**9 Wilwyne Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EP**

**Proposed erection of a new four bedroom detached dwellinghouse**

# Planning Statement

**Author:**

**Dariusz Kusyk BA BEng MSc - 1 Right Plan**

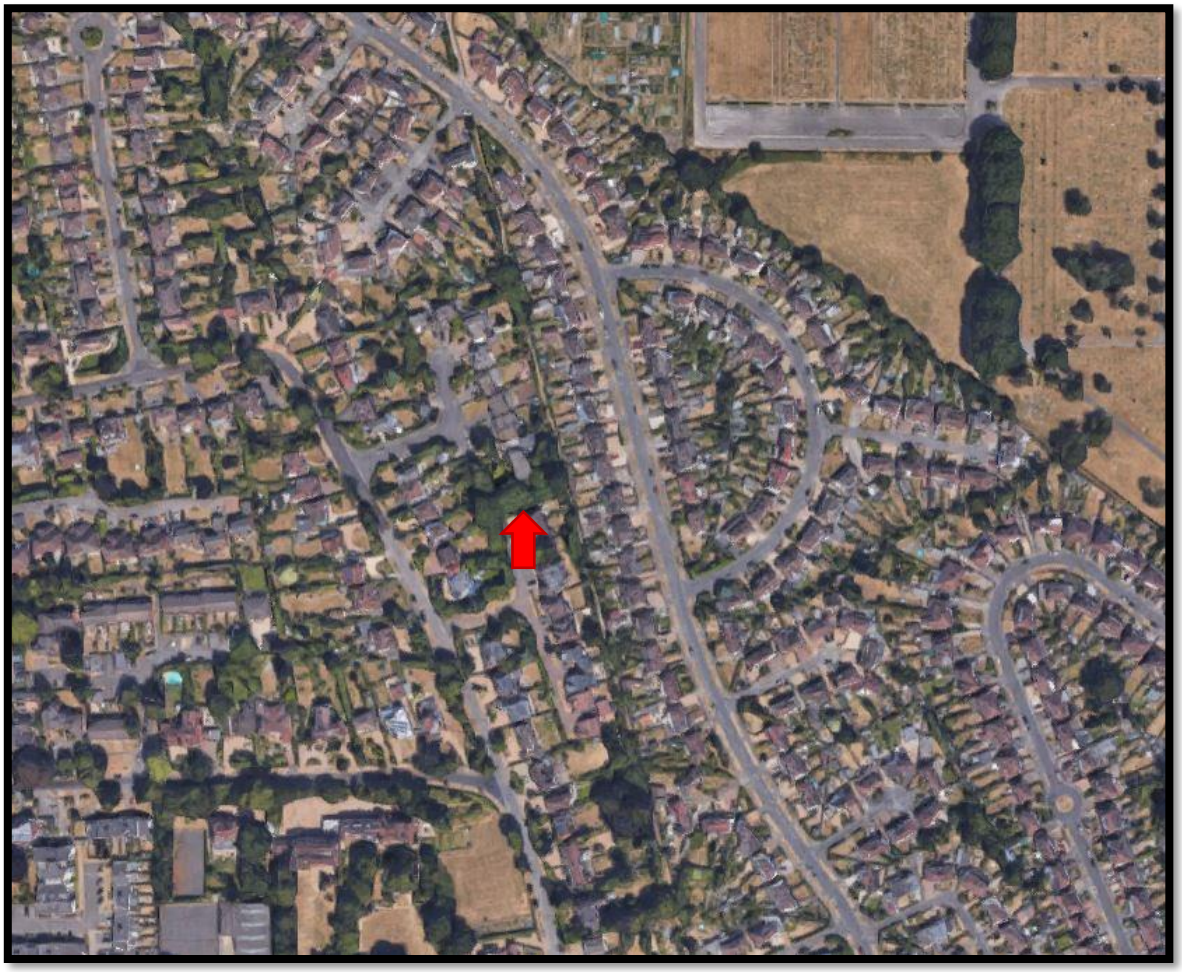
# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Preface

This design statement has been prepared in support of a Full application for the proposed erection of a new detached dwellinghouse at the side garden of 9 Wilwyne Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EP.

The following statement covers the subject and information required for submission as set National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the NPPF. This document will outline the application site history and the design strategy for the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

## 1.2. Site Location



*1. Aerial photograph*

*2. Bird's eye photograph (front of the proposed dwelling)*

*3. Bird's eye photograph (back of the proposed dwelling)*

## 1.3. Site Description

The application site is located at the end of Wilwyne Close cul-de-sac. The proposed dwelling would be sited to the side of the host property, covering part of the spacious side garden of the plot. The application site is surrounded by diverse buildings, which are relatively mixed in terms of their front appearance, design, architectural features or roof forms. Only the group of dwellings to the north of

the application property at Wilwyne Close include dwellings of a fairly similar scale, roof forms and relatively consistent mass of the buildings, however clearly altered through the implemented extensions and alterations of the frontages and elevations. The side garden (where the new dwelling is proposed) is adjacent to a more massive and monolithic residential building at George Close to the south. The adjacent property includes a higher ridge, more bulky visual scale and comprises an attached single storey side garage and additionally a detached garage, sited to the front and breaching the established building line along the close. The application site is heavily screened by the existing mature landscaping and trees, located behind the bend of the road, therefore not considered prominent or exposed, neither from the Wilwyne or George Close perspective.

The site is occupied by a two storey building, which is currently used as a single dwellinghouse – Class C3. The host building comprises deep and spacious private amenity space with dense landscaping, approximately 45.5m deep and 14.0m wide. The entire area of the application property (dwelling + garden) is circa 1270.0m², where the host dwelling includes approximately 211.0m² footprint. The property benefits from off-street parking and given its positioning and surrounding screening, it is not considered to be prominently sited within the streetscene.

The application property is a detached dwelling, sited next to two entirely diverse detached dwellings on both sides. In itself, no. 9 is considered not fully cohesive with the Wilwyne Close, however given its scale, relatively modest roof angles and appearance, it appears more cohesive in relation to properties to the north, rather than bulky and massive dwelling to the south. Below photographs present the application site (November 2019).

FL58 HWX

## 1.4. Surrounding Area Description

The majority of the Wilwyne Close streetscene is characterised by a dominant presence of residential type of development, with some examples of groups of dwellings with repeatable design features, with mostly consistent roofscape, however containing inconsistent frontages arrangement and due to mix of various elevations' materials, significantly diverse appearance. Nevertheless, the directly adjacent area surrounding the application dwelling's garden (where the proposed dwelling would be sited), contains a range of different forms and sizes. All adjacent buildings, within the closest proximity of the site, are presented on the below photographs included in this paragraph.

Within the closest proximity from the application property, there is a strong division in between character of the buildings on each side of the site. Consistent, mild angles of the dwellings with front balconies and single garages built within frontages are linked with mix of different materials, what is characteristic for Wilwyne Close. On the other hand, George Close includes sharp gables, steep slopes and crown roof forms, within relatively high buildings. Every building also contains gable dormer windows, overlooking front driveways. Residential buildings within the George Close streetscene appear significantly more massive and bulky, due to shorter separation distances from the edge of the carriageway and because of more sizable footprints with higher ridge and eaves level.

A significant density and variety of existing landscaping along the footpath running along the rear boundaries of the properties has been presented on the below photographs.

# 2. Planning Policy

## 2.1. NPPF

***Achieving Sustainable Development***

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF (July 2019) emphasises that "*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*" and expands that in the paragraph 8, that it "*has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive:*

- *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;*
- *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".*

Furthermore, a decision-making in favour of sustainable development is strengthened and its significant weight is confirmed in paragraph 38, which states that *"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".*

***Residential redevelopment location and appropriate density***

Paragraph 68 of the NPPF encourages to prioritise small development sites with regards to housing land provision and it emphasises that *"Small and medium sized sites can make an important*

*contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:*

- *identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare;*
- *support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes".*

Furthermore, an effective use of land is significantly highlighted in paragraph 71, which says that development suitable for first time buyers or entry-level sites should "*be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards*", whereas paragraph 117 and encourages Local Planning Authorities to "*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*" and "*makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land*". Additionally, paragraph 118 says that decisions should "*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops".*

Paragraph 122 in the 'Achieving appropriate densities' part of NPPF, emphasizes that "*Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:*

a. *the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
b. *local market conditions and viability;*
c. *the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
d. *the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
e. *the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places."*

***Housing Quality and Design***

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that the *"creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve"* and that *"good design is a key aspect*

