

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No. 201765FUL

Address: 155-159 Whitley Wood Lane, Reading

Proposal: 4 no semi-detached dwellings (C3) with new access from Salford Close following demolition of existing storage buildings (B8)

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Target Date: Originally 5/3/2021; extension of time agreed until 19th July 2021

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site comprises part of the rear garden of 155 Whitley Wood Lane, a brownfield area with garage buildings where a transport business (use class B8) has been run, and an overgrown fenced off area to the rear of 159 Whitley Wood Lane. The existing B8 use is served by an existing vehicular access between 155 and 159 Whitley Wood Lane.

Proposal:

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of four, four-bed semi-detached dwellings. A new access is proposed from Salford Close, with 2no off-road parking spaces for each dwelling.

Rear amenity space for both 155 and 159 Whitley Wood Lane would be reduced to facilitate rear amenity space for the proposed dwellings.

The proposed materials would comprise multi-red facing brickwork, interlocking concrete roof tiles and upvc doors and windows.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: Existing Site 20/17 E100

Drawing No: Proposed Loft and Roof Plan 20/17 P101

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 20/17 P102

Drawing No: Proposed Section 20/17 P104

Drawing No: 3D Visual 20/17 P105

Received 10th December 2020

Drawing No: Proposed Site Plan Rev 1 20/17 P103

Received 3rd March 2020

Drawing No: Proposed Floor Plans Dwelling 1 and 2 20/17 P100a

Drawing No: Proposed Floor Plans Dwelling 3 and 4 20/17 P100b

Drawing No: Proposed Loft 3 and 4 20/17 P101b

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 3 and 4 20/17 P102b

Received 4th May 2021

Design and Access Statement

Received 10th December 2020

Relevant Planning History:

180858/FUL 4no semi-detached dwellings with new access from Salford Close following demolition of existing storage buildings. Use access from Whitley Wood Lane to provide 2no off-road parking spaces for No.155. Permitted subject to S106 Legal Agreement.

170519/OUT Outline application with all matters reserved for the demolition of existing buildings and construction 4 No. new houses (re-application following refusal ref: 162217). Permitted subject to S106 legal agreement.

162217 An outline application with all matters reserved for the demolition of existing buildings and construction 4 No. new houses. Refused.

Consultation Responses:

Natural Environment: No objection subject to conditions.

Ecology: No objection subject to condition.

Transport: Further to revised/additional information, no objection subject to conditions.

Environmental Protection: No objection subject to conditions.

Neighbouring properties were consulted and site notice was displayed. No neighbour letters of representation received.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH APPLICANT/AGENT

The agent was advised of comments from the Transport Team to satisfy parking and access requirements. Revised plans were received addressing the comments raised.

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 Adaption 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 Housing Standards
- 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 Parking

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Affordable Housing SPD (2013) / Draft Affordable Housing SPD
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Tree Strategy (2021)

Appraisal

The main issues to be considered are:

- Principle of Development
- Design, Impact on Street Scene and Character of the Area
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Amenity of Future Occupiers
- Impact on Natural Environment
- Impact on Parking/Highways
- Sustainability
- Environmental Health Issues
- Affordable Housing
- CIL

The principle of the development

Broadly speaking the proposed scheme is very similar to permission 180858, which was considered appropriate at the time. Although it is acknowledged that the local policy context has changed in the intervening period (with the adoption of the new Local Plan in 2019, replacing the old LDF documents, and the new policies having a greater emphasis on the historic environment and conservation areas), it is considered that the proposed scheme accords in full with the relevant current policies which is detailed further below.

The principle of the development in terms of loss of non-core employment land to housing and development of private residential housing has previously been considered acceptable under applications 180858/FULL, 170519/OUT and application 162217/OUT (which was refused for other planning reasons).

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 4x4 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.

As such, there is no in-principle objection to the proposals, subject to all other matters (as discussed below) being satisfactory.

Design, Impact on Street Scene and Character of the Area

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.

The permitted applications 180858/FUL and 170519/OUT were for 4 new houses in a similar position and layout as that proposed under this current application. Given the siting of the dwellings, the proposals would effectively provide a continuation of the form and layout of this part of Salford Close, by continuing the existing road line and reflecting the placement of the houses. The amenity space for each property would be commensurate to the size of the dwellings and reflective of other garden sizes within the immediate area and it is considered that the plots can suitably accommodate the dwellings without giving a feeling of overdevelopment.

