

The Courtyard, Edinburgh Road, Reading Berkshire RG30 2UA

Appeal statement in relation to the refusal of planning permission by Reading Borough Council relating to application Ref. 231288
Land adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road Reading

The proposal is to construct a two storey L shaped hipped roof dwelling adjacent to the eastern boundary in a similar location to the approved scheme under reference 210308

There are three reasons for refusal as follows;

1. The proposed development, due to its inappropriate design and architectural form, excessive scale and layout and its prominence in the street scene would appear as an incongruous and unsympathetic development that would not be of a sufficient high quality design. This arrangement would be exacerbated by the loss of important trees and existing spaciousness which currently contribute positively to the existing character. Consequently the proposal would harm the character and visual amenity of the area, would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Redlands Conservation Area and would harm the setting of the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment), EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) and EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

1

2. The proposed development fails to demonstrate that there would be no harm to existing trees on site and fails to demonstrate acceptable provision of replacement tree planting and landscaping with consequent harm to the visual amenity, biodiversity and environmental quality of the area including the character and appearance of the Redlands Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) and EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

2

3. The proposed development has failed to demonstrate that it would not result in a net loss of biodiversity and that a biodiversity net gain would be achieved. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens), EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) and EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

3

4. The applicant has failed to submit sufficient information for the Council to determine whether or not bats and other priority habitats would be adversely affected by the proposed development, contrary to Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

4

5. 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 (Affordable Housing) and CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the

Site Description & surrounding area

The site is located in the Redlands Conservation Area with the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall located opposite.

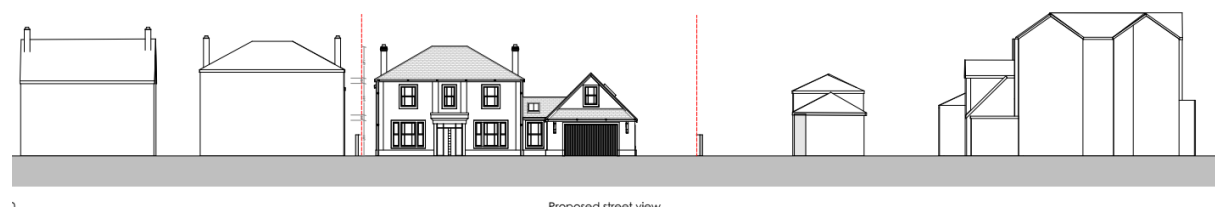
Looking at Refusal no 1-

The inspector said with the Appeal Ref App/E0345/W/19/3237840 -

*As detailed within the Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal1 (CAA), this is a tightly drawn **essentially Victorian/Edwardian** suburb of Reading. The special interest of this designated heritage asset derives to a large extent from the sheer variety, exuberance and blending of the architectural styles of the **Victorian period** in such close proximity. The Appraisal adds that this is reinforced by the retention of boundary walls and railings throughout the area which, together with mature tree cover, give the area its coherence. It also makes particular reference to the corner buildings, which strictly have a more commanding presence.*

The proposed main dwelling compared to the approved scheme is similar however the hipped roof proposed will soften the massing looking from the road.

Unfortunately the street scene added by the officer is far from accurate as it does not shown the adjacent properties to the





We believe the refused design sits more comfortably adjacent to no 43 & 41 & does not appear to encapsulate 43.

Within the Officer's report relating to the approved scheme the following statement is copied below;

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.

The retheme of the eaves & roof shapes sits in a more logical manner where by the heights are dropping away to the proposed garage which in turn sits nicely with the outbuilding within the plot of 45 Upper Redlands Road.

This is not a Pastiche design, there is no issue with this approach as long as the design, materials & detailing are accurate to the period.

The applicant wants to live in a Victorian dwelling which provides the benefits of a sustainable house in the 21 century & is prepared to spent the additional money to undertake a faithful building.

This is a self- build, not a speculative development.

Here are a few paragraphs from the word Pastiche;

More interesting that those architects who have used pastiche to whimsically play with historical forms, from Lutyens to the Postmodernists. The best pastiche buildings can create a sense of playfulness or nostalgia just as well as any truly original structure.

A **pastiche** is a work of [visual art](#), literature, theatre, music, or architecture that [imitates](#) the style or character of the work of one or more other artists.^[1] Unlike [parody](#), pastiche pays homage to the work it imitates, rather than mocking it.^[2]

We therefore consider this design is appropriate in this location.

The inspector stated;

*The special interest of this designated heritage asset derives to a large extent from the sheer variety, exuberance and blending of the architectural styles of the **Victorian period** in such close proximity.*

The Council also acknowledged that there were no particular design issues with the refused scheme of 4 houses. Particularly plot 4 which is relevant to this Appeal.



The proposed design is a true Victorian design which sit comfortably in this location.

The refusal suggests there will be loss of important trees.

- The Tulip tree on the frontage T1 within no 45 Upper Redlands Road is not affected.
- The small Holly tree on the front boundary will be left intact. T2



The trees on top of the mound are shown as being retained on the site plan within the rear garden. However the Arb report from Harper tree Consulting is advising that the group of trees on top of the bunker namely a group of Sycamore & Ash Trees are likely to become unstable as the bunker deteriorates (Executive Summary on page 5)

The Common Lime is unaffected.T5.

We are quite content to leave the bunker & trees in place & monitor the situation in the future.

Therefore there is little change in relation to the existing situation.

The approved scheme at the eleventh hour made an alteration to the front entrance.

Looking at Refusal no 2;

The Arb report from Harper tree Consulting, we believe adequacy deals with the incursion of the garage into the RPA.

Incursions into RPAs

In many instances, a low degree of root disturbance can be deemed to be acceptable. Where incursions can be fully invasive, or low level invasion can sometimes be achieved by the use of specialist methods to limit the degree of disturbance. The table details the incursions and how they are to be dealt with.

Incursions into RPAs of retained trees		
Type of incursion	Tree number	Precautions to be taken
Foundation for garage	T1	A hybrid solution where the foundation inside the RPA will be on screw pile and the remainder on a strip foundation will be used.
Hard surfacing for parking	T1	150mm deep cellular confinement sub base will be used with a permeable finishing layer.

New tree planting & landscaping can we believe be conditioned if the inspector was minded to Allow this Appeal.

We were not given the opportunity to prepare a detailed landscaping scheme or even confirm that the trees on the mound over the bunker could remain.

Comments within the Officers report stated ;

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.

We are content for this part to be via a condition if the Inspector agrees.

We would hope that we have provided sufficient justification to persuade the Inspector to allow this appeal.

Looking at refusal no 3;

Within the Officer's report relating to the approved scheme, it states;

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.

There is no reason as we can see it why this cannot be conditioned if the Inspector was minded to Allow the Appeal.

The same Ecology report was submitted for this refused application.

It would seem one rule for one & one for another!

Looking at refusal no 4;

The Ecology report submitted was accepted within the approved scheme, there is no change & therefore it should be acceptable again.

Looking at refusal no 5.

A Unilateral agreement is being prepared on the same basis as the approved scheme which will fully comply with Policies H3.

This will be forwarded shortly once agreed with Reading Borough Council.

Other matters;

The Appellant is content to agree to a condition to comply with Policy H5 ie

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110l per person per day & 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements
- The dwelling will be highly insulated & air tight.
- The dwelling will be heated via an air source heat pump incorporating under floor heating.
-

This is now a standard condition & easy to comply with.

As this will be a self-build, self-build exemption will be applied for before commencement of the development subject to receiving planning consent.

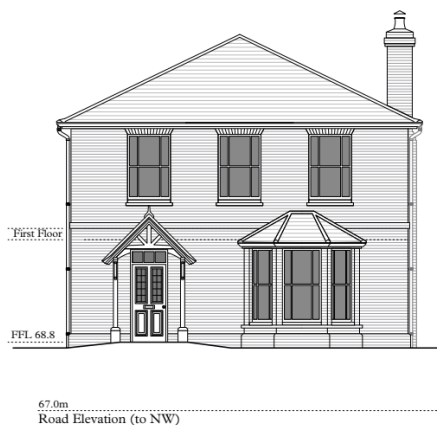
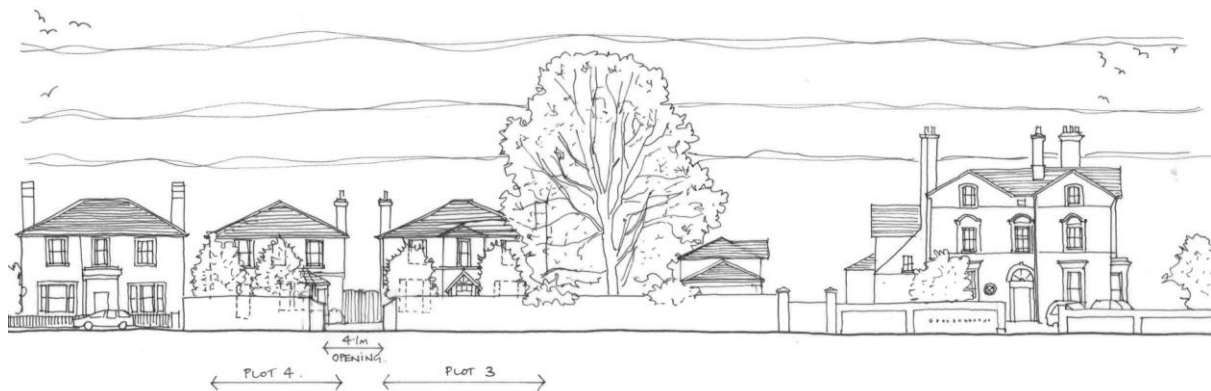
In conclusion

Having considered the reasons for refusal in relation to the previous approved scheme, reasons nos 2-3-4-5 are only in our opinion to plump out the refusal document as the information is either provided & ignored or one that could be conditioned as before.

The main bone of contention is whether the design proposed is acceptable in;

- **Design terms**

The inspector had no particular issues with the design of the four house scheme



Plot 4 of dismissed appeal in similar position



Front elevation of dwelling subject to this appeal with attached garage.

Notwithstanding the attached garage the designs are broadly similar, the inspector had no issues with the design (also confirmed by Reading Borough Council Planners)

- **Massing**

Does the attached garage make the scheme unacceptable?

All parties are concerned about the loss of the openness afforded on this part of the street frontage & whether the introduction of the garage detracts from this feel.

In answer to this the garage is a very similar structure to that of the adjacent building within 45 Upper Redlands Road & is subservient to the host building.

Its not much different when viewing the main building of no 45 against the adjacent subservient building within that plot.



Chris Keen MRICS MCABE

