Mr & Mrs M Rowe, Flint Cottage 8 The Beeches, Elsley Road, Reading RG31 6RQ

Dear Sir / Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Relocation of Boundary Fence and Removal of Shared Access to 8 The Beeches, Reading, RG31 6RQ

Please find attached an application for planning permission for the relocation of the boundary fence and removal of the shared access to 8 The Beeches, Reading, RG31 6RQ

The submitted planning application comprises the following in addition to this covering letter:

- Application Form and Certificate
- Drawing MA132.01.01 Site Location Plan, Plans and Elevations

The planning application fee has been calculated as £206 and has been online via the Planning Portal. This is a resubmission of the previous submission made November 2020.

Site Location, Description and History

The site is detached two storey dwellinghouse set in a group of two other houses all accessed off The Beeches via a shared drive.

The Beeches is a short road, off Elsley Road, serving 5 other dwellings.

The site is not within a Conservation Area.

A 2018 application for a 'Certificate of lawful development application for a new 1m high brick pillar, dropped kerb to provide a new access onto The Beeches and associated driveway with gully for drainage within the site' (Ref: 180690) was granted on 18th May 2018.

This confirms that the new access driveway is lawful.

Aerial view showing new access driveway and gates

However, the original planning permission of the dwellings (Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/A/00/1050421) which was granted in January 2001 contains a planning condition (10) which states that:

> *The areas shown on the submitted drawings for the parking, turning and circulation of vehicles shall be constructed and kept available for such use at all times. No development whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) shall be carried out on such areas or in such a position to restrict access to such facilities*

Proposed Development

Given the above the shared driveway is no longer required as alternative access to provided directly onto The Beeches.

In this respect, the proposed development seeks to remove the existing gates (1.8m high) to the shared area and replace with a 1.8 metre fence.

In addition, the application proposes to relocate the fence to the boundary line of the property to allow additional space within the garden for vehicle turning as well as re-instating planting.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This represents the starting point for assessing the development prospects for a particular site or property.

The Development Plan context in Tilehurst is provided by the Reading Local Plan (2019).

The Proposals Map shows that there are no specific designations which apply to the site.

Relevant Development Plan policies are:

- Policy H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
- Policy H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- Policy TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters

In addition, Material Considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

These are discussed below, where relevant.

Planning Considerations

The following assessment considers the relevant Development Plan policies and material considerations identified in the preceding section and the degree to which the proposed development complies with their provisions or not as the case may be.

The principal considerations in the assessment of the development proposals are considered to be in relation to the principle of the development, its appearance and the impact on highway safety.

Local Plan Policy H9 states that an extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it:

- Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;
- Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line;
- Does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas; and
- Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.

In addition to the above, ancillary accommodation, such as granny annexes, will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately

In this respect the proposal will not result in any detrimental impact on the character of the area as it will provide a high-quality fence in place of an existing gate and additional landscaping can be provided to enhance its appearance further.

The proposed amended boundary will not result in any loss of privacy of neighbours and will enable a biodiversity net gain within the application property by allowing an increase in planting.

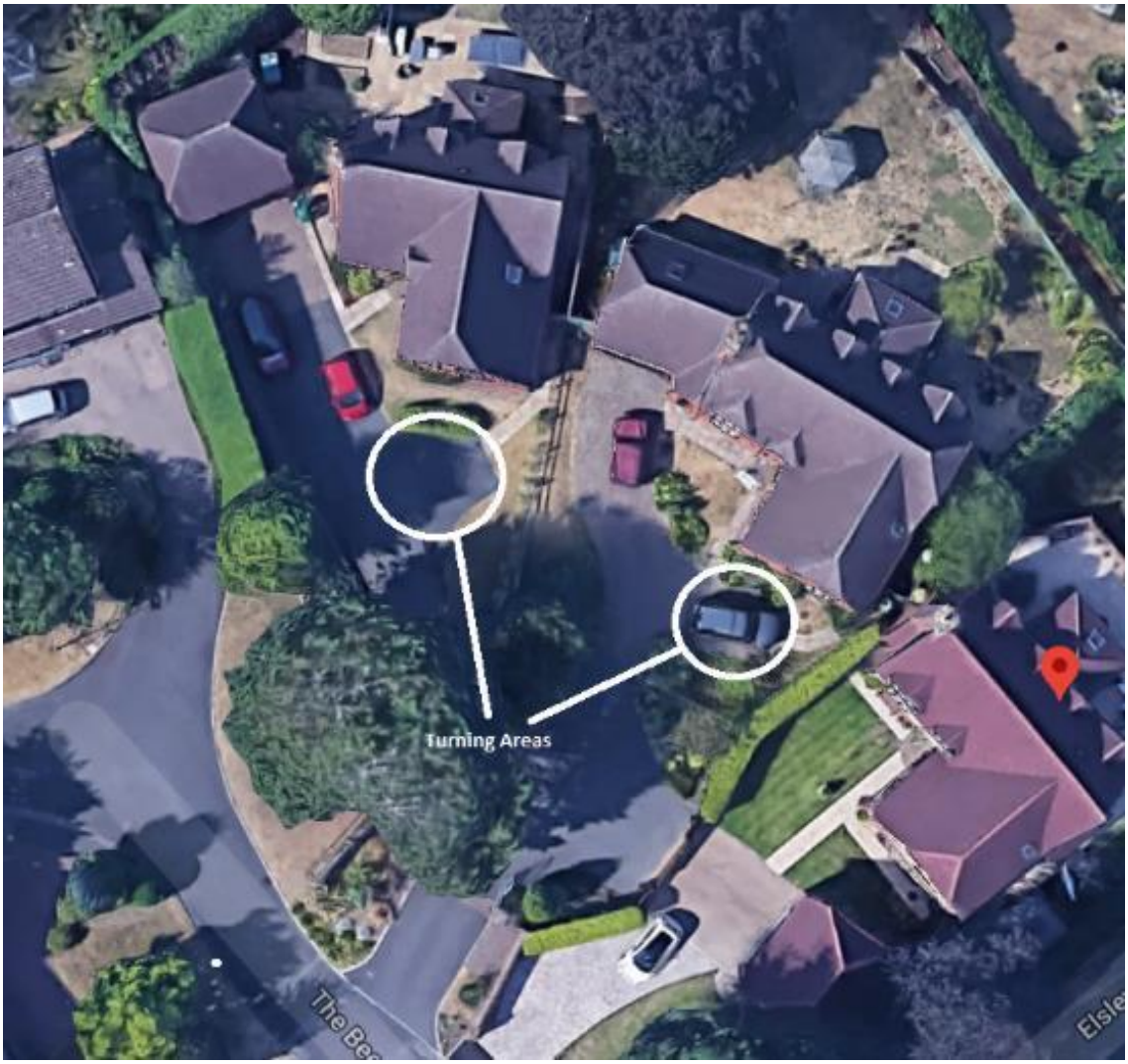
In addition, the proposed development will not result in the loss of any garden land but will increase the size of the garden of the application property by fully enclosing all the land within the curtilage and ownership. Therefore, a small increase in the size of the private garden will occur and this is supported by Policy H10 of the Local Plan.

The House Extensions SPD confirms that, in respect of fences and gates that the Council normally resists proposals that would close off views or change the character of a street unless positive improvement can be demonstrated. The proposed development will not result in any change to the street scene but will enhance the appearance of the shared area which is no longer required or used by the Applicant.

Policy TR3 of the Local Plan states that in determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to 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.

In this respect the proposed development has no impact on the amount of car parking spaces available to the dwellings and the remaining shared driveway serving the neighbouring properties will still be in excess of 6 metres wide and provide sufficient space for turning so that vehicles can enter and exit if forward gear and therefore in accordance with the guidance as set out in the Parking Standard and Design SPD.

Furthermore, the neighbouring properties which will use the shared driveway all have turning areas within their curtilage as shown below:



Therefore, the proposed development will not have any impact on the manoeuvrability of vehicles and will provide additional turning space for the Applicant as No. 8 does not currently have any turning space within its curtilage to exit the site via the new driveway.

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Given the above, it is clear that no severe or cumulative impact on highway safety and therefore planning permission should be granted.

Conclusion

An assessment of the relevant planning policies in the adopted Development Plans confirms that there is no significant conflict with their provisions and that the statutory test imposed by Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is met.

The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Guidance are material considerations in the assessment of the development proposal. An assessment of these material considerations confirms that the proposed development is consistent with national planning policies and provides further support for the application.

The above confirms that the principle of the development is supported, the proposed design is compatible with the local area and the proposed development will not have any impact on the safety of the highway.

In this respect, there are no sustainable reasons to refuse consent.

Appendix A Showing the current estate boundary

Item A The existing fence line is currently set back from the property boundary and is predominately Griselinia Hedging, which has been established for almost 20 years this is interspersed with closed board fencing. The current hedge located either side of the tarmac driveway area to be enclosed, will NOT be removed and is part of the local habitat for a wide variety of nesting birds and insects.

The area to the left and right of the tarmac once enclosed within the curtilage by the new fence, will be further enhanced with additional planting to encourage more biodiversity alongside the vehicle turning head for No8. The existing Thuja specimen, which was planted by the applicant 15 years ago is also being retained.

(Photo of existing boundary wooden fence belonging to no6 & no7 from within the estate)

(Photo of the existing boundary fence of no6 and no 7 outside the estate seen from neighbouring properties 5,4,3, and 2 of the Beeches cul-de sac)

Item B The new wooden fence to be installed to separate No8 is approximately 30 feet in length ie just over 5 typical fence panels in length exc posts the new fence will be the same height as the existing boundary fence which is 1.8meters i.e. a standard fence.

Item B The entire boundary of No 8 will be similar in nature to the existing boundary of No8 which is currently enjoyed by no 6 and 7 and 8, which is a mix of fence, hedge, fence, hedge and wall , in effect creating a mixed border rather than a full-length fence, which may be displeasing. This also ensures future generations/occupiers can manage the boundary both in terms of financial responsibility and physical demands with a mix of fencing and hedging which tends to appeal to more people, rather than a long run of hedge or a long line of boring fencing.

In order to carry out the works a temporary fence will be installed on site with appropriate signage.

If there are any queries or further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact the householder direct.

Yours faithfully

Mr M & Mrs S Rowe

Householder No8