

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: PL/25/0102 Full planning permission

Address: 1029 OXFORD ROAD, TILEHURST, READING

Proposal: Development of new building to provide 2no.2 bedroom and 6no. 1 bedroom flats along with the creation of 6 parking spaces and associated landscaping following the demolition of the existing building (amended description)

Applicant: Mr Chris Thorpe

Received date: 21 January 2025

Target Decision date: 22 August 2025 (extension of time)

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site contains a detached property set within a plot of 0.1ha. It is currently reported by the applicant to be in a state of disrepair, though no evidence internally of the state of the flats has been provided (not seen by the case officer). The site was subject of a tree preservation order for a large Horse Chestnut Tree. Recently the tree was given consent for removal by the LPA, with a replacement tree conditioned under such approval (PL/25/1109) (confirmed to have been removed by officers site visit on 20 August 2025).

A reasonably steep incline exists directly off Oxford Road, with the existing building being on flat ground. The rear garden then includes a significant retaining structure near the rear of the converted property. The rear garden includes lawn with various trees, and hedges. The properties either side slope uphill from left to right (as viewed from street).



Figure 1 - Site Photos January 2025

The house itself is a well presented 1915-1930 detached dwelling with two full height curved bay windows and chimneys. It is brick built, with pebbledash at first floor. The rear extension appears to be a later addition, similar to other properties, with non-matching bricks and matching tiled roof. There is also a portion of single-storey rear extension, and single-storey side extension which contains a garage.

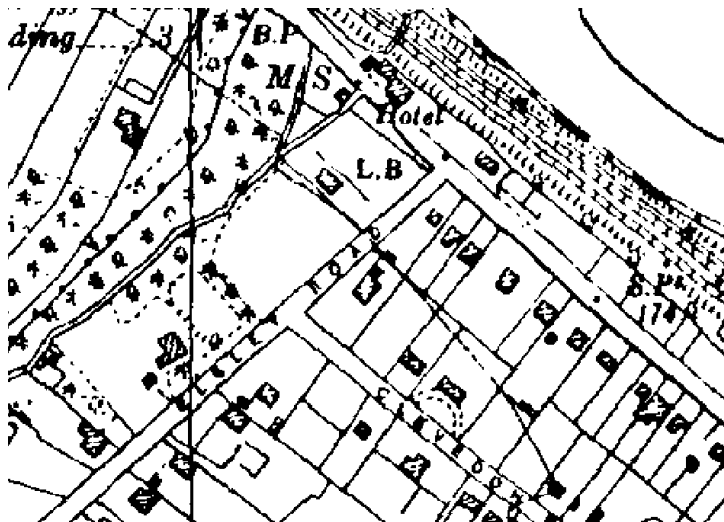


Figure 2 - 1930's ordinance survey extract showing site.

The site is not listed, nor within a conservation area. The site is within an air quality management area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks permissions for the demolition of the existing building (containing 4 flats) and replacement with a three-story (loft accommodation) building to contain 8 flats (6 no. 1-bed flats, and 2 no. 2-bed flats).

The proposal would include the expansion of the existing parking provision to accommodate 6 no. parking spaces, a manoeuvring area, and bin storage collection pad within the site (and up the steep driveway). To the rear, the site would have a private amenity space for the ground floor rear flat, a small private garden to the ground floor right hand side flat, and a bin and bike store to the rear of the building. The remainder of the garden would be communal amenity space.

The following final revisions of the proposal were considered

Application forms

Location plan

Community infrastructure levy form

The Chris Wood Acoustics, 'Noise Impact assessment', dated 17 January 2025

The Energy test, energy statement, dated 16 January 2025

The 'Chesters Place Limited', Transport statement, dated 16 January 2025

The Redmore environmental, Air quality assessment, dated 17 January 2025

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 January 2025

Drawing No: P.01 Rev J – Proposed site layout with topo

Drawing No: P.07 Rev A – Proposed visibility splays

Drawing No: P.06 Rev B – Construction management plan

Drawing No: P.05 Rev G – Proposed site layout enlarged with ground floor plan

Drawing No: P.04 Rev F – Existing and proposed street scenes

Drawing No: P.03 Rev F – Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: P.02 Rev H – Proposed Plans

Drawing No: B.01 Rev C – Block Plan

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 March 2025

The Sturt & Company, Viability Report, dated 11 April 2025

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 23 April 2025

The Echological Ltd, Roost Assessment Rev V1, dated May 2025

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 8 May 2025
The Tamla Trees, Arboricultural impact assessment & method statement, dated May 2025
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 20 May 2025
Drawing No: P.08 Rev A – Proposed turning space tracking
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 13 June 2025
The Echological Ltd, Biodiversity net gain report, Rev V6, dated 8 August 2025
The Echological Ltd, Statutory Biodiversity Metric, dated 8 August 2025
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 8 August 2025
Affordable housing statement
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 August 2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Trees - Planning Natural Environment – No objections, subject to conditions.
- Ecology Consultations – No objections, subject to conditions.
- Transport Development Control – Objections, based on lack of carparking spaces.
- Waste Operations Consultations – No objection.

