

**51 CRESSINGHAM ROAD
READING
RG2 7RX**

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

OCTOBER 2015

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement accompanies the application for planning consent to demolish the existing dwelling and to construct 3x3-bed and 1x4-bed dwellings on the land at 51 Cressingham Road, Reading, as shown on the submitted proposed site plan 3308/200.
- 1.2 The statement is considered to be commensurate to the scale of development proposed and the proposal is considered to be appropriate in the context of residential nature of the area and would comply with the development plan for the area. Indeed, it is considered that the proposed new buildings would positively enhance the streetscene and the character of the area more generally by bringing development on the site more in line with the scale and proportions of adjacent development. This statement should be read in association with the suite of drawings submitted together with the Sustainable Design Statement and Bat Survey report. Also submitted is an Affordable Housing Statement and a Viability Appraisal.

2. THE SITE:

- 2.1 The site is located on the southern side of Cressingham Road at the corner with Birdhill Avenue and approximately equidistant to Shinfield Road to the east and Northumberland Avenue to the west from where on both roads there are good public transport links to Reading town centre. The site is within the urban settlement and the surrounding area comprises a mixture of building styles and sizes including post war detached and semi-

detached 2 storey dwellings with bungalows and more recent infill developments of primarily two storey scale.

2.2 The site is generally rectangular although with a somewhat angled frontage of just over 26m and an area of approximately 0.15ha. The site topography falls slightly from the south to the north and from east to west along Cressingham Road.

2.3 The site is close to local centres and within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Councils Revised Parking Standards and Design SPG 2011 which characterizes 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.

4 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal is for the erection of 3x3-bed and 1x4-bed semi- detached houses set over two storeys with associated garaging and surface car parking and with primary living areas on the ground floor with a south facing aspect over the rear gardens. The two larger houses would have integral single garages with accommodation over.

4.2 The design reflects the general scale and rhythm of houses along Cressingham Road and respects the scale of the bungalows along Birdhill Avenue with single storey elements to the rear and by virtue of the separation distances to those houses.

4.3 The houses would be set into the ground to reflect the topography and would have gardens commensurate to the size of the houses and which would be useable and private as appropriate to houses of this type in this location. Each house would have a shed in the rear garden which can be used for cycle storage and there is side access from front to back for all plots.

4.4 Materials to be used would be appropriate to the local context and the houses 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. 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 whilst making far more efficient use of the land in a sustainable location. 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 National Policy Guidance

- 5.2.1 With the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27 March 2012 all principle PPS's have been replaced. The NPPF identifies a presumption in favour of sustainable development as a "golden thread " running through plan-making and decision-taking and at paragraph 49 states that housing applications "should be considered in that context".
- 5.2.2 The Framework document also says that "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people". The Framework recognises that planning supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities by supplying the housing needed for present and future generations and advises that development "that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay".

5.3 Reading Borough Core Strategy Document and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document

- 5.3.1 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.

- 5.3.2 Policy CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development) states, inter alia, that the scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.
- 5.3.3 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.
- 5.3.4 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.
- 5.3.5 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.
- 5.3.6 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.
- 5.3.7 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.
- 5.3.8 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.

5.3.9 Policy DM6 (Affordable Housing) requires that, subject to viability, developments of 1 – 4 dwellings provide a contribution that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.

5.3.10 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.

5.4 Policy appraisal

5.4.1 Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and the “golden thread” of the presumption in favour of sustainable development it is considered that the proposal makes far more efficient use of land than the existing situation and where the property is situated in close proximity to frequent bus services and the town centre this is considered to be a site quite capable of taking development at a higher density where this would be consistent with principles of sustainable development. Certainly the design is considered to be of a standard that would make a positive contribution to the streetscene and the character of the area and with regard, therefore, to the aims of the NPPF, this is considered to be a sustainable development that “should go ahead, without delay”.

5.4.2 Local Plan policies considered relevant to this application largely make the aspirations of the national policy framework more local.

5.4.3 The buildings 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.

5.4.4 With regard to Policy CS4 the proposal would seem to be well located for taking a higher housing density where the site is large enough to accommodate four houses with

appropriate garden sizes and breathing space around the buildings. With a site area of approximately 0.15ha the density proposed would be 26dph which, whilst below that set out in Policy CS15, is considered wholly appropriate with regard to the prevailing density in the area.

- 5.4.5 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.
- 5.4.6 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.
- 5.4.7 With regard to Policy CS9 the applicant accepts that where appropriate contributions are justified these would be sought under the CIL Regulations.
- 5.4.8 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.
- 5.4.9 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.
- 5.4.10 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.
- 5.4.11 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. However, in this case we are of the opinion that there is sufficient distance to adjoining properties such that standard back to back distances are achieved and the only 1st floor side windows would serve landings or bathrooms and would be obscure glazed. We consider there to be sufficient distance to the adjacent house to the west so as not to appear overbearing to the occupiers of that house and given the orientation of the proposed houses on the plot there is not considered to be any impacts on light to adjacent properties.

5.4.12 The proposal incorporates levels of private amenity space for future occupiers which is generally commensurate with the size of the houses and the level of provision in 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.

5.4.13 The application is supported by a Viability Appraisal which concludes that the development would not be viable if a contribution for affordable housing under Policy DM6 was required. If the development is not viable it will not come forward and clearly this must be considered material to the determination of the application where the need for housing in the borough, affordable or otherwise, is clearly identified.

5.4.15 Notwithstanding that, 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 future occupiers of the development.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The application proposes to replace the existing building to provide for a continuing residential use on the site and where the existing building is considered to have a poor presence within the street.

6.2 The site is within a sustainable location and it is considered that the proposal would positively enhance the character of the area by bringing development on the site more in line with the scale and proportions of adjacent development.

6.3 This is thought to be a well-considered scheme proposal and one that takes full account of the established characteristics of the area. Given the sites location in close proximity to the local and town centres and public transport connections it is considered that higher density development is acceptable. The overall design is considered to be acceptable and in the context of development in the area the relationship between the proposed and existing houses is also considered acceptable. Given this we consider that the proposal complies with the development plan context for the area and therefore where this is considered to be a sustainable form of development, it “should go ahead, without delay”.

October 2015