

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: PL/25/0436 Full planning permission

Address: 3 LINDEN ROAD, READING, RG2 7EG

Proposal: Proposed 2 bedroom, two storey C3 dwelling following the demolition of existing outbuildings.

Applicant: Mr S Klosi

Received date: 21/03/2025

Target Decision date: 25/06/2025

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

No. 3 Linden Road is a two storey semi-detached house on the corner of Linden Road and Beech Road. There have been recent additions of a full width rear dormer and a wraparound single storey rear and side extension.

The garden at 3 Linden Road is currently sub divided into two sections by a low level fence and gate. The section at the end of the garden is filled with rubbish and building material on a gravel ground surface in an unkempt state. There is currently a shed and a garage at the end of the existing garden with a blocked up access gate facing onto Beech Road. The outbuildings would need to be removed as part of the proposal. The existing dwelling at 3 Linden Road is not served by a dropped kerb.

The area is characterised by open corner plots and the pattern of development is typically small front gardens and larger rear gardens of between 15 and 25m in depth that are grass covered and softened with trees and vegetation. Houses are predominantly rows of two storey terraced houses or semi-detached pairs with hipped or pitched roofs, having formed part of a former Reading Council housing estate. The majority of houses are now privately owned. There is a mix of materials comprising pebble dash, grey and painted white or rendered frontages, with dark grey or brown roof tiles. This includes the application site and immediately surrounding dwellings. Houses along Beech Road are part pebble dash and part red brick.

It should be noted that no formal planning permission was sought for the existing wrap around side and rear house extension or for the loft extension. The loft extension would likely have been permitted development. The wraparound extension however would have required planning permission but it is likely that it is now immune from enforcement action as having referred to historic Google Streetview images, it is evident that these were constructed sometime between September 2012 and July 2024 but this has not been formerly confirmed.

The 'existing' plans submitted for the previous planning application 140139 for a 'Two storey side and single storey rear extension to form a granny annex' that was refused in 2014, illustrate the original size of the rear garden for 3 Linden Road.

Location Plan – 3 Linden Road - 140139



LOCATION PLAN

It is sited within an air quality management area. There is an existing cycle route along Linden Road.

Site visit photos 4 June 2025

The front of 3 Linden Road



The side of 3 Linden Road (viewed from Beech Road)



The proposed rear garden area for the retained 3 Linden Road. The remainder of the garden is illustrated on plans to serve the proposed dwelling.



The rear of the house as extended



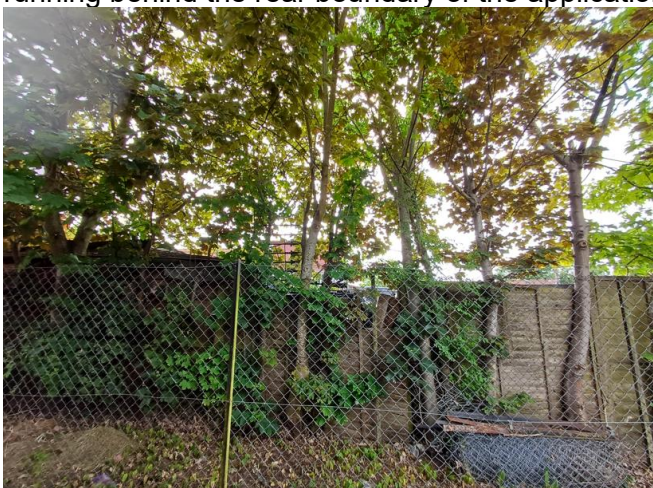
View of rear garden at 3 Linden Road (currently subdivided by a low fence, with gate)



Views across to neighbouring gardens at 5 and 7 Linden Road



Trees along the edge of the site on the boundary with 7 Linden Road (which has a small strip of land running behind the rear boundary of the application site).



View from the neighbouring garden at 5 Linden Road of the existing single storey outbuildings within the garden at 3 Linden Road



View From Google Earth of 3 Linden Road and the surrounding houses



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a 2 bedroom, two storey C3 dwelling following the demolition of existing outbuildings in part of the existing rear garden of no. 3 Linden Road. The section of garden

proposed for the site is approximately 170m² with the new dwellinghouse measuring approx. 8.8m in width, 7.2m in depth, 3.5m to the eaves rising up to a roof height of 6.6m. The ground floor consists of a kitchen dining room lounge area and WC. The second floor consists of two bedrooms with front facing windows and a bathroom set within a part hip and part gable roof. The CIL form states that the total gross internal space to be provided is 85.4m².

Two parking spaces are proposed to the side of the proposed house adjacent to the remaining rear garden of 3 Linden Road, with a small garden to the rear.

An existing access into the rear garden is proposed to be moved to the other side of the proposed site, where the parking spaces are located. The current use of the land is private residential garden for 3 Linden Road. The proposal seeks to re-configure the site to reduce the size of the existing rear garden for 3 Linden Road.

Plans considered

Location Plan

PL3125.102 Proposed Plans

PL3125.103 Block Plans

PL3125.101 Existing plans

De minimis BNG calculator

Land rear of 3 Linden Road_SSM_22b0_map_v1. Small sites (The Statutory Biodiversity Metric)

Version 1.2.2 Release date July 2024

Biodiversity gain plan, 20/03/2025

De minimis exemption for Biodiversity Net Gain (Regulation 4) Eligibility of a small development application for an exemption from the schedule 7A General biodiversity gain condition under the De minimis criteria, Report by Joe's Blooms Ltd

CIL

As received 21 March 2025

Sustainability Statement, Atrio Architecture, April 2025

Affordable housing statement, Atrio Architecture, April 2025

Design, Access & Planning statement, Atrio Architecture, April 2025

As received 30 April 2025

Planning History

140139 Two storey side and single storey rear extension to form a granny Annex – refused 1 April 2014

3. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed on the 4 June 2025 for the statutory consultation period.

The following were consulted and further detail is provided as an Appendix:

- Transport Development Control – There was a failure to demonstrate that adequate car parking could be provided and there was an objection to the plans submitted, however RBC transport feedback that this could be overcome by conditions. Additional information and revised plans were requested due to insufficient information being provided.
- Trees - Planning Natural Environment – There was a failure to demonstrate that trees along the rear access to 7 Linden Road would be protected. An arboricultural impact assessment in accordance with the current 'BS5837' was requested due to insufficient information being provided. The application form states that there are no trees or hedges adjacent to the proposed development and the lack of information would form a reason for refusal, contrary to CC7, H10, H11, EN12 and EN14.

- Ecology Consultations – no objections were raised in relation to BNG uplift information submitted subject to conditions required to protect nesting birds and provision of wildlife planting and ecological enhancements in relation to BNG and policies EN12 and EN14. Concerns were raised in relation to nearby trees and additional information is required in relation to trees along the end boundary of the existing garden.
- Environmental protection – Standing advice was provided for a small residential new build – nine dwellings or less: Demolition and construction - The applicants should submit a statement detailing how noise and dust will be effectively managed during demolition (if relevant) and construction and who will be responsible for this. We recommend conditions for Construction Method Statement; Hours of construction and demolition (8-18.00 Monday-Friday and 8-13.00 Saturday & Sunday); and no materials to be burnt on site.

One letter of representation has been received in objection to the loss of the existing garden, existing problems with car parking in the street caused by residents at the existing house at 3 Linden Road and that the site already has an extension which covers the garden.

4. 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:

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 and a submission version submitted in May 2025.

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’. Policies CC2 and CC3 are being updated to reflect developments in climate change and sustainability construction which should be a consideration in the Local Plan review. Policy CC7 reiterates that all development must be of high quality design, to maintain and enhance physical character and context. Policy EN12 includes the addition of wildlife friendly schemes. Policy H1 states that provision will be made for at least an additional 825 dwellings per annum (14,850 over the plan period 2023-2041). Policy H2 identifies that the greatest need for family homes is for 3 or more bedroom houses. Policy H3 will continue to require an affordable housing contribution for any additional new dwelling. Policy H5 requires net-zero development and requirements for renewable energy, with energy statements to be provided.

National Policy and Guidance
National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (updated February 2025)
National Planning Practice Guidance

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
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
EN15: AIR QUALITY
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
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents
Affordable Housing (2021)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations Under S106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

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.

5. APPRAISAL

Principle

The NPPF encourages the efficient use of land, and states (para.124): *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”*

Brownfield land is defined within the NPPF as (Previously Developed Land): *“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.”

The subject plot in question is the garden curtilage of a residential dwelling. The NPPF 2024 para 75 states that “*plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development to residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area,*” whilst para 129 regarding appropriate densities highlights the “*desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens)*”.

The principle of the development would, therefore, need to be assessed in terms of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 75 that seeks to ensure that policies are set out to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens.

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that Local Plans should outline a strategy to meet the objectively assessed needs of the Borough in a way which makes as much use as possible of Brownfield Land. The Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 does include a range of policies which reflect this. The Local Plan, and supporting documents steer development to brownfield sites, and as per the latest Annual Monitoring Report (2023-2024) Reading is delivering above the target number of dwellings as set out within the Local Plan.

The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) provides a framework for the delivery of development within the Borough over the plan period. This includes provision of 689 homes per annum (on average). This includes a shortfall of 230 dwellings, however, the Local Plan (2019) and associated policies were adopted with full knowledge of this shortfall. The provision of new development on ‘windfall sites’ can be considered, and the benefits of this supply is considered positive though is generic to any proposal for new housing, and as such it given appropriate weight.

As such, it is considered that Brownfield Land is the highest priority for development. Notwithstanding, the provision of windfall sites within other areas is considered under the Local Plan. At the local level, the Council’s Local Plan (Policy H11) establishes a number of criteria against which applications for the development of private residential gardens need to be assessed, in accordance with Paragraph 75 of the NPPF.

Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens), states:

“Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

1) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:

- The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
- A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
- Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
- Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
- The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*

- *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
- 2) *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
- 3) *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
- 4) *The proposal does not lead to tandem development⁸⁹;*
- 5) *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
- 6) *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
- 7) *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing*
- 8) *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and*
- 9) *The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.*

The site is considered to be a residential garden and not previously developed land.

Although the provision of an additional dwelling would contribute to additional housing within the borough under policy H1 (Provision of housing), the sub division of the residential garden in this instance is considered an unacceptable development. The unacceptability of the proposal is assessed against the relevant policies as follows.

Density, Design and impact on the Character of the area

Part 12 of the NPPF 'Achieving well-designed places includes a number of paragraphs around design and fitting with character of areas. Specifically, Paragraph 135 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states:

“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or

b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings

The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) includes a number of policies relating to the design and location of dwellings. Specifically: CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H2 (Density and Mix), H11 (Development of private residential gardens).

Policy H2 relates to general location, accessibility, density and housing mix matters. Where policy CC7 requires that *“all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form ...”*

Policy H11, set out above, includes a range of criteria for assessment of new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or former curtilage of private residential gardens.

The proposed development would include a single two bedroom, two storey detached chalet style dwelling to the rear of 3 Linden Road built within close proximity to its surrounding boundaries, approximately 0.5 m in distance from the side access boundary for 7 Linden Road fronting onto Beech Road and approx. 3.4m from the boundary with 5 Linden Road and the proposed dining room. The boundary wall measures less than 3m from the rear elevation wall of 3 Linden Road where two parking places are proposed at the side of the new dwelling, with a new access proposed. The dwelling would be setback approx. 2.3m from the front boundary. This would follow a different pattern of development compared to other properties setback between 5.7m-7.4m along Linden Road and approx. 5m-6m along Beech Road. It would also result in a cramped street scene and close the gap between properties on Linden Road and Beech Road.

It is evident from the window placement that the design of the additional house has been constructed to avoid any direct overlooking issues and to provide future occupants with the most convenient living accommodation with windows provided for all habitable rooms. The roof is hipped to provide sufficient daylight and sunlight for rear ground floor rooms at 3 Linden Road. However the design of the new dwelling has been constrained by the logistical limitations of the plot. The proposed front gable and dormer window increase the amount of habitable floor space due to the reduce head height in the first floor accommodation, however the roof dormer has a flat roof and is not in keeping with similar dormers with a gabled roof.

The absence of rear windows at first floor level removes any impact of overlooking however the resultant brick walls with use of rooflights provide an unneighbourly, overbearing blank facade and oppressive impact for surrounding properties at 3, 5 and 7 Linden Road and 5 Beech Road.

The existing dwelling at 3 Linden Road would have a rear garden measuring from approx. 2.8m to 3.2m in depth. 3 Linden Road has been extended, with the addition of a roof conversion and a wraparound ground floor side and rear extension.

As such the impact on 3 Linden Road should be assessed as well as the impact of the new development within the site.

The character of the local area is residential in nature and generally low density, however the proposed development will be out of keeping with the established pattern of development of short runs of terraced housing and semi-detached properties with open and spacious corner plots and generous gardens of between 15 and 25m in depth. Outbuildings within gardens are present, but are predominantly small scale, single storey and ancillary in use. The design is cramped within the plot with little provision for soft landscaping for the new dwelling or for 3 Linden Road.

The proposed dwelling, due to its location to the rear of no 3 Linden Road, would form an unacceptable density of development with a greater intensification of the site in comparison to any existing buildings within the area. There is no precedent for detached dwellings in the area. The intensification of the site and the proposed design of the additional house would not contribute to character of the area and the cumulative effect of the extensions and 3 Linden Road in addition to the new dwelling result in an over-development of the plot. The site is not considered an adequate size to accommodate the proposed development.

The new dwelling has a contrived design which is not considered suitable for its intended location in close proximity to neighbouring properties and surrounding boundaries with a lack of reasonable separation distances between 3 Linden Road and the garden amenity at 5 Linden Road.

The application forms attempt to say that materials are proposed to match 3 Linden Road, however the existing property is rendered rather than brick. Roof tiles are also proposed to match 3 Linden Road with uPVC windows and doors in grey anthracite whereas the existing dwelling has white uPVC windows and doors with a grey marking painted around the window frames. In addition the roof tiles at 3 Linden Road, although matched in colour to the neighbouring property are of a smaller size, scale and texture than surrounding properties, whilst the facing tiles on the loft extension do not match the roof tiles. A condition for further materials specifications would be required if the proposal is considered acceptable to ensure that the materials will be in keeping with other properties along Beech Road. Whilst inconsistent information has been provided the effect of what is proposed in terms of materials is not considered harmful.



StreetView photos of the front and rear of 3 Linden Road

Notwithstanding the concerns raised above, there are also concerns related specifically in terms of the appearance of the new dwelling that is incongruous and contrived to fit into the constrained garden amenity, with development in close proximity to neighbouring properties. The chalet detached bungalow style design is contrived to fit into the sub divided residential garden, in close proximity to neighbouring boundaries with an overbearing and oppressive impact on garden amenity. Both of the resultant gardens would be materially smaller than those of neighbouring dwellings. The land to the rear of 3 Linden Road is not considered appropriate to be an additional plot in terms of size and location for the proposed development. The refusal for application 140139 stated that 'open' corner plots are a distinctive feature to the character of the area.

The resultant dwelling would be fundamentally at odds with the layout, scale and form of the character of the area and prevailing pattern of development. The proposal, as a development set within a residential garden fails to make a positive contribution to the character of the area, the building is crammed into a location that cannot adequately accommodate the servicing requirements for it, and results in a cramped and overdeveloped parcel of land. The site would also be detrimental to the amenity of existing and future residents as discussed in the section below.

With regard to mix, policy H2 (Density and Mix) states that:

“Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.”

The submitted information indicates that the proposed scheme could be for a 2-bedroom house, which would fail to comply with Policy H2.

The proposal would result in an unacceptable density of development and, due to its uncharacteristic relationship with existing built form and spaces within the surrounding area, the prevailing pattern of development and urban grain and its proposed plot size. Its design is out of keeping with the prevailing form of terraced and semi-detached houses. A single detached property fails to respond positively to its local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness. The proposed development does not respect the size and character and appearance of similar spaces in the vicinity, including garden areas. The development of the rear of the garden contributes to the degradation of the open plot, which is compounded by the culmination of development on the original site. The proposal represents an overly intensive use of the site and due to the harm to the character and pattern of development of the surrounding area that would result, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the local character and would be contrary to the NPPF, Policies H10, H11 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

The remainder of this appraisal shall demonstrate, the proposal would also fail to meet a number of the Policy H11 criteria, in particular elements 1), 2) and 6) . The proposal, by virtue of its location, and proximity to boundaries would fail to make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Specifically, the layout and relationship (as mentioned above) would provide a poor relationship to existing buildings and spaces. The layout would not integrate with the coverage of adjoining plots, and would fail to provide any space for appropriate landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. It would be at odds with the existing urban grain and urban structure of the area. Though the scale, height and massing of the building matches the area, the materiality, contrived designs necessitated by the restricted size of the plot fail to provide high design quality respectful of the character and appearance of the area. Overall, these number of failings in this regard highlight the unacceptable positioning of the proposed development.

Amenity

Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.

As discussed above, the design does not result in overlooking of neighbouring properties and the plans demonstrate access to daylight and sunlight for the top of the windows on the rear ground wraparound at 2 Linden Road. Despite the hipped roof being angled away from neighbouring properties at first floor level, due to the close proximity of the additional dwelling in relation to its neighbours, it would result in a visual dominance, appearing overbearing and unneighbourly. The rear garden at 5 Linden Road would be dominated by a much taller structure than the current single

storey outbuildings. The siting of the proposed dwelling would not provide for spaciousness around itself nor the existing house that would be characteristic of the area and is considered to dominate the plot. The separation distances between the dwelling and its boundaries will result in a poor outlook for future occupants from the ground floor living and dining room windows, in addition for occupants at 3 Linden Road, with rear views directly onto boundary walls less than 3m away from the rear elevation. Considering the height and design of the proposed dwelling and the distance to neighbouring properties, it is considered that there would be an unneighbourly impact on neighbouring properties at 5 Beech Road and at 5 and 7 Linden Road in addition to the resultant visual dominance and overbearing impacts.

Amenity space

Policy H10 states that houses will be provided with private outdoor space, which should be functional, and provide suitable areas for sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space, and should "... *not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.*" The supporting text of the policy states that houses should have private amenity space no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling.

The proposed scheme would result in a very reduced garden at 3 Linden Road and would include a very small rear garden of its own. This would lead to insufficient functional private amenity space for the proposed new dwelling and the existing retained dwelling, which would not meet the requirements of Policy H10 to provide useable space no less than the ground floor area of the dwelling to which it relates. The quality of the space would also be further detrimentally affected. The proposal would have a small and cramped garden for both the existing and proposed dwelling, which would have a detrimental effect on the enjoyment of the spaces by existing and future residents.

As discussed above, Policy H10 states that all houses are to be provided with '*functional private amenity space*'. Whilst some private amenity space has been annotated on the proposed site plan, the space would be limited and not characteristic of those in surrounding plots (which are far more generous in size and more suited to family accommodation). The amenity space would thus be heavily constrained by the parking area as required by application. Consequently, the proposals in any event would not allow for an attractive or enjoyable amenity area, and would not be a similar size to the adjacent residential properties. Similarly, given the distance to neighbouring properties and nature of the proposed 2 bed unit, it is considered that it would result in a significant noise or disturbance to the nearby neighbouring properties due to the close relationship between the rear gardens and low level fencing and noise disturbance from car parking.

The above mentioned policies also relate to the amenity of residents and the enjoyment of their gardens. In addition to the principle objections over the location of the proposal, the amenity of nearby residents, and the enjoyment of their rear gardens would be compromised by locating a new dwelling in close proximity of existing residential gardens.

With regard to noise and disturbance, should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, conditions would have been required in respect of protecting neighbours during the construction period. A construction method statement would therefore also have been secured via condition and would have been required from a highway safety perspective too.

Space standards

Policy H5 sets out a number of standards that new build housing should be built to. This includes that dwellings should meet the National Space Standards for their internal space. The proposal, by virtue of the bedroom sizes would be considered a 2-bed 4-person dwelling. The Design and access statement states '*For a two storey 2no. bedroom dwelling the minimum GIA is 70sqm (3 persons) or*

79sqm (4 persons). The proposal has a total GIA of 85.4sqm. The design is a chalet bungalow style with the first floor rooms built into the roof of the house. No confirmation has been provided as to whether the first floor rooms would provide sufficient provision for headroom/headspace of 1.5m in order to meet the required standards for habitable space in order to achieve the stated sqm floor area. This is a failure to demonstrate and casts doubt on the integrity and legitimacy of the architectural response, due to the convoluted design and forms part of a reason for refusal.

In light of the above the numerous individual shortfalls identified, when considered cumulatively, result in an overall conclusion that the quality of accommodation for future occupiers would be contrary to Policies CC8, H5, and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

BNG, Trees and landscaping

Policy EN12 states that development should ‘*Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and • Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

Policy EN14 states ‘New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage’ and that ‘Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.

The RBC ecologist was satisfied with the Biodiversity Net Gain uplift information submitted, subject to a condition in relation to nesting birds, wildlife friendly planting and biodiversity enhancements for the site, as there should be no net loss on site, with a resultant net gain for Biodiversity wherever possible.

Additional information is required in relation to the existing trees located along the boundary with 5 Beech Road. No arboricultural impact assessment or tree protection measures have been provided. Though this may be able to be conditioned should approval be recommended, in this instance, it would form a reason for refusal in not demonstrating that trees in close proximity to the new dwelling can be protected.

When the culmination of the over development on site is taken into consideration, with the relationship of the existing surrounding buildings, there is little opportunity for additional landscaping due to the extent of hardstanding surface and remaining areas to be landscaped, contrary to policy H10 and EN12 and EN14.

Affordable Housing

The proposal seeks to create one additional unit through conversion and, therefore, a contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision is required as part of the application in accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The applicant stated they agreed in principle to enter into a legal agreement to secure a financial contribution and that valuations would be provided. No efforts have been made under the current application to provide any valuation documents to support this application.

However, as 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. Consequently, this forms a further reason for refusal of the application.

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.

Other issues

Access/Parking/Transport Matters

Policy TR5 addresses car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points (EVCP). The Policy includes a requirement for each new house to be provided with an electric charging point.

The change in access for the new property would be acceptable in principle as it is not considered far enough away from nearby road junctions to be a danger, however additional information would still be required regarding the proposed driveway materials which are required to be semi permeable. Permission would also have to be sought from the Reading Highways team in terms of the re-siting of street furniture and the creating of a drop kerb. Adequate provision for cycle and bin storage is shown.

The existing house has been extended with a wraparound single storey extension and roof dormer and it is not clear how many occupants are living at the property. At the site visit, two vehicles were parked in the front garden at 3 Linden Road.

The existing rear drive access for 3 Linden Road at the end of the garden will be closed up and moved further along to the adjacent side of the new dwelling. Sufficient visibility will be retained and subject to the re-siting of street furniture, and a condition for the previous access closure with reinstatement of the pavement would be required if the proposal were to be approved.

The requirement for a new access and reinstatement of the original one can be conditioned. Highways licences may also be required. Reading parking standards require the provision of 2 car parking spaces for each dwelling, this is recommended to be conditioned should approval be recommended.. The RBC Transport team have advised of the requirements for a drop kerb at 3 Linden Road to avoid driving across a pedestrian footpath

Waste Services

Waste storage is proposed to be provided at the front of the property. This arrangement is likely to be suitable subject to a condition for additional bin storage details and the presentation of bins to the highway for collection.

Sustainability

Policy CC3 Adaptation to Climate Change states that all development should demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The supplementary planning document – Sustainable Design and Construction (2019) outlines the Standard Assessment Procedure requirement for minor residential developments.

Policy H5 sets the requirements for new housing, in particular, the proposal would be expected to be built to achieve a minimum of 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.

The applicant has provided a statement as to how the proposal would meet the above requirements, though a condition would need to be applied should approval be recommended due to the lack of evidence provided regarding how this sustainable construction would be achieved.

CIL

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) liable development as it results in the creation of a new dwelling. The applicant has provided the CIL Additional Information Form. If the scheme had been acceptable an informative would have been attached to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed access, cycle parking and waste provision would be considered acceptable in principle subject to conditions however the proposed development would close most of the existing gap between houses on Beech Road and does not respond positively to local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness. In weighing up the planning benefits of the proposal with regard to introduction of one additional unit to the housing stock within the borough, assisting the local plan target against the dis-benefits of the scheme as detailed at length within the above sections it is considered that the identified harm of the introduction of a dwelling in the proposed location on both existing and future residents would significantly outweigh the benefits of the proposal. As such, the application is recommended for refusal.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Appendix

A) RBC Transport feedback

Address: 3 LINDEN ROAD, READING, RG2 7EG
 Proposal: Proposed 2 bedroom, two storey C3 dwelling following the demolition of existing outbuildings.

The application site comprises of existing outbuildings accessed from Beech Road. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing outbuildings, and the construction of a two-storey detached new dwelling.

The site is located in Zone 3, Secondary Core Area of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone is typically within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route' which provides high quality bus routes to the town centre and to major supermarkets and local centre facilities.

The existing dwelling (No3 Linden Rd) will need to retain its existing parking provision. Plans have not been submitted illustrating this. Google images identify an area of hardstanding fronting Linden Road, however, there does not appear to be a vehicle crossing serving it, therefore the applicant is currently undertaking illegal manoeuvres over the footway to park in this area. **The Highway Authority would not support an application where there was a loss of existing parking that would result in an increase in on street parking. The only way this application could be supported by the Highway Authority would be for the required number of parking spaces associated with the existing house to be provided at the rear alongside any parking for the new dwelling.**

Two parking spaces are proposed for the new dwelling as illustrated below:

Existing Site Plan



Proposed Site Plan



The proposed site is currently served via an existing vehicle crossing from Beech Rd. Plans indicate that the access is to be relocated to the west, bringing the new access closer to the junction of Beech Rd/Sycamore and Linden Road. The location of the new access is acceptable as it will still be located further than 10m from the junction; visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m have been provided. The existing vehicle crossing from Beech Rd will need to be reinstated and realigned with the footway. **(Revised plans illustrating this will be required)**. All works undertaken on any part of the Public Highway which includes the introduction of a new access will require a license from the Highways Department. The parking area will need to be constructed from permeable material to avoid any increase of surface water run-off from the site on to the public highway, or a drainage channel provided where the driveway meets the back of the footway.

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 will need to be illustrated on plans.** It should be noted that installation of the charging point will need to conform with the latest building regulations.

In line with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed dwelling should be provided with 2.0 secure cycle parking spaces, in a development of this nature this can be provided within a secure garden shed. Submitted plans illustrate a storage unit located in the private rear garden, this is therefore deemed acceptable.

Bin storage should not be further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Bin storage has been illustrated located to the rear of the property with a collection area adjacent to the parking area allowing for kerb side collection. Provision is therefore deemed acceptable.

A construction management statement will be required for this development.

Please ask the applicant to submit revised plans addressing the comments above so that this application can be fully determined.

B) RBC Ecology response

The application site is an end of terrace house where it is proposed to erect a new house in the garden

Protected Species and Priority Habitats

It seems unlikely that the development will adversely affect protected species or priority habitats. There is however a small risk that birds may nest in the outbuildings and surrounding vegetation (Google maps shows a line of trees to the rear of the garden)– however, this can be addressed via a condition for clearance works

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

From April 2024, it is a legal requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all developments (unless exempt) must demonstrate a net gain of at least 10%. The site appears to be developed as entirely hardstanding with a number of out buildings across the site. As such, the development would not affect any on -site habitats and would not be subject to mandatory BNG.

However, local policy EN12 reads:

b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:

** Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*

** Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

As such, should the application be approved, it would be recommended that a condition be set to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided (such as integrated bird and bat boxes and wildlife friendly planting). Alternatively, the applicant may wish to provide this information prior to determination of the application to negate the need for such a condition.