

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Southcote

App Ref: 211885/HOU

Address: 101 Southcote Lane, Reading, RG30 3AH

Proposals: Dropped kerb and vehicle crossing

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mrs Amanda Breen

Date received: 19/11/2021

Valid from: 19/11/2021

Target Decision date: 14/01/2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey middle-terraced dwelling located on the south side of Southcote Lane. The main house is set back and down from the highway, with a 10m depth grass verge between the highway and front garden. The grass verge extends from 81 Southcote Lane to 1 Faircross Road, with four mature highway trees. The grass verge is segmented by vehicle crossings to several properties on the south side of Southcote Lane.

Southcote Lane is a classified road, and therefore planning permission is required for the proposed dropped kerb and vehicle crossing. Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School is located 150m north of the proposal site, with Southcote Primary School located 150m south west of the proposal site.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks a dropped kerb and vehicle crossing, providing vehicular access from the front garden of 101 Southcote Lane to the highway.

The application form and proposed plans specify that a tree stump located within the grass verge to the front of 101 Southcote Lane will be removed and replaced with a new tree, which the applicant has agreed to fund. As the removal of the tree stump and the planting of the replacement tree is not considered a requirement to facilitate the proposed development of a vehicle crossing and dropped kerb, it is not considered appropriate to secure the contribution of the tree as part of this planning application.

Plans considered:

- ~~Location Plan - 101 Southcote Lane~~
- Proposed Block Plan - 101 Southcote Lane
- ~~#101 Southcote Lane Vehicle Crossing - RBCVC101SouthC~~

Received on 19/11/2021

- #101 Southcote Lane Vehicle Crossing - RBCVC101SouthC 130122
- Location Plan - 101 Southcote Lane

Received on 13/01/2022

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

180540/HOU - Dropped kerb and vehicle crossing - Application Refused on 29/05/2018. Reason for refusal is as follows:

1. The proposed dropped kerb and vehicle crossing would result in a significant loss of existing grass verge which currently contributes positively to the character of the street and provides an attractive area of open green space. The loss of this green space would have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, harmful to the character and appearance of Southcote Lane. Also, if approved, it would set an undesirable precedent for further fragmentation of the green space. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS7 and CS28 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015).

181506/HOU - Dropped kerb and vehicle crossing (resubmission 180540/HOU) - Application Refused on 29/10/2018. Appeal Dismissed on 19/03/2019. Reason for refusal is as follows:

1. The proposed dropped kerb and vehicle crossing would result in a significant loss of the existing grass verge, which currently contributes positively to the character of the street and provides an attractive area of open green space. The loss of this green space would have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, harmful to the character and appearance of Southcote Lane. Also, if approved, it would set an undesirable precedent for further fragmentation of the green space. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS7 and CS28 of the Core Strategy (2008).

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

97 Southcote Lane, Reading, RG30 3AH - No response received.

99 Southcote Lane, Reading, RG30 3AH - No response received.

103 Southcote Lane, Reading, RG30 3AH - No response received.

61 Silchester Road, Reading, RG30 3EJ - No response received.

63 Silchester Road, Reading, RG30 3EJ - No response received.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 21/12/2021

- The proposed dropped kerb will result in the loss of the grass verge, however this application has been discussed and agreed with the Highways Department and therefore there are no Transport objections to this application.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Response received on 06/01/2022

- The crossing does not impact on any existing trees so there are no objections.
- It is noted that the Crossing plan includes the removal of the adjacent tree stump, albeit it does not appear necessary for the crossing, and indicates the planting of a replacement tree, which would be a positive addition.

Reading Borough Council, Parks - Response received on 06/01/2022

- There are no tree-related issues in the background, so we have no objection to the crossing.

A site notice was displayed from Thursday 2nd December 2021, expiring on Thursday 23rd December 2021. No further responses have been received.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Reading Borough Council Vehicle Crossing Policy (2018)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Principle of Development and Design

In respect to applications seeking new access onto the transport network, development is subject to Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Policy TR3 ensures that proposed new access is safe, and does not have a detrimental impact on highway congestion or the environment. The proximity of other existing vehicle accesses is also a consideration.

Proposals for new vehicle access onto classified roads are required to seek planning permission and meet the requirements of the Reading Borough Council Vehicle Crossing Policy (2018).

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires development to respect the character of the surrounding area, as well as allow for ease of movement and permeability. The quality of the public realm and the provision of green infrastructure and landscaping is also a consideration.

It is considered important to contextualise this application alongside the previous two applications at the proposal site (see section 3 of this report for details), both of which were for dropped kerbs and vehicle crossings and were refused. The same reason for refusal applied to both applications, stating that the development would represent a significant loss of the grass verge, harming the character of the surrounding area. It is also stated that the development would set an undesirable precedent for further fragmentation of the green space.

The delegated report for application 181506 addressed the quality of information submitted for the application, in that accurate plans were not submitted. As a result it was not possible to establish the relationship between the proposed vehicle crossing and the existing highway tree. Application 181506 was also not supported by Transport Development Control, as based on the plan submitted Proposed Site Plan, the development would be within 1m of a street lamp. Transport Development Control objected to the application due to the substantial removal of the grass verge, which was not considered in accordance with the Reading Borough Council Vehicle Crossing Policy.

Turning to application 211885, the proposed vehicle crossing from the highway to 101 Southcote Lane has been discussed with the Reading Borough Council Highways Department. A proposed site plan has been submitted which illustrates the relationship between the proposed development and the highway tree. The vehicle crossing proposed is at a slight angle in order to avoid the Zebra crossing, which has been constructed in the time between application 181506 and application 211885. Though not to scale, the plan provides details of the amount of grass area that would be lost as a result of the development. As part of the development, the existing pedestrian access will be partly incorporated in the proposed vehicle crossing, with the unincorporated section of the pathway re-established within the grass verge. The proposed site plan also demonstrates that vehicle crossing will suitably avoid the existing BT cabinet within the grass verge.

Upon visiting the site, it was noted that the condition of the grass verge outside of 101 Southcote Lane showed obvious signs damage due to vehicles crossing the grass verge to access front gardens along Southcote Lane. Figures 1 and 2 below demonstrate balding areas of the grass verge as a result of vehicles crossing the verge. It is considered that instating a vehicle

crossing at the site may help to restore the quality of the grass verge particularly closest to the front gardens of 99 101 Southcote Lanes which show clear signs of vehicles crossing the grass verge.



Fig 1. Grass verge closest to 99 & 101 Southcote Lane. Photo taken by case officer on 10/12/2021.



Fig 2. Grass verge closest to 99 & 101 Southcote Lane. Photo taken by case officer on 10/12/2021.

When taking into account the partially reinstated pathway within the grass verge, the approximate loss of grass verge as a result of the proposed vehicle crossing would be 12m². In accordance with paragraph 14 of the Reading Borough Council Vehicle Crossing Policy; *“The loss of an area of grass verge up to 8m² is acceptable, however, if an area of between 8m² and 15m² of public highway / Council maintained grass verge is considered for removal, it will need to be replaced by a suitable permeable bituminous/tarmacadam material appropriate for use on the public highway and approved by the Council. This material will be applied to all of the crossing area to reduce the impact of surfacing a verge area”*. In accordance with this aspect of the Vehicle Crossing Policy, the proposed site plan indicates that the crossing will be constructed of permeable materials. The width of the dropped kerb including the left and right transition kerbs would be 4.57m.



Fig 3. Front of grass verge in front of 101 Southcote Lane.

Overall, the proposed vehicle crossing and dropped kerb is considered to have been sufficiently demonstrated within the plans submitted for this application. Steps to reduce the loss of grass verge by reinstating the pathway are positive and mitigate the amount of grass area lost as a result of the proposed vehicle crossing. In the context of the Zebra crossing which was installed

since application 181506 was refused, it is considered that the visual impact of the loss of grass verge will be minimal and not overly harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

It should also be noted that the application form submitted for application 211885 states that the planting of a new tree is to be funded by the applicant to replace an existing tree stump to the front of 101 Southcote Lane, which is upon Highways land. The removal of the tree stump as demonstrated on the proposed plans is not required to facilitate the proposed vehicle crossing, therefore it is not considered appropriate to secure the planting of a new tree via condition or contributions associated with this planning application. Whilst the planting of a new tree is welcomed, it is not considered relevant in this instance to the development proposed and as described under application 211885.

7.2 Safeguarding Amenity

The proposed development is not considered to harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents. It is not considered that the proposed vehicle crossing would result in increased vehicle movement within the locality. As a result, the proposed development is not considered to harm neighbouring residents with regards to noise, disturbance, or fumes in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.3 Transport

As per the consultation response to this application from Transport Development Control; the proposed development has been discussed and agreed with the Highways Department. As a result, there are no Transport objections to the application subject to a condition requiring the proposed vehicular access to be provided in accordance with the approved plans. This is in the interests of road safety in accordance with Policy TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

7.4 Natural Environment and Other Matters

As per the consultation response to this application from Natural Environment; it has been confirmed that the proposed vehicle crossing will not impact upon any existing trees and there therefore no objections. The Reading Borough Council Parks Team, which manage highway trees have also confirmed that there are no tree related issues for this application.

As noted in section 7.1 of this report, the application form states that a new tree will be planted as part of this application. As the proposed vehicle crossing and dropped kerb will not result in the loss of a highway tree it is not considered a requirement to secure details of new tree planting as part of this planning application. Instead, an informative will be attached to any approval of this application stating how the charge associated with the planting of a highway tree for the benefit of the applicant should this be something they wish to pursue. The planting of a new highway tree can be discussed with the Reading Borough Council Highways Department in seeking a licence for the vehicle crossing and dropped kerb.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

10. CONDITIONS

TL1: Time Limit (Standard)

The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

AP1: Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Plans considered:

- Proposed Block Plan - 101 Southcote Lane

Received on 19/11/2021

- #101 Southcote Lane Vehicle Crossing - RBCVC101SouthC 130122
- Location Plan - 101 Southcote Lane

Received on 13/01/2022

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

M3 MATERIALS (AS SPECIFIED)

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and/or application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives

IF3: Highways

- The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.
- Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.

I29: Access construction

The Council's Highways section should be contacted at 19 Bennet Road, Reading, RG2 0QX, telephone: 0118 937 2138, to agree the access construction details and to grant a licence before any work is carried out within the highway. A formal application should be made allowing at least 4 week's notice to obtain details of underground services on the applicants' behalf.

The planting of a new highway tree can be discussed with the Reading Borough Council Highways Department in seeking a licence for the vehicle crossing and dropped kerb.