

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Mapledurham

App Ref: 220641/FUL

Address: Site Adjacent 1 Woodcote Way, Reading, RG4 7HE

Proposals: Construction of new dwellinghouse

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr David Turner

Date received: 29/04/2022

Valid from: 25/05/2022

Target Decision date: 15/11/2022, extension of time on decision agreed from 20/07/2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is located adjacent to 1 Woodcote Way, Mapledurham. The surrounding area along Woodcote Way is considered residential and largely of two storey semi-detached and detached dwellings. The majority of dwellings along Woodcote Way have been developed with one or two storey rear or side extensions. One storey developments are located on neighbouring roads such as Westdene Crescent.

The proposal site is not located within a Conservation Area, Listed or in the setting of a Listed Building. The proposal site is located within the Air Quality Management Area.



Fig 1. Site Adjacent 1 Woodcote Way, Reading.
Site photo taken on 15/06/2022.



Fig 2. Site Adjacent 1 Woodcote Way, Reading.
Site photo taken on 15/06/2022.

A site visit was undertaken by the case officer on 15/06/2022.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks the erection a chalet bungalow within the private amenity space of 1 Woodcote Way. The detached garage to the rear of the dwellinghouse at 1 Woodcote Way is also to be demolished in order to improve the amount of resultant amenity space afforded to 1 Woodcote Way.

Plans considered:

- 1:100 Site Plan - 107/1
- 1:100 Proposed House - 701/10
- Block and Location Plans - 701/11
- Design and Access Statement

Received on 03/05/2022

- 1:100 Street Scene - 701/12
- Supplementary Statements

Received on 25/05/2022

- Block Plan - 701/13

Received on 28/07/2022

- Existing Floor Plans - 701/14

Received on 17/08/2022

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

890070/FUL - Erection of first floor conservatory. - Application Permitted on 16/11/1989

060407/FUL - Construction of new house - Application Refused on 02/01/2007. Reasons for refusal:

1. The proposal would result in an unacceptable level of overlooking into private amenity spaces of adjoining properties. This would be in conflict with Policies HSG9 and HSG5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998)
2. The site, by reason of its restricted area, is unsuitable for the proposed development, which would appear cramped and out of character with other development in the locality. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), Policy HSG9 (Location of Residential Development) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan
3. The proposed dwelling would result in the loss of private amenity space to the existing dwelling to the detriment to the occupiers of this dwelling. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), HSG9 (Location of Residential Development) and CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 and the Council's supplementary planning guidance, "Space Around Dwellings" (1994)
4. The application fails to make suitable arrangements to secure financial contributions and other transport related works required to off-set the impact of the development as set out within policies KEY3 (The Role of Development in Improving the Town), TRN11B (Development and Traffic) and LE13 (The provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Planning Obligations under s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990' (adopted July 2004, amendments adopted September 2004)

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

2 Woodcote Way, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HE - No response received.

3 Woodcote Way, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HE - No response received.

4 Woodcote Way, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HE - No response received.

136 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LD - Response received on 08/06/2022.

- States that the plans are inaccurate in demonstrating the relationship of the development with neighbouring properties.
- Concerns of overlooking to 136 Upper Woodcote Road from the proposed first floor gable window to the new dwelling.
- States that the resultant private amenity space to 1 Woodcote Way would not be insufficient in terms of size in relation to the dwellinghouse.
- Concerns as to whether the proposed access would be sufficient for the development.

- Concerns that the proposed dwelling would be overbearing to neighbouring properties due to its location in relation to neighbouring dwellings and would reduce the openness of the gardens and the surrounding area.
- The development is not considered in accordance with Policy H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- States that the proposals are an overdevelopment of the site and compromise the quality of the amenity for existing and future residents.
- The proposed development does not overcome the reasons for refusal as stated for the 2007 application (Planning Application Reference: 060407/FUL).

136A Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LD - Response received on 16/06/2022

- States that the resultant private amenity space to 1 Woodcote Way would not be insufficient in terms of size in relation to the dwellinghouse.
- States that the proposed street elevations drawing is unclear and does not accurately demonstrate the relationship of the development with neighbouring properties.
- Concerns of overlooking to 136a Upper Woodcote Road from the proposed first floor gable window to the new dwelling.
- Concerns of highway safety with the proposed access.
- Concerns that the proposed dwelling would be overbearing to neighbouring properties due to its location in relation to neighbouring dwellings and would reduce the openness of the gardens and the surrounding area.
- The development is not considered in accordance with Policy H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- States that the proposals are an overdevelopment of the site and compromise the quality of the amenity for existing and future residents.
- The proposed development does not overcome the reasons for refusal as stated for the 2007 application (Planning Application Reference: 060407/FUL).

