

#DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: 200496/FUL

Address: 8 Riley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UX

Proposals: Demolition of existing dwellings and erection of 4 detached dwellings including access, parking, landscaping and associated works

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

Date received (valid from): 30 March 2020

Target Decision date (agreed extension of time): 31 July 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site this application relates to is the land and dwelling associated with no.8 Riley Road, Tilehurst, and a portion of highways land along Delaney close (currently owned by the Crown). The site currently contains a two storey rendered finish dwelling, similar to that at no. 6 Riley Road, the land along Delaney Close is an open piece of grass maintained by the Council. The wider area, is generally categorised by semi-detached or detached dwellings with circa 6m setbacks to the prevailing building line. There are also a number of terraced properties along Delaney Close. Although there is no distinctive dwelling type within the area, the dwelling are predominantly served by large setbacks, parking at the front of dwellings, and soft landscaping (trees, hedges) and boundary fencing (along Riley Road). The later development at the end of Delaney Close has similar a similar setback to the front and includes on street parking to the front and rear of the dwellings.

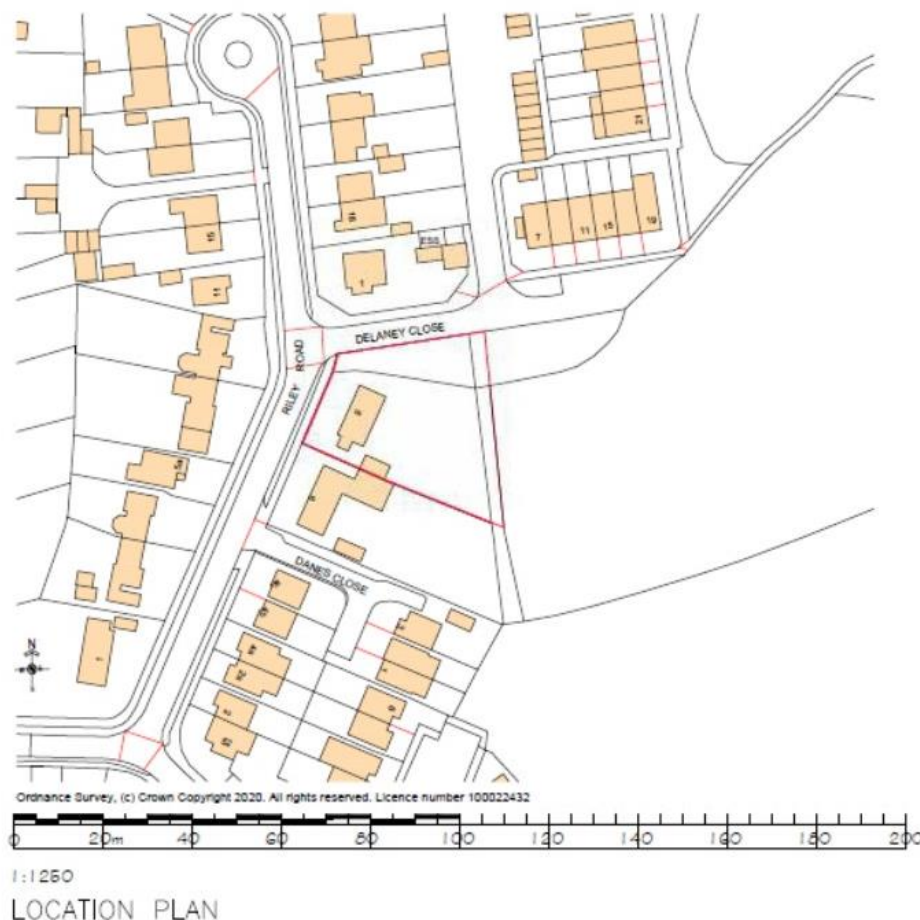


Figure 1 - Site location plan

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing dwelling, garage, and boundary fencing, and replacement (including construction on what is currently highways land) with 4 new attached dwellings fronting Delaney Close, and construction of a single garage adjacent no.6 Riley Road. The proposed development would include subdivision of the rear garden to provide private gardens associated with each dwelling, 8 car parking spaces (1 integral garage, 1 private garage (separate building), and 5 uncovered off-street parking), and sheds in the rear garden for provision of bicycle parking, as well as soft landscaping to the corner and frontage of the new development.

2.2 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

- Drawing No: 02/B - Site plan, garages and location plan
- Drawing No: 01/C - Floor plans and elevations plots 1 to 4
- Drawing No: 350G/19037T/100 - Topographical survey
- Location plan - existing
- Tree survey prepared by tree solutions
- Transport survey (doc ref: PER105).
- Application forms
- CIL form
- Design and access statement prepared by D2 Planning
- Preliminary ecological appraisal prepared by Johns Associates
- Various site photos
As received 31 March 2020
- Drawing No: 360G/19037T/200 - Ground floor plan (existing)
- Drawing No: 360G/19037T/201 - First floor plan (existing)
- Drawing No: 360G/19037T/300 - External elevations (existing)
- Drawing No: 360G/19037T/100 - Topographical survey
As received 15 April 2020
- Brick materials photo
- Schedule of materials
- Example roof tile photos
As received 16 April 2020
- Affordable housing statement and viability appraisal
- Open space statement
As received 22 April 2020
- Response letter to concerns dated 30th June 2020
- Bat survey report, J00540version 1 - dated 30 June 2020
- Riley Road Tree constraints, tree impact assessment, and tree protection method statement for residential re-development, prepared by BJ Unwin Forestry Consultancy
- Drawing No: RRTRP-JUN20 - Tree retention and protection plan
- Drawing No: RRTRP-JUN20 - Tree plan
As received 30 June 2020
- Response to e-mail letter dated 13th July 2020
- Drawing No: 01/D - Floor plans and elevations plots 1 to 4
- Drawing No: 02/C - Site plan, garages and location plan
As received 13 July 2020
- Drawing No: 02/D - Site plan, garages and location plan

- Transport letter dated 20th July 2020 prepared by PSP consulting
- Drawing No: 2330-001 - Visibility splays
As received 20 July 2020

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 None relevant to application site.

4. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH APPLICANT/AGENT

- 4.1 The applicant was advised on 12 June 2020 that the Council had a number of objections to the proposal, including an in principle objection, and that amendments to the plans would not be encouraged. Notwithstanding, the applicant submitted an amended set of plans including minor elevational changes, and a revised design for the garage design adjacent no.6 Riley Road which were considered and the application is determined against. Due to the minor nature of the changes, and lessening the impacts on the adjoining property by virtue of amending the size and location of the garage no further public consultation was undertaken.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- 5.1 RBC Ecology consultant provided the following statement:

- 5.1.1 *"The application site comprises a detached house located adjacent to Lousehill Copse Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Local Nature Reserve which is designated because of the priority woodland habitat it contains. It is proposed to demolish the house and to construct 4 dwellings on the site.*
- 5.1.2 *The proposals do not comply with ecology related planning policy for the reasons set out below:*
- 5.1.3 *Adverse impact on the adjacent woodland*
- 5.1.4 *The nearest house plot 4 will be approximately 2m from the woodland edge. This would result in an unacceptable and adverse impact on the LWS through overshadowing, increased noise and disturbance, light pollution, etc, and would fragment the wide green network. This, despite what is written in the DAS and the ecology report, would be contrary to policies EN12 and EN14, and paragraphs 170 and 174 of the NPPF.*
- 5.1.5 *Inadequate information about roosting bats*
- 5.1.6 *The applicant has submitted an ecological assessment with the application [Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Bat Roost Inspection - JOHNS ASSOCIATES - 25 March 2020]. This states that the house hosts a bat roost and that three further surveys need to be undertaken to determine the status of the roost. The applicant's ecologist emailed the council in March 2020 asking if further bat surveys could be secured via a planning condition. The council's response was that they could not.*

5.1.7 This is because, Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document has not been revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

5.1.8 *"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted."*

5.1.9 And, since 1) the extent to which bats (which are a protected species) may be affected by the proposals has not been established, and 2) there are no "exceptional circumstances", the application would not be in accordance with the above planning policy.

Summary

5.1.10 The proposals will have an unacceptable adverse impact on the adjacent Lousehill Copse which is a local wildlife site, a local nature reserve and a priority habitat as per the NPPF. Furthermore, insufficient information has been provided to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process. The application is therefore contrary to policies EN12 and EN14 in Reading's local Plan, and paragraphs 170 and 174 of the NPPF and Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05."

