

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No. 210452/FUL

Address: 7 Lower Armour Road

Proposal: Extension and conversion of existing dwelling to form a pair of semi-detached dwellings

Case officer: Matt Burns

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site is located on the north side of Lower Armour Road and contains a single bungalow. To the south, west and north of the site are residential dwellings of a range of sizes and styles whilst to the east of the site is The Butchers Public House.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission extension and conversion of the existing bungalow to form a pair of two-bedroom semi-detached bungalow dwellings with off-street parking to the front and gardens to the rear.

The proposed extensions include a 2.8m wide and 8.6m long single storey side extension to the west elevation and a 4.9m wide and 8.5m long single storey side extension to the east elevation together with two additional bay window projections to the front elevation.

Plans Considered

- Drawing ref. 01 D - Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 8th July 2021

- Drawing ref. 02 D - Hard - Soft Landscape / Visibility Splay

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 22nd September 2021

Relevant Planning History

None.

Consultation Responses

RBC Transport - No objection subject to conditions to secure provision of the proposed vehicle parking spaces and access points, cycle parking, refuse store and electric vehicle charging points. A condition to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to commencement of development is also recommended.

RBC Natural Environment - No objection, subject to conditions to secure provision of the proposed tree protection measures and submission and approval of a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping.

Ecological Adviser - No objection.

Public Consultation

The Butchers Arms PH 9 Lower Armour Road, no.s 3A, 5 Lower Armour Road and no.s 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 Newbery Close were notified of the application by letter. No letters of representation have been received.

Equality Act

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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.

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

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

EN13: MAJOR LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

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

H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

Appraisal

The principle of the 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.

Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, that does not mean that the development of private residential garden land is unacceptable in principle, rather that previously developed land should be the first choice for housing development.

Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- a) It makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- b) The site is of an adequate size to accommodate the development;
- c) The proposal has a suitable access;
- d) The proposal would not lead to an unacceptable tandem development;
- e) The design minimises the exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
- f) It does not cause detrimental impact on residential amenities;
- g) The emphasis is on the provision of family housing;
- h) There is no adverse impact on biodiversity, and
- i) The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

The proposals would also assist in meeting the Council’s housing targets in accordance with Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in an accessible location in accordance with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development).

Therefore, the principle of redevelopment could be acceptable providing the criteria outlined in Policies are met together with other material planning considerations.

Layout, Appearance and Design

In addition to the requirements of Policy H11 outlined above Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that all development proposals are of high design quality which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located in terms of layout, landscape, density and mix, scale, height and massing and architectural detail and materials. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that the design of outdoor areas respects the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.

Existing plot sizes surrounding the site are varied with those plots to the west on the opposite. Whilst the proposals seek to subdivide the site to form two plots compared to the single

dwelling plot that currently occupies the site, plot coverage for both proposed dwellings are considered to be reflective of and in keeping with the grain of development within the locality.

Aside from two proposed modest front bay window extensions the proposals would not bring the development closer to the Lower Armour Road frontage and would retain a 3m set back which is characteristic of nearby dwellings. The proposed side extensions would bring the development closer to both flank boundaries within a minimum separation of 0.9m to either flank. Dwellings set close to flank boundaries it not uncommon in the surrounding area and proposed separation is not considered out of keeping with this character. The two dwellings proposed would also be single storey bungalows with the side extensions being subservient additions set down from the main roof and set back from the existing front elevation such that the proposals are considered propitiate to the site and its surroundings. In terms of appearance the proposed extensions would reflect the style of the existing bungalow with gable pitch tiled roof and red brick external walls and are considered to integrate satisfactorily with the existing building and surrounding area.

Each dwelling would be served by its own private garden amenity which are considered to be of suitable size relative to the floor area of both dwellings and the character and size of private amenity spaces would to other dwellings nearby. The application is accompanied by a landscaping principles plan which indicates new tree and shrub planting and areas of permeable paving to the front and rear of the site.

The two proposed dwellings would be served by new dropped kerb vehicular access from Lower Armour Road and would not be tandem development.

The proposals are considered to accord with the relevant principles of Policy H11 in terms of layout, scale, design and landscaping and Policy CC7.

Natural Environment

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity where possible. Policy EN14 (Trees Hedges and Woodlands) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended with new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site.

Trees

A single existing tree is located at the end of the rear garden of one of the dwellings and is to be retained as part of the proposed development. A tree protection plan has been submitted with the application which shows a heras fence construction exclusion zone around the retained tree. This has been reviewed by the Natural Environment Officer who is satisfied that this would ensure suitable protection for this retained tree and implementation of these measures can be secured by way of condition. A further condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of a detailed scheme of a hard and soft landscaping for the front and rear of the site in line with the landscaping principles documents submitted.

Ecology

The application is accompanied by a bat survey report which has been reviewed by the LPA's Ecological Adviser who is satisfied that the existing building is unlikely to host roosting bats which are a protected species and therefore the proposals would not result in a net loss of biodiversity on the site. Details of wildlife friendly planting will be secured as part of the condition to secured submission and approval of a hard and soft landscaping scheme.

The proposals are considered to accord with Policies EN12 and EN14.

Amenity of surrounding and future occupiers

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks that development proposals should safeguard the amenity of both existing and future occupiers and Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors in terms of pollution. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) sets out the standards to which new dwellings shall be constructed. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect from the impacts of pollution.

The proposed dwellings are considered to be served by suitable outlook and daylighting and would accord with the nationally prescribed spaces standards as required by Policy H5. The dwellings would also be sited such that they would not be overlooked by surrounding properties and as such future occupiers would be served by suitable levels of privacy.

The adjacent dwelling to the west (no. 5 Lower Armour Road) has a single storey garage building located directly on the boundary with the dwelling set some distance away and as such the proposals are not considered detrimental to the residential amenity of these adjoining occupiers. The very modest intensification of use of the site in replacing the existing single dwelling with two is not considered to result in any general noise and disturbance concerns to surrounding occupiers.

A condition is recommended to require submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of development to ensure surrounding properties are not adversely impact by associated construction activities.

The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC8, H5 and EN16.

Transport

Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, each dwelling would require 1.5 car parking spaces. The development proposes that each dwelling would only be provided with 1 parking space. However, given the existing dwelling does not have any formal off street

parking the proposed shortfall in parking space would be no different than that of the existing dwelling. In addition to this area is served by a frequent bus service into the town centre and therefore 1 parking space per dwelling is considered acceptable in this instance. The proposed parking spaces are of acceptable sizes and would be served by 2 new dropped kerb access points for which plans have been submitted demonstrating provision of suitable visibility splays for these accesses.

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. Policy TR5 requires that for each new dwelling with dedicated off-street parking an electric vehicle charging point is provided and the position of such points is indicated on the proposed plans. A condition is recommended to require submission, approval and provision of electric vehicle charging points for each of the dwellings prior their first occupation.

Suitable cycle storage is shown to the rear of the site, provision of which would be secured by way of conditions. There is considered to be suitable scope within both of the proposed plots to accommodate necessary bin storage.

A condition is recommended to require submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of development to ensure the construction works would not adversely impact on the surrounding highway network.

Subject to the measures outlined above the proposed development is considered to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Sustainability

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires that development proposal incorporate sustainable design practices to take account of climate change. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new housing is be built to the higher level of water efficiency standards under Building Regulations and achieves at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rates above the Building Regulations standards.

The proposals include use of permeable paving, landscape planting and electric vehicle charging points and as such are considered demonstrate compliance with Policy CC3. Conditions are recommended to secure submission and approval of design stage evidence that the proposals meet the emissions and water efficiency standards under Policy H5 prior to commencement of development and then further confirmation that the dwelling have been built to the approved standards prior to their first occupation.

Subject to the recommended conditions above it is considered that the proposals would accord with Policies CC3 and H5.

Affordable Housing

Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires that for schemes of 1-4 dwellings a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing

elsewhere within the Borough. The adopted Affordable Housing SPD (2021) sets out that the policy compliant contribution equates to 5% of the GDV of the development. The Applicant submitted relevant valuations of the proposed development during the course of the application whereby the required contribution has been calculated to be £15,000. However, the applicant has since confirmed that they do not wish to enter into a s106 legal agreement for the development and therefore failure to do so and to secure a policy compliant contribution toward provision of affordable housing would be contrary to Policy H3 and would represent a reason for refusal of the planning application.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposals are for new building housing and are therefore liable for CIL based upon a new build floor area of 61m².

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE planning permission for the following reason:

1. 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 Policies H3 and CC9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the adopted Affordable Housing SPD 2021.

Informatives

1. This decision relates to the following plans and documents:
 - Drawing ref. 01 D - Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 8th July 2021
 - Drawing ref. 02 D - Hard - Soft Landscape / Visibility Splay
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 22nd September 2021
2. The local planning authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive by advising of the concerns with proposal and providing for the opportunity for the application to be withdrawn. The applicant chose not to withdraw the application, hence the issuing this refusal notice
3. Without prejudice to any future application or appeal, the applicant is advised that the reason for refusal could be overcome by entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement.
4. The applicant is advised that the refused scheme, had it been able to be approved, would have been a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable development