

DELEGATED FULL APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: 200658/FUL

Address: 37 South View Avenue

Proposal: Demolition of an existing bungalow and build two semi-detached houses

Case Officer: Mr James Overall

Date received (valid from): 17 February 2020

Target Decision Date: 14th April 2020

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Date Received
Location Plan		20200501_Rev2_01	3 Dec-20
Block Plan		20200501_Rev2_02	3 Dec-20
Site Plan		20200501_Rev2_03	31 Jan-21
Floor Plans	Existing	20200501_Rev2_04	3 Dec-20
Elevations (North & South)	Existing	20200501_Rev2_05	3 Dec-20
Elevations (East & West)	Existing	20200501_Rev2_06	3 Dec-20
Ground Floor Plan	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_07	3 Dec-20
First Floor Plan	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_08	3 Dec-20
Loft Floor Plan	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_09	3 Dec-20
Elevations (South & West)	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_10	3 Dec-20
Elevations (North & East)	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_11	3 Dec-20
Floor Areas (sqm)	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_12	3 Dec-20
Parking Arrangements	Proposed	20200501_Rev2_13	31 Jan-21

PLANNING HISTORY

Reference No.	Description	Outcome
111611	Replacement rear pitch roof	Application Permitted on 2 Feb-12

CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

- 33 South View Avenue
- 35 South View Avenue
- 41 South View Avenue
- 43 South View Avenue
- 17 Fairfax Close
- 19 Fairfax Close
- 21 Fairfax Close

No letters of representation have been received.

Transport

The proposed development consists of the demolition of the existing bungalow and the creation of 2 dwellings.

The site is currently accessed from a single dropped kerb located to the east of the property with the proposal now includes a double width access which will result in the loss of 1 on street parking space. In principle the Highway Authority would have no objection to this subject to an updated drawing illustrating the full width of the proposed dropped crossing, I would however be happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

A total car parking provision of 3 spaces has been provided and given that the surrounding area includes parking restrictions so as to limit any overspill parking this has been deemed acceptable. However, as the proposed dwellings will intensify demand for on street car parking permits there should be an assumption that no permits will be issued to either property.

The submitted drawing indicates that on site turning would occur but given the forecourt depth is only 4.8m and not the required 6m I do not believe the illustrated tracking is achievable. It is however believed that vehicles would reverse into or out of the site, given that this is likely to be the existing situation I am happy for this to be retained given that it would not worsen the existing situation.

Cycle parking should be provided at a ratio of 2 spaces per unit and has been indicated on revised plans. In principle this is deemed acceptable however full details will be required but I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

Refuse storage and collection areas have been illustrated on the submitted plans adjacent to the site access and therefore is deemed acceptable.

In accordance with Policy TR5 of the Local Plan (2019) each property should provide an electric charging point.

The submitted amended plans clarify the provision of an electric charging point for each dwelling and this is deemed acceptable.

There are no transport objections to the proposal subject to conditions.

Trees

The access plans have been amended to provide one joint access, thereby retaining the wall on the frontage and existing vegetation, which is positive.

The plans do not label the vegetation shown as 'existing tree / shrubs / hedge to be retained'. It is suggested that the applicant resubmits the plans to make it clear that the vegetation is existing and to be retained.

As existing vegetation is to be retained, including the tree, and it appears the driveway will be upgraded, details of vegetation protection and a specification/method statement for the driveway will be required and can be secured via condition L7 (arb method statement).

Given that Transport are happy with the parking, there are no objections from Natural Environment subject to conditions L2 (landscaping etc) and L3 (boundary treatment).

Given that the application form states that there are no trees on site and that none would be affected, the former not being true and the latter only now being true (possibly), vegetation on site has not been considered or shown on plans and it is unclear what the plans are for the rear garden at all, hence it is suggested that condition L2 is left as per default, i.e. with the inclusion of soft landscaping, and the applicant can, through discharge of conditions confirm existing, retained and proposed planting at the rear. The remainder of details in L2 will be required.

Ecology

The bat survey has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There are therefore no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Environmental Protection

Construction and demolition phases

We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).

Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.

Subject to conditions, there are no objections.

Environment Agency

Please see standard advice.

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 policies in 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'

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
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE
H2: DENSITY AND MIX
H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
Revised S106 Planning Obligations (2013)
Affordable Housing (2013)
Tree Strategy for Reading (June 2010)
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Assessment

The proposed scheme seeks planning permission for the demolition of a 4-bedroom bungalow and replace with the erection of two new 5-bedroom semi-detached residential houses with associated landscaping and car parking.

The existing property is of traditional brick and block construction with a tiled pitched and gabled roof. The bungalow is a 4-bedroom detached house with a large garden to the rear. The current bungalow is dwarfed by the surrounding properties, which are two storeys in height.

The principle of redeveloping the site is considered acceptable as a two-storey development would likely suit the character of the area better.

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Design, appearance and impact upon the character of the area and the street scene
- b) Impact on neighbouring properties and amenity
- c) Ecology/Trees
- d) Other considerations

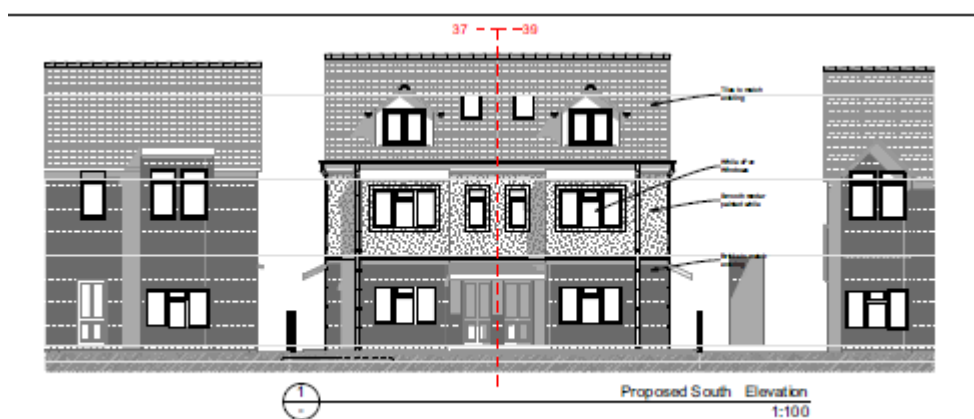
a) Design, appearance and impact upon the Character of the Area and the Street Scene

Policy CC7 states, *“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”*.

Pattern of Development

The majority of the dwellings along South View Avenue, have a reasonable gap between their side elevation and their curtilage boundary, which assists with ensuring that a terracing effect does not occur. The existing bungalow at 37 South View Avenue currently provides a large break in development, as the majority of dwellings along South View Avenue are semi-detached, two storey properties. The existing elevation drawing shows how the existing bungalow appears sat between the adjacent semi-detached houses

The proposed scheme has a footprint wider than that of the existing dwelling, decreasing the gap between No.41 South View Avenue. Whilst this isn't necessarily harmful, given that No.41 is pulled far enough away from the boundary to create a break in development and would be the same distance as existing from No.35 when one then considers the depth and height of the proposed dwellings the result is that it is clear that the site will be overdeveloped. There is insufficient space on either side of the property to fit with the pattern of development in the surrounding locality; which involves driveways extending along the side elevation of dwellings.



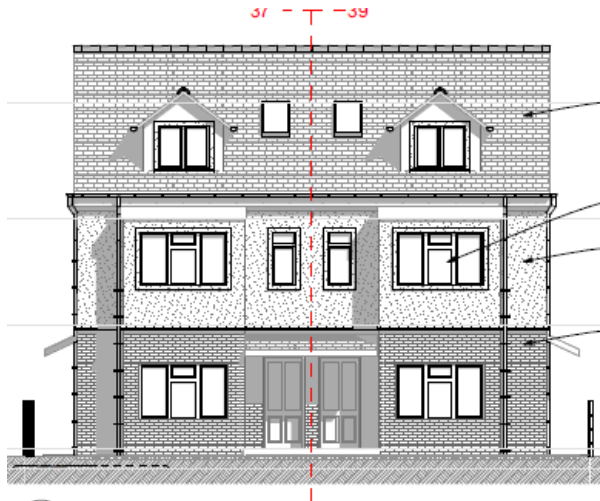
In addition to the above, by squeezing two dwellings on to the narrow plot the rear gardens would be significantly narrower than those within the surrounding area. This would exacerbate the impression of the site being overdeveloped. This is also considered to be detrimental to the pattern of development and is not supported by Policy CC7 of the Local Plan (2019).

Street Scene

The proposed scheme combines to elements of design which can be seen on properties in the surrounding area.

The first of these is the protruding front bay, which can be seen on No's 33 and 35 South View Avenue; and the second of these is the front facing dormers, which can be seen on No's 29 and 31 South View Avenue.





Whilst these design features are considered acceptable when used alone, when combined (like within this application), it creates a very bulky appearance to the front elevation.

At the rear a box style dormer roof is the proposed design. This appears particularly large and top heavy and not of high design quality as aspired to by national and local plan policy.



Further to this, the proposed development is to be situated on a narrower site when compared to the other semi-detached properties in the locality; and the proposed scheme will be slightly taller than the neighbouring properties. The design of the development is therefore considered to not comply with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan (2019).

Given the above, it is considered that the proposed scheme fails to comply with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan (2019), due to overdevelopment of the plot, scale and bulk of the scheme. Whilst it is considered that the principle of redeveloping the existing site is acceptable and the proposed finishes and materials would reflect those used in the area these merits of the scheme are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that the proposed design and massing of the development would have on the area. These faults indicate that the plot is not big enough to allow a pair of dwellings as proposed to be built without significant visual harm to the area and the new houses themselves.

b) Impact on neighbouring properties and amenity

Policy CC8 seeks to ensure that new development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight visual dominance and overbearing among other things.

The existing bungalow extends beyond the rear elevation of the neighbouring properties, but at a single storey level. The proposed dwelling will extend further than the existing dwelling and will be two storeys in height. Whilst it is considered that 41 South View Avenue is a reasonable distance from the curtilage boundary to not be detrimentally impacted outlook will definitely be impacted. No. 35 South View Avenue however will have its outlook harmed to an unacceptable level. The newly proposed dwellings would create a detrimental overbearing presence to the occupants of No.35, which is considered to not comply with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan (2019).

Space Standards

Room sizes should also be in line with the Council's Policy H4 and the Department for Communities and Local Government - Technical housing standards - nationally described space standards:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf

Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m2)

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	

The properties are shown to both have GIAs measuring 217.33 square metres; over three storeys. This fits well within the Nationally Described Space Standards and are therefore considered to not have a detrimental impact upon the future occupants of the dwellings. As such this element of the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan (2019). However, given the excess of space provided above the minimum; it reiterates the point made earlier that the proposed scheme will result in overdevelopment of the site. The proposal could easily be reduced and still comply with the required space standards.

c) Ecology/Trees

Ecology

The submitted Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been reviewed by our Ecology department, and it is confirmed to have been undertaken to an acceptable level. The Ecology department has not raised any concerns with the proposed scheme having received this PEA.

Trees

The Natural Environment department has reviewed the proposed scheme, and are happy with the amended plans; however, they want to see plans which label the existing vegetation and show it to be retained. Realistically, this could be conditioned; and therefore, it is considered that from an arboricultural perspective there are no issues with the proposed development.

d) Other considerations

Transport

The amended parking scheme has overcome the original concerns raised by the Transport department. Whilst it is not believed that the shown tracking diagrams are realistically achievable, it is presumed that vehicles would reverse into or out of the site. Given that this is likely the existing situation, no concerns are raised in this regard. There are no transport concerns with the proposed scheme subject to conditions.

Affordable Housing

Policy H3 states that *“on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough”*.

Valuations of the scheme have been received, and the applicant would be willing to provide a Policy compliant affordable housing contribution.

However, given the design, scale, bulk and neighbouring amenity concerns raised in sections a) and b) of this appraisal; a Section 106 has not been pursued. In absence of a Section 106 legal agreement to secure a Policy compliant affordable housing contribution, this will make up an additional reason for refusal.

Conclusion

Whilst there is no objection to the principle of redeveloping the application site, it is considered that the proposed scheme will result in overdevelopment of the plot; as by way of the design, scale and bulk. In addition to this, the proposed scheme will create an unacceptable outlook for the No.35 South View Avenue. Finally, a Section 106 legal agreement to secure an affordable housing contribution is absent.

As such the proposed development fails to comply with Policies CC7, CC8 and H3 of the Local Plan (2019) and is therefore recommended for refusal.

An informative should be used to advise that the applicant considers seeking pre-application advice.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refuse planning permission