

**Crombies Oak
175 Lowfield Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 6NG**

PLANNING STATEMENT

April 2017

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This statement accompanies the full application for planning consent to demolish the existing dwelling and to construct a replacement 4 bedroom house at Crombies Oak, 175 Lowfield Road, Caversham, Reading as shown on the proposed site plan 3412/200.
- 1.2 Pre-application planning advice was provided for a similar scheme by virtue of application reference 161825/PREAPP, dated 01 December 2016, which established that the principle of a one for one replacement dwelling in this location was acceptable, subject to compliance with local plan policies. Concern was raised that the scheme then proposed contained a number of architectural features that would contrast with the “uniform and much simpler appearance of surrounding dwellings fronting Lowfield Road”, plot coverage and setbacks to the side boundaries, the forward projection relative to the staggered building line of Nos. 1 – 6 Lowfield Road and amenity impacts on properties to the rear from first floor windows.
- 1.3 We are of the opinion that this current scheme overcomes previous concerns and would make an attractive addition to the streetscene. This statement should be read in association with the suite of drawings submitted together with the Sustainable Design Statement. A Bat Survey is not considered necessary as the current dwelling has an extremely low pitched roof with concrete interlocking tiles obviating access through any cracks or crevices.

2. THE SITE:

- 2.1 The site is located to the western end of Lowfield Road close to the B481 Peppard Road and the district centre of Emmer Green where there are a number local shops and services.
- 2.2 The existing dwelling was constructed in the 1970's and is one of only two bungalows in the immediate area, the other being immediately to the west. The building would appear to have been built as part of the Caversham Park estate and is of uniform appearance in the manner of other buildings on the estate. However, the site is on the edge of the estate and there are older buildings with more character to the east and south.
- 2.3 The site is generally level with a large hedge along the frontage and generally ornamental planting to the rear and with a south facing rear aspect.
- 2.4 The site is close to the Emmer Green District Centre and within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Councils Revised Parking Standards and Design SPG 2011 which characterises this area as containing a variety of land uses, within 400m walk of high frequency bus services.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 There does not appear to be any relevant planning history over the site, except for the previously mentioned request pre-application advice, to which this current scheme has regard.

4 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing bungalow and attached garage and its replacement with a 2 storey, 4 bedroom detached house with a single storey element effectively wrapping around the south and east elevations providing garaging and family accommodation on the ground floor.
- 4.2 The design reflects the general scale and rhythm of houses along Lowfield Road and the houses to the north and west on Peppard Road.

- 4.3 Materials to be used will be appropriate to the local context, but with a slightly more contemporary twist to include facing brick, painted render and elements of Iroko boarding under a slate tiled roof. The proposed house would sit comfortably in the streetscene in terms of heights and scale, with appropriate setbacks to side boundaries and an area of open frontage, similar to other properties in the area. The existing hedge along the frontage is proposed to be replaced and new tree planting is also proposed as shown on drawing 3412/202.
- 4.4 It is considered that the scheme proposed represents a high quality of design that would fit comfortably on the plot and would make a positive contribution to the visual character of the area. However, having set out the site context and proposals it is now necessary to consider the proposal against the development plan for the area.

5 Development Plan

- 5.1 An assessment of the development plan context for the area would indicate the following policies are relevant:
- 5.2 Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock 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 climate change.
- 5.3 Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access) states 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 people, so that they can use them safely and easily.
- 5.4 Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that all development is of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 5.5 Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities) states that proposals for development will not be permitted unless the LPA is satisfied that infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development

or made necessary by the development will be provided or re-provided at the appropriate time.

- 5.6 Policy CS24 (Car/ Cycle Parking) states that maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.
- 5.7 Policy DM1 (Adaption to Climate Change) sets out to deliver the requirements of Policy CS1 and states that all developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Such measures should include orientation to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements, maximising resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, heating and ventilation of the building, provision of suitable landscaping and measures to minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development.
- 5.8 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure that development does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of, inter alia, privacy, access to sunlight and daylight and visual dominance.
- 5.9 Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that developments are provided with appropriate levels of outdoor space which allows for sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space.

6 Policy appraisal

- 6.1 There do not appear to be any policies directly related to replacement dwellings in the borough but assessed against other policies we are of the opinion that the proposal does comply.
- 6.2 The building would be constructed to high environmental standards as required by Policy CS1 and the current Building Regulations but with the 2015 Deregulation bill having

received Royal Assent in March 2015 new planning consents from that date can no longer include a condition to comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes.

- 6.3 The development would conform to Part M of the Building Regulations with respect to disabled access and it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with respect to Policy CS5.
- 6.4 Policy CS7 reiterates, to a large extent, the guidance contained in the old Policy CUD14 and it is considered here that the proposal complies with that guidance in that the proposed buildings would reflect the scale and proportions of other properties in the area and the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the area by removing what is not a particularly attractive building and where appropriate levels of amenity and open space around the dwellings would be achieved.
- 6.5 With regard to Policy CS9 the applicant accepts that where appropriate contributions are justified these would be sought under the CIL Regulations, but a Self-Build exemption will be applied for.
- 6.6 The scheme provides sufficient car parking on-site and appropriate levels of secure cycle storage and it is considered that the proposal can be regarded as acceptable with regard to Policy CS24.
- 6.7 With regard to Policy DM1, in existing urban situations it is not always possible to design and orientate dwellings to maximise the passive solar gain potential but this site does allow for south facing living areas and outdoor amenity areas to allow sun and daylight into that elevation and we propose less glazing to the north elevation to limit heat loss.
- 6.8 A Sustainable Design Statement is submitted with this application which seeks to address the issues raised in the Council's Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document.
- 6.9 In terms of safeguarding amenity and the requirements of Policy DM4, the site is in a suburban area where there will always be some acceptance of overlooking, particularly to the rear of rear gardens. The pre-application advice received did refer to potential

overlooking to the rear of garden boundaries of Nos. 174 and 176 Peppard Road from first floor rear bedroom windows, but these have been reduced over the previous scheme with only one bedroom window proposed to the eastern end of the rear elevation. That is the end furthest from Nos. 174 & 176 and we are proposing to plant established trees to supplement existing trees along the common boundaries to screen the proposals. The relationship would not be dissimilar to the existing relationship with No. 5 Lowfield Court and we are of the opinion that it would be an acceptable relationship.

- 6.10 The proposal incorporates levels of private amenity space for future occupiers which is generally commensurate with the size of the house and the level of provision generally found in the area. In accordance with Policy DM10, the amount of private amenity space would allow for sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space.
- 6.11 With regard to the natural environment chapter of the Core Strategy, given the nature of the existing building there are not considered to be any ecological implications with the demolition of the building. It is considered that the landscaping proposed on drawing 3412/202 would provide a pleasant environment for the occupants of the house, whilst providing natural habitat and maintaining the character of the area. However, the applicant would be happy to discuss any enhancement potential if the Council's Natural Environment Officer has any suggestions through the course of the application process.
- 6.12 Notwithstanding that, given the above assessment of the scheme against planning policies, it is put here that the proposal as submitted wholly accords with the development plan context for the area and provides the opportunity to enhance the character of the area whilst providing a high quality living environment for the applicants.
- 6.13 There are not considered to be any significant amenity impacts arising from the proposal and where the overall design and landscaping is considered to be of a high quality the proposal complies with the development plan for the area. It is hoped that planning officers can concur with this and that planning consent will be forthcoming.