

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT**Ward: Caversham Heights****App Ref: PL/25/0422****Address: 92 Albert Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7PL****Proposal: Erection of detached dwelling****Applicant: Widbrook Developments Ltd****Received date: 19 March 2025****Target Decision date (with e.o.t): 13 June 2025****Case Officer: Louise Coveney- Fuller**

Application Site

The site relates to land to the rear of 92 Albert Road, Caversham located on the east side of Albert Road, close to the junction with Chelford Way to the south. The site is subject to Tree Preservation Order 40/06 which includes a number of trees, along with the trees next door at No.94 Albert Road and is within a Green Link. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. The area of the application is garden land associated with the flats to the east.

Proposal

The proposed development seeks permission for the erection of a detached dwelling. The proposal would be a modern flat roofed, part two-storey dwelling, part single-storey with 2 no. car parking spaces accessed via Chelford Way.

Relevant Planning History

920010/FUL (92-00010-FUL) - Conversion of existing building (used as three flats) into five flats incorporating new dormers, and parking area with new crossover. Permitted (2 July 1993)
Unimplemented

920133/FUL (92-00196-FUL) - Two storey extension and conversion of existing building (used as three flats) into seven flats incorporating new dormers, and parking area with new crossover.
Refused (26 June 1992)

231265/FUL- Erection of 4no.dwellings following demolition of existing buildings. Refused (5 March 2024)

230663/FUL - Erection of hoarding as a means of enclosure to secure an unoccupied building. Under Consideration.

PL/24/0496 - Extension and alterations to flats 1 and 3 to create one additional apartment. Withdrawn (21 June 2024)

PL/25/0425- Replacement entrance porch and conversion into 2no. semi-detached dwellings- Pending Consideration

Tree works applications:

PL/23/1081E-common Lime T5 & T6 - removal of basal growth twice a year for the next 5 years to keep from obstructing the public highway. - valid

Representation

A site notice was displayed by the Case Officer. This has met the statutory consultation requirements for the application.

Objections

5 comments were received in objection to the proposal are summarised as below:
(officer note: some addresses have commented more than once on the proposal)

- Overdevelopment of the plot
- Detrimental impacts upon trees, and future pressure to prune
- Impact on residential amenity of properties within Chelford Way
- Poor design, living environment
- Negative impact on setting and out of character with the area
- Lack of space to provide meaningful landscaping to Chelford Way
- Parking along Chelford Way
- Impact on Trees- continuation of loss of trees

Internal Consultations

Ecology: Object.

The application site comprises an area of garden where it is proposed to erect a detached dwelling. The site is located within a Green Link as per policy EN12 of the local plan.

The proposals will result in the loss of much of the existing garden.

It is our advice that the application as it stands does not comply with policies EN12 and H11. It will lead to the loss of private garden land, within a designated Green Link and would does not provide "biodiversity net gain wherever possible".

The Biodiversity Net Gain metric submitted shows a net gain in habitat units – however, we are concerned over its accuracy (see points below) and our advice is that the proposal does not meet the requirements of Policy H11. Additionally, it does not 'maintain, protect, consolidate, extend or enhance' the identified Green Network, instead contributing to its fragmentation, contrary to Policy EN12.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021, all (non-exempt) developments are required to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), demonstrated using the Statutory Metric.

The development will lead to a large part of the garden being replaced by hardstanding. The applicant has submitted a small sites metric that concludes that the development will lead to a net gain of 0.0052 (AHU) units (equivalent to 12.27%) through the inclusion of a green roof and nine small trees in 8m2 areas in the southeastern corner of the site.

However, the net gain habitat units is likely to be incorrect for the following reasons:

(1) the calculation includes urban trees as part of the habitat creation. Trees within gardens should not be included in the metric as trees within private gardens as the metric guidelines read:

"Where private gardens are created, any tree planting within the created garden should not be included within post-development sheets of the metric. The habitat type 'Urban – Vegetated garden' should be used. "(Additionally, the practicality of accommodating 9 trees within such a small area - 8m2 - is questionable and unlikely to be acceptable. These trees (2) the metric includes an area of modified grassland as a post intervention habitat. This area falls within the garden and should be shown in the metric as Vegetated Garden as the council would have no control over how this area will be managed post development and certainly not for 30 years.

(3) the calculation shows an area of green roof. While this can contribute to biodiversity, it will be located upon a built structure and (as with point 2 above), the local planning authority would have no power to enforce or monitor the management of the green roof

for the minimum 30 years period to contribute towards BNG calculations. As such it should not be included in the metric

An updated metric should be provided which addresses the above points. Furthermore, our advice would be that the house may constitute over-development of the site. To mitigate the net loss in biodiversity, a smaller house design and reduced hardstanding around the dwelling would help. Currently, it has not been demonstrated that the proposals will deliver a net gain for biodiversity.

Summary

The proposed development will lead to a large dwelling and result in a likely large loss of biodiversity. Unless it could be demonstrated that there are no suitable alternatives exist, the proposals would not accord with the local Policies H11 and EN12. The council will need to decide whether the loss of biodiversity on a Green Link is acceptable and if so, whether offsite provisions to mitigate this loss are appropriate.

Transport: *No in principle Objection.*

The application site lies on the eastern side of Albert Road and is located within 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.

This application consists of the construction of 1 x 4 bedroom detached dwelling located to the east of the existing building and would front onto Chelford Way. A new vehicle access is proposed to serve the new dwelling.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed development would be required to provide 2.0 off road parking spaces for each dwelling. Proposed site plan identifies a 2 bay parking bay which is deemed acceptable. Water runoff from the proposed dwelling onto the public highway is not permitted. An appropriate method of drainage needs to be provided within the property curtilage including the use of suitable permeable surfacing materials.

A new vehicle crossing is proposed from Chelford Way, the extent of the dropped kerb will need to be illustrated on plans including visibility splays of 2.4x43m. A license will be required from the Highways department to undertake all works on the public highway.

The Council's Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 – 2026 includes policies for investing in new infrastructure to improve connections throughout and beyond Reading which include a network of publicly available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public transport. 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 has been illustrated on plans. Installation of the charging point will need to conform with the latest building regulations. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 2 no cycle parking spaces. In a development of this nature this can be provided within an individual store such as a garden shed. This has not been illustrated on plans and will need to be illustrated on revised plans.

Bin storage has been illustrated on plans and it is assumed that bins will be brought forward to the property boundary for kerb side collection from Chelford Way which would replicate the existing arrangement for dwellings in the area. It is recommended that the Council's Waste and Recycle Team are contacted to ensure the correct capacity and type of bins are provided.

CMS will be required for this development and licenses obtained from the Highways Team to undertake all works on the Public Highway.

Natural Environment: *Objects.*

Previous planning proposals on this site have not been successful. Application 240496 (Extension and alterations to flats 1 & 3 to create one additional apartment) was withdrawn. Application 231265 (Erection of 4no.dwellings following demolition of existing buildings) was refused, with RfR 4 (amenity space provision) & 9 (pressure on trees) relating to tree issues

The current proposal is for a new dwelling in the rear of the existing garden
With reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Ref: PB/AIA-25/03.05/Proj_2 dated 17th March 2025 from Tree Surveys:

I note that that the AIA is based on a tree survey done by the same company on 29 August 2022. The survey should have been updated, being so old, to account for changes (which I know have happened) since then, albeit some changes are noted in 2.4.2.

The plans cited in 1.5.1 are not the current plans submitted with this application.
3.3 cites 3 documents used in production of this report, including 'Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice' which was withdrawn in 2014 and also refers to NJUG 10, which was withdrawn and replaced by NJUG 4 in 2007. I don't know why the author would be referring to either, but it is inappropriate to do so.
3.3 refers to the use of BS5837:2012, which is at least current, but it is questionable whether guidance in this has been used

Section 5 confirms that no tree removal or pruning is required to allow for the proposal.
5.2.2 states:

'The details of any hard landscaping work, including patios, walls and footways, and the excavation and erection of gate posts, were not available at the time of preparing this report'.

This is not acceptable.

In order to fully assess the proposal, the full of extent of works must be made known and arboriculturally assessed as recommended in 5.4.2 of BS5837.
Proposed Site Plan Layout PR11.3-105 D and Landscape Plan PR11.3-106 D are unhelpful in showing the extent of soft and hard landscaping or boundary treatment to assist with this, as would be expected to be shown.

5.2.3 goes on to say:

'There will be no major impacts on tree root protection areas as a result of this scheme provided that the tree protection barriers and ground protection mitigation are installed as shown on the tree protection plan ref PB/TPP-25/03.05_Proj_2 included in Appendix 2 and maintained in situ until all construction works activity is completed'.

It is unclear how the author can come to this conclusion given the statement in 5.2.2.

5.4.5 then states:

'It is anticipated there will be RPA incursions for the foundations and construction of new hard surfaced paths and patio and excavation and installation of new fence posts. Disturbance to tree roots can be significantly reduced by appropriate mitigation work to be set out in an AMS'.

This justifies the need to include this now, as it is 'anticipated'.

5.5. confirms that the route of services is unknown – again this is important to know to assess the tree impact (ref 8.4 of BS5837). There is an expectation that the connection will be from existing services in Chelford Way hence the route of existing services could have at least been established.

7.1 confirms (twice) that 'The retained trees within the site will continue to increase in size as they reach full maturity' and that 'it is anticipated that some minor management intervention may be required in keeping with normal arboricultural practice'

*The author does not comment on this any further, other than to state that a tree works application will be required. BS5837:2012 5.3.4 advised that:
'A realistic assessment of the probable impact of any proposed development on the trees and vice versa should take into account the characteristics and condition of the trees, with due allowance and space for their future growth and maintenance requirements'*

With point (d) stating:

'Future pressure for removal. The relationship of buildings to large trees can cause apprehension to occupiers or users of nearby buildings or spaces, resulting in pressure for the removal of the trees. Buildings and other structures should be sited allowing adequate space for a tree's natural development, with due consideration given to its predicted height and canopy spread...'

The acknowledgement that the tree(s) will need pruning in the future does not take the above advice into account and indicates that insufficient space has been provided for future growth.

8.1 of the AIA states:

'The retained trees will provide shade over parts of the site late morning to afternoon. Shade is considered beneficial especially in hot weather and we do not anticipate any adverse impacts as a result of these retained trees'

No Tree Constraints Plan has been provided, as would be expected in an AIA, on which shading segments would be included, as recommended in 5.2.2 of BS5837, to assist with this point.

The TPP includes an area of 'Ground protection - No-dig foundations' but it's unclear what is proposed here hence clarity is required:

I note that a 'Tree Root Protection Plan' PR11.3-102 D has been provided by the developer, separate to the AIA/TPP. It is not appropriate and unnecessary to provide this separately as it just confused matters.

Some new planting has been indicated, the details of which could be secured via condition, if approved.

The development fails to demonstrate a lack of harm to a protected tree of high amenity value and is, by virtue of the proximity to retained trees, is likely to result in future pressure to prune or fell contrary to Local Plan Policy EN14 and aims of the adopted Tree Strategy (2021).

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.

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:

PLANNING POLICY

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

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

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

EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

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

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Planning Obligations Under Section 106 SPD (2015)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

Tree Strategy (2021)

Other relevant documentation / guidance / legislation

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

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very

similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the advice given below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

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. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.*”

As such, it is clear that the priority for development should be on Brownfield Land. Notwithstanding, the Reading Borough Local Plan includes policies which seek to facilitate appropriate development of land which is currently or was previously contained within residential gardens. As such, subject to meeting the requirements, the principle of development could be acceptable.

The site would be considered a windfall site in accordance with the NPPF. It is noted that the provision of housing would assist with meeting the Council's objectively assessed need in accordance with Policy H1. However, it is afforded limited weight as it is a generic benefit for residential schemes against a backdrop of high housing delivery, as well as all other policy requirements, including design, character, and amenity considerations outlined below.

Design and Character

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is in terms of layout, landscape, density, scale, height, massing, architectural detail and materials. Policy H11 seeks to ensure that development of land which includes land currently or formerly within the curtilage of private residential gardens: make a positive contribution to the character of the area, provide adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed, provides appropriate access, does not lead to tandem development, minimises exposure of private boundaries to public areas, does not cause significant detrimental impact to the amenity of existing nearby occupants, emphasises the provision of family-sized housing, provides a biodiversity net gain, and does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

The NPPF (Para 131) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The National Design Guide 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'.

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 application site, as above is part of the garden of no. 92 Albert Road. The properties along Albert Road, are generally large detached dwellings set within generous plots, being constructed generally pre-1915. Chelford Way, and Orwell Close are a more modern development (1960-70's). The site would form a transition between a looser urban grain to a tighter urban grain of the areas. Chelford Way, to which the proposed development would relate included a reasonably consistent building line and built form. The space around buildings is considered a positive element of Chelford Way, Albert Road, and Orwell Close, with significant rear gardens a key aspect in giving the dwellings their setting. The proposal would be a similar plot size to the Chelford Way properties. However, would have a much larger footprint, and a smaller garden area compared to the others.

The design, being modern in appearance would not specifically be objectionable. It would distinguish itself from the larger historic building at 92 Albert Road, and those in the modern development which it is set. Materiality would be important, including the type of wood, as the bright colour shown on the elevations may not be appropriate. However, a condition could be included to secure such details.

The proposal would be a significant change to the character and appearance of the area and be detrimental to the overall spaciousness and openness presented between the distinctly different areas in which the site is related to. Therefore the proposal is considered to be overdevelopment in scale and form of the proposed site and would therefore not be considered to be in conflict with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan (2019).

Overall, the layout of the development within the plot relative to the transition between the two distinct grains of the area is not considered to provide a sufficiently spacious layout to accommodate the development. This results in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to policies CC7, H10, H11, and paragraph 131 of the NPPF 2024.

It is noted that no.92 Albert Road is considered a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), which was referred to as a reason for refusal in application PL/23/1265. The proposed development, by virtue of its siting within the setting of that NDHA has the potential to impact upon its significance. Due to the separation distance, and scale, it is not considered that the proposal would have a significant detrimental impact on the NDHA as to warrant a reason for refusal in this instance.

Impact on Amenity

Policy CC8 and H11 of the Reading Local Plan relate to protection of, and provision for, amenity of residents. The proposed development would, as it is infill development introduce a new dwelling, windows, and potential concerns for the amenity of existing and proposed residents. Policy H10 requires development to be provided with functional open space to meet the needs of the development.

The proposed development is for a dwelling with an approximate gross floor area of 210m². The proposal includes a garden which wraps around the eastern side of the dwelling, with an overall area of ~440m². The supporting text of Policy H10 states that a useful guide for proposals for dwelling is that the outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates. It is noted that of the above referenced ~440m², some ~165m² is in the form of a front garden area. This would be behind a timber post and beam fence, however may not be considered as useable open space due to the privacy limitations. It may also be segregated from the remainder of the open space by a permitted development fence of 1.8m in the future. In addition to this area of potentially less useable open space, the garden area would be on the eastern side of the site under the canopies of T1, T2, and T12 of the Tree preservation order. These trees are protected, and as such works such as pruning requires permission. The orientation of the garden, including the principal area of outdoor space directly accessed from the kitchen and dining areas. This area would be subject to significant shading from protected trees through much of the morning, and shading from the dwelling itself in the afternoon. There would be significant pressure to prune the trees within this area (discussed further below). The overshadowing of the garden space despite its useable size being greater than the dwelling it would be attached, including the degree of privacy afforded to it by an open side garden would amount to the space being sufficiently unusable as to not meet the requirements of policy H10.

The above policies also relate to the quality of the outdoor amenity space serving the future occupants. Not only would the garden area be significantly smaller than the gardens sizes of Albert Road to the north and south. The proposed garden is not considered to offer the quality of outdoor amenity space that is a key characteristic to Albert Road. As such, the proposal is not considered to comply with Local Plan policies CC8, H10, and H11.

Impacts upon 92 Albert Road

The proposal is within close proximity to the living room to the existing ground floor flat at 92 Albert Road. The building would present a large two-storey building directly in front of the windows of the

ground floor room. This is an odd relationship given the existing buildings design. The ground floor also benefits from dual aspect. It is likely, based on the above that the existing flat (and proposed conversion) would not be significantly impacted in terms of overbearing as a result of the proposal.

The proposal would reduce the overall amount of garden associated with the three flats at 92 Albert Road. The layout of the current garden appears to be communal open space, with only ground floor having direct access. Though the arrangements are unclear. Given the size of the plot, the reduction of on-site garden space is not considered to be significantly harmful to the amenity of the existing flats.

Impact on Natural Environment - Trees/Landscaping

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to protect trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodland from damage or removal, extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposals should include appropriate landscaping.

The submitted arboricultural impact assessment was based on a tree survey dated August 2022. Tree works have occurred between that survey and current date (Tree works ref PL/23/1081E). RBC's natural environment officer has provided a response that outlines the AIA and AMS do not satisfactorily demonstrate that the impacts to trees as a result of the development.

The development fails to demonstrate a lack of harm to protected trees of high amenity value and is, by virtue of the proximity to retained trees, is likely to result in future pressure to prune or fell contrary to Local Plan Policy EN14 and aims of the adopted Tree Strategy (2021).

Impacts on Ecology

The subject site comprises a large residential garden, which has been cleared of most vegetation prior to the application having been lodged. The site is within an identified green link as per policy EN12 of the Local Plan (2019). In accordance with Policy EN12, all development would be expected to not result in a net loss of biodiversity. Any net gain should be provided wherever possible. Mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements as implemented in 2024 also apply to the proposed development.

As per Schedule 7A, paragraph 6 of the Town and Country Planning Act states that if activities on land on or after 30 January 2020 has taken place other than in accordance with a planning permission and as a result the biodiversity value of the onsite habitat is lower than it would otherwise have been, the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat is to be taken to be its biodiversity value immediately before the carrying on of the activities.

Whilst, in line with the biodiversity net gain hierarchy, off-site biodiversity net gain may be appropriate. The details of the existing baseline, and proposed biodiversity gain provided are not considered to be accurate, nor are they able to be secured in accordance with the requirement for a 30 year biodiversity net gain. As such, the applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with Policy EN12, and has failed to demonstrate the pre-development value accurately in accordance with published biodiversity net gain guidance by the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

Transport Considerations

Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

The proposed development would be provided with an access which meets the requirements of the highways authority. The proposal would provide 2 no. parking bays in accordance with the adopted Parking SPD. It would also be possible to condition provision of 1 no. electric vehicle parking bay in line with policy, though indicated lacks sufficient details. Cycle storage, and bin storage is also

considered satisfactory. Should permission have been able to be granted, a condition for a construction management plan would be included.

Affordable Housing

Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires that for schemes of 1-4 dwellings a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. In accordance with the adopted Affordable Housing SPD 2021 this equates to contribution equivalent to 5% of the GDV of the development.

The applicant stated they agreed in principle to enter into a legal agreement to secure financial contribution. However, no formal valuations have been submitted (noting the agent's suggested contribution). Given that the proposal is not considered acceptable in other planning terms, the Council has not pursued the S106 legal agreement to secure the financial affordable housing provision. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H3 and CC9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

An informative will specify that this reason for refusal could be overcome, in the context of an acceptable scheme in all other respects, by entering into a s106 or unilateral undertaking.

Sustainability Considerations

In accordance with Policies CC2, and H5 of the Reading Local Plan (2019) all development would be required to demonstrate how it is proposing to be constructed to address climate change. In this instance, the proposal is sought to be built to acceptable standards. As such, should the recommendation had been to approve, a condition would have been attached to secure post construction certification that an appropriate standard had been met in line with the appropriate acceptable standard.

Waste Considerations

The proposal includes bin storage allocated within the application site as shown on the block plan, and waste collection would be presented to the highway on collection days. This would be considered acceptable. No bin collection pads would be supported, and a suitable worded condition could be attached to a permission should approval have been recommended.

CIL

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development if approved. If the scheme had been acceptable an informative would have been attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

Conclusion

Though the proposal would provide and additional dwelling on a windfall site which would assist in meeting Reading's objectively assessed needs, the proposal would fail to represent a high quality development which fits with the existing urban layout and urban grain, and would represent overdevelopment of the plot on a number of matters. The impacts of the proposal on trees, and potential for further impacts to trees as a result of the poor quality of outdoor amenity spaces which is significantly overshadowed and would result in increased pressure to prune protected trees. The applicant has failed to demonstrate the appropriate baseline for the site and therefore that there would be no net loss in biodiversity, and a net gain in accordance with mandatory requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse