

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 210308/FUL

Address: Land adjacent 43 Upper Redlands, Reading

Proposal: Erection of a single detached dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping.

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Decision date: Originally 21/04/2021; EOT agreed until 10/12/2021

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site relates to land adjacent 43 Upper Redlands Road, located on the south side of Upper Redlands Road.

The site is located in the Redlands Conservation Area and the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall is located opposite the site to the north. The site is also located within a Green Link.

The surrounding residential properties are between 2 and 3 storeys in height, and their designs vary within traditional architecture. There are examples of grey and red brick, mostly Victorian, with Stucco and render. The majority of the properties in the area are grand buildings, within generous plots and walled gardens.

Proposal:

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a single detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping.

The proposed materials would include white brick and slate tiles and a sliding gate is proposed along the front boundary.

The single storey rear element would feature a biodiverse roof and soft landscaping is proposed including 6 new trees.

Two car parking spaces are proposed, as well as a secure cycle area and bin storage.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: Existing Location Plan P01

Drawing No: Front Elevation P06

Drawing No: Side Elevation P07

Drawing No: Elevations (Side and Rear) P08

Received 24th February 2021

Drawing No: Site Plan P02 Rev A

Drawing No: Street Elevation and Longitudinal Section P04 Rev A

Drawing No: Floor Plans P05 Rev A

Received 21st May 2021

Drawing No: Site Plan and Landscape P03 Rev B

Received 20th July 2021

Other documents submitted:

Heritage Assessment P18-0096 dated 21st January 2021

Planning Statement P18-0096 dated February 2021

Design and Access Statement dated February 2021

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal date 2018

Tree Removal Plan dated 02.2.2021

Received 24th February 2021

Visibility Splay at Access Appendix A

Received 21st May 2021

Arboricultural Survey and Report DEV201214-632 dated 16.6.2021

Soft Landscaping Scheme dated 16.6.2021

Tree Planting Plan 001 dated 17.6.2021

Tree Protection Plan 001 dated 18.6.2021

Received 18th June 2021

Relevant Planning History:

201168/PRE - Erection of a single high quality detached dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping (two options).

191860/FUL - Full planning application for erection of 4 dwelling houses and a Detached garage, including vehicle accesses with associated landscaping and parking. Withdrawn.

182214/FUL - Erection of 4 dwellinghouses and accesses with associated landscaping and parking. Refused and dismissed at appeal.

181174/PRE - Pre-application advice for the erection of four dwellinghouses with associated landscaping and parking.

Internal/External Consultation Responses:

Highways Officer: Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions. Discussed below.

Tree Officer: Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions. Discussed below.

Heritage Officer: No objection subject to conditions. Discussed below.

Ecologist: No objection subject to conditions. Discussed below.

CAAC:

Summary

Support

Well thought through modern design that retains the building line and a large garden area.

Object

The large vehicular entrance

The rear dormers

Comments

Concerns about the weatherability of materials

Concerns about future protection of the site

Consultation letters were sent to nearby occupiers on 24/03/21. A site notice was erected by the applicant expiring on 24/04/21.

2 letters of support received (from same property), 7 letters of observation, and 7 letters of objection received (2 from same property) with a summary of the concerns being:

- Future openings in the boundary wall
- Size and design of entrance gate
- Future development on the site/Preservation of open space and garden area
- Loss of trees

- Protection of trees
- Quality of materials
- Harm to designated heritage asset
- Design out of keeping with character of area
- Procurement of same architect for future submissions
- Fake chimney stack
- Loss of long views
- Determination at Planning Application Committee
- Developer should provide community garden
- Impact of lighting
- Adherence to RBCs modern slavery policy
- Air and noise pollution
- Construction noise disruption
- Precedent

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised ...

Formal pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this application under reference 201168/PRE, which was also discussed the Reading Design Review Panel.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For this Local Planning Authority, the development plan is now in one document - the Reading

Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN15: Air Quality

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

H1: Provision of Housing

H2: Density and Mix

H3: Affordable Housing

H5: Standards for New Housing

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens

TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents & other relevant documents/guidance

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal

Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, 2016);

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a);

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b).

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents and other relevant documents/guidance

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)

Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, 2016)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b)

Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)

Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)

DCLG Technical housing standards - nationally described space standards (2015)

National Design Guide: Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places (2019)

Appraisal

Principle

The NPPF states that LPAs should “*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*”. The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed land’ excludes private residential gardens.

Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, that does not mean that the development of private residential garden land is unacceptable in principle, rather that previously developed land should be the first choice for housing development.

Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) It makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- 2) The site is of an adequate size to accommodate the development;
- 3) The proposal has a suitable access;
- 4) The proposal would not lead to an unacceptable tandem development;
- 5) The design minimises the exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
- 6) It does not cause detrimental impact on residential amenities;
- 7) The emphasis is on the provision of family housing;
- 8) There is no adverse impact on biodiversity, and
- 9) The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

Therefore, while the proposed site is not ‘previously developed land’, the principle of redevelopment is considered acceptable providing the criteria outlined in Policies H11 and H2 (relating to general location, accessibility, density and housing mix matters) are met.

Furthermore, it is considered that the principle of providing Class C3 residential use at the site is acceptable in that this aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing). More specifically, the proposals would assist the Borough in meeting its annual housing targets. The proposal of 1x5 bed family dwelling, set within the context of the size and nature of the

site, is considered acceptable. The density of development is also considered suitable, with the proposal making an efficient use of the space/land available.

Design, Heritage Assets and Impact on the Character of the Surrounding Area

Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and H11 (Development of Private and Residential Gardens) both seek to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.

The site lies within the Redlands Conservation Area and as such there is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regards to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in Policy EN1 which states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced and Policy EN3 which states that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced and that development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Furthermore, Policy EN6 requires that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development and that new development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. The Council will, therefore, have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF 2021 details that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The recently published National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of 'Context' and it states that "well designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones." Additionally, there is specific reference to 'views inwards and outwards'.

With this context in mind, the character of this part of Upper Redlands Road. and as noted in the Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal, is one of large two storey detached and semi-detached properties set within generous plots and well-treed grounds. This creates a relatively low density, open and spacious character and appearance within an arboreal setting. There is a variety of design styles, featuring a variety of material from red brick to stucco to render. The Conservation Area Appraisal also notes that 'properties here and throughout the Conservation Area are "linked" by frontage brick walls and/or low brick walls with railings above, and good tree cover behind'.

It is also pertinent to note that application 182214 - which was for 4 dwellings - at the site (see relevant history above) was refused and dismissed at appeal for the following reason:

"The proposal would have a detrimental impact upon the character of Redlands Conservation Area as all four of the proposed dwellings would result in the partial loss of areas of brick wall in the streetscene which contribute the character and appearance of the area.

In addition to this, whilst the existing properties are currently set in adequate grounds which equate with their status Victorian villas; the proposed dwellings would diminish that garden area and would also lack adequate surrounding curtilage for the new dwellings (from a Conservation & Heritage perspective).

In addition, the loss of brick boundary wall and creation of a new entrance plus the construction of new dwellings opposite to the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall would harm the setting of the Listed Building.

The proposed scheme is therefore contrary to Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy (2008) (altered 2015); the statutory requirements of Section 66(1) and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; guidance within the NPPF and NPPG; as well as the Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)."

Since the application was refused and dismissed at appeal, the applicant entered into pre-application advice discussions with the Council which included discussions with the Reading Design Review Panel. This application, which seeks to overcome the previous reason for refusal, has taken on board comments made at the pre-application advice stage which is welcomed.

It is relevant to note that the Inspector for the appeal, which was dismissed, did not raise any specific design concerns with the proposed dwellings themselves. The concern was largely to do with the substantial loss of garden space to facilitate the four dwellings proposed, the siting of the proposed dwellings and erosion of the spacious character, the substantial loss of trees and removal of large areas of brick wall to provide several accesses.

Further to the above, whilst application 182214 was for four dwellings, this proposal is for one dwelling, with one associated access proposed, a reduction also from the previous four. Whereas it was proposed to remove 32 trees previously, it is now proposed to remove 6, and with provision of replacement tree planting also. In overall terms, is not considered that the same concerns arise as under application 182214 in terms of significant loss of garden space, erosion of spacious character, significant loss of trees and removal of large areas of brick wall, which shall be expanded upon below.

The proposed dwelling would follow the established building line of this part of Upper Redlands Road which is appropriate - and noting that the Inspector considered the previous proposal to 'detract from the established building line along this part of Upper Redlands Road'.

It is considered that when viewed from Upper Redlands Road, the scale, proportions and roof form of the proposed dwelling - which would be of a similar eaves and overall height to No's 39 and 43 Upper Redlands Road - would be respectful of, and sympathetic to, the character and appearance of these neighbouring properties. Whilst the single storey element would be of a relatively large footprint, it would not be readily visible from the street scene or other public vantage points in the Conservation Area and, given its single storey nature, would remain a largely subservient feature. Furthermore, this element of the proposals would sink in to the site to minimise its impact, as the land raises towards the rear.

It is considered that there would be sufficient space about the dwelling and distance to the boundaries to accommodate the proposed dwelling without resulting in overdevelopment of the site or a feeling of crampedness. Indeed, the reduction from four dwellings to one dwelling also allows the majority of garden space to remain and thereby also not significantly reducing

the spaciousness between No's 43 to the east and 45 Upper Redlands Road to the west, nor to No.17 New Road to the south west.

In terms of its detailed design and appearance of the scheme, a contemporary interpretation of the existing houses along this row is proposed. Whilst there is no policy against contemporary design in a conservation area, this is subject to a scheme which responds positively to the local context whilst also incorporating its own high quality design approach. In this respect, para 134 of the NPPF 2021 states that significant weight should be given to:

“outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in the area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”

Establishing whether a proposal is an innovative design is invariably a subjective matter. However, the scheme has evolved through the pre-application process, which included assessment by the Reading Design Review Panel. This reflects advice contained within the NPPF 2021 and the NPPG which states that local planning authorities should have design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design.

In this instance, the scheme evidently picks up on the scale and rhythm of this part of the Upper Redlands Road, albeit with a more contemporary finish, and with the landscaping proposed to further assist its assimilation into the grain of the surrounding environment. When seen from all nearby vantage points the proposed scale and design approach, although in contrast to nearby buildings, is not overwhelming and is instead considered to successfully respond to its context without undermining the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole. In this respect, it is considered that suitable care has been taken in the design approach. There would be limited harm in the immediate vicinity of the site, but only by reason of introducing built form into presently open land. **The level of harm is considered to be ‘less than substantial’ a differentiation required by paras...of the NPPF 2021, and then the harm would be very much at the lower end of the ‘less than substantial’ range. In this case, para 134 applies and this states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which will be considered in the planning balance to follow.**

More specifically, white brick, to reflect both neighbouring properties and materiality of the Listed Wantage Hall (opposite) are proposed, which are characterful of the area and supported by officers. Furthermore, the inclusion of diamond brick motif (again to reflect the boundary

wall of Wantage Hall) is considered to add further visual interest to the scheme and is welcomed.

Concern has been raised in representation that the former windows would 'overbalance' the rear of the property. Whilst flat roof dormer windows are not generally a characteristic feature of the area, they would be relatively small in scale so as to sit comfortably within the roofslope and are a design response to the contemporary nature of the proposal and considered appropriate in this instance. Given their scale and position they are not considered to appear overly dominant within the roofslope.

Although undoubtedly contemporary in form, both officers and members of the Design Review Panel consider that the facing materials and design to be fitting to the context (a modern interpretation of the historic context), and if executed as shown, would result in a high quality addition to the conservation area too, as well as adding visual interest to the street scene. However, the success of the scheme from a design perspective will to an extent be dependent on the quality and finish of the exact materials. As such, it is considered necessary to secure a condition for samples and manufacturing details of all facing materials to be submitted/approved prior to the commencement of works. By securing this condition it will ensure the high design quality envisaged at application stage is achieved in practice.

With regard to the proposed vehicular entrance, concern has been raised in representation that not only would the access appear excessive in width, but that the interruption into the wall itself would be out of keeping with the character of the area. Further to this, it is noted that in respect of the boundary wall, the Inspector for the appeal considered that "the proposed punctuation of several sections of walls would cause unacceptable harm to the integrity of the street scene, which would be detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area".

Further to the above, the reduction in the number of dwellings from four to one has also resulted in the reduction of associated accesses and therefore fewer punctuations in the brick wall, with the one access proposed. Whilst the access as originally proposed was considered to be overly excessive at a width of 6.5m revised plans were received reducing this to 3m - and thereby also reducing the amount of wall to be removed. Whilst this would clearly result in the punctuation of the wall, the access would be enclosed by a sliding gate and it is considered that given the nature of the sliding gate it would preserve the sense of continuity along this boundary. Furthermore, the sense of enclosure provided by the wall would largely remain, again, given the nature of the sliding gate. In overall terms, the reduction in the width of the

access, combined with the proposed sliding gate, is considered to provide only a brief and unobtrusive interruption in the line of this boundary wall and noting that the Inspector's concern was in respect to several large sections of walls proposed to be lost as apart of application 182214.

In terms of the style of the sliding gate, two options have been proposed by the applicant. One option being brick clad to match the existing wall and another to be metal clad. It is considered that a metal gate with laser cut pattern as indicated would complement the pattern of the main dwelling and would be a modern solution that would fit well with the modern style of the proposed dwelling. It is considered, however, that the gate detail can be secured by way of condition.

Concern has been raised in representation that the proposals would block out long views of Wantage Hall. Whilst loss of view is not a material planning consideration, it is not considered that the proposed dwelling is of such a scale to detract from the setting of the listed Wantage Hall.

SOLAR PANELS

GREEN ROOF

There is no objection to the proposals from the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer.

Accordingly, in overall terms, it is considered that the proposals are appropriate in listed building / conservation area / other heritage asset terms. Hence, the proposed works are considered to comply with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and national policy contained within the NPPF 2021 and associated guidance.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety.

The neighbouring properties potentially most affected by the proposals are No's 43 and 45 Upper Redlands Road located to the east and west of the site respectively.

In relation to No.43, no windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing this property and as such there would be no material loss of privacy, and this can be secured by way of condition. No.43 Upper Redlands Road has the benefit of a deep two storey rear addition close to the western boundary and the two storey element of the proposed dwelling would not project past this; indeed, it would align with this elevation. Whilst the proposed single storey rear element closest the common boundary would project 6.4m past the rear elevation of No.43, the roof would be flat to minimise the impact, with a modest height of 2.2m closest to the boundary. Given this, combined with the significant intervening boundary wall, the distance of 2.3m from the proposed dwelling to No.43 itself, and the large amount of amenity space to No.43, it is not considered to result in any significant overbearing effects such to warrant a refusal on this basis.

Owing to the element of flat roof proposed, however, it is considered necessary to include a condition stipulating that the flat roof area shall not be used as a roof terrace, and any access out onto this area shall be for maintenance/means of escape purposes only. This is in order to prevent any detrimental impacts of overlooking and/or noise and disturbance of the neighbouring premises.

In relation to No.45, given the significant distance from the proposed dwelling to this property (well over 20m) it is not considered to result in any overbearing effects. No windows are proposed on the west flank elevation facing this property and as such there would be no loss of privacy.

In general terms it is noted that the proposed dwelling could be subject to significant further extensions and alterations under subsequent permitted development rights, which could negatively impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers. In order to manage this,ref;a it is considered necessary and reasonable to have secured a condition to remove permitted development rights under Classes A (alterations, B (roof additions) and E (outbuildings). In addition, a further condition is also required in respect of protecting the amenity of neighbours during the construction period. A construction method statement will be secured via condition and is required from a highway safety perspective too. As such in overall terms, considering all nearby residential occupiers, no significantly harmful amenity impacts would occur, subject to conditions in accordance with Policy CC8 in particular.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new building housing is built to high standards. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect future occupiers from the impacts of pollution and Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that residential developments area provided with adequate private or communal outdoor amenity space.

It is considered that the proposals would provide an overall good standard of accommodation throughout with largely regular shaped rooms providing suitable outlook, natural lighting and ventilation. Internally, the floor spaces would largely comply with the space standards as set out in Policy H5. Whilst bedrooms 3 and 4 (as annotated) would just fall below the space standards (in terms of actual useable floor space), given these would serve a 4th and 5th bedrooms, this is not considered unacceptable.

The proposed garden area would be commensurate to the size of the dwelling - albeit irregular in shape - and not out of keeping with the wider area which features gardens of similar size.

The plans also include conveniently located cycle and waste storage facilities. Overall, the proposals are considered to provide suitable accommodation within the context of the constraints of the site.

In order to help ensure future residents maintain sufficient amenity space (and to protect neighbouring amenity as above) it is proposed to remove PD rights in relation to Class A (enlargement improvement or alteration), B (roof additions) and Class E (outbuildings).

Therefore, in overall terms and having applied a critical planning balance to the consideration of the scheme as a whole, the proposed dwelling is considered to provide an overall suitable standard of accommodation, in line with Policies EN5 and H10 in particular.

Transport Issues

Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

Upper Redlands Road is located within Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposals are required to provide parking provision of 2 off road parking spaces. The proposals include an area of hard standing with space for at least two vehicles and an on-site turning area which is acceptable. Further to this, the site is located within a Residents Permit Parking Zone, where there is significant pressure for on-street parking. Therefore, it is unlikely that future occupants of the new dwelling would be able to obtain resident or visitor permits. This would ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. Given the above, the Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that there is no objection to the application on parking grounds, given that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. However, the applicant is reminded that future occupants of the dwellings should be aware that they would not be eligible for any residents parking permits.

A new opening in the boundary road is proposed to provide a new access. The Council's Highways Officer requested visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m, as well a reduction in the width of the access and indication of the protection markers in place for the existing shared parking bays at the front of the site. Revised plans were received illustrating these splays and reducing the access width to 3m (and matching access protection markers) which is acceptable.

Sliding access gates are proposed and the Highways Officer originally stated that these would need to be set further back into the site to ensure vehicles do not wait on the public highway to enter the site. The applicant confirmed during the course of the application that the gate will be set back from the outer edge of the on-street parking by 4.7m (as shown on revised plans). The Highways Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable (subject to a suitably worded condition to secure as such) and it is considered that any further set back would erode the prominent boundary wall alignment which would unlikely be considered acceptable in heritage terms.

In line with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed dwelling should be provided with 2 secure cycle parking spaces. A storage unit is proposed (as shown on the proposed site plan) and this is acceptable. Bin storage has also been on the on the proposed plans to be located to the front of the site allowing for kerb side collection, which is also acceptable.

Further to the above, Policy TR5 includes a requirement for each new house to be provided with an electric charging point. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of condition.

In the circumstances, and further to revised plans, there are no transport objections to the proposed development subject to conditions to include submission of a construction method statement and informatives in compliance with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Natural Environment

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposal should include appropriate landscaping.

This site is within the Redlands Conservation Area which affords a certain level of protection to the trees on site.

Concern was originally raised by the Council's Tree Officer that there was an inconsistency between the documents submitted, with an out of date Arboricultural Method Statement. As such, an amended Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement was submitted.

A tree works application to fell one Maple tree and one Holly tree was agreed by the Natural Environment Team in 2018 (ref 181863) and this is acknowledged. However, it is noted that the Maple tree was not felled (within the 2 year period). It is proposed to remove this tree under this application which is considered acceptable - and a new S211 Notice will not be necessary.

As above, the tree protection and landscape plans have been amended during the course of the application. Whilst the Tree Survey states that T2, a low value Holly tree, is to be retained, the proposed layout makes it likely that it will need to be removed to facilitate the development. The Tree Officer considers that given the proposed planting scheme, this is acceptable.

Whilst the Tree Officer considers that further information is required as part of the Arboricultural Method Statement, sufficient details have been provided at this stage, with the development acceptable in principle, subject to a revised Arboricultural Method Statement to be secured by way of condition.

In terms of the landscaping plan and scheme, the proposed tree species *Amelanchier lamarckii* (Snowy Mespilus) and Cockspur thorn are considered acceptable. However, the Tree Officer considers that given the proposed location, the applicant may wish to reconsider the specific

Hawthorn proposed due to its long, sharp thorns. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of condition.

It is noted that the Arboricultural Method Statement makes reference to 'Tree pruning/felling enabling works (in progress)'. The applicant is reminded that no tree works should be carried out (and which will not be approved should planning permission not be forthcoming) without consent given the sites location in a Conservation Area. An informative will be added to any decision notice to this effect.

In overall terms, given the number of trees retained and removed and the replacement planting provision, it is considered that the vegetation net gain on the site following the development will be positive. As such, the proposals are considered acceptable in terms of trees and landscaping, subject to conditions to secure appropriate tree species and landscaping details as well as submission and subsequent implementation of Arboricultural Method Statement, in compliance with Policies CC7 and EN14.

Ecology

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that developments should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity. Furthermore, the site is within a Green Link ...

An ecology report has been submitted with this application and the Council's Ecologist is satisfied that the report has been undertaken to an appropriate standard, concluding that the risk of roosting bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. Furthermore, the proposed biodiverse green roof on part of the building would help to mitigate the effect of the proposed dwelling within the Green Link. As such, there are no ecological objections to the scheme.

To ensure the proposed green roof appropriately mitigates the impact to biodiversity to the rear garden, the Council's Ecologist has recommended a condition requiring the submission of the green roof details prior commencement of the development. Furthermore, given the nature of the scheme, it would also be appropriate to ensure that ecological/biodiversity enhancements - to include bat and bird boxes - are provided and this can also be secured by way of condition in compliance with Policy EN12.

Sustainability

Various sustainability measures are proposed as noted in the Design and Access Statement including grey water recycling system, rain water harvesting system, permeable paving, solar panels, a heat recovery system, air source heat pump, net gain in tree vegetation and green roof. These elements represent positive sustainability benefits of the scheme and are welcomed.

Notwithstanding the above, Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. In light of this conditions are recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

Although secured by planning condition, these new requirements will be administered through the Building Regulations. Confirmation of compliance will need to be submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition.

Affordable Housing

The proposal seeks to create one additional unit and therefore a contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision is required as part of the application in accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The applicant has agreed to provide a policy compliant contribution towards affordable housing of £68,333.00 which will be secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement.

CIL

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the CIL Additional Information Form. Based on the information provided by the applicant and the 2021 CIL rate, this is estimated to amount to £53,281.40 (340m² of the proposed dwelling x £120 per m² x 2021 indexation (£156.71)). An informative would be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

Other Issues

In relation to planning conditions, in line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended), which came into force on 01/10/18, discussions have been

undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement conditions. The applicant has formally agreed to the recommended pre-commencement conditions via return email on 03/08/2021 and ...

Other matters raised in representation

All material considerations have been covered in the above report.

Concern has been raised that the application would set a precedent for future development nearby. In this regard, any future application would be assessed by the Council on the characteristics of each site and merits of the proposal before them.

Overall Planning Balance and Conclusion

The formation of an additional dwelling would assist, albeit to a limited extent, to the delivery housing within the Borough. Furthermore, from a design perspective the proposal represents a welcomed and high quality innovative addition which is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and preserve the setting of other nearby heritage assets. The quality of accommodation is suitable for future occupiers and the green roof is considered to assist with helping local ecology and a positive step towards reducing the impact of climate change at the micro-level.

In overall terms the planning merits of the proposals (including the provision of an affordable housing financial contribution) are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. Ultimately, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations, the benefits are considered to outweigh the conflicts. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT subject to completion of S106 Legal Agreement and conditions.