

Appearance



Appearance



PLANNING ANALYSIS

Relevant Planning Policies

Planning Introduction The local planning authority for the site is Reading Borough Council. The proposals on the site will be assessed against national and local planning policy, the key policy documents for this site area as follows:

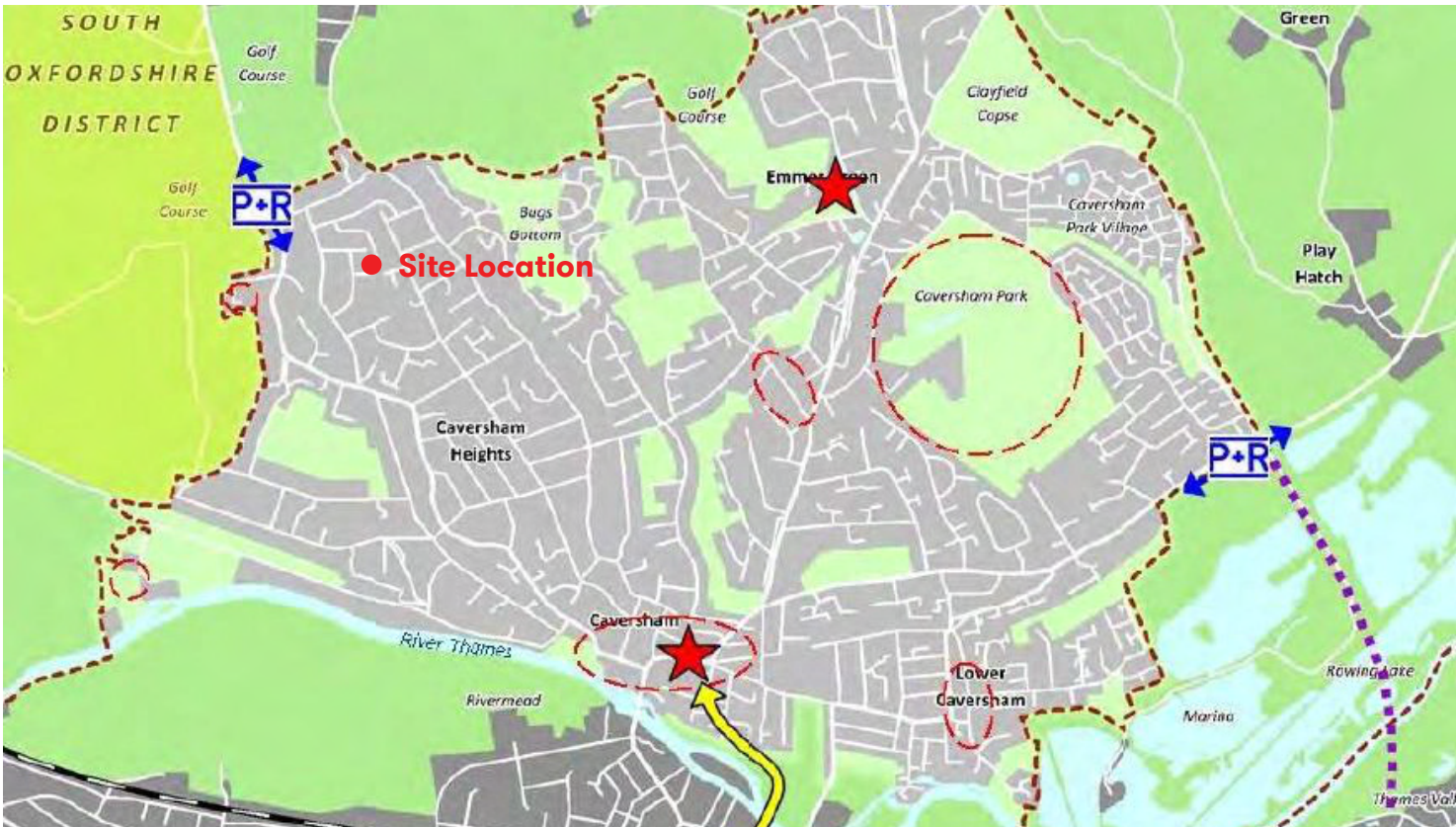
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Key policies from each of the above documents are set out later in this section.

