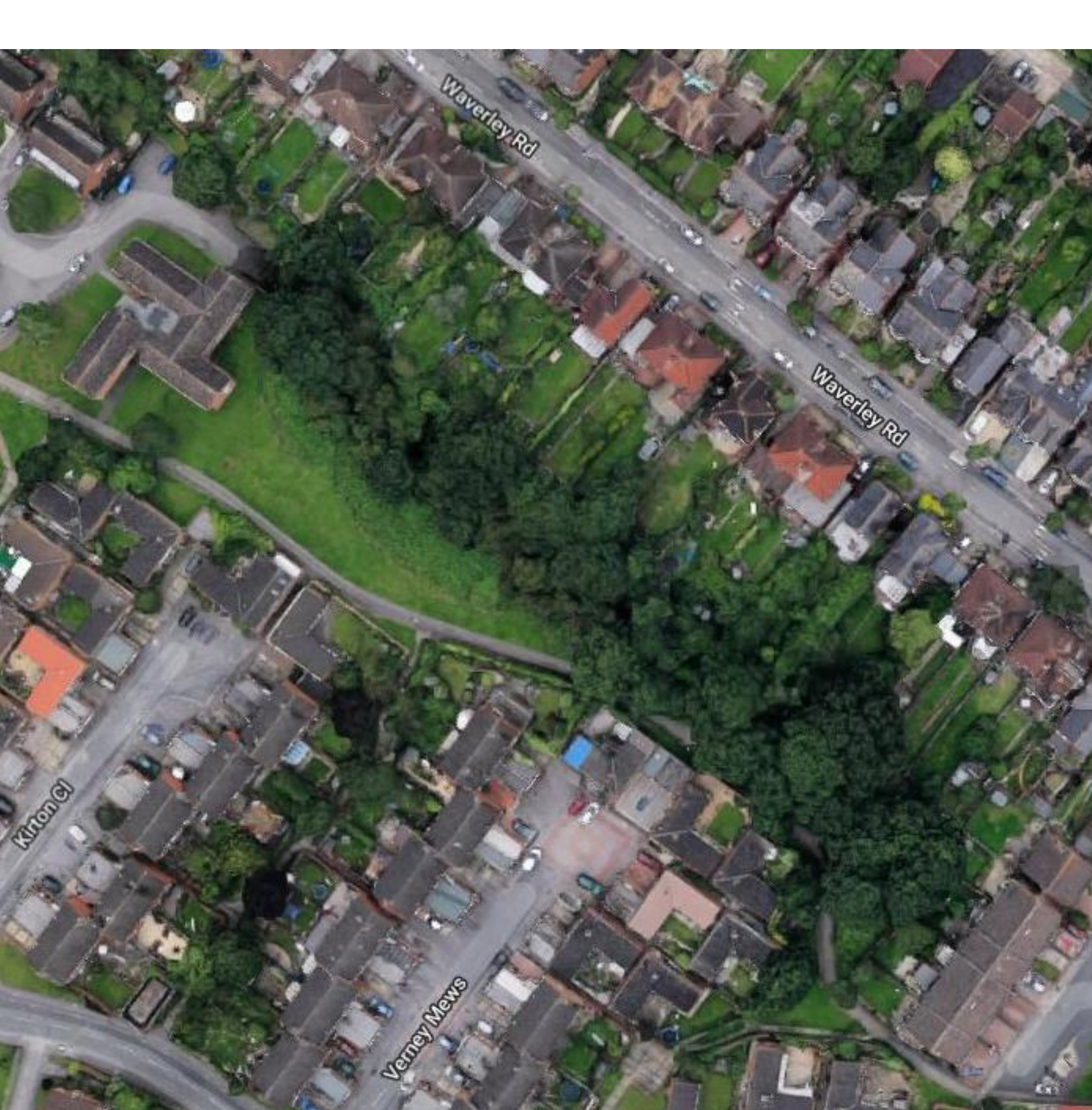




**PLANNING, DESIGN AND
ACCESS STATEMENT**

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION
SIX DWELLINGS

LAND ADJACENT TO THORPE HOUSE
COLLIERS WAY
READING

On behalf of
THAMES VALLEY RETIREMENT HOMES LTD

NOVEMBER 2018



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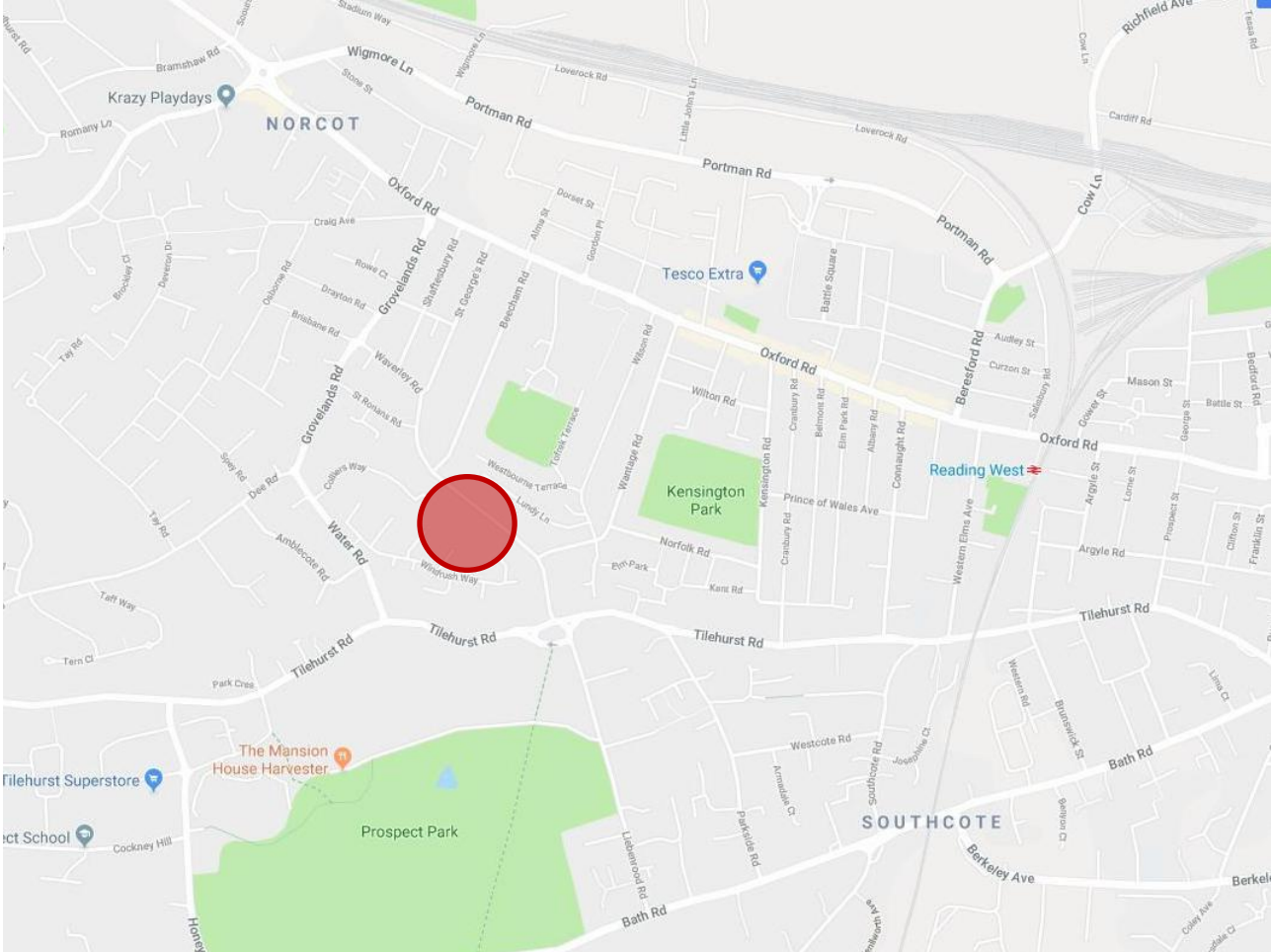
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PART I— BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1 INTRODUCTION



Extract from Google Map



Extract from Google Map showing the application site in the wider area

1.1 The following Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a revised outline planning application made by Thames Valley Retirement Homes Ltd for the residential redevelopment of a vacant site in Tilehurst. The application site lies to the north of Kirton Close, and to the east of Thorpe House along Colliers Way.

1.2 This outline planning application proposes the provision of a terrace of 6 dwellings with on-site parking and access provided from Kirton Close. All matters are reserved save for access however, detailed indicative elevations and a site plan have been provided for illustrative purposes only.

1.3 This development follows on from two previous proposals for residential redevelopment of the application site and is considered to be an appropriate response to the refusal of these previous applications. The development will provide an important windfall housing contribution to this area, making efficient and effective use of a highly sustainable brownfield site which is supported by the key objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).

1.4 The format of this statement has been developed in accordance with the National Planning Practice Guidance. This statement has also been prepared with regard to the guidance provided by CABE ‘Design

and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them’ (2006).

1.5 The proposed development has given particular consideration to the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), the Reading Borough Council Core Strategy (adopted January 2008) and the relevant supplementary planning documents.

PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2 SITE CONTEXT



Photos taken of the site October 2018



2.1 The application site is irregularly shaped and measures approximately 0.3ha in area. The site is positioned at the east of Colliers Way, to the rear of Thorpe House, an existing flatted residential building. The site is located to the north of Kirton Close and to the south of Waverley Road. The site is not associated with Thorpe House and is under separate ownership with the Applicants.

2.2 The application site is not identified on the Council’s Proposals Map for any particular use, however, it falls within the defined settlement boundary and is considered to constitute previously developed land. The land is not designated as public open space.

2.3 Historically, the land was used as a brick and tile works, including housing associated kilns and chalk pits. Evidence of these workings is present in the form of a steep embankment which runs along the northern boundary of the site, fading as it extends to the east.

2.4 In more recent years, however, the site has become overgrown and occupied by dense brambles and some tree coverage. Several of the more mature trees are currently protected by way of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s) located along the northern site boundary. There have also been issues with vandalism, drug misuse and fly-tipping at the site which has resulted in a security fence being constructed around the perimeter of the site to prevent unlawful access.

2.5 Pedestrian access to the site is currently only available to 16 Kirton Close and on a footpath running between Colliers Way and Windrush Way to the west.

2.6 The footpath continues to connect Kirton Close and Verney Mews to the south via alleyways linking between existing dwellings. Vehicular access is not currently provided to the main part of the site however, the access via Colliers Way has sufficient width to facilitate vehicular access, currently only used by vehicles for maintenance purposes.

PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3 LOCAL CHARACTER



3.1 The application site is located within an established residential area of Tilehurst characterised by unusual single storey 'L-shaped' bungalows, two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings and flats. Within the immediate context of the site, the character is defined by the backs of the bungalows along Kirton Close and Verney Mews and the large two-storey flatted building to the east along Colliers Way known as Thorpe House.

3.2 The architecture within the general locality is utilitarian in character dating from the 1960's and 1970's. The area lacks any distinct architectural merit or any particular local distinctiveness that might be said to otherwise positively contribute to the quality of the built environment. The adjacent dwellings back onto the site with no overlooking and therefore provide limited natural surveillance.

3.3 The local area is considered to be very sustainably located for residential use, within reach of Reading Town Centre. The site is within close proximity to two frequent premier bus routes to and from the town centre area that have 30 and 15 minute frequency respectively connecting to Little Heath and Central Reading which benefits from a Great Western Mainline and a Railway Station with direct links to Newbury to the west, Oxford to the North and London Paddington to the east.

3.4 More locally, the site is within walking distance of a number of local services and shops including those at Prospect Park (0.7 miles to the south) and a multitude of shops, hot food takeaways and services along the Oxford Road (0.5 miles to the north).



PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4 PRE-APPLICATION HISTORY

4.1 The application site has recent planning history including pre-application requests.

4.2 The applicant originally sought pre-application advice in respect of a residential development scheme on the site in 2013 (LPA Ref: 131179/PREAPP). The scheme proposed a total of 8 dwellings with a mix of 6 x 3 bed houses and 2 x 4 bed houses. The scheme proposed two banks of four houses arranged back to back.

4.3 Formal written response was received in February 2014 which confirmed that although the site is not formally designated for any particular purpose, the Council consider that it currently provides a contribution to the visual amenity, biodiversity and ecological value of the area and as such residential redevelopment would likely be resisted.

4.4 Furthermore, the Council considered that the vehicular access proposed which was via the side of Thorpe House, was insufficient in width and conflicted with the footpath. The design and layout was also not supported and the proposal failed to incorporate any soft landscaping in terms of vegetation. In particular, the Council advised that as there are several trees on the site which are protected by way of a Tree Preservation Order, any proposal for the site would need to incorporate measures to ensure the retention and protection of these trees.

4.5 Following this request for pre-application advice, the applicant sought professional planning advice from JSA, which accumulated in the submission of a revised pre-application advice request in July 2016. The revised proposal was prepared with the benefit of the earlier Officer's advice and sought to respond to the issues raised through the provision of an alternative scheme proposal.

4.6 The pre-application proposal comprised a single flatted block containing 15 units with two options for access; 1. via a new shared access from Colliers Way and 2. a new access from Kirton Close achieved through the demolition of the existing bungalow (No. 16).

4.7 Written feedback was received from the Planning Officer (Stephen Vigor) on August 2017 (LPA Ref: 161305/PREAPP). The

main points considered the following;

- The area is characterised by two-storey development and at 2.5 stories the proposal would likely appear incongruous and isolated;
- The illustrative building contained a large crown roof which was considered to appear bulky and would contrast unsympathetically with the simple less prominent forms of Thorpe House;
- The 21 parking spaces indicated was considered to be insufficient, instead requiring 28 spaces for the quantum and mix proposed;
- In terms of access, Option 1 was considered to be unacceptable in terms of pedestrian safety and was considered to be contrived and not good design. Concerns were raised with Option 2 in relation to pedestrian safety due to the interface with the existing footpath;
- The design and massing of the building combined with a heavily glazed frontage was considered to result in the “perceived loss of privacy” although no actual loss of privacy;



Proposed Site Plan Option 1
(LPA Ref: 161305/PREAPP)



Proposed Site Plan Option 2
(LPA Ref: 161305/PREAPP)

- The proposal was also considered to likely be overbearing upon the gardens of the dwellings on Kirton Close and Verney Mews; and
- The impact upon the protected trees would need to be demonstrated.

4.8 Whilst many of the issues raised by the Council can be addressed through design changes, an issue was raised by the Council that the site is ‘open-space’. The Council recognised that the site is not designated as open space on the adopted proposals map. Nor can the site provide public open space due to its private ownership. The Officer advised in their opinion that, the proposal must comply with Policy CS28 which confirms that “*development proposals that will result in the loss of open space or jeopardise its use or enjoyment will not be permitted*”.

4.9 The Council confirmed after a series of email correspondence that they would not be able to support any residential development on the site for this main reason.

PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

5 PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

5.1 Due to the unlawful activity on the site; fly-tipping, drug misuse and other social nuisance, a Certificate of Lawfulness application was submitted for the erection of a 2m high security fence around the perimeter of the site (LPA Ref: 162105). This application was approved February 2017. A boarded fence has now been constructed by the Applicant which provides security and prevents views into the site which might otherwise serve to attract further fly-tipping or other anti-social or potential illegal activities.

5.2 In 2017 an Outline Planning Application was submitted (with all matters reserved save for access) for residential development for up to 18 dwelling units. The proposal was for a flatted scheme ranging between two and two-and-a-half storeys in height. The illustrative approach suggested the appearance of individual dwellings rather than a more typical flatted block design.

5.3 The application was considered at the Planning Committee on 6th December 2017 and was refused for 11 reasons covering the following;

- i) Loss of open space;
- ii) Scale of proposed buildings;
- iii) Loss of 16 Kirton Close on character of the area;
- iv) Parking layout;
- v) Risk of accidents to users of the footpath;
- vi) Harm to existing trees and landscaping;
- vii) Neighbours amenity;
- viii) Outlook, daylight, sunlight and private outdoor amenity space of future occupants;
- ix) Lack of a Sustainable Drainage Strategy;
- x) Affordable Housing legal agreement; and
- xi) Legal agreement to secure mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training of local people.

5.4 Following this refusal, the Applicants submitted an amended outline application for residential redevelopment to provide a maximum of 14 dwelling units and demolition of 16 Kirton Close to provide access (LPA Ref: 180849). This application attempted to address the reasons

for refusal from the previous application, however, that application was refused in July 2018 for the following reasons:

- i) The proposed development would result in the loss of open space that has not been previously developed and which makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and environmental quality of the area due to its openness, undeveloped character and green vegetated appearance;
- ii) The amount of development proposed within the main body of the site would require a scale of building that would appear as an incongruous, jarring and poorly integrated feature within the context of the notably modest scale of development in adjacent streets, the minimal distance that would be likely to exist between the building and north eastern and south western site boundaries would result in an overly cramped appearance, further adding to the visual harm. For these reasons the development would represent an overdevelopment of the site, fail to respond positively to its local context, and fail to reinforce local character and distinctiveness;
- iii) The proposed removal of the dwelling at 16 Kirton Close and its replacement with an access roadway and vehicle parking area would result in the loss of continuity and enclosure within the established street scene which is characterised by a regular built form of a distinctive style and appearance. The proposed access would result in a disjointed and visually stark arrangement of access road and vehicle parking to the detriment of the existing streetscene;
- iv) The proposal would require traffic crossing an existing footpath/cycle path, without giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists. This would result in an increased risk of accidents to users of the footpath;
- v) The proposal includes the unnecessary and unjustified removal of a TPO-protected tree of amenity value at the northern corner of the site. As such the proposal fails to preserve and not harm the character and appearance of the site and area within which it is located, including the wider contribution to visual amenity provided by mature trees;
- vi) The application fails to demonstrate that the proposed amount of

- development can be accommodated without harm to the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings caused by a loss of privacy to windows and gardens due to overlooking; overbearing effects resulting from the likely scale and proximity of the building; and disturbance from vehicle movements adjacent to Thorpe House;
- vii) The application fails to demonstrate that the proposed amount of development can be accommodated in a manner which provides adequate outlook, daylight, sunlight and private outdoor amenity space for future occupiers;
 - viii) In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough and the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities; and
 - ix) In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the employment skills or training needs of local people with associated socio-economic harm.



Proposed Site Plan LPA Ref: 180849



PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

6 SITE ANALYSIS AND CONSTRAINTS



5.1 The Applicant’s intention is to find a suitable solution for residential redevelopment of the application site. There are a number of constraints and opportunities for the Application site which, along with the relevant planning history, have shaped the current proposal;

5.2 **Constraints:**

- Current lack of a formal vehicular access;
- Change in levels across the site, specifically the embankment along the northern boundary;
- Neighbouring dwellings’ amenity, outlook and daylight access;

- Need to consider the site’s irregular shape to prevent the creation of ‘problem’ areas.

5.3 **Opportunities**

- Extremely sustainable brownfield site within the residential development area of Reading;
- Bring forward a redundant area of unused private land into sustainable economic and social use;
- Contribution of six high quality dwellings to the Councils windfall housing targets;

- Opportunity to improve the visual appearance of this site;
- Opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the area;
- Very good public transport links;
- Within excellent walking distance to shops and services;
- Opportunity to enhance the natural surveillance and improve community cohesion.

PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

7 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

7.1 The planning policy context for the site is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and the Reading Borough Local Development Framework which comprises the Reading Borough Core Strategy (January 2008, altered January 2015), the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (October 2012, altered January 2015) and the relevant SPD's.

7.2 Reading Borough Council are progressing with a new Local Plan which will set out how Reading will develop up to 2036. The new Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on Thursday 29th March 2018 beginning the process of public examination. Following public hearings ending in October 2018 the Council are expected to provide additional information to the Inspector which is currently under production. Therefore the draft policies hold little weight in relation to this current planning application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)

7.3 The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

7.4 The NPPF was updated recently in July 2018. The updated NPPF and its policies are the most relevant national guidance available at this time.

7.5 The objectives to achieve sustainable development as set out in Paragraphs 7 to 14 include the requirements to take local circumstances into account and to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of the area. The Local Plan is the starting point for decision-making but material considerations can sometimes indicate that the plan should not be followed (Para. 12 and 47).

7.6 Paragraph 48 deals with the weight to be given to emerging plans and where there are significant unresolved objections, the emerging plan would be given less weight than otherwise.

7.7 Paragraphs 59-79 deal with the issue of delivering enough homes. Small to medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements (Para. 69). Planning Authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their decisions, giving weight to the benefits of suitable sites within existing settlements (Para. 68).

7.8 Local Planning Authorities have to meet a Housing Delivery Test and be able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply with an additional buffer (Paras. 73-75).

7.9 Sustainable transport is addressed in Section 9 of the NPPF. Development should be refused on highway grounds where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Development should create safe, secure and attractive places that give priority to pedestrians and cycles.

7.10 Development should make efficient use of land as detailed in Para's 117-123. Local Plans should seek to optimise the use of land in their area (Para 123a).

7.11 The creation of high quality places through good design is addressed in Para's. 124-132.

Reading Borough Council Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document

7.12 In relation to sustainable construction and design, Core Strategy Policy CS1 confirms that proposals for the construction of new buildings will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

7.13 Policy CS4 relates to accessibility and the intensity of development and confirms that the scale and density of development within the Borough should be related to its level of accessibility of walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.

7.14 Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy confirms that residential development proposals will generally not be permitted on sites which fall outside of the defined settlement boundary as defined on the Proposals Map. The Proposals Map confirms that the site falls within the defined settlement boundary.

7.15 Core Strategy Policy CS14 relates to housing provision and confirms that provision will be made for at least 572 new dwellings per annum for the period 2006-2016 and 521 new dwellings per annum for the period 2016-2026. This provision should be made up of development on, inter alia, small previously developed sites.

7.16 Policy CS15 relates to location, accessibility, density and housing mix. This confirms that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by: (i) an assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located; (ii) its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4; (iii) the need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and (iv) the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers. This Policy continues to state that net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable. In accessible sub-urban locations, the Council will seek a density of 30-35 dwellings per hectare. In Urban locations, the Council will seek a density of 40-75 dwellings per hectare.

7.17 Policy DM5 of the Sites and Detailed Policies provides further guidance regarding housing mix and confirms that on new developments for 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, the Council will generally require over 50% of dwellings to be 3 bedrooms or more. The Council will also require the majority of dwellings will be in the form of houses rather than flats, having regard to all other material considerations. All newbuild dwellings in any location should also be built to 'Lifetime Homes' standards, having regard to all other material considerations.

PART I — BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

7 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

7.18 Policy CS16 and DM6 relate to affordable housing and confirms that the Council will require affordable housing provision at 30% of the total number of dwellings for all developments of 10 units or more. Where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/ landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.

7.19 In respect of design, Core Strategy Policy CS7 confirms 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. The various components of development will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the urban design objectives.

7.20 All new development should make provision for open space through appropriate on or off-site provision, or through contributions towards the provision or improvement of leisure or recreational facilities, including open space, in accordance with Policy CS29. On sites proposing less than 50 dwellings, new open space provision, improvements or enhancements will be sought by appropriate contributions.

7.21 In addition to this, Site and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM10 confirms that dwellings should be provided with functional private or communal open space that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses should be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.

7.22 The supporting text of this Policy provides minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for new flatted residential development outside Reading and confirms that 25sqm of outdoor space should be provided per unit for 1-2 bedroom flats.

7.23 Policy DM4 relates to safeguarding amenity and states that development should not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of: - (i)

privacy and overlooking, (ii) access to sunlight and daylight, (iii) visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development, (iv) noise and disturbance, (v) artificial lighting, (vi) vibration, (vii) dust and fumes, (viii) smell or (ix) crime and safety. This policy continues to state that a back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually considered appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect of privacy.

7.24 Policy CS5 relates to inclusive access and confirms that all buildings should be located, sited and designed to provide suitable access to, into and within, its facilities for all potential users, including disabled person, so that they can use them safely and easily.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing SPD (Adopted July 2013)

7.25 Policy DM6 seeks lesser proportions of affordable housing provision on sites of less than 15 units.

Employment, Skills and Training SPD (Adopted April 2013)

7.26 This SPD sets out the obligations which will be sought from developers at the construction and end user phases of development to contribute towards a range of employment, skills and training measures to mitigate the impacts of development to ensure that local people can better access job opportunities arising from new development.

Revised Sustainable Design and Construction SOD (July 2011)

5.27 The aim of this SPD is to ensure that developments are of a high standard with practical advice for sustainable design and construction plus waste minimisation.

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011)

5.28 In accordance with this SPD the site falls within 'Zone 3—Secondary Core Area'. Zone 3 sites are in reach of a variety of land uses and densities and include some local centres for day-to-day needs. Typically these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses 'Premier

Route'.

5.29 In accordance with the SPD two parking spaces are provided for each dwelling with an additional three visitor spaces to prevent overspill of parking onto Kirton Close.

5-Year Housing Land Supply

5.30 In accordance with the Annual Monitoring Report for 2017 we understand that the Borough Council can supply a 8.23 years housing land supply. There is an allowance for small site windfalls at 127 per annum. It is considered that this application provides a positive contribution to the Borough Council's windfall allowance.

PART II — THE PROPOSAL

8 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

8.1 The next section of this statement seeks to respond to the reasons for refusal of the last application.

8.2 The application site historically comprised part of a former brick and tile kiln works and chalk quarry throughout the 19th Century.

8.3 During the turn of the century until the late 1960's, the site formed part of the wider 'Grovelands' Brick, Tile and Pottery Works which occupied a large area in this part of Tilehurst. Throughout this period, the site became fully excavated and, once quarried later became part of the 'works' area.

8.4 In the 1970's the wider area was redeveloped for residential development however, the site remained in private ownership and its alternative use was not explored until recently.

8.5 Whilst not definitive, within both previous refused applications, the Council have concluded both times that they classify the application site as open space despite the evidence portrayed before them that the site has an historic relationship as a Tile and Brick works.

8.6 The applicant, as mentioned previously, has now constructed the approved security fence around the perimeter of the application site. This now prevents the site as being used as 'open space' by local people as well as preventing fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour which has occurred in the past.

8.7 Despite the conclusions of the Council so far, it is still contended by the applicant that the site cannot be classified as 'open space' and will now remain inaccessible due to the aforementioned security issues.

8.8 Accordingly, the site is therefore considered to fall within the defini-

tion of previously developed land.

8.9 As the site is within an established settlement boundary as defined by the Councils adopted Proposals Map, and the lack of any other designations, accordingly the Principle of Development is considered to be acceptable and actively supported by the NPPF.

8.10 The following chapters seek to resolve the issues raised by the Council with the last planning application. It is considered that the reduction in the number of units to six is acceptable.



Indicative design for six dwellings

PART II — THE PROPOSAL

9 OPEN SPACE

9.1 The first reason for refusal relates to the loss of open space and is stated as:

“The proposed development would result in the loss of open space that has not been previously developed and which makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and environmental quality of the area due to its openness, undeveloped character and green vegetated appearance. As such the proposed development would be contrary to Policies CS7 and CS28 of the RB LDF Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015)”.

9.2 The Council have retained their argument that the application site as open space is easily enjoyed by local residents.

9.3 It is the applicants’ case that there is no public access, as evi-

denced now by the security fence, which has also reduced the subjective comments regarding the amenity value of the site. It is the Applicants intention for the fence to remain as long as the site remains undeveloped.

9.4 The site has been become overgrown and would be an unusable and unsafe space for the public. The revised scheme would allow for a larger proportion of the site to be dedicated as open space and managed as such. The proposals reduce the footprint of the development by 29%.

9.5 In accordance with Policy CS28, which states; *“Development proposals that will result in the loss of open space or jeopardise its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that*

replacement open space, to a similar standard can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space (our emphasis)”, the applicants consider that the by reducing the level of built form on site, there is now reasonable scope to provide improvements to the recreational use of the site (to the eastern boundaries) which is fully accessible to local residents and managed as public open space.

9.6 The Council must therefore give due weight to the fact that a large proportion of the site would be provided as managed public open space which is in accordance with Policy CS28. This qualifies as an improvement to recreational facilities for the area.

9.7 It is worth noting that there are already a number of existing open spaces within the locality of the site. The diagram indicates that the local area is well served by open space, most of which, unlike the application site, is public open space, fully accessible and useable by the local Community.

9.8 The diagram on this page shows a number of ‘parks’ or public open spaces which are managed for the use by the public and are therefore in a suitable condition to be used as such. In particular, Colliers Way and Grovelands Road (yellow) have a good level of visual amenity landscaping, are appropriately placed and provide an attractive public realm.

9.9 Accordingly it is considered that the development of a portion of the application site is acceptable in accordance with Policy CS28 and, by reducing the level of built form and hardstanding, there is more potential for enjoyment from the remaining proposed open land.



PART II — THE PROPOSAL

10 USE AND AMOUNT

10.1 The second reason for refusal states;

“The amount of development proposed within the main body of the site would require a scale of building (or buildings) that would appear as an incongruous, jarring and poorly integrated feature within the context of the notably modest scale of development in adjacent streets. The minimal distance that would be likely to exist between the building(s) and north eastern and south western site boundaries would result in an overly cramped appearance, further adding to the visual harm. For these reasons the development would represent an overdevelopment of the site, fail to respond positively to its local context, and fail to reinforce local character and distinctiveness. The proposal would therefore harm the character and appearance”.

10.2 This application seeks outline permission for just six dwellings

(three-bedrooms) with on site parking and private amenity, parking and turning areas and a new access from Kirton Close and is a much more condensed and smaller scheme than previously proposed.

10.3 By reducing the amount of development, the proposed built form and hardstanding is reduced to leave more useable communal open space for local residents.

10.4 The precise details of development will be the subject of a reserved matters application but the submitted drawings indicate a suitable and sensible option to provide six dwellings; ideal for families and young-couples.

10.5 By reducing the level of built form it is considered that development of the site now conforms to the existing grain of development in the local-

ity. The development styles in the immediate vicinity vary between detached, semi-detached and flatted development of a variety of ages and styles. There are two-storey dwellings and flats and single storey detached bungalows.

10.6 Overall the current application proposes a reduced amount of development which is complementary to Thorpe House and to the dwellings at Kirton Close, Verney Mews and Colliers Way.

10.7 The reduced amount of development allows for much greater spatial separation increasing distances from neighbouring buildings and the front site boundaries.

10.8 Finally, the reduction in proposed development from the previously refused 14-unit scheme to just six units will significantly reduce the anticipated number of vehicle movements in Kirton Close. In fact, there would be a net increase of just 5 dwellings. The traffic generation associated with the scheme would not have an appreciable impact on the character of the area.



Indicative design for six dwellings

PART II — THE PROPOSAL

11 LAYOUT, SCALE AND AMENITY

Layout and Scale

11.1 Whilst all matters except access are reserved, this Outline application is supported by a detailed indicative site layout showing buildings of an appropriate scale that could be accommodated on the site.

11.2 To address the second reason for refusal, the level of built form on site has been reduced. Where previous schemes proposed blocks of flats, with a mix of one and two-bedroom units, the current proposal is for three-bedroom dwellinghouses (family units) which would help to meet an identified need in Reading. Para. 5.1.6 of the supporting text to Policy DM5 says: *“the greatest need over the plan period is likely to be for dwellings containing three or more bedrooms. Indeed, to completely rebalance the effects of previous development and the likely level of development in the centre, virtually all the new provision outside the RCAAP area would need to be of more than 3 bedrooms.”*

11.3 To reduce the scale and level of built form, the Applicants are proposing at this Outline stage, six dwellings, linked as a terrace for illustrative purposes. This reduces the level of built form compared with the previous schemes for flats and leaves more of the site to be dedicated

as ‘open space’.

11.4 It is proposed that the building will be situated to the west of the site, leaving the eastern portion to be managed open space, the north to be private amenity land and the south to consist of the access and private parking.

11.5 The proposed dwellings would be two storey in height and would not have roof accommodation; therefore reducing the bulk of the roof. The prevalent character of the area is two-storey.

11.6 It is concluded that the number of proposed units and the creation of dwellinghouses is wholly in keeping with the character of the area and would not breach the scale of neighbouring buildings.

Amenity

11.7 Reasons for refusal 6 and 7 relate to the concerns that harm could be caused to neighbouring dwellings (privacy, overbearing and noise from vehicle movement) and the amenity of future occupiers in terms of their outlook, daylight, sunlight and private outdoor amenity space.

11.8 The nearest part of the proposed development to Thorpe House would be 14m and set back away from the neighbouring boundary with this flank elevation containing no windows. There would therefore be no detriment to the amenity value of occupiers at Thorpe House.

11.9 The front aspect relates to No. 17 Kirton Close and No. 12 Verney Mews both of which back/flank onto the application site. The development would be approximately 15 metres from No. 17 Kirton Close. This is considered to be an acceptable distance between the proposed dwellings and will prevent overlooking and loss of light.

11.10 Given the separation of the buildings from the neighbouring boundaries it is demonstrated that the proposed quantum of development is now in full accordance with local planning policies having no adverse effect upon the amenities of neighbouring residents or those of the prospective occupiers.

11.11 The proposed dwellings have all been afforded a level of private amenity space which commensurates contemporary family living.



ABOVE: Refused Site Plan LPA
Ref: 180849

BELOW: Current Proposed Site
Plan



Refused Site Plan LPA Ref: 171219

PART II — THE PROPOSAL

12 APPEARANCE

Appearance

12.1 Whilst all matters, except access, are proposed to be reserved, this application is accompanied by detailed indicative sketches depicting the suggested appearance of the building. Previous attempts to produce a design for the application site have been considered to not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

12.2 At this stage the application is Outline only, with all matters reserved except access; therefore the precise quantum, size, scale, design and appearance have only been presented as indicative at this stage.

12.3 However, in response to the reasons for refusal and the comments regarding character of the proposed development, the Applicants have provided detailed indicative drawings which demonstrate a likely and suitable response to the need to ensure that the proposed development is in character with the locality.

12.4 It is proposed that the houses will be constructed from brick and have a conventional built form. This would complement and enhance the character and appearance of the locality.

12.5 The adjacent sketches demonstrate how the proposed scheme could look.



Indicative view looking north



Indicative view looking north-east

13 ACCESS AND PARKING

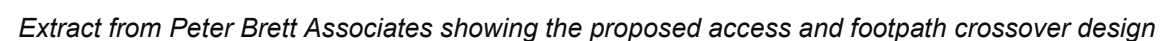
13.1 The fourth reason for refusal states;

13.2 Access is the only matter to be determined for this outline application and is recognised as being important to ensure that the reason for refusal is addressed fully.

13.4 A access arrangement with a raised table has been discussed and agreed with Reading Borough Council Highway officers. This will provide a crossover that is safe to all users.

13.6 Further details are available in the accompanying Transport Statement.

13.6 The scheme now proposes six units which ideally would consist of three bedrooms therefore in accordance with the Councils adopted Parking Standards, twelve resident parking spaces have been provided within the site boundary. Whilst visitor spaces are not required for the development the Applicants have provided three visitor spaces in the same location as previous schemes to mitigate the impact of the proposals on Kirton Close and to maintain on-street parking for the existing development post demolition of no.16.



PART II — THE PROPOSAL

14 ECOLOGY, TREES AND LANDSCAPING

Trees and Landscaping

14.1 The fifth reason for refusal refers to the “*unnecessary and unjustified removal of a TPO-protected tree of amenity value (Norway Maple T1 of TPO; T540 of tree survey) at the northern corner of the site. As such the proposal fails to preserve and not harm the character and appearance of the site and area within which it is located, including the wider contribution to visual amenity provided by mature trees*”.

14.2 The revised proposal has reduced the amount of built form on the site, therefore reducing the indicative footprint of buildings and hardstanding in comparison with the previous applications.

14.3 Therefore, it is now proposed that only one of the five TPO trees on site will be affected. Previously an arboricultural report was submitted, completed by ROAVR, which concluded that T1 and T2 (to the northern boundary) are of poor quality and that their removal and replacement would not be assessed as a loss.

14.4 The reason for refusal relates to T1 to the northern boundary. Whilst the arboricultural report concluded it was of poor quality, the proposed scheme now proposes to retain this tree and this addresses reason for refusal no. 5. To confirm, it is still proposed to remove T2 from the site due to its low quality and potential danger to neighbouring properties.

14.5 It is proposed that the excess land to the west will be landscaped and managed as an area of open space for local residents to enjoy. A full landscape plan can be submitted as part of the conditions following a reserved matters application once the final design and layout of the site has been approved.

14.6 As much of the site is expected to remain ‘green’ or landscaped with additional trees and shrubs proposed to ensure that the sites amenity value and openness is not affected. By produc-

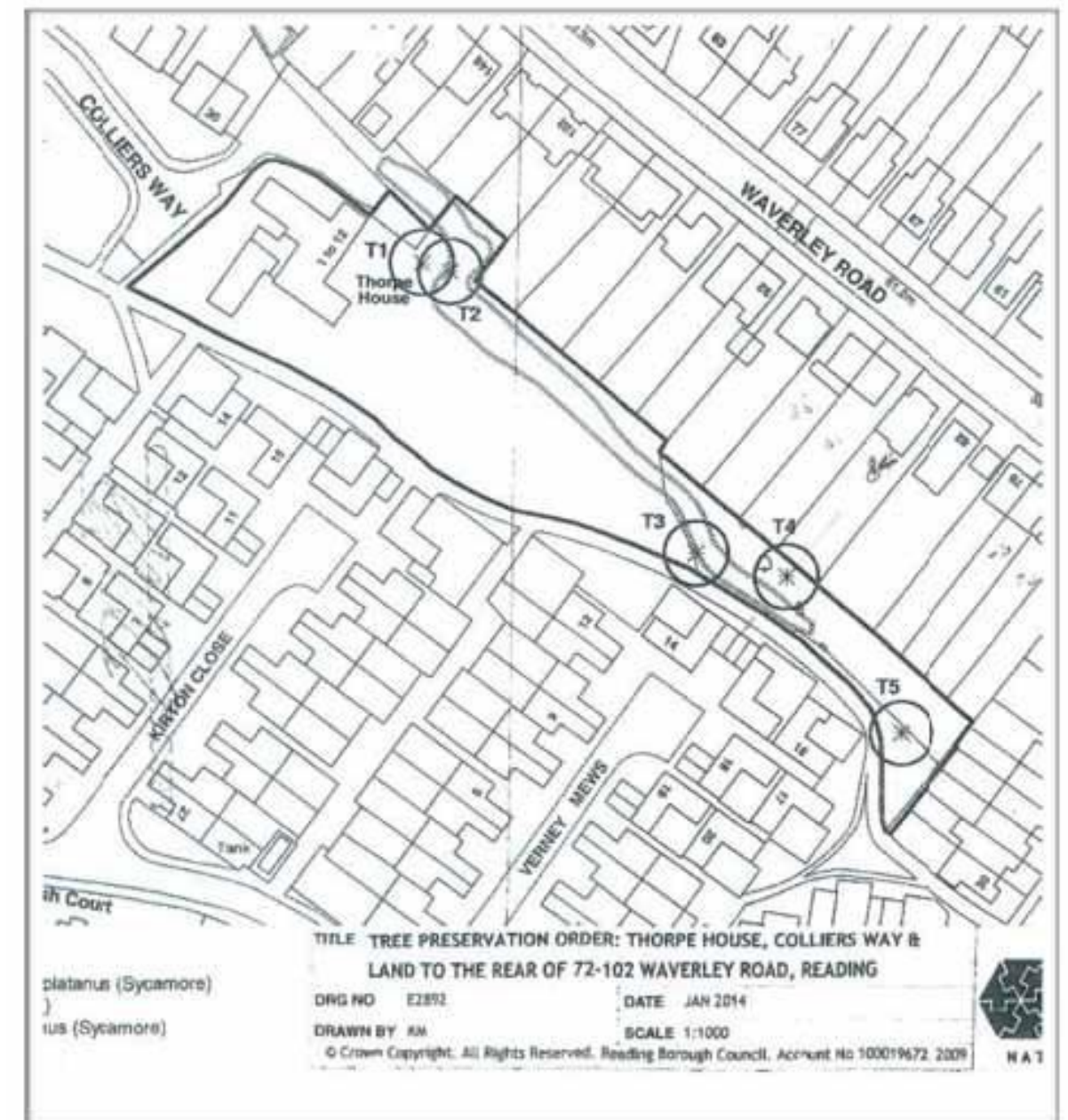
ing a managed area of the remaining site there is a better opportunity to have accessible open space for local residents to enjoy.

Ecology

14.6 Both previous Outline applications were supported by a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal prepared by ECOSA.

14.7 Under the last outline application the Council’s Ecologist raised no ecology objections subject to conditions securing appropriate wildlife-friendly landscaping, details of external lighting and controlling the clearance of vegetation during the bird nesting season.

14.8 The Applicants are happy to have conditions in accordance with the Councils ecologist’s comments and the proposals are in full accordance with Policy CS34. For clarity, the previous submitted Preliminary Ecological Assessment (dated May 2017) has been submitted with this application.



Data collected on the five TPO trees

PART II — THE PROPOSAL

15 SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Sustainability

15.1 The application site is highly sustainable, being within close proximity to a number of local shops, services and community facilities.

15.2 The site also benefits from regular public transport links with a number of nearby bus stops which provide easy access to central Reading and the Train Stations at Reading and Reading West. Therefore, in terms of sustainability, the site is ideal for residential development as it promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Efficiency

15.3 It is expected that the final buildings will be built in accordance with the energy requirements of The Code for Sustainable Homes as a requirement of Policy CS1 which expects that 50% of the units would need to demonstrate a 19% improvement in the Dwelling Emission Rate over the Target Emission Rate for the type of dwelling. It is considered by the Council that this can be secured by a condition.

15.4 It is expected that a Reserved Matters application will be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement in accordance with Policy CS1 and DM1.

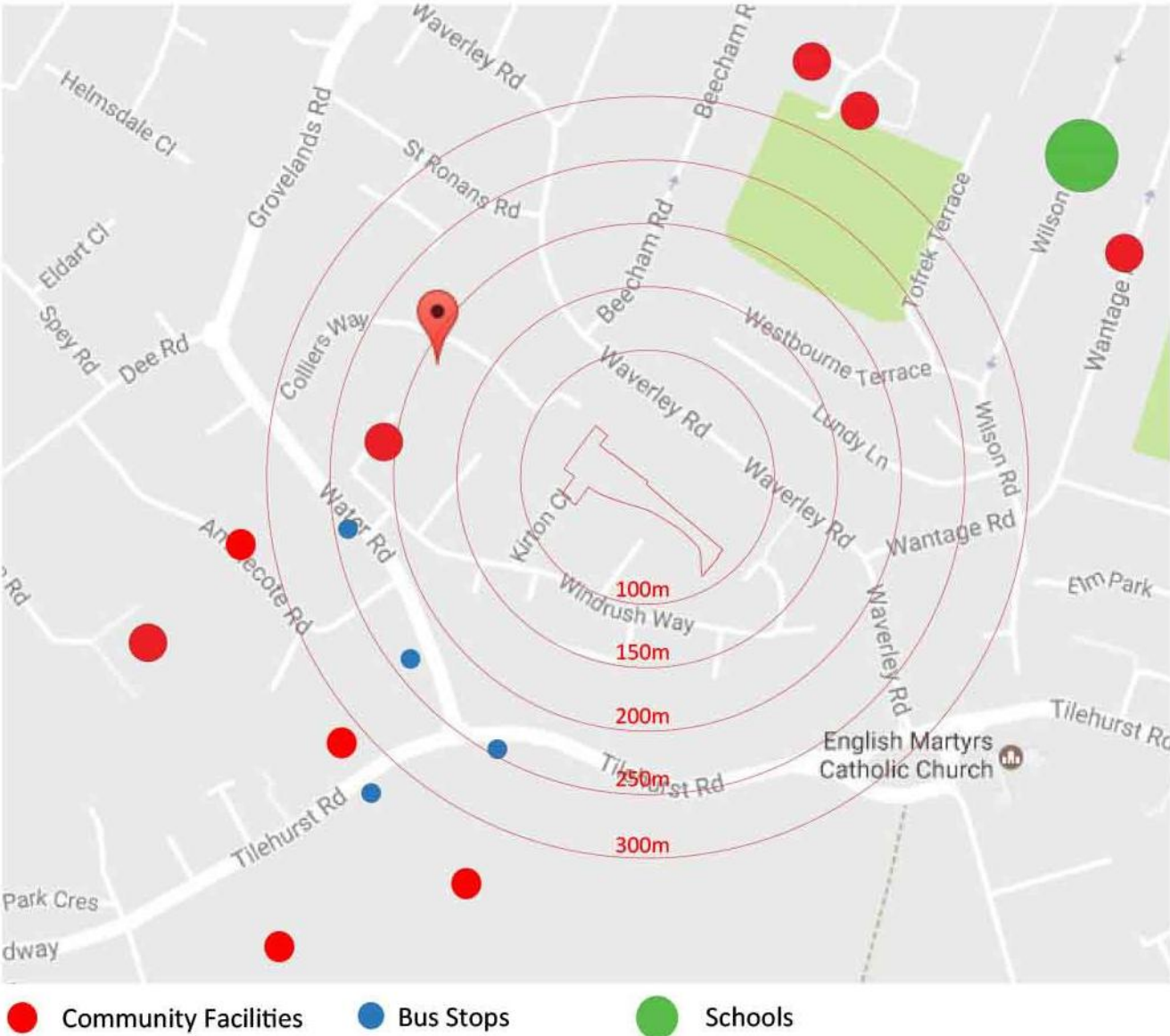
Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDs)

15.5 The previous application was supported by a Preliminary Surface Water Drainage Strategy (provided by STM Environmental) which summarised that the site can incorporate SuDs techniques including the use of soakaways. Previous applications were considered to be ‘Major Applications’ however, as this Outline application now only proposes six dwellings a revised SuDs report has not been commissioned.

15.6 It is acceptable to conclude that a Reserved Matters application will be supported by a full SuDs assessment and management system however, this will be dependent upon the final design and layout of the development.

Contaminated Land

15.7 Due to the site’s history as a Tile and Brick works it is expected that a condition will be placed on the Outline permission for further investigation to ensure that the development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose.



Location of Community Facilities, Bus Stops and School

PART II — THE PROPOSAL

16 CONCLUSIONS

16.1 It is concluded that the development of this site to provide six family-sized dwellings will make a valuable contribution to the Borough’s housing supply being a dwelling type that is in high demand and short supply. The application site is fulfilling no useful purpose in its present state. It is brownfield land within the urban area and in a sustainable location. There should be no objection in principle to its re-use for residential purposes.

16.2 The Borough have historically raised objection to its development on the basis that the land in question is a valuable amenity as a piece of open space. This is not the case. It is presently an unused site with limited amenity value whereas the proposed development would secure a managed area of open land on a large proportion of the site, enhance the safety and natural surveillance of the area through introducing new housing and significantly improve the appearance of the site.

16.3 The scale and form of the development, as shown on the indicative drawings, would be entirely in keeping with the character of the area and avoid any undue overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact.

16.4 Care has been taken to ensure that the access to the site would not conflict with the important pedestrian and cycle route that runs along the site’s Southern boundary.

16.5 The standard of amenity for the proposed residents would be good. The internal space provision and external amenity space would be sufficient and comply with the nationally prescribed standards.

16.6 This outline planning application provides sufficient information to demonstrate that all of the grounds of refusal on the previous proposals can be overcome. The reduced scale of the scheme helps to reinforce this.

16.7 In the planning balance, the proposed scheme brings with it significant benefits and little or no adverse impact and on this basis conditional outline planning permission should be granted.