*of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".*

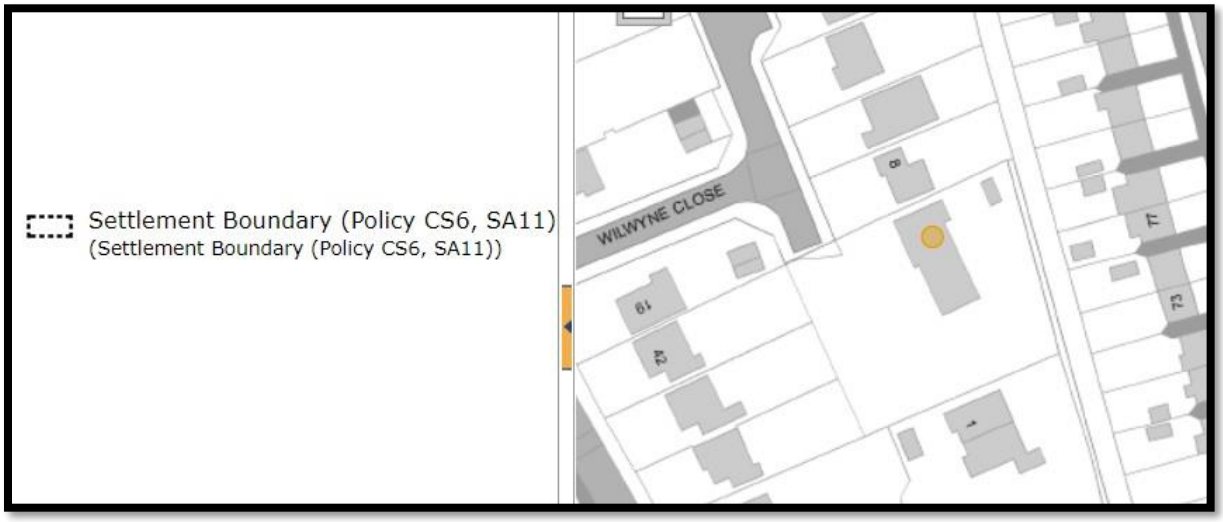
Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 126 emphasizes an important role of the design codes and guides, which should "*provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design"* and that *"their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified*".

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF comprises a list, in terms of what decisions should ensure with regards to proposed developments, inter alia:

- *"function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over 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, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users46; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience".*

Delivering a decent level of design quality is comprised in paragraph 130 - "*Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents*".

## 2.2. Local Development Framework (November 2019)




*4. Local Plan Policies Map*

***Residential redevelopment location***

The application property is located within the settlement limits of Reading, therefore it is considered to constitute a positive contribution towards target set out in the Local Plan Policy H1, which identified 230 dwellings shortfall.

The proposed dwelling would be accommodated within the settlement boundaries for Reading. Local Plan Policy H16 states that "*There is scope for some of Reading's suburban residential areas to undergo renewal and regeneration that would achieve the following aims:*

- *Improve the local built environment;*
- *Improve and modernise the housing stock; and*
- *Deliver additional homes."*

Policy H16 then continues that *"Where development would fulfil the above aims, it would generally be supported, subject to other policies in this plan and provided that:*

- *Any loss of undeveloped land would be outweighed by a qualitative improvement in open and green space and by the benefits of development to the community as a whole;*
- *Buildings and features that make a positive contribution to the area's character are retained;*
- *There would be adequate community facilities to serve the resulting community; and*
- *There would not be an unacceptable impact on the highway network as a result of loss of parking areas or garages."*

Effectively, due to residential character of the proposed development in the current application, Local Plan confirms a clear assumption in favour of such redevelopment, from private amenity space use, as

described in this statement. Besides major development locations, small-scale housing development has been strengthened in Paragraph 4.4.108 states that *"…there may still be opportunities for smaller scale regeneration, renewal and reconfiguration of some of Reading's suburban areas. The principle of this is generally to be welcomed, and the policy aims to provide support to such proposals where they do not result in unacceptable impacts on the existing area."*.

Local Plan Policy H11 '*Development of private residential gardens*' includes rules which apply for the successful new development in residential private amenity spaces. The most important and relevant (for the purpose of this application) aspects of the proposed residential development quality appraisal are:

1. Positive contribution to the character of the area;
2. Adequate size, dimensions, spacing, setting, landscaping and highways impact;
3. Appropriate access;
4. No tandem development;
5. Minimising of exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
6. Neighbours impact (light, privacy, noise, safety);
7. Family-sized housing;
8. Appropriate impact upon the biodiversity and green network;
9. The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.

***Accessibility***

Number of Local Plan Policies relate to sustainable development, such as CC6 'Accessibility and the intensity of development' part, which emphasises importance of sustainable location of development – *"The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations. Unless it can be demonstrated that the accessibility of a site is to be significantly upgraded, for example, by providing high quality pedestrian routes or providing access to good public transport services, any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility."*.

Policy CC6 explains in paragraph 4.1.25 that *"…primary locations for new development will be those accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of employment, services and facilities, leisure, education and health facilities, or which are accessible by walking to routes/stops of frequent public transport services that provide easy access to the aforementioned uses"*. Paragraphs 4.1.27 continues that good level of accessibility means - *"to be that within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop served by a service*

*with a frequency of better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction within daytime hours (7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.).”*

The general health targets, accompanying appropriately located developments, mentioned in the explanation of this policy include:

- *“increased physical activity;*
- *decreased incidences of cardiovascular disease and obesity;*
- *reduced levels of stress caused by traffic noise and congestion;*
- *fewer cases of lung or heart disease associated with poor air quality;*
- *proximity to healthcare services;*
- *access to open space for recreation”.*

***Design Quality***

Policy CC7 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 above components are linked with the subsequently highlighted urban design objectives, which should be enhanced by the proposals, inter alia:

- *“Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place;*
- *Continuity and enclosure;*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping;*
- *Ease of movement and permeability;*
- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand;*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time;*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs”.*

In addition, CC7 summarizes and encourages to ensure that proposed developments:

