

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 15/01/19

Extension of time: 12/07/19

Application No: 182037/FUL

Address: 5 St Peters Avenue, Caversham

Proposal: Demolition of existing bungalow, and construction of a replacement part 2, part 3 storey dwelling with associated external works.

Case officer: Anthony Scholes

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.1 The application site contains a detached bungalow located on the southern side of St Peter's Avenue, a wide tree-lined avenue. The surrounding area is characterised predominantly by large two storey dwellings set within large plots. The properties in the vicinity vary in terms of design and architectural composition. There is a change in ground levels, sloping upward from left to right as viewed from the street. The site also slopes downward away from the road.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing bungalow and associated garage, and replacement with a two storey, part three storey (to the rear due to sloping ground) residential dwelling and associated landscaping and carparking.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None applicable.

4. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Environmental Protection

- 4.1 No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC Transport

- 4.2 No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC Ecology

- 4.3 No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC Natural environment (trees) officer comments

- 4.4 No objections, subject to conditions.

5. Public Consultation:

5.1 Letters were sent to all adjoining owners, and a site notice was displayed from 29 November 2018. Due to neighbour comments that a site notice had not been displayed appropriately, a second site notice was displayed on at the front of the property. Notwithstanding, neighbours were not prejudiced from making comments due to the location of the first site notice.

5.2 A number of observations were received, and can be summarised as:

- Dwelling is too large, out of keeping, and at odds with the surrounding dwellings;
- Site notice not displayed properly;
- Description incorrect, development include three-storey portion;
- Overbearing, loss of privacy, and access to sunlight/daylight for adjoining dwellings;
- Boundary treatments are not in keeping with adjoining (original and proposed);
- Boundary treatments as revised will be in keeping with road;
- Building materials will be out of keeping with character of the area;
- Concerns over construction vehicle parking, and damage to road;
- Desire to conserve bungalow;
- Not enough parking for future residents;
- Damage to adjoining protected trees;
- Concerns over noise and hours of construction

6. Equality Act 2010

6.1 In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this 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.

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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

7.2 The 'National Planning Policy framework' ('NPPF') 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy

and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given).

- 7.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2012;

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

RBC Local Development Framework

Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable construction and design
- CS2 Waste minimisation
- CS4 Accessibility and the intensity of development
- CS5 Inclusive access
- CS6 Settlement boundary
- CS7 Design and the public realm
- CS14 Provision of Housing
- CS16 Affordable Housing
- CS24 Car/ Cycle Parking

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

- SD1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- DM1 Adaptation to climate change
- DM2 Decentralised energy
- DM4 Safeguarding amenity
- DM6 Affordable housing
- DM10 Private and communal outdoor space
- DM11 Development of private residential garden land
- DM12 Access, traffic and highway-related matters
- DM19 Air quality

Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable housing (2013)

Revised parking standards and design (2011)

Planning obligations under section 106 (2015)

Sustainable design and construction (2011)

Reading Borough Submission Draft Local Plan 2018

Following the examination process, the independent inspector has identified a number of modifications that are needed to the Local Plan which require further period of consultation. These are known as main modifications. Consultation on these modifications is taking place between Wednesday 12 June and Wednesday 24 July 2019.

8. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH APPLICANT/AGENT

- 8.1 The applicant's agent was advised that the proposal (as originally submitted) was not considered acceptable due to its scale, height, massing, access and boundary treatment. The proposal was therefore unlikely to be supported. Revised plans were negotiated and submitted to address the LPA's concerns. This report considers these revised plans.

9. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations
- Impact on residential amenity
- Design and the public realm
- Transport
- Ground conditions
- Community infrastructure levy
- Equalities impact

Principle of development

- 9.1 The existing bungalow at the site is not considered to be of any particular architectural merit. The building is not listed, within a conservation area or locally listed. Within this context, there is no in-principle objection to the existing building being demolished, subject to the replacement dwelling being appropriate in all other respects. As such, there is no in-principle objection to the proposals, subject to all other matters (as discussed below) being satisfactory.

Design Considerations

- 9.2 The proposals would replace the existing bungalow, which is not of any particular aesthetic merit, with a part two storey, part three storey dwelling. As described above, the three storey portion is as result of the topography of the site. In terms of footprint it would be larger than the existing bungalow, particularly to the front by projecting 2.5-4.4m further forward. To the rear, the building will extend slightly beyond the existing built form, not including the proposed raised patio area. The proposal retains space between the dwelling and the property boundary to no. 7, and increases the gapping to no.3 to 2.7m. The development also includes the removal of the existing access, and boundary treatments, and replacement

with hedging for most of the frontage along with a electric gate with timber posts.

- 9.3 The existing bungalow is significantly smaller than the majority of houses in the immediate vicinity and the bungalows are not prevalent within the immediate vicinity, as apparent by the two storey dwellings flanking the bungalow and those on opposite the side of St Peters Avenue.
- 9.4 In the context of the site and the prevailing character of St Peters Avenue, there is no clearly defined architectural style, and furthermore, due to the topography and vegetation within the street, dwellings are generally hidden from view.
- 9.5 Policy CS7 of the RBC LDF core strategy outlines that development must be of a high quality and respect the layout, urban grain, scale, height and massing, and architectural details of the area in reading in which it is located. In this regard, the proposed development is commensurate in size to other dwellings within the locality and represents a similar plot coverage. The overall scale and height as proposed, reflects the roof heights of the two adjoining dwellings. The building line is forward of both adjoining dwellings, however without any uniformity within the street this is not an uncommon or harmful feature. Finally, the architectural detailing and styles are not specifically related to adjoining properties or others within the street, however it does include a front gable end and hipped roof forms which are not uncommon within the area.
- 9.6 Given the above, it is considered that the overall bulk and scale would not appear cramped or incongruous within the plot or wider street scene, with the overall scale and design appearing commensurate with the scale of other dwellings in the area. Whilst the height of the rear portion is notabale, it is not considered that this is sufficiently harmful in order to justify refusal.
- 9.7 The proposed design, materials and built form would not be out of keeping within the wider context of the street scene which features a mix of different housing types, materials and designs. Given this, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to any adverse effect on the visual amenities of the street scene.
- 9.8 It is considered that the overall scale of the proposed boundary treatment would not be so great as to cause harm to the street scene, which features a variety of boundary treatments. The proposed hedging and 1.5m high gate would be similar to the adjoining property and is considered acceptable in this instance.
- 9.9 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely harm the character of the surrounding street scene, or give rise to an overly dominant or incongruous design within the context of the site.

Impact on residential amenity

- 9.10 The neighbouring properties most likely affected by the proposals are No's 3 and 7 St Peter's Avenue. Both these properties are two storey dwellings, with no. 3 having a hipper roof form which is built up to the boundary, and no.7 having a first floor window facing the proposal site.
- 9.11 Two first floor windows are proposed on each flank elevation facing adjoining properties these have been identified as obscure glazed, and as such would not result in a loss of privacy to neighbouring properties. All flank windows are proposed for en-suites or bathrooms, as such, a condition is recommended to be attached to secure that the windows be maintained as obscure glazed.
- 9.12 The proposed development would be set further forward of the adjoining building lines, and further back than the existing rear elevations of both adjoining properties. The site is orientated NNE to SSW and as such, the sun will pass to the rear of the dwellings. The increased height of the proposed dwelling has the potential to affect light and outlook from adjoining properties. In this instance. The proposal would not breach a 45 degree line to habitable room windows on adjoining properties. The resultant dwelling would have an eaves height of 6.95m to 4.7m as viewed from the lower side of the dwelling (no.3). Although this is a substantial height, the highest part of the building would be adjacent to the adjoining property at the point it is built to the boundary. It will not be viewable at this point as clearly, and the height of the dwelling at the front of the property would be similar to any two storey dwelling. Finally, the proposed development includes a raised patio area with a retractable shade sail over it. This is located in a similar location, and at a similar height to the existing raised platform.
- 9.13 As the property is shielded from view at its highest portion, does not encroach on the 45 degree line from adjoining habitable rooms, and due to the orientation and location of the dwelling, it is not considered that the development would adversely affect the amenity, outlook, privacy, or result in a significant loss of daylight reaching adjoining properties. It is therefore acceptable in this regard.
- 9.14 The proposed development would provide sufficient internal living standards, outlook, and privacy for all future occupants, and is considered acceptable in this regard.

Transport

- 9.15 The property is accessed via a privately maintained road. The proposed development includes the repositioning of the access and provision of additional hardstanding within the frontage of the property. The parking area will provide an acceptable level of parking. The proposed hardstanding is proposed to be a permeable paving, which is acceptable to enable water

infiltration, and to be acceptable in appearance, it is recommended to be secured by condition.

- 9.16 A number of representations have requested that a condition be attached to any approval that require the road to be inspected prior to commencement and reinstated in a similar condition following the development. As the roadway is privately maintained, this would not be under the purview of the Council and as such is a matter to be privately managed, similarly the applicant will have to ensure that appropriate permissions are granted (if required) for changes to the vehicular access.

Ecology

- 9.17 A bat survey was submitted with the application and the Council's Ecologist has no objection to the proposals on ecology grounds, subject to following the recommendation of the report. In any event, as bats are protected species this is covered by separate European Legislation.

Impact on protected trees

- 9.18 The site adjoins properties which contain protected trees, and there are a number of protected trees within the highway. The proposal would locate hardstanding within the site, and the access outside of the root protection zone of the respective trees as to protect them from damage as a result of the development. The applicant has submitted an arboricultural method statement (AMS) which demonstrates that the works can be undertaken safely, works will be secured to be undertaken in accordance with the AMS by condition.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 9.19 The proposed development would include the demolition of the existing dwelling which has been in use as a dwelling within the last 3 years. The proposal therefore constitutes a chargeable development whereby the new building floor space is deductible from the proposed floor space. As such the proposed development will have a CIL liability of £37,088.47.

Equalities Impact

- 9.20 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. 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.
- 9.21 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Council LDF, and supplementary planning documents. The proposal has been considered acceptable in the context of the above and is therefore acceptable.

11. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes