

02 October 2024



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Emmer Green
Planning Application Reference:	PL/23/1733
Site Address:	7 Hawthorne Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6LY
Proposed Development	Proposed replacement dwellings comprising a pair of semi-detached 2-storey 3-bedroom houses with rooms in loft space
Report author	Marcie Rejwerska
Applicant	Rosegold Estates Ltd
Deadline:	5 th February 2024 (extension of time to be agreed)
Recommendations	Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by 31 st January 2025 (unless officers on behalf of the ADPTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
S106 Planning Obligation	To secure the sum of £75,000 towards the provision of Affordable Housing within the Borough of Reading. Index-linked from the date of permission and payable prior to first occupation of any part of the development.
Conditions	1. Time Limit Standard 2. Approved Plans 3. Materials – schedule and samples to be submitted prior to commencement 4. SAP Assessment Design Stage – to be submitted prior to commencement 5. SAP Assessment As Built – pre-occupation 6. Habitat Enhancement Scheme – to be submitted prior to commencement 7. Landscaping Details – to be submitted prior to commencement 8. Tree Protection Measures – including Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan – to be submitted prior to commencement

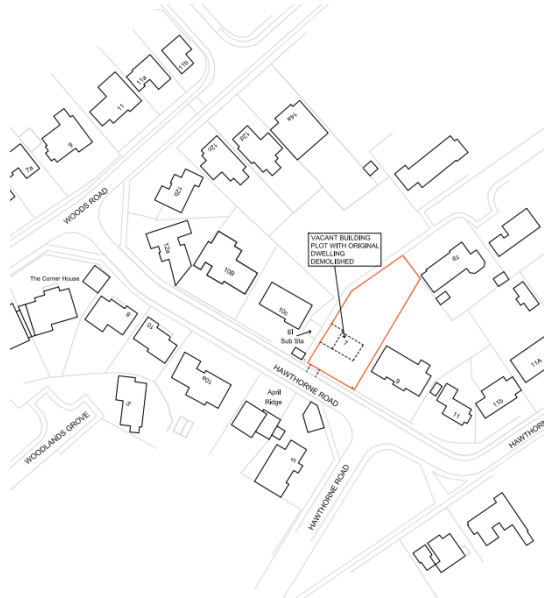
	9. Vehicular Access As Specified 10. Vehicle Parking As Specified 11. Cycle Parking As Specified 12. Refuse Storage As Specified 13. EV Charging 14. Construction Method Statement – to be submitted prior to commencement 15. Hours of Construction 16. No Bonfires
Informatives	1. Terms 2. Pre-commencement conditions 3. S106 4. Building Control 5. Complaints About Construction 6. Encroachment 7. Highways 8. Access Construction 9. Advice about installation of underground services 10. CIL 11. Positive and Proactive - approval

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This report explains the proposal for erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings on a vacant plot on Hawthorne Road in Emmer Green. The application site is currently vacant following demolition of one dwelling on the site sometime in 2016, under a previously granted planning permission for a single replacement dwelling which was not completed. The proposed semi-detached dwellings would have a gravel driveway frontage with landscaping to the front and rear of the site. The dwellings themselves would have one entrance at the front elevation and one at the side to maintain the dominant appearance of a detached dwelling.

2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application is referred to Committee at the request of Cllr Robinson and Cllr Yeo.
- 2.2. The application site is located on the north-eastern side of Hawthorne Road, adjacent to a public footpath connecting Hawthorne Road and Lowfield Green. The site at present is vacant and overgrown following demolition of a bungalow on site around 2016. The surrounding area is residential, characterised by detached dwellings of various design.
- 2.3. Site location plan:



3. The proposal

- 3.1. Planning permission is sought to erect 2x semi-detached two-storey, 3-bedroom properties on the north-eastern side of Hawthorne Road. The proposed dwellings will measure:

Unit 1

Gross Internal Area: 177m²

Bedroom 1: 14.65m²

Bedroom 2: 16.11m²

Bedroom 3: 20.86m²

Rear garden: 105.11m²

Unit 2

Gross Internal Area: 184.9m²

Bedroom 1: 14.77m²

Bedroom 2: 16.11m²

Bedroom 3: 21m²

Rear garden: 184.42m²

- 3.2. The proposed frontage will comprise a gravel bonded driveway to provide off-road parking and landscaped with hedging.

- 3.3. Submitted plans and documentation:

HRC07-001 Block and Location Plan, received 30/11/2023

READ2301 Site Survey, received 30/11/2023

Landscape Maintenance Schedule, Adams Habermehl, dated 23/11/23, received 30/11/2023

0894 1.1B Soft Landscaping, received 09/04/2024

0891 1.2B Hard Landscaping, received 09/04/2024

HRC07-006 Rev P2 Proposed Floor Plans, received 09/04/2024

HRC07-007 Rev P3 Proposed Elevations, received 09/04/2024

BNG Metric Calculations, received 13/03/2024

Biodiversity Statement – Mitigation Hierarchy, received 13/03/2024

Viability Report, Dr A. Golland, dated May 2024, received 30/05/2024

HRC07-100 Site Plan, dated September 2024, received 19/09/2024

4. Planning history

- 4.1. PL/08/0151 - Demolition of an existing dwelling and the construction of a pair of two-storey semi-detached dwellings with associated car parking and amenity spaces. – Outline Application Permitted on 07/10/2008
- 4.2. PL/15/1114 - Replace existing residential dwelling with new build residential home – Application permitted on 25/08/2016
- 4.3. PL/16/1484 - Discharge of condition nos 3 (Materials), 6 (CMS), 7 (Noise and Dust) and 10 (Landscaping) of planning permission ref. 151114 – Conditions Discharged
- 4.4. PL/21/1923 - Erection of a pair of semi detached houses and a detached garage – Application Refused on 14/02/2022 for reasons relating to:
 - Excessive scale of proposed garage and associated turning area;
 - Inadequate landscaping and tree planting;
 - Insufficient outdoor amenity space due to proposed outbuildings;
 - Failure to demonstrate acceptable visibility splays and electric charging vehicle points;
 - Absence of completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution to affordable housing.

5. Consultations

- 5.1. RBC Transport Development Control – No objections to amended plans, subject to conditions.
- 5.2. RBC Natural Environment - the application is supported in terms of trees and landscaping subject to conditions L2 to secure landscaping details and L7 to secure tree protection measures. Please also add the soil informative.
- 5.3. RBC Environmental Protection – No comments to make.
- 5.4. Ecology – Net loss on site not supported unless the developer can sufficiently mitigate the loss and justify the public benefit of the proposal. Conditions recommended to secure habitat enhancements.
- 5.5. The following addresses were consulted via letter:
 - 5 Hawthorne Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6LY
 - 6 Hawthorne Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 5LY
 - 9 Hawthorne Road, Caversham, Reading
 - 8 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA
 - 10 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA
 - 27 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

April Ridge, Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

48 Orchard Grove, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NF

10c Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

20a Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

24 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

15a Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

12a Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

17 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

19 Lowfield Green, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NZ

18a Hawthorne Road, Caversham, Reading

16 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

Hawthorne Road, Caversham, Reading

22 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6NA

5.6. Letters of representation received as follows:

18 objections citing concerns relating to:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Will set a precedent for future application to subdivide existing detached dwellings.
- Pressure on existing utilities.
- Land covenant on the site for detached properties only.
- Proposed dwellings will be out of character.
- Proposal will lower the value of surrounding dwellings.
- Construction traffic will conflict with school traffic from Micklands Primary School causing risk to children using the adjacent footpath.
- The ridge height would be out of character.
- Overshadowing to no. 9 Hawthorne Road.
- Insufficient off-road parking provision will lead to increased on-street parking.
- Proposal should be limited to a single replacement dwelling.
- Inaccuracies on plans.

1 letter of support received.

5.7. Site notices were also displayed on site.

6. Legal context

- 6.1. 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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

- 6.2. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.3. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policies:

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

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

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

Sustainable Design and Construction 2019

7. Appraisal

- 7.1. The main considerations are:
- I) Land Use Matters
 - II) Design and Character
 - III) Residential Amenity
 - IV) Biodiversity and Landscaping
 - V) Transport and Parking
 - VI) Affordable Housing & CIL

Land Use Matters

- 7.2. The NPPF (2023) 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 in built up areas. Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. As such, the principle of development on this site is accepted, subject to compliance with other relevant and material considerations.

Design and Character

- 7.3. The Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area within which it is located, in terms of layout, landscaping, density, scale, height and massing and architectural detail and materials. The policy also seeks that developments respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, create safe and accessible environments and are visually attractive.
- 7.4. The surrounding area is characterised by detached properties in varying character, many with varied roof forms. The proposed character of the property reflects this with a staggered principal elevation and a half-hipped roof. The properties would have a connected front porch with Unit 1’s entrance located to the side of the porch to create the appearance of a single dwelling. This was a revision to the design made by the applicant in response to the objections received.
- 7.5. The proposed roof would be marginally taller than the neighbouring no. 5 and 9 Hawthorne Road. However, this is not considered harmful to the wider character of the street as the height difference is minimal, measuring 0.6m above the ridge of no. 9 Hawthorne Road. There are a number of different roof forms in the immediately surrounding area, such as nos. 6 Hawthorne Road, 1 Hawthorne Road and Dante, Hawthorne Road.
- 7.6. The proposed materials including facing brickwork and concrete roof tiles are considered in keeping with the wider character of the area. A condition is recommended to secure a schedule of materials and samples prior to commencement of works on site.

Residential Amenity

- 7.7. Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of existing nearby residents as well as future occupiers of the proposed development from risks of harm relating to matters such as overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy, visual dominance and overbearing development, noise, and artificial lighting.
- 7.8. Policy H10 is also relevant and seeks to secure private outdoor amenity areas on all new residential developments. The policy requires private outdoor space to not measure less than the measured gross internal area of the dwelling which it serves, but also takes into consideration the proximity of the site to quality public open spaces as a guide.
- 7.9. For future occupiers, there are no significant risks to amenity identified. The proposed fenestration layout will allow for an acceptable access to natural sunlight/daylight and adequate ventilation. Bedrooms contained within the loft space will not benefit from any meaningful outlook, however, this is a typical arrangement and not considered to pose any harm.
- 7.10. Both proposed dwellings will have an acceptable amount of private outdoor amenity space at the rear. Although slightly below the size requirement as recommended for new residential developments, the proposed garden spaces are considered adequate to provide meaningful amenity space for future occupiers.
- 7.11. In respect of impact to amenity for existing neighbouring properties, there are also no identified risks to amenity. The proposed dwellings follow the prevailing building line at

the front elevation, preventing any overshadowing and visual dominance. At the rear, the proposed single storey element extends has a minimal impact on the neighbouring properties as there is sufficient separation distance to side plot boundaries at an appropriate height and scale. This therefore does not raise any concern with relation to overshadowing from the rear. The proposed fenestration layout creates typical views one would expect from a residential property on this site, and none that would pose a risk of overlooking or loss of privacy to any neighbouring properties.

- 7.12. Overall, there would be no significant harm to residential amenity either for future occupiers of the proposed dwellings, nor any neighbouring properties.

Biodiversity and Landscaping

- 7.13. Policy EN12 requires that on all sites development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. The mandatory biodiversity net gain under Schedule 7A of the TCPA 1990 does not apply to this site.
- 7.14. The proposal results in a small biodiversity net loss on site (7.76%) relating to the scrub habitat which has resulted from the land being cleared and left to become overgrown over the years. The site was previously occupied by a dwelling, and it is considered reasonable to expect its ongoing residential use which limits the extent to which the site can be left vegetated due to the need to accommodate the building and open garden areas. The proposal involves a 77.2% net gain of hedgerow units and sufficient soft landscaping, as demonstrated in the submitted plans and officers consider that the marginal loss on site has been sufficiently mitigated to prevent significant harm to the environment and biodiversity on site.
- 7.15. Policy EN14 seeks that individual trees, groups of trees and hedges will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, that Reading's tree cover is extended, and that new development shall make provision for tree retention and planting to provide for biodiversity, and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change.
- 7.16. There is an existing Silver birch tree within the site and several trees which overhang onto the site from the north-west and south-east. There are no direct impacts on trees apparent in the proposals. Building works could impact on these trees however and an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan is recommended to be secured by condition to ensure appropriate tree protection measures are provided.
- 7.17. Overall, the minimal biodiversity net loss on site is considered appropriately mitigated with the proposed soft landscaping, and the net loss is not considered sufficient to require an off-site compensation. Conditions are recommended to secure details of tree protection and landscaping prior to commencement of works on site.

Transport and Parking

- 7.18. The application site is in Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities. In accordance with the Council's current adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD each dwelling would require 2 off-road parking spaces.
- 7.19. The submitted plans demonstrate that each dwelling will be provided with the required provision of off-road parking. There is therefore no identified risk to pressure for on-street parking. The visibility splays have been demonstrated on the submitted site plan and are considered acceptable.
- 7.20. Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable on transport and highways grounds.

Affordable Housing & CIL

- 7.21. Policy H3 requires all resident development to make appropriate contributions towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading. On sites of 1-4 dwellings, a financial contribution is required that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.
- 7.22. Council's Valuer advises the policy-compliant contribution is 'viable' and the applicant has agreed to enter into a S106 legal agreement to secure this.
- 7.23. The proposal will also be CIL liable. Both dwellings have a cumulative gross internal area of 365m², chargeable at a rate of £179.29/m² (as per RBC CIL Schedule of Rates 2024).

8. Equality implications

- 8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9. Conclusion & planning balance

- 9.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its design, scale, and layout. It is not considered harmful to the character of the wider area. The minimal biodiversity net loss on site is not considered to outweigh the benefit provided from high quality landscaping on site. The recommendation is therefore made to grant planning permission subject to completion of the legal agreement to secure affordable housing contributions.

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Appendix 1: Plans

1. Site plan and soft landscaping



2. Proposed front elevations

