

Planning Statement

Garages at No. 51 - 65 Wensley Road, Reading RG1 6DQ

On behalf of Reading Borough Council



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Authored by: SEL

Checked by: ROO

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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 8 new build single-storey garages and 4 demarcated parking bays on land at No 51 – 65 Wensley Road, Reading.
- 1.2 The description of the planning application is:
- Development of 8 garages and 4 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 8 garages and 4 parking bays at No51-65 Wensley Road, Reading RG1 6DQ. 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 (ref. 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 8 garages will be provided at No 51-65 Wensley Road, and 17 garages will be provided at No 72 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. 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 the amenity of neighbours;
 - (vi) the proposed natural environment improvements
 - (vii) 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 - Site Assessment
 - Section 8.0 - 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 No 51-65 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.
- 2.2 The site is located to the rear of the dwellings at No 51-65 Wensley Road. It is predominantly unpaved, and overgrown in several areas, with a small number of vehicles informally parking in this area.
- 2.3 The site area is 0.085ha.
- 2.4 There is a private garage which is directly accessed from the site on the southern boundary, as well as a rear garden gates, one of which is located in the south-east corner and the other in the south-west corner.
- 2.5 A significant portion of the site to west is extremely overgrown and there is also some fly tipping on the site

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. It is characterised by low rise blocks of apartments of three and four storeys which are set back from roadways by grassed areas; and terraces, detached and semi-detached houses of two storeys with front gardens.

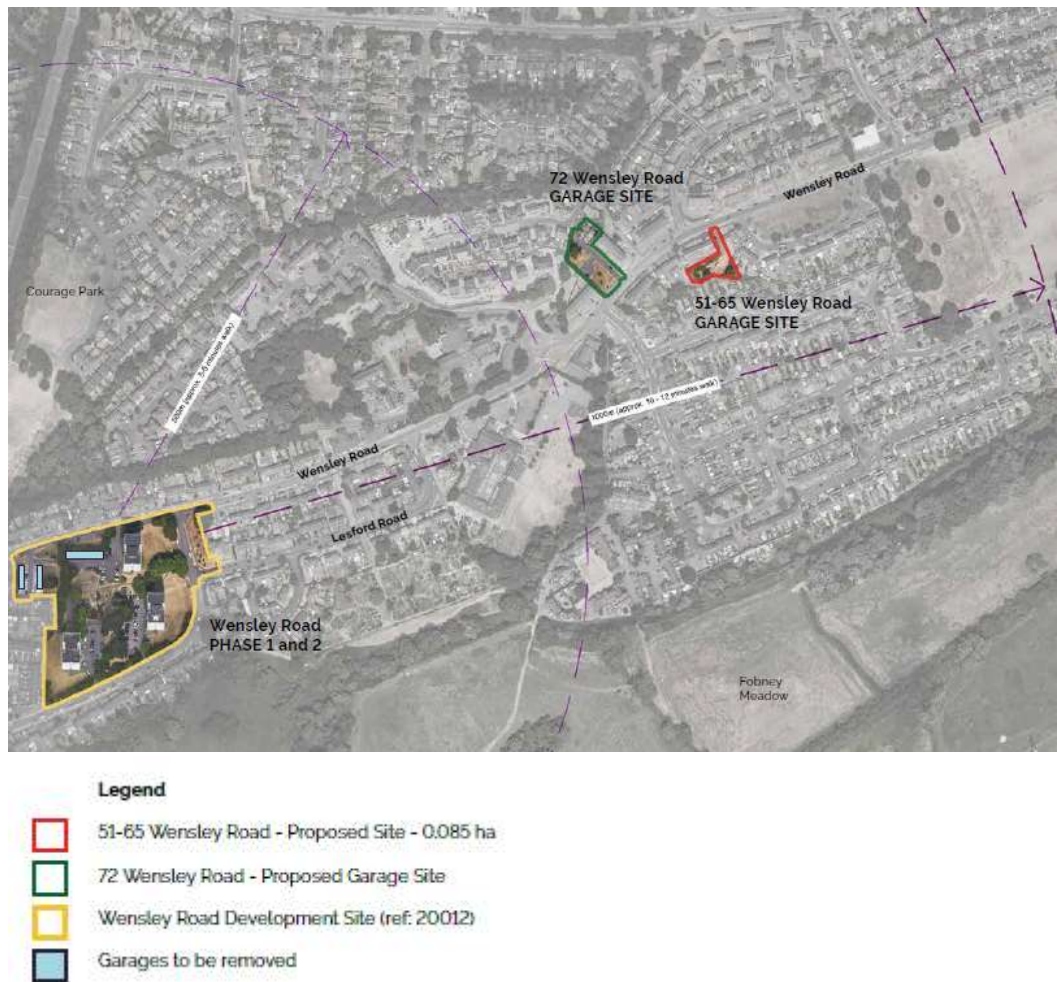
2.8 Within the local area there is a parade of shops and a post office, and other local community facilities and services which include the Coley Park Baptist Church, Berkshire Independent Hospital, and St Mary & All Saints CofE Primary School.

