

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No.: 221252/OUT

Address: 59 Corwen Road

Proposal: Outline application for the erection of two storey building to create 2 No. 1 bedroom maisonettes (all matters reserved)

Case officer: Connie Davis

Extended Target Date: 20/12/22

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site comprises of a garage block associated with 59 Corwen Road. The garages sit next to a Reading Borough Council owned car park. The surrounding area is residential.

The site is not Listed, nor in a Conservation Area.

Proposal:

Outline Planning permission is sought for 2 x 1 bedroom maisonettes. All matters are reserved (appearance, scale, layout, access and landscaping).

Plans/Documents considered:

03 Rev B - Proposed Site Plan

Received 28th November 2022

Land Registry Details
Photographs

Received 25th October 2022

Planning Statement

Received 1st September 2022

01 - Location Plan
02 - Block Plan
04 - Existing Floor Plans - Nos. 57 & 59
Application Form

Received 23rd August 2022

Relevant Planning History:

160010 - Demolition of existing residential dwellings and associated garaging and the erection of 7 no. 1 bedroom apartments with associated parking cycle storage and amenity space - Application Refused

160993 - Proposed demolition of existing garage block and the erection of 3no. new apartments with associated parking and amenity - Application Refused

Consultation Responses:

Internal consultees:

Transport - Objection

Natural Environment - No objection subject to condition and further details being provided at reserved matters stage

Ecology - No objection subject to conditions

Environmental Health Officer - No objection subject to conditions

Thames Water - A build over agreement is required if the development is within 3m of a public sewer

External Consultation

Adjoining properties were consulted via letter on 07/09/22. In addition a site notice was displayed.

3 letters of objection were received raising the following concerns:

- The car park is not 'dis-used' as described by the applicant
- The boundary of 59 Corwen Road was moved further back into the car park
- Properties in Hursley Close will experience a loss of light, privacy, and feeling hemmed in
- More potential noise and traffic
- Mention of potential future development of the Council owned car park
- The proposed entry to the site from Cadogan Close means churning up the existing tenants (no 57) garden. If permission is given to enter the site from the council car park this would encroach on the parking facilities. This would then mean these cars would be parked on a very busy Corwen Road.
- It's not clear whether the new flats are market rate homes or low cost starter homes
- Loss of parking - the car park has been used by neighbours for 18 years
- Concern over where materials would be stored
- The outline of the new development is close to the existing maisonettes - consider the plans should be scaled down
- Boundary fences are presently damaged and these should be restored

Officer comment: *The above points will be responded to within the report*

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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, 2021) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable

development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan (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
- CC9 Securing Infrastructure
- EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network
- EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- EN15 Air Quality
- EN16 Pollution and Water Resources
- H1 Provision of Housing
- H2 Density and Mix
- H3 Affordable Housing
- H5 Standards for New Housing
- H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

- SPD - Sustainable Design and Construction (2013)
- SPD - Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- SPD - Affordable Housing Provision (adopted 2021)

Appraisal

Land use principles

The development site is located within the urban area of Reading. As established by Local Plan Policy H1, there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area. This policy supports the principle of housing development within the borough on land which is not functional floodplain or open space and that which contributes towards social, economic and environmental wellbeing. There is an identified requirement to provide 15,847 dwellings and associated infrastructure over the plan period.

In meeting housing need, the NPPF states that LPAs should “*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*”. The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed

land' excludes private residential gardens in built up areas. The priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular on vacant, under-utilised and derelict sites. As the site is currently occupied by garage blocks and associated access, it is considered the land is classified as 'previously developed' brownfield land and therefore in principle is supported by the NPPF.

The existing garage structures are also not listed, within a conservation area. Within this context, there is no in-principle objection to the garage structures being demolished, it does need to be established that the loss of the garages would not result in adverse impacts on parking provision and the highway network.

Therefore, the principle of residential development within a residential area is generally acceptable, subject to other material considerations which are discussed below.

Design Considerations and Impact on the Character of the Area

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm is a strategic policy seeking high standards of design quality in new development. It sets out how various components of development including layout, urban structure and urban grain, and scale, make a positive contribution to their surroundings and respond positively to their local context.

In terms of layout this includes buildings, routes and open spaces within the development and the way they are laid out in relation to buildings and spaces outside the development.

Whilst the layout, scale and appearance of the building are reserved matters, the indicative plans demonstrate a development that would be a two-storey development that would be set back slightly further than 59 Corwen Road. The general parameters of a two-storey building in this location is acceptable, given the surrounding context. The plot is considered of sufficient size to accommodate a development of this indicative size. The indication of positioning is also considered acceptable for the purposes of this outline application as it demonstrates that sufficient space around the building would be accommodated. It would be positioned further back than the front elevation

Whilst the proposed dwellings would not form part of the terrace itself, they would be positioned in a comparative layout in terms of building line and the general spacing to the existing terrace. The layout would allow for comparable amenity space and parking arrangement.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Impact on Parking/Highways

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site. The site is located in Zone 3 and the parking requirement in this zone is 1 space. The Transport officer has advised that they are assessing the proposal as one dwelling (as it is a massionette) rather than two separate flats. A car free scheme would not be acceptable as the site is located a sufficient distance away from Reading town centre.

The application proposes to demolish a privately owned garage block belonging to 59 Corwen Road. The existing Council car park which is next to the block, will remain.

Whilst access is reserved for future consideration, it needs to be established if in principle there is sufficient space on site for the parking space. Within the red outline of the site, it has not been demonstrated that a parking space could be accommodated. The applicant has advised that historically parking is however this is an informal arrangement, and the space in question not part of the application site and therefore cannot be controlled as part of the application. Furthermore, the existing garages are currently parking allocated to 59 Corwen Road and therefore sufficient parking needs to be reprovisioned. The reprovisioned parking needs to be within the red line ownership. On the revised site plan, 4 parking spaces are reprovisioned parking in the curtilage of 57 Corwen Road, however this is outside of the application boundary.

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. Whilst this matter could be dealt with via condition ordinarily, the applicant has not demonstrated sufficient onsite parking for the proposed development then there is also not space to accommodate an electric vehicle charging point on site.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 1 cycle parking space for the development. In addition, details of refuse and waste storage are required. Should the proposal have been acceptable, these would have been secured via condition.

Due to the applicant not demonstrating that the development could accommodate a policy compliant level of parking, or re-provide the parking which would be lost for existing dwellings within the application site, the proposal is contrary to Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

It should be noted that in neighbouring comments, there was concern that the applicant had stated that the car park was disused. Officers are mindful that statements within D&A statements may be subjective. Regardless of this, the car park is not subject to this application given it is not in the ownership of the applicant.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties and Future Occupiers

Neighbouring Occupiers

Provided the proposal is acceptable in other planning terms, the detailed assessment of the impact on neighbours and future occupiers from the proposed dwellings would be subject to a Reserved Matters application where details of the internal layout would be known.

Policy CC8 seeks to ensure occupiers (existing and proposed) are afforded sufficient levels of amenity. From the indicative plan, the building would be located further back than 57/59 Cowen Road but would not result in a breach of 45 degree light angles from habitable rooms. The building would have a separation distance of over 20m between the building and rear windows of Hursley Close which is considered acceptable.

Further consideration of this would be dealt with at reserved matters stage, particularly the placement of windows, but it is considered that in principle, a two-storey residential building can be accommodated on site without sufficient adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. A condition would be applied ensuring no side windows facing 57/59 Road given the

development is set further back and could compromise the level of privacy enjoyed in the rear garden.

Future Occupiers

The dwellings would be expected to provide rooms of an adequate size in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government - Technical housing standards - nationally described space standards. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states that 'new build housing should be built to the following standards: a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard'. Policy H5 also states that 'ensuring sufficient levels of internal space is essential to the quality of life of residents of the Borough, which is a key element of the vision of the Borough'. It is indicated that the dwellings would be 50 sqm which would comply with the space standards, but further detail on this would be required at reserved matters stage. However, in principle it is considered that the plot could accommodate dwellings that would meet the nationally prescribed space standards.

Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space sets out that 'Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space... Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.'

H10 also states that '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.'

The proposed rear amenity space is appropriately sized and is comparable to those in the vicinity. It would measure approx. 96 sqm which exceeds the size outlined in Policy H10 which states that 1 bed flats should be provided with 25 sqm per dwelling. The proposal therefore complies with Policy H10 and a condition would be included to ensure the garden space is retained as communal space.

The proposed development is considered acceptable in relation to the above policies and would not result in any negative effects on amenity of future or existing residents.

Impact on the Natural Environment

Whilst landscaping is reserved, it needs to be established that the layout and access of the development would allow for soft landscaping on site (as part of a reserved matters) and would not result in harm to any existing trees on site.

There are no trees within the site except for a dead tree to the rear and a young tree growing against the derelict garages, as such existing trees will not be a factor in assessing this application. Two trees to the front of the site, one on either side of Hursley Close entrance, should be protected during development.

With reference to the **Proposed Site Plan Project No. 02/22-01 Drg. No. 03**, the following are noted:

There are no landscaping details provided with this outline application, but officers are satisfied that the proposed layout can accommodate soft landscape and tree planting within the site. As

the proposal creates residential capacity within the site, outdoor amenity space, soft landscaping and tree planting should be secured via condition. This should include privacy screening planting to the rear. In addition, service runs locations should be secured as part of the landscaping condition and demonstrate that they do not negatively affect the existing trees to the front.

As there is a risk that due to construction site logistics (materials delivery, contractors parking, materials storage, etc) the two trees to the front of the site will be damaged during development, an informative should be added to indicate precautions must be taken to mitigate harm to trees.

In conclusion, the outline application is supported in terms of trees and landscaping subject to a **condition** to secure landscaping, services and planting details at reserved matters stage.

Environmental Protection Matters

Policy EN16 states that *‘Development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.’*

The development lies on the site of disused garages, which has the potential to have caused contaminated land (oil spillages, waste storage etc). The proposal may introduce new pollutant linkages between contaminated land and sensitive receptors at the site. The application site lies adjacent to the site of an historic brick works, which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use. Therefore a condition would have been applied to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination to comply with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Conditions would also be applied controlling the hours of construction for the benefit of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Sustainability

Policies CC1, TR5, and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 all include increased standards for sustainable homes. As such, conditions will be attached to ensure the following:

- Proposal will achieve a minimum 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emissions rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulation (may be superseded by future Building Regulations by construction);
- Proposed development to be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations;
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Should the proposal have been acceptable, conditions to these effect would have been attached to the permission.

Affordable Housing

The proposal seeks to create two new dwellings and, therefore, a contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision is required as part of the application in accordance with policy H3 and the Affordable Housing SPD under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. On sites of 1-4 dwellings, this equates to 10% of the GDV of the

development. Whilst the principle of an affordable housing contribution has been agreed by the applicant, this was not progressed by the LPA due to outstanding concerns regarding the application meaning it would not be progressing with a recommendation of approval. An informative will be included to state that this reason for refusal may be able to be overcome at appeal.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL would apply to the proposal.

Other Matters raised in representations

- The boundary of 59 Corwen Road was moved further back into the car park
Officer comment: This is a civil matter rather than a planning matter
- Mention of potential future development of the Council owned car park
Officer comment: This application can only assess the scheme presented rather than comment on any potential future, speculated schemes
- It's not clear whether the new flats are market rate homes or low cost starter homes
Officer comment: The properties would be market homes
- Concern over where materials would be stored
Officer comment: This would have been controlled via condition should the application have been approved
- Boundary fences are presently damaged and these should be restored
Officer comment: This is a civil matter rather than a planning matter

Conclusion

On the basis of the above, and in light of any other material planning considerations, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, the recommendation is to grant outline planning permission. If the proposal were to be recommended for approval, it would be necessary to include a series of conditions securing height parameters and maximum extents of building footprint.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE outline planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed layout fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and electric vehicle charging points. This could result in on-street parking/reversing movements on Corwen Road, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with local plan policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.
2. 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 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021.

Informatives:

1. Plans considered
2. Pre-app
3. Positive and Proactive
4. Reason for refusal 2 could be overcome at appeal