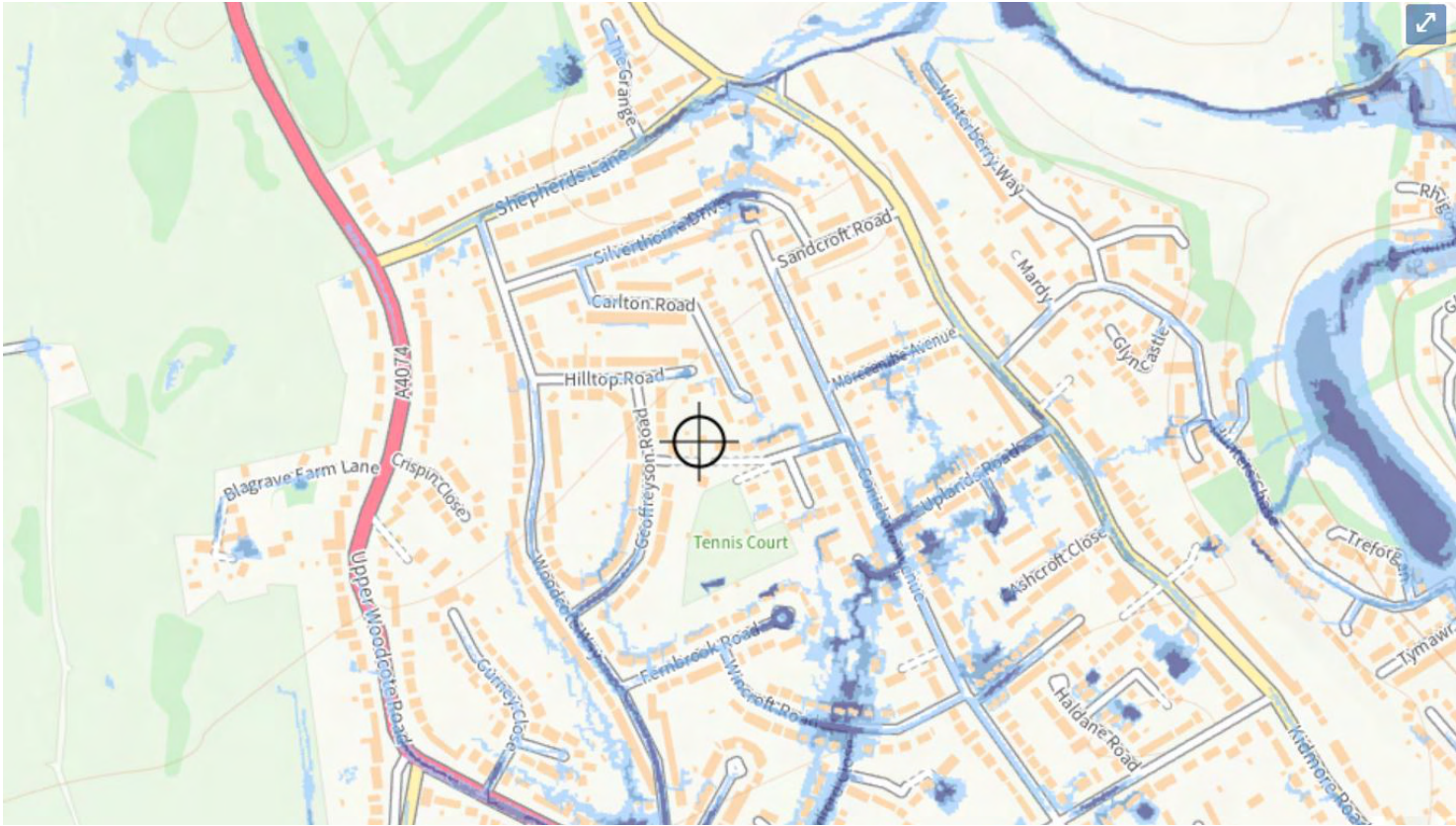
Classification of the Site The site is located in the Caversham area of Reading, in largely residential surroundings. Caversham is at the edge of the local authority boundary with South Oxfordshire District Council bordering the suburb at the north west.

The site is not located within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Conservation area and therefore the additional restrictions that apply in those settings are not relevant to this project.

We have searched the national flood risk register and the site is listed as having a “very low risk” of both surface water and coastal / river flooding. Flood risk will not therefore be a constraint to development.



Extract from Reading Borough Council Local Plan showing town centres (star), cluster of heritage assets (red dashed) and local authority boundary (brown dashed) (NTS)



Flood Risk Map showing flood risk areas in blue

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework The National Planning Policy Framework is the high level national framework setting out how local authorities must determine applications. It includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development which requires authorities to approved proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Reading Borough Local Plan **CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION** Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:
- Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;
 - Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;
 - Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and
 - All development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in river flooding levels as a result of climate change.

Reading Borough Local Plan (Continued) **CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE** Development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:

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

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives:

- Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place
- Continuity and enclosure
- Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping
- Ease of movement and permeability
- Legibility - clear image and easy to understand
- Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time
- Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;

Relevant Planning Policies

**Reading Borough
Local Plan
(Continued)**

- Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- 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; or
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

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.

**Reading Borough
Local Plan
(Continued)**

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

a) The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:

- Sites with identified biodiversity interest - Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and the River Thames and all its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal); and
- Areas with potential for biodiversity value and which stitch the Green Network together – designated Local Green Space and open green spaces, and existing and potential Green Links.

New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.

b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:

- Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and
- Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.

In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and

Relevant Planning Policies

**Reading Borough
Local Plan
(Continued)**

it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is “no net loss” of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS

Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.

New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

New build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:

- a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.
- b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations⁷⁹
- c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.
- d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target

**Reading Borough
Local Plan
(Continued)**

- emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.
- e. 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) (see below).
 - f. On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be ‘wheelchair adaptable’ as defined in part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be ‘wheelchair accessible’.

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

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.

Relevant Planning Policies

Reading Borough
Local Plan
(Continued)

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

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.

Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:

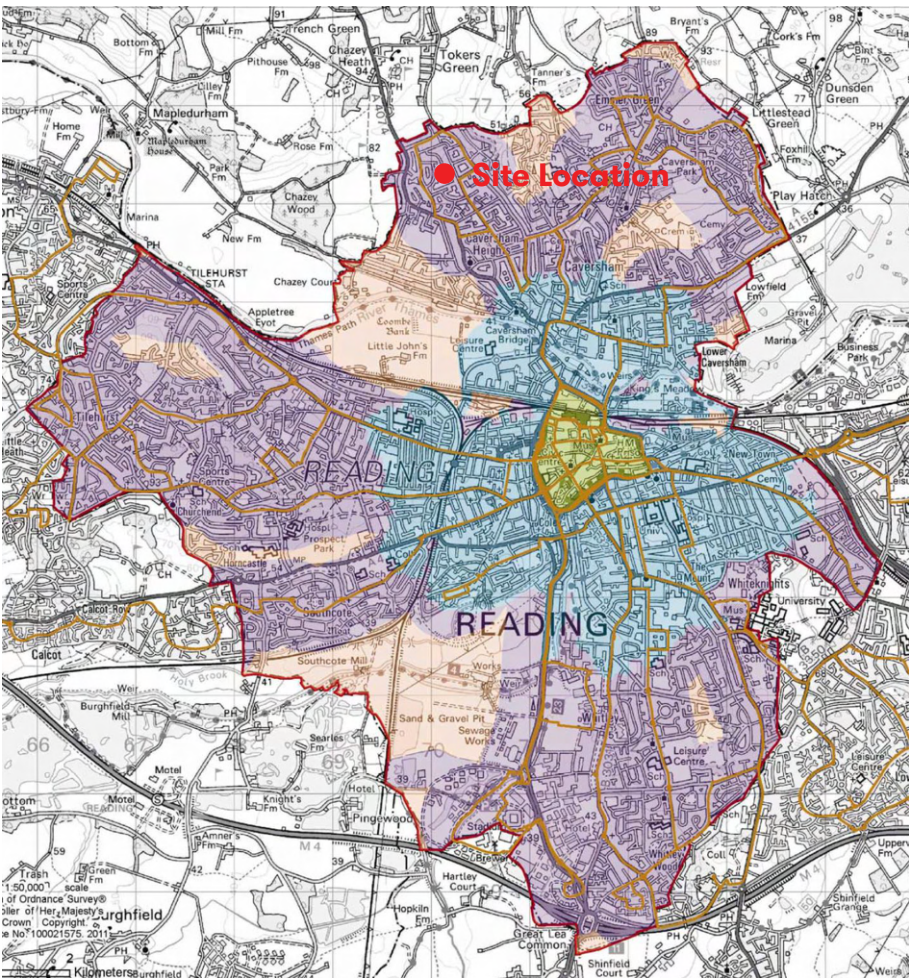
- All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points;
- Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.

Relevant Planning Policies - Other Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD

This policy sets out parking requirements for new developments. The site is located in Reading Borough Council's zone 3 for parking meaning a new build house with four bedrooms or more will require 3 parking spaces. A new house with 2 or more bedrooms will require 3 bicycle parking spaces. This SPD also provides guidelines on the expected sizes and layout of parking.

Garage spaces will be counted as parking spaces towards meeting this requirement subject to meeting minimum sizes.



Reading Borough Council Parking Zone Map from the Parking Standards and Design SPD (Oct11) showing the site in Zone 3 (shaded in purple)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

In this SPD, planning requirements are set out for sustainable design. For residential developments a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations is required.

Guidance is also provided on how to improve sustainability in residential developments and how to meet core policies in the local plan (CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5, EN18 and H5).

For residential development a fabric first approach is suggested whereby efforts are made to specify high performance building materials to minimise energy use across the life cycle of the building.

Analysis of Proposals

Principle The site is currently occupied by a single detached dwelling house and the proposals are also for a single detached dwelling house, albeit one larger in size.

The proposed scheme is fully compliant with the local plan and the relevant policies as set out below.

Design The design of the house is a direct response to the substantial existing trees positioned throughout the site. The layout of the house has been developed to avoid development within the Root Protection Areas of these trees and this has necessitated a layout which is somewhat unconventional.

Further development of the design has been undertaken since the previous pre-application submission in response to the feedback received. This has included a significant reduction in height for the parts of the house closest to the neighbouring dwelling at 4 Conisboro Way, this had been facilitated by introducing a split-level arrangement to both the ground and first-floor layouts. The parts of the proposals closest to Conisboro Way are now nearly 1m lower than in the previous scheme.

The height of the house increases towards the rear of the site in line with the existing increasing ground levels. This is in line with the built topography of the surrounding houses which sit at a higher level the further north they are. The overall height of the house remains below that of the houses in the immediately surrounding area.

The size of the house has also been reduced to pull it away from both the Western and Eastern boundaries. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed house is still larger than those in the surrounding area, it is also the case that the overall site area is substantially larger than any other in the surrounding area and the proposals and therefore proportionally similar to the neighbouring pattern of development.

A mix of materials including brickwork, timber cladding and metal panels has been proposed to break up the bulk of the building and provide visual interest along both side elevations. Additionally, the western elevation will feature espaliers to allow the growth of plants across the façade to provide further visual interest.

The proposals are therefore fully compliant with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan.

Energy Efficiency & Sustainability The building has been designed with a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency with high amounts of insulation. The layout of the house also facilitates high levels of cross ventilation.

Whilst there are some large areas of glazing, these are mainly limited to northern and eastern facades, or overshadowed by other areas of the building and not therefore subjected to direct sunlight and solar gain during the hottest hours of the day. Additionally, roof overhangs have been designed to further reduce overheating risk and surrounding trees will further mitigate these issues.

Heating and hot water will be provided via an Air Source Heat Pump.

It is noted that the requirement for small residential developments to achieve a minimum of 19% improvement in regulated emissions over the target emissions rate in the 2013 Building Regulations is now out of date as the building regulations have recently been updated to require a significantly greater than 19% improvement compared to the 2013 Regulations.

An energy and sustainability statement has been provided in Appendix A which further elaborates on these matters.

The proposals are therefore fully compliant with the requirements of policies CC2, CC3 and H5 of the Reading Local Plan.

Transport The proposals include the provision of 3no. external parking spaces, this meets the minimum requirements of 3 spaces for dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms. In addition to this, there is an integrated double garage, however, it is acknowledged that this does not meet the minimum size set out in the local parking guidance to count towards the overall site parking provision, hence the additional external spaces have been provided. The garage also provides secure bicycle storage for the house.

Analysis of Proposals

Transport (Continued)	A single electric car charger will be provided adjacent to the external parking spaces. There is sufficient space for vehicles to turn and leave the site safely in forward gear. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan.	Provision of Amenity Space	The proposals leave a substantial private garden space for the benefit of the house which is more than comparable to other houses in the immediate area. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy H10 of the Reading Local Plan.
Impact on Neighbour Amenity	The design of the house has been carefully considered to avoid any potential harmful amenity impacts on the neighbouring properties. Overlooking is avoided as 'back-to-back' distances significantly exceed 20m in all instances with the exception of 38 Geoffreyson Road where the 'back-to-back' distance is approximately 18m, however, all windows along the façade facing the Geoffreyson Road properties are proposed with obscured glazing, fixed frames, and with timber louvres across them to reduce any actual or perceived overlooking. The house is positioned closest to the existing property at 4 Conisboro Way. As the position of the proposals is slightly behind this neighbouring house, the angled shroud around the first floor in this area has been included to prevent any oblique views from the first floor to the rear façade windows of this house. Concern was raised in the pre-app response about the potential for the proposals to have an overbearing impact on 4 Conisboro way. In response, this part of the house was pulled 1m further away from the boundary and the height of the house in this area was reduced by 900mm. This has substantially reduced the impact on this neighbouring property and the relationship is now similar to the relationships of 32 Carlton Road to 5 Conisboro Way, 45 Hilltop to 52 Geoffreyson Road, and 43 Hilltop to 30A Carlton Road. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy CC8 of the Reading Local Plan.	Trees	From the outset of the design, the existing mature trees of amenity value have been the driving force behind the proposals in terms of both protecting those trees and making them the focal point of the design. The footprint of the building has been entirely defined by the Root Protection Areas of the existing trees with only minimal encroachment which will not cause any harm as confirmed in the supporting Arboricultural statement. Detailed proposals for the hard landscaping within the Root Protection Areas has been provided within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment which confirms that this aspect of the proposals will not have a negative impact on the trees. The house itself is set away from the crown of the main trees within the site and is not therefore likely to result in any future 'pressure to prune'. Indeed, since the proposals have been designed to take in key views of the main trees any future pruning or removal of these trees would diminish the principle of the design. It is acknowledged that leaf fall onto the roof could be a future maintenance consideration, however, that is also the case for the existing house and can be overcome through robust and thorough detailing which can be secured via condition if the local authority considers this necessary. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy EN14 of the Reading Local Plan.

Analysis of Proposals

Ecology A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal was completed in July 2022 and is included with this submission.

The PEA identified the need for further Bat Emergence Surveys which were completed in August 2022, these surveys confirmed that the existing house does not support bats and a copy of the subsequent report has been included with this submission.

The existing site is an overgrown and unmaintained private domestic garden, all of which is part of the domestic curtilage of the existing dwelling. It is reasonable to assume that any future occupier of the existing house, or a new house on the site, would seek to cut back the overgrown foliage and restore the garden to its domestic setting. This could include substantial areas of hard landscaping or maintained lawn which have little ecological or biodiversity value.

The landscape proposals submitted alongside this application provide a meaningful Biodiversity Improvement in comparison to the existing site, establishing significant areas of new habitats that have never been present on the site before. This application provides the opportunity to secure the proposed biodiversity measures via the implementation of a condition on any approval to ensure that these improvements are maintained in the long term.

The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy EN12 of the Reading Local Plan.

Annexe Building Due to the layout of the site, the proposed annexe building could never have the benefit of its own independent access and would always, therefore, be truly ancillary to the existing house. We welcome any conditions the local authority feels are necessary to further secure the ancillary relationship.

It is intended that the annexe will be a single room open plan space. As mentioned earlier in this report, the applicant may consider moving into the annexe during the construction of the main house. If this did happen it would be on a temporary basis only and the annexe would be returned to the intended single-room configuration once the main house is completed. This can be secured via condition, however, some reasonable overlap between the completion of the house and the adjustment of the internal reconfiguration of the annexe would be required to allow the applicant to move from one property to the other, we would suggest this is one month but are happy to discuss the wording of any condition further.

Conclusion

Conclusion The proposals, as submitted, represent a high-quality form of development. Whilst the design is a departure from the surrounding housing, this is not harmful to the visual or built character of the area nor would there be any loss of amenity to neighbouring residents. The proposals are a carefully considered response to what is otherwise an extremely constrained site. These proposals are fully compliant with both national and local policies and permission should therefore be granted without delay.

APPENDIX A

ENERGY STATEMENT

Energy & Sustainability Statement

Introduction This statement has been prepared in response to the Reading Borough Council Sustainable Design Checklist for Residential Developments as set out in Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Energy / CO2 The development has been designed to use energy from the sun effectively without introducing risks of overheating. There are several large areas of glazing on the eastern and southern facades which will allow the building to benefit from solar gain, however, the majority of large areas of glazing have been limited to the northern side of the house. This maximises internal daylight levels whilst minimising the risk of overheating from excessive direct sunlight during the afternoon.

Glazing on the south elevation is either directly shaded from the midday sun with roof overhangs and late afternoon sun by shadowing from adjacent building projections. Glazing on the west elevation is limited due to issues related to overlooking but this also helps to minimise overheating risk.

Overheating risk is further mitigated by the existing trees on the site, the large areas of glazing in the main living spaces have been proposed to overcome the lower daylight levels which will be caused by overshadowing from these trees.

The layout of the house will facilitate large volumes of natural cross ventilation to provide passive cooling to the interior spaces.

All lighting will be from low-energy LEDs and the house will be fitted with a Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery System to provide a comfortable internal environment whilst minimising heat losses from extract ventilation.

The building has been proposed with provision for high levels of thermal insulation with larger roof and wall build-ups than would be typical on similar dwellings in the surrounding area, this is a partial driver of the height of the building being slightly greater than the eaves height of surrounding houses, those houses do not feature high levels of insulation which requires thicker building fabric.