138 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LD - No response received.

140 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LD - Response received on 20/06/2022.

- The existing area at the corner of Upper Woodcote Road and Woodcote Way is already overcrowded in terms of number and proximity of dwellings.
- The proposed dwelling would not follow the existing building line along Woodcote Way and would create a visually odd arrangement that would harm the character of the surrounding area.
- It is unclear as to whether the proposed dwelling would be a sufficient distance from neighbouring dwellings with regards to impact on amenity.
- Concerns of loss of privacy to occupants of number 140 and neighbouring residents.
- Concerns of the effectiveness of obscure glazing to the proposed roof lights and whether this would sufficiently address concerns of loss of privacy.

A site notice was erected on 15/06/2022 for a period of 21 days, expiring on 06/07/2022. The following response was received to the consultation.

4.2 Internal consultees

The following is a summary of response received from internal consultees.

Reading Borough Council, Archaeology - Response received on 17/06/2022.

- *I am writing to advise that the above application is likely to have an archaeological implication, on account of the archaeological potential of the site. In particular the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record contains numerous records for Roman activity in the vicinity of the site, including the location of a possible villa site c. 400 m to the north west, and a late Iron Age and Early Roman settlement site at Mapledurham Playing Fields c. 350 m south west. In addition a number of finds are*

recorded in the near vicinity (within 100 m) of the site including several Roman coins, Roman pottery and metalwork, and undated human remains (possibly post medieval).

- Thus we would conclude that the site has archaeological potential, and, should permission be granted for the construction of a new dwelling, we would recommend that an archaeological condition is attached securing a limited scheme of archaeological works. This would be in line with both Local and National planning policy, namely paragraph 194 of the NPPF, which requires “Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit ... where necessary, a field evaluation.”
- My recommended condition is as follows:
 - o Condition: No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.
 - o Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. The condition will ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded in order to advance our understanding of the significance of any buried remains to be lost and in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the Borough.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Response received on 01/09/2022

- Existing plan 701/1 does not appear to accurately reflect what is on (and adjacent to) the site in terms of tree/vegetation coverage, assuming Google images are up-to-date.
- However, with reference to Proposed Plan 701/10, the proposed house is acceptable in relation to the conifers in the south corner of the site. A brief tree protection plan is required to demonstrate protection of the ground within their Root Protection Areas (currently not calculated) during construction. I would suggest the applicant could easily provide this now to avoid a pre-commencement condition - this could just be a revised Proposed Plan with the proposed line of protective fencing shown, its specification and a note saying it will be erected prior to commencement and retained until completion.
- Two trees are shown to be removed hence in line with EN14 and aims of our Tree Strategy, landscaping will be required, to include replacement tree planting, of a minimum 3 trees to provide a net gain. This could be secured by condition if the applicant does not wish to provide that now.

Reading Borough Council, Ecology - Response received on 22/06/2022

- The application site comprises a parcel of land in a residential area of Caversham, located at the southern end of Woodcote Way. The land appears to comprise an area of amenity grassland with garden shrubs, a flat roofed shed, greenhouse and three large trees at the south of the land.
- The proposed plans appear to show that the trees will be unaffected by the proposals, and once precautions are in place to protect these trees and any nesting birds, the proposals are very unlikely to affect any priority habitats, protected species, or designated wildlife sites. There are therefore no objections to this application on ecological grounds.
- However, in line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, which states that “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged” a condition should be set to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided within the new development. Wording is given below.

- *Condition: Prior to the commencement of the development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include integral bird and bat boxes, tiles or bricks on the new building and native and wildlife friendly landscaping (including gaps at the bases of fences to allow hedgehogs to traverse through the gardens), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved.*
- *Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with paragraph 179 and 180 of the NPPF*

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 28/06/2022

- *In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed development will need 2.0 off road parking spaces. Parking for the existing dwelling, No1 would need to be retained. The parking area for the new dwelling should be made of permeable material, any proposal should not increase any surface water run-off from the site onto the Public Highway. The driveway would need a drainage channel provided where the driveway meets the back of the footway.*
- *The Council's Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 - 2026 includes policies for investing in new infrastructure to improve connections throughout and beyond Reading which include a network of publicly available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public transport. The Councils Local Plan was adopted in November 2019, and this includes a requirement at Policy TR5 for each new house to be provided with an electric charging point. This would need to be illustrated on revised plans.*
- *The submitted Planning Statement state and proposed plan 701/10, illustrates the new and existing dwelling will be provided with off road parking in accordance with the Councils current standards. An in an out access/exit is proposed for the new dwelling, utilizing one of the existing accesses and the creation of a new one. The position of the new access is acceptable and visibility splays achievable. The introduction of the new dropped crossing will result in the partial loss of the grass verge (which is part of the public highway) outside the property. The loss of grass verge below 15m2 is acceptable. A license will be required to undertake all works on the public highway, this includes the introduction of the new access and partial removal of the grass verge.*
- *In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, a 3-bedroom dwelling would require 2no secure cycle parking spaces. In a development of this nature, cycle storage can be provided in the rear garden area in a secure garden shed. Confirmation required; however, I am happy to deal with this by way of condition.*
- *Bin storage should not be located further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods and should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway. Bin storage area has been illustrated on plans, and it assumed that bins will be collected kerb side, as per the current arrangements for properties in the area.*
- *There would appear to be a number of trees on the site, therefore the Natural Environment Officer should be consulted to ascertain any risks to trees/tree roots etc.*
- *The applicant should be made aware that a Construction Management Statement will be required for this proposal if it is approved.*
- *There are no Transport objections to this application.*

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 Adaption to Climate Change

CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H3 Affordable Housing

H5 Standards for New Housing

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

H11 Development of Private Residential Gardens

EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN2 Areas of Archaeological Significance

EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN15 Air Quality

TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Affordable Housing SPD (March 2021)

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted 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)

Tree Strategy (March 2021)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Land use principles

Policy H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan sets out the requirements for residential development within private residential gardens.

Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

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.*

To be discussed further in this report under section 7.2 Design.

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;*

To be discussed further in this report under section 7.5 Private and Communal Outdoor Space.

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

To be discussed further in this report under section 7.7 Transport.

4. *The proposal does not lead to tandem development;*

The proposal would not lead to tandem development as the proposed dwelling is located to the side of the existing dwelling, and would have a frontage along Woodcote Way.

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

To be discussed further in this report under section 7.2 Design.

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

To be discussed further in this report under section 7.4 Safeguarding Amenity.

7. *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*

The proposal seeks the addition of a three-bedroom family dwelling to the site and the retention of a three-bedroom family dwelling.

8. *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever 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; and*

To be discussed further in this report under section 7.6 Trees, Landscaping and Ecology.

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

It is not considered that the proposed development would prejudice the satisfactory development of the wider residential area, which consists largely of family sized homes.

There is also no in principle objection to the proposed development, provided the development complies with the policies set out within the Reading Borough Local Plan, which will be discussed further within this report.

7.2 Design

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high quality design and maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this specific case; this concerns the following components:

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

The application is also subject to the relevant criteria of Policy H11 as outlined in paragraph 7.1 of this report.

Both sides of Woodcote Way to the north of the proposal site consists of two storey semi-detached and detached family sized (3-bed or more) dwellings. It is considered that this is an established rhythm along Woodcote Way in terms of the size, scale, appearance and character of development along Woodcote Way. Leading north from the proposal site, the size, scale and appearance of dwellings has a consistency, with the size of private gardens increasing to each plot as you head north along Woodcote Way. Whilst 1 Woodcote Way has a comparatively small amount of garden space to the rear, the main house benefits from an extensive garden that tapers to the side (south) of the dwelling.

The proposed development seeks the erection of a 3-bed chalet bungalow to the south of 1 Woodcote Way. The existing dwelling is situated on an angular plot, which narrows towards Upper Woodcote Road.

In terms of scale, the development is considered very similar to the previous scheme that was refused at the site under application 060407 in 2007 (see section 3 of this report for details). The design and footprint of the proposed dwelling is also very similar to that of the proposed dwelling that was refused at the site in 2007. The only tangible change from the scheme that was refused under application 060407 in 2007 is the orientation of the proposed dwelling. The proposed new dwelling is now set at a slight angle facing towards the existing dwelling. The front of the proposed dwelling therefore does not line up with the existing dwellings along the west side of Woodcote Way. This has resulted in an awkward, contrived and cramped relationship between the proposed dwelling and the existing dwelling and wider street scene.

It appears that the reason for the change in orientation of the proposed dwelling from the 2007 scheme is to address one of the reasons for refusal for that scheme which concerned a loss of privacy to neighbouring residents along Upper Woodcote Road as a result of openings proposed to the first floor of the new dwelling resulting in harmful overlooking. It is considered that this attempt to overcome this reason for refusal within this revised scheme has resulted in a contrived layout that only highlights that the scheme is considered an overdevelopment of the site.

It is considered that the proposed chalet bungalow would be an anomaly to the street scene and appear out of place in terms of size, scale, character and appearance. In accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the development is not considered to respond positively

to its visual context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness. Whilst acknowledging that the proposed dwelling is smaller than neighbouring dwellings along Woodcote Way, the development is considered to break the established rhythm of the street scene. This is exacerbated by the awkward and contrived arrangement of the development on site, with the proposed dwelling situated at an odd angle in relation to the existing dwelling.

Overall, the development is considered to harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In accordance with Policies CC7 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the new dwelling is not considered to respond positively to the local context, given the size, scale, and appearance of dwellings on Woodcote Way.

7.3 Standards for New Housing

As this application is seeking the erection of a new dwelling, policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan is applicable.

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires that development proposal incorporate sustainable design practices to take account of climate change. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new housing is be built to the higher level of water efficiency standards under Building Regulations and achieves at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rates above the Building Regulations standards and details of this in the form of design and construction stage SAP reviews can be secured by way of conditions.

The proposed dwellings exceed the minimum gross internal floor areas and storage requirements as set out in policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The gross internal floor area of the new dwelling is 127m², which is above the minimum space requirement of 102m² for a three bed, six-person, two storey dwelling. No change is proposed to the gross internal area of the existing dwelling, which is 143m², and is above the minimum space requirement of 102m² for a three bed, six-person, two storey dwelling.

In accordance with Policy H5; “All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3)”. The Design and Access Statement and Supplementary Statements for this application states that the proposed dwelling would be in general compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations. Having reviewed the plans it is considered that the internal layout is adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.4 Safeguarding Amenity

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to:

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety;*

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan goes on to state that; “*The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back*

distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy."

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan discusses a back-to-back distance of 20m is usually appropriate when addressing concerns of overlooking and loss of privacy. With regards to this application; the orientation of the development means that there is more of a side-to-back relationship between 136 Upper Woodcote Road and the proposed dwelling, and a back-to-back relationship between the 136a Upper Woodcote Road and the proposed dwelling. Nevertheless, the distance between the developments and the positions of windows serving habitable rooms is considered applicable to both relationships.

As measured from the proposed block plan, the proposed dwelling would be within 20m of both 136 and 136a Upper Woodcote Road.

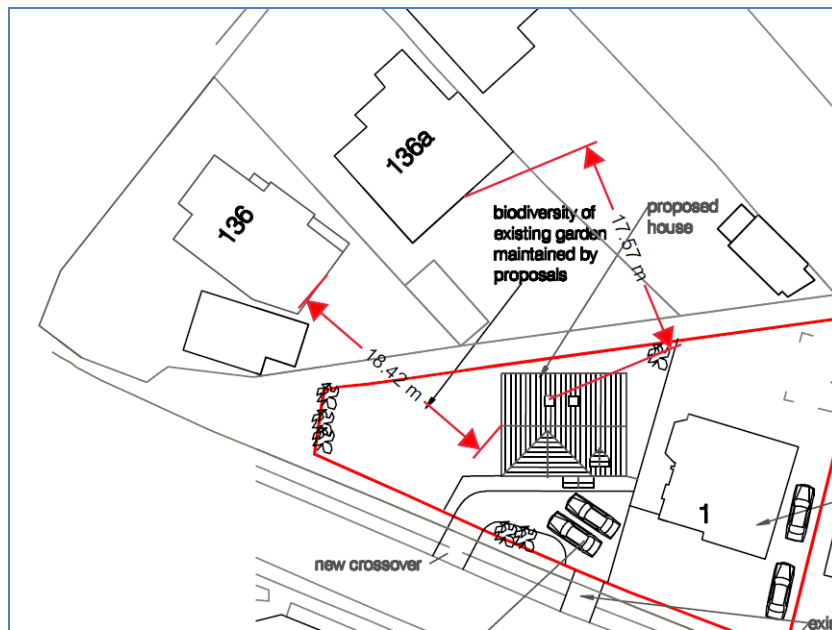


Fig 3. Annotated proposed block plan demonstrating the distances from window openings at the proposed dwelling to 136 and 136a Upper Woodcote Road.

As discussed, the angle of the proposed dwelling has altered in an attempt to address concerns of overlooking to neighbouring residents. Despite the change in angle to proposed dwelling, the first-floor bedroom window is still considered to provide opportunities for overlooking to the rear elevation of the dwelling at 136 Upper Woodcote Road and the rear garden. Whilst the change in angle goes some way to address these concerns, it does not fully address concerns of overlooking from the proposed first floor gable window to the proposed dwelling to the rear elevation of 136 Upper Woodcote Road and the rear garden.

Two rooflights are proposed to the rear roof slope serving a bathroom and a hallway. The plans have indicated that these would be obscure glazed. Given the proximity of these windows to the boundary with 136a Upper Woodcote Road, there are concerns that there would be a perception of overlooking to number 136a. This is considered the case given the position and the proximity of the first floor rooflights facing the rear garden of 136a.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, as the development would result in a loss of privacy to 136 Upper Woodcote Road. The development would also result in there being a perception of overlooking to the occupants of 136a Upper Woodcote Road due to the proximity of the rooflights proposed

to the rear roof slope, despite the indication on the proposed plans that these would be obscure glazed.

7.5 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that:

- *Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.*
- *The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.*

As discussed in section 7.2 of this report; the proposed development is considered not considered to provide adequate private amenity space to the existing dwellings at 19 and 21 Western Elms Avenue from the resultant development.

As per paragraph 4.4.87 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; for houses “useable private outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates (measured externally and including garage space).”

As existing, 1 Woodcote Way benefits from a generously sized garden with a similar dwelling to amenity space relationship as 2 Woodcote Way, which is located on the direct opposite side of the road. The proposed dwelling would result in the sharp erosion of the private amenity space afforded to 1 Woodcote Way. It is proposed the existing garage at 1 Woodcote Way be demolished to compensate for the loss of garden space to the proposed replacement dwelling. It is not considered, however, that the loss of 328m² of garden space to 1 Woodcote Way is adequately compensated for by the resultant space provided by a detached garage with an area of 23m².

Whilst development would result in the provision of 146m² to the rear of 1 Woodcote Way, the angle of the plot to the rear, tapering south means that the resultant space is comparatively lacking in quality when compared with the rear gardens of neighbouring dwellings along Woodcote Way. The size and angle of the resultant private amenity space to 1 Woodcote Way is not considered to respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity and therefore not in accordance with Policy H10.



Fig 4. Aerial image of the proposal site (outlined in red). An approximation of the subdivision of the plot has also been indicated in red. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 14/11/2022.

With regards to the proposed dwelling; the private amenity space allocated would be to the side of the dwelling, with minimal usable amenity space to the rear. The proposed amenity space to the proposed dwelling is not considered to respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.

The proposed development is therefore not considered in accordance with Policy H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. In this regard, the development is also not considered in accordance with criteria 2 of Policy H11 (as highlighted in section 7.1 of this report) of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.6 Trees, Landscaping, Ecology and Archaeology

The proposed development provided very little detail in terms of landscaping. The Council's Natural Environment Team indicated that a brief tree protection would be required for this application, along with a landscape plan proposing the replacement of two trees to be removed. In line with the Council's Tree Strategy, where a net gain of trees is sought when the removal of trees is proposed, a minimum of three trees would have been required for this development.

As the tree protection measures and landscaping details could have been secured via condition to any approval of this application, it is not considered appropriate to refuse this application on natural environment grounds.

The Council's Ecology consultant also raised no objections to the application, with details of ecological enhancements such as bird boxes and bat boxes to be secured via condition to any approval.

Berkshire Archaeology also suggested a condition be attached to any approval of the application concerning the requirement for a programme of archaeological work to be agreed prior to development commencing on site, and for any approval programme to be adhered to during construction. This is due to numerous records for Roman activity in the vicinity of the site, including the location of a possible villa site c. 400 m to the north west, and a late Iron Age and Early Roman settlement site at Mapledurham Playing Fields c. 350 m south west. In addition a number of finds are recorded in the near vicinity (within 100 m) of the site including several Roman coins, Roman pottery and metalwork, and undated human remains (possibly post medieval).

On the basis that the comments from the Berkshire Archaeology, the Council's Ecology consultant and the Natural Environment Team could have been overcome via conditions, it is

considered that the development would have been in accordance with Policies EN2, EN12 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan subject to these conditions.

7.7 Transport

As stated in the response from Transport Development Control, there are no in principle objections to the scheme from a transport or highways perspective, however, additional information was required in order to be policy compliant. For instance, electric vehicle charging points had not been demonstrated along the plans, along with secure cycle storage for each dwelling, as well as bin storage and collection points.

Whilst this information is still outstanding at the time of issuing a decision for this application, it is not considered appropriate to formulate a reason for a refusal to the application regarding these items as they could have been secured via condition to any approval of the application.

7.8 Affordable Housing

In accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; *“Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading:*

- (...) on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.”*

The applicant has confirmed that they agree to enter into a section 106 legal agreement to secure a policy compliant affordable housing contribution however given planning permission is to be refused for other reasons a section 106 has not been drafted and therefore this would amount to an additional reason for refusal of the planning application. A proposed figure for the affordable housing contribution was suggested within the Supplementary Statement submitted for this application, however, no evidence has been provided as to how this figure has been calculated using valuations from two separate estate agents in accordance with the requirements of the Affordable Housing SPD (2021).

7.9 CIL

The proposal includes the addition of more than 100sqm of new floor space and so would be CIL liable.

	Existing (m ²)	Proposed (m ²)	Change
Existing Dwelling			
Ground Floor	74	74	0
First Floor	69	69	0
Garage	19	0	-19
Proposed Dwelling			
Ground Floor	0	72	72
First Floor	0	55	55
Total Change			108

Accordingly, on the basis of the 108m² proposed floorspace the liability (based on a 2022 CIL rate of £156.24 per sqm) would total £16,873.92.

The standard informative is recommended to be included on the decision notice to advise the applicant of this separate process and requirement.

8. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposal would be an overdevelopment of the site, which would result in a cramped arrangement between the proposed dwelling and the existing dwelling. This relationship would also appear contrived and at odds with the wider street scene along Woodcote Way. The development would also harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents with regards to overlooking, in particular those at 136 and 136a Upper Woodcote Road. In short, the scale of the proposed development is considered too large given the situation and angle of the plot.

Officers did advise the agent of these shortcomings and this conclusion. The agent was provided with an opportunity to withdraw the application prior to a decision being made, but this was not forthcoming (also acknowledging the right to appeal). Hence the above conclusion reached on the application, on the basis of the information submitted and consideration of all material matters.

Permission refused due to the following reasons:

1. The site, by reason of its restricted area, is unsuitable for the proposed development, which would appear cramped and out of character with other development in the locality. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies CC7 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
2. The proposal would result in an unacceptable level of overlooking into private amenity of 136 Upper Woodcote Road, with a perception of overlooking to the occupants of 136a Upper Woodcote Road. This would be in conflict with Policies CC8 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
3. The proposed dwelling would result in the loss of private amenity space to the existing dwelling to the detriment to the occupiers of this dwelling. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC8, H10 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

10. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives

IF0: Positive and Proactive Working - refusal

The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to see if relevant concerns could be resolved to allow permission to be granted. However, that has not been possible within the agreed extended timescale and therefore the decision to refuse planning permission has been taken. The agent was given an opportunity to withdraw the application in advance of the refusal being issued but this was not acted upon.

C00: Plans Considered

The refusal relates only to the following plans and information as received by the local planning authority:

- 1:100 Site Plan - 107/1
- 1:100 Proposed House - 701/10
- Block and Location Plans - 701/11

- Design and Access Statement

Received on 03/05/2022

- 1:100 Street Scene - 701/12
- Supplementary Statements

Received on 25/05/2022

- Block Plan - 701/13

Received on 28/07/2022

- Existing Floor Plans - 701/14

Received on 17/08/2022

I14: Pre-app Advice

This planning application was submitted without the benefit of first seeking pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority, which can often result in the avoidance of refusal of planning permission. Please see the following link to the Council's pre-application service here:

http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app_Nov_2016.pdf