- *“Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*

- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.".*

# 3. Appraisal

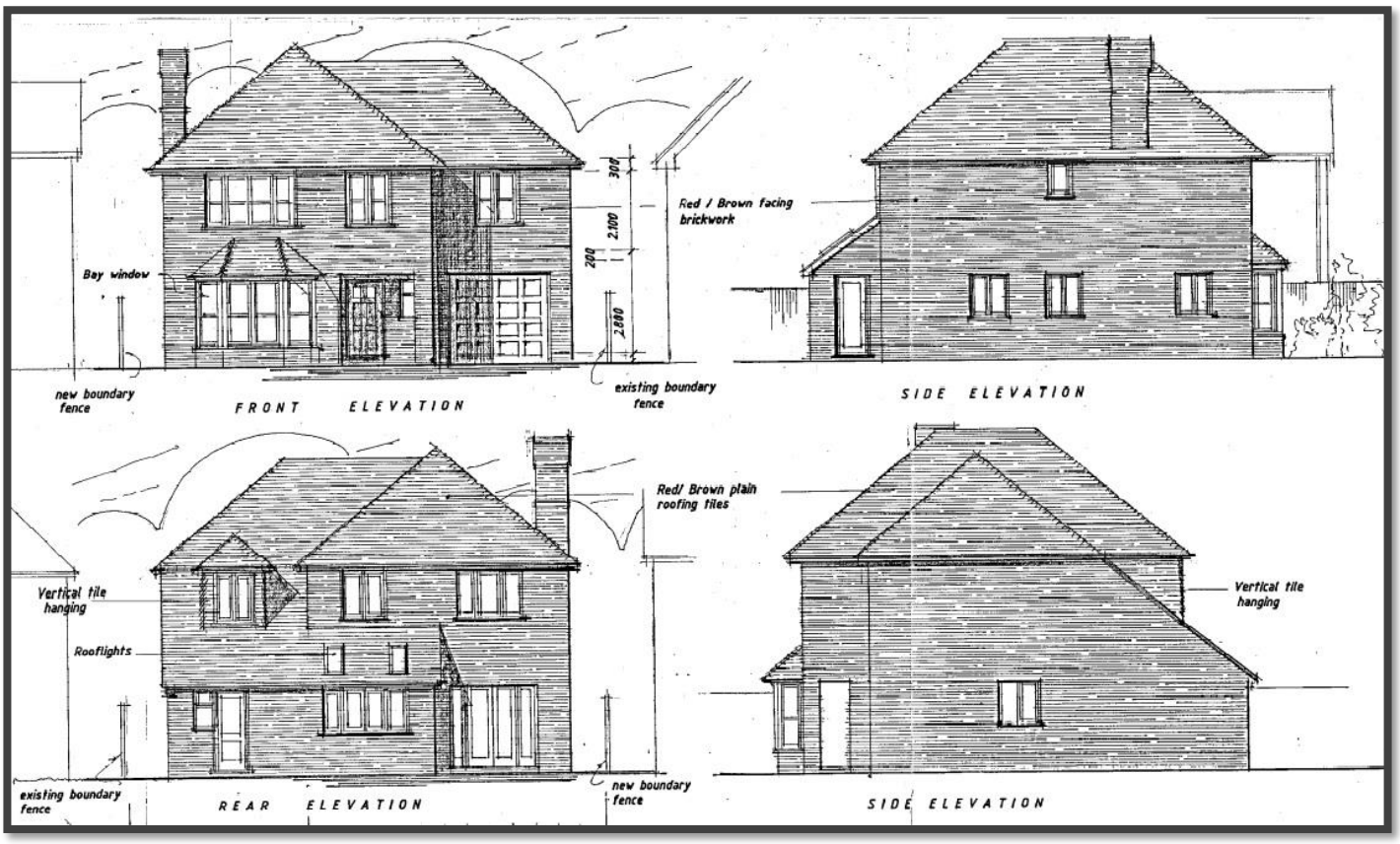
## 3.1. General concept

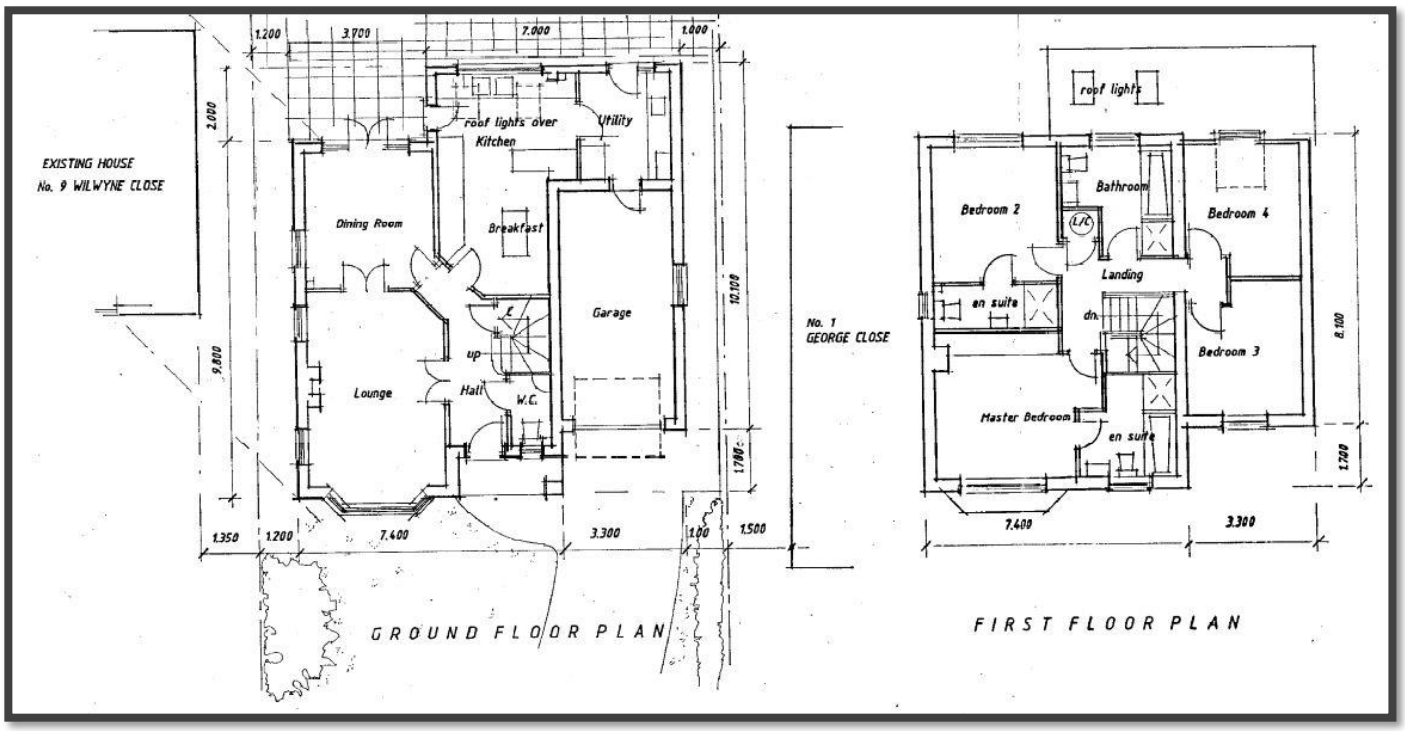
The overall aim of the proposal is to make efficient use of the existing site and its assets, by proposing a new detached, four bedroom dwellinghouse in the garden of this property, through the above proposal. The application property is characterized with a location within Reading settlement boundaries, which is not consistent in terms of the design, where such residential development is acceptable, subject to conditions.