Heating and hot water will be supplied via an air source heat pump. PV solar panels were considered for the roof however these were dismissed due to overshadowing from the surrounding trees reducing their effectiveness.

The integrated garage provides ample space for cycle storage for all occupants.

The proposals are fully compliant with Reading Local Plan policy H5 as the house is fully compliant with the nationally-described space standards, will be built to the higher water efficiency standard (this can be secured via condition), it will exceed the 19% improvement over the 2013 building regulations (as these have been updated to require greater than 19% improvement) and the house is accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the building regulations.

As this is a minor application for a single replacement house, no Section 106 contribution is required to offset regulated emissions from the proposals.

Water Whilst at this stage in the design process sanitary fittings have not been selected or specified, this will be completed to ensure that the potential consumption of wholesome water by persons occupying the new dwelling will not exceed the optional requirement of 110 litres per person per day and a water efficiency calculation will be produced as required by the Building Regulations to demonstrate this. It is assumed that this will be secured by condition.

Due to the large root protection zone areas, a rainwater harvesting system has not been considered to be appropriate as this will require large areas of excavation to install.

Materials External materials have been selected for their durability and long life span. Brickwork is characteristic of the local area and provides a robust substrate where vegetation has been proposed to be grown up the side of the building. Timber has a low embodied energy and it is proposed to use a durable species that will be left untreated but installed in a well-ventilated substrate to maximise life span without reliance on future maintenance which could become neglected. The metal

Energy & Sustainability Statement

cladding will be similarly durable and long life and helps to break up the external appearance of the building.

It is anticipated that the main structure of the building will be timber frame which has a substantially lower level of embodied energy than masonry or concrete load-bearing structures.

**Surface Water
Run-off**

The house is not located in a flood risk area and being purely domestic property is not anticipated to create any pollution risks.

All external surfaces have been designed to be fully permeable and SuDs compliant and do not, therefore, increase the risk of surface water runoff.

As this is a minor development for a single replacement domestic dwelling, it does not need to demonstrate compliance with the other requirements of policy EN18 of the Reading Local Plan.

Waste

The design minimises the amount of waste that will need to be sent to landfill, the house follows the existing natural topography of the site and all hard landscaping is proposed above the existing ground levels, this minimises excavation and the amount of spoil which must be removed. The redistribution of the remaining spoil from foundation excavations across the site was considered but deemed inappropriate as this would have a negative impact on the Root Protection Areas of the existing trees.

There will be some waste generated from the demolition of the existing house, wherever possible this will be reused in the proposals such as in hardcore for building sub-bases but this is subject to the waste being free of contamination. Due to the age of the existing building, it is anticipated that it will contain asbestos which will limit what can be reused and recycled. The building will be subject to a full demolition asbestos survey prior to the commencement of the works and any identified Asbestos Containing Materials will be removed by an appropriately licensed contractor.

The proposals included provision for storage of separate recycling bins in line with the local waste collection scheme.

Pollution

There are not anticipated to be any onerous noise pollution sources generated by the proposals.

An external lighting scheme has not yet been progressed, however, these details can be secured via condition if the local authority wishes to ensure that light pollution from external lighting is minimised.

The proposals include the provision of an electric car charger to allow future occupiers to switch to electric vehicles.

Only insulation products that have a low Global Warming Potential will be used with those featuring high levels of CFC, HFC and HCFC blowing agents in their manufacture avoided.

As heating and hot water will be provided via an Air Source Heat Pump there will be no onsite sources of atmospheric pollution.

Health & Well-being

The layout of the house has been designed to maximise internal daylight levels in a considerate way that minimises the related risk of overheating.

There is a large private garden amenity space for use by the occupants and the layout has been designed in compliance with part M4(2) of the building regulations to ensure future adaptability as the needs of the occupants change.

Management

Details of how the construction site will be set up have been set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment document. If the council requires further details of the construction site set-up, this can be secured via condition which will allow this to be coordinated with the chosen building contractor.

Ecology

The proposals include a landscape plan which provides substantial ecology and biodiversity improvements over the existing site. The improvements can be secured via condition which will lock in the improvements for the long term on a site which is otherwise an uncontrolled domestic garden on which the occupiers have the right to amend and alter as they see fit subject to the TPOs on 3 of the trees.

APPENDIX B

PRE-APP RESPONSE

Mr G Gunton
JDRM Architects
Studio 8, Beaconsfield Studios
25 Ditchling Rise,
Brighton
BN1 4QL

Our Ref: 221684/PREAPP

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 3227
E-mail: david.brett@reading.gov.uk

20 December 2022

Your contact is: David Brett, Planning & Building Control

RE: 221684/PREAPP - Pre-Application Advice for proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling house at 2 Conisboro Way, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HT

Dear Mr Gunton,

This letter is in response to the above pre-planning application enquiry received on Friday 11th November 2022.

Site and Area Description

The proposal site consists of a detached bungalow. The site itself is situated off an unadopted highway, off Geoffreyson Road. There are just two properties on this stretch of Conisboro Way and it is segregated off from the rest of the properties on Conisboro Way by bollards to prohibit vehicular movement. Mature trees line the perimeter of the site, three of which are protected by TPO to the east boundary.

The proposal site is generously sized in relation to neighbouring plots, with the neighbouring plots backing on to the proposal site. A track road runs along the west boundary of the site, separating the proposal site from the rear boundaries of dwellings along Geoffreyson Road.

Proposal

The proposal seeks to:

- Demolish existing dwelling and a new two storey dwelling.
- Single storey annexe proposed to the rear of the site.

Plans Considered

The following plans were provided as part of this pre-application enquiry:

- ☐ Completed Pre-Application Enquiry Form
- ☐ Site Location Plan Existing - 2202(10)001
- ☐ 2202-2 Conisboro Way, Stage 2 Report - November 2022

Relevant Planning History

- ☐ None.

Consultations Summary

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment

- The site is subject to TPO 46/03 which includes 2 Sycamore and 1 Oak within the curtilage.
- A number of non-protected trees on site were cleared prior to submission.
- I note from the 2202-2 CONISBORO WAY, STAGE 2 REPORT that a tree survey has been done and I assume the map extract on the 'Site Analysis - Topography, Tree and Vegetation' page is taken from that. As is stated on that page, a full Arboricultural Impact Assessment will be required as part of any future planning application.
- The RPAs shown have been used to identify a 'developable area', as shown on the 'Site Strategy' page, albeit impingements into RPAs are included within the proposals. The principles of overcoming those impingements, as indicated on the 'Site Levels & Landscaping in Root Protection Areas' page appear sound but will have to be demonstrated in the future AIA. This AIA will also need to consider shading, amenity space impacted by trees, hence future pressure to prune/fell trees (as is included in BS 5837) as this matter is not currently addressed and is an important consideration. It will also need to confirm the location of services, which should avoid RPAs.
- I note that no landscaping is included. Given the recent tree / vegetation removal and the increase in built form (house and hard landscaping) compared to the existing situation, landscaping is justified and will be expected as part of any future application.
- In conclusion, the principle of a replacement dwelling is acceptable, however the acceptability will depend on the final details, demonstration that development will avoid harm to retained trees and avoid future pressure on those trees and appropriate new landscaping.

Reading Borough Council, Ecology

- The site appears from the photos in the architect's statement to comprise overgrown areas, buildings, trees surrounded by hedges. However, photos from a recent site visit show that there has been considerable clearance of the vegetation on site, including the hedge lines on the borders of the site.



Fig 1. Existing site photo submitted within Stage 2 Report.



Fig 3. Existing site photo submitted within Stage 2 Report.

Fig 2. Site Photo taken by Ecology on 01/12/2022.



Fig 4. Site Photo taken by Ecology on 01/12/2022.

- It is likely that the site could be used by a number of protected and priority species including bats, birds and hedgehog. There is therefore a risk that the proposals could affect priority habitat and protected and priority species. An ecological assessment (comprising an extended Phase 1 Habitat and Species Scoping Survey, bat surveys of the buildings and any trees, and any phase 2 surveys) would therefore need to be submitted with the planning application
- Survey requirements
- Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey protected species.
- Extended phase 1 habitat & protected species scoping survey
- An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised technique for environmental audit and involves classifying and if required mapping habitats on and adjacent to the application site. The survey is then 'extended' and any features or habitats that are likely to be of importance for notable or protected species, and or prove to be a constraint to development are investigated further and described.
- Phase 2 ecology surveys
- If the surveys show that the site contains habitats suitable for protected species further surveys for species such as bats may need to be carried out.
- Scheme design and Biodiversity Net Gain Planning
- Paragraph 174 of the NPPF reads "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment".
- Paragraph 180 of the NPPF reads
- "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged by [...] minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- [...]
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."
- The applicant would need to demonstrate that the development will result in a "net gain" in biodiversity units (as measured using the latest DEFRA 3.1 Metric),

using the site before the trees, hedges and other vegetation were cleared as the baseline. This would be in accordance with the NPPG which reads:

- "It may also be relevant to consider whether any deliberate harm to this biodiversity value has taken place in the recent past, and if so whether there are grounds for this to be discounted in assessing the underlying value of the site (and so whether a proposal would achieve a genuine gain)."
- And also, DEFRA's Biodiversity Net Gain User Guide.
- With this in mind, the applicant should design the development from the outset so that its value for wildlife is maximised, for example by providing mixed native hedges, new tree planting, green roofs and integral bird and bat boxes.

Reading Borough Council, Transport Development Control

- The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.
- The application seeks to demolish the existing dwelling and replace it with a 6-bedroom C3 dwelling with a separate annexe located at the rear of the property.
- Parking

In accordance with the adopted SPD, a 3+ dwelling will require 2 x off road parking spaces.

The proposed ground floor plan identifies a double garage is to be provided.

In the Councils current Parking Standards and Design SPD, it is recommended that the internal dimensions for a double garage are 7000mm long x 5500mm wide, this is to allow easy access to/from each vehicle and sufficient storage to the rear to accommodate a bicycle. The proposed provision does not conform to these standards.

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 will need to be illustrated on plans a full application is submitted.

Plans indicate that an annexe is proposed in the rear garden, if the proposed annex were to be commercially let, the newly created annex would require parking for 1 car which should be independently accessible from those from the main dwelling, however the potential of a scenario for a commercial let dwelling can be controlled via the application of the appropriate condition.

- Access

It would appear that access will be gained from Conisboro Way. Details of the access will need to be illustrated on plans.

Water run-off from private property onto the public highway is not permitted, an appropriate method of drainage needs to be provided within the property curtilage including the use of suitable permeable surfacing

materials. On site turning areas for vehicles should also be provided to allow vehicles to exit in forward gear.

Any lamp columns/telegraph poles will need to be illustrated on plans. Should any of these require re locating the full cost would be met by the applicant.

The applicant should be advised that a license must be obtained from the Council's Highways section before any works are carried-out on any footway, carriageway, verge, or other land forming part of the public highway.

- Cycle Storage
A minimum of 2 cycle storage spaces which should be in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store are required, in a development of this nature these can be located within a garage (please see comments above) or a secure garden shed.
- Refuse Collection/Storage
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. Refuse storage and collection areas will need to be illustrated on plans if a full application is submitted.
- The applicant should be made aware that this development will be subject to a Construction Management Statement.
- In principal Transport would not have any objections to this application, however please be aware that this is an officer response and is made without prejudice to the formal determination of any subsequent planning application by this Council, as the local Planning Authority.

