

Planning / Design & Access Statement

& Sustainability Statement

Land rear of 5 Woods Road | Caversham | RG4 6NA

March 2022

Client/Applicant: Bockmer Developments Ltd.

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Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of 2 new 3-bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, on land rear of 5 Woods Road, Caversham.
- 1.2 This statement will examine the relevant issues relating to the planning application and seek to demonstrate that the proposals are sustainable and in full compliance with local and national planning policy.

Planning History

- 2.1 Application: 060439/FUL
Description: Proposed erection of 3 houses with access from Orchard Grove.
Decision: Approve 2nd February 2007.
- 2.2 Application: 181573/FUL
Description: Erect 1 pair of semi-detached & 1 No. detached dwelling at rear of 4a and 5 Woods Road. Demolish No. 5 Woods Road & replace with new detached dwelling. Provision of new access.
Decision: Refused 6th March 2019.
Reasons for Refusal (summary):
 1. The proposed layout dominated by the creation of the new access results in a dominance of hardstanding. The hardstanding minimises the size of the proposed residential plots resulting in a cramped form of development which is not in keeping with the existing built form. Incongruous dwelling design not in keeping with the existing development to the rear of the site. Failed to demonstrate that this

layout would not prejudice the satisfactory development of the wider area.

2. The proposed new dwelling within plot 5 due to its height, bulk and siting is considered to have a significantly detrimental impact in relation to the visual dominance and overbearing effects on No. 5a Woods Road.
 3. The proposal fails to provide a suitable level of amenity to proposed Plot 4 due to the proximity to the mature protected Oak tree (TPO 13/18).
 4. The proposal fails to demonstrate that Plot 4 could be erected without causing significant harm to the health of the protected Oak tree.
 5. The proposed layout fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of access and servicing due to failure to show suitable space for turning of service vehicles or the ability to achieve the required visibility splays.
 6. The application has failed to demonstrate that the development would protect and maintain existing wildlife habitats for bats and as such the full impact of the proposals on protected species cannot be established.
 7. Absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution toward the provision of Affordable Housing.
- 2.3 Appeal: APP/E0345/W/19/3224844
Application: 181573/FUL
Decision: Appeal dismissed 14th August 2019.
Reasons (summary of relevant aspects of the decision):
 - Oak tree subject to TPO is a feature that positively contributes to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The tree would shade a considerable part of the garden area of plot 4 and add significant pressure to lop or fell the tree.
 - The scheme would result in the creation of a new vehicular access. The access would appear cramped and uncharacteristic of the surrounding

development, in comparison to accesses serving other developments in the area.

- The site lies to the rear of properties along Woods Road. The Council contend that the street is “predominantly characterised by chalet bungalow dwellings or houses with the first floor set in a mansard roof”. However, the properties are more varied. There are some with mansard type roofs or accommodation within the roof space, however there are also two-storey properties under hipped roofs, as well as roofs over gables. There is considerable variation in the style, form and scale of the dwellings.
- There is reference to the scheme preventing the development of the wider area. I am not convinced that the scheme would prevent comprehensive development of the area.
- I find that the proposed dwellings would not be inappropriate additions in terms of their appearance and that the scheme would not necessarily prevent the wider development of the area. However, this does not outweigh that I find that the access and potential effect on an Oak tree would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

2.4 Application: 191601/FUL

Description: Demolition of property at No. 5 Woods Road, form access 2 No. new detached dwellings.

Decision: Refused 23rd March 2020.

Reasons for Refusal (summary):

1. The proposed layout, by virtue of the incongruous vehicle access, dominance of hard standing, inefficient use of land, harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
2. Surveys to establish if the building hosts a bat roots have not been undertaken and submitted.
3. Absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution toward the provision of Affordable Housing.

Planning Policy

- 3.1 The relevant planning documents and policies that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

National Planning Policy

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised on 20th July 2021, sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, and supersedes all previous national planning policy. The NPPF states that there is to be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Reading Borough Local Plan

- 3.3 The Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019, sets out the Council’s adopted planning strategy for the Borough. The Local Plan includes the following policies which are relevant to these proposals:
- 3.4 Policy CC6 – Accessibility and The Intensity of Development.
This policy requires that the scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by sustainable modes of transport to a range of services and facilities, the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations.
- 3.5 Policy CC7 – Design and The Public Realm.
All development must be of high quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area, in terms of, layout, urban structure, density and mix, scale, architectural detail and materials.

- 3.6 Policy 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, harm to outlook, noise and disturbance, etc.
- 3.7 Policy CC9 – Securing Infrastructure.
Proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.
- 3.8 Policy EN12 – Biodiversity and The Green Network.
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.
- 3.9 Policy EN14 – Trees, Hedges and Woodland.
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.
- 3.10 Policy H2 – Density and Mix.
The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by, the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, current and future level of accessibility, the need to achieve high quality design, the need to maximise the efficiency of land use, the need to minimise environmental impacts.
- 3.11 Policy H3 – Affordable Housing.
Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading, on site 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.
- 3.12 Policy 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, by meeting the nationally described space standards, achieving a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, achieve a minimum 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate defined in the 2013 Building Regulations, being accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations.
- 3.13 Policy H10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space.
Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space. The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of similar spaces in the vicinity.
- 3.14 Policy H11 – Development of Private Residential Gardens.
Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage of former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where; the proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area; the application site provides a site of adequate size; the proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highways standards; the proposal does not lead to tandem development; the design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas; the proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants; the emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing; the development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible; the proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.

- 3.15 Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highways-Related Matters.
In determining proposals involving the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.
- 3.16 Policy 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. Development should make provision for electric vehicle charging points.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.17 The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to these proposals:
- 3.18 Supplementary Planning Document – Sustainable Design and Construction, adopted in December 2019.
- 3.19 Supplementary Planning Document – Revised Parking Standards and Design, adopted in October 2011.
- 3.20 Supplementary Planning Document – Affordable Housing Provision, adopted in March 2021.

Site & Surroundings

Site Description

- 4.1 The site is located on land to the rear of 5 Woods Road, Caversham. The proposed development will however be accessed from Orchard Grove, should planning consent be granted.
- 4.2 The site sits within the existing settlement boundary of Caversham.
- 4.3 The application site measures 0.05 ha in area.
- 4.4 The application site is L shaped. The main body of the application site is a rectangular parcel of land that forms part of the rear garden of 5 Woods Road. The remainder of the application site is located to the northeast and extends to adjoin Orchard Grove.
- 4.5 The site slopes gently up to the north following the natural contours of the land. There is a change in level of approximately 1m across the full depth of the site.
- 4.6 The main body of the site to the rear of 5 Woods Road is grassed and enclosed with close board fencing, but otherwise the site is featureless. The remainder of the application site that extends to Orchard Grove is paved in tarmac, an access from the highway having been formed as part of the works to implement planning approval 060439/FUL in anticipation that the land to the rear of 5 Woods Road would be developed in the future.

Site Surroundings

- 4.7 The northern boundary of the application site faces onto an existing public footpath that extends along the edge of Orchard Grove toward Abbotsleigh Gardens. Beyond the footpath is Reading Cemetery.
- 4.8 To the east of the application site is Orchard Grove which is a development comprising of a single row of houses facing north toward the cemetery. The development along Orchard Grove was constructed in several phases, the most recent being Nos. 15 to 17 immediately to the east of the application site which were built under planning application 060439/FUL. This development involved the construction of a pair of two-storey semi-detached houses (Nos. 15 & 16) and a two-storey detached house (No. 17).
- 4.9 The houses in Orchard Grove are brick built and have a mix of gabled, half hipped and hipped roof forms. The houses sit on narrow plots with 1m access paths to the side, the narrowest plot being No. 8 measuring approximately 5.8m in width, followed by Nos. 15 & 16 measuring 6.7m in width. Car parking is provided on driveways to the front of the houses. The rear garden of No. 17 measures approximately 9m in depth whereas the rear gardens of Nos. 15 & 16 measure approximately 11.5m in depth.
- 4.10 To the west of the application site is the rear garden of No. 4a Woods Road. The rear part of the garden contains an apple tree and a Lime tree. Further to the west on the boundary of Nos. 4 & 4a Woods Road is an Oak tree that is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 13/18). The Oak tree is located approximately 12.5m from the site application site boundary and will not be impacted by these proposals.
- 4.11 To the south of the application site is No. 5 Woods Road and its neighbouring properties. No. 5 Woods Road and the properties at Nos. 5a and 6 Woods Road are chalet houses with the first floor located in the roof. Housing of this character was originally dominant in the area, however that is no longer the case as two-storey detached housing at for instance at Nos.

4a, 7 & 7a, have been constructed as replacement and infill housing within the Road. The rear garden of No. 5 Woods Road measures approximately 50m in depth from the rear extension to the rear boundary, which is of sufficient depth to accommodate the development proposals whilst retaining a generous garden for the existing house.



Fig. 1 - Site Photograph Facing South.



Fig. 2 - Site Photograph Facing Southwest.



Fig. 3 - Site Photograph Facing North.



Fig. 4 – Orchard Grove Facing West.

Design Proposal

General

- 5.1 This application seeks planning consent for the erection of 2 new 3-bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses.
- 5.2 The proposed houses will each provide 99.8 sqm of internal accommodation (gross internal area) and have been designed to meet the nationally described space standard which requires that two-storey 3-bedroom houses (5 person) provide a minimum of 93.0 sqm of internal accommodation.
- 5.3 The proposed houses have been designed to be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations.

Layout

'Layout' – the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated and orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development.

- 5.4 The layout of the proposals has been informed by the site context and constraints.
- 5.5 The existing development at Orchard Grove comprises of a single linear row of houses. The proposed semi-detached houses will be sited broadly in line with the existing houses in Orchard Grove following the established pattern of development.
- 5.6 The application site will be subdivided into two linear plots approximately 6.5m in width and of a comparable size to those found in Orchard Grove. Car parking will be provided to the front of the proposed houses accessed via the existing vehicular drop kerb at the end of Orchard Grove. To the rear the proposed houses will have gardens measuring 12m in depth.
- 5.7 Direct back-to-back separation distances between the proposed houses and No. 5 Woods Road will exceed 26.7m, and oblique separation distances between the first-floor windows of the proposed houses and Nos. 4a & 5a Woods will measure at worst 20.2m.
- 5.8 Overall, the density of the proposed development and the size of the proposed housing plots will respect the size and character of similar properties in the site context.

Means of Access

'Access' – the accessibility to and within the site, for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding access network.

- 5.9 Pedestrian and vehicular access to the proposed houses will be from Orchard Grove via an existing drop kerb. A private driveway will extend into the site to provide access into the development.
- 5.10 The application site is located within Zone 3-Secondary Core Area, as described in the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document, and 3-bedroom houses located within this zone require 2 car parking spaces. In addition, 2 secure cycle parking spaces are required.
- 5.11 Each house will have 2 car parking spaces located immediately in front of the dwelling and 2 secure cycle parking spaces with a storage shed within the rear garden.
- 5.12 Refuse bins will be stored in the rear gardens of the proposed houses and refuse bins will be placed on the driveway adjacent to Orchard Grove on collection days.
- 5.13 Refuse vehicles and fire appliances will utilise the existing turning facility within Orchard Grove and will not need to enter the site.
- 5.14 The layout of the proposed driveway is such that it could be extended in the future to provide access to future development within the neighbouring gardens of Nos. 3a, 4 & 4a Woods Road.

Appearance

'Appearance' – the aspects of a building or place within the development which determine the visual impression the building or place makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

- 5.15 The proposed houses have been designed to respect the local character of area in their appearance.
- 5.16 Good quality materials that have been selected to match those used in the construction of Nos. 15 to 17 Orchard Grove will be used in the construction of the proposed houses.
- 5.17 The proposed houses will be of a traditional masonry construction. External walls will be formed in red brick, with brick band detailing and segmental arches over the windows providing interest to the facade.
- 5.18 Casement windows with a traditional Victorian glazing bar pattern, matching those used in the construction of Nos. 15 to 17 Orchard Grove, will be used in the construction of the new houses.
- 5.19 The roof of the proposed houses will be hipped with front projecting gable ends and will be finished with a profiled tile, to have a similar appearance to the existing houses in Orchard Grove.

Scale

'Scale' – the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings.

- 5.20 The proposed houses will be two-storey, measuring approximately 5.0m to the eaves and 7.9m to the ridge from ground level. The proposed houses will be of a similar height to the existing houses in Orchard Grove.

Landscaping

'Landscaping' – the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated and includes: (a) screening by fences, walls or other means; (b) the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass; (c) the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks; (d) the laying out or provision of gardens, courts, squares, water features, sculpture or public art; and (e) the provision of other amenity features.

- 5.21 A detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme for the site will be submitted to the Council for approval should planning consent be granted for these proposals. The landscaping scheme will seek to improve visual screening and separation between the proposed houses and the existing properties in Woods Road. The landscaping scheme will also seek to enhance the biodiversity of the site with the addition of appropriate native planting.

Sustainability

Energy Efficiency

- 6.1 The proposed houses will be constructed to achieve a minimum 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.
- 6.2 To prevent heat loss the proposed houses will be well insulated, and measures will be taken to limit air leakage. The proposed houses will be of a traditional masonry construction and will therefore have a high thermal mass to act as a buffer to external heat fluctuations.
- 6.3 All habitable rooms within the proposed houses will benefit from good natural day lighting, and the proposed houses will benefit from passive cross ventilation.
- 6.4 Energy efficient fixtures and fittings will be provided within the proposed houses. All light fittings will be low energy fittings. White goods will be 'A' rated appliances.

Water Resource Management

- 6.5 The proposed houses will be designed for a maximum potential water consumption of 110 litres of water per person, per day. The design will utilise water saving devices such as dual flush toilets, spray taps, and water efficient white goods.

Flood Risk Management

- 6.6 The application site is not located within an area of flood risk. To minimise surface water run-off and promote Sustainable Urban Drainage, all surface water from roofs and hard surfaces will be discharged on site into a SuDS compliant drainage system.

Biodiversity

- 6.7 The biodiversity of the site will be enhanced following the recommendations stated within the accompanying ecology appraisal.

Waste, Recycling & Composting Facilities

- 6.8 Refuse storage will be located within the gardens of the proposed houses. Waste collections will utilise the Councils waste collection and recycling scheme.
- 6.9 Space within the rear gardens of the proposed houses could be utilised for onsite composting should residents choose to do so.
- 6.10 Site waste generated in the construction of the houses will be managed to both limit the amount of waste generated and to recycle or re-use waste that is generated where this is practicable.

Sustainable Construction

- 6.11 Where possible, materials with A and A+ Green Guide rating will be specified in the development. Timber will be sourced from sustainable certified sources wherever possible.

Conclusion

- 7.1 The development proposals are sustainable and in full compliance with local and national planning policy.
- 7.2 Policy CC7 – Design and The Public Realm.
The proposals and of a high quality design that respects, reflects and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.3 Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity.
The development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable conditions in the proposed houses.
- 7.4 Policy EN12 – Biodiversity and The Green Network.
The biodiversity of the site will be enhanced following the recommendations stated within the ecology appraisal.
- 7.5 Policy EN14 – Trees, Hedges and Woodland.
Important trees will not be negatively impacted by these proposals.
- 7.6 Policy H2 – Density and Mix.
The density of the proposed development closely reflects the character of the surrounding area.
- 7.7 Policy H3 – Affordable Housing.
The developer will enter a legal agreement to make an appropriate financial contribution toward the provision of affordable housing.
- 7.8 Policy H5 – Standards for New Housing.
The proposed houses have been designed to be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, the houses will be constructed to achieve a minimum 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over

the target emission rate defined in the 2013 Building Regulations and to have a maximum potential water consumption of 110 litres of water per person, per day.

- 7.9 Policy H10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space.
The proposed houses will have private gardens that are similar in size to those found in the vicinity.
- 7.10 Policy H11 – Development of Private Residential Gardens.
The site is located on land that forms part of the residential curtilage of No. 5 Woods Road however; the development will make a positive contribution to the character of the area; the site is of an adequate size to accommodate the proposed houses; the access meets appropriate highways standards; tandem development is not proposed; the proposals do not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants; the proposals provide family-sized housing; the proposals do not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area; and the proposed development overall meets the requirements of this policy in full.

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