A site notice was erected on a nearby lamppost at the frontage of the site. No letters of representation have been received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent

It is noted that the applicant and officer have corresponded significantly over the course of the application. Given the issues raised officers maintained that pre-application advice should have been sought on the proposal. Discussions have focussed on some issues, with less feedback being able to be provided on all matters due to the time consumed on specific discussions (i.e. BNG, Tree matters, Viability). The applicant sought to revise plans throughout the application, with the latest being considered in this assessment.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/06/0775 - Front dormer, single-storey rear extension and two-storey side extension to existing property. Refused 27 September 2006

PL/25/1109 - Fell one Aesculus hippocastanum (Horse Chestnut). Consent given 11 August 2025

1025-1027 Oxford Road

PL/05/0834 (FUL) - Demolish existing dwellings and erect 2 no. buildings containing 7 no. apartments each. Refused. Dismissed at appeal 13 December 2006

PL/06/1080 (FUL) (Historic ref 06/00561/OUT) - Demolish existing dwellings and erect 2 no. buildings containing 12 no. apartments. Refused. Allowed at appeal 13 December 2006

PL/07/0937 (REM) (Historic ref: 07/00706/REM) - Reserved matters application pursuant to outline consent 06/00561 (demolish existing dwellings and erect 2 no. buildings containing 12 no. apartments) for approval of details of scale, appearance and landscaping. Approve (scale, appearance, landscaping) 11 October 2007

PL/23/1537 (CLE) - Lawful commencement of the following development: Erection of two buildings containing 12 apartments pursuant to planning permission granted on appeal reference APP/E0345/A/06/2024818. Certificate given 29 February 2024

5. EQUALITIES 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:

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework 2024
National Planning Guidance 2014 onwards

The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
Section 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land
Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places
Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

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
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing

H5: Standards for New Housing
H11: Development Of Private Residential Gardens
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2019)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
Employment Skill and Training SPD (2013)
Tree Strategy (2021)
Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

Other

The Carter Jonas, review of applicant's financial viability assessment dated June 2025

Local Plan Partial 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 update 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 these applications 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 determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of development, design and character and appearance of the area

Land use considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Residential garden land is not considered to be brownfield land. The site is considered partially 'previously developed land' under the NPPF definition.

From a purely land use perspective, a proposal to introduce 8 C3 residential units would broadly comply with the objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) by contributing towards meeting the housing needs within the Borough. However, this is subject to the more detailed considerations of relevant Local Plan policies and the context of the application site. As the remainder of this report demonstrates, the proposal has failed to satisfactorily meet a number of other policy requirements.

Demolition of existing dwelling

The proposed development seeks the demolition of an existing dwelling which was previously converted to 4-flats. The proposal would provide 8 flats on the site. Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) (2019), seeks to protect the existing housing stock, and ensure that permission is not granted for a net loss in the number of residential units. Policy CC7 seeks to ensure that all development maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

The existing area is characterised by detached dwellings set within generous plots. These are generally set off from the boundary, with some larger two-storey extensions which are further set off the boundary (such as no. 1031). There are limited examples of larger rear extensions (i.e. 1007 Oxford Road), though all gardens are generally of a good size, in excess of the footprint of the dwellings to which they are attached. There is a consistent building line for the frontages of properties.

