

***Proposed Demolition of existing bungalow and garage and erection of 2 infill terraced houses
on land known as 76a Queens Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 8DL
For Mr & Mrs Ravi & Dipiksha Sodha***

RMDL:PDA76QR



Planning, Design & Access Statement

R A M M U R T I D E S I G N L T D

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Introduction, Site Location and Description

This design & access statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the proposed new 2No terraced houses on the plot of land to replace the existing garage workshop and associated private residence, the use for which has become redundant.

Proposals were submitted to gain pre-application advice dated 15th May 2019 and referenced 190539, and the scheme now being submitted for consideration is informed by the detailed advice and follow up meeting on 26th July that was held with the Planning Officer. The officer advice is referred to within another section within this document.

The development site is the land that would remain once the existing garage workshop and the bungalow is removed, and lies approximately midway on Queens Road in Caversham, which is in an established residential area.

The plot at its narrowest point at the front is 8.05m across and 25.3m deep providing an area of 207.3m²

The adjacent properties to the Western and Eastern boundaries at Nos 76 and 78 are both typical of the era, being late Victorian or Edwardian two storey houses comprising 3 bedrooms.

Typically it is seen within the style and layout of the properties in area, that at ground floor level there is a reception room to the front, an inner stairway leading to the upper floor and then a living area linking to the projecting rear section with a kitchen and ground floor bathroom, with doors leading to the garden from there.

The first floors have two bedrooms in the main building and then usually an additional bedroom over the projecting lower set rear element.

Many of the houses along Queens Road have had loft conversions over the years, with either just roof line windows or some with rear dormer extensions, allowing for additional accommodation in the roof space.

The properties to the north are also set in a terraced arrangement and have a rear gable to rear gable distance of more than 20.0m, measured from the rear most parts of each dwelling at first floor. There are closer distances at ground floor where impact on overlooking is not an issue.

There is an access path between the rear gardens of the properties on Queens Road and those on Kings Road to the North, running East to West from Coldicutt Street. This path has become overgrown and is unkempt with now an almost non-existent access available to the application site.

Properties opposite the site to the South are again a run of terraces similar in style and arrangement as those adjacent to the application site.

There is a separation distance of approximately 14.5m when measured front of house to front of house across the road.

There is an established building line for the terraced housing to either side of the site, although the existing garage workshop was set back from the building line to allow for fuel pumps whilst the workshop was in use.

The materials used for adjacent existing homes are a red facing brickwork with stone heads over entrance doors and first floor windows. Feature bands and quoin effect detailing exists to No78 and the run of dwellings to the West, but it is plain facework to No 76 and the dwellings to the East.

The roofs are originally slate or with some more recently having been replaced with slate affect replacement roof tiles. There are brick built chimneys usually in pairs but a narrower version to each of the ends of No 76 and to No 78.

The properties to the East of the application site have a parapet feature to the roof design, whilst the properties to the west do not.

The existing terraced homes to either side are more than 100 years old. They are not however statutorily or locally listed or are of any special interest nor are they within a conservation area. In these circumstances it is considered that the intention for any new build should try and continue as far as possible to align with the fronts of the adjacent terraces, to respect the general heights of eaves and ridge lines and to maintain the privacy and limit overlooking over the adjacent plots.

An infill development attempting to retain some uniformity but allow a minimal increase in the height of the building could incorporate and reflect the fact that there are changes in roof lines with raised ridges and steeper roof angles in some instances in the street, and this could be used as a positive feature to improve accommodation to the proposed new development. Although this was presented as part of the design submitted for Pre-app advice, it has been removed from the now submitted proposals.

It is considered that when infilling an established terrace, new development should either precisely replicate the features and details of neighbouring buildings or (if this is not practicable) should respect the general urban design characteristics and proportions of neighbouring property whilst introducing new buildings that are clearly contemporary but respectful of their neighbours.