In terms of detailed design, surrounding properties are a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties which vary in size. The appearance, bulk and massing of the dwellings with relatively subordinate front porch features, and brick work to match adjacent properties is considered acceptable in the context of the mixed character of the surrounding area. The ridge height would be comparable with its neighbours and the plot width frontage not too dissimilar to that found in the prevailing character of the surrounding area.

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 Neighbouring 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.

Given the significant distance from the proposed dwellings to the rear gardens and dwellings themselves of No's 155 and 159 Whitley Wood, there would be no material loss of amenity in terms of loss of light or overbearing impact. Similarly, given the back to back distance of over 25m this is considered sufficient so as not to result in any material loss of privacy.

In relation to No.34 Salford Close, to the north west of the site, the proposed dwelling closest to the common boundary would not project past the rear elevation of this property, nor would it breach a 45 degree line to any habitable room window. No first floor windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing this property and this could be conditioned to prevent any material loss of privacy.

Looking towards the properties to the east of the site along Webster Close, the proposals would be close to the rear boundary of No.7. However, there would be a distance of 1m to

the boundary, and approximately 11m to No.7 itself. This is not too dissimilar to the layout/siting approved under application 180858/FUL and 170519/OUT, and, whilst visible, given this and the location to the north west of the site, it is not considered to result in any significant material loss of light or overbearing impact. No first floor windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing this property and this could be conditioned to prevent any material loss of privacy.

In general terms it is noted that the proposed dwelling could be subject to significant further extensions and alterations under subsequent permitted development rights, which could negatively impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers. In order to manage this, it is considered necessary and reasonable to secure a condition to remove permitted development rights under Classes A (alterations), B (roof additions) and E (outbuildings).

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.

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.

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.

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

There are no significant trees or landscape features on the site. However, the site is located in an area identified as having less than 10% tree cover in the recently adopted Tree Strategy and the Council has a commitment to protect and enhance tree cover through new development in these areas. Given the scale of the development, and as per application 180858, it is considered that a substantial scheme of new tree and landscape planting would be appropriate. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of suitably worded conditions.

Similarly, the Council's Ecologist is satisfied 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 Policies CC7, EN12 and EN14.

Impact on Parking/Highways

Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development

The site is located on the C304 within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Existing parking provision for N0.155 and 159 Whitley

Wood Lane would be retained and Salford Road is proposed to be extended. The proposed dwellings would be provided with 2 off road parking spaces each on an area of hardstanding at the front of the property which confirms to the Council's parking standards in terms of number of spaces and sizes. Permeable paving is proposed with linear drain and soakaway which is an appropriate method of drainage for water run-off.

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.

Revised plans were also received indicating the proposed bin collection point 15m from the highway. Whilst this is acceptable, the area illustrated on the plans appears to be on privately owned land and therefore permission will need to be sought from the land owner to use this area for storage; an informative will be attached in this respect.

In accordance with the Council's parking standards and design SPD, secure cycle storage for 2 cycles per dwelling should be provided; this can be in the form of a garden shed for residential houses. The plans illustrate each dwelling will have a garden shed at the rear of the garden accessed via a side entrance and this 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.

Sustainability

Since application 180858 was permitted, the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 has been adopted which places a greater emphasis on sustainability. 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.

Policies CC2 and H5.

Affordable Housing

The proposal seeks to create four additional dwelling 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 £68,000 which will be secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement.

Environmental Health Issues

A variety of conditions are considered to be required in respect of contaminated land. It is not considered that the proposals could be resisted on contaminated grounds alone and thus a condition will secure more details. These conditions are identical to those included on the 2018 planning permission and 2017 outline permission at the site, with no further information offered by the applicant in this submission (with view to reducing the requirements secured by condition). Therefore, similar conditions to those secured in 2018 are considered to be necessary at this time too in accordance with Policy EN16.

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 £71,303.05 (560m² of the proposed dwellings - 105m² of the existing = 455m² additional x £120 per m² x 2021 indexation).

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 09/11/2020.

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.

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, subject to completed S106 Legal Agreement in relation to Affordable Housing, and subject to conditions