

Planning Statement

Garages at No. 72 Wensley Road, Reading RG1 6DN

On behalf of Reading Borough Council



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement provides supporting analysis and commentary for the planning application submitted by HTA Design LLP on behalf of Reading Borough Council for the development of 17 new build single-storey garages and 11 demarcated parking bays at No 72 Wensley Road, Reading.
- 1.2 The description of the planning application is:
- Demolition of 13 garages, removal of 10 parking bays; development of 17 garages and 11 parking bays, and the resurfacing of roadway and footpaths, and landscaping.*
- 1.3 The scheme has been designed by HTA Design LLP.
- 1.4 The submitted application provides 17 garages and 11 parking bays at No 72 Wensley Road, Reading RG1 6DN. This application must be considered in the context of the consented application at Wensley Road (ref.0200122). This consented application, which is Phase 1 of the urban regeneration works on the Estate, provides 46 new affordable homes in the Wensley Road 'loop', adjacent to the residential towers Irving Court, Wensley Court and Riversley Court at Wensley Road.
- 1.5 The provision of new dwellings is in part facilitated by the demolition of 29 garages which are owned by Reading Borough Council and rented to local residents. These garages date to the 1960s, and are smaller than modern sized garages, and a number of garages are in need of significant repair. It is agreed in the Planning Obligations of the consented permission reference 200122 to offer an alternative to each person affected by the loss of a garage. There are 24 garages that need to be replaced, and a total of 25 new garages are being provided.
- 1.6 A total of 17 garages will be provided at No72 Wensley Road, 8 garages will be provided at No51-65 Wensley Road. Together these applications fulfil the planning obligation of the consented application at Wensley Road (ref. 0200122). The parking bays which are provided in this proposal are in addition to the Planning Obligation requirement. In order to minimise disruption to residents renting the garages at the Wensley Road 'loop', the sites for the reprovided garages are within easy access, less than 10 minutes walking distance. Further details on this are set out in Section 3.
- 1.7 In terms of use class, the development is considered to be ancillary to Use Class C3.



- 1.8 The scheme has been subject to a positive Pre-Application discussion with Reading Borough Council Officers which has informed the development of the proposal. This took place in December 2020. Further details of the Pre-Application discussion is set out in Section 3 of this Planning Statement.
- 1.9 Concurrently with the submission of the application, a newsletter providing details of the proposal has been sent to neighbouring residents at the time of submission of the application. Details of the newsletter are included in the DAS.
- 1.10 The key planning considerations relevant to the redevelopment of this site include:
- (i) the acceptability of the provision of garages and parking bays on the site;
 - (ii) accessibility to the site;
 - (iii) the safety and security of the site;
 - (iv) the proposed design and materials
 - (v) the impact on heritage assets;
 - (vi) the impact on the amenity of neighbours;
 - (vii) the proposed natural environment improvements
 - (viii) the sustainability of the proposal.
- 1.11 The planning statement which is divided into the following sections:
- Section 2.0 - Site and Surroundings;
 - Section 3.0 - Proposed Development;
 - Section 4.0 - Planning Policy Considerations;
 - Section 5.0 - Planning Assessment of the Proposal;
 - Section 6.0 - Design and Layout
 - Section 7.0 - Heritage Statement
 - Section 8.0 - Site Assessment
 - Section 9.0 - Summary and Conclusions.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

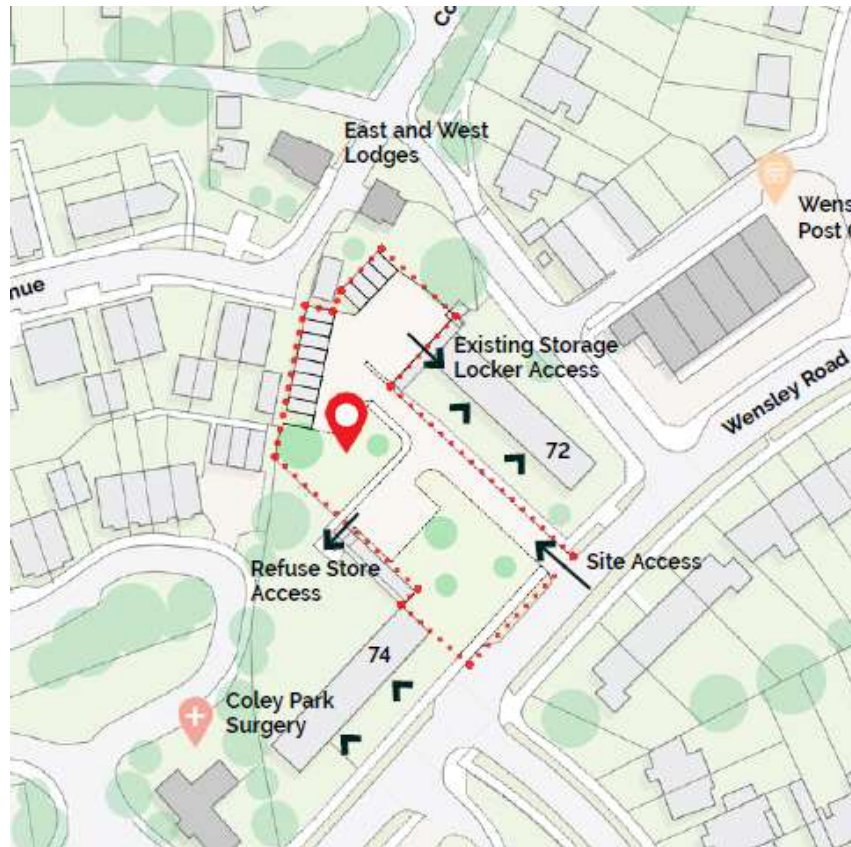
Site and Location

- 2.1 Following an initial assessment of sites within the Coley Park estate undertaken by White Young Green / Tetra Tech, the site at No72 Wensley Road was identified as suitable for the reprovision of the garages due to the location and capacity. The site is owned and managed by Reading Borough Council. There is one occupied garage which is under separate ownership.
- 2.2 The existing site is comprised of a parking court in the centre of the site as well as a parking and garage court to the north of the site, separated by a green lawn area.
- 2.3 The site area is 0.19ha.
- 2.4 Currently located on the site are 10 demarcated parking bays and 13 existing garages. Twelve of the garages are vacant and all are in a poor state.
- 2.5 Located outside the redline boundary for this application are storage sheds used by neighbouring residents. These are accessible to pedestrians from a gate leading from the central parking court, and this access will be maintained under the proposal.

Figure 2.1 Extract from Google Maps: site location



Figure 2.2 Extract from the DAS: site location and access



2.6 The DAS provides details on the site history.

The Surrounding Area

- 2.7 The site is located within an area which is predominately residential, characterised by low rise blocks of apartments of three and four storeys set back from roadways by grassed areas; and terraces, detached and semi-detached houses of two storeys with front gardens.
- 2.8 Within the local area there is also a parade of shops and post office, and other local community facilities and services which include the Coley Park Baptist Church, Berkshire Independent Hospital, and St Mary & All Saints CofE Primary School.
- 2.9 To the west of the proposal site is the application site for new residential development adjacent to the tower blocks at Wensley Road in the Wensley Road 'loop' (reference 200122).

Accessibility

- 2.10 The proposal site itself is accessed from Wensley Road via a roadway which will be retained in the proposal. The access gates to the rear gardens, and access to the privately owned garage will be retained.
- 2.11 The extract from the DAS below shows the location of the site for the Phase 1 application located in the Wensley Road 'loop' in relation to the application site at No72 Wensley Road, and also No51-65 Wensley Road.

Figure 2.2 Proposal site location in relation to Wensley Road application ref. 200122



- 2.12 The site at No 51-65 Wensley Road is under 10 minutes walking time from the towers at Wensley Road. Therefore, the garages are in an easily accessible location for residents at Irving Court, Wensley Court and Riversley Court at Wensley Road and are a suitable alternative to the 29 garages that will be demolished as a part of the proposal to develop 46 new dwellings.



- 2.13 The site is approximately a 30 minute walk from Reading town centre, and it is served by the local bus route 11 Bronze which connects the site to the town centre and Reading train station. Bus services are approximately every 20 minutes and the journey time to the town centre is approximately 15 minutes. The town centre is also accessible by car and bicycle.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 This section provides a description of the proposed development and the consultation that has been undertaken with Reading Borough Council officers.
- 3.2 A detailed description of the design of the proposal and the relationship with the existing surrounding properties is set out in the Design & Access Statement prepared by HTA Architects which accompanies this application.

Wensley Road Phase 1: application ref. 200122 and reprovision of garages

- 3.3 This application proposes the provision of 17 garages and 11 parking bays. The provision of these garages, in conjunction with the new garages provided at No 51 – 65 Wensley Road which are subject to a separate application, will meet the requirement to reprovide the garages that are lost through the regeneration works at Wensley Road (ref. 200122).
- 3.4 Application ref. 200122 was granted planning permission on 16th December 2020. The Unilateral Undertaking states at part (2) (d)

This Unilateral Undertaking given by the Owner to bind the Owner and any person deriving title from it for the purpose of:

(d) to offer each person affected by the loss of a garage or garages within the red line boundary of the site an alternative garage / storage per garage given up within the Coley area;

- 3.5 A total of 29 garages will be demolished; of these 24 garages are in use and the users are affected by the demolition. A total of 25 garages will be reprovided in the applications at No 72 Wensley Road and No 51-65 Wensley Road, and therefore the requirement will be met.
- 3.6 The table below summarises the position in relation to the existing and proposed garages and parking bays. All garages are owned by Reading Borough Council with the exception of one garage at the No72 Wensley Road site.