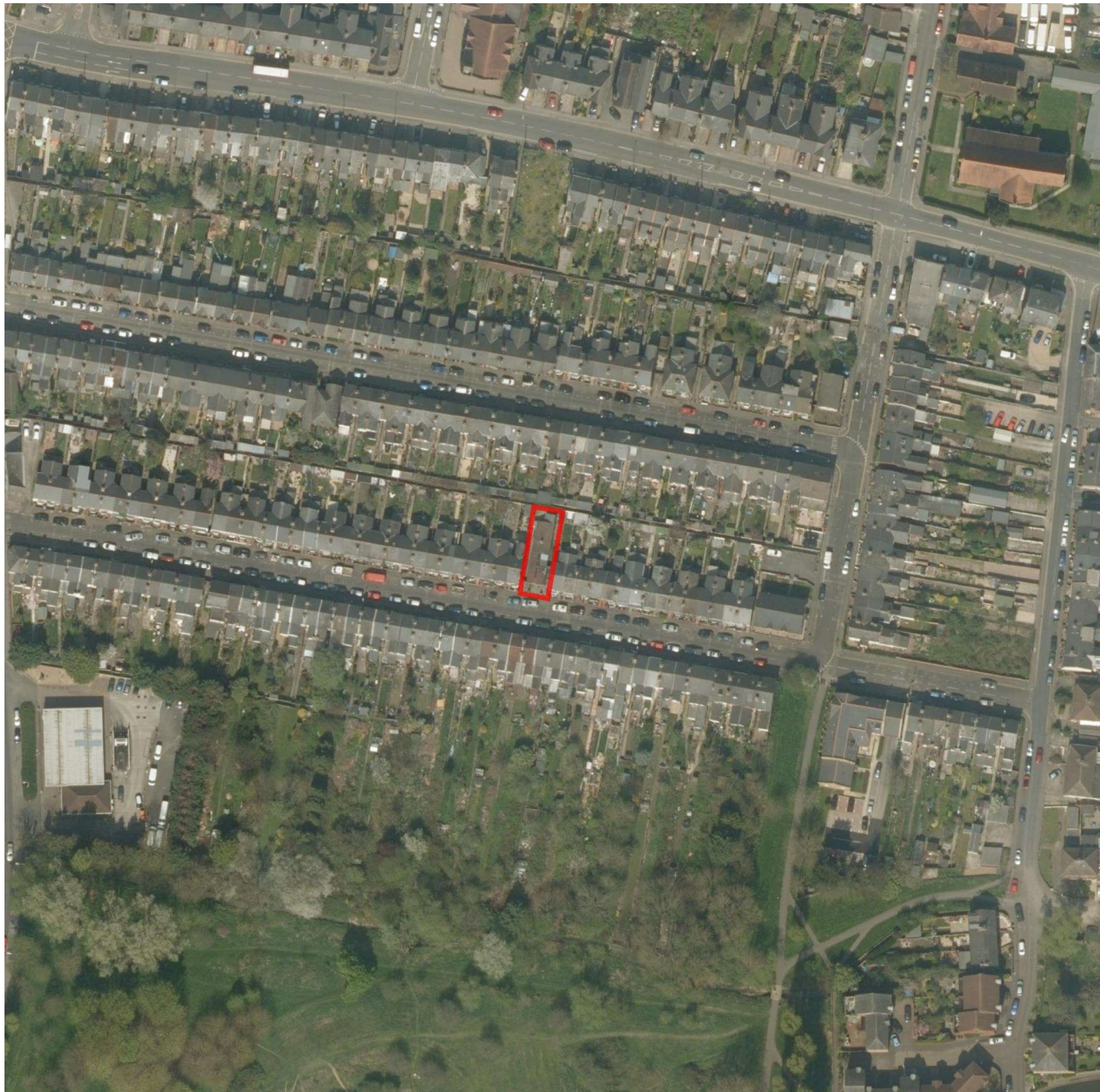
Application site



No 76 and to the West

No 76a Application site

No 78 and to the East



Aerial view of the site and its setting

Planning History

The plot has been in a mixed use for many years and used as a working garage with a petrol filling station to the front forecourt and had a private residence to the rear for use by the business owner. There are no references available to this property on the councils planning website and it is assumed that there have not been any past applications of note as a result.

Nearby properties have had applications for loft conversions and have carried out development via their allocated “Permitted Development Rights” for simple alterations and extensions.

Planning Policy

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In the case of this application, the development plan of relevance consists of the Reading Borough Core Strategy (January 2008) and the Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).

There are a number of adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which support the adopted plan will need to be considered as part of this application. These include the Revised Sustainable Design & Construction SPD, Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD and the Affordable Housing SPD.

Principle of Development

The application site is located with an established residential and built up area of Caversham, close to the River Thames to the North of Reading.

The Spatial Strategy within the Core Strategy sets out that it will seek to maximise development opportunities within the built-up area of Reading.

Policy CS14 in the adopted Core Strategy sets out that provision will be made for the completion of an average of at least 521 dwellings per annum in the period 2016-2026, in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in this Core Strategy.

The location of the application site within the built-up area of Caversham in Reading and the fact the site already contains a residential property as well as an disused garage workshop, means that the principle of residential development on this site is already established in planning terms.

Material Considerations

The main material consideration is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government’s up to date strategy and guidance for plan making and decision taking.

The SDPD does not schedule any specific land use change allocation for the application site, but other detailed policies of general relevance to this application include:

Policy SD1 (Policy CC1 within draft local Plan November 2017) (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

- reinforces the NPPF and confirms a positive approach to planning, with planning applications that accord with the development plan being approved without delay unless material circumstances indicate otherwise;

Chapter 11 of the NPPF 'Making effective use of land' and Chapter 12 'Achieving well-designed places' encourage the planning system to act positively in terms of:

- Delivering high quality design and securing good standards of amenity for all existing and future occupants;
- Encouraging the efficient use of land; and making the best use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focusing development in locations which are sustainable.

Given that this proposal is delivering two dwellings within the built-up area of Reading, on a site which is already capable of supporting the existing buildings, the proposal should therefore be considered acceptable in principle

Character and appearance

Policy CS7((Policy CC7 within draft local Plan November 2017)) of the Core Strategy sets out 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.

- This includes design component such as layout, landscaping, density, scale, height, and architectural detail and materials. These design components will be assessed to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to a range of urban design objectives including; character, legibility, adaptability, continuity and enclosure, and ease of movement and permeability.

Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Policy EM3 within draft local Plan November 2017)

Core Strategy Policy CS11 sets out the considerations to be addressed in order to justify the loss of existing employment land (other than within identified Core Employment Areas) as follows;

- (i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?
- (ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?
- (iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?
- (iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?
- (v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?
- (vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?

The previous use of land in this case has been a small scale mixed live and work use comprising an employment element of a garage/ workshop and an associated residential bungalow.

The site is accessed by narrow residential streets with no anticipated change in this.

Employment use of the site has declined progressively over the years, partly in response to increasing regulation inhibiting continuation of some elements (notably the former petrol pumps/ tanks) within residential areas such as this. On the closure of the business the site has not subsequently been marketed for combined garage and residential use as the condition of the buildings and lack of any demand for such interlinked uses is such that redevelopment is considered to be the only practical way forward.

The site is wholly surrounded by residential property. Continued or intensified use as a garage is considered highly likely to detrimentally affect neighbour amenities.

There is strong demand for residential property in Caversham. The site is within an established residential area with good access to a full range of local amenities and public transport.

The employment element of use on the site is an isolated element with no relationship to any adjacent employment land.

In these circumstances the loss of employment land at 76a Queens Road Caversham is justifiable in terms of Core Strategy Policy 11

Policy DM11 (Policy CC7 within draft local Plan November 2017) of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document sets out when proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens is acceptable. Development in these circumstances are acceptable where:

- The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- 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;
- The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;
- The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development;
- The design and layout minimise exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;
- The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;
- The emphasis is on the provision of family sized housing;
- The development would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit in association with adjacent open space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribution to the green network; and
- The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.

The Design and access statement elements of this statement show that the site is in a sustainable location which would not require on site car parking, but to encourage the use of public transport and cycling. It should be noted that There is the opportunity to provide some permit parking which would be directly outside the site for two vehicles which would have been available to the application site as a natural provision.

Policy DM1 (Policy CC3 within draft local Plan November 2017) (Adaptation to Climate Change)

- requires development to demonstrate design to adapt to climate change, including orientation for natural heating and ventilation, resistance and resilience, use of trees and other planting to improve microclimates, and minimising surface water run-off.

The submitted proposals reflect the arrangement and orientation of buildings that exist within the north side of Queens Road.

The materials and construction form will meet with current requirements for heat loss, low water consumption, and allow for rainwater to be drained by soakaways. Heating would be by way of modern low energy boilers with good insulation values, smart meters, and smart heating controls that offer eco enhancements that limit and encourage the monitoring of wastage of energy used to heat the homes.

Policy DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) (Policy CC9 within draft local Plan November 2017 # Securing infrastructure)

- requires appropriate contributions through planning obligations and/or CIL for relevant local infrastructure.

Policy DM4 (Policy CC8 within draft local Plan November 2017) (Safeguarding Amenity)

- seeks to protect the living environment of existing and new residential property in terms of avoiding undue overlooking/ loss of privacy, loss of sunlight/ daylight, dominance, noise, dust, vibration, fumes or crime.

The proposals seek to retain ground floor accommodation in approximately the same footprint as the current buildings occupy, with upper storeys only aligning with the existing rear of the adjacent buildings, and the 45 degree splay from existing neighbours windows are not compromised in these locations as are seen to be demonstrated on the floor plans.

The front of the buildings are set so that the line of the terrace runs through with the adjacent dwellings.

The scale of the proposed development means it is unlikely that one new dwelling will have any detrimental impact in terms of noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, dust and fumes, smells, or crime and safety. The location of the new dwellings adjacent to the existing properties means the development will not result in the loss of privacy or restrict access to sunlight and daylight. The proposed dwellings would not have any first-floor side facing windows, with the habitable rooms all having front and rear facing windows.

Policy DM10 requires that dwellings are provided with functional private or communal open space that allow for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. The proposed new dwellings will be provided with their own private residential garden space sufficient to meet the above objectives.

Transport

Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document deals with access, traffic and highway-related matters. It sets out that where proposals involving the generation of additional trips on the transport network consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. It further identifies that development will only be permitted where accesses to the highway comply with adopted standards, the development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network, and the proposal would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network.

Ecology and tree planting

Policy DM18 (Tree Planting)

- requires provision for new tree planting on or off site to improve the amount of tree coverage, provide for biodiversity and help

adapt to climate change. – some opportunity for landscaping to the rear gardens is available.

Further and draft policies as part of Reading Borough Councils Draft Local plan submission March 2018 refer to the following pertinent policies:

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

- Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,433 homes (averaging 671 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036. The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area to ensure that the shortfall of 644 dwellings that cannot be provided within Reading will be met over the plan period.

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

- The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by: the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas; its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport; the need to achieve high quality design; the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms. As a minimum, on new developments for 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, planning decisions will ensure that over 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations.

H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading

- on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing; on sites of 5 – 9 dwellings, 20% provision of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing; and on sites of 1 – 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.

Further, Policy DM6 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document is the affordable housing policy, it sets out the thresholds for contributions across the borough. It requires that on sites of 1-4 dwellings, a financial contribution is provided that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable elsewhere in the Borough. This proposal will be policy compliant with regard to affordable housing contributions

A viability assessment is attached as part of the application set of information that demonstrates that contribution would not be required.

Reading Borough Council implemented its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1st April 2015. Policy DM3 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document ensures that proposals for development make appropriate provisions for infrastructure, services, resources and amenities. These provisions will be secured through planning obligations and/or CIL as relevant. In accordance with the CIL Charging Schedule (January 2015), this development is subject to £120 per m2. This proposal will be policy compliant regarding CIL requirements

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

- New build housing should be built to the following standards:
 - a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.
 - b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations77.
 - c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes;
 - d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.
 - e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations where it is viable, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below).
 - f. On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

- Planning permission will not be granted for any loss of residential accommodation or land unless there are exceptional circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number of residential units or gross floor area.

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

- Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, 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.
- 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.

The proposals do not conflict with any allocations or proposals scheduled by the Development Plan and they fully reflect principles for sustainable development and will make full use of a highly sustainable however now redundant previously developed site.

The proposals take full account of the relevant development management policies. The proposed intensity of use is appropriate to the location, and relevant to help meet needs for more housing.

The proposals will have been carefully considered in terms of the quality of living conditions provided for new residents and maintaining amenity for existing neighbours

In particular it should be noted that the proposed 3 bedroom homes will reflect the identified need for larger homes in accordance with policy H2

Design Development and Pre-application Advice

Proposals were submitted to gain pre-application advice dated 15th May 2019 and referenced 190539, and the scheme now being submitted for consideration is informed by the detailed advice and follow up meeting on 26th July that was held with the Planning Officer.

The initial scheme presented at pre-application stage was based upon running through with levels at ground floor that matched those of the adjacent properties at Number 76 and 78, and took reference in terms of the height of the building from instances elsewhere on Queens Road, with raised eaves and ridge levels to allow an improvement and additional accommodation within the loft spaces.



Elevations that were submitted as part of pre-app

The issues raised from the Pre-app advice submission were as follows and have been addressed as noted:

1. New local plan adding weight to the submitted proposals
 - *Key elements are included as part of submitted scheme and policy references are shown within the PD&A old to new.*
2. Justification as to loss of the commercial use
 - *Now included within this document*
3. It is noted that a 'Sequential and Exception Test' document has been submitted with this query. Whilst it makes reference to the need to compare the proposed site with other available sites to find out which has the lowest flood risk, **it does not actually identify any other sites let alone compare them.**
 - *Detailed analysis now included within submitted reports*
4. Eaves and the ridge heights as shown was not seen to be acceptable
 - *Eaves and ridge are lowered in submitted scheme.*
5. Rear projections were seen to be out of keeping & Loss of light concerns
 - *The scheme reflects that of the existing adjacent units which have rear projections, and it is demonstrated that 45degree splays from neighbours' windows are not compromised. Furthermore, at ground floor it is seen that we are no worse than if the existing were to be retained, and the scheme has no further impact rather than an improvement to the current status*
6. Rear dormer concerns and out of keeping with neighbours
 - *The dormers are retained as part of the scheme but centralised keeping distances from boundaries.*
7. Landscaping to the front was mentioned
 - *The arrangement to retain the established building line precludes the introduction of landscaping to the front as the space will be used for cycle/bins storage.*
8. Demolition works,
 - *The applicants are happy to accept a planning condition included within the planning approval*
9. Internal arrangements and floor areas
 - *the units are now reduced, and the plans show a 5-person unit and a 4-person unit which comply with the floor area requirements over three storeys.*
10. Loft space, useable due to heights,
 - *The drawings include a section drawing as part of proposals to show available headroom and useable spaces*
11. Statement re climate change required.
 - *A short statement is included as part of the response to Policy DM1 (Policy CC3 within draft local Plan November 2017) (Adaptation to Climate Change)*
12. Parking and permits may not be officered
 - *It is requested, at least two parking permits could be allowed as the existing garage and bungalow would have had some allocation for on-street parking, and that the new dwellings should retain this allocation,*
13. There is a Lamp column on the footpath...
 - *The lamp column does not impact or is impacted by the development,*
14. Garden shed & Bins to be shown on plans
 - *A key is added to the site plan that confirms location of bins and garden shed, which allows for both options to store cycles at the front of the house and or at the rear garden area*
15. The viability assessment was omitted from the pre-app set of information
 - *now included and the applicants are happy to cover the council's costs for the review.*
16. Stage 2 contamination surveys
 - *The applicants are happy to accept as a planning condition following demolition works and production of intensive investigations*
17. Ecology
 - *A bat survey was submitted as part of the pre-app and is included as part of this submission*
18. Existing floor plans
 - *Were included and are part of this application set of information.*

Access

The site is located approximately 1.0 mile from the Lower Caversham shopping precinct located at the Junction of Gosbrook Road and Church Street where a variety of services including banks, shopping, and Post Office are available.

The site is within walking distance to a local convenience store on the corner of Gosbrook Road and Washington Road, and there is also a butcher's shop in Coldicutt Street, and a petrol filling station with convenience items and a cash machine on George Street.

There is a bus stop within a very short walking distance on George Street at the end of Kings Road with bus routes 23 & 25 operated by Reading Transport providing services to Reading Station and to the town centre.

Reading Station is within walking or cycling distance and provides links to London, Maidenhead, Slough, Oxford, Newbury, and Basingstoke.

Queens Road has Permit Holder parking with a 2-hour short stay facility between the hours of 8.00am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday only.

There is no facility as available to existing properties for off road parking, and no opportunity to provide parking off road for the new development.

The new dwellings will conform to the latest requirements of part M of the building regulations to provide an accessible building, whilst taking key features of the Lifetimes Homes recommendations for inclusion as part of the proposals.

The proposals will include ground floor wash rooms, corridor and door widths to allow access for occupiers with difficulties in mobility with access to rear gardens for private amenity.

It should be noted that the Thames riverside and promenade are in very close proximity to the application site providing additional public amenity for the future occupiers.

Cycle storage and bins storage is limited to the existing dwellings, with the small areas of hard-standing being used for this purpose.

In order to maintain some uniformity to the street frontage, it is proposed to utilise a similar area for the two new dwellings as shown on the floor plans, but to also include a shed to allow further secure storage within the rear garden. As such, a suitably sized of timber shed with lockable facility as secure and covered enclosure on site would still be provided to the rear gardens.

The site is in a good location for an encouraged use of sustainable travel options with the public services already in its proximity.

Appearance and Scale

The key constraint is that of the relationship between the existing buildings, both in terms of location, height of building and aspect so that the new building does not dominate and overpower the existing arrangement of the adjacent dwellings.

The design of the new properties has taken reference from its neighbours.

The intention for any new infill development of houses should try and continue as far as possible the features of and be set to align with the fronts of the adjacent terraces, to respect the general heights of eaves and ridge lines and to maintain the privacy and limit overlooking of the adjacent plots.

The properties to the East of the application site have a parapet feature to the roof design, whilst the properties to the west do not.

Any new development should meet current design standards and achieve reasonable distances from neighbours.

Distances to rear boundaries and back to back arrangements are more than the minimum requirements.

There are no rear to side arrangements that would impact overlooking or loss of privacy with any new windows set with an aspect to their own rear or front gardens and not to the sides.

The proposal is to not exceed two storeys to ensure that any built form is kept as low as possible, however, with roof voids being utilised for the provision of additional accommodation.

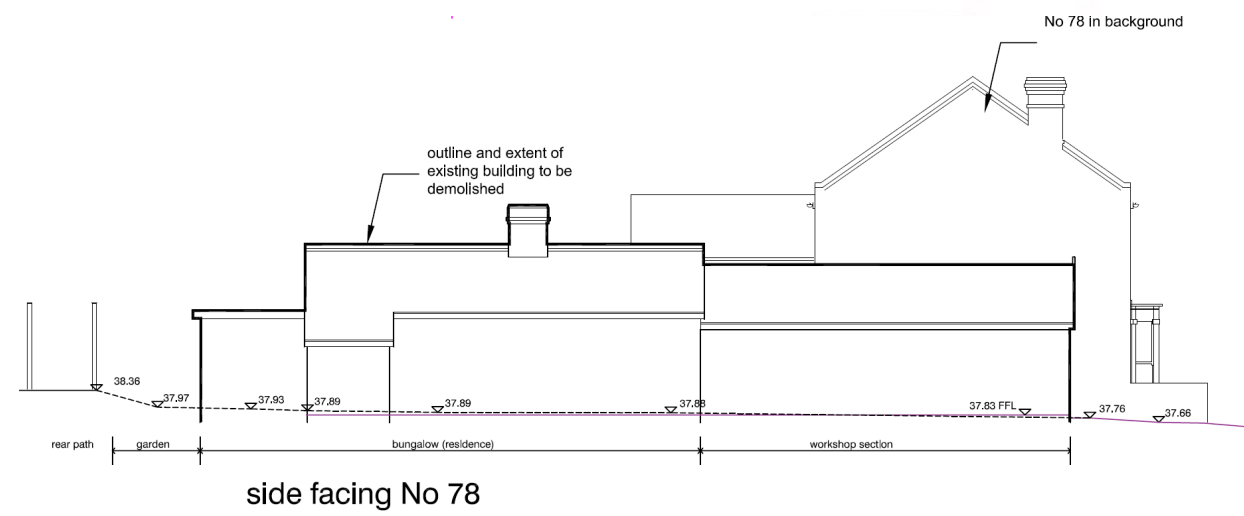
The roof slopes have been intentionally designed to reflect those of the adjacent dwellings where many have been refurbished to make good use of this space to the benefit of the occupiers.



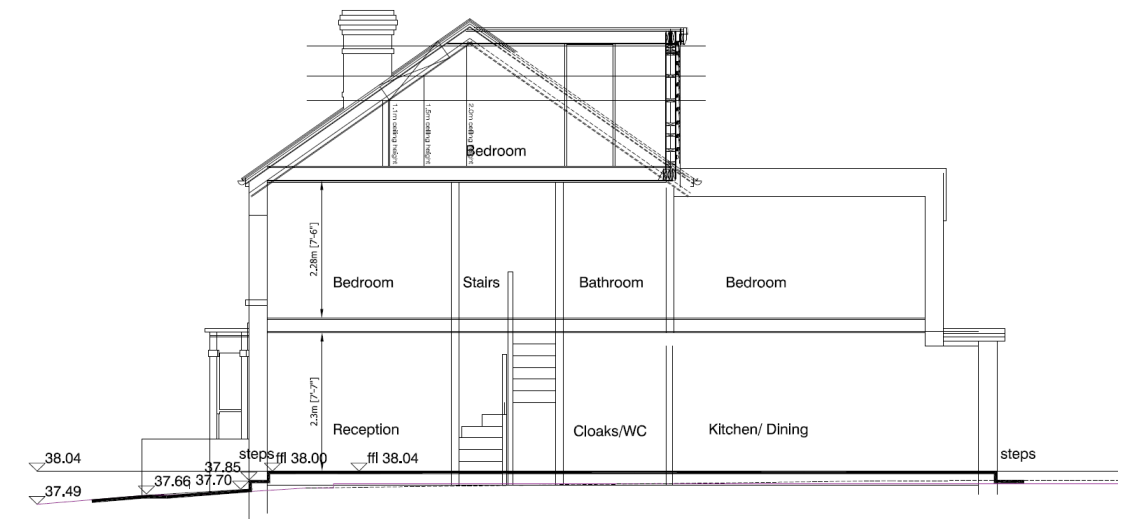
Existing elevation to Queens Road



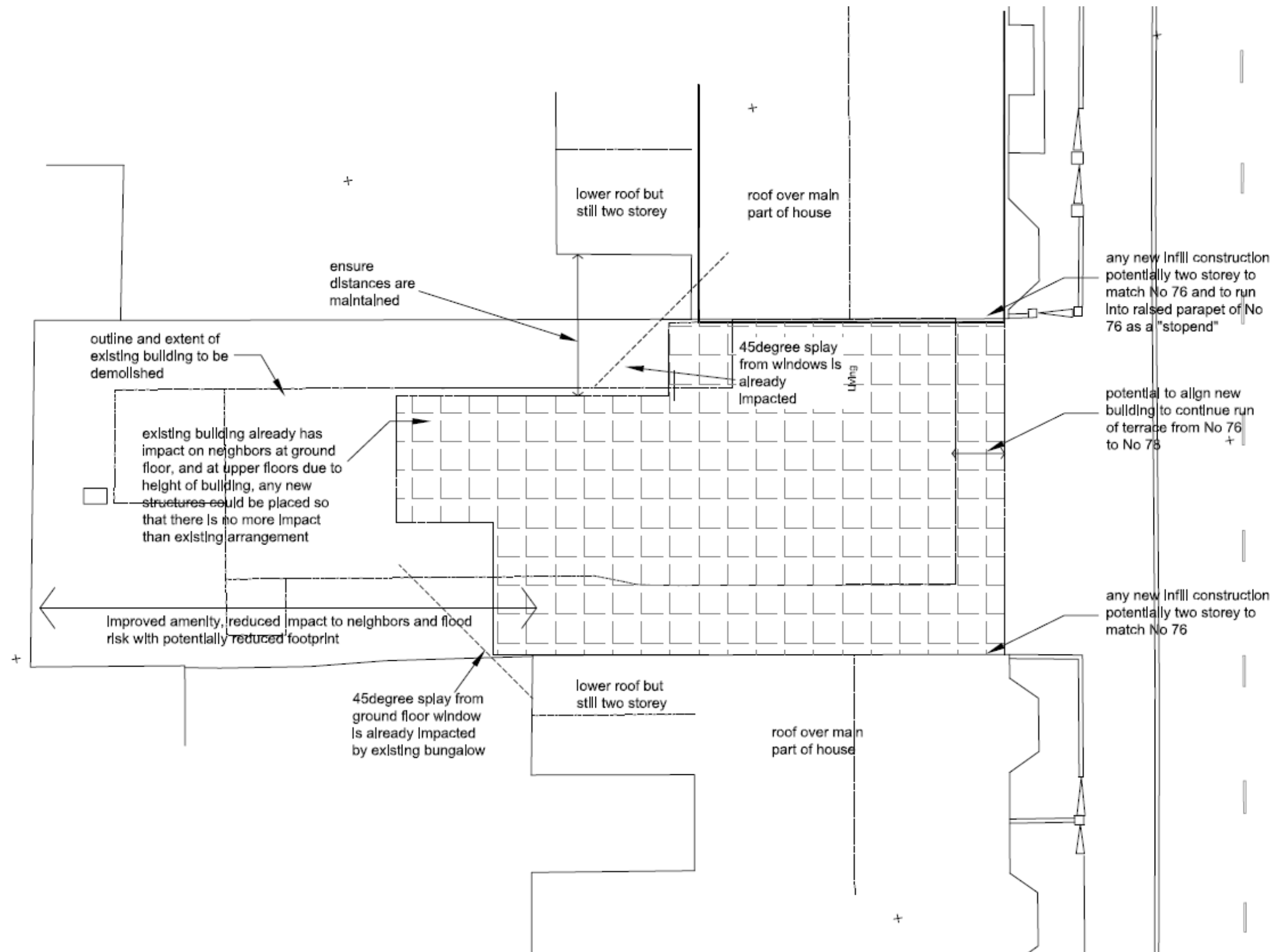
Proposed elevation to Queens Road



Existing sectional elevation

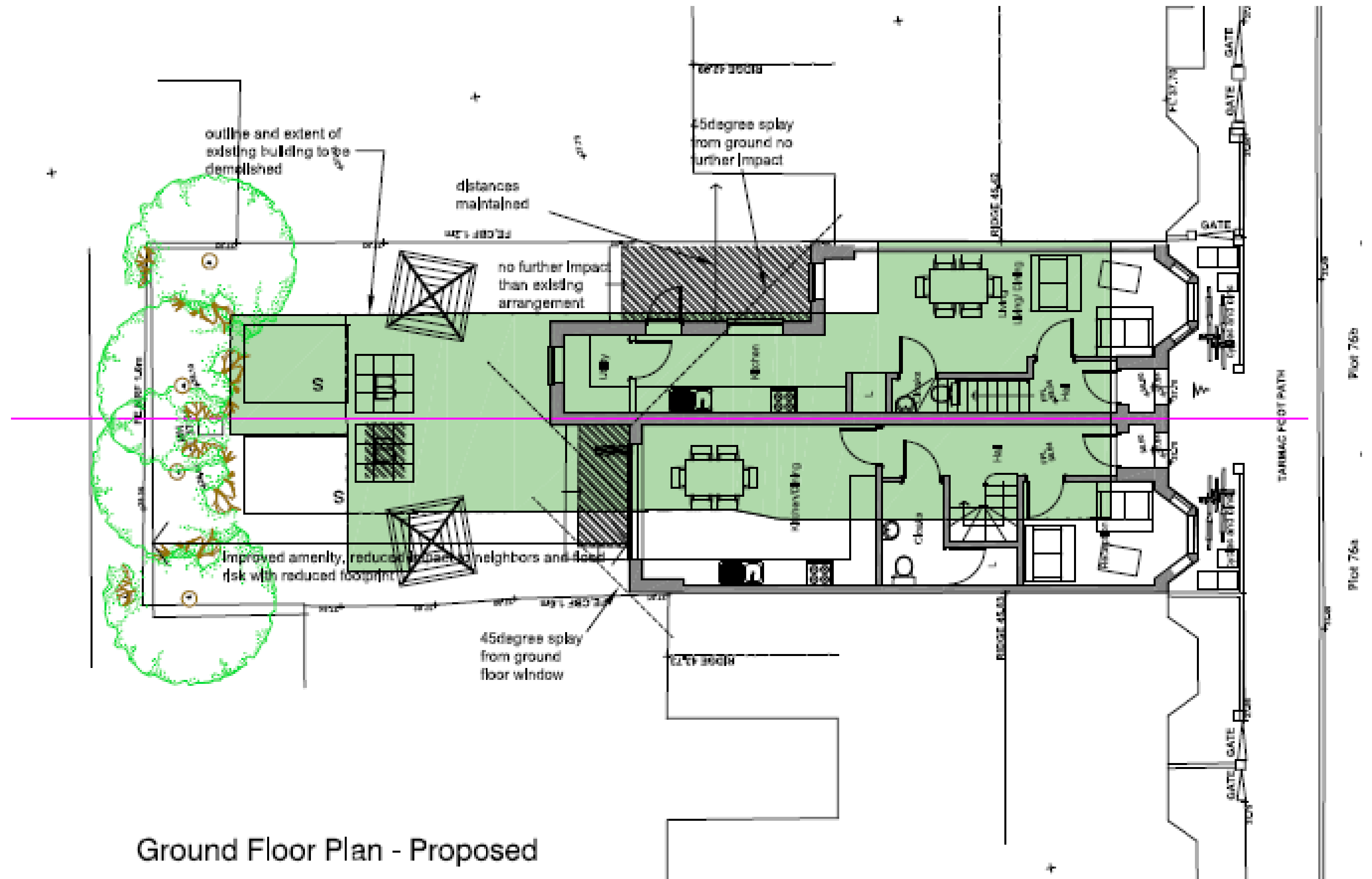


Proposed sectional elevation showing levels set to 38.04 as advised in collaboration with the EA



Constraints and Opportunities plan

Plan shows the site constraints and the resultant footprint available for any new development to replace that of the existing



Ground Floor Plan - Proposed

Working site layout based upon constraints and available footprint, (shows original building footprint in green against new proposal)



Examples of varying building designs within the surrounds of the application site, and where roof heights are not consistent even in the run of some of the terraces.

Hard and Soft Landscaping

The existing boundaries to the rear gardens of properties of the rear garden are predominantly 1800mm high close boarded fences which already achieve a coherent appearance and achieve a good sense of enclosure, to both the existing dwellings and the same to the new proposed dwellings.

The resultant garden area following the setting of the houses will be divided at the rear to provide a private garden to each dwelling, and the frontage will allow parking and a good area for planting, and the remainder set to lawn for communal use.

The materials would be selected for the external surfaces which are practical and sympathetic to the building form, with naturally drained sustainable finishes that would retain surface water run of within the plot both for the hard surfaces and for roof drainage.

Areas and density

The application site as it exists has a site area of 207.3m², and much of this is already occupied by the existing garage workshop and the private residence in the form of a bungalow connected to the workshop at the rear.

The plot is 8.05m across at its narrowest width and 25.3m deep

Gross internal areas proposed are:

Plot 76a – 5-person unit
Ground floor 44.25m²
First floor 40.30 m²
Loft floor 14.08 m²
Total floor area for 98.63m²

Plot 76b – 4-person unit
Ground floor 39.45m²
First floor 31.35 m²
Loft floor 14.06 m²
Total floor area for 84.86m²

Policy H4 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan dated March 2018 design guide has put forward for adoption minimum space standards which align with the Department for Communities and Local Government guidelines for new dwellings, which has set minimum floor areas for the type and number of bedrooms being provided.

Although these are currently guidelines, the proposals for a 5 Person 3bedroom dwelling set over three storeys would need to achieve 99m².

The new unit 76a, would as proposed come negligibly just under this required floor area,

For a 4-person 3bed unit over three storeys, a floor area of 90m² is required. Due to the constraints with neighbours at the rear for the new unit No 76b, this unit as proposed would be less than the requirement, but the floor plans demonstrate that the accommodation can be provided comfortably.

Therefore two dwellings can comfortably sit within the plot width and provide the level of accommodation expected whilst ensuring that that impact to neighbours is insignificant.

Obligations/Infrastructure

In line with the government's current National Planning Policy Framework, and Reading Borough Councils draft Local Plan March 2018, yet to be adopted, it is understood that developments such as the one described here, consisting of less than 10 new dwellings and overall less than 1000m² combined floorspace, are exempted from contributing towards pooled funds for the provision of affordable housing in the wider area. It is therefore understood that no such contributions should be sought by the local planning authority.

The applicant is aware that as there is a net increase in the number of dwellings from the existing 1No that a “Community Infrastructure Levy” payment would be required and has completed an application stage CIL form as part of the application set of information.

Viability Appraisals

A development Viability Appraisals was undertaken for the proposed development by Bruton Knowles, 2 Paris, Parklands Railton Road Guildford, Surrey GU2 9JX on 23rd November 2018 and in their summary the report states that:

3.8.1 In order to be considered able to viably contribute to planning obligations the Residual Land Value is required to equal or exceed Site Value. On this occasion, I have assessed Site Value at £260,000 and the Residual Land Value at £217,000 and I conclude that it is not viable for the Proposed Development to contribute towards the provision of Affordable Housing or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The appraisal is attached a part of the application set of information.

Flood Risk

From data reviewed from the Environment agency, the site is in Flood Zone 2 and only partially in flood Zone 3.

This relates to a flood risk area where caution is required for any new development, and as a result a flood risk assessment has been prepared with detailed Sequential and Exception tests reviewed considering the proposed residential development of the site to be suitable.

The data was prepared by Argyl on 8th October 2019 with their report AEL-4491-FRA-958724 and their findings are attached as part of the application set of information.

Exception and Sequential tests

Both the Exception and Sequential tests have passed the requirements and the two new dwellings are a viable proposition for the application site.

Report 72198R2 prepared by Geosmart for Argyl Environmental states in its executive summary that:

*“A review of the search area and chosen Site parameters, outlined within Section 4 of this report, indicate there are no suitable alternative development locations, which are at a lower Flood Risk than the subject Site. Therefore, the Site and proposed development is considered to have passed the Sequential Test.
In line with paragraph 102 of the NPPF (2019), as there were no alternative Sites at a lower flood risk which would accommodate the Site; the Exception Test should be passed.
The Exception Test is comprised of two main components, including wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk be demonstrated and demonstration that development will be safe for its lifetime.
The wider sustainability benefits outweigh the risk identified within the site-specific FRA (ref: AEL-4491-FRA-958724) produced for the Site. The mitigation measures set out within the recommendations of the FRA would provide suitable mitigation to reduce the impacts of flooding over the lifetime of the proposed development.
Thus, the proposed development is considered to pass both the first and second parts of the Exception Test.
In conclusion, the proposed development passes the Sequential and Exception Tests.
There are therefore no tenable grounds for refusal on flood risk grounds.”*

Environment Agency collaboration

The scheme design has been presented to the Environment Agency in order to obtain their approval to the proposals in advance of the planning application being submitted. The key advice has been to set levels to 38.04 based on actual design modelling that has been prepared in collaboration with the Environment Agency with the flood risk assessment incorporating the EA's recommendations. The EA's approval to the proposals will be submitted as part of the submitted proposals, or during the course of the application being submitted.

In overall terms the effects of the proposal in terms of flood risk for vulnerable uses will be to replace one single storey dwelling which has 100% of its floor area exposed to risk (and has no resilience measures) with two dwellings each having upper floors above flood risk levels and with resilience measures so that ground floor accommodation can be re-used soon after a flood event. It is therefore considered that the net effects of the proposal should be regarded as neutral/ acceptable in terms of flood risk.

The intention is to continue the 'building line and scale' of the existing terraced homes to both left and right of the development site, and in order to be as close as possible to storey and building heights to these reference buildings, it is proposed that the new floor levels are set 300mm above the existing ground levels, as this would follow the standing advice from the Environment Agency that would relate to “minor applications”.

This would allow for the new dwellings to be only marginally raised, and therefore provide the opportunity to limit any impact to neighbours and the streetscene.

The site area is 207.3m² and the existing footprint of the garage workshop and the attached bungalow to the rear is 104m². The new proposals relate to a built ground floor footprint of 100.02m², being marginally less than that of the current arrangement and should therefore be seen to have a positive affect to flood risk mitigation relating to a small reduction on the existing.

Site Contamination

A Phase 1 Desk Top Study with a Preliminary risk assessment was provided by Soil Environment Services Ltd in their report dated October 2016. The report findings were:
Some uncertainties are considered to exist with regards to the concentration of potential contaminants from former on-site activities. Metals, hydrocarbons, asbestos and other potential contaminants could be present in the soil at concentrations above guideline values. These could pose a risk to human health and controlled waters.
It is recommended that a Phase 2 investigation is undertaken with sampling of the site in order to substantiate the possible risks from contamination. The investigation may consist of soil samples from targeted boreholes with soils samples analysed in a UKAS and MCERTS accredited laboratory for metals, hydrocarbons, asbestos and other associated contaminants, such that a site specific quantitative risk assessment can be undertaken and appropriate risk reduction measures recommended.
Any site investigation should be targeted with regard to sampling locations and all works in accordance with BS 10175 - Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites: Code of Practice and CLRI 1 - Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, using LQM/CIEH S4ULs guideline values.

As a result, A scope of works for the Phase 2 intrusive investigation will need to be agreed with the council prior to intrusive or development works.

The appraisal is attached a part of the application set of information.

Biodiversity and Protected Species

The existing building is well maintained and there are no signs for the potential effect to protected species.

An ecological appraisal was carried out by “Urban Tree Experts” on 17th November 2018 which confirms:

From the internal and external inspections, it can be concluded that there is no evidence of current or prior use of the property by bats and the building is in a poor condition. Informed by the results of the detailed preliminary bat survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that the building has a very low potential for roosting bats. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required., however, as a contingency, In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed works, all work must stop and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licensed bat ecologist.
If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 24 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the building may have changed and become more suitable to support roosting bats.

Conclusion

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has considered the local context and character and used this assessment to inform the characteristics of the proposed development to which it provides an appropriate response in terms of its scale, layout, use, appearance (including in terms of the materials to be used) and landscaping.

The proposal will provide two homes each with three bedrooms and helping to meet the significant needs for new homes within the urban area.

The proposed development is consistent with policies at the national and local level in relation to matters of design and access and responds to the requirement for the creation of safe and secure environments.

The application site (in common with a significant surrounding area of Caversham) is within a flood risk zone. The small scale infill proposal is designed with resilience to flood events and will replace an existing single storey home which has no such measures. On balance the circumstances justify an exceptional case for approval.

The proposed development is in an accessible location, easily accessible for public transport and to a range of local services and facilities.

We trust that the local planning authority will agree that on balance this proposal represents sustainable development with two flood resilient infill homes meeting local needs and enhancing the site vicinity. It will therefore be appropriate to grant planning permission.