Relevant Policies

This proposal would be considered against local planning policies, including:

[Reading Borough Local Plan \(Adopted November 2019\)](#)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC4: Decentralised Energy
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
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Other relevant documents:

[Affordable Housing SPD \(March 2021\)](#)

[Reading Borough Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD \(October 2011\)](#)

[Sustainable Design and Construction SPD \(December 2019\)](#)

[Reading Borough Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule \(January 2015\)](#)

Local policies and guidance can be found at

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/planningpolicy>.

Appraisal

The main factors to be considered are:

- A) Principle of Development
- B) Design
- C) Impact on Amenity
- D) Natural Environment & Ecology
- E) Transport
- F) Affordable Housing
- G) Other Matters

A) Principle of Development

The proposal site consists of a single storey C3 dwelling. The existing bungalow is not considered of any architectural merit or significance and is clearly in a state of disrepair, the demolition of the bungalow is therefore considered acceptable. The development proposed seeks the replacement of a C3 dwelling with a new C3 dwelling, the land use would therefore be retained. The principle of the use is therefore considered acceptable provided the development is in accordance with the Policies outlined within the Reading Borough Local plan.

An annexe is proposed to the rear of the garden, with a generous gross internal area of 57m². No information has been provided as to the intended use of the proposed annexe. As per Policy H9, paragraph 4.4.76 of the Reading Borough Local Plan:

“A number of demographic trends are also at work in Reading, including an ageing population, as well as less traditional household arrangements. The provision of ancillary accommodation, such as granny annexes, can be one housing solution to some of these trends. However, this ancillary accommodation should not be a way of introducing new dwellings by stealth.

Therefore, planning conditions and, where necessary, obligations will ensure that extra accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling. Ancillary accommodation could be considered a separate dwelling where it:

- ☐ Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities e.g. kitchens and bathrooms;
- ☐ Has its own front door without internal links to the main house; and/or
- ☐ Has its own external facilities, e.g. access, drive, garden; or has scope for these external facilities to be easily created.”

Any future application for full planning permission will need to provide details of the internal layout of the proposed annexe as well as details of its intended use. As discussed in paragraph 4.4.76, the LPA has previously sought to secure annexe buildings as ancillary to the main house via planning conditions and in some cases obligations. Where the answer is yes to any of the bullet points within paragraph 4.4.76, obligations may be required to secure the building as ancillary to the proposed dwelling at 2 Conisboro Way.

B) Design

The design of any development will be considered against the requirements of Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Policy CC7 states that:

“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -

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

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives: -

- ☐ *Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place*
- ☐ *Continuity and enclosure*
- ☐ *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping*
- ☐ *Ease of movement and permeability*
- ☐ *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand*
- ☐ *Adaptability - capable of adaptation over time*
- ☐ *Diversity - meets a wide range of needs.*

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- ☐ *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- ☐ *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- ☐ *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- ☐ *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.”*

[Highlighted for officer emphasis]

The proposed dwelling consists of a two storey, 5 bedroom flat roof building and is positioned centrally within the site. A single storey annexe building is also proposed to the north of the site. The siting of the proposed dwelling within the plot appears to have been dictated by the presence of existing mature trees within the site, this also appears to have affected the design of the proposed dwelling as it sprawls in three directions within the site. The site itself does not front any busy highway or main road, and benefits from tree coverage despite the clearing of the site that appears to have taken place.

The surrounding area consists predominantly of mid-20th century two storey detached dwellings, with similar designs in terms of size, scale and appearance. The dwelling proposed is considered a significant departure from the design of dwellings within the surrounding area. The design is considered unconventional given the neighbouring context, however, the design of the building is not considered harmful. The proposed replacement dwelling would be largely obscured from the highway by the dwellings lining the east side of Geoffreyson Road.

Although the contemporary design approach does have potential in terms of fitting a building into this constrained site, there are concerns that the footprint of the dwelling as proposed is considered too large, dominant and would be positioned awkwardly within the site. The position of the dwelling appears to have been heavily dictated by the presence of tree within the site. Significant bulk has been added to the western boundary of the site, with a flank wall that extends approximately 28m along the boundary of the site, with an approximate maximum height of 6m to the north of the building, and an approximate maximum height of 7m to the south of the building. This elevation could appear intrusive and overbearing to residents along Geoffreyson Road, making no positive contribution to the public realm. It would also fail to provide a suitable landscaped setting for the new building.

Limited details have been provided as to the external materials and finishes of the proposed dwelling and annexe. A detailed schedule of materials will be required within the submission of any application for full planning permission.

It is not possible, however, to fully understand the relationship that the proposed development would have on the surrounding area at this stage. Existing and proposed street scene elevations from Conisboro Way would be required in order to understand the scale of the development in relation to 36 Geoffreyson Road and 4 Conisboro Way. CGI drawings would also be useful in illustrating the proposed appearance of the dwelling and its relation to neighbouring properties.

C) Impact on Amenity

Any future planning application will be considered against Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Policy CC8 states that:

“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- ☐ *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; or*
- ☐ *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.”*

[Highlighted for officer emphasis]

In accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, any future application will need to demonstrate the development would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents or future occupants.

There are concerns that the development would appear overbearing to 4 Conisboro Way. The eastern projection of the proposed dwelling is set approximately 1m from the boundary to 4 Conisboro Way, however, the height of the development to that boundary is between 6.3m and 7m with the length of the façade being approximately 8.6m. It is therefore considered that the eastern projection would appear overbearing when viewed from the rear garden and habitable rooms to the rear of 4 Conisboro Way. It is therefore encouraged that the development is set further back from the boundary, reducing the height of the development, and adding articulation in the design of the roof/first floor in order to break up the large blank façade.

Any future application will need to demonstrate that the development would not appear overbearing or harm the outlook from neighbouring properties that surround the proposal site, this is with respect to the properties along Geoffreyson Road, Carlton Road and Conisboro Way. From the drawing submitted within the Stage 2 Report, it appears that the proposed dwelling would be within 20m of the rear elevation of 38 Geoffreyson Road, however, as only a single window serving an ensuite is proposed to the first floor of the elevation facing the development it is considered unlikely that there would be harmful overlooking to 38 Geoffreyson Road. The window serving the ensuite would also likely be conditioned to be obscure glazed, with a further condition restricting the insertion of further windows to that elevation to avoid harmful overlooking to the rear gardens and rear elevations of the dwellings along Geoffreyson Road.

D) Natural Environment & Ecology

The proposal site is located within the Green Network, therefore, and in accordance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan “permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites within identified interest or fragments the overall network”. Policy EN12 continues that “development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible”.

As advised by the Council’s Ecology consultant; an ecological assessment of the site will need to be carried out with ecological enhancements proposed where appropriate. A bat survey will also need to be carried out to determine the impact that demolition of the existing dwelling would have on protected species. Ecological enhancements will need to be provisioned in accordance with the DEFRA 3.1 metric in achieving biodiversity net gain through the development. It appears that the style and design of the development and the proposed annexe presents a good opportunity for enhancements such as green walls and green roofs.

The pre-application documents have also been reviewed by the Council’s Natural Environment Team. As detailed within the Stage 2 Report document, a tree survey has already been carried out by a suitably qualified arborist. It has also been confirmed within the Stage 2 Report that an Arboricultural Impact Assessment will also need to be carried out, with the report submitted for consideration within any application for full planning permission - this is a validation requirement. A detailed landscaping scheme will also need to be submitted for the site. An all-encompassing plan that also includes biodiversity enhancements is encouraged.

E) Transport

As the development proposed a replacement dwelling with more than three bedrooms, two on site vehicle parking spaces are required for the development proposed in accordance with the requirements of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. An integrated double garage has been proposed, however, it does not appear that the garage meets the recommended dimensions for a double garage as specified within the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, where garages should be 7mx5m.

The use of the proposed annexe has also been questioned by Transport Development Control. Should the annexe be commercially yet or be used as a dwelling separate from the main house, an additional vehicle parking space will be required on site.

In terms of bin storage, the location of the bins is likely to be appropriate. However, it is unclear how these will be accessed by waste collection vehicles. Therefore, the Waste Collection team will be consulted on any future planning application. Prior to submitting any future application, you may wish to consult the Waste Operations team directly by calling 0118 937 3070 or emailing WasteServices@reading.gov.uk.

Due to the demolition and construction development proposed, a construction method statement will need to be submitted for consideration. It is encouraged that these detailed are submitted for consideration at application stage, however, the construction method statement can be secured via condition.

If a formal response is received from Transport Development Control after this advice has been provided, this will be passed on to you for consideration.

F) Affordable Housing

As the development seeks the direct replacement of a single dwelling, no affordable housing contribution is required.

G) Other Matters

The development would be liable to the Reading Community Infrastructure Levy regime. The details are available within the [Reading Borough Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule \(January 2015\)](#).

Procedural Points: Submitting a Valid Application

Should you decide to submit a future full planning application, you are advised to consider the Council's validation checklist (available [via the website](#)). This provides details as to the level and nature of information required to validate an application. The determination period for the Council to consider your application will only begin once all the necessary information to validate the application has been received.

At this juncture the following information would be required as a minimum when submitting a full planning application as per the requirements of the [Planning Application Validation Checklist](#):

- ☐ All Part 1 requirements (existing and proposed plans / forms etc)
- ☐ Existing and Proposed Street Scene Elevations
- ☐ Design & Access Statement
- ☐ Planning Statement
- ☐ Bat Survey
- ☐ Ecological Survey and Report, and associated Ecological Enhancements Plan
- ☐ Tree Survey and Tree Protection Plan
- ☐ Material Details
- ☐ Sustainability Statements (see Appendix 1 of the Sustainability SPD)
- ☐ CIL Form and Calculation Methodology plans
- ☐ Vehicle parking and waste storage details

The following is not a validation requirement, but is suggested to be submitted within any future application:

- ☐ Landscaping Plan

In line with section 4 of the NPPF you are encouraged to discuss your emerging proposals with nearby occupiers and ward councillors prior to the submission of any future application.

Conclusion

As discussed, the scale and layout of the proposed dwelling would appear at odds with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. However, a smaller building of a similar style could perhaps be accommodated. Materials would need to be of a high quality. The living conditions of neighbouring residents would also need to be suitably protected, currently there are concerns that the development would appear overbearing to 4 Conisboro Way along the eastern boundary of the site.

Any future application will need to be supported by ecological assessments and an ecological enhancement plan for the site given the clearing that has already taken place. A net gain of biodiversity will need to be achieved at the site in accordance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The full arboricultural impact assessment will also need to be submitted within any future application, along with a robust landscaping plan.

This advice is in good faith and will not over-ride the formal consideration of a planning application by the Council. The responses received from consultees may also affect the decision period if matters are raised which were not addressed at pre-application stage or require consideration before a decision is made.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

~~David Brett~~

David Brett

Senior Planning Officer

Planning | Directorate for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services

Reading Borough Council

SDV

JDRM **Architects**

JDRM Architects
Studio Eight
Beaconsfield Studios
25 Ditchling Rise
Brighton
BN1 4QL

01273 673 673

www.jdrmachitecture.com

hello@jdrmachitecture.com