
LAND TO THE REAR OF 246 – 250 RODWAY ROAD, TILEHURST, READING RG30 6EG

**Proposed erection of three x three-bedroom dwellings with integral garages.
Planning Policy, Design and Access Statement**

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1.00 Introduction

- 1.01** This Statement is submitted in support of an application for the erection of three three-bedroom dwellings with integral garages on land to the rear of 246 – 250 Rodway Road, Tilehurst, with access via the existing access from Gypsy Lane.
- 1.02** This Statement will describe the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, explain the history of the site, describe the proposed development, identify the policy framework, set out other material considerations and demonstrate that the proposed development is in accordance with the policies of the approved development plan and is also supported by central government advice. Design principles will be described and the design solution explained.
- 1.05** This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Ground & Water contamination and land stability report: June 2017, GHA Tree Constraints Plan: November 2015 and email from RBC Assistant Highway Manager dated 10 June 2014.
- 1.06** This application is submitted following the withdrawal of planning application 160690 for the erection of three dwellings on 27 May 2016. The Planning Officer's concerns in respect of that proposal are set out in an email dated 5 May 2016. This statement will explain how the current proposal has overcome those reasons for refusal.

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2.00 Site and Area Appraisal

2.01 The site is a plot of some 600sqm. to the south of the two storey semi-detached dwellings at 246 – 250 Rodway Road. The site is roughly square in shape. To the west are the back gardens of three terraced dwellings in Portmerion gardens. Between those back gardens and the application site is a group of trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. To the east, the rear garden of 252 Rodway Road. To the south, Gipsy Lane, an adopted highway which runs west to east, and is separated from Pottery Road to the south by a strip of woodland. Further to the south is an estate comprising terraced dwellings.

2.02 The site itself falls away steeply from south to north. The boundary with Gipsy Lane is defined by a two metre high close boarded fence with double gates set back slightly from the road. The east boundary is also a 2m high close boarded fence, that to the west a 2m high chain link fence, and to the south, a 1.8m high fence. The site contains three; buildings, a garage, an office/store and a covered frame. The site contains piles of various household and commercial materials/waste, more particularly described in the Ground & Water report.

2.03 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is from Pottery Road, via Portmerion Gardens and Gipsy Lane. A Statutory Declaration dated 20 March 2006 provided by previous owners of the site testifies that the access via Gipsy Lane has been used since 1980. RBC Assistant Highway Manager has confirmed that use of this vehicular access is acceptable.

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3.00 Identifying the Policy Framework

- 3.01** S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan comprises the Reading Borough Core Strategy: January 2008 altered January 2015, and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document: October 2012. The relevant policies, as referred to in the Planning Officer's email of 5 May 2016 are set out and considered at Appendix 1, below.

4.00 Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.01** Central government advice is a material consideration. This is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in March 2012.
- 4.02** The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. Sustainable development is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Paragraph 14 explains that *"At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development ... For decision taking this means*
- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
 - where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole;*
 - or*
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

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- 4.03** Paragraph 49 confirms that *“Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.”*
- 4.04** In terms of design, paragraph 56 explains that *“The government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”* and at paragraph 66 *“Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably.”*
- 4.05** In determining planning applications local planning authorities are required to *“approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development.”* And *“look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”* (Paras 186 & 187).

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5.00 Design Principles

5.01 To provide a modest development in keeping with the character of the area and designed to overcome the concerns previously expressed by the Planning Officer, which may be summarised as:

- Impact on a Major Landscape Feature;
- Impact on trees and ecology;
- Amenity of neighbours;
- Amenity of future occupiers;
- Land stability.

6.00 Design Solution

6.01 The proposal is for a terrace of three dwellings with car parking provision including integral garages. The built form is innovative and modern with an undulating roof form. Accommodation is provided on three floors, and the building is partially set into the slope. At street level the accommodation is parking, garaging, storage and bedroom 3. At garden level (i.e., set into the slope) is the principal living accommodation: living, dining and kitchen rooms, bathroom and bedroom 2. The top floor provides bedroom 1 with an en suite.

6.02 The rear gardens are some 10m in length, and provision is made for some landscaping on the site frontage. The building footprint is outside of the root protection area of the neighbouring protected trees.

6.03 In terms of impact on the Major Landscape Feature (MLF), which is the strip of woodland between Gipsy Lane and Pottery Road, this will not be affected as the proposal is to utilise the existing access via Portmerion Gardens. The development plan Proposals Map shows the MLF to extend into the south-east corner of the application site. This must be a drafting error. The southern boundary of the site adjacent to Gipsy Lane is presently, and has been for some time, a close boarded

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fence. This part of the application site performs no positive function in landscape terms. The removal of the 2m high fencing, its replacement with an attractively designed building and the provision of landscaping will serve to enhance the setting and appearance of the MLF.

- 6.04** The building footprint is now set outside of the root protection area of the protected trees, and there will be no impact on the trees in the MLF. There will be no adverse impact on trees or ecology.
- 6.05** In terms of any impact on the amenity of neighbours, the undulating roof form means that the built form is unlikely to be overbearing. There are no windows facing towards the closest dwellings, those in Portmeirion Gardens, so no overlooking. The roof height is at its lowest at this end of the building, so again the building will not be overbearing, and there will be no unacceptable overshadowing, particularly having regard to the intervening mature trees. In respect of any impact on the dwellings in Rodway Road, these are over 25m from the proposed new building. The living rooms for the new dwellings are at the garden level so there will be no possibility of overlooking. At street level only one bedroom window in each dwelling faces the rear. On the top floor, where the greatest potential for overlooking existing, the only windows facing towards Rodway Road are to the en suites, which will have obscure glazing and limited opening. There will be no unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbours.
- 6.06** The site sections show that level rear garden space will be provided. There will be adequate amenity space for the future occupiers.
- 6.07** The report prepared by Ground & Water Ltd addresses ground stability and records that *“No evidence for shallow or deep slope instability was noted during the site walkover.”*

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7.00 Conclusions

The process

- The proposed development will make efficient use of previously developed land in a sustainable location.
- The modest development has been carefully designed to respect the surrounding area in terms of scale and type of housing.
- There will be no material loss of amenity to any adjoining occupiers.
- The scheme has been designed to complement and reflect the character and appearance of the area.
- There will be no adverse impact on trees.
- The scheme has been carefully designed in every respect.
- Central government advice is that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. There are no adverse impacts that outweigh the benefit of providing much needed housing.

Use

- Residential.

Amount

- Three dwellings.

Layout

- The layout has been designed to provide a pleasing residential environment, providing adequate useable private garden area, and ensuring privacy and no inter-visibility or overlooking.

Scale

- The scale of the new building is in keeping with the scale of surrounding development and appropriate to the site.

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Landscaping

- The development offers the opportunity to provide new planting.

Appearance

- Materials and design are appropriate to the character of the area and the new dwellings have been designed to be attractive.

Access

- Adequate access and car parking are provided.

Documents

1. Ground & Water contamination and land stability report: June 2017.
2. GHA Tree Constraints Plan: November 2015.
3. Statutory Declaration: John Deegan and Elizabeth Mary Deegan: 20 March 2006.
4. Email from RBC Assistant Highway Manager: 10 June 2014.
5. Photographs.

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Appendix 1

Reading Borough Core Strategy 2008: altered January 2015

Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

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 form, including:

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials.

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives:

- Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place
- Continuity and enclosure
- Quality of the public realm
- Ease of movement and permeability
- Legibility - clear image and easy to understand
- Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time
- Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they:

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing

This is an overarching policy. Insofar as it is relevant to the proposal;

- The plot sizes are comparable with those in the near vicinity;
- The landscape appearance of the site will be improved;
- Density and mix of dwellings are appropriate to the location;
- Scale, height and massing are keeping with the character of the area;
- An innovative approach has been taken to the architectural design.

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CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of areas designated as a Major Landscape Feature. The designated areas are:

- The Thames Valley;
- The Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows;
- The West Reading wooded ridgeline;
- The East Reading wooded ridgeline; and
- The North Reading dry valleys.

The proposed development will not detract from the character or appearance of the MLF. Opportunity will be provided to enhance its setting.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document: October 2012 : altered January 2015

DM4: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

Development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of:

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell; or*
- *Crime and safety.*

The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.

As well as immediate impacts, other aspects to which this policy applies will include matters such as hours of operation of businesses, and effects of traffic movements, particularly of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Proposals which would generate regular movements of HGVs on residential roads will not be acceptable. Where an otherwise acceptable development could change its character to a use that would have a greater impact on amenity without needing planning permission, conditions will be applied to restrict such changes.

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The development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, the back-to-back distance is in excess of 20 metres.

DM10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

Dwellings will 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 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.

Adequate, functional private outside space is provided.

DM17: GREEN NETWORK

The identified Green Network comprises Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Areas of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and designated open space plus both existing and potential Green Links, all of which are shown on the Proposals Map. It also includes Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, shown in Figure 4. These Green Links shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced.

New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of open space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.

The development will improve the setting of the Green Link in this location.