the proposed development has involved careful consideration of the future development of the remainder of the site allocation, with all dwellings and windows positioned to ensure that such development can come forward without prejudice.
- The proposed development complies with the standards set out in the BRE Guidance, thereby meaning that the internal daylight levels within existing neighbouring residential properties will be safeguarded, as well as ensuring acceptable daylight levels within the proposed new dwellings.
- The proposed development has been carefully designed with a view to optimising the energy efficiency and sustainability credentials of the new dwellings.

- The proposed development will not require the removal of any trees and the proposals will not have adverse impacts on the long-term vitality of the retained trees.
- As documented, no activity from reptiles (or amphibians / Grey crested newts) were recorded during surveys.
- The proposed development is supported by a Landscaping Scheme which includes details of supplementary landscape and wildflower planting, which will strengthen the landscape structure of the Site and provide for an enhancement in biodiversity. (Net gain achieved.)

6.4 In conclusion, we consider that the proposed development accords with the relevant adopted planning policies and associated guidance at the local and national level. We would also respectfully submit that the proposed development accords with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, and that planning permission should be granted.

Appendix A

Pre-Application Response issued by Reading Borough Council (Ref: 211367/PREAPP)

Appendix B

**Comments issued by Natural Environment Officer at
Reading Borough Council (Ref: 211367/PREAPP)**