

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF
2NO. THREE BEDROOM DWELLINGS WITH
ASSOCIATED PARKING, AMENITY SPACE AND
LANDSCAPING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF
EXISTING GARAGE**

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

**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS
STATEMENT**

ON BEHALF OF BRADFIELD PROPERTIES LTD

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1. Introduction and Site Description

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of Bradfield Properties Ltd in support of a full planning application for the erection of two additional three bedroom dwellings on land to the side of No.323 Southcote Lane. As existing the land forms part of the property's amenity area and its current use is residential curtilage. No changes are proposed to the existing property other than the demolition of an existing garage at the side.
- 1.2 The site is a corner plot located adjacent to the junction between Southcote Lane and Burghfield Road which is to the north west of the site. It takes access from Southcote Lane, a classified road subject to a 20mph speed limit. Parking is on a single driveway leading to a single garage at the side of the dwelling, and no on-site turning is available at present.
- 1.3 The site is bordered by No.321 Southcote Road to the east and properties fronting Inkpen Close to the south. The site is located opposite a three storey building forming flats on the northern side of Southcote Lane, and to the west of the site fronting Burghfield Road is four storey flatted accommodation.
- 1.4 The site is located within the settlement boundary and is not subject to any special designation. It is not within a flood zone and is not affected by any tree preservation orders. There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets in close proximity.

This statement will introduce the proposals to the Local Planning Authority before analysing the key considerations of the development against relevant planning policy. The statement concludes that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

- 1.5 In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by the relevant application forms and the following plans:
 - Location and Block Plan ref 19-052-02-02-001
 - Existing topo P19-052-01-91-002
 - Proposed Site Plan ref P19-052-02-02-001

- Proposed Plan P19-052-02-03-001
- Elevations P19-052-02-05-001
- Elevations P19-052-02-05-002

2. Planning History

- 2.1 There is no planning history relating to the site on the Council's website.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The proposed development is for the erection of two semi-detached dwellinghouses on the land to the side of No.323 Southcote Lane, within its existing residential curtilage. The dwellings would be handed, with a living room and kitchen/dining room at ground floor level, two bedrooms and a bathroom at first floor level and a third bedroom with an en suite bathroom at roof level.
- 3.2 A contemporary design is proposed, utilising bricks at ground and first floor level, and zinc cladding to the roof which would include two front facing windows. The dwellings would each have a width of 5.2m, a depth of 8.4m and a maximum height of approximately 9m.
- 3.3 Parking is proposed to be located to the front of the site, with additional hard standing constructed in order to accommodate the required level of parking for the development. Access would remain in the same location as existing. Outdoor amenity space would be provided to the rear of all three properties, and with planting proposed to the site boundaries and internally between properties.

4. Assessment Against Relevant Planning Policy

- 4.1 The Development Plan for the Reading Borough Council currently consists of relevant policies within the Reading Borough Local Plan which was adopted in November 2019 and replaced previous development plan documents for the Borough including the Core Strategy and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.
- 4.2 Other local strategies or publications relevant to the development include Affordable Housing SPD, Revised Parking Standards SPD and the Council's CIL Charging Schedule.
- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Principle of the Development

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

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 4.5 Local Plan Policy CC7 states that *'All development must be of a high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.'* The policy lists various components of development form, including layout, landscape, density, scale and materials that will be assessed to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to various urban design objectives.
- 4.6 The site is located on the corner of Southcote Lane and Burghfield Road and as such any development to the side of the existing building will be prominently located. The surrounding buildings are not considered to be of significant architectural merit and as such, an opportunity exists for a distinctive building to be designed for the site that be of an innovative and high quality design that would enhance the character of the area.

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- 4.7 The proposed building would be of a contemporary design, drawing on the existing character through the use of brickwork at ground and first floor level but taking a modern approach to the roof design through its design and materials. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are no examples of such a design in the vicinity it is not considered that this should preclude such a design from being considered. There are a variety of building sizes and designs in the local area, including two storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings, and three and four storey flats. As such there is no distinct character to the area that needs to be respected or maintained, and as set out within Paragraph 127 of the NPPF innovation and change, where appropriate, shall not be prevented or discouraged.
- 4.8 The design proposed is considered to be appropriate to this plot and would provide a distinctive building that would enhance the character of the area in this location. Whilst it would be greater in height than the adjacent dwellings on the southern side of Southcote Lane, it would be far smaller in scale, height and massing than the adjacent flatted developments to the north and west. Although it would bring the built development nearer to Burghfield Road, due to the existing verge and footway an acceptable set back distance from the highway will be maintained and the dwellings would therefore not appear overly prominent in the street scene.
- 4.9 With regard to its density and layout, due to the size of the site sufficient areas for parking and outdoor amenity would be provided forward and rear of the dwellings. These areas are assessed in further detail below, however in character terms the layout of the site is in keeping with the character of the area. The development would achieve acceptable set-offs to either side, and the size of the outdoor amenity areas is similar to the size provided on numerous properties within the local area. Although the front of the site would be taken up by hardstanding, this is also a common feature of properties in the surrounding area fronting both Southcote Lane and Burghfield Road and would be softened by the planting of landscaping on the property boundary.
- 4.10 It is therefore considered that the development is in accordance Local Plan Policy CC7 in that it would be of a high quality design that would enhance the character and appearance of this area of Reading. The development would be acceptable in terms of its layout, landscape, density, scale and materials to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the Council's urban design objectives.

Residential Amenity

- 4.11 Local Plan Policy CC8 states that *'Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions of new living properties'* and gives a number of considerations for neighbouring amenity. These include privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight, outlook and visual dominance/overbearing.
- 4.12 The two dwellings would be set further to the south than the existing dwelling at No.323 and as such would be visible from the rear of that property. However, a 45 degree line drawn from the midpoint of the nearest rear facing windows at No.323 would not intersect either of the dwellings and as such there would not be an unacceptable loss of light or outlook to the rear facing windows. The primary windows at No.323 face west towards Burghfield Road, and the dwellings have been sited further to the south to avoid any loss of light or outlook to these windows.
- 4.13 The dwellings would be visible from the rear amenity area of No.323 however Plot 2 would be set 4.0m off the boundary with the rear garden which is considered sufficient for there not be to an unacceptable overbearing or visually dominating effect when viewed from the outdoor amenity area at the rear of the existing dwelling. No side facing windows would face towards the garden at No.323 and as such there would no overlooking to the neighbouring property that would result in a loss of privacy.
- 4.14 The neighbouring property to the rear on Inkpen Close has the same orientation as No.323 Southcote Lane in that the primary windows face west. There are two windows that face north towards the application site, and a gap of approximately 20m would remain between these windows and the closest rear facing first floor window on the new dwellings. As such the development would comply with the requirements of Policy CC6 in respect of back-to-back distances.
- 4.15 All three dwellings would be provided with private outdoor amenity space to the rear. Local Plan Policy H10 requires dwellings to be provided with functional private outdoor space, and states *'The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to the main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and not be*

compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing.'

- 4.16 The supporting text to the policy states '*In determining the appropriate level of private and communal open space for new development, the constraints of the site and the extent of deprivation of public open space within the proposed scheme will be taken into consideration*'. The text goes on to state that, in the past, the Council has sought to ensure that outdoor space no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates should be provided.
- 4.17 It has not been possible to achieve this level of outdoor space for all three dwellings, however the phrase '*In the past*' suggests that the Council will not necessarily insist on such a standard being met. The policy suggests that individual circumstances, such as the constraints of the site and the size of other spaces in the vicinity, will be taken into consideration when assessing the appropriateness of the outdoor amenity area.
- 4.18 The constraints of the site are key to determining the level of private amenity space for the development. As the primary windows at the existing dwelling face north, it has been necessary to set the dwellings further back into the site in order to ensure that these windows are not compromised. It has also been necessary to set the dwellings further to the rear in order to achieve on-site turning, a key benefit of the scheme which is discussed below. As such, the rear amenity areas that are proposed are the maximum that can be achieved given the constraints of the site.
- 4.19 As has been referenced above, large rear amenity areas are not part of the character of the area. In particular there are properties on both Southcote Lane and Inkpen Close with similarly sized rear areas, and also three properties fronting Burghfield Road to the north of the site which have very small amenity areas compared to the size of the dwellings. As such, the outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity. They will be clearly identified as private areas by their location and boundary treatment, will be appropriately related to the main entrances, will be safe and will not be overlooked.
- 4.20 As such, the development would not result in a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties, and would provide acceptable living conditions for

occupants of the new properties. The development would therefore be in accordance with Local Plan Policies CC8 and H10.

Parking and Highway Safety

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

- 4.24 The site is in a sustainable location, within walking distance of shops, a primary school, a library, clinic and a pub. An Aldi and a Lidl supermarket are located to the north west on Bath Road, a 0.5k walk away, and Manor Farm Primary School is a 0.25km walk to the south west. The shops and facilities Coronation Square are a 0.65km walk to the east. Furthermore Southcote Lane is served by a frequent bus service, with a bus stop in very close proximity to the site.
- 4.25 As such it is not likely that the development would result in the encouragement of the use of the highway network for short local trips. It would not compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road, and as such would not be contrary to Policy T3.
- 4.26 Policy TR5 requires development to provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of the location within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. The policy refers to the Council's Parking Standards SPD which includes different standards in four zones according to the accessibility of those zones. The site is located within Zone 3 (Secondary Core Area) which has a '*Variety of land uses, within 400m walk of high frequency bus services.*' Three bedroom houses within this zone are required to provide two parking spaces.
- 4.27 Six parking spaces are proposed on the site which complies with the requirements of the parking standards. Where tandem parking is proposed, both spaces will be allocated to the same plot. As set out above, on-site turning is provided as part of the parking layout to ensure that vehicles can enter and exit the site in a forward gear.
- 4.28 It is also noted that two cycle spaces need to be provided per plot. There is space to provide sheds within the rear gardens for cycle parking and details can be secured by condition if necessary. Refuse collection arrangements will be as existing, with storage to the side or rear of the properties.
- 4.29 As such, the development would provide acceptable parking provision and would therefore comply with Policy TR5.

Affordable Housing

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

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

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

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The development is acceptable in principle and would not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity or highway safety. An affordable housing contribution can be secured through a Section 106 Agreement, and CIL contributions provided as required.
- 5.2 As such the proposed development complies with the relevant development plan policy and the Council is therefore respectfully requested to **approve** the application for planning permission.