

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date (agreed extension of time): 10/06/20

Application No: 191775/FUL

Address: Land adjacent to 5 Wilson Road, Reading RG 30 2RS

Proposal: Erection of a 2 bedroom house with off road parking

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

Date received (valid from): 4 December 2019 Target Decision date: 10 June 2020

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site is located on the Eastern side of Wilson Road, and is currently clear of structures and covered by hardstanding. The site forms, and historically has been, the side garden associated with no. 5 Wilson Road. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of terraced, and other attached dwellings to the south, and predominantly semi-detached dwellings to the north. This side of Wilson Road includes a number of shallow plots, although this is generally not characteristic of the wider area.

2. Proposal

The proposed development is for the erection of a 2-bedroom dwelling, associated landscaping, and an on-site parking space.

3. Internal Consultations

RBC Transport Development Control

No objections subject to conditions.

Environmental health

No objections subject to conditions.

4. External Consultees

Neighbours

Letters were sent to all adjoining properties. No responses have been received.

5. Relevant Planning History

None applicable to subject land.

5 Wilson Road

191071/HOU - First floor rear extension (retrospective) APPROVED 27/9/2019

6. Plans and Documents

Design and access statement

Drawing No: WN8 - Location and block plans elevations

Drawing No: WN7B - Proposed plans

As received 6 November 2019

CIL forms

Drawing No: WN10 - Proposed street elevation and plan

Drawing No: WN9 - Existing street elevation and plan

As received 22 November 2019

Valuations

As received 4 December 2019

Drawing No: WN7C - Proposed plans

As received 11 March 2020

Drawing No: WN7D - Proposed plans
As received 14 May 2020

Drawing No: WN7E - Proposed plan
Annotated floor plans

Various internal photographs of no.5 Wilson Road
As received 2 June 2020

7. 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.

8. 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) (RBLP).

The 'National Planning Policy framework' ('NPPF') 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given).

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2019;
National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

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
- EN10 Access to Open Space
- 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
- H11 Development of Private Residential Gardens
- TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised parking standards and design (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2013)
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)

10. Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations
- Impact on amenity
- Affordable Housing
- Transport matters
- Environmental health matters
- Sustainability
- CIL

Principle of development

The NPPF (para. 117) states that *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land”*.

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.

Therefore, the principle of the redevelopment of the site for further residential development could be acceptable subject to the above criteria and other material planning considerations.

Design considerations

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) 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. The various components of development form, including: Layout: urban structure and urban grain; landscape; density and mix; Scale: height and massing; and Architectural detail and materials”*.

The Council’s adopted Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

1. *“The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*

- a. *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
 - b. *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
 - c. *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
 - d. *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
 - e. *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
 - f. *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
2. *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
3. *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
4. *The proposal does not lead to tandem development;*
5. *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
6. *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
7. *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*
8. *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and*
9. *The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.”*

The proposed development is for the erection of a two-storey house with central brick gable end walls, and a two-storey side extension set down from the main roof form, with a hipped roof form, proposed to be clad in hung red tiles. The proposed development would be positioned to be in line with the building line along the eastern side of Wilson Road, although with a bay window protruding forward. The proposal would be built to the boundary of no.7 Wilson Road, and would be of a similar depth to no.7.

The proposal would result in the loss of the entire garden of no.5 Wilson Road, and although this is current hardstanding, so in itself its loss would not be detrimental to the appearance of the street, it would have detrimental effects for the following reasons. As the only outdoor space associated with No.5 Wilson Road its complete loss would be contrary to Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space). The site also currently forms a valuable part of the character of this section of Wilson Road, which includes a number of terraced dwellings which, while covering a similar amount of the plots in which they sit, that the spacing between buildings is a particularly characteristic feature. As such, the loss of the garden, and loss of spacing between buildings would be harmful to the amenity of the existing and future residents of no.5, and harmful to the wider streetscene.

The form of the proposed building; long and slim to provide for on-site carparking, with a two-storey side extension of a hipped roof form, and hung tile, would appear

uncharacteristic for the area. The proposal would also appear cramped within the street, and the provision of a part recessed parking space would appear uncharacteristic.

The plot coverage, and unusual width would represent an inappropriate form of building which does not reflect the architectural styling of the surrounding buildings, and wider area.

The inclusion of inappropriate window sizes, and positioning; and uncharacteristic bay window, in addition to the proposed setback two-storey side extension and ill-matching materials, would cumulatively be of a poor quality design. The proposal would also fail to provide any space on-site for the provision of suitable on-site landscaping, or appropriate boundary treatments.

Therefore, the design, is not considered to be a high quality design which would maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. The architectural styling, materials, and form do not reflect that of the existing area, and would not be appropriate. The proposal is considered to be overdevelopment of the plot, including the loss of the entire garden space associated with the original dwelling (no.5 Wilson Road). The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CC7 and H11 of the RBLP, as well as Policy H10 (discussed further below).

Impact on amenity

Policy CC8 of the RBLP 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:*

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety; or*
- *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.”*

The existing dwelling at no.5 Wilson Road includes two side-facing windows. One window is the secondary window for the living room, with the other being the primary window for the bedroom at no.5. The applicant has proposed that the windows become obscure glazed (although it is unclear as to whether they would become non-opening), and propose a roof light above the bedroom to the rear of no.5 (adjacent to the proposed development).

The proposed development would result in a two-storey side extension immediately adjacent to the existing windows (although they are proposed to become obscure glazed). The proposal would be located on the southern side of the building, and would restrict a significant amount of natural light reaching both windows, and the proposed roof light (particularly afternoon light). It is considered that this would harm the living conditions of the existing dwelling, and would not be considered acceptable.

In terms of privacy, the proposal would introduce a small rear garden, side access, and parking immediately adjacent to the side windows of no.5 Wilson Road. Although the applicant owns the adjoining property and has proposed to obscure glaze these windows.

It is considered that the location of these windows (one of which serves a bedroom) in relation to the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the living condition of the existing and future residents of no.5 Wilson Road in terms of noise and disturbance associated with use of the garden of the proposal.

In addition, the proposed obscure glazing of the rear window, would also be likely to be required to be non-opening to ensure that the bedroom window could not open onto the garden of the proposed. Although the obscure glazing, and a non-opening window would mitigate privacy concerns, it is not considered that a bedroom served by only one non-opening window, and a roof light would provide an appropriate level of accommodation for residents, and would remove any opportunity to air out and open windows during hotter months.

As for the proposed 2-bedroom 2-storey dwelling, policy H5 states that all new development in Reading should meet a number of standards. Specifically, the nationally described space standards (including in supporting text of Policy H5) require that a 2-bed 3-person (based on the size of the bedrooms in this case) over two-storeys be a minimum of 70m². The applicant has provided a plan showing the dimensions of rooms, and a partial section of the proposed dwelling. The plans and measurements show that the proposal would be 71.22m². The partial section shows that the bedroom to the rear of the proposal would be provided with sufficient head space (1.8m at the lowest point).

The plans include bicycle storage, and bin storage within the overall internal space dimensions and the section plan also does not include information to show the head height within the first floor bathroom. As such, discounting the approximately 5m² of bicycle and bin storage, which is not considered to be space which should count towards habitable space (as it would be similar to an external storage area), the proposed floor space would not meet the H5 Policy requirements. In addition, the dimensions shown on the supporting documents are not as measured on the plans received. The floor space measured on the plans (by the LPA) as shown in Appendix A below, more accurately show that the internal space for the proposed 2-bed dwelling would be 62.68m² well short of the nationally described space standards, and well short of the 72m² (68m² discounting the bicycle/bin store) as contended by the applicants agent. As such, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with the requirements of policy H5.

In addition, Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that *“Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens ... The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity”*. The supporting text within Policy H10 also states that in the past the Councils standards were that *“useable private outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates (measures externally and including garage space)”*. Although not a strict criteria, it is a useful guide. The applicant has proposed, and asserts that the proposed small garden would provide an appropriate amount of outdoor space for the proposed 2-bed dwelling, and is of a similar size to that of the surrounding dwellings’ rear gardens (focusing on terraces further along Wilson Road). The proposed 18m² garden with a depth of approximately 3m at its deepest point, is well short of previous planning guidance, and is not considered to contribute toward a pleasant or useable garden space for the proposed dwelling. The dwellings along Wilson Road, particularly adjacent to the site are not provided with significant gardens, and as such this garden is similar to that of surrounding space. However, the proposal would not provide sufficient on-site private

amenity space, and surrounding shortfalls should not provide any precedent for poor provision of garden space for new development.

Affordable Housing

The RBLP was adopted in November 2019, which included policy H3 (Affordable Housing) which requires all development (including small sites) to contribute appropriately toward affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. The applicant has agreed to contribute in line with policy (10% of the GDV for 1-4 dwellings) with a sum of £13,084.00 (based on valuations received). Although the sum was agreed, the LPA has found the development not to be acceptable in other regards, and therefore the failure to complete a s106 agreement to secure this would form a reason for refusal, however a s106 or unilateral undertaking could overcome this.

Transport matters

The proposed development includes a shortfall of on-site parking (with the requirement being for 1.5 spaces). Although there is a slight shortfall, the site is located within close proximity to high frequency bus routes and would have good access to alternative means of travel. The on-site parking space, in accordance with policy TR5 would be required to be installed as an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point, which could be secured by condition. Other transport conditions to control construction phase management could be controlled by condition should the scheme have been found acceptable in other regards.

Environmental health matters

Environmental health officers' response was that there were no extraordinary concerns in relation to the proposal, with construction noise being of primary concern, and a condition would have been satisfactory had permission been recommended.

Sustainability

The proposed development would be required to be constructed in accordance with the optional building regulations standards (Council's opt-in) as outlined in the RBLP. A condition would be able to secure this had the scheme been acceptable in other regards.

CIL

The proposal would have been CIL liable if recommended for approval.

11. Conclusion

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh against the granting of consent.

12. Recommendation

REFUSE

13. Appendix A - Scaled and annotated plans