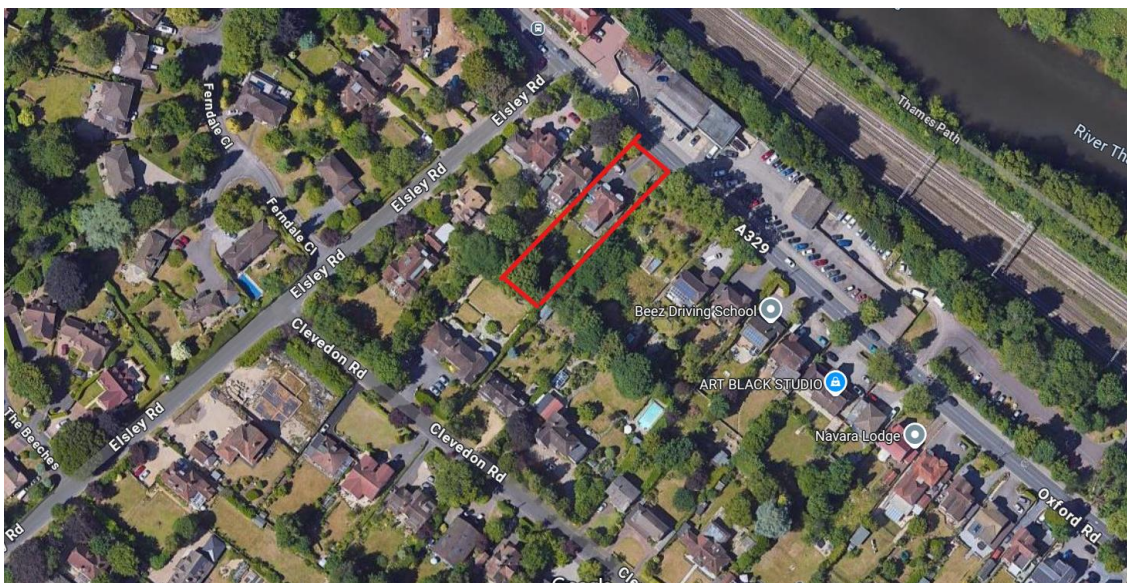


Figure 3 - Aerial image of site locality (current application site outlined in red)

Notably, the adjoining site at 1025-1027 was subject to a planning application (outline planning permission) ca 2006, which was refused by Council, and allowed at appeal (reference above), for the demolition of two dwellings and construction of two buildings to contain 6 flats each (12 flats total). This

Policy CC7 of the RBLP (2019) states that all development should be of a high design quality that maintains and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which is it located. The various components of development form stated in policy include: Layout: urban grain and structure, landscape, density and mix, scale: height and massing and architectural details and materials. The policy also relates to a number of other aspects that will be highlighted as required within the assessment below. Policy H11 also relates to the development, being land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens, though these requirements are similar to CC7 in some regards. Part 12 (para's 131-141) of the NPPF 2024 (Achieving well-designed places) also seeks the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.

Layout: urban structure and urban grain

The proposed development would include a substantial increase in the overall plot coverage. As highlighted by the below. The proposal would include a three-storey building at a similar depth to neighbouring properties, but at a scale and width that is closest to the adjoining consented scheme (though incomplete). The plot coverage overall, with the width and overall depth, even though only single storey at the very rear, is considered excessive and at odds with the prevailing layout and urban grain/structure predominantly found in the adjacent area. The proposal also includes ancillary bin stores and bike stores. These are single storey structures to the south east corner of the building. These are low profile, but add to the built form, and in addition to the excessive bulk of the building contribute to further harm to the layout and urban grain.

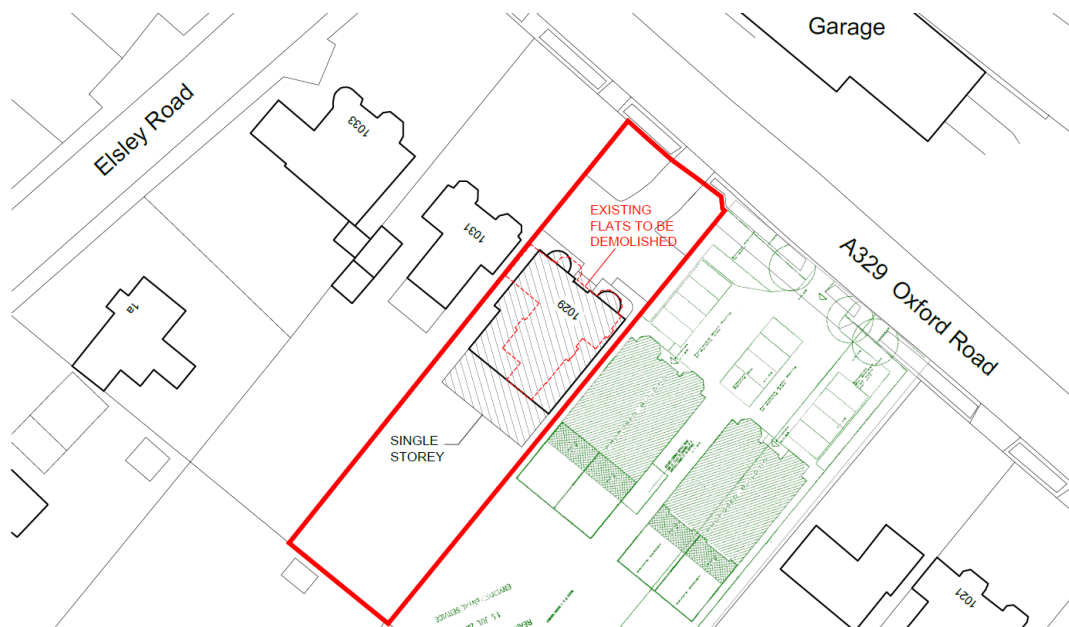




Figure 6 - Officer generated existing streetscene with neighbouring development



Figure 7 - Officer generated streetscene, proposed with neighbouring incomplete development shown

Density and mix

In tandem with policy H2, policy CC7, and H11 seeks to consider the appropriateness of the mix of units provided. In this instance, the proposal sits within an area of mixed density. Some dwellinghouses sit around the site, others are converted to flats, or as per the approval next door, blocks of flats exist within the vicinity. Opposite, another block of flat sits further east along Oxford Road. Policy H2 seeks to provide a mix of dwellings, with an emphasis on family homes of three or more bedrooms. Given the location of the area and size of the plot, it would be reasonable to expect a greater provision of two-bedroom units, and include some three-bedroom family sized units. Though policy does not set a specific target, the overprovision of one-bed units and lack of family sized units is a negative for the scheme.

Architectural detail and materials

The proposed development proposes a reasonably detailed front elevation. The inclusion of curved features, and gable end walls are features of the existing dwelling and the wider area. The shared entrance is detailed, with the inclusion of a stepped entrance and porch. The front elevation is reasonably detailed and appears to match the architectural detailing of the area, which is generally acceptable in its own right (separate to the above issues).

To the sides and rear of the property, the detailing, and architectural features appear to have been lost and become plain, or non-existent. The proposal includes basic with inconsistent detailing and layout of

windows and doors. The overall height and scale of the rear protrusions result in significant flat roofed sections. These are often a result of overdevelopment, and result in poor detailing. The rear elevation includes consistent arrangements of windows and doors, and the roof dormers are boxed, with what appear to be bifold doors as Juliet balconies. This proposal, whilst reasonable at the front, appears, by way of overall height, depth and width inconsistent in approach resulting in poor built form and appearance to the rear.



Landscape

The proposal would include an increased area of hardstanding for carparking at the front of the proposal. The increase hardstanding in itself would be minor compared to the existing, resulting in limited additional harm to the character and appearance of the area. This does limit the area to the frontage available for landscaping. The proposal includes two trees to the frontage of the site (one is required under the above mentioned TPO approval). There are also hedges proposed in front of the bay windows, and at the very front of the site. Additional planting could be included, it would be expected with a recommendation for approval, that landscaping be secured by condition.

To the rear, the proposal also includes hedging to separate the raised communal area from the private amenity area of proposed flat 3. There is limited further detailing of the rear garden space provision. This could also be dealt with by condition to ensure a suitable scheme.

Design conclusion

Overall, the proposed development, by way of its excessive plot coverage in both width and depth, and overall height, and cumulative massing would result in substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located contrary to Policy CC7 and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 131, 135 and 139 of the NPPF 2024.

The proposal, by way of its mix of unit sizes would result in harm to the overall supply of housing and fail to meet the housing requirements of Reading, specifically through lack of provision of family sized, three-bedroom or larger dwellings contrary to policies H2, H11, and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024.

In addition the proposal, by way of the detailed design of the rear elevation of the building would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area through the incongruous and poor quality of design, particularly to the side and rear of the proposed development contrary to Policy CC7, and H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 131, 135 and 139 of the NPPF 2024.

Amenity

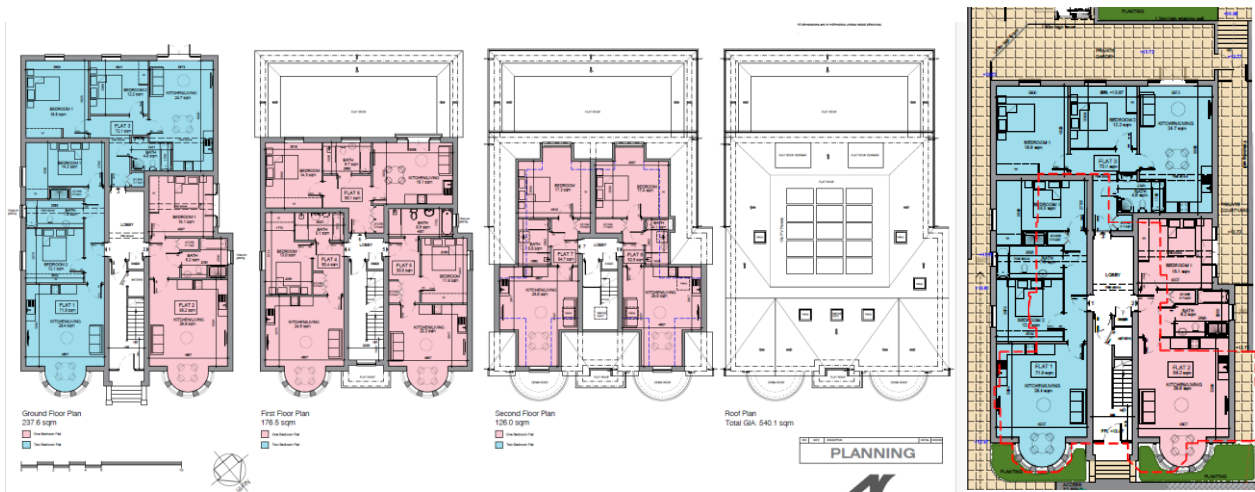
Policy CC8 of the RBLP (2019) seeks to ensure all development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residents or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties. The following considerations are relevant to the proposal: privacy and overlook; access to sunlight and daylight, visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; harm to outlook; noise and disturbance. Policy H11 also seeks to avoid detrimental impacts on amenity of adjacent or nearby occupants. Paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024 relate to amenity considerations.

Policy H5 seeks to provide a good level of accommodation and meet nationally described space standards.

Privacy and overlooking

Impacts on existing residents (privacy and overlooking)

The proposal would include multiple side facing windows for flats 1 and 2 at ground floor, and flats 4 and 5 at first floor. The loft flats would include one roof light each facing sideways. The side facing windows would be provided mostly to bedrooms. With one each on the western side being for bathrooms. At ground floor, though these side facing windows would provide direct outlook toward neighbouring properties, due to the topography, and boundary treatments, including potential new fencing, it is unlikely that there would be impacts upon neighbouring properties. At first floor, the side facing windows would be directly overlooking neighbouring properties. For no. 1031, this includes private amenity space, with direct access from ground floor. In addition, a bedroom window which would be nearly in an identical position at ground and first floor to a side facing window at the incomplete development at 1025-1027, would provide direct views into a neighbouring property. As such, the proposal results in significant harm by way of overlooking to neighbouring properties.



Impacts on proposed residents (privacy and overlooking)

In addition to the impacts upon the first floor side facing windows of the neighbouring site, the proposal would introduce direct overlooking between bedrooms of the approved neighbouring development into the proposed eastern first floor flat (flat 4). The proposed ground floor flat, would have side facing windows to two bedrooms. This would be the primary access to the bin store and bike store of the development. There would be direct views into bedrooms of dwellings from users of the proposed development.

The proposed rear facing ground floor flat (flat 3) is proposed to include a small private amenity space. This would be beyond the single storey rear portion which contains it. Above, flat 6 would have a juliet balcony from its kitchen/living area. There would also be communal open space above a retaining wall, and beyond the private amenity space of flat 3. This would result in significant overlooking to flat 3 by the residents of the proposed scheme to the detriment of the privacy of residents. There is also more opportunity for direct views into all rooms of flat 3 and 6 from the raised communal space which is 1.34m above the ground level. The proposed hedging may alleviate some overlooking, though the access stairs would provide a clear vantage beyond the proposed 1.8m high fencing resulting in harm to privacy of proposed flat 3.

Access to sunlight and daylight

Impacts on existing residents (sunlight and daylight)

The proposal would include a three-storey sized dwelling, with accommodation within a pitched roof at third floor. Due to the size, location, and orientation of the existing property, it is unlikely that the proposal would result in significant harm and loss of daylight or sunlight to existing residents.

Impacts on proposed residents (sunlight and daylight)

The proposal includes 4 no. northern single aspect flats (1,2,4 and 5) each with varying amounts of side facing windows. The loft flats would include one rear window, roof lights and a smaller front window within the gable end walls. The loft flats would likely be afforded suitable daylight/sunlight by way of the number and location of windows.

The proposed ground and first floor north-facing flats (1,2,4 and 5) have significant windows within the curved bay windows. These are likely to give sufficient daylight, however, would likely provide limited daylight. The applicant has not provided a daylight/sunlight appraisal to support the application. Therefore, it is not possible to determine if the flats would have sufficient daylight/sunlight. The applicant has failed to demonstrate suitable daylight/sunlight for these flats.

Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development

Impacts on existing residents (Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development)

The proposal would result in a large building in close proximity to the existing residents at no.1031, and close to and higher than side facing bedrooms windows proposed at 1027 (incomplete development). The proximity to the windows, and amenity space on each side of the site would result in harmful overbearing appearance when seen from both sides.

Impacts on proposed residents (Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development)

Similarly to the above, the proposed side facing windows of flats 1 and 4 would look directly on to the flank wall of the incomplete development. This would result in an overbearing impact to future residents.

Harm to outlook

Existing residents at 1031 are unlikely to be subject to impacts on outlook as a result of the proposal. The incomplete development at 1027 would be impacted by the proposed scheme through side-facing bedroom windows. Flats 1, 2, 4, and 5 are subject to unacceptable outlook from bedrooms, looking directly on to adjoining large flank walls of the proposal.

Noise and disturbance

Impacts on proposed residents (Noise and disturbance)

The proposal is located within an AQMA, and on a busy road. The applicant has provided an air quality assessment, and a noise assessment (brief letter). It is considered that both elements could be conditioned should permission have been recommended to be given to ensure appropriate standards are met. It should be noted that both reports do not adequately demonstrate compliance with local plan policies.

The proposed layout includes appropriate stacking of uses between all flats and is considered acceptable in that regard.

Quality of accommodation

The proposal has shown that the proposed flats would meet the requirements of policy H5, and the nationally described space standards, there has not been sufficient information to assess the loft flats for reduced head heights. The proposal does not appear to provide for any accessible flats as required by policy H5, however as this might have been overcome through planning condition if a positive recommendation had been considered this is not considered a reason to refuse.

Conclusion – Amenity

The proposed development would result in significant harm to neighbouring properties and fail to provide a suitable level of amenity for proposed residents contrary to policy CC8, H11 of the RBLP (2019) and 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.

Amenity space

Policy H10 relates to the provision of private and communal outdoor space for new developments. The proposal includes a small private amenity space for flat 2, and a good sized private open space for flat 3. There is also a large rear garden proposed as communal open space. The private courtyard for flat 2 is not considered sufficiently useable. The private garden for flat 3 is considered a reasonably useable size (separate to overlooking concerns above). The large communal garden proposed is considered sufficient for the proposed development and offsets the insufficient private courtyard for flat 2.

Transport Matters

Policies TR3, and TR5 seek to ensure that developments provide suitable access, parking, and cycle parking (including EV charging). The proposal would seek to provide 6 no. parking spaces for the proposed development. The site is located within zone 3 as per the adopted 'revised parking standards' SPD. It is 340m from Tilehurst Train Station. The 'Azure' route which is infrequent to Reading Central from Pangbourne services a bus stop at the Roebuck, and the 16 route which is more frequent than the Azure stops at Tilehurst Station.

The applicant has referenced Census 2011 data to support the lower parking provision, however this relates to how people travel to work. We have looked at our own car ownership data for Kentwood Ward and data states 1.17 vehicles for a 1 bed unit and 0.93 for a 2 bed room unit, even taking into consideration the change of mix of the units, this still does not justify the proposed 6 spaces. A minimum of 10 spaces would be required for this development.

It is worth noting that the site at the moment would appear to have an over provision of parking for the existing units; This over provision allowed for on site turning of delivery vehicles. This application is

generating an under provision and is therefore worsening what is already on site and will result in vehicles reversing into and out of the site to the detriment of highway safety. It is also worth noting that the recent tracking plan submitted is for a standard vehicle and not for a small delivery van which was previously requested.

Cycle storage should be provided in accordance with the Council's current Parking Standards and Design SPD. Based on the mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units 0.5 cycle storage spaces would be required for each unit, this equates to a minimum of 4 secure and covered storage spaces, that should utilise Sheffield type stands. Submitted plan P0 5D identifies 8 cycle storage spaces located at the rear of the building in an accessible enclosed storage unit, this element is deemed acceptable.

Bin collection area has been relocated adjacent to the access which would allow for kerb side collection.

The applicant has not demonstrated that all the Transport and Highway aspects of the development are appropriate and is included as a reason for refusal.

Waste management

The proposed development seeks to include a rear bin storage area. The bin collection point would be up the driveway slope, to be collected by RBC waste operatives (parked on Oxford Road). This would appear to be 8.7m from the rear of vehicle collection point. RBC waste operations advised that:

Slopes should be avoided wherever possible along the pathway. Where needed the gradient should fall away from the bin storage area and should be no greater than 1:12. It is not acceptable for the route between the storage area and the collection vehicle (i.e. in the direction that filled bins will be pulled) to have any uphill gradients.

I don't think this particular slope will be an issue as it is downhill but need to be sure the 10m distance is adhered to.

As such, the waste collection will be appropriate, and waste storage to the rear also appropriate. A condition would be recommended in the event of an approval, that bins not be left or stored to the front of the building other than on collection days to ensure appropriate management.

Affordable Housing

For a development of the size proposed, Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires a contribution to enable the equivalent of 20% of the Gross Development Value of the development to be provided as Affordable Housing. This would be a financial contribution secured under Section 106 to secure provision off-site elsewhere in the Borough of Reading. As set out in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD (2021) the most appropriate way to calculate the contribution is to calculate the Gross Development Value (GDV) of the entire proposed development.

With regard to this Policy H3 and the Council's position on affordable housing for small site developments (less than 10 dwellings) it is relevant that a significant need for Affordable Housing exists within the Borough, as demonstrated by the assessment contained within the 'Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment' and the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The Inspector concluded during the local plan examination process that the Council had satisfactorily justified seeking affordable housing on sites with less than 10 dwellings. The Council's justification remains and has continued to be accepted in several planning appeal decisions.

The GDV of the scheme, as confirmed by a Council commissioned report by Carter Jonas values the scheme at £2,205,000. A policy compliant contribution would therefore equate to £220,500.

The applicant proposed 3 offers on 21 August 2025:

(a) in a S.106 planning obligation an upfront contribution of £15,000 (not subject to review), and a late-stage review clause(s) with various terms that differ from Council's approach and advice from RBC valuations;

(b) in a S.106 planning obligation £0 up front contribution, and a late-stage review clause(s) with various terms that differ from Council's approach and advice from RBC valuations;

(c) in a S.106 planning obligation £45,000 upfront contribution with no late-stage review mechanism

None of these offers are considered sufficient to meet Policy H3 objectives and therefore failure to comply with this policy is a reason for refusal.

Having reviewed the applicants revised affordable housing statement, dated 20 August 2025, received 21 August 2025, the applicant raised that deliverability of the scheme is not a material planning consideration. Officers consider that deliverability of the scheme is a material planning consideration in this instance.

Natural Environment

There are no objections from natural environment officers. The TPO tree has been felled, the proposed landscaping shows two trees on the frontage, and details of trees, and other landscaping would be secured by condition.

Biodiversity net gain

In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) Part 2, 13 (1) Every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition in sub-paragraph (2). (2) The condition is that the development may not be begun unless— (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority (see paragraph 14), and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan (see paragraph 15).

The application is supported by an appropriate metric. The baseline and post development BNG units have been agreed and the applicant would need to buy 0.13 biodiversity units or 0.27 statutory credits to achieve the requisite 10% net gain. The following versions of the report (6th revision) were considered to inform RBC's ecologist consultant:

The Echological Ltd, Biodiversity net gain report, Rev V6, dated 8 August 2025

The Echological Ltd, Statutory Biodiversity Metric, dated 8 August 2025

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 8 August 2025

Given the above, the applicant has suitably demonstrated the quantum of biodiversity loss on site. The applicant would seek to secure off-site BNG in this instance. Though there would be a loss on site contrary to policy EN12, the provision of an offsite BNG would be considered acceptable in this instance in the balance of provision of dwellings.

Sustainability

Policy H5 requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. Policy CC2 seeks for new development to respond to climate change through reducing energy, water, materials usage.

The proposal includes PV panels on the roof. Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, conditions would have been recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

Although secured by planning condition, these requirements would have been administered through the Building Regulations, with confirmation of compliance submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition.

The applicant was requested to consider inclusion of green roofs either on the building, or within bin stores. These elements can achieve various other objectives including: reducing urban heat island effects, co-location benefits with PV, amenity value for residents. This request was made in light of the emerging local plan policy (EN19 – Urban greening factor) which is set for examination in late 2025. The policy is not in an advanced stage and therefore can be afforded limited weight. The applicant decided to not take on these suggestions.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the CIL Additional Information Form. 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.

8. CONCLUSION

There are considered to be a number of significant shortcomings, such as the proposed scale, massing and design deficiencies which results in the proposals being harmful to the character and appearance of the area and resulting a cramped overdevelopment of the site. In addition, there are significant concerns over the impact on the living accommodation of existing nearby occupiers as well as future occupiers. The benefits do not outweigh the identified harm by a significant margin. There is also identified harm to the transport network through lack of parking provision on site.

The failure to meet identified housing need in terms of the amount, mix and tenure of affordable housing amounts to substantial harm. The absence of affordable housing will have practical, tangible and absolute impacts on the ability of the Borough to house its residents and would be in direct conflict with the aims and objectives of existing and emerging development plan policy and the NPPF in respect of achieving sustainable, mixed and balanced communities.

It is acknowledged that there would be some planning benefits associated with the proposed development, such as the provision of 8 residential units to assist with the Borough housing targets. Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weighs firmly against the proposal, and planning permission is recommended to be refused.

The proposals are therefore recommended for refusal on this basis for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, due to the excessive scale and bulky form of the building and associated development together with their site coverage, would represent a cramped and unattractive, overdevelopment of the site which fails to accommodate buildings, bin and bike stores, in a manner that enhances the character and appearance of the area. This harmful arrangement together with the visual prominence and relative site levels would result in harm to the street scene and character of the area. Contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public

Realm) and H11 (Development of private residential gardens) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 129, 131, 135 and 136 of the NPPF 2024.

2. The proposed mix of units within the development is dominated by 1 bedroom flats and there are no 3 bedroom flats and as such would fail to adequately contribute towards meeting the identified housing needs of Reading Borough. Contrary to Policy H2 (Density and Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 61 and 129 of the NPPF 2024.
3. The proposed development, due to the single-aspect layout of flats 1,2,4 and 5, would result in a poor quality of accommodation in terms of outlook, daylight and sunlight for occupiers of these flats. This would result in a detrimental impact on the living environment of future occupiers. Contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H5 (Standards for New Housing) of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.
4. The proposed development, due to its scale and siting in relation to No.1031 and 1025-1027 Oxford Road would result in an overbearing effect, and overlooking, harmful to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and result in harmful overlooking into the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H11 (Development of private residential gardens) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraphs 123, 135 and 139 of the NPPF 2024.
5. The proposed layout fails to make adequate provision for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles within the site resulting in an increased risk of on-street parking and/or vehicle manoeuvring with consequent harm to road safety and the flow of traffic. Contrary to Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters) of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 109, 115 and 117 of the NPPF 2024.
6. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure the provision of an acceptable contribution towards meeting affordable housing need either on site or through an off-site financial contribution the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough and the need to provide sustainable mixed and balanced communities. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H3 (Affordable Housing) and CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021 and paragraph 64 of the NPPF 2024.

Informatives

1. The following plans and documents were considered:

Application forms

Location plan

Community infrastructure levy form

The Chris Wood Acoustics, 'Noise Impact assessment', dated 17 January 2025

The Energy test, energy statement, dated 16 January 2025

The 'Chesters Place Limited', Transport statement, dated 16 January 2025

The Redmore environmental, Air quality assessment, dated 17 January 2025

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 January 2025

Drawing No: P.01 Rev J – Proposed site layout with topo

Drawing No: P.07 Rev A – Proposed visibility splays

Drawing No: P.06 Rev B – Construction management plan

Drawing No: P.05 Rev G – Proposed site layout enlarged with ground floor plan

Drawing No: P.04 Rev F – Existing and proposed street scenes
Drawing No: P.03 Rev F – Proposed Elevations
Drawing No: P.02 Rev H – Proposed Plans
Drawing No: B.01 Rev C – Block Plan
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 March 2025
The Sturt & Company, Viability Report, dated 11 April 2025
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 23 April 2025
The Echological Ltd, Roost Assessment Rev V1, dated May 2025
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 8 May 2025
The Tamla Trees, Arboricultural impact assessment & method statement, dated May 2025
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 20 May 2025
Drawing No: P.08 Rev A – Proposed turning space tracking
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 13 June 2025
The Echological Ltd, Biodiversity net gain report, Rev V6, dated 8 August 2025
The Echological Ltd, Statutory Biodiversity Metric, dated 8 August 2025
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 8 August 2025
Affordable housing statement
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 August 2025

2. The local planning authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive by advising of the concerns with proposal and providing for the opportunity for the application to be withdrawn. The applicant chose not to withdraw the application, or agree further extensions of time to allow further discussions, hence the issuing this refusal notice.

3. Without prejudice to any future application or appeal, the applicant is advised that reasons for refusal 7 be overcome with the completion of a satisfactory s106 legal agreement for a scheme that was in all other respects acceptable.

4. The applicant is advised that the refused scheme, had it been able to be approved, would have been a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable development.