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**Francesca Di Giuseppe & Fredrik Wetterhall**

9 Glebe road  
Reading RG2 7AG  
[REDACTED]

Reading, 1 October 2024

**Dear Members of the Planning Committee,**

To the attention of Louise Fuller

We are writing to formally object to the proposed development at **11 Glebe Road, RG2 7AG** (Planning Application No. PL/24/1083, PP-13330496), which involves the construction of eight one-bedroom flats and a new dwelling. The proposed development would invade our privacy as next door neighbours and stands in stark contrast to the established character of the road, which predominantly consists of family homes. The introduction of high-density, small-unit flats is inconsistent with the intended purpose and character of the area, and it would significantly alter the fabric of the neighbourhood.

After reviewing the application and related documents and comparing them to the Reading Borough Local Plan regulations adopted in November 2019, we have identified several key concerns that highlight why this development is unsuitable and detrimental to the principles of the established conservation area and the community's well-being. These issues are summarised below and elaborated in detail in the attached document. Relevant breaches of local planning regulations are also outlined for your convenience.

### **Design and Scale Issues**

The proposal is overbearing in scale, bulky, and excessively high, which will negatively impact the appearance of the conservation area. We believe that the proposed plan represents **overdevelopment**, and its bulky appearance is in direct conflict with Cross Cutting Policy **CC7 (Design and the Built Environment)** and **H9 (Residential Design Standards)**. By harming the host building, which is a building of local interest, it also contravenes the specifications of local policy **NE1 (Protection of the Natural Environment)**.

### **Sustainable Design and Construction**

The Climate Change Emergency declared by Reading Borough Council in 2019 implies that any new development should include a detailed set of measures to reduce its environmental impact. The proposed plan fails to specify sustainable materials, landscaping, or surface solutions that would minimise environmental impact (**CC3 – Adaptation to Climate Change**). Furthermore, it does not outline solutions for

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decentralised energy (**CC4 – Decentralised Energy**) and does not provide sufficient waste storage that would facilitate much-needed recycling (**CC5 – Waste Minimisation and Storage**).

The development, due to its excessive scale, fails to demonstrate that it would not harm the environment, as its own reports indicate a certain loss of biodiversity (**EN12 – Biodiversity and the Green Network**). Additionally, it does not show that the increased demand on water and sewage systems would remain within sustainable limits (**EN16 – Pollution and Water Resources**), nor does it include a plan for a sustainable drainage system (**EN18 – Flooding and Drainage**). Lastly, there is no specification for charging points for electric vehicles, which should be provided given the provision of off-road parking spaces (**TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking**).

### Loss of Privacy and Amenity for Neighbours

The development will significantly reduce the separation from **number 9**, falling well below the recommended 20-metre back-to-back distance specified in **CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)** policies of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan. Due to its height and placement, the proposed building will introduce windows directly overlooking neighbouring properties, thereby breaching privacy guidelines and reducing the availability of natural light. The lack of light from the south-facing roof aspect at number 9 will also prevent the installation of solar panels, thereby impacting our ability to reduce our own ecological footprint.

Additionally, the large number of cars positioned at the very boundary with number 9 will increase noise levels, create dust and fumes, and negatively impact air quality, directly affecting the bedrooms at the front of the property. Given that this development encroaches on a private garden area rather than an existing development site, its overbearing character is also in breach of **H11 (Development of Residential Gardens)**.

### Impact on Traffic and Transportation

The increased number of cars in the area and the lack of sufficient off-road parking will exacerbate congestion, create a parking shortage, and pose highway safety risks, particularly given the proximity of the junior Abbey School and the bus stops for routes 5 and 6 directly in front of the property. Reading Borough Council has already acknowledged serious problems related to local traffic in Reading East (**Chapter 9.2.8: “there is a serious local issue with car parking [...]”**), and this development, due to its excessive scale, will exacerbate the chronic lack of parking, complicating vehicle manoeuvring, and increasing the risk to pedestrian safety (**TR3 – Mitigating Transport Impacts**).

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### Lack of Infrastructure for Household Waste Management, Off-Road Parking, and Bicycle Storage

The proposed **parking spaces for both bicycles and cars are insufficient** to meet the needs of the occupants. We also question the feasibility of the current plan, which allocates only 7 off-road parking spaces for the block of flats, for the following reasons:

The bin storage is clearly inadequate for the number of dwellings proposed. If extended, its current placement at the main car entrance would impede access to the site. Alternatively, relocating it to the border with number 9 would result in the loss of a parking space. Furthermore, the number of assigned parking spaces makes it impossible to implement a proper **IN and OUT** system, which is necessary given the constrained layout. With a correctly designed **IN and OUT** system, only five off-road parking spaces would realistically be available which fall well below the need for 1 space per dwelling.

Moreover, the provision of only four bicycle storage spaces for an expected population (at full capacity) of 22 (4 for the two-bedroom flats and 2 for each of the one-bedroom flats) is inadequate. This does not align with the general principles of promoting sustainable transportation options outlined in **TR1 (Sustainable Transport Networks)**.

### Biodiversity and Ecological Harm

The construction will disturb local wildlife, as noted in the developer's own environmental report. The development will harm protected bat populations identified on the adjacent property—issues that are ignored by the developer's environmental survey. Additionally, the plan encroaches on an existing mature garden that includes protected trees. Under the guidelines of **H11 (Development of Residential Gardens)**, such developments should only be considered if they focus on the provision of family-sized housing rather than small-unit dwellings. As it infringes on an established garden, a full landscaping plan should be provided, especially for the borders shared with neighbours.

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In summary, we find the scale, organisation, and lack of adequate provisions in the proposed design to be **entirely unacceptable**, particularly given the increased sensitivity toward sustainability and environmental responsibility.

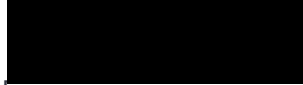
Given the adverse impact on the neighbours amenities, the local character, infrastructure, and the environment, we respectfully request that the planning application be reconsidered and ultimately refused in the interest of preserving the family-oriented nature and heritage of the neighbourhood.

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We are reassured that a very similar proposal was not deemed acceptable in past planning applications (**Planning application 080022**), indicating that a conversion of this proportion is not desirable in the current location.

The attached document forms an integral part of our objection: **Expansion on Objections to the Proposed Development at 11 Glebe Road, RG2 7AG (Planning Application No. PL/24/1083, PP-13330496)**.

Sincerely,

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Fredrik Wetterhall

# Expansion on Objections to the Proposed Development at 11 Glebe Road, RG2 7AG (Planning Application No. PL/24/1083, PP-13330496)

In this more extensive document, we elaborate on the rationale behind the six main objections we have expressed in our request for planning permission refusal. A visual summary of our main concerns is presented in Figure 1.

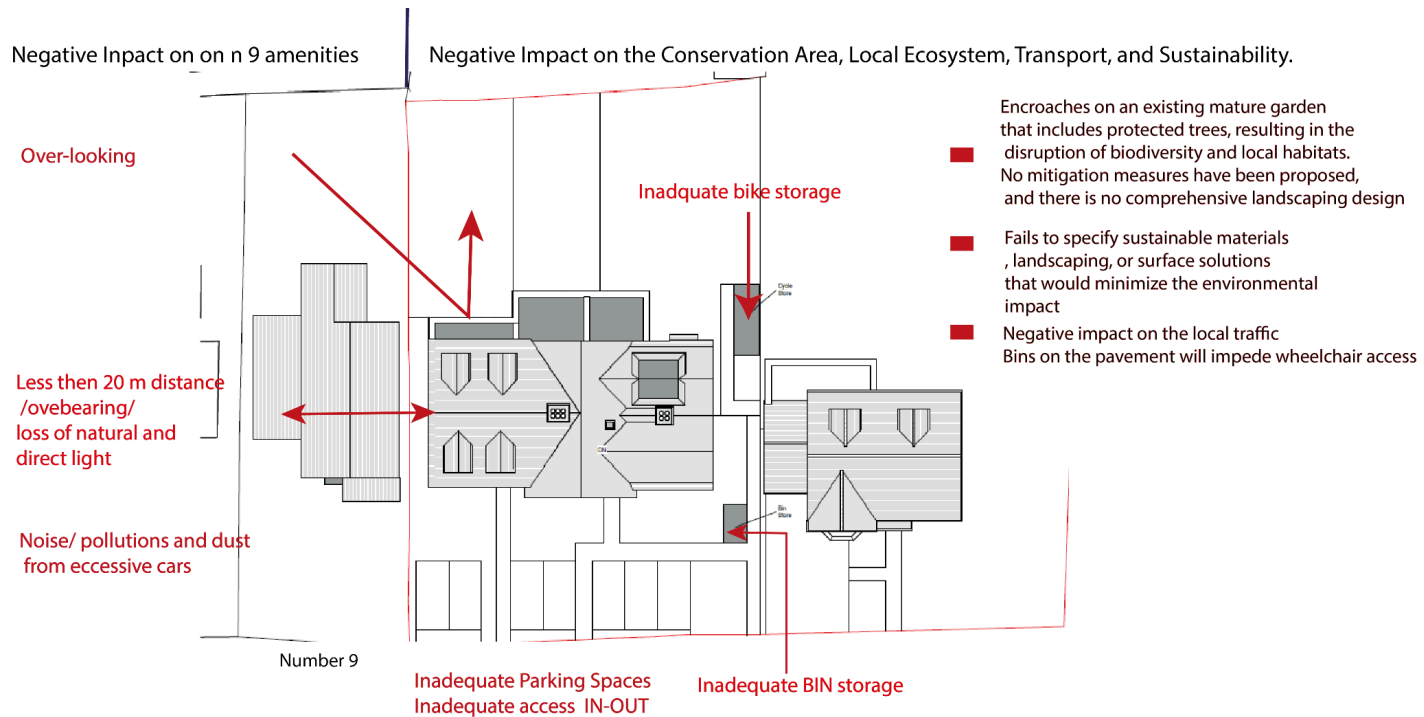


**Figure 1.** Visually depiction in broad lines the scale of objections to the proposed development.

## Inappropriate Scale and Overbearing Design

The existing building is already the largest on the road. Its visual impact is softened by the large plot of mature trees and formal garden hedges, which mark its boundaries, reflecting its origins as a former family home. Given the size of the building, we find that any further extension is unnecessary and unjustified. Indeed, in appearance, the proposed plan is overbearing and inconsistent with local design policies, which set reasonable standards for side extensions. Local Policy clearly states that side extensions should be smaller than the main building and must be set back to avoid negatively impacting neighbouring properties (see figure 2 depicting how the proposed extension, which is neither set back nor set down, is considered unacceptable by local regulations.)



**Figure 2** Extract from a design guide for planning extensions, edited by the Reading Planning Office which clearly highlights what is considered **unacceptable** and is implemented in the proposed plan.

The proposed development, with its large, overbearing design, fails to meet the local requirements, as it is neither sufficiently set back nor appropriately scaled to mitigate its impact on the street scene.

The proposed development would lead to **overdevelopment** in a conservation area, setting a **harmful precedent** and disrupting the neighbourhood's balance. Moreover, the extension would significantly harm the host building, a structure of **architectural** and **historical significance**, by overwhelming its form and compromising its integrity. This would result in a **loss of historical value** and damage the visual cohesion of the conservation area, making it inappropriate for approval.



**Figure 3.** The proposed extension of the existing house at 11 Glebe Road (right), in relation to the existing house at 9 Glebe Road (left), clearly shows the **overbearing intrusion** into Number 9's privacy and the **overwhelming impact** it will have on Number 9's amenities, particularly in terms of **light obstruction, overshadowing, and overlooking**.

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## Sustainable design and climate impact

The accompanying *Sustainable Design and Construction Statement* is vague and lacks concrete details on the materials or technologies proposed for the development. While the document references strategies and design choices aimed at achieving a sustainable build, it does not outline specific measures or recommend particular technologies to ensure compliance. As a result, **it is not possible to verify whether the development will adhere to the relevant sustainability policies based on the provided statement.**

## Impact on Neighbour Privacy and amenity

The proposed plan is in breach of CC8 Safeguarding amenity, Reading Borough Local plan, p30 for the following points:

- Privacy and overlooking
- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects
- Harm to outlook
- Noise and disturbance

The proposed development, due to its **massive height and scale**, will directly overlook neighbouring properties, particularly Number 9 (see figure 2). With the large number of flats being planned, the developer will be unable to avoid placing windows that overlook private gardens and living spaces, **leading to a significant breach of privacy** for existing residents. Local policies also specify that **windows facing neighbours should be avoided**. However, the design of the proposed flats **does not comply** with this guidance. The main living room windows on the north aspect will bring much forward that the present configurations and directly face the neighbouring property at Number 9, at a distance well below the recommended **20 metres** for directly facing windows. This will result in a **loss of privacy**.

The proposed building will also reduce the **access to sunlight and daylight** to the number 9. Aside from the negative effect of shadowing, this will also have a negative impact on the well established garden on both sides of the house. The south facing roof on the house on No 9 would be a potential area to install solar panels. This will no longer be feasible with the proposed extension.

The proposed number of flats will result in a substantial increase in the number of occupants. A plausible scenario estimates at least 1-2 occupants for each of the six one-bedroom units, at least 3-4 occupants for the two two-bedroom units, and at least 6 people in the four-bedroom detached house (numbers extracted from table 4.1 of the reading borough council local plans). Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that at any time, **there will be at least 16 people living in the converted flat units and possibly 22**. This represents at least a tenfold increase in occupancy from the current situation,

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bringing a doubling in the density of Glebe road with just one single development. This heightened population density means more people will be using balconies, windows, and outdoor spaces, further exacerbating the intrusion into neighbours' privacy. This will lead to **noise and disturbance** for most part of the day. The number of cars at the front of the building and adjacent to 9 Glebe Road will generate a significant amount of noise, dust, and pollution, adversely affecting the tranquillity of the residents and directly impacting the bedrooms at the front of 9 Glebe Road

### **Lack of provision of off road parking, bicycle off road storage and waste bin storage**

Reading Borough plan of 2019 states in section 4.1.38: *'Most tensions can be avoided by careful design, siting and orientation of buildings and spaces, paying particular attention to those aspects which are most likely to cause issues (e.g. car parks, bin stores and noisy equipment)...'*. This is also mentioned in H8 on conversion of buildings into flats (p87) *'Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access'*. The current plan is not considering this, see below for details.

