
PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared to accompany an application submitted to Reading Borough Council for full planning permission for works of demolition and the erection of a detached two-storey dwelling with parking and amenity space on land to the north of 104 Berkeley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire.

1.2 The Statement is structured as follows:

- The Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning History
- The Proposal
- Planning Policy Context
- Planning Considerations
- Conclusions.

2.0 The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Berkeley Avenue, a short distance to the south of the junction with Bath Road and, in its totality, comprises a broadly wedge-shaped section of land extending to an area of approximately 0.10 hectares. Located broadly centrally in the site is a detached two-storey dwelling (104 Berkeley Avenue) of predominantly brick construction (with rendered sections) under a pitched, tiled roof. Access to the dwelling is via a driveway located in the north-western corner of the site and which extends off a short spur road leading from Berkeley Avenue. The driveway accesses a garage building located in the north-western corner of the site. The principal area of amenity space serving the dwelling is located to the south and west of the property.
- 2.2 The site is located in a predominantly residential area. To the north of the site is 106 Berkeley Avenue, also a detached two-storey dwelling, albeit positioned closer to the western boundary (with Berkeley Avenue) than No 104. To the east is 102 Berkeley Avenue, a detached single storey dwelling – a form of development that continues eastwards of the site - with Benyon Mews, a relatively modern development comprising two-storey terraced dwellings with gardens extending up to the site boundary, located to the north-east of the site. Further to the north are a range of more extensive residential buildings at the junction of Berkeley Avenue with Bath Road.
- 2.3 The extent of the site is shown outlined in red on the site location plan accompanying the application and, for planning policy purposes, is not the subject of any specific designations.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 An application (210420) was submitted last year for the demolition of the existing dwelling and garage and the erection of two pairs of semi-detached dwellings with parking and amenity space. This application was withdrawn prior to determination.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for works of demolition and the erection of a detached two-storey dwelling with parking and amenity space.
- 4.2 Full details of the proposed development are shown on plans 001-010 that accompany the application. As set out therein, it is proposed to demolish the existing garage located on the northern boundary of the site, with alterations to the existing dwelling including the removal of the single storey section to the side (north) of the dwelling together with the 'blocking-up' of an opening in the first-floor north elevation of the existing dwelling.
- 4.3 The proposed dwelling would be located to the side (north) of the existing dwelling, set forward thereof by approximately 8.0m, with a stepped/staggered plan form, to a maximum width of 7.8m and depth of 10.0m. The building, which would retain a gap of 2.1m to the existing dwelling and a minimum of 2.8m to the northern site boundary, would be finished with brick and timber boarding to the external elevations under a pitched, tiled roof. Accommodation would be contained over three levels, with the ground floor comprising mainly living accommodation, with bedroom accommodation at first and second floor level, the latter contained in the roof of the building and lit by a dormer window in the rear elevation.
- 4.4 Access to the proposed dwelling would be via the existing entrance from the spur road leading off Berkeley Avenue, which would also continue to serve the existing dwelling. This would lead to a parking area to the side (north) of the proposed dwelling and providing two tandem parking spaces. A garden area would be contained to the rear (east) extending to an area of approximately 140sqm.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 Under the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a statutory obligation to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 Having regard to the planning designations affecting the site, this section of the Statement outlines the thrust of related National Planning Policy advice before going on to summarise the relevant Development Plan policies in the context of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.3 The NPPF was first published on 27 March 2012 and, with immediate effect, replaced a raft of advice and guidance contained in various Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs), and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). In July 2018 a revised version of the NPPF was issued (NPPF2), followed by further revisions in February and June 2019 (NPPF3). In July last year a further set of revisions were published (NPPF4)
- 5.4 As with the original (2012) NPPF, sustainable development remains at the heart of the Framework, with three interdependent and overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental – driving the achievement of sustainable development. In order to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive manner, the Framework embodies, in paragraph 11, a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.5 For decision-taking – in respect of applications for planning permission – the presumption in favour of sustainable development means (paragraph 11):
- (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - (d) where there are no development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:

- (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas of assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Housing

- 5.6 In terms of housing, paragraph 60 re-affirms that, in order to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, *'it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed'*. Paragraph 69 recognises the value and contribution that small and medium sized sites can make to meeting housing requirements and states that, through the development plan, land to accommodate at least 10% of housing requirements should be on sites no larger than one hectare.

Transport

- 5.7 Insofar as it relates to matters of sustainable transport, paragraph 105 advises that significant development should be focused on locations that are, or can be made, sustainable.

Effective Use of Land

- 5.8 Paragraph 119 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Moreover, paragraph 120 advises, *inter alia*, that substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes, and that decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings. In addition, paragraph 124 advises that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land.

Design

5.9 Paragraph 126 highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development by creating better places in which to live and work, with paragraph 130 seeking developments that:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture;
- are sympathetic to local character and history;
- establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustainably an appropriate amount and mix of development; and
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

5.10 Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking in to account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents (paragraph 134).

Development Plan

5.11 For the purposes of this application, The Development Plan comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in November 2019, and replaced the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and the Site and Detailed Policies Document. The most relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan are considered to be:

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|---|------|--|
| ➤ | CC1 | Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development |
| ➤ | CC2 | Sustainable Design and Construction |
| ➤ | CC3 | Adaptation to Climate Change |
| ➤ | CC5 | Waste Minimisation and Storage |
| ➤ | CC6 | Accessibility and the Intensity of Development |
| ➤ | CC7 | Design and the Public Realm |
| ➤ | CC8 | Safeguarding Amenity |
| ➤ | EN9 | Provision of Open Space |
| ➤ | EN14 | Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland |
| ➤ | H1 | Provision of Housing |
| ➤ | H2 | Density and Housing Mix |

- H3 Affordable Housing
- H5 Standards of New Housing
- H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- H11 Development of Private Residential Gardens
- TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR2 Major Transport Projects – Cycle Network
- TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters
- TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Other Matters

5.12 In addition to the Local Plan policies outlined above, the following Supplementary Planning Documents are also of relevance to the proposals:

- Affordable Housing SPD
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 This section of the Statement considers the principal planning considerations having regard to the following factors:

- The principle of the proposed development;
- Affordable Housing and Housing Mix
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- The effect on neighbouring residential amenity;
- The quality of living environment for future occupiers;
- Existing and Proposed Landscaping;
- Highways, Access and Parking;
- Flooding and Drainage; and
- Sustainability and Design

The Principle of the Proposed Development

6.2 The site is located in the built-up area of Reading where the adopted Local Plan accepts the principle of additional residential development, with no site-specific constraints or limitations to the re-development of the site for such purposes.

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

6.3 Whilst the scale of the proposed development falls below the threshold for the provision of affordable housing as detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework, the terms and requirements of Policy H3 of the adopted Local Plan (and related SPD) are noted – insofar as such seeks a financial contribution towards affordable housing provision from schemes of the proposed scale. Accordingly, the application is accompanied by a draft/framework Planning Obligation providing the basis for the required financial contribution.

6.4 In terms of housing mix, there are no specific policy requirements relating to schemes of this size. Nevertheless, Policy H2 of the adopted Local Plan recognises, and emphasises, that there is a strong need for family-scale housing and the proposals – by delivering a single family-sized unit – would make a positive contribution to these requirements.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 6.5 As detailed in Section 2.0, the site is located in a predominantly residential area of mixed character, comprising a series of detached, semi-detached and terraced units, together with apartment buildings. In addition, there is a wide variation in scale, including single-storey properties, chalet-style dwellings and two-storey buildings, with larger scale buildings a short distance to the north of the site at the junction of Berkeley Avenue and Bath Road. There is a similarly wide variety in the architectural style and treatment of buildings. Accordingly, there is no clear consistency or uniformity to the pattern and character of development in the area to which development on the site should conform.
- 6.6 That, however, is not to suggest that there are no limitations or constraints in this regard, simply that there is greater flexibility in delivering development that integrates with the surroundings. In this regard, the layout of the proposed development - effectively comprising infill development between the existing (truncated) dwelling and 106 Berkeley Avenue to the north – appropriately follows the rhythm and pattern of development in the area, with the gaps between the proposed dwelling and neighbouring buildings and the boundaries of the site consistent with the wider surroundings and ensuring the development does not appear cramped on the site. Moreover, the resultant plot size, scale and proportions would be consistent with those in the area – indeed there are examples of much smaller plot sizes immediately adjacent to the site.
- 6.7 Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would be two-storey in scale (with accommodation in the roof) a height that, as shown in the elevations, would be consistent with the existing building on the site and marginally lower than the buildings in Benyon Mews to the north-east and significantly lower than other buildings in the area (including 41 Bath Road to the north). In this context, and given the comparability with the height of the existing building on the site, the scale of the proposed dwelling would appropriately respect the scale of built development in the area.
- 6.8 In addition, and as noted, there is a wide variety in architectural styles and form in the area. The proposed scheme, which reflects traditional proportions and scale, incorporates more contemporary elements in the

detailing and external finish of the building yet results in an overall form of development that acknowledges the modern origins, but integrates comfortably with the existing developed/built surrounds.

- 6.9 Taken in combination, therefore, it is considered that the proposals would appropriately respect and reflect the character, pattern and appearance of the area, and thereby comply with related Development Plan policy. In addition, it should be acknowledged that this is achieved in a manner that would make a more effective use of land and deliver an additional unit of family accommodation, with both factors weighing positively in support of the scheme.

