

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Kentwood Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0377 Full planning permission

Address: 51 ARMOUR HILL, TILEHURST, READING, RG31 6JP

Proposal: Part-retrospective, extension to nursery to accommodate an additional 6 children by way of a single storey rear extension following demolition of existing open-sided structure, provision of single storey office building, storage enclosures, and covering to sandpit area and amended boundary treatments to frontage.

Applicant: Mrs Louise Otty

Received date: 10 March 2025

Target Decision date: 8 May 2025

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a detached single storey building on the northern side of Armour Hill, Tilehurst. The surrounding area is residential, with a mix of dwelling types in the vicinity. The site abuts a residential premise to the west, and an access path toward Arthur Newbery Park.

The site is not a listed building, not within a conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks permission for the part-retrospective, extension to nursery to accommodate an additional 6 children by way of a single storey rear extension following demolition of existing open-sided structure, provision of single storey office building, storage enclosures, and covering to sandpit area and amended boundary treatments to frontage.

The following plans and document were submitted

Drawing No. PL-002.pr – Proposed Plans & Elevations (including site location plan)

Drawing No. PL-001.pr – Existing Plans & Elevations (including site location plan)

EA Flood map

Design and access statement

Covering Letter

Application forms

As received 10 March 2025

Drawing No. PL-002.A – Proposed Plans & Elevations (including site location plan)

As received 24 March 2025

The 'Harmonia Consulting', Noise Impact Assessment Revision 00, and date 24 April 2025

As received 24 April 2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Environmental Protection Consultations – No objections.
- Ecology Consultations – No objections.
- Trees - Planning Natural Environment – No objections.
- Transport Development Control – No objections.
- Waste Operations Consultations – No response.

A site notice was displayed; no comments were received by members of the public.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/05/0037 - Erect 2.4m high boundary fence to north and eastern boundaries. Approved 23 June 2005

8079 – Use of library as day centre for severely handicapped children (Historic Description) –
Unconditional consent given 18 November 1960

5. EQUALITY ACT

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.

6. 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:

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

National Policy and Guidance
National Planning Policy Framework 2023
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)
CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE
EN15: AIR QUALITY
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
OU1: NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

SPG/SPD
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2013)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of development

Policy OU1 states that 'Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site', subject to other policies in the plan, the expansion of an existing community use would be considered acceptable within its own site.

There is a need for additional childcare in Reading as shown in the Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2023. The application is supported by the RBC Brighter Futures for Children team as it is a key priority for the local authority is to increase the supply of childcare in Reading to ensure that the market can respond to the growth in demand.

Amenity Considerations

Policy CC8 states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance.

The proposed extension to the existing nursery would facilitate an additional 6 (total of 23) children places within the site. The site appears to have been in situ for some time, with a planning permission granted in 1960 for the conversion of the library into a day centre for children. As outlined within the supporting acoustic assessment, the additional children will not give rise to significant additional noise and remain within the current operational hours 9am-6pm.

Design Considerations

The proposal includes various additions within the rear of the site. The demolition of the existing open-sided structure attached to the rear and replacement with an enclosed area for children being the key element. A number of other elements have been added over time, and are sought to be regularised through this part-retrospective application. A single storey detached 'office' structure has also been erected. All structures appear to have been erected after 2015, which would be the earliest period in which they would become immune from enforcement. The proposed extension to the main building would be a ~2.9m tall flat roofed structure to be constructed in brick with a roof light. The office structure as in situ is 2.8m tall to ridge height, this would result in ~24m of built form along the boundary of no. 49 Armour Hill. The bin store and covered sand pit roof are ~2.1m tall.

Policy CC7 and CC8 seek to ensure development is of a high quality which does not result in harmful impacts upon amenity of residents.

The proposed development would extend the existing day nursery beyond the existing rear wall along the boundary of the neighbouring residential use. The extension would not be readily viewable from the highway, though would slightly visible behind the 2.4m palisade fence and 2m tall closed boarded fence from the access to the neighbouring open space.

Though a significant plot coverage, and built to boundary coverage that would not be appropriate for a residential extension. The proposal as an extension to a community use, would provide an improved offering for a use which is highly needed within the Borough. The design would match the construction of the main building for the new extension, and the office is set down and of very small scale where viewable from public spaces. The bin store, and cover to the sandpit would also be minor alterations necessary for the development and complimentary to the use of the site.

By virtue of the fencing, and hedging to no. 49, the proposal would not result in an overbearing appearance, nor undue sense of enclosure to the dwelling. The proposal also retains outdoor play space which provides relief to the overall plot coverage to avoid appearing cramped within the site.

Transport

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

The Site has good local walking connectivity and given the small scale of the use, is likely to serve the local population. Due to the constraints of the site, there is no existing or proposed on-site parking. Given the sites sustainable location, good walking and cycling connectivity (including through Arthur Newbury Park), and the impacts of carparking on the frontage of the site, a car free development is acceptable in this instance. The proposal would result in a negligible increase of vehicle trips as a result of the minor increase in capacity of children.

8. CONCLUSION

The extension of the existing community use is supported by Policy OU1 as the overall benefits of an intensification of use would not result in harm to the character of the area due to the scale and height of the development. It is recognised that the proposed plot coverage is high, and the length is larger than what might be acceptable in other instances, the benefits of the additional provision would outweigh the concerns associated with the scale.

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on this basis.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Approve.