**The plan only provides 7 off-road** parking spaces for the converted block of flats and a separate parking area for the single dwelling (figure 1). The lack of one off-road parking space per unit is in contrast to national and local regulations which for our areas specify 1 off-road parking for 1-2 bedroom flats and 1.5 for 3+ bedroom houses. It also relies on the assumption that families in the two-bedroom flats will only have one car and will not need to park on the road. It also does not account for visitor parking which will have to make use of road parking. Additionally, the design does not consider that, to access the premises with such a large number of cars, two entrances—one for IN and one for OUT—should be considered. If this were taken into consideration, then the available spaces would reduce to only 5. No provision of disabled access is given.

Given the size of the development, the proposed **bike storage** is also completely inadequate, with only 4 spaces for an estimated 16-22 occupants. Being undersized by at least four times, the storage should be four times larger. At the correct size it would be difficult to situate in the current position. Reading borough Council recommendations state that *'cycle parking should be situated in close proximity to the trip origin and destination. Encouraging cycling is more effective when parking is provided in more convenient locations than car parking, such as near building entrances'*. This suggests that the bike storage should be located at the front of the building, potentially in the area currently allocated for car parking again reducing the available parking.

Similar concerns apply to **bin storage**. In the present situation, residents in Reading are typically provided with a 140L grey refuse bin, a 240L red recycling bin, and a 23L food waste bin. **The space allocated for waste bins in the proposed plan is 3m x 2m** and is at the very entrance of the planned conversion. The minimum size for storage for a bin is

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0.7m x 0.7m, so the current plan can only accommodate a maximum of 10 bins, rather than the 16 required, without even considering space for the small food waste bins. This means that the storage area should be at least double the current size and cannot be located in the planned position, as it would impede vehicle access to the premises. Further, the addition of 8 large and 8 small food waste bins for each collection day would further add to the difficulty to access the pavement for disabled, a recognized issue in Reading.

### Loss of Biodiversity and Ecological Value

The developer's own environmental survey has confirmed a **loss of biodiversity** and **ecological value** on the proposed development site. This is particularly concerning in an area where conservation and protection of natural habitats are paramount. It is important to highlight that the neighbouring property, **Number 9**, was identified as hosting **bat populations**. The extension of Number 9 was previously subject to a **conditional clause** to protect this **protected species**. Bats are legally protected under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**, making it illegal to disturb or harm them or their roosts. The proposed development will result in increased **noise, light, and human activity**, which could **disrupt the bats' habitat**. This loss of ecological value contradicts **sustainable development principles** and further erodes the **natural heritage** of the conservation area. The failure to address this issue showcased by the planning application demonstrates a lack of consideration for local **environmental policies** and obligations under **biodiversity action plans**.

In a conservation area, the **protection of natural habitats** is just as important as the preservation of architectural and historical features. The developer's disregard for the local bat population and general biodiversity not only affects the ecological balance but also contradicts the purpose of conservation area status, which seeks to protect both the built and natural environment.

### Impact on Traffic Congestion

The proposed development, with 8 flats and a new dwelling, will bring a significant increase in the number of vehicles using the local roads. This will lead to heavier congestion, particularly during peak hours and **school drop-off and pick-up times at the local well attended Abbey school**. The additional traffic and parking demands will obstruct bus lanes of routes 5 and 6 which have a bus stop just outside the premises

The local area currently has insufficient parking spaces, and the addition of 9 new households with an estimated occupancy of at least an extra 16 to 22 people will exacerbate this issue. With limited road space, the development will lead to **illegal parking**, blocking driveways, and creating further **obstruction** for both pedestrians and vehicles. The development doesn't appear to account for visitor parking, adding further strain to the existing parking situation.

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The increased volume of vehicles, coupled with inadequate parking, poses a **serious safety risk** for pedestrians, particularly **children at the adjacent Abbey School**. During school hours, the **narrow local roads** may become unsafe due to bottlenecks and frustrated drivers attempting dangerous manoeuvres, such as turning or reversing in confined spaces.

The local road network (a small cul de sac) is **not designed to handle** the additional traffic and parking demands that this substantial development will bring. Over time, this will lead to wear and tear on the infrastructure and further congestion issues, which are unsustainable for the community.