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: No193 Wensley Court, No203 Irving Court and No205 Riversley Court (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 application site at the Phase 1 application located in the Wensley Road 'loop' in relation to the application site at No 72 Wensley Road, and also No 51-65 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 8 garages and 4 parking bays. The provision of these garages, in conjunction with the new garages provided at No72 Wensley Road which are subject to a separate application, will meet the requirement to reprovide the garages that are lost through the urban renewal and residential development 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 of the Unilateral Undertaking 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.

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



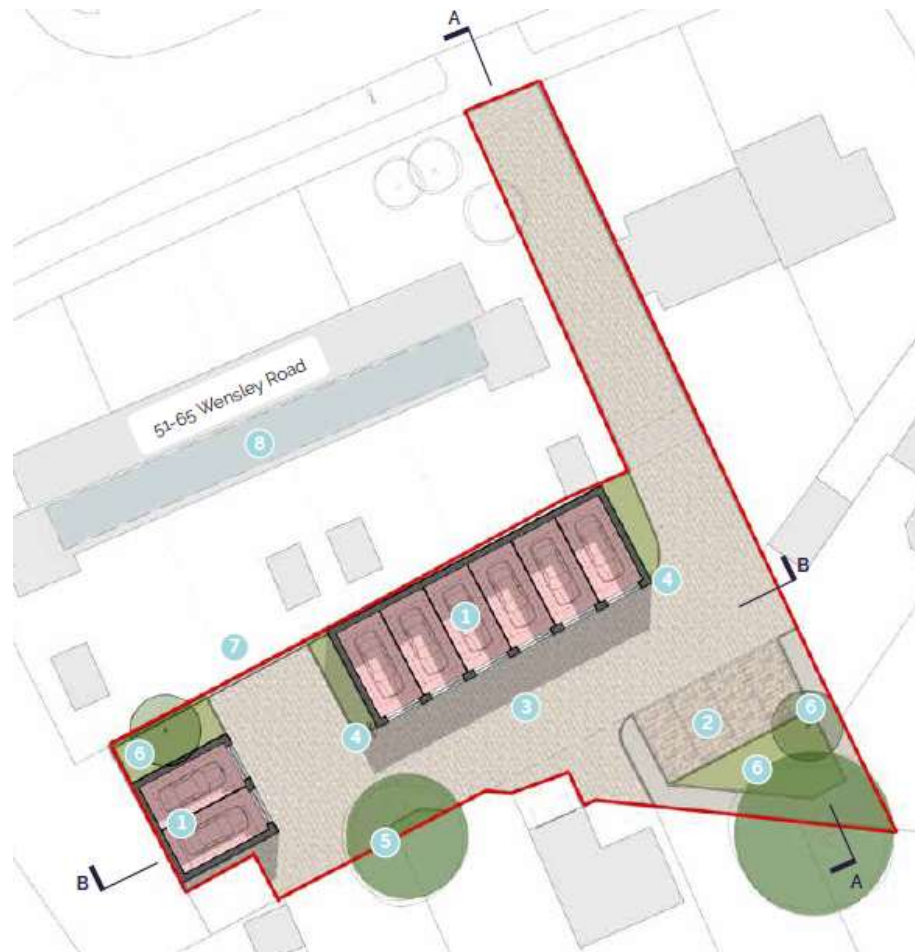
Summary	
Total number of garages occupied at Wensley Road loop and must be reprovided	24
Total number of occupied garages 51-65 / 72 Wensley Road that must be reprovided	1
Total new garages provided	25 (8 at No51 - 65 Wensley Road 17 at No72 Wensley Road)
Total new parking bays provided	15

Proposed site layout

3.7

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

Figure 3.4 Proposed Site Layout



Key Features

- ① Proposed Garages X 8
- ② Demarcated Parking Bays x 4
- ③ Permeable paving
(to carriageway and parking)
- ④ New Street Lighting & CCTV
- ⑤ Retained Existing Trees
- ⑥ Proposed Trees & Planting beds
- ⑦ Improved Boundary Wall
(to RBC Properties)
- ⑧ Zone for PV Installation



Proposed design

- 3.8 A summary of the proposed design is set out here:
- Proposed garages: 8No in 2 blocks comprising 6 units and 2 units located to the south of the access way, along the western and northern perimeter of the site;
 - Garage design: red brick walls with grey roof tiles and grey doors;
 - Proposed parking bays: 4No located to along the southern perimeter
 - Proposed trees and planting beds; existing trees retained;
 - New street lighting and CCTV
 - Permeable paving for carriageway and parking bays.
- 3.9 The existing site entrance and roadway into the site from Wensley Road will be retained, as will the pedestrian access to rear gardens and the privately owned garage. The boundary wall to RBC properties will be improved.
- 3.10 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

- 3.11 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 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) in the Phase 1 scheme;
 - Consider widening the access road if the vehicle flow intensifies and the policy requirement for electric charging points;
 - 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;



- There are no heritage assets in the near vicinity which must be taken into consideration;
- 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 is required to explain how proposal has been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.

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



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. There is a current further consultation on changes, but it does not affect these proposals.
- 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 the amenity of neighbours;
 - vi. the proposed natural environment improvements
 - vii. the sustainability of the proposal.

Planning Designations

- 5.2 The extracts of the Proposals Map below shows that the site 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.

UPAVON DRIVE

49m

52m

Govt. Offs

WENSLEY ROAD INSET

School

WENSLEY ROAD

ASBOURNE

-  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 vacant and is used for informal parking. It is proposed that the development is ancillary to Use Class C3.
- 5.4 The site has previously been identified as suitable for housing. However, the Phase 1 of 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 the garages are single storey and therefore they will not make a change to the sense of enclosure or daylight / sunlight levels. 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.
- 6.11 A ground investigations survey is submitted as part of this application. It is recommended that a watching brief should be undertaken during the construction phase, and if during development any previously undiscovered contamination is found then an inspection should be undertaken.

Access, traffic and highway-related matters

- 6.12 Access into the site at No 51-65 Wensley Road is from Wensley Road via an existing access roadway which will be retained in this application. The access gates into the rear gardens to the south will be maintained. There is a privately owned garage to the east of the roadway and access to this will also be maintained.
- 6.13 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.*



- 6.14 Tracking has been undertaken to ensure that the garages on the western perimeter do not require drivers to reverse out of the site. Tracking drawings by White Young Green are included as part of the submission. The access arrangements are considered acceptable by the Highways Officer.

Conclusion

- 6.15 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 Site Assessment

Natural Environment Improvements

7.1 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.

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

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

7.4 The perimeter fence will include hedgehog friendly gavel boards.

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

Trees

7.6 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.

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



Electric Vehicle Charging

- 7.8 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.

- 7.9 Consultation with the Highways Officer concludes that this proposal will not result in the increase in parking of 10 or more parking spaces, and therefore there is no requirement to provide electric charging points.

Sustainability

- 7.10 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:
- 7.11 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.
- 7.12 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;
 - An array of PV panels will be installed in the south-east facing roof of the 51-55 Wensley Road flatted block. These panels will provide renewable energy to existing residents, and also be used to power the proposed street lighting. Lighting will be installed with a motion sensor to prevent lights being left on accidentally;
 - Solar power will be used to charge the proposed street lighting.
- 7.13 The measures proposed meet the requirements of Policy CC3.



8.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1 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 the amenity of neighbours;
 - vi. the proposed natural environment improvements
 - vii. the sustainability of the proposal.
- 8.2 This application proposes the development of the site with 8 garages and 4 parking bays.
- 8.3 In conjunction with the garages proposed at No72 Wensley Road, the garages proposed at No 51-65 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.
- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 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.
- 8.6 Therefore the planning proposal for 8 new garages and 4 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.