

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 201170/FUL

Address: 16 Richmond Road, Caversham, Reading

Proposal: Erection of 2 detached dwellings following demolition of existing bungalow

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Target Date: Originally 29/10/2020; Extension of Time Agreed until 30/6/2021

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to an existing bungalow located on the south side of Richmond Road.

Richmond Road and the surrounding area comprises a variety of architectural dwelling styles and ages with both detached and semi-detached two storey dwellings and bungalows.

There are two Lime trees at the front of the site which are subject to TPO 141/05.

Proposal:

This is an application for the erection of 2 detached dwellings following demolition of the existing bungalow.

The materials used in the construction of the building will include:

Plot 1 - Plain clay roof tiles, facing brickwork, painted render and painted timber doors and windows

Plot 2 - Natural slate roof, facing brickwork, painted render, hanging tiles and painted timber doors and windows

Car parking is proposed at the front of the site and soft landscaping is also indicated on the plans.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: Block and Location Plan 3708/200B

Received 17th December 2020

Drawing No: Ground Floor Layout 3708/201D

Received 3rd March 2021

Drawing No: First Floor Layout 3708/202F

Received 13th April 2021

Drawing No: Roof Plan 3708/203E

Received 3rd March 2021

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 3708/204E

Received 13th April 2021

Drawing No: Proposed Street Scene 3708/205C

Received 12th November 2021

Drawing No: Proposed Site Plan 206F

Received 12th February 2021

Drawing No: Existing Elevations 3708/102

Drawing No: Existing Ground Floor Plan 3708/101

Received 19th August 2020

Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Strategy MW.20.0713.AIA Rev D

Received 3rd March 2021

Design and Access Statement

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Rev 00

Topographical Survey

Received 19th August 2020

Relevant Planning History:

880321/FUL Construction of a pitched roof over existing flat roof extension to kitchen. Permitted.

Consultation Responses:

Highways Officer: Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

Tree Officer: Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions.

Ecology: No objection subject to conditions.

Neighbour letters were sent to adjoining properties and 9 neighbour letters of representation (2 from the same property and 5 from the same property) received. The concerns are summarised as follows:

- Existing boundary treatment of 14A and 16 Richmond Road
- Sinkhole/subsidence
- Construction traffic and construction times
- Damage to properties
- Loss of light/sunlight
- Site too small for 2 houses
- Loss of privacy
- Out of character
- Inability to receive sky satellite
- Loss of view

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised of concerns relating to the design, parking provision and impact on trees/soft landscaping. Further to revised plans, no further objection from the Transport or Tree Officers subject to conditions. Revised design considered acceptable.

No formal pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this application.

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.

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. In this case the development plan consists of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

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

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Affordable Housing SPD (October 2020)

Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

DCLG Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard (2015)

Tree Strategy (2020)

Appraisal

Principle of development / land use matters

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.

The Council’s Local Plan 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.

Therefore, while the proposed site is not ‘previously developed land’, the principle of redevelopment is considered acceptable providing the criteria outlined in Policies are met.

The existing bungalow at the site is not considered to be of any particular architectural merit. The building is not listed, within a conservation area or locally listed. Within this context, there is no in-principle objection to the existing building being demolished, subject to the replacement dwelling being appropriate in all other respects (which is detailed further below). As such, there is no in-principle objection to the proposals, subject to all other matters (as discussed below) being satisfactory.

Furthermore, it is considered that the principle of providing Class C3 residential use at the site is acceptable in that this aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1. More specifically, the

proposals would assist the Borough in meeting its annual housing targets. The proposal of 2x4 bed family dwellings, set within the context of the size and nature of the site, is considered acceptable. The density of development is also considered suitable, with the proposal making an efficient use of the space/land available.

Design, Impact on the Character of the Area and Street Scene

Policy CC7: Design requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form include layout, landscape, density and mix, scale - height and massing and architectural detail and materials.

Concern was raised by officers that the plans as originally proposed were not considered to result in a suitable enough transition between the bungalows flanking the site, and that the overall depths of the dwellings at two storey appeared overly excessive as presented by the deep flank elevations and need for double roof pitch at the rear.

Revised plans were received showing lower single storey side elements to each proposed dwelling, hipped main roofs and a reduction of the depth of the dwellings at two storey. This is considered to result in a softer transition from bungalow to two storey dwelling, more space about the dwellings generally and a better built form to plot ratio.

Further to the above, concern has been raised in representation that the proposals for two storey detached dwellings would be cramped and out of keeping with the character of the area. The existing site is wide - uncharacteristically wide in relation to the majority of plots along this part of Richmond Road. Following subdivision of the plot, both resultant plot sizes would largely be in keeping with plot size to other two storey dwellings along this part of Richmond Road. They would be commensurate to the size of the dwellings and no harm is considered to arise as a result of plot size or layout. Furthermore, the proposals would continue the existing road line along this part of Richmond Road and largely reflect the placement of the two storey houses. The siting of the dwellings within the plots, combined with the plots size and single storey elements is considered to suitably accommodate the dwellings without giving a feeling of overdevelopment.

In terms of detailed design, whilst the appearances would differ from that immediately either side, the character of Richmond Road is noticeably varied, including a two storey dwelling opposite the site. In this respect, the siting, appearance, bulk and mass of the dwellings with

a mix of brick and render finish to each dwelling is considered acceptable in the context of the mixed character of surrounding properties.

Whilst the rear elevation is a little contrived in design, the dwellings would be relatively symmetrical in appearance and given its position at the rear of the property would not be readily visible from the public domain.

Overall, it is considered that the proposals have taken enough design cues from the street scene where appropriate, and it is not considered that the design makes the proposals so conspicuous so as to cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposals would not be overly excessive in scale, allowing for soft landscaping, parking spaces and access. Indeed, the proposal is considered to strike an appropriate balance between maximising the potential of the site for residential development whilst not representing an overdevelopment of the site.

To ensure suitable quality of materials it is considered reasonable and appropriate to secure further details (and samples) of the proposed materials by way of a suitable worded pre-commencement condition. With this condition secured and in light of the above, it is considered that the proposals would not adversely harm the character of the surrounding streetscape or give rise to an overly dominant or incongruous addition to the immediate area such to warrant a refusal. In compliance with Policies CC7, H10 and H11.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

Residential amenity is assessed against Policy CC8 which requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety.

The neighbouring properties potentially most affected by the proposal are No's 14a and 18 Richmond Road, located to the north east and south west of the site respectively.

In relation to No.14a, concern has been raised that the proposals would result in a loss of light and privacy to the occupiers of this property. Whilst three rooflights are proposed in the roof of the single storey side element of the proposed dwelling facing this property, given their upward angle, they are not considered to result in any significant material loss of privacy. The

first floor windows would face down the garden of the proposed dwelling and any views across to No.14a would be at an oblique angle and not an unusual relationship. The proposals would not breach a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable room window and indeed the single storey element closest to the common boundary would be hipped away to minimise the impact. Whilst clearly visible to the occupiers of No.14a, the proposals are not considered to result in any significant material loss of light or overbearing impact.

In relation to No.18, and as above, whilst three rooflights are proposed in the roof of the single storey side element of the proposed dwelling facing this property, given their upward angle, they are not considered to result in any significant material loss of privacy. Similarly, the first floor windows would face down the garden of the proposed dwelling and any views across to No.18 would be at an oblique angle and not an unusual relationship.

Concern has been raised that the proposed dwellings would result in a loss of privacy and overbearing impact to the occupiers of No.15 Richmond Road, located on the opposite side of the road. This property is itself a two storey dwelling. Two storey dwellings located on either side of a road are not an uncommon relationship; moreover, they are a usual relationship. Whilst clearly visible, given the distance and relationship, the proposals are not considered to result in any significant material loss light, privacy or overbearing impact.

Concern has been raised that the proposed dwellings would result in a loss of privacy and loss of view to the occupiers of No.4 Haldene Road. Whilst loss of a view itself is not a material planning consideration, given this property is located over 50m away, this is more than sufficient distance to ensure that no loss of privacy or overbearing impacts would arise.

In terms of noise, vibrations, dust and fume considerations, it is considered that both during the construction phase, and subsequently, the proposals will be acceptable subject to a variety of conditions for any permission. A construction method statement will therefore be secured via condition and is required from a highway safety perspective too. As such in overall terms, considering all nearby residential occupiers, no significantly harmful amenity impacts would occur, subject to conditions and in compliance with Policy CC8 in particular.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new building housing is built to high standards. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect future occupiers from the impacts of pollution and Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that

residential developments area provided with adequate private or communal outdoor amenity space.

It is considered that the proposals would provide an overall good standard of accommodation throughout with fairly regular shaped rooms providing suitable outlook, natural lighting and ventilation. Internally, the floor spaces would largely comply with the space standards as set out in Policy H5. Whilst bedroom 4 to each dwelling (as annotated) would just fall below the space standards (approx. 10m² rather than 11.5m²) given these would serve a 4th bedroom, this is not considered unacceptable.

The first floor master bedrooms (as annotated) would each have a window on the flank elevations. Given their positions and the proximity of the proposed dwellings to each other (albeit the windows would be at a slight angle to each other), a condition will be attached to ensure that these windows are obscurely glazed so as not to result in any material loss of privacy (and noting that each master bedroom would still have a large window for light/outlook on the front elevation).

Similarly, several windows are proposed on the ground floor south west flank elevation of Plot 1 and north east elevation of Plot 2. Again, noting that the windows would be at slight angles to each other, and acknowledging the proposed intervening boundary treatment, as above, given their positions, amount and the proximity of the proposed dwellings to each other a condition will be attached to ensure that these windows are obscurely glazed so as not to result in any material loss of privacy. The applicant was given the option to make these high level windows instead; however, opted to keep the windows as proposed and accept the obscured glazing condition.

The proposed garden areas would be commensurate to the size of the dwelling and not out of keeping with the wider area which features gardens of similar size.

The plans also include conveniently located cycle and waste storage facilities. Overall, the proposals are considered to provide suitable accommodation within the context of the constraints of the site.

Therefore, in overall terms and having applied a critical planning balance to the consideration of the scheme as a whole, the proposal as a whole is considered to provide an overall suitable standard of accommodation, in accordance with Policies H5 and H10 in particular.

Transport Issues

Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 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 SPD, each dwelling should be provided with 2 off road parking spaces. The proposal would be provided with two parking spaces at the front, plus the addition of an attached single garage to each dwelling. Further to revised plans, each garage would meet the recommended internal dimensions of 3m x 7m to allow easy access to vehicles and provide storage for bikes. Each plot would be served by the existing accesses (one at each end of the frontage with no new access proposed) which is acceptable.

Further to the above, Policy TR5 includes a requirement for each new house to be provided with an electric charging point. This has been indicated on revised plans which is appropriate.

Cycle storage has been proposed and is located at the rear of the site. Whilst the proposed location is acceptable, detailed plans confirming that the cycle parking provision meets the Council's adopted standards in terms of layout is required. This can be dealt with by way of condition. Refuse collection is also proposed at the rear of the site and is proposed to be kerb side collection (as is for other residents of the road) which is acceptable.

In the circumstances there are no transport objections to the proposed development subject to conditions and informatives in compliance with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Natural Environment

Policy CC7 seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy EN14 requires new development to make provision for tree retention and planting.

As above, there are trees to the front of the site (two Limes) that are subject of TPO 141/05. Concern was originally raised by the Council's Tree Officer that the proposals could result in

harm to tree results. A revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment (and tree protection strategy) was submitted (alongside revised ground floor plan and site plans showing treatment at the front of the site). The Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable and that there is no objection subject to conditions in respect of landscaping and implementation of the Arboricultural Method Statement, in compliance with Policies CC& and EN14.

Ecology

Policy EN12 requires that new development should provide a net gain for biodiversity where possible and should incorporate biodiversity features into proposals where practical.

A bat survey report has been submitted with this application and the Council's Ecologist is satisfied that the report has been undertaken to an appropriate standard, concluding that the risk of roosting bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There is no objection subject to submission of a wildlife friendly landscaping scheme - to include bird and bat boxes on the proposed dwellings - and this can be secured by way of a suitably worded condition in compliance with Policy EN12.

Further to the above, as the vegetation on site is overgrown, it is considered likely to provide potential nesting habitats for birds and as such an informative in relation to the disturbance of wildlife will also be attached to any consent.

Sustainability

No specific information has been submitted in relation to the sustainability or energy credentials of the proposed development.

Notwithstanding the above, Policy H5 'Housing Standards' requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. In light of this conditions are recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

Although secured by planning condition, these new requirements will be administered through the Building Regulations. Confirmation of compliance will need to be submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition.

Affordable Housing

The proposal seeks to create one additional dwelling (one of the two proposed units classed as a replacement dwelling for the existing bungalow) and therefore a contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision is required as part of the application in accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Affordable Housing SPD under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The applicant has agreed to provide a policy compliant contribution towards affordable housing of £53,750 which will be secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement.

CIL

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the appropriate CIL Additional Information Form. An informative would be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect. Based on the information provided, this is estimated to amount to £31,394.00 (496m² of the proposed dwellings - 296m² of the existing building to be demolished x £156.71 per m² (2021 indexation rate).

Other Issues

In relation to planning conditions, in line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended), which came into force on 01/10/18, discussions have been undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement conditions. The applicant has formally agreed to the recommended pre-commencement conditions via return email on 20/04/2021.

Other Matter Raised in Representations

All material considerations addressed in the above report.

Concerns over subsidence would be address under the Building Regulations application.

Access to sky satellite and loss of view are not material planning considerations.

Conclusion

The proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. Ultimately, when applying an overall

critical planning balance of all material considerations, the benefits are considered to outweigh the conflicts. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement.