

## DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle

App Ref: 231627/FUL

Address: 24 Wantage Road, Reading, RG30 2SE

Proposals: Construction of 3 bedroom dwelling at the rear of 24-26 Wantage Road with access from Wilson Road.

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Date received (valid from): 27 December 2023      Target Decision date: 21 February 2024

### 1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises land at the rear of 24-26 Wantage Road which comprises two single storey garages accessed from Wilson Road with garden space at the rear. The surrounding area is predominately residential, comprising terraced and semi-detached dwellings in similar character. 24-26 Wantage Road and the application site are within an Article 4 Direction area due to their patterned brickwork. The site is also south of the Oxford Road West local centre and just outside of the Air Quality Management Area.

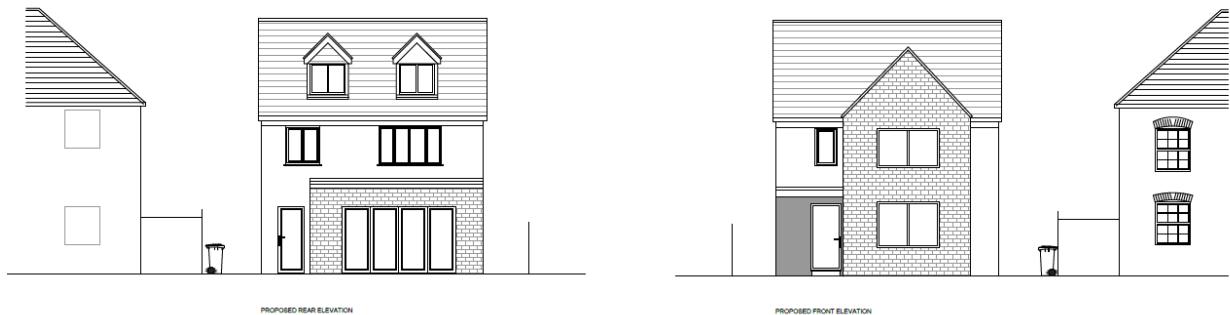


*The application site outlined in red. Image taken from Google Maps on 03/04/24.*

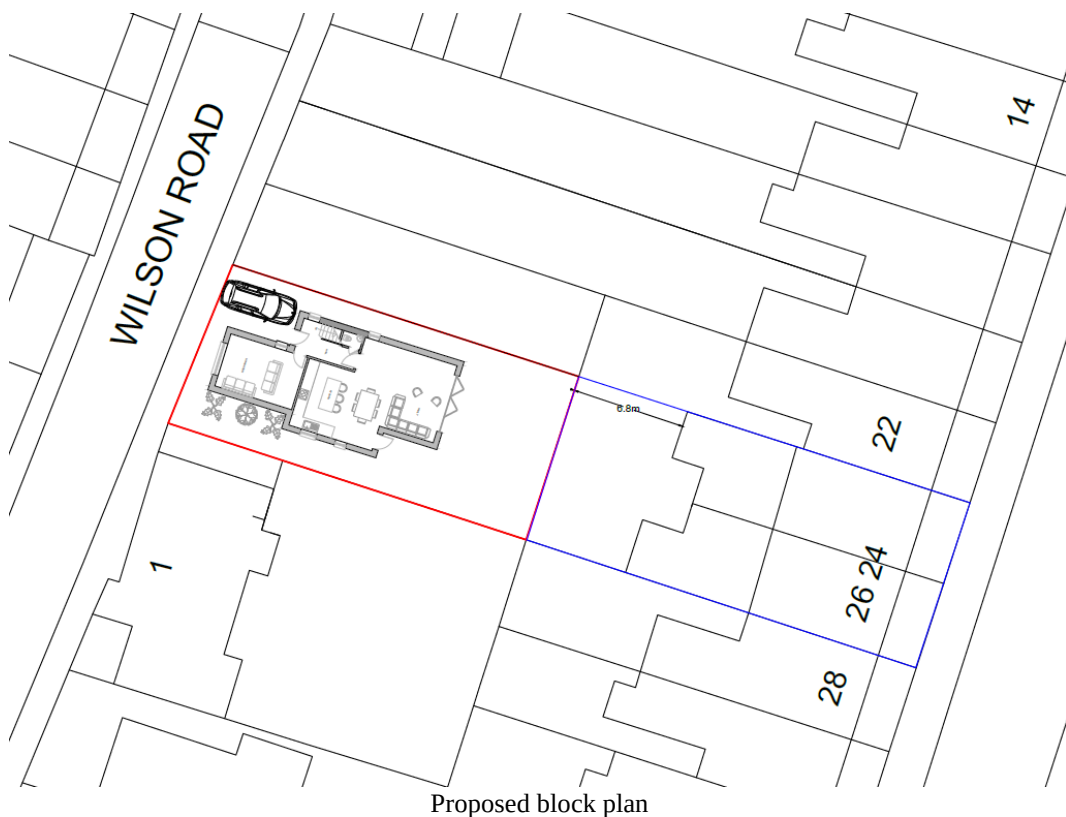
### 2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for removal of the garages and replacement with a two-storey, 3-bedroom dwelling at the rear of 24-26 Wantage Road with access from Wilson Road. The proposed dwelling would be set back from Wilson Road to provide a paved driveway and have

a footprint of 82.5m<sup>2</sup>. The rear garden would measure 104m<sup>2</sup>. The driveway would provide one off-road parking space, and covered and secure cycle storage is proposed within the rear garden.



Proposed rear (left) and front (right) elevations



Proposed block plan

Plans considered:

RSP/RC/01DAS - Design and Access Statement, dated November 2023, received 15 November 2023

RSP/01109 - Energy Statement, dated December 2023, received 27 December 2023

PP-12593992v1 - Location Plan, dated 14 November 2023, received 14 November 2023

BS5837 Arboricultural Report & Impact Assessment, dated 14 December 2023, received 27 December 2023

Affordable Housing Statement, dated 14 December 2023, received 27 December 2023

RPS/RC/01 B - Proposed Plans, dated 10 November 2023, received 19 January 2024

RPS/RC/02 B - Vehicle Tracking Diagrams, dated 10 November 2023, received 19 January 2024

### 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

161760 - Construction of 2 Semi-detached houses at the rear of 24-26 Wantage Road with access from Wilson Road - Application permitted but not implemented

191239 - Application for removal or variation of condition 2 following grant of planning permission. (Application no 161760) - Application permitted

220032 - Construction of 2 semi-detached houses at the rear of 24-26 Wantage Road with access from Wilson Road - Application refused and dismissed at appeal

Reasons for refusal relating to:

- Harm to residential amenity in respect to loss of privacy, outlook and light for neighbouring 24 and 26 Wantage Road and future occupiers of the proposed dwellings, and 1 Wilson Road in respect to outlook and loss of light.
- Inadequate accommodation and private outdoor amenity space for future occupiers.
- Harm to the character and appearance of the area.

### 4. CONSULTATIONS

Non-statutory:

#### **RBC Transport Development Control:**

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site. In accordance with the adopted standards, a 3 / 4 bedroom would require 2 parking spaces. Under application 161760 and 220032, the Highway Authority accepted a reduced provision of 1no. off road parking space for each dwelling; given the extensive parking restrictions in place preventing unauthorised on street parking reduced provision can be considered in this instance. Wilson Road is within a Residents Permit Parking Zone 07R. Any additional parking demand created by this development should not be accommodated on the surrounding roads where there is significant demand for on-street parking, therefore, if a development is approved the parking conditions and informative will applied to prevent any future occupants of the new dwelling from obtaining resident or visitor parking permits to protect the amenities of the existing residents.

The Parking spaces should be 2.5m x 5 m, no part of a vehicle can overhang any part of the highway. Illustrated plans do not conform to these dimensions.

The Council's Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and this includes a requirement at Policy TR5 for each new house to be provided with an electric charging point. This will need to be illustrated on plans.

It would appear that the Rear of No24 Wantage Road is not currently served via a vehicle dropped crossing. Any new vehicle access will require a licence from the Highways Department. Given the one way nature of the street I am happy that the required visibility splays can be achieved.

A front boundary wall is proposed along the frontage of the site, any boundary wall should not exceed 0.6m in height. The extent of the boundary wall and vehicle access will need to be illustrated on plans.

In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision 2 cycle storage spaces should be provided per dwelling which can be in the form of a lockable store such as garden shed. This has been illustrated on plans.

Bin storage has been illustrated on plans at the front of the site allowing for kerb side collection.

A CMS will be required for this development.

**RBC Environmental Health:**

The applicants should submit a statement detailing how noise and dust will be effectively managed during demolition (if relevant) and construction and who will be responsible for this. Conditions recommended: CMS, hours of construction/demolition, no bonfires.

**RBC Natural Environment:**

The application fails to demonstrate landscaping principles and tree planting for positive net canopy gain, contrary to our adopted Tree Strategy's objectives 4 and 11 and to policy EN14 of the Council's Local Plan. However, given the available space and the size of the proposed development, it is likely that appropriate tree planting can be provided - I am happy to revisit this conclusion if the agent/applicant submits a brief Landscape Plan prior to a decision.

**Ecology:**

A previous application (220032) was refused and dismissed at appeal for non-ecology reasons. The land appears from google maps to comprise two gardens which include garages and storage units/garages. Given the urban location of the site and the nature of these buildings, they are considered unlikely to host bats. However, a condition should be set to ensure that any clearance or demolition undertaken to facilitate the works should be carried out outside the bird nesting season (March - August).

The applicant would need to demonstrate how the development will result in a "net gain" in biodiversity units as measured using the latest DEFRA Metric.

Furthermore, the development should be designed so that its value for wildlife is maximised, for example by providing integral bird and bat boxes, mixed native hedges and new tree planting within the development. This should be secured via a planning condition.

**Public:**

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

22 Wantage Road, Reading, RG30 2SE  
24 Wantage Road, Reading, RG30 2SE  
26 Wantage Road, Reading, RG30 2SE  
28 Wantage Road, Reading, RG30 2SE  
Flat 1, The Old Dairy, 1 Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RS  
Flat 2, The Old Dairy, 1 Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RS  
Flat 3, The Old Dairy, 1 Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RS  
Flat 4, The Old Dairy, 1 Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RS  
38 Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RN  
36 Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RN

No letters of representation received.

## **5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

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

### **National Policy and Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

### **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

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

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

### **SPD**

Affordable Housing (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Planning Obligations Under S106 (2015)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

### **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.

## **APPRAISAL**

The main issues to be considered are:

- I) Land use principles
- II) Design and character
- III) Residential amenity
- IV) Natural Environment
- V) Transport and parking
- VI) Other matters

## I) Land use principles

Paragraph 123 of the NPPF states *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land”*.

The definition within the NPPF states that brownfield land (previously developed land) is defined as: *“Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.”* The definition excludes residential gardens.

The development would, therefore, need to be assessed in terms of the requirements of the NPPF paragraph 72 that seeks to ensure that policies are set out to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens. Also, at local level, the Council’s Local Plan (Policy H11) establishes a number of criteria against which applications for the development of private residential gardens need to be assessed.

Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

1. *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*  
*The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
  - *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage; [Discussed within the Design section].*
  - *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc.;*
  - *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
  - *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
  - *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings. [Discussed later in the report within Design section].*
2. *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking; [Discussed later in the report].*
3. *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards; [Discussed later in the report.]*
4. *The proposal does not lead to tandem development; The proposal does not lead to tandem development as the property has a frontage and access directly onto Wilson Road.*
5. *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures; [Discussed later in the report within the Design section.]*

6. *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants; [Discussed later in the report.]*
7. *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing; Proposal is for a 3-bedroom property.*
8. *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and [Discussed later in the report.]*

*The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area. It is not considered that the proposed development would prejudice the satisfactory development of the wider residential area, which consists largely of family sized homes.*

There is no in-principle objection to residential use in itself within this residential area, however, a proposal would need to comply with the policies set out within the Reading Borough Local Plan, which will be discussed further within this report.

## II) Design and character

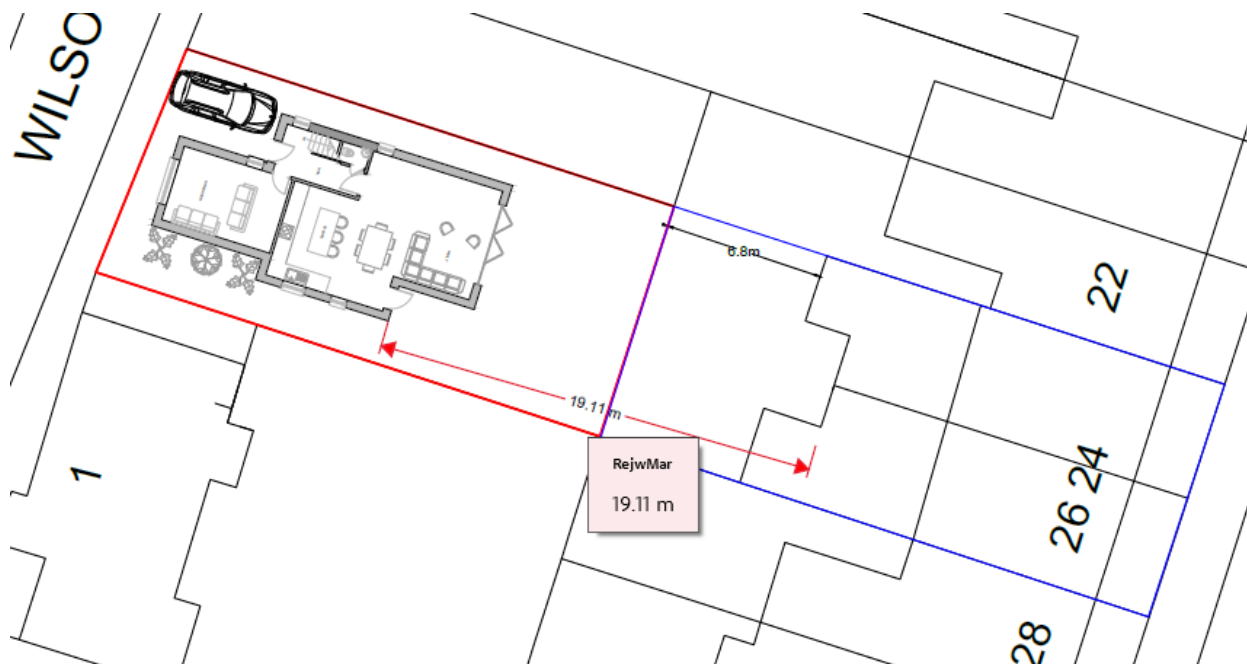
Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high quality design and maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this specific case; this concerns the following components:

- Layout
- Landscape
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

The application is also subject to the relevant criteria of Policy H11 as outlined above.

The previous appeal decision for this site describes the local character as follows: “Dwellings on Wilson Road are a mix of two storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings of varying design, set back behind a small front garden, with long rear private gardens and finished in red brick. However, on the same side as the application site, there is a mix of rear gardens and outbuildings interspersed with terraced and semi-detached properties of varying sizes, plot layouts and designs formed to the back of Wantage Road. Some of the plot layouts and sizes are smaller than opposite, but the backland properties largely retain a simple form and face Wilson Road, which together with coherent materials and finishes provides a distinct character and appearance to the area.” *Para 29, Appeal ref APP/E0345/W/22/3299930*  
There has been no significant change to the character since this appeal.

The proposed dwelling appears to have a more contemporary design with a two storey outrigger at the front, leading to concentration of the bulk of the property towards the rear. The design issues are two-fold, in that the design of the property is at odds with the character of Wilson Road, and the layout and design itself leads to a development that sits awkwardly within its plot, raising subsequent amenity concerns.



Extract from proposed site plan with annotated measurement taken by the officer. The distance is measured between two storey facades of both the proposed dwelling and the neighbouring properties on Wantage Road.

The proposal by way of its design and layout does not follow the pattern of development nor the prevailing character of Wilson Road, where properties have a relatively simple form, and are situated close to the road, allowing for adequate rear garden space to maintain reasonable separation distances with properties on Wantage Road. The contemporary form with a front outrigger creates an uneven distribution of massing resulting in a contrived design.

Furthermore, the concentration of the bulk of the property towards the rear of the plot is not considered ideal considering the constrained nature at the rear of the plot, with separation distances measuring 19m between rear two-storey facades of the proposed dwelling and numbers 22 and 24 Wantage Road. This results in the proposed dwelling sitting awkwardly within its plot, resulting in subsequent residential amenity harm to future occupiers and neighbouring properties (discussed within the residential amenity section of this report).

In conclusion, the design and layout of the proposed property would appear out of place for its location and would relate poorly to the constraints of the site, and is, therefore, contrary to Policies CC7 and H11 of the RBLP.

#### Standards for new housing

As this application seeks one new dwelling, policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan is relevant.

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires that development proposal incorporate sustainable design practices to take account of climate change. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new housing is be built to the higher level of water efficiency standards under Building Regulations and achieves at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rates above the Building Regulations standards and had the proposal been acceptable overall then details of this in the form of design and construction stage SAP reviews could have been secured by way of conditions.

The proposed dwelling exceeds the minimum gross internal floor areas and storage requirements as set out in policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The gross internal floor space of the proposed new dwelling is approx. 133m<sup>2</sup>, which exceeds the minimum space standards for a 3-bedroom dwelling. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

#### Safeguarding amenity

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to:

- Privacy and overlooking
- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development
- Harm to outlook

There are no identified concerns in relation to overshadowing or loss of access to daylight for either neighbouring properties or future occupiers of the proposed property. The proposed fenestration layout would allow for suitable access to natural sunlight.

The property would have a separation distance in excess of 4.5m at the side with no. 1 Wilson Road, which has north-facing side windows on the ground and first floors. Although it is not known if these windows serve habitable rooms, the separation distance is considered acceptable, and the orientation of the site would result in limited overshadowing. There is more concern in relation to the separation distances at the rear of the site, which measure 13m between the nearest point at the rear of the properties or 19m taken from two-storey elevations. The combination of the back-to-back distance and that the bulk of the proposed habitable rooms (bedrooms) would be concentrated to the rear, with the inclusion of two rear dormers, there are concerns that there would be overlooking and loss of privacy to nos. 22 and 24 Wantage Road, which would be contrary to Policy CC8.

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that:

- *Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, 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.*

Numbers 22 and 24 Wantage Road would be left with relatively shallow gardens, however, this is an established arrangement as there is fencing in place already to divide the gardens from the application site. The shallow gardens, although not ideal, follow the pattern of this section of Wantage Road. The rear gardens on Wilson Road tend to be much shallower, and therefore, although the proposed rear garden for the new property is below the size as recommended by Policy H10, it is considered acceptable in this case.

## Natural environment

Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states *“New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained”*.

Furthermore, Policy EN12 states *“On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”*

There are no existing trees within the application site. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment is considered sufficient to demonstrate that existing trees adjacent to the application site would not be harmed either by the development or during the construction process. Had the scheme been acceptable overall then future landscaping could have been reasonably secured via condition.

The applicant has not submitted biodiversity net gain calculations and no information has been provided to indicate whether the proposal could result in a biodiversity net loss. As such, there is insufficient information to conclude whether the proposal would accord with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

## Transport and parking

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. The site is located within the Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD.

For this location and size of dwelling, 2 off-road parking spaces would be required. The Transport Development Control team have accepted the reduction to 1 off-road parking space due to the close proximity to public links. Wilson Road is a resident permit only road and future occupiers would not be entitled to resident or visitor parking permits to protect the amenities of the existing residents.

It is also noted that the 1 off-road parking space illustrated on the proposed plans does not appear to conform to the recommended dimensions for parking spaces.

Should the application have been found acceptable overall, a condition would have been recommended to secure a construction method statement.

## Other matters

### **Affordable housing:**

In accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; *“Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading:*

- *(...) on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough."*

Given that planning permission is to be refused for other reasons a section 106 has not been drafted and, therefore, this would amount to an additional reason for refusal of the planning application.

#### **Community Infrastructure Levy:**

The proposal includes the creation of more than 100sqm of new floor space and so would be CIL liable.

#### **Conclusion**

The proposal has been assessed against the adopted policies as outlined above and is considered contrary to Policies CC7, CC8, CC9, H3 and H11 of the RBLP and is therefore recommended for refusal.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**REFUSE PERMISSION**

#### **Reasons for refusal:**

1. The development by way of its contemporary and contrived design of the stepped elevations is at odds with the simple form character of Wilson Road, failing to positively respond and contribute to the local area in which it is located. Additionally, the proposal concentrates the bulk of the dwelling to the rear of the plot, and by way of its layout fails to positively respond to its local context and site constraints, contrary to Policies CC7 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. The development due to the constrained nature of the site and minimal back-to-back separation distances to numbers 22 and 24 Wantage Road poses a risk of overlooking and loss of privacy to both neighbouring properties on Wantage Road and the future occupiers of the proposed dwellinghouse. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
3. 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. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H3 and CC9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021.
4. The proposal has failed to demonstrate that the development would not result in harmful biodiversity loss on site through the lack of submitted biodiversity net gain metric calculations, nor the submission of an ecological appraisal. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.