

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A
DETACHED THREE BEDROOM DWELLING WITH
ASSOCIATED PARKING, AMENITY SPACE AND
LANDSCAPING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF
EXISTING GARAGE**

**323 SOUTHCOTE LANE, READING, BERKSHIRE,
RG30 3BJ**

**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS
STATEMENT**

ON BEHALF OF BRADFIELD PROPERTIES LTD

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1. Introduction and Site Description

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of Bradfield Properties Ltd in support of a full planning application for the erection of an additional three bedroom dwelling on land to the side of No.323 Southcote Lane. As existing the land forms part of the property's amenity area and its current use is residential curtilage. No changes are proposed to the existing property other than the demolition of an existing garage at the side.
- 1.2 The application is submitted following the recent withdrawal of application 191922 which was for the erection of 2no. three bedroom dwellings. Reading Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority raised a number of concerns with the application such as it would result in a cramped overdevelopment of the site with the proposed properties appearing overly prominent. The design of the properties was not considered acceptable, and concerns were raised with regard to the amenity space provided.
- 1.3 The new application was responded to these concerns, and this statement will introduce the amended proposals to the Local Planning Authority before analysing the key considerations of the development against relevant planning policy and previous concerns raised. The statement concludes that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.
- 1.4 In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by the relevant application forms, images and the following plans:
 - Existing Topo – Drawing P19-052-01-91-002
 - Location and Block Plan – Drawing P19-052-02-02-001
 - Proposed Site Plan – Drawing P19-052-02-02-004
 - Proposed floor plans – Drawing P19-052-02-03-005
 - Proposed North and East Elevations – Drawing P19-052-02-05-005
 - Proposed South and West Elevations – Drawing P19-052-02-05-006

2. Planning History

- 2.1 Prior to the submission of application 191922 the site was not subject any planning history.
- 2.2 Application 191922 was submitted in December 2019 for '*Erection of 2no. three bedroom dwellings with associated parking, amenity space and landscaping following demolition of existing garage*'. The application proposed two semi-detached dwellings with accommodation proposed over 2.5 storeys and a mansard roof design including zinc cladding.
- 2.3 A number of concerns were raised, initially by the Council's Natural Environment Officer which can be summarised as follows:
- Westernmost dwelling would be positioned forward of prevailing building line and as such the development would appear visually obtrusive from Burghfield Road.
 - Additional parking and turning areas require removal of shrubbery and lawn, and the introduction of large areas of hardstanding. Insufficient space for soft landscaping.
 - Amenity spaces were insufficient in size.
- 2.4 Following these comments, the Planning Officer confirmed their agreement with these comments and that application proposed too much development on the site, resulting in a cramped appearance. The proposed scheme was deemed unacceptable and as such, it was agreed on 2nd April 2020 that the application should be withdrawn.

3. Site Description

- 3.1 The site is a corner plot located adjacent to the junction between Southcote Lane and Burghfield Road which is to the north west of the site. It takes access from Southcote Lane, a classified road subject to a 20mph speed limit. Parking is on a single driveway leading to a single garage at the side of the dwelling, and no on-site turning is available at present.
- 3.2 The site is bordered by No.321 Southcote Road to the east and properties fronting Inkpen Close to the south. The site is located opposite a three storey building forming flats on the northern side of Southcote Lane, and to the west of the site fronting Burghfield Road is four storey flatted accommodation.
- 3.3 The site is located within the settlement boundary and is not subject to any special designation. It is not within a flood zone and is not affected by any tree preservation orders. There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets in close proximity.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The proposed development is for the erection of a detached dwellinghouse on the land to the side of No.323 Southcote Lane, within its existing residential curtilage. The dwelling will include a living room, dining room, kitchen and study at ground floor level together with an integral car port, and three bedrooms, an en suite and a bathroom at first floor level.
- 4.2 The dwelling will have a pitched roof design with a maximum height of 8m, a width of 9m and a depth of 10.6m. Whilst the eaves height to the east will be 5.2m, this will be significantly reduced on the western elevation to 2.5m as the built form to that side will be reduced to a single storey. The north (front) elevation drawing demonstrates the reductions that have been made in comparison to the previous proposal.
- 4.3 Parking is proposed to be located within a car port, with a second space located on the driveway. Parking for the existing dwelling will be located to the side, with two spaces proposed. A shared turning area will also be accommodated within the site. Access will remain in the same location as existing. Outdoor amenity space will be provided to the

rear of both properties, and with planting proposed to the site boundaries and internally between properties.

5. Assessment Against Relevant Planning Policy

5.1 The Development Plan for the Reading Borough Council currently consists of relevant policies within the Reading Borough Local Plan which was adopted in November 2019 and replaced previous development plan documents for the Borough including the Core Strategy and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

5.2 Other local strategies or publications relevant to the development include Affordable Housing SPD, Revised Parking Standards SPD and the Council's CIL Charging Schedule.

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Principle of the Development

5.4 The site is located within the defined settlement boundary and is not subject to any special designation. Additional residential development is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, parking provision or highway safety. These matters are discussed below.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

5.5 Local Plan Policy CC7 states that '*All development must be of a high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.*' The policy lists various components of development form, including layout, landscape, density, scale and materials that will be assessed to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to various urban design objectives.

5.6 The site is located on the corner of Southcote Lane and Burghfield Road and as such any development to the side of the existing building will have an impact on the visual

amenities of Burghfield Road. The previous application proposed two dwellings in this location set only 2m from the side boundary with Burghfield Road and one of the Council's concerns was that the development would appear visually obtrusive when viewed from that location.

- 5.7 The reduction to one dwelling has reduced the visual impact of the development in a number of ways. Firstly, development is set further away from the western boundary of the site with a gap of 3m now proposed. The greater reduction however is from the amendments to the scale of development and overall built form proposed which is illustrated by the north elevation drawing; the red line outline on this drawing shows the difference with the previous proposal. The highest point of the dwelling is now set approximately 9m from the boundary, with the height reducing to 2.5m at the closest point to the boundary. The significant reduction in built form, in combination with setting the dwelling further from the boundary, has significantly reduced its prominence and the resulting impact it will have on the visual amenities of Burghfield Road.
- 5.8 Although greater in overall height than the adjoining dwellings, the height reduces to either size which has reduced the overall scale and bulk. As a corner plot, the dwelling would be prominently sited, and it is common for such buildings to be higher at a road entrance. It is considered that the size and scale of the dwelling will be commensurate with the character of the area in which it is located.
- 5.9 Although not the primary issue, concerns were also raised with regard to the design of the previous proposal which included 2.5 storey dwellings with mansard roofs. As such, a more traditional design approach has been taken with a pitched roof design now proposed which will be in keeping with the design of dwellings fronting Burghfield Road. In terms of materials, a mix of red bricks, render and clay tiles is now proposed to reflect the existing mix of materials in the local area.
- 5.10 With regard to its layout, concerns were raised that the previous application proposed an overdevelopment of the site and would appear cramped. The reduction to one dwelling has resulted in a larger amenity area for the single property, a greater set off to the side, less hardstanding and more space for soft landscaping to the front and

side of the site. As previously, the hedge and trees to the side will remain, softening the development when viewed from Burghfield Road.

- 5.11 The amended scheme proposes significant reductions and enhancements in comparison to the previous proposal, taking into account the Council's concerns. It is considered that the amended scheme will be acceptable in terms of its layout, landscape, density, scale and materials to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the Council's urban design objectives. It will therefore be in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC7.

Residential Amenity

- 5.12 Local Plan Policy CC8 states that '*Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions of new living properties*' and gives a number of considerations for neighbouring amenity. These include privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight, outlook and visual dominance/overbearing.
- 5.13 The dwelling will be set further to the south than the existing dwelling at No.323 and as such will be visible from the rear of that property. However, a 45 degree line drawn from the midpoint of the nearest rear facing windows at No.323 does not intersect the dwelling and as such there will not be an unacceptable loss of light or outlook to the rear facing windows. The primary windows at No.323 face west towards Burghfield Road, and the dwelling has been sited further to the south to avoid any loss of light or outlook to these windows.
- 5.14 The dwelling will be visible from the rear amenity area of No.323 however the dwelling will be set 4.0m from the rear garden which is considered sufficient for there not to be to an unacceptable overbearing or visually dominating effect when viewed from the outdoor amenity area at then rear of the existing dwelling. A side facing bathroom will face towards the garden at No.323 which will be obscure glazed to ensure no unacceptable loss of privacy.
- 5.15 The neighbouring property to the rear on Inkpen Close has the same orientation as No.323 Southcote Lane in that the primary windows face west. There are two windows that face north towards the application site, and a gap of approximately 20m will

remain between these windows and the closest rear facing first floor window on the new dwelling. As such the development will comply with the requirements of Policy CC6 in respect of back-to-back distances.

- 5.16 Both the existing and the proposed dwellings will be provided with private outdoor amenity space to the rear. Local Plan Policy H10 requires dwellings to be provided with functional private outdoor space, and states *'The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to the main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing.'*
- 5.17 The supporting text to the policy states *'In determining the appropriate level of private and communal open space for new development, the constraints of the site and the extent of deprivation of public open space within the proposed scheme will be taken into consideration'*. The text goes on to state that, in the past, the Council has sought to ensure that outdoor space no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates should be provided.
- 5.18 One of the main concerns with the previous application was that the level of amenity space for the two dwellings proposed was insufficient. As a result of the reduction to one dwelling, the amenity space on the additional plot will be associated with one dwelling only. This has increased the amenity space for the proposed dwelling to 110m². An area of 74m² is to be provided for the existing dwelling, which is larger than previously proposed, and in any event the size of this area was not raised as a concern.
- 5.19 As set out on the plans, the gross internal floorspace of the new dwelling is 113m² - this does not include the car port as it is not a habitable area. Whilst the area of the amenity space will be slightly below this at 110m², the area proposed is considered sufficient in size for the new dwelling and has therefore responded to the concerns previously raised by the Council. The amenity space will be commensurate with that provided for dwellings in the local area and ensures that the setting of the dwelling does not appear cramped.

- 5.20 As such, the development will not result in a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties and will provide acceptable living conditions for occupants of the new dwelling. The development will therefore be in accordance with Local Plan Policies CC8 and H10.

Parking and Highway Safety

- 5.21 Local Plan Policy T3 states that where proposals would result in the generation of additional trips onto the highway network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Development will only be permitted where the development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the highway network and the proposals will not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cycles. The policy also states that for proposals involving a material increase in the use of an existing site access directly onto the classified highway network *'will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.'*
- 5.22 The additional dwelling will utilise an existing access onto the classified highway network, however it is not considered that a small increase in the use of this access by two additional cars will result in any material impact that will harm highway safety. All the properties on the southern side of Southcote Lane are required to cross a footway/cycleway to access the highway network however visibility in both directions is adequate as existing and will be improved by the removal of some of the existing boundary treatment. It is noted that the Council's Highways Officer did not raise any objection to the previous proposal, which will have increased the use of this access further than the development now proposed.
- 5.23 As existing there is no on site turning, and cars have to either reverse in or out of the access which could result conflict with users of both the pedestrian/cycleway and the highway. The proposed scheme will provide space for on-site turning which will ensure that vehicles can both enter and exit the site in a forward gear. As a result the potential for conflict will be significantly reduced in comparison with the existing situation and

as such the development will result in highway safety benefits in comparison to the existing.

- 5.24 The site is in a sustainable location, within walking distance of shops, a primary school, a library, clinic and a pub. An Aldi and a Lidl supermarket are located to the north west on Bath Road, a 0.5k walk away, and Manor Farm Primary School is a 0.25km walk to the south west. The shops and facilities Coronation Square are a 0.65km walk to the east. Furthermore, Southcote Lane is served by a frequent bus service, with a bus stop in very close proximity to the site.
- 5.25 As such it is not likely that the development will result in the encouragement of the use of the highway network for short local trips. It will not compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road, and as such will not be contrary to Policy T3.
- 5.26 Policy TR5 requires development to provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of the location within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. The policy refers to the Council's Parking Standards SPD which includes different standards in four zones according to the accessibility of those zones. The site is located within Zone 3 (Secondary Core Area) which has a '*Variety of land uses, within 400m walk of high frequency bus services.*' Three bedroom houses within this zone are required to provide two parking spaces.
- 5.27 Four parking spaces are proposed on the site, three on the driveways and one within the car port. The car port will have dimensions in excess of that required by the parking standards and the driveway spaces will be of the size required. The parking provision proposed will comply with the requirements of the parking standards. Whilst two spaces in tandem are proposed for both dwellings, these will be allocated to the same plot which was previously considered acceptable. As set out above, on-site turning is provided as part of the parking layout to ensure that vehicles can enter an exit the site in a forward gear.
- 5.28 It is also noted that two cycle spaces need to be provided per plot. Due to the size of the car port there is space for this provision to be accommodated. Both properties will

be provided with separate areas for refuse storage in accordance with Council requirements.

- 5.29 As such, the development will provide acceptable parking provision and will therefore comply with Policy TR5.

Affordable Housing

- 5.30 Local Plan Policy H3 requires sites of 1-4 dwellings to provide a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. As set out in Appendix 4 of the Affordable Housing SPD, this will equate to 5% of the gross development value of the proposed development. The provision of affordable housing will be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.
- 5.31 The requirements of the policy are noted, and a draft Section 106 Agreement will be submitted when appropriate.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.32 The Council adopted a CIL Charging Schedule in January 2015 which includes a charge on additional residential dwellings of £120 per square metre.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The application has been amended in response to the Council's previous concerns. The amount of development proposed has been reduced to one additional dwelling, with resulting amendments proposed to its design and the overall scale of development. It is considered that the amendments made to the development have overcome the Council's concerns regarding the impact on the visual amenities of the area and the size of the amenity areas proposed.
- 6.2 Accordingly, the amount of hardstanding has been reduced with further areas of soft landscaping now proposed which benefits the character of the area. As previously, there will be no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents or highway safety.
- 6.3 The proposed development complies with the relevant Development Plan policy and as such it is respectfully requested that Reading Borough Council *approve* the application, thereby granting planning permission for the proposed development.