

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR:

SITE AT: 82 CHICHESTER ROAD, TILEHURST, READING, BERKS RG30 4XD

1. LOCATION

The site lies within the defined urban area of Reading close to a range of services and transport links including the nearby Norcot Road with its well served bus route.

The site lies near the top of Chichester Road near the junction with Blundells Road. The site formally comprised a chalet bungalow however following recent consent for a dwelling in the rear garden this has now been demolished. Immediately adjacent to the site there are a number of small semi-detached and terrace style two and three bed dwellings. The site has a small access road running down the side of the property and the applicant owns the complete length of this extended kerb line to the rear of the site.

2. Planning History

An initial application for three units was withdrawn due to Officer concerns on size and overlooking and the recommendation at that time was to consider a pair of semi detached units. A full application for two three bedroom units and one two bed unit was submitted in December 2018 which was refused in February 2019 citing cramped and uncharacteristically small gardens providing inadequate outdoor amenity not in keeping with private rear gardens of adjacent properties, inconsistent roof form and affect on No`s 80 & 84 Chichester Road. The parking arrangement, waste collection, cycle and storage proposals were considered acceptable.

A further application Ref 190902 for two units comprising three double bedrooms was subsequently submitted and no issues were raised. Bedrooms had front facing windows and impact on No 80 Chichester Road was not considered to be an issue.

3. Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework - This guidance states (Par 14) that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF identified three dimensions to sustainable development: namely economic, social and environmental and suggests that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Paragraph 56 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decision should aim to ensure that developments show compliance with the following guidelines :-

Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;

Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;

Create accessible & safe environments;

Are visually attractive as a result of good design and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 60 confirms that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

The following policies are considered relevant:

Policy CS1 – Sustainable Construction and Design. Requires the design and site layouts to use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

Policy CS4 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development. States that the scale and density of development within the Borough will be located to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.

Policy DM4 – Safeguarding Amenity. States that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking; access to sunlight and daylight; visual dominance and overbearing effects. The proposal would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity; The proposal does not prejudice the wider development of the area. The first floor window to Unit 82 C will be provided with vision control film on the opening section (note this will open in such a way as to ensure blocking of overlooking) and the glazing up to 1.8m above finished floor level will also have the film as indicated.

Policy DM11 has been complied with in that the areas of the properties meet with the requirements in terms of floor areas and access at the side of both plots will be provided together with a gated access to unit 82 B ensuring access for bicycles is maintained.

DM12 – Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters. States that consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment and previous highway consultation has confirmed the access and parking satisfactory

CONSIDERATIONS

Amenity Space

The question of lack of amenity space was considered to be one of the main reasons for refusal of this three unit scheme and it was sited that the proposed space did not reflect the size or character of private residential gardens in the surrounding area. This has now been reviewed and as will be seen on Drawing No 02 the conclusion as drawn at that time was totally inaccurate. In the first instance No`s 90 (three bed) & 92 Chichester Road (two bed) have rear gardens of 46 & 49 Sq./m respectively. This should be compared to the proposed Nos 82 B (3 bed) and 82 A (two bed) that have 72 Sq./m & 49 Sq./ m respectively. The same comparisons with No 76 & 78 Chichester Road which have gardens of 46 & 42 sq./m which is smaller than the proposed units. Comparison has also been made with No`s 62 & 66 Sanctuary Close (Three bed units) which have 70 & 67 sq./m gardens and this compares favourably with the proposed units 82 B & C which have 72 & 76 sq./m respectively. Based on these figures therefore it is clear that the amenity space provided is in keeping with the immediate locality.

Overlooking & Impact on immediately adjacent properties

The development has been set out to allow a good sized gap to each adjacent boundary. There is over a 1.0m ground level variation to the adjacent property with this proposal being lower (see street scene elevation). The siting of the proposed building has taken into account the position of the adjacent dwelling which is set 4.0m away from the boundary. The side facing windows of the adjacent property have been considered however an existing car port at the side provides roof cover over these windows and with the two 2.0m high fence on the boundary the view from the ground floor of this property is substantially obscured. A potential issue with the first floor dormer window of No 84 Chichester Road has been checked and as can be seen from Dwg No 02 the daylight line from this window is not affected by the proposal.

The previous refused scheme considered that a front facing window from Plot 82 A would present overlooking on No 80 and this unit has subsequently been redesigned to incorporate a high level Velux roof light and therefore that there no loss of amenity & policies DM4 and DM 11 would appear to be satisfied .

Roof Form

The previous scheme that was refused sited that the roof form had inconsistencies and this has been reviewed and the proposal now has one continuous ridge with hips ends (these are optional and could be made into full gables if required).

Section 106 Payment

A financial contribution towards affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM6 will be made and the applicant formally agrees to this requirement subject to a written request to the Planning department requesting the up to date position on the Written Ministerial Statement in relation to Section 106 payments for 4 units or less and the successful appeal against payment that was granted on Appeal for the rear of 52 Norcot Road Ref APP /E0345/W/17/ 3173270.

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing Statement

The proposal provides for a pair of three bed semi detached houses and a single two bed unit thereby meeting a specific housing need within Reading as well as meeting the aims of Policy DM11.

The application requires a 10% affordable housing contribution based on the requirements of Policy DM6. The applicant proposes a financial contribution to be agreed.

Access and Parking.

The proposed dwellings use the existing access from Chichester Road providing 2 spaces for the three bedroom units and 1.5 for the two bed unit with an extra visitor parking space added (the parking arrangement is shown clearly on the 1:500 block plan). A 6.0m forecourt depth has been provided as requested. As discussed previously the site is a small walk from Norcot Road with its frequent bus service. Cycle stores are provided for both properties in the rear gardens with a gated access as shown on the block plan (the land at the rear is in the same ownership).

5 Design, Access and Energy/Sustainability

(a) Design

The new dwellings as proposed reflect the adjacent properties (see Dwg 02 which highlights the comparison with adjacent plots) and also responds positively to local character in the form of building designs, materials, layout and landscaping and it is considered that the proposal pays regard to the scale and proportions of the street scene in general. The location of the parking to the front of the development is virtually unchanged to that of the existing bungalow and is in keeping with the existing street scene. Overlooking from the plot in close proximity to no 80 Chichester Road has been overcome with the use of a bathroom at the gable end which in turn will have frosted glass etc and the front bedroom is served by both Velux and side facing windows.

(b) Access

The proposed resurfaced driveway will be finished in a material which will minimise any noise disturbance and its impact on neighbouring properties.

(c) Sustainable Design

The proposal has been designed to potentially accommodate any of the following:

Air source heat pumps and/or solar thermal panels where appropriate.

(d) Energy Efficiency

To minimise heat loss from the proposed building and to maximise the efficiency, the proposal will incorporate the following: Insulated roofs, walls and floor & double glazed windows. Ventilation is incorporated into the design to avoid condensation & energy efficient lighting is provided.

(e) Water Resource Management

Compliance with the Water Regulator requirements for 25 L/sec per person will be provided using water saving devices, such as dual flush /low flush toilets.

(f) Waste Recycling

The proposal will encourage responsible waste recycling in the following way:
Adequate space exists for storage of waste and recycling containers within the site for the proposed three dwellings.

6 Conclusions

This application follows on from the recent approval of two fairly large three bed units App No 190902 and when looking at the scale of development approved and this scheme it can be clearly seen that this proposal is not disproportionate in terms of scale. Indeed the linear length of gable on the approved scheme at 11.0m is greater than the current proposal. Previous issues indicating lack of amenity space has been demonstrated to be unfounded (See section on Amenity space above) and all of the other points that were listed in the rejection have now been dealt with. A review of the Officers report for two units at the rear of 52 Norcot Road which was granted consent would appear to back up this opinion.

The proposal makes a good use of the site in a sustainable location well related to key facilities and bus services and as such receives strong support from national and local policy (NPPF and Policy CS4). The pair of three bed semi detached units and one two bed unit will contribute to the required dwelling use in accordance with Policy DM11.

The site is accessible to public transport modes and provides for car parking and secure cycle storage for the proposed two dwellings in accordance with adopted standards.

The floor area of the dwellings accord with the guidelines as put forward by the Local Authority for a pair of semi detached houses and a two bed unit.