

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT**SITE ADDRESS:** 7 Hawthorne Road Reading**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 211923/FUL**PROPOSAL:** Erection of a pair of semi-detached houses and a detached garage**CASE OFFICER:** Connie Davis**Site Description and Surrounding Area**

The application relates to a vacant piece of land on the northern side of Hawthorne Road. The site was formerly occupied with a chalet bungalow style dwelling but this has been demolished. The surrounding area predominantly consists of detached two storey residential properties of a wide variety of styles. A public footway leading to Lowfield Green to the rear of the site runs along the western boundary of the site separating it from an electricity substation building and no. 10C Woods Road beyond. To the east of the site is no. 9 Hawthorne Road.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission to erect a pair of 3-bedroom semi-detached dwelling along with a two-storey detached garage.

The dwellings would have a maximum height of 8m and an eaves height of 5m. In total, the pair of dwelling would have a width of 13.2m and depth of 10.7m (including the proposed porches). The dwellings would have hipped roofs and would be finished in timber and render with a slate roof and upvc windows.

The proposed garage would be 'L' shaped, have a maximum height of 6.5m and a maximum width of 12.7m. It would have 4 pitched roof dormers and would accommodate 2 cars. The building would also have a workshop, garden room, gym and office.

Plans Considered**Planning Statement****Received 7th December 2021**

Application Form

CIL Form

Haw.Garage.Ele.S&R - Garage Elevations Side & Rear

Haw.Garage.Ele - Garage Elevations

Haw.Garage.plans.1121 - Garage Plans

Location Plan

Haw.Semi's.FP. - Floor Plans Semi's

Haw.Semi's.F&R.Ele - Front & Rear Elevations

Haw.Ele.Side001 - Side Elevations

Haw.Drainage.1121 - Drainage layout

Block Plan (Existing)

Block Plan (Proposed)
Haw.SP.Prop.1121 - Site Plan Proposed
Haw.SS.1121 - Street Scene
Haw.SS.P.1121 - Street Scene Perspective

Received 29th November 2021

Relevant Planning History

08-00520-OUT - Demolition of an existing dwelling and the construction of a pair of two storey semi-detached dwellings with associated car parking and amenity spaces - Granted.

151114/FUL - Replace existing residential dwelling with new build residential home - Application Permitted

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

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

In this regard the NPPF allows full weight to be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019). The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

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

National

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- | | |
|------|--|
| 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 |
| CC9 | Securing infrastructure |
| EN12 | Biodiversity and the green network |
| EN14 | Trees, hedges and woodlands |
| EN15 | Air Quality |
| EN16 | Pollution and Water Resources |

H1	Provision of housing
H2	Density and mix
H3	Affordable housing
H5	Standards for new housing
H10	Private and communal outdoor space
TR1	Achieving the transport strategy
TR3	Access, traffic and highway related matters
TR5	Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Affordable Housing (2021)
 Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
 Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
 Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
 Tree Strategy (2021)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

Transport - Objection as revised information is required

Ecology - No objection subject to condition

Natural Environment - Objection

Public

Notification letters regarding the application were sent to nos. 5 and 9 Hawthorne Road, April Ridge and no.10c Woods Road and no. 19 Lowfield Green on 07/12/21.

12 objections were received, relating to the following matters:

- Not in keeping with other properties in the area
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Concerns over child safety given the additional vehicular access
- The proposed garage is an attempt to create another dwelling
- The development would have impact on 19 Lowfield Green
- The development does not make a positive contribution to the character of the area
- The development would create further pressure on the highway and may lead to on street parking
- Hawthorne Road comprises of detached properties rather than semi-detached
- Open space at the end of Lowfield Green would be impacted. This would affect dog owner/ walker's enjoyment
- Would result in the removal of a mature silver birch tree
- Dimensions are not included on the plans
- Concern regarding overlooking from garage windows

- The development would lead to increased noise, loss of daylight and visual dominance of the garage
- Loss of light to rear garden of 9 Hawthorne Road
- Screening/ planting is misleading
- There is no drawing of the 3rd proposed dwelling (“garage”/house) from the perspective of 19 Lowfield Green, although every other perspective has been presented

Officer comment: These matters will be discussed in the report.

APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The [NPPF](#) states that LPAs should “*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*”. The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed land’ excludes private residential gardens in built up areas.

Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. The site is vacant but was previously used for residential purposes. As such the principle of development on this brownfield site is established and accepted. The introduction of two new houses would also continue to contribute to the provision of family housing in accordance with Policy H1. However, this is subject to other material planning considerations such as matters relating to design, residential amenity, transport and landscaping along with the principle of demolishing the existing dwelling.

Appearance and impact on the character of the area

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) 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*

Pair of semi-detached dwellings

The proposed pair of dwellings would sit comfortably within the plot. The ridge height of the proposed building (when looking at the two properties together) is comparable to its neighbours and the dwellings would be positioned to be in keeping with the established building line with adjacent dwellings. The design of the dwellings, whilst someone standard with limited architectural interest, is not considered unacceptable.

Concern has been raised as part of the public consultation period the proposed scheme comprises pf semi-detached dwellings rather than a single detached dwelling. However, both a pair of semi-detached and a single detached dwelling have been approved at the site previously (see planning history). As such, the principle of two semi-detached dwellings on the site has been accepted. Whilst the footprint of the individual dwelling swill be smaller

than the surroundings, the overall footprint of the building as a whole would be considered in keeping with the surrounding area.

The street-scene is mixed in terms of character and overall design. Given this and the above considerations the form, bulk and mass of the building is not considered to be out of keeping with that of the character of the surrounding area. Details of proposed materials could have been secured via a suitably worded condition.

Detached garage

The proposed detached garage would be a two-storey structure with an expansive width and depth on neighbouring boundaries. It would represent a bulky addition to the rear plot of the site that would fail to integrate with the character of the residential area. There are no examples of such large outbuildings in the vicinity and therefore the general built coverage of the plot would be greater. It would result in an overdevelopment of the site. The proposed driveway/ turning area at the rear would also be uncharacteristic with surroundings and in combination is considered to result in an overdevelopment of the plot when coupled with the pair of semi-detached properties.

As such, by way of its height, width and overall general bulk in close proximity to site boundaries, the detached garage would represent an unacceptable development in line with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) 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.*

Proposed semi-detached dwellings

No. 9 Hawthorne Road to the east incorporates a single side facing obscurely glazed window and the proposed semi-detached dwellings would not project beyond the rear of this property. This would also be the case with no. 10c Woods Road. This property does not incorporate any first floor side facing windows and is also separated from the site by a public

footway and electricity substation building. It is not considered that dwellings would result in any adverse loss of light, outlook or undue overbearing impact to neighbouring dwellings.

Serving non-habitable rooms, it is not considered unreasonable to require all proposed first floor side facing windows to be obscurely glazed and fixed shut below 1.7m from internal floor level in order to protect the privacy of surrounding occupiers. A condition would also be attached preventing any further side windows being installed on either dwelling.

The proposed dwellings would be located in excess of 20m away from 19 Lowfield Green to the rear of the site. As such, the back-to-back distance is considered acceptable and in line with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Detached garage

The proposed detached garage would be located on the boundary with and would extend to a depth of 10.7m along the boundary with 9 Hawthorne Road and a width of 9.6m along the boundary with 19 Lowfield Green. Measuring a ridge height of 6.7m, it is considered that by virtue of its two-storey height and depth along shared boundaries, it would result in a harmful level of visual bulk from rear amenity spaces along with resulting in a loss of light to the spaces. Whilst there is some screening on the boundary with 9 Hawthorne Road, the longevity of the vegetation cannot be guaranteed and the unacceptable development cannot be accepted on the basis that it would be screened. The garage would have a number of windows which neighbours were concerned would reduce their privacy. However, given the building is to be used as ancillary accommodation (rather than a residential dwelling), and as such windows would not serve habitable rooms, it is not considered that a loss of privacy would be a justifiable reason for refusal.

An access track to the garage would run alongside the boundary with 9 Hawthorne Road. It has been raised in neighbor representations that the access track running alongside this property would have the potential to have an adverse impact on privacy in terms of noise. However, given the scheme is for a single residential dwelling, it is not considered vehicle movements would be excessive and result in a level of disturbance or pollution to resist the application. Nevertheless, a condition preventing external lighting being installed on the access track without separate planning permission from the Local Planning Authority will be attached in response to this concern.

As such, the proposed detached garage, by reason of its bulk and proximity to neighbouring boundaries, would be considered a visually prominent and overbearing structure to the amenity spaces of 19 Lowfield Green and 9 Hawthorne Road contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Future occupiers

For future occupiers of the dwellings, it is considered that the proposed residential units will provide an overall good standard of accommodation. The proposed dwelling is spacious internally, with regularly shaped rooms providing good levels of outlook, access to and natural ventilation.

A condition would have been applied preventing the garage being used for separate residential use, only for ancillary space for the main dwelling.

Amenity Space

Policy H10 states that *The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.*

The new dwelling furthest to the east would have a disproportionately larger amenity space compared to the property to the west. Policy H10 states that *'The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity'*. Whilst garden sizes do vary in the vicinity, that allocated to the new dwelling to the west of the site is considered substantially smaller to the point where it is considered at odds with the form and layout of others. It would be encompassed by the rear garden space of the new dwelling to the east, the majority of which is hardstanding (to be used for parking). Given that the rear amenity space will be used primarily for parking/ as hardstanding, it is considered that the actual amount of useable space for recreational enjoyment is limited. As such, the size of actual useable amenity space is considered substandard for both dwellings, owing due to the presence of the proposed garage (meaning the gardens cannot be more equally split between the two) and the majority of the rear of the sites being encompassed by the garage and driveway/ parking space.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CC7 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Transport

The proposed 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.

In accordance with the Council's current adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, each dwelling will require 2 off road parking spaces. The proposed site plan Drawing No Haw.SP.Prop.1121 illustrates the each dwelling will be provided with 2 off road parking spaces on the front drive. Plans and the Design and Access statement also confirm that one of the properties will be provided with additional garage parking/workshop area at the rear of the property.

It is recommended that the internal dimensions for a double garage are 7000mm long x 5500mm wide. Whilst the width conforms the length of the garage does not, however as this is additional provision, this can be accepted in this instance. Water run-off from the new dwellings onto the public highway is not permitted. An appropriate method of drainage

needs to be provided within the site's curtilage including the use of suitable permeable surfacing materials.

Visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m are required to be illustrated for the new dropped crossing, as well as illustration of the telegraph pole located in close proximity. Accesses will not be permitted within 1m of a telegraph pole. Any costs related to the relocation would be met by the applicant. A licence 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 to agree the access construction details. Revised plans are required illustrating visibility splays and the telegraph pole, however these were not provided by the applicant.

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 Council's 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 which has not been shown on the submitted plans.

In accordance with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD, each 3 bedroom dwelling should be provided with 2 secure cycle storage spaces. For a development of this nature storage can be provided in a secure garden shed. Submitted site plan illustrates a garden shed in one dwelling and a garage/workshop in the other, this is therefore deemed acceptable.

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. The submitted Plan site plan illustrates refuse storage in the front garden area for each dwelling which is deemed acceptable. A Construction Method Statement would have been required for the development should it have been acceptable.

Concerns were raised in the neighbour consultation period that the development would pose a risk in particular, for school children. The Transport Officer has not identified any increased highway risk for pedestrians or pressure on the highway as a result of the two new dwellings and therefore the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

As such, the applicant has failed to demonstrate the proposed parking layout would have acceptable visibility splays or would provide electric charging points and therefore is not considered acceptable in terms of Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Natural Environment

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) states that: *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*

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) states that: *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.

Ecology

Given the site has already been cleared, it is considered that proposal is very unlikely to affect any priority habitats, protected species, or designated wildlife sites and there therefore no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

However, in line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, which states that “*opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged*”. As such, should the proposal have been acceptable in other regards, a condition would have been included requiring the applicant to submit details of biodiversity enhancements, namely bird/ bat boxes and wildlife friendly landscaping. Subject to this condition, the proposal would have been considered acceptable in relation to Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Trees/ Landscaping

A Silver birch tree previously identified for retention under previous applications is not mentioned within the submitted documentation. One new tree is proposed on the frontage and the (assumably) existing hedge vegetation is retained. The proposed tree species is not a native species, which is not in line with the aims of our Tree Strategy and of small stature.

Other than the small tree on the frontage and a small length of (potentially proposed/replacement) Laurel hedging, no other soft landscaping or planting is provisioned, as it is expected on a site proposing 2 new dwellings and 1 large outbuilding. The built and hard surfaced areas share on the site are overwhelming and the proposed soft landscaping is not on balance with these, which is not in line with the Local Plan EN14 Policy.

However, Natural Environment Officers have advised that to address the above, a landscaping plan that demonstrates additional shrub and tree planting and soft landscaped areas in the rear should could be submitted be submitted. A clear soft landscape bed to accommodate the tree on the frontage is also necessary. This has not been forthcoming, and nor has the balance between soft/ hard landscaping been amended.

As such, the proposal is not supported in terms of trees and landscaping as it is not in line with the aims of the Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy or the requirements of EN14 policy.

Sustainability

Policies CC1 and CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) state that construction 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*’. Pre-commencement conditions relating to the following matters would have been required to be attached to conform with Policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019):

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and

- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

Affordable Housing

In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 2 dwellings, would be liable for an off-site affordable housing contribution equivalent of 10% of the GDV of the development.

The applicant stated they agreed in principle to enter into a legal agreement to secure a financial contribution. However, valuations have not been submitted (it would usually be expected for such information to be submitted at the outset of this application - in any future appeal it would be expected for 3 valuations to be submitted at the outset of the appeal to allow further consideration of this) and as the proposal is not considered acceptable in other planning terms, the Council has not pursued the S106 legal agreement to secure the financial affordable housing provision.

An informative will specify that this reason for refusal could be overcome, in the context of an acceptable scheme in all other respects, by entering into a s106 or unilateral undertaking.

Other matters raised in representations

- Open space at the end of Lowfield Green would be impacted. This would affect dog owner/ walker's enjoyment

Officer comment: it is not considered that the proposed development would cause substantial harm on this area of undesignated space nor would it preclude enjoyment from this public space. The area of space is of good size and walkers would not be obstructed by the development.

- Dimensions are not included on the plans

Officer comment: Plans are scalable, with the exception of the submitted block plan. However, Officers consider that sufficient information has been provided in order to reach a decision.

- There is no drawing of the 3rd proposed dwelling from the perspective of 19 Lowfield Green, although every other perspective has been presented

Officer comment: Officers consider that sufficient information has been provided in order to reach a decision. Had the scheme been heading towards an approval, this plan would have been required from the applicant. It should be noted that the detached building has not assessed as a new dwelling as it has been submitted as an outbuilding.

Equalities Act

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability,

gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE Full Planning Permission for the following reasons:

- 1) By reason of its height, depth and general bulk, the proposed detached garage and associated access/ turning area would fail to respect to the layout and character of the area due to resulting in an excessive built up coverage of the plot. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 2) The proposed detached garage, by reason of its height, depth and overall scale, would be overbearing and result in harmful visual dominance from the rear gardens of 9 Hawthorne Road and 19 Lowfield Green contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 3) The proposal has failed to demonstrate or make provision for an adequate landscaping and tree planting on site contrary to Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (2021).
- 4) The dwellings would fail to be provided with an amenity space that respects the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity. Furthermore, due to the presence of the outbuilding and associated access, the amount of useable amenity space is also substandard. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 5) The applicant has failed to demonstrate the proposed parking layout would have acceptable visibility splays or would provide a policy compliant number of electric charging points. As such, the proposal is contrary to policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 6) In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021.

Informatives

1. Plans/ Documents considered

2. Pre-app
3. Positive and proactive - refusal
4. Reason for refusal 6 could be overcome at an appeal