3.7

Figure 3.1 Proposed garages / parking bays

Wensley Road site adjacent to Irving Court, Wensley Court and Riversley Court (ref. 200122)	
Existing garages	29 (13 to west of Wensley Court 16 in NW Corner of site)
Garages to be lost through demolition	29
Number of occupied garages that must be reprovided	24
No 51-65 Wensley Road	
Existing garages / parking spaces	2 garages directly accessible from site but both are beyond the application boundary, and will not be affected by the proposals. Additionally, informal parking: 4 spaces
Number of occupied garages that must be reprovided	0
Replacement garages	8 garages 4 parking bays
No 72 Wensley Road	
Existing garages / parking spaces	13 garages 10 parking bays
Number of occupied garages that must be reprovided	1 (Number g81 on the far left side of the site under separate ownership)
Replacement garages at No 72 Wensley Road	17 garages 11 parking bays



Summary	
Total number of garages occupied at Wensley Road loop and must be reprovided	24
Total number of occupied garages 51-65 / 72 Wensley Road that must be reprovided	1
Total new garages provided	25 (8 at No51 – 65 Wensley Road 17 at No72 Wensley Road)
Total new parking bays provided	15

Proposed site layout

3.8

The extract below from the DAS shows the proposed site layout.

Figure 3.4 Proposed site layout



Key Features

- ① Proposed Garages X 17
- ② Demarcated Parking Bays x 11
(with permeable paving)
- ③ Electric Vehicle Charging Bays
- ④ New Street Lighting & CCTV
- ⑤ Retained Existing Trees
- ⑥ Proposed Trees & Planting beds
- ⑦ Improved Boundary Wall
(to RBC Properties)
- ⑧ Zone for future PV Installation

Proposed design

3.9 Further details of the proposed design are provided in the Design & Access Statement. A summary is set out here:

- Proposed garages: 17No in 4 blocks comprising 3, units, 3 units, 4 units, and 7 units located to the west of the access way, and along the west / north perimeter of the site;
- Garage design: red brick walls with grey roof tiles and grey doors;
- Proposed parking bays: 11No; two banks of 4 on the eastern perimeter, and 3 parallel bays on the western side of the access road;
- Proposed trees.

3.10 The existing site entrance and roadway into the site from Wensley Road will be retained, as will the gate on the western boundary which provides pedestrian access to the storage sheds for the flats at No 72 Wensley Road and the rear entrance and garden of No 74 Wensley Road. Existing trees will be retained.

3.11 Further details on the layout, design of the garages and the landscape strategy are provided in the Design & Access Statement.

Consultation on Proposals

Pre-application Consultation

3.12 Pre-application consultation has been undertaken with officers at Reading Borough Council who are supportive of the proposal. Pre-Application feedback received 17th December 2020 is summarised below:

- Land use principles: ancillary to Use Class C3 is accepted;
- Provide a clear summary of the number of garages required to replace those lost through the redevelopment of land occupied by garages at Wensley Road adjacent to Irving Court, Wensley Court and Riversley Court (reference 200122);
- Provide tracking details to ensure the parallel parking bays are accessible;
- Consider boundary treatment and access control to secure the parking court; consider providing one entrance into the site; a lighting strategy is recommended; consider physical security of garage doors; consider CCTV;



- Materials: red brick is welcomed as it aligns with the local vernacular;
- Consideration needs to be given to heritage assets in near vicinity;
- Impact on amenity of neighbours is considered unlikely to be significant;
- Mature trees need to be carefully considered; if younger trees are removed they must be replaced; protection of all trees is required and replacement planting details for any trees removed;
- There are no ecology related issues;
- Land contamination survey required due to proposed use ancillary to Use Class C3;
- Sustainability: commentary required to explain how proposal has been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.

The scheme has been presented to Council members including the local Minster ward councillors who support the proposal.

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4.0 Planning Policy Considerations

- 4.1 This section provides a list of the planning policies and guidance documents of relevance to the consideration of the planning applications.

National Planning Policy

- 4.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government on 25 July 2018 and sets out the overarching national policy framework for planning. The NPPF identifies the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development (paragraph 8). It has subsequently been revised in February 2019.
- 4.3 The NPPF also applies a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' (Para 11) whereby Local Planning Authorities should plan positively to meet the development needs of an area and planning decisions must take account of the proposals accordance with the development plan.
- 4.4 The following NPPF principles are considered particularly relevant to the Application Scheme:
- Decision making;
 - Making effective use of land;
 - Achieving well-designed places;
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding;
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 4.5 Paragraph 39 highlights the importance of early engagement to support 'better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community'. Paragraph 128 goes onto emphasise the importance of "early engagement with the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes" to ensure that proposals reconcile differing interests and meet local expectations.
- 4.6 The government's commitment to achieving a well-designed place is set out in section 12. The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve (paragraph 124). This requires the evolution of development proposals to consider quality (paragraph 128). New development should protect against a range of impacts arising from climate change, through suitable adaptation measures, such as increasing green infrastructure, can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (paragraph 150), and avoid development on the most vulnerable locations with the lowest flood risk (paragraph 163).

- 4.7 Well-designed places also require the active management of growth in a local area. Local authorities are encouraged to support proposals, which prioritise the creation of places which are safe, secure and attractive and minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, while also responding to local character and design standards (Paragraph 110). Proposals should only be prevented on highways grounds if unacceptable impacts on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network are considered to be severe.
- 4.8 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) documents were published from March 2014 and used in July 2018 to reflect the revised NPPF (2018), providing contextual support for the Framework. The following NPPG documents are considered relevant to the Application Scheme:
- Climate Change (2014);
 - Community Infrastructure Levy (2018);
 - Consultation and pre-decision matters (2014);
 - Design (2014);
 - Making an application (2014);
 - Planning Obligations (2016).

Local Planning Policy

Reading Borough Council

- 4.9 The Development Plan for Reading Borough Council comprises adopted Local Plan and Proposals Map (November 2019) which covers the period up to 2036.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.10 Supplementary planning documents include: Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011); Planning Obligations under S106 (April 2015), and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July 2011). Other policy documents include the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (January 2015).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 4.11 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a source of funding from developments, whose aim is to assist in supporting local infrastructure delivery in order to ensure future housing and employment growth envisaged in its Local Plan can be accommodated sustainably.



- 4.12 The Reading Borough Council charging schedule was adopted in 2015. The land use of the application is considered to be ancillary to Use Class C3, and therefore the relevant charge is for residential development: £120 / sqm across the Borough.
- 4.13 All relevant CIL forms have been completed and accompany this planning application.



5.0 Planning Assessment of the Proposal

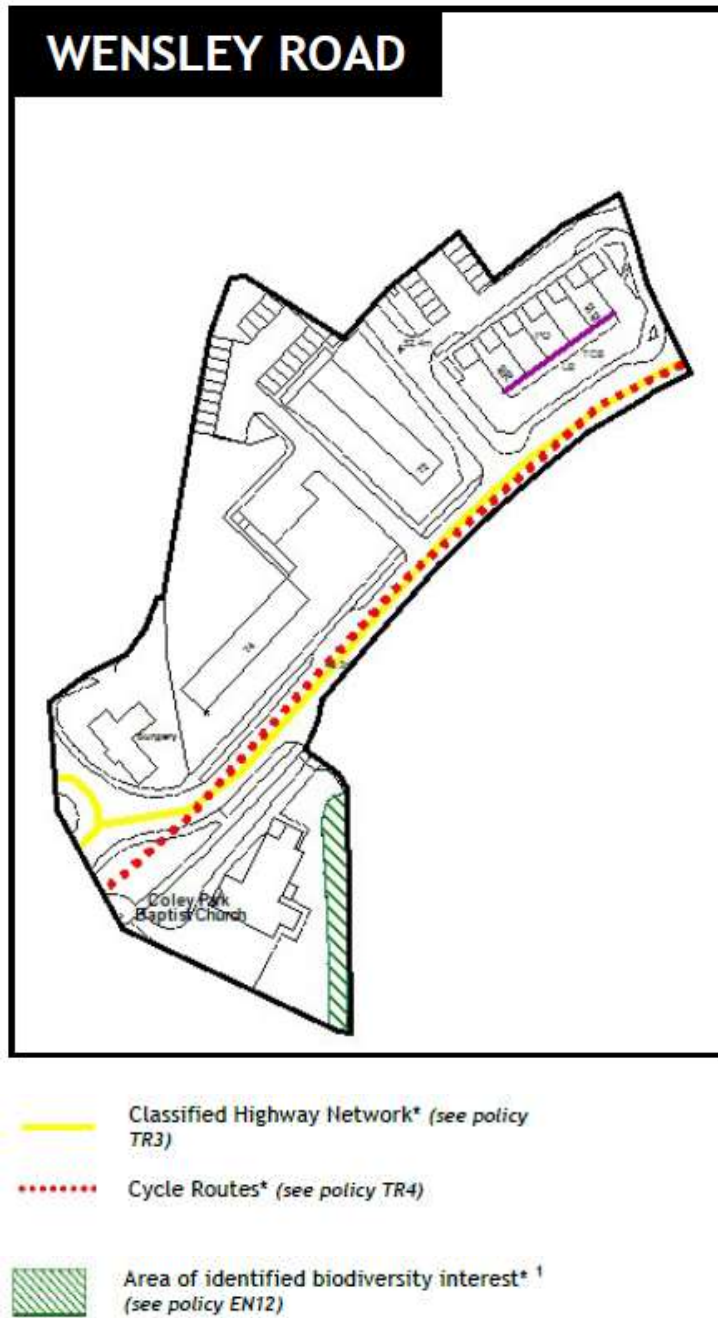
Key Planning Considerations

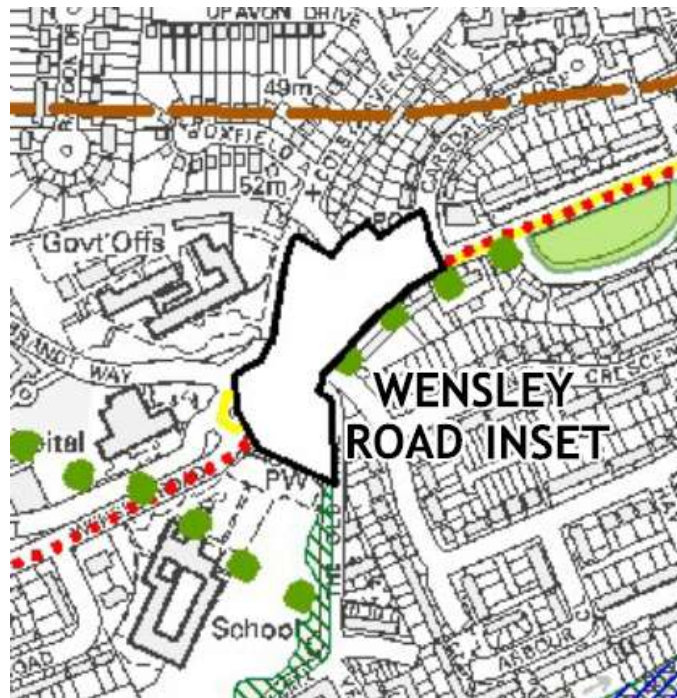
- 5.1 This section and the following section of the Planning Statement assesses the key planning considerations for the proposed development, which are as follows:
- i. the acceptability of the provision of garages and parking bays on the site;
 - ii. accessibility to the site;
 - iii. the safety and security of the site;
 - iv. the proposed design and materials
 - v. the impact on heritage assets;
 - vi. the impact on the amenity of neighbours;
 - vii. the proposed natural environment improvements
 - viii. the sustainability of the proposal.

Planning Designations

- 5.2 The extracts of the Proposals Map below, both the insert for Wensley Road and the wider map, shows that it is located on the Wensley Road green link. There are no other designations. Wensley Road is marked as a part of the classified highways network, and also a designated cycle route. To the south west of the site is an Area of Biodiversity Interest.

Figure 5.1 Extracts from Reading Borough Council Proposals Map





-  Classified Highway Network* (see policy TR3)
-  Cycle Routes* (see policy TR4)
-  Local Green Space and Public Open Space (policy EN7)
-  Area of identified biodiversity interest* ¹ (see policy EN12)
-  Existing or proposed Green Link (policy EN12)
-  Air Quality Management Area* (see policy EN15)



Principle of development

- 5.3 The site is currently developed with garages and parking bays, which will be demolished to enable the proposed development of garages and parking bays. It is proposed that the development is ancillary to Use Class C3.
- 5.4 Twelve of the 13 garages are currently vacant: these garages have been since at least 2013, and some as far back as 2005. Reading Borough Council is seeking to purchase the garage which is not currently under their ownership. The site has previously been identified as suitable for housing. However, the wider urban renewal proposal at Wensley Road for 46 new homes and associated landscaping and open space granted permission in December 2020 (ref. 200122) was considered higher priority, and the development of this site for garages will facilitate this urban renewal project.
- 5.5 The proposed use, and Use Class, is considered to be acceptable due to the current use of the site and the surrounding residential uses.



6.0 Design and Layout Considerations

Design & Layout

- 6.1 The NPPF (2018) is clear in its recognition of the importance of good design, which is considered to be a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 124). The NPPF goes on to state at paragraph 127 that planning policies and decisions set out six criteria which developments should respond to which includes that: developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area for the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history; are safe, inclusive and accessible.
- 6.2 Adopted Local Plan Policy CC7 Design and the Public Realm sets out the criteria against which the borough will assess the quality of design. The policy 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. These include: layout; landscape; scale and architectural details and materials. Consideration is also given to urban design objectives.
- 6.3 The policy states that the developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: respond positively to their local context; create safe and accessible environments, and are visually attractive as a result of high-quality built forms and spaces.
- 6.4 In response to Policy CC7, the design of the proposed garages has been considered in the context of the urban location which is characterised by low to medium residential development: the low rise structures are appropriate in scale and the materials, red brick and grey tiles and doors, are in keeping with the local vernacular.
- 6.5 The retention of existing trees and introduction of new trees will improve biodiversity and screening of the new structures from the surrounding residential properties.
- 6.6 The number and location of garages and parking bays is acceptable for the site layout and access arrangements.



- 6.7 Following consultation with the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police it is proposed to install new street lighting and CCTV to deter anti-social behaviour.

Safeguarding amenity

- 6.8 Adopted Policy CC8 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 11 criteria, which includes outlook and sense of enclosure, levels of daylight / sunlight, visual amenity, and noise and disturbance
- 6.9 It is acknowledged that the proposal will create a change to the built environment. However there are garages already existing on the site and the replacement with new units will not make a change to the sense of enclosure or daylight / sunlight levels as the dimensions of the existing and proposed garage units are comparable. There are no issues relating to privacy and overlooking as the proposed use is garages, which will not be inhabited, and there are no proposed windows in the new units.
- 6.10 The usage of the garages is not anticipated to cause a level of noise and disturbance which is considered to cause an issue. The new lighting will be fitted with a motion sensor to ensure that lights are not left on accidentally.

Access, traffic and highway-related matters

- 6.11 Access into the site at No72 Wensley Road is from Wensley Road via an existing access roadway which will be retained in this application. An existing pedestrian gateway on the western side of the site boundary, which provides access to the storage sheds to the rear of the flatted block at 72 Wensley Road and the flatted block at 74 Wensley Road will be maintained.
- 6.12 Policy TR3: Access, traffic and highway-related matters states that:
- In determining proposals involving new or altered access onto the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.*
- 6.13 Tracking has been undertaken to ensure that the parallel parking bays on the eastern side of the access roadway into the site are accessible. The tracking drawings by White Young Green are included as part of the planning application submission. The drawings indicate that vehicles are



able to access the parallel parking bays, and the access arrangements are considered acceptable by the Highways Officer.

Conclusion

- 6.14 Overall it can be concluded that the proposed development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties adjacent to the site, and therefore the proposal complies with Policy CC8. The proposal is also considered acceptable in relation to Policy TR3.



7.0 Heritage Statement

Introduction

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement assesses the impact of the proposal at No 72 Wensley Road on the heritage significance of the pair of Grade II listed lodges at Coley Park which lie to the north of the site. The Listed Buildings, which are discussed in more detail below, are the East and West gatehouses associated with the former Coley Park estate. The gatehouses lie to the north of the proposal site.

Policy Context

- 7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) provides policy guidance on the conservation of the historic environment.
- 7.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 184 that:
- Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance... These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.*
- 7.4 The NPPF goes on to state at paragraph 189:
- In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*
- 7.5 Reading Borough Council Development Plan Policy EN1 'Protection and enhancement of the historic environment' requires that historic features, including their settings, are protected and where possible enhanced. Historic features are set out, and include Listed Buildings.
- 7.6 The policy states that all proposals are expected to protect and where possible to enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance; harm or loss of a heritage asset would require justification.



- 7.7 In relation to Listed Buildings, applications are required not to have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their setting.
- 7.8 Policy EN6 'New Development in a historic context' requires that heritage assets will inform and shape new development, and that this new development will contribute to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of the new development.

Structure of the Heritage Statement

- 7.9 To comply with these requirements, the structure of this heritage statement is as follows:
- the relevant heritage assets within the vicinity of the site are identified.
 - a brief history of the development of the former Coley Park is set out;
 - an assessment of significance for the heritage asset is set out;
 - the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the identified heritage asset in light of policy
 - a summary of the findings of the assessment and conclusions with regard to heritage impacts are provided.

The Heritage Assets

- 7.10 The identified heritage assets that are of relevance to this application are the Grade II Listed Buildings located on Coley Avenue: East and West Lodges at Coley Park. The buildings were listed in 1978.
- 7.11 The plan below shows the location of the Listed Buildings in relation to the site:

Figure 7.1 East and West Lodges and the site at No71 Wensley Road



7.12 The List Entry description states:

Early C19. Architect 13 A Alexander. 1½ storeys rendered. Matching lodges with hipped slate roofs. Facing fronts with plinths and string over ground floor. Projecting Doric portico (stone) and 6 panel door each. Flanking blind arched recesses. Central small arched window above with radiating glazing, gable over. Moulded wooden cornice continued up gable verges. On north front, string becomes impost mould to an arched glazing bar sash window in arched recess, cornice continued. Further set back extension. The Lodges are linked by cast-iron railings with low arrow head dog-rails. Panelled standards to gates, side gate by West Lodge.

7.13 The former Coley Park estate has a number of Listed Buildings associated with it; however these buildings are separated from the proposal site by extensive mid-late 20th Century development, and together the Listed



Buildings do not form a coherent historic estate or designed landscape. Therefore, they are not considered as heritage assets in relation to this proposal.

- 7.14 The NPPF also identifies that non-designated heritage assets are identified by the Local Authority. The register of unlisted buildings of local architectural and historic interest maintained by Reading Borough Council does not identify any non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposal site.

Former Coley Park Estate

- 7.15 The Coley Park Estate was developed during the 14th and 18th Centuries. The original Coley Park House was demolished and replaced by an early 19th Century house which is a Grade II Listed building and now used as a hospital. The driveway to the house was lined by trees, and the entrance was flanked by two single storey lodges.
- 7.16 During the 19th and early 20th Centuries, the estate was strongly defined and separated from the expansion of Reading by open space. However, the development of housing in the mid to late 20th Century in the grounds to the west of Coley Park House, including the area occupied by the proposal site, has meant that the former estate is incorporated into the urban conurbation of Reading. The buildings of the estate that remain, including the lodges, are now a part of the urban area.

Assessment of Significance

- 7.17 The NPPF describes the significance of a heritage asset as:
- The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting*
- 7.18 Historic England has identified four types of heritage value that a heritage asset may have: aesthetic, communal, historic and evidential value.

Historic value

- 7.19 The Lodges were constructed in the early 19th Century, and frame the entranceway into the north-east of the Coley Park estate. There are few elements of the Coley Park estate that remain, and these Lodge buildings are representative of this historic estate. However due to mid to late 20th



Century developments, the estate is no longer a cohesive whole, and the Lodge buildings have separated from the historic landscape and form part of the wider urban fabric of Reading.

- 7.20 Therefore, the historic interest of the Lodges can be considered to be limited as the linkages to the historic estate are reduced.

Architectural value

- 7.21 The architectural character of the Lodges reflects that of Coley Park House. They were designed in the Neo-Classical style, with simple detailing. The buildings are 1.5 storeys in height, with round headed sash windows set within an arched recess placed centrally on the elevations, and small projecting porches facing each other across the driveway.

The Setting

- 7.22 The setting of the Lodges is characterised by 20th and 21st Century residential development which does not reflect the architectural style, materials or character of the Lodges themselves. The residential developments surrounding the Lodges are a variety of architectural styles, characterised by low rise development of two, three and four storeys.
- 7.23 The layout of the surrounding area has only fragmented elements of the historic layout and landscape of the Coley Park estate. In terms of the historic buildings, as well as the Lodges, Coley Park House and the converted Coley Park Farm complex survive all of which are Grade II Listed. The tree lined avenue which marked the approach to the north-west entrance into the former estate is now part of Coley Avenue and the 20th Century residential development along this route. However, Coley Avenue was extended, thus losing the connection with the historic drive.
- 7.24 While it can be considered that these structures have some group value, there are few linkages between them as the surrounding landscape contains limited historic references.
- 7.25 Therefore, it is considered that the setting does not contribute positively to the significance of the Listed Buildings.

The contribution of the site to the significance of the setting

- 7.26 The proposal site, located within a residential area, is comprised of garages which are in a poor state of repair. These garages, and the site itself, do not



have a historic, functional or aesthetic link to the Listed Buildings, and in this respect cannot be considered to contribute to their significance.

Impact Assessment

- 7.27 The scheme at No 72 Wensley Road does not propose to make any changes to the Listed Buildings. The proposal site is within the setting of the Listed Buildings, and therefore the impact is indirect.
- 7.28 In response to the location of the proposed garages arranged in a block of three at the northern end of the site, consideration has been given to the pitch of the roof. These garages are located within the setting of the Lodges.
- 7.29 The proposed garages replace the existing garages which are in a state of disrepair and visually detract from the setting of the heritage assets. The proposed garages are of good quality, built from redbrick which is in keeping with the local vernacular, and therefore they provide a visual improvement to the setting of the heritage assets.
- 7.30 The existing garages have a mono-pitch roof. However, the design of the proposed garages incorporating a mono-pitch roof would result in the overall height of the garages being greater than the shallow dual pitch roof which is proposed. The shallow dual pitch roof will have less of a visual impact on the setting of the heritage assets than a mono-pitch roof. The dual pitch roof has additional benefits: a mono-pitch flat roof can result in more maintenance and could encourage ASB.
- 7.31 It is considered that there will be no harm caused to the significance of the setting of the heritage asset by the proposed garages, which provide a visual improvement to setting of the heritage assets.

Summary and Conclusions

- 7.32 The site consists of vacant garages, located to the rear of No72 Wensley Road. There are no heritage assets on the site (designated or non-designated). However there are two Grade II listed Lodges in close proximity to the site.
- 7.33 The Heritage Statement assesses the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the listed Lodges and their setting. As there is no historic, functional or aesthetic relationship between the site and the listed heritage assets, the sites does not contribute to their setting or significance.



- 7.34 The proposed development has taken into consideration the nearby heritage assets, and it is concluded that they do not cause harm as defined in policy, and therefore the proposal is acceptable in terms of heritage impacts.



8.0 Site Assessment

Natural Environment Improvements

8.1 Adopted Policy EN12 states at part (b):

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. Development should:

- Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and
- Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.

8.2 Green roofs have been considered but they are not considered suitable in this location due to ASB issues and maintenance concerns.

8.3 The existing trees will be maintained on the site, and it is proposed to include additional new trees.

8.4 Therefore the proposal has introduced measures which meet the requirements of Policy EN12.

8.5 The perimeter fence will include hedgehog friendly gavel boards.

8.6 Therefore the proposal has introduced measures which meet the requirements of Policy EN12.

Trees

8.7 Adopted Policy EN14 require trees, hedges and woodlands to be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance. The policy requires new development to make provision for tree retention and planting, particularly on the street frontage, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. There is also a requirement that the trees are adequately maintained.



- 8.8 A Tree Survey, and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement is currently being undertaken and it will be provided separately.

Electric Vehicle Charging

- 8.9 Adopted Policy TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging states in relation to electric vehicle charging:

Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:....[cont]

Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential development of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.

- 8.10 Consultation with the Highways Officer concludes that due to the number of garage and parking spaces provided, there will be 4 charging points (2 x 2 double socket rapid charge) installed. The access route into and layout of the site will encourage the use of the electric charging points.

Sustainability

- 8.11 Reading Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and are committed to working towards achieving carbon neutral Reading by 2030. Policies in the newly adopted Local Plan reflect this support for sustainable development: Policy CC3 Adaption to Climate Change states that all developments must demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.

- 8.12 In summary, the key elements of the proposed development which address resource efficiency and environmental protection are:

- The site layout will allow existing mature trees within the site to be retained; additional trees and planting will be provided to support biodiversity;
- Permeable paving will be provided from natural and recyclable materials, which will help to mitigate flood risk and support biodiversity;
- To accompany the works within the red line boundary, it also proposed that an array of PV panels will be installed to the south-east facing roof of the RBC owned 72 Wensley Road flat block, maximising the potential of the roof space and orientation. These panels will provide renewable energy to the existing residents



helping to reduce energy bills. A portion of the panels will also contribute to power and lighting within the communal areas;

- Electric car charging points are provided;
- Solar power will be used to charge the proposed street lighting.

8.1 The measures proposed meet the requirements of Policy CC3.



9.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 9.1 Section 1 sets out the key planning considerations relevant to the redevelopment of this site; these are:
- i. the acceptability of the provision of garages and parking bays on the site;
 - ii. accessibility to the site;
 - iii. the safety and security of the site;
 - iv. the proposed design and materials
 - v. the impact on heritage assets;
 - vi. the impact on the amenity of neighbours;
 - vii. the proposed natural environment improvements
 - viii. the sustainability of the proposal.
- 9.2 This application proposes the development of the site with 17 garages and 10 parking bays.
- 9.3 In conjunction with the garages proposed at No51-65 Wensley Road, the garages proposed at No72 Wensley Road are intended, to reprovide those which will be lost through the Phase 1 development at the Wensley Road 'loop' (ref. 200122). A total of 29 garages will be demolished. The Unilateral Undertaking requires that all residents using a garage that will be demolished to be offered a replacement and this will partly be achieved through this application.
- 9.4 The use class of the proposed garages is ancillary to Use Class C3 (residential). This is considered appropriate in relation to the existing use, the surrounding residential, and the intended use by residents. In terms of accessibility, the site is within easy access of the Phase 1 Wensley Road scheme. In terms of the access into the site itself, it is currently accessible to cars, and access arrangements remain unchanged. The scale and materials of the proposed garages is considered appropriate for the location, and they will not have a negative impact on the neighbouring residential properties.
- 9.5 In relation to the Listed Buildings that are located to the north of the proposal site, it is considered that the proposed garages do not cause harm to the significance of the setting of the heritage asset



- 9.6 Consideration has been given to natural environment improvements and the sustainability of the proposal and measures have been introduced which include tree planting and permeable paving are appropriate to the scale of development.
- 9.7 Therefore the planning proposal for 17 new garages and 11 parking bays with associated landscaping meets policy requirements, and fulfils the planning obligations of an application which has been granted permission, and we request that this planning application is granted permission.