Effect on Neighbouring Residential Amenity

- 6.10 As detailed in section 2.0, the site is surrounded by residential development with the impact on surrounding properties (including the existing, retained dwelling) considered in turn below.

106 Berkeley Avenue

- 6.11 As noted, 106 Berkeley Avenue is located to the north of the site and comprises a detached two-storey dwelling that fronts Berkeley Avenue to the west and presents a two-storey flank elevation towards the site boundary, from which the dwelling is off-set by approximately 4.0m.
- 6.12 The proposed dwelling, would be some 2.8m from the shared boundary (at its nearest) and, whilst it would be marginally set behind the front of No 106 and continue approximately 6.0m to the rear thereof the degree of separation between the properties (7.0m) and their respective alignment to each other is such that the physical form and mass of the proposed dwelling would not have a harmful impact on light or outlook to No 106. Moreover, the only opening proposed in the facing (northern) flank elevation at first floor level and above would be a stepped-back door leading on to a balcony – the position and orientation of which is such that it would not give rise to a meaningful or unacceptable level of overlooking of 106 Berkeley Avenue. To that extent, therefore, - and given the position of other window openings - there would be no adverse impact on privacy.

6.13 Furthermore, whilst the proposals would result in an increase in the level of use of the access – which is positioned on the boundary with No 106 – the additional use of such would not have any material or unacceptable impacts on amenity in terms of matters of noise/disturbance.

6.14 Given such, it is not considered the proposals would impact adversely on the amenities of the occupiers of 106 Berkeley Avenue.

Benyon Mews

6.15 Benyon Mews is located to the north-east of the site and comprises a series of two-storey terraced dwellings, the garden to the southern-most of which 'over-laps' and backs on to the garden of proposed dwelling

6.16 This property (that in Benyon Mews) benefits from a rear garden some 14.0m deep, with the first floor of the proposed dwelling positioned approximately 10.5m from the shared boundary between the properties. That being the case, there would be some 24.5m between the rear facing (bedroom) windows of the proposed dwelling and the rear of the nearest property in Benyon Mews, a distance sufficient to ensure that there would be no overlooking or loss of privacy, or an adverse impact on light/outlook.

6.17 Accordingly, the proposals would preserve the amenities of the occupiers of properties in Benyon Mews.

102 Berkeley Avenue

6.18 102 Berkeley Avenue is a detached single storey dwelling the long (flank) elevation of which runs parallel to the eastern boundary of the site, with garden area to the rear (north). As such, the principal habitable room windows are contained in the front (south) and rear (north) elevations facing away from the boundary of the application site.

6.19 Given such, the physical position of the proposed dwelling, off-set from the eastern boundary of the site by approximately 10.5m, is such that there would be no adverse impact on light/outlook. In addition, and again having regard to the relationship between the existing dwelling on the site and No 102, the layout and form of the proposed dwelling and the juxtaposition with No 102, is such that there would not be a material or

unacceptable level of overlooking of the private amenity areas or living accommodation of No 102. Indeed, the degree/extent of any views of the area to the rear (north) of No 102 would be no greater than the views of that area that are currently available from the properties in Benyon Mews, or could be available from the existing dwelling on the site.

- 6.20 For these reasons, therefore, it is considered that the proposals would also respect and preserve the amenities of the occupiers of 102 Berkeley Avenue.

104 Berkeley Avenue

- 6.21 As shown on the site plan, the proposed dwelling would be located to the north of the existing property where the layout and arrangement of rooms and related openings are such that the siting and scale of the proposed dwelling would not impact adversely on matters of light/outlook. Furthermore, the location of window openings in the proposed dwelling are such that the privacy of the occupiers of 104 Berkeley Avenue would not be adversely affected.
- 6.22 Furthermore, whilst the proposals would result in a reduction in the size of the garden area serving 104 Berkeley Avenue, the scale of the garden that would be retained would comfortably meet, and exceed, the Council's standards in connection with the same.
- 6.23 No other properties would be adversely affected by the proposed development.

Quality of Living Environment for Future Occupiers.

- 6.24 For the following reasons it is considered that the proposals would deliver an appropriate standard of amenity for future occupiers of the development:
- For comparable reasons to those detailed above, the relationship between the existing dwellings and buildings surrounding the site and the proposed dwellings are such that these (existing buildings and structures) would not unacceptably impact on future amenity

with reference to factors such as light, outlook and privacy¹.

- The internal floorspace of the proposed dwelling would meet (and exceed) the nationally described space standards and would thereby comply with Policy H5 of the adopted Local Plan.
- The amenity area to the proposed dwelling – which would be some 140sqm – would (in quantitative terms) provide an appropriate standard of amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling and would respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity of the site. Given such, the extent and form of amenity space provision would accord with the Council's guidelines and the requirements of Policy H10 of the adopted Local Plan

6.25 Given such, it is considered that an appropriate standard of amenity would be provided for future occupiers of the development.

Existing and Proposed Landscaping.

6.26 There are no existing landscape features on the site that make a significant or meaningful contribution to the character and visual amenities of the area and, that being so, there are not considered to be any landscape constraints to the proposed development. Notwithstanding such, the layout and form of the proposed development – in proposing a single dwelling on the northern section of the site – would not impact on the existing trees to the south of the current property, or the majority of trees along the western boundary of the site. This, together with the wide scope for additional tree planting in the garden of the existing and proposed dwelling (all of which could be controlled by planning condition) would ensure an appropriate level of tree canopy coverage and compliance with the principles of Policy EN14.

6.27 Accordingly, the following landscape framework is proposed as part of the development

- Garden area (to the existing and proposed dwelling) to be mainly laid to lawn, save for pathways and patio sections;

¹ Recognising the alterations proposed to the existing dwelling (104 Berkeley Avenue).

- Garden area between the existing and proposed dwelling to be contained by 1.8m high close-boarded fencing, with other site boundaries unaffected;
- Additional tree planting (as necessary) in the garden of the existing and proposed dwelling; and
- Parking and circulation areas to be either porous tarmac or porous paving, or a combination of both.

6.28 Given the above, and the generally urban characteristics of the surroundings, this approach to site landscaping would ensure a development that is appropriately integrated in to the surroundings and, through condition, would reflect the requirements of Policy EN14 of the adopted Local Plan.

Highways, Access and Parking

6.29 As shown on the site plan, access to the proposed dwelling would be via the existing entrance that extends off the minor spur road that serves only 104 and 106 Berkeley Avenue. The ability, as proposed, to access on to the spur road would facilitate safe access on to the wider highway network, including Berkeley Avenue. That being so, there are no access constraints or limitations to the proposed development.

6.30 As shown on the site plan, both the existing and proposed dwelling would be provided with two parking spaces. This level of provision, for a site situated in Zone 2, would comply with the requirements of the Revised Parking and Design Standards SPD. In addition, the layout of the parking spaces within the site would facilitate safe turning of vehicles so that they can enter and leave the site in forward gear, all as shown on plan 05.2.

6.31 In addition, the following should be noted:

- The garden areas of the existing and proposed dwelling would appropriately accommodate cycle parking provision;
- Electric charging point(s) would be provided as part of the scheme;
- Porous surfacing materials would be used for the parking areas and driveway; and
- Bin storage (on collection days) to the front of the existing and

proposed dwelling would be within accepted carry distance of the site access.

- 6.32 Given such, there are no highways or parking limitations to the development.
- 6.33 Furthermore, whilst the highway land directly to the front (west) of the site is identified in the adopted Local Plan Proposals Map for a 'Major Transport Project' that project relates to cycleway provision, and the proposed development would not compromise or prejudice that scheme.

Flooding and Drainage Implications

- 6.34 Data held by the Environment Agency indicates that the site is located in Flood Zone 1 for fluvial flooding purposes and, therefore, is acceptable as a matter of principle for additional residential development.
- 6.35 In addition, the Environment Agency data indicates that there are no constraints in respect of surface water flooding, nor flood risk from a reservoir breach. Given such, there are not considered to be any flooding constraints or limitations to the proposed development.

Sustainability and Design

- 6.36 In accordance with the requirements of Policy CC2 of the adopted Local Plan, the proposed dwellings would be constructed to achieve BREEAM 'very good' requirements. Moreover, and for the reasons detailed above, the proposals would amount – in locational and accessibility terms – to a highly sustainable form of development, making more effective and efficient use of land.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 This Statement has been prepared to accompany an application submitted to Reading Borough Council for full planning permission for works of demolition and the erection of a detached two-storey dwelling with parking and amenity space on land to the north of 104 Berkeley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire.

7.2 For the reasons set out, the Statement has demonstrated:

- That the principle of the proposed development is acceptable;
- That the proposals would provide family-type housing – contributing to an identified need for such – and making an appropriate provision towards affordable housing;
- That the layout, scale, design and form of the proposed development would respect and reflect the character and appearance of the area;
- That there would be no adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity;
- That an appropriate quality living environment would be created for future occupiers of the development;
- That there are no landscaping constraints or limitations to the proposed development;
- That the access and parking arrangements are acceptable;
- That there are no flooding or drainage constraints to the development; and
- That proposals would deliver a sustainable and efficient form of development.

7.3 Given the above, the Statement demonstrates that the proposals would be

fully compliant with Development Plan policy and all other material considerations, and that planning permission should be granted accordingly.