

DELEGATED FULL PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/25/0425

Address: 92 Albert Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7PL

Proposal: Replacement entrance porch and conversion into 2no. semi-detached dwellings

Applicant: Widbrook Developments Ltd

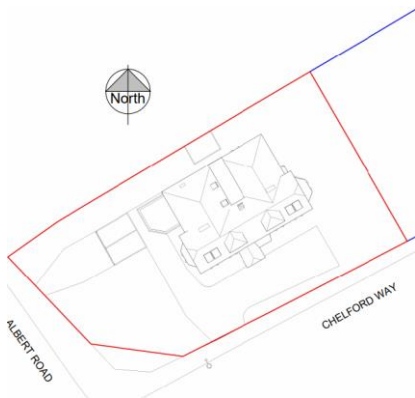
Received date: 19 March 2025

Target Decision date (with e.o.t): 30 August 2025

Case Officer: Louise Coveney- Fuller

Application Site

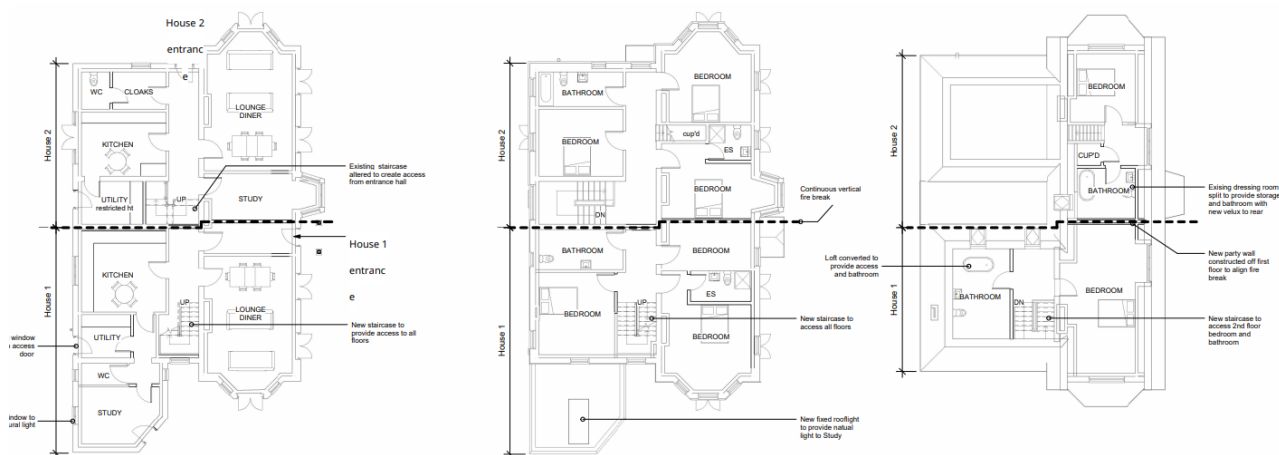
The site relates to 92 Albert Road which was last used as four flats, Caversham located on the east side of Albert Road, close to the junction with Chelford Way to the south. The site is subject to Tree Preservation Order 40/06, along with the trees next door at No.94 Albert Road and is within a Green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



Block Plan- (showing application site outlined in red)

Proposal

Replacement entrance porch and conversion into 2no. semi-detached dwellings



Proposed floor plans -showing the application is for the conversion of the existing dwelling into a pair of semi detached dwellings.

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 Withdrawn (21 June 2024)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/25/042- Erection of a detached dwelling – Refused

Representations

A site notice was displayed by the Case Officer this has covered the consultation period.

5 objection comments have been received in relation to the above application:

- 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

Consultations

Transport: No objection

Natural Environment: Recommends Condition

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.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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 Cyle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

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

Planning Considerations

Policy H7 Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number of residential units or gross floor area. This proposed development will result in the net loss of 2. In this instance, it is argued that are exceptional circumstances where there is a need to provide a much-needed housing, in the form of family housing via the conversion of the existing property into a pair of semi's.

Design and Character

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. 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 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 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.

The proposal is of an acceptable scale and form in relation to the existing plot and wider area. Taking into consideration the site is reducing in intensity of use on the site and would not involve additional development. It is a relatively straightforward subdivision of the existing to form two houses which would largely preserve the existing character. As such, the development would not conflict with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan (2019).

Impact on Residential 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.

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. In terms of the impact of the proposal on the amenities of the neighbouring properties no concerns are raised in relation to an overbearing or overshadowing impact. In addition, no concerns, are raised in relation to the proposed garden space for the proposed development. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Local Plan policies CC8, H10, and H11.

Impacts on Ecology

The site is within an identified green link, however, as the proposal is for the subdivision and will not result in any additional built form on the site it would not result in a net loss of biodiversity. As such, the proposal is in accordance with policy EN12.

Impact on Natural Environment - Trees/Landscaping

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to 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 proposed plans show no increase in footprint of the building so in that respect it is acceptable in relation to trees. Some indicative landscaping has been shown, further details of which could be secured via Condition. Along with the submission of a tree survey or AIA has been provided in order to demonstrate an acceptable impact on trees.

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. There are no Transport objections to this application, additional on-site parking is being provided.

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, , a condition has 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 has been attached to a permission

CIL

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development and informative would has been attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed subdivision of the existing dwelling with the extension of a front porch is acceptable in principle and would not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing building, or the wider surrounding area nor would the development result in an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, result in a harmful transport or trees implications.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions as outlined within the Decision Notice.