## 3.2. Impact on the Character of the Area

The proposed development would result in a two storey detached dwelling, with an in keeping appearance and with type and colour of used materials, which would positively contribute to both streetscenes along Wilwyne and George Close. The proposed development would provide a sympathetic design, uncontentious pitched roof form with a reasonable scale, which would rather address type of properties to the south. The proposal includes traditional fenestration elements installed within elevations of the building, in order to provide an appropriate and decent quality design and to preserve a typical residential character of the area, similar to the surrounding area. Given the location of the application site in between two culs-de-sac, the proposed scheme was intended to appear neutral in the wider perspective and uncontentious in relation to both adjacent buildings. The proposed red/brown brickwork with traditional windows and French doors would be considered in keeping with the fenestration details of the existing dwellings in the area. The roof form is a more massive element, which in combination with the cat slide feature to the rear and a bedroom dormer, is considered well-balanced and in keeping with the character of the area. Integrated garage in the southern part of the frontage is considered to compliment properties along George Close, which also include such feature in front elevation of all 3x neighbouring residential buildings.

*5. Proposed elevations*




*6. Proposed ground and first floor plan*

The unsympathetic and neglected front landscaping would be removed and replaced, providing a neat arrangement and attractive appearance when viewed from the front driveway perspective. In relation to similar appearance of the adjacent houses, the proposal would appear well-fitted with the residential character of the streetscape.

## 3.3. Impact on neighbours

***Loss of Light and Overbearing***

Due to the proposed development situation, overall scale and form of the enlargement and similar scale of the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overbearing and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to arise. The overshadowing arrangement is considered to be similar as to the rear of adjacent dwellings and no further, detrimental loss of light would arise as a result of the proposed development.

***Loss of Privacy and Overlooking***

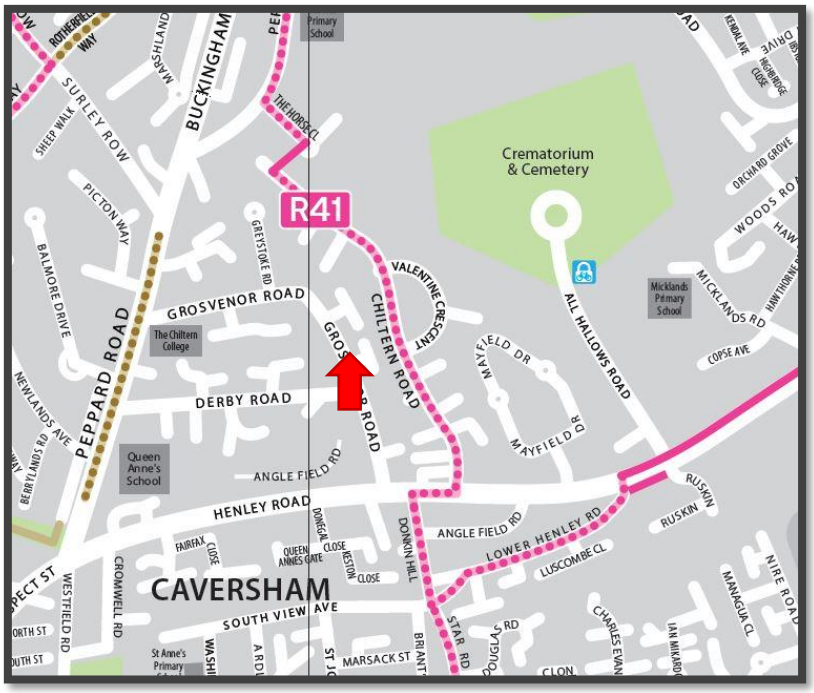
Due to the proposed dwelling's situation, its scale, positioning of the new windows and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overlooking arrangement would be considered to occur. The only upper-level side elevation window would be facing the adjacent dwelling, however it can be made of obscure glass and being non-openable up to 1.7m above the finished floor level, therefore resulting in no unacceptable loss of privacy.

## 3.4. Transport, parking and access

The proposed site is located to the north, around 2.1km from the Reading Town Centre, however approximately 1.0km from Caversham Centre. Given close proximity from adjacent bus stops on Henley Road (about 5 min walk), the application property benefits from a broad bus service with frequent links to Reading Centre and towns/villages surrounding Reading.

The application dwelling's close vicinity to Henley Road, which provides vehicle access to the A4155 towards east and links with main road surrounding Reading Town Centre. The broad road networks around the site also provide huge choice and possibilities of cycle routes and walking paths in and around the area, from local amenities on Henley Road or Church Street, which include wider range of services such as grocery shops, churches, temples, pharmacy, cafes, pubs, restaurants, educational facilities, surgeries or nurseries. Range of services located within walking distance from the application site, makes it highly appropriate and sustainable for a residential development, as presented on the below cycle routes map.

Parking plan has been amended and submitted to the LPA on 8th of June 2020.




*7. Cycle routes network*

The proposed dwelling would benefit from an allocated two parking spaces (front driveway), on-street parking on adjacent cul-de-sac. Additionally, the proposal includes lockable bike storage in the back for up to 4x bikes. The application property is benefited from easy cycle access to the town centre and direct access to few main cycle routes.

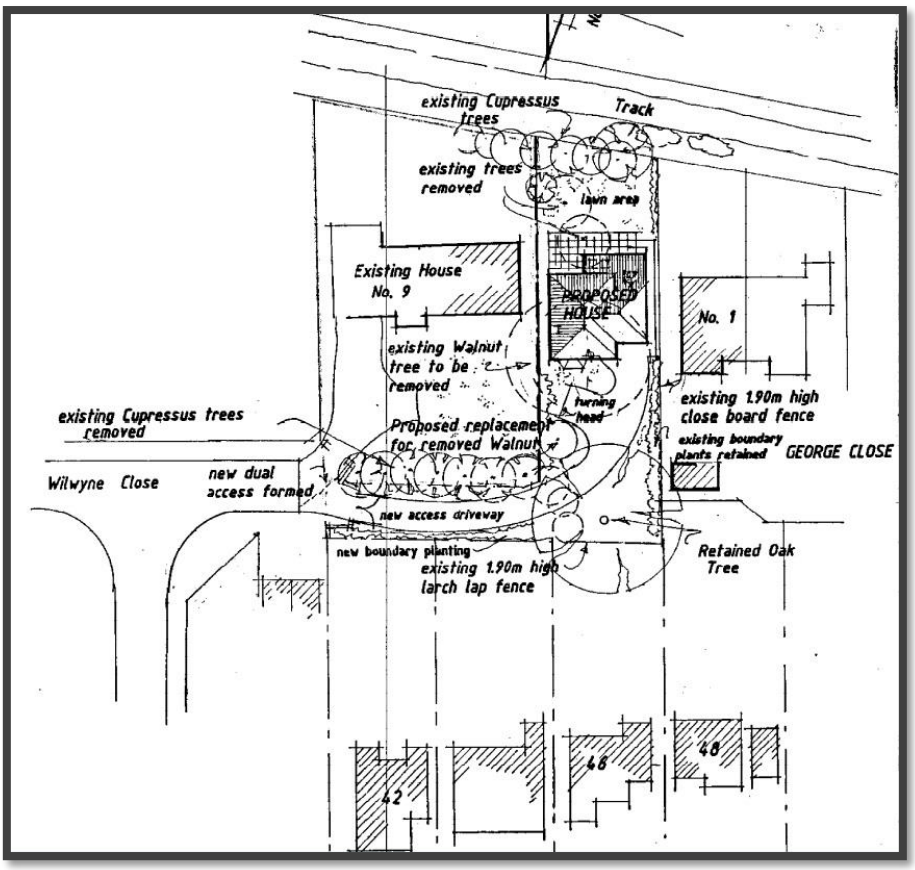
## 3.5. Development of private residential gardens

Policy H11 of The Local Plan confirms that in case of proposal for a new residential development, that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable, however subject to numerous conditions

The proposal would comply in terms of housing mix guidance and requirements, due to provision of a family suitable residential unit, which would positively contribute to the Mixed Housing Council's Policy H2 and would stand in compliance with the NPPF. Furthermore, the application dwelling's location is considered suitable to provide more affordable family units, which would be well-fitted within the surrounding area's character. It is therefore considered that, as a result of the proposed development, new dwelling in the back garden of application property no. 9 Wilwyne Close in Reading, would stand in accordance with the Reading Local Plan Policy H11.

It is considered that the proposed scale and design of the new house would comply with bullet point 1) of the H11 Policy, which emphasizes that a positive contribution should be provided in terms of:

- *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
- *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;*
- *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
- *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
- *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
- *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*




8. *Proposed site plan.*

The above picture in para 3.2 presents the proposed dwelling's elevations, which are considered to positively answer to the above requirements in terms of the used materials, architectural features and fenestration details. Furthermore, another figure above, which shows the site plan, is considered to sufficiently clarify the matters of sufficient amenity space, appropriate spacing in between surrounding buildings and reasonable separation distances from the existing dwellings. It is noticeable that the

proposed dwelling would be a transition between the lower host building and higher building no. 1 George Close to the south, therefore the proposed design, through slightly lowered ridge level would positively contribute to the surrounding area character and would appear well-blended within the neighbourhood.

## 3.6 Internal floorspace

It is considered that the proposed dwelling would comply with the national standards, as per Local Plan Policy H5(a), accordingly with the below table, presenting minimum gross internal floor areas and storage for new residential developments (from Nationally Described Space Standards).

| Number of bedrooms (b) | Number of bed spaces (persons) | 1 storey dwellings | 2 storey dwellings | 3 storey dwellings | Built-in storage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1b | 1p | 39 (37)* | | | 1.0 |
| | 2p | 50 | 58 | | 1.5 |
| 2b | 3p | 61 | 70 | | 2.0 |
| | 4p | 70 | 79 | | |
| 3b | 4p | 74 | 84 | 90 | 2.5 |
| | 5p | 86 | 93 | 99 | |
| | 6p | 95 | 102 | 108 | |
| 4b | 5p | 90 | 97 | 103 | 3.0 |
| | 6p | 99 | 106 | 112 | |
| | 7p | 108 | 115 | 121 | |
| | 8p | 117 | 124 | 130 | |
| 5b | 6p | 103 | 110 | 116 | 3.5 |
| | 7p | 112 | 119 | 125 | |
| | 8p | 121 | 128 | 134 | |
| 6b | 7p | 116 | 123 | 129 | 4.0 |
| | 8p | 125 | 132 | 138 | |

*9. Nationally Described Space Standards.*

## 3.7 Private and outdoor amenity space

It is acknowledged that currently the application property comprises a sufficient private amenity space within its residential curtilage, in order to provide a convenient outdoor space for a new four bedroom dwelling. The proposed dwelling would contain circa 205.0m² private rear garden, whereas the larger, main property would retain around 380.0m² (excluding front garden). It is considered that it would stand in compliance with the Local Plan H10 Policy, which states that there should be an adequate size of any proposed private amenity space. Notwithstanding the above, the application site is located within close proximity of numerous green public spaces, accessible within walking distance (15-20 min). All recreational areas along river Thames are of high quality, large and offering extensive activities (various sports, playgrounds, blue infrastructure, or green open grass areas).

### 3.8 Ecology and Trees impact

The aim of the application is to rearrange the front driveway, effectively by removing dead trees and unattractive landscaping, by providing a new access road with parking space and soft landscaping. This will have an impact upon the TPOs and the ecological aspect, however this is assessed in the separate survey reports submitted with this application.

Revised Arboricultural survey and the protection plan has been submitted to the LPA on 8th of June 2020.

## 4. Conclusion

By virtue of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that it would comply with the relevant parts of Reading BC Local Plan, therefore we kindly appeal, to approve the submitted application.

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