5.1.11 Following an additional bat survey, RBC's ecology consultant provided the following:

5.1.12 *"The bat survey has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats."*

5.1.13 However the fundamental issue with this application has not been resolved. This is that there will be a new house directly adjacent to the woodland (there is a line of recently planted trees between the boundary fence and the mature trees but this is still part of the woodland). As such the proposals would have an unacceptable and adverse impact on the LWS through overshadowing, increased noise and disturbance, light pollution, etc, and would fragment the wide green network. This, despite what is written in the DAS and the ecology report, would be contrary to policies EN12 and EN14, and paragraphs 170 and 174 of the NPPF.

5.1.14 The appeal decision that the applicant refers to is from 2007 (new planning ref: 070328) and since this time there has been significant changes in planning policy. It also has a very different site layout with the gardens backing on to the copse.

5.1.15 *It is therefore recommended the impact on the woodland priority habitat, LWS and LNR be included as a reason for refusal."*

5.2 Transport Officers - Transport do not have any objections with the information submitted addressing the points raised about visibility splays and bin and cycle

storage. In addition, transport officers and the highways authority have no objections to the stopping up order as would be required.

- 5.3 Environmental protection (Trees) officer - It appears a large number of trees and other vegetation, including a significant hedge along Delaney Close has been recently cleared. There are currently no large or potentially large trees adjacent to the site that would result in a conflict with the proposal, nor need to prune, as such there would be no environmental protection officer objections subject to conditions.
- 5.4 Environmental protection officers - No objection subject to conditions.

Public

- 5.5 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

39 Delaney Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UY
11 Riley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UX
30 Riley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4UX
19 Delaney Close, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4UY
17 Delaney Close, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4UY
39 Dudley Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JJ
31 Delaney Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UY
17 Riley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4UX
9 Riley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UX
18 Riley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UX

- 5.6 23 responses were received with the following summary representing the matters raised:

- Loss of well-used open space (the grassed area currently a highway verge)
- Lack of sufficient parking for proposal;
- Potential highway safety impacts of the proposal;
- Concerns about publicity of application; *Officer note: The publicity of this application has been undertaken in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 and as the LPA has fulfilled its statutory duty*
- Concerns over impact on natural environment (flora and fauna);
- Harm to view toward green space; *Officer Note: Views are not a protected feature under planning regulations.*
- Concerns that residents should be given the opportunity to purchase the grassed area; *Officer Note: this is not a matter that has any bearing upon a planning application*
- Concerns over access for emergency vehicles;
- Overlooking and privacy concerns for existing residents;
- Concerns over boundary treatments to adjoining property (no.6);
- Concerns over right to park on proposed areas (adjacent no.6); *Officer Note: this would be a private matter between land owners*
- Concerns over capacity of sewer network;
- Noise from intensification of use of the site;

6. CONTACT FROM LOCAL MEMBERS/ MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

- 6.1 An enquiry was received from the right honourable member of parliament (MP) for Reading West, Alok Sharma, who was contacted by concerned residents. The MP

requested that in accordance with planning regulation public comments were considered carefully when considering the current application. *Officer Note: All public comments have been duly considered, and a full response on all matters is detailed below, with non-planning related matters noted in the section above.*

- 6.2 The ward Councillor Ricky Duveen was in touch in relation to the proposal querying if the land was sold by the Council to the developer and whether there was a restrictive covenant applied which prevented the construction of housing on the land. *Officer Note: The land in question is owned by the Crown Estates and as such the Council did not sell the land to the owner, it is officers understanding that although a price has been agreed between the Crown and the Applicant this sale may not have been finalised and as such no details on any restrictive covenants would be available at this time (if any were applicable).*

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

- 7.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

CC1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC2	Sustainable design and construction
CC3	Adaptation to climate change
CC5	Waste minimisation and storage
CC6	Accessibility and the intensity of development
CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
CC9	Securing infrastructure
EN7	Local green space and public open space
EN8	Undesignated open space
EN9	Provision of open space
EN10	Access to open space
EN12	Biodiversity and the green network
EN14	Trees, hedges and woodlands
EN15	Air quality
EN16	Pollution and water resources
H1	Provision of housing
H2	Density and mix
H3	Affordable housing
H5	Standards for new housing
H10	Private and communal outdoor space
H11	Development of private residential gardens
TR1	Achieving the transport strategy
TR3	Access, traffic and highway related matters
TR5	Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

- 7.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Affordable housing (2013)
Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

8. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations
- Residential amenity and quality of accommodation
- Private outdoor space
- Transport matters
- Ecology and trees
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters
- Equalities impact

Principle of development

- 8.1 The application site is over land within the current curtilage of a residential dwelling (no.8 Riley Road) and land separately owned, and currently under highways management (land fronting Delaney Close).
- 8.2 Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that: “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land”.
- 8.3 The definition with the NPPF states that brownfield land (previously developed land) is defined as: “Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.”
- 8.4 Furthermore, a permanent structure is defined as “a permanent building or permanent structure that is anchored to a permanent foundation with an impermeable floor, and that is completely roofed and walled (a door is recommended, but not required). A fabric frame structure is a permanent structure if it meets the following specifications:”. As such, it is clear that the parcel of land in question would not be considered previously developed land under the NPPF and as such, the priority of development should be on other sites.

- 8.5 Paragraph 118 goes on to states that: “Planning policies and decision should ... recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk minimisation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production”
- 8.6 Policy EN8 of the Local Plan goes into more detail specific to Reading and states that “There will be a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space ... Development should not result in the loss of or jeopardise use and enjoyment of undesignated open space ... The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land”. Whilst the site is in private ownership, the supporting text to the Policy in paragraph 4.2.30 explains that “Reading has many areas of open space not identified in Policy EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space) in both public and private ownership. It is important that these areas are retained where possible”. The definition of open space in the glossary to the NPPF does not limit it to land in public ownership, but all open space of public value. Indeed, the NPPG (Ref: Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 37-001-20140306) confirms that open space can take many forms, including being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development.
- 8.7 In this instance, the parcel of land is also considered to be “undesignated open space” as defined within the Local Plan, and as such there would be a presumption in favour of its retention.
- 8.8 The site is located within an existing residential area and is located in close proximity (<400m) to high frequency public transport routes. As such, it is not disputed that the land is in an urban area, and a fairly accessible location. It is however argued that the public good currently served by the land is that of amenity value which is, and had been a feature of the area for a substantial amount of time as such it is considered to have an intrinsic value as a piece of undeveloped and ‘undesignated open space’ which forms part of the character of the area.
- 8.9 In terms of providing additional dwellings on the site, the supporting statement outlines that the proposal can contribute to the supply of housing in the area. The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) sets a target of 15,847 homes over the period 2013 to 2036 (an average of 689 homes per annum), which is slightly below the identified need of 699 homes per annum. Although the most recent annual monitoring report (2018-2019) shows a 5.57 years supply of housing land, this is against the background of a slight shortfall in meeting needs. However, given the small scale of the shortfall (230 dwellings over the plan period), it is not considered that this would be sufficient justification to outweigh the need to comply with other policies in the Local Plan, which were drafted, examined and adopted with full knowledge of the anticipated shortfall.
- 8.10 The proposed development would turn the land, which is currently an of an open character which contributes positively to the area and is well utilised by residents as a desire line toward the Lousehill Copse. The development would turn the undesignated open space into private front gardens and carparking therefore jeopardising the enjoyment of the undesignated open space by residents, without any attempt to provide an improved recreational facility, or alternative and comparably accessible open space as detailed in policy EN8.
- 8.11 As outlined above, it is considered that the proposed site is not considered previously development land in line with the NPPF. The site is considered to be an ‘undesignated open space’ in accordance with policy EN8. As such, in principle, the development for

residential over this land is not considered acceptable.

Design Considerations

- 8.12 Policy CC7, and H11 (as part of the development site includes areas previously used as residential gardens) seek to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area, and require a *“high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*
- 8.13 Policy CC7 outlines a number of considerations to ensure development would protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area including:
- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
 - *Landscape;*
 - *Density and mix;*
 - *Scale: height and massing; and*
 - *Architectural detail and materials*
 - *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.*
 - *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.*
- 8.14 Policy H11 includes a similar number of design comments which states: *“development that includes land within the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:*
- 1) *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*
- *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.*
- 2) *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
 - 3) *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
 - 4) *The proposal does not lead to tandem¹ development;*
 - 5) *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
 - 6) *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
 - 7) *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*
 - 8) *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and*
 - 9) *The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.”*
- 8.15 In addition, the NPPF (para. 64) states: *“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”.*
- 8.16 The existing streetscene along Riley Road includes a uniform building line (on the Eastern side of the road) which is continued within the cul-de-sac further along the same side of Riley Road. The opposite side of the road includes a stepped building line for the whole length, although the large front gardens are a feature for the entire road. Delaney Close includes four rows of attached dwellings which partly face the Close, but mostly face the adjoining copse as their front gardens, all with similarly large setbacks to the front of the dwellings. The original parts of the close (the Western side of Riley road, the cul-de-sac, and no’s 6 & 8 Riley Road) are generally large semi-detached or detached properties set within large plots. The more recent developments of Danes Close, Atherton Close, and the attached properties at the end of Delaney Close are more dense developments with smaller and narrower gardens than what would have been the original prevailing character. The dwellings are a mixture of attached, detached, and terraced dwellings with a range of materials including brick, render, and hung tile; with generally clay roof tiled dwellings. In addition, the roof forms are a mix of hipped, gabled (parallel to the street) including front facing gables. As such, the character of the area is varies, and is without any prevailing character or style of building. The site is not located within a conservation
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area, nor a listed building.

- 8.17 The proposed requires the demolition of the existing building. Following the demolition, the replacement dwellings would be wholly oriented to Delaney Close, with only a single garage structure, an expanse of hardstanding, and fencing being visible from Riley Road. The original dwelling is of a similar style to that or the surrounding area, and appears to have aged well within its setting. Notwithstanding, the building is considered to have limited architectural and historical merit and as such its demolition is considered acceptable. To the replacement within the Riley Road streetscene, a small single storey garage sat in front of a 2m high boundary fence forming the side boundary to proposed plot 1, and a largely blank side flank wall the proposed dwelling at plot 1, would create a large gap within the streetscene disrupting the consistent building line, and spacing between buildings. The resultant void would be a largely uncharacteristic gap which is not a feature within the immediate vicinity. Similarly, the large blank flank wall, and 2m high fencing, and side facing gates (including the access to the rear of plot 2) coupled with the retention of the large expanse of hardstanding and a small garage structure in place of a prominent two-storey dwelling would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located contrary to policies CC7 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 8.18 The proposed dwellings would be located with primary frontages to Delaney Close. Plots 1 and 2 would be set back from the footpath by 2.97m, and plots 3 and 4 would be setback some 5.95m. The design of the block would have a fairly standard appearance, similar to that of the original dwelling to be demolished. The dwellings would include a set-down 1.5 storey element which includes an integral garage for plot no.3, and a two-storey end extension, making a terrace of four dwellings linked by a set-down extension. This link is considered to be an unusual feature for the area with the design of the dwellings attempting to respond to both the terraced properties and the semi-detached dwellings surrounding it. Although uncommon, as detailed throughout the prevailing character is fairly mixed as such the linking feature and design are considered generally acceptable. The window ratio to the front would be relatively large compared to the prevailing area, and may be too great a window coverage for the Northern aspect.
- 8.19 The proposed 2.97m setback to plots 1 and 2 is considered to be insufficient to respect and enhance the character and appearance of the area, which includes (as detailed above) generally large setbacks to form relatively similar building lines along the frontages. As such, the lack of soft green space to the front of plots one and two closest to the junction of Delaney Close and Riley Road would, in addition to the in principle objection to the loss of open space, would be an inconsistent rhythm of plot frontages, and building lines (acknowledging there is not currently a building line on this part of Delaney Close). As such, the siting and space to the front of plots 1 and 2 is considered harmful to the open and spacious nature of front gardens within the area, and wider openness of the area leading toward Lousehill Copse contrary to policies CC7 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 8.20 The originally proposed development included a front facing dormer window to the 1.5 storey linking element which in the revisions was removed. In design terms, the proposed development could be conditioned to ensure appropriate materials, and other front facing boundary treatments. Due to the mix of dwelling styles and building materials within the area the design proposed (notwithstanding the above siting objection) is considered generally acceptable.

- 8.21 Furthermore, the layout of the four plots, having long narrow gardens (excluding plot no.1) would be inconsistent with the layout of plots particularly those along Riley Road. They would be reasonably similar to those serving the terraced dwellings in Delaney Close. As there is a variety of garden sizes and shapes, the proposed layout would represent a similar relationship of built form compared to space around buildings as is existing within the area, and would be better than that in adjoining development sites (such as Danes Close) due to not requiring extension access roads.
- 8.22 To the front of proposed plots 3 and 4 are off-street parking to the front of the dwelling. The on-site parking requirements are met by this (as detailed below), and the provision of off-street parking to the front of dwellings is a common occurrence within the area, as such is considered generally acceptable, with soft landscaping and boundary treatments being able to be secured by condition.

Residential amenity and quality of accommodation

- 8.23 Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.
- 8.24 Policy H5 includes a number of standards for new development. The proposed development would include the provision of 4 x 3-bed dwellings. All proposed dwellings would meet the adopted standards set out in H5, including room sizes. The proposed would be required to meet improved standards under the optional building regulations which apply where local plans require, and these could be secured by condition where appropriate.
- 8.25 The proposed layout provides kitchens to the front, and living/dining rooms within the south facing aspect including direct access to the rear gardens, and large open windows/double doors. Outlook, and privacy would be maximised for all proposed dwellings.
- 8.26 The proposal would introduce four new dwellings with rear facing first floor windows facing the toward no.6 Riley Road. Due to the orientation of the site, plots 1 and 2 would likely not gain any view into rear facing windows at no.6, and long views into the rear garden (circa. 16m). Plots 3 and 4 would be greater than 20m from window to window and would be an oblique view into such windows. Similarly, the rear windows at first floor would be greater than 20m from the rear boundary and unlikely to result in significant overlooking to no.6.
- 8.27 The proposed single storey garage structure (revised from a large double garage) would replace the existing 2-storey flank wall at no.8. The existing hardstanding to the front of no.8 would be retained and used for parking of plot no.2. The hardstanding is currently in situ and used as a driveway for no.8. As such, there would be little change to the existing situation, and a lessened impact on outlook from side facing windows at no.6. The increase amount of carparking, being 4 spaces for 2 dwellings would be unlikely to result in a significant increase in vehicle movements and would be commensurate of the residential nature of the area.
- 8.28 The proposal would also provide a pedestrian access to the rear of plot no.2 along the boundary of no.6. This would be for bin storage and cycle storage access. Although this could generate additional pedestrian activity along the shared boundary, the residential nature of the proposed use would mean infrequent trips, and minimal disturbance to neighbours. The boundary treatments (fencing) and gates have been shown as 1.8m high closed boarded fencing. This would be similar to the existing and would be a permitted development to 2m in height, as such would not be harmful to

the residents of no.6.

- 8.29 The proposed development is considered to afford a good level of accommodation for future residents whilst protecting the amenity of existing residents in accordance with policy CC8.

Private outdoor space

- 8.30 Policy H10 states that *“dwellings to be provide with functional private open space ... that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.*
- 8.31 *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 main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.”*
- 8.32 Although no specific criteria, the supporting text of the policy (4.4.87) states *“In the past, the Council has sought the following minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and they provide a useful guide for proposals:*
- (a) Houses: Useable private outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates (measured externally and including garage space).”*
- 8.33 Each of the proposed gardens although narrow (plot 2 being the narrowest at 5.5m) due to their depth are considered to be sufficient (including being at least as large as the GIA of the dwellings they would serve) for the purposes of policy H10.

Transport matters

- 8.34 The proposed development would intensify the use of the site by 3 dwellings, and as such would require additional carparking in accordance with policies TR1, TR3, and TR5. The Adopted parking standards supplementary planning document (SPD) also includes standards for new developments.
- 8.35 A large number of objection have highlighted the pressure for on-street parking in the area, and have considered increased traffic an additional hazard for the area. Upon visiting the site, it was noted that the left hand side of Delaney Close was heavily parked, as was the area to the rear of the Delaney Close properties. There are no on-street parking restrictions currently in place on Delaney Close. Concerns were also raised that garages were no longer used for parking (in general) and that this would likely occur within the proposed development, or persons may have more than 2 cars resulting in additional demand for on-street parking.
- 8.36 In addition, the proposed development would be over land which is currently designated as highways land (although in private ownership by the Crown Estates). The development would therefore require a stopping up order prior to the development being able to be commenced. There has previously been a stopping up order request processed by the highways authority. As with the previous stopping up order, the highways authority and RBC transport officers would have no objection to

this subject to a 2m footpath being required along Delaney Close to contain pedestrian access to the proposed dwellings, and for the provision of services.

- 8.37 The site is located within Zone 3 being “within 400m walk of high frequency bus services”. Based on the size of the dwellings (being 3-bed) are required to provide 2 car parking spaces per dwelling. The proposed development includes tandem parking for plots 1, 2, and 3 (including 1 garage, and an integral garage) and a side-by-side parking for plot 4. As such, based on the proposal, the development would meet the Council’s adopted parking SPD.
- 8.38 The Council’s transport officers have considered the proposal, the access is considered acceptable in this regard, and visibility splays have been demonstrated to be acceptable.
- 8.39 The proposed development includes space on site for bin storage, and cycle storage, and the responsibility would be on the occupier to bring bins out on collection days. The provision of each is considered acceptable.
- 8.40 The proposed development would create two driveways along Delaney close, and would extend the dropped kerb and driveway along Riley Road. The minor increase in vehicle numbers (4 max) along Delany Close, and 4 at Riley Road would be unlikely to result in a significant amount of traffic, and due to the provision meeting the standards required under the SPD would not result in any increased demand for on-street parking in the area. In addition, the provision of dropped kerb/driveways along Delaney close would represent an area of no parking along Delaney Close which would reduce the chance vehicles would be parking on both side of the road.
- 8.41 The development could also be conditioned to ensure that:
- Any dropped kerbs would be partly permeable in line with the Council’s highways guidelines;
 - Electric vehicle charging is provided in accordance with policy TR5;
 - Garages to be kept as storage for vehicles (removing permitted development rights to convert to living space);
 - Parking be provided and maintained;
 - Cycle parking to be provided and maintained;
 - Bin storage to be provided;
 - Visibility splays to be provided

Ecology and trees

- 8.42 Policies EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) require “, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network.” Policy EN14 states “Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended.”
- 8.43 As stated in the RBC ecologist’s statement above “... there will be a new house directly adjacent to the woodland (there is a line of recently planted trees between the boundary fence and the mature trees but this is still part of the woodland). As such the proposals would have an unacceptable and adverse impact on the LWS through overshadowing, increased noise and disturbance, light pollution, etc, and would fragment the wide green network.”

8.44 As such, the impact of the proposed dwelling is considered to be significant, and notwithstanding the previously approved developments (070328/FUL) and as noted by RBC's Ecologist: *"and since this time there has been significant changes in planning policy. It also has a very different site layout with the gardens backing on to the copse."*

8.45 As such, the impacts of a new dwelling within such close proximity to a highly constrained identified green space surrounded on all sides by considerable development would further detrimentally affect the priority habitats contrary to policy EN12 of the Reading Borough local Plan (2019).

8.46 The natural environment officers of RBC have been consulted, and based on the amended details submitted consider that the proposal would not result in an unsustainable relationship between any off-site trees which form part of the Copse, nor would any of the trees currently, or in future overshadow to a considerable degree the rear gardens of the proposal. A condition could be secured to ensure appropriate hard and soft landscaping were the scheme acceptable in other regards.

Affordable Housing

8.47 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 4 additional dwellings units, would be liable for an off-site affordable housing contribution.

8.48 As outlined within the policy: *"In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution."*

8.49 The applicant has provided a viability appraisal and open book analysis, which concluded that the development would not be viable with the inclusion of an affordable housing contribution, and a s106 agreement would be secured in line with the agreement between the Council's valuer and the applicant for a deferred affordable housing contribution should the profit exceed the agreed amount. The deferred contribution amount would be equal to a 50/50 split (between the Council and the applicant) on profits above 15% on the development.

Other Matters

CIL

8.50 The proposed development would generate a CIL liability.

Sustainability

8.51 As above, policy H5 requires additional sustainability measures including EV charging points, a 19% dwelling emissions rate improvement, and an improved water efficiency level which would be secured by conditions.

Street trees

8.52 The proposed development is located in an area with prominent established street trees. Had the development been considered acceptable in all other regards the inclusion of the provision of, or contribution toward street trees along the frontage would have been required within a s106 agreement.

Equalities Impact

8.53 When determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including

from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

9. CONCLUSION

8.1 As detailed above, although the proposed development would provide additional dwellings of a generally suitable design, internal space, layout and garden space with sufficient on-site parking, bin storage, and bicycle parking. The in-principle objection to the loss of the privately owned piece of 'undesignated open space', and the impacts on the Riley Road streetscene, and layout of the proposed dwellings would not be sufficiently outweighed by any benefits of the scheme.

8.2 The recommendation would therefore be to REFUSE the scheme.

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes