

ERECTION OF NEW DWELLING

AT

**147 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING,
RG4 7JR**

PLANNING STATEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the erection of a new dwelling, to replace the existing dwelling, at 147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7JR.
- 1.2 This application follows planning permission being granted for extensions in 2024 (ref PL/23/0726), however, whilst development was underway for that application it has since become clear that it is necessary to re-build rather than construct extensions. The construction has therefore stopped. This application therefore seeks permission for the new dwelling rather than extensions, to regularise this position, however the proposed development when completed is virtually identical to that already approved.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located on the western side of Upper Woodcote Road, close to the junction with Blagrove Lane. The site currently comprises a single storey detached dwelling with first floor accommodation in the roofspace (chalet bungalow), and an attached garage. To the rear, there is a single storey projection and a conservatory.
- 2.2 To the front of the property is a driveway laid partly to gravel and lawn, and the front boundary features a mature tree and hedgerow. There is a gate on one side of the front boundary. The side boundary treatments are a fence and hedgerow.
- 2.3 The plot is rectangular in shape and benefits from a long, rear garden. The long, rectangular plot shape is a feature of most surrounding properties along this road. Neighbouring dwellings are generally detached, and of varying architectural styles. Many are two storey and some are single storey with accommodation in the roofspace.
- 2.4 The application site lies within the urban area and within an Air Quality Management Area. The site is not subject to any landscape, heritage or ecological designations and lies within Flood Zone 1.

- 2.5 The previous Officer's report stated that the site was in an Area of High Archaeological Potential, however on the interactive and pdf Local Plan maps it is clearly outside this area. However, an archaeological report has already been submitted and discharged as part of the previous planning conditions.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Previous planning applications at the site are listed below:

Year	LPA Ref.	Description	Decision
2025	PL/25/0700	Application for approval of details reserved by Condition 5 of PL/23/0726	Approved
2025	PL/25/0604	Application for approval of details reserved by Condition 4 of PL/23/0726	Approved
2024	PL/23/0726	Front, side and rear extensions, front porch addition and part first floor extension	Granted
2007	PL/07/0449	Conservatory to rear of property	Granted
1990	PL/90/1194	Single storey pitched roof extension to side and rear	Granted

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 It is proposed to construct a new detached dwelling in place of the existing dwelling. The dwelling would have largely a single storey eaves height with first floor accommodation in the roofspace, as existing. To the front, there would be a projection with a window at first floor, a covered porch with pitched roof, and two dormers in the roof slope. The garage would be integral to the property.
- 4.2 To the rear, there would be a two-storey projection with doors and a Juliet balcony at first floor, and two sets of patio doors and a window at ground floor level. Again there would be two dormers in the rear roof slope. On the northern side elevation, there would be three windows at ground floor and a velux in the roof slope. On the southern side elevation, there would be three windows and a door at ground floor level.
- 4.3 The ridge height would remain the same as the existing dwelling, with two roof lights. The property has a maximum depth of approximately 16.2m including the rear projection and front porch. It has a maximum width of 12.7m approximately. The property remains a similar distance from both side boundaries to existing, and is further away from the southern side boundary than the existing garage.
- 4.4 The proposed materials are dark red plain roof tiles, red facing brick below feature line, cream render above brick feature line, black plastic guttering and downpipes, grey UPVC windows and all external timber clad with white UPVC.
- 4.5 The proposal is virtually identical to that approved under PL/23/0726. The only differences are:
- The chimney has been removed
 - On the southern side elevation, one additional ground floor window has been added and the side door moved forwards
 - Slight internal changes to the layout including an enlarged utility room and smaller storage room, repositioning of the doors to the living/dining room/kitchen, enlargement of the ground floor shower room and reduction of cupboard space.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 It is considered that the principal of development is clearly acceptable here, as the proposal is replacing an existing dwelling with another. Therefore, the main issues to consider in the assessment of this application are:

- Impact on Character
- Residential amenity
- Highways and parking
- Ecology
- Affordable Housing
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Relevant planning policy

5.2 The application will be assessed against the following planning policy documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

Impact on character

5.3 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

5.4 Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan (RLP) states that all development must be of high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of the development, including the layout, landscape, density, scale and architectural details and materials will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive

contribution to urban design objectives. Developments also need to respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness.

- 5.5 In this case, the existing chalet bungalow will be replaced by another dwelling of similar design and the same height. The new dwelling will remain largely of single storey eaves height with roofspace accommodation, similar to the existing and surrounding dwellings. Whilst there will be a two-storey projection, this will be at the rear of the property and the street scene is, in any case, mixed and does feature some two-storey dwellings. The spacing within the existing application site will remain similar to existing with similar or wider gaps to the side boundaries.
- 5.6 The proposed materials will ensure that the appearance of the dwelling is high quality and complements the existing street scene and neighbouring dwellings. Virtually identical plans were already considered acceptable in this regard and this proposal will result in no material difference to the street scene from the plans already approved.
- 5.7 It is considered therefore that the proposal would maintain and enhance the character of the street scene and the local area and would be in keeping with existing neighbouring dwellings. It would be in accordance therefore with the relevant planning policies in this regard.

Residential amenity

- 5.8 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure developments create places that have a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 5.9 Policy CC8 of the RLP states that development will 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, harm to outlook, noise and disturbance and artificial lighting, amongst other things. It states that the position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important.

- 5.10 The proposed new dwelling is no higher than the existing dwelling. In terms of width, it is very similar to the existing dwelling, and narrower compared to the existing garage, although the northern side elevation is deeper. Whilst the proposed new dwelling would extend slightly further to the rear than the existing dwelling, the rear elevation would be in line with the neighbouring dwelling to the north, and would be far enough away on both sides so that it would not result in any unacceptable overbearing effects or loss of light to neighbouring habitable windows.
- 5.11 The front elevation would remain virtually in line with the existing elevation and as such would not cause any loss of light or overbearing effect to neighbouring front windows. There are no upper floor side windows proposed other than velux windows in the roof space so no direct overlooking would occur. Whilst the two-storey rear element would result in some new views, these are normal views between neighbours and they would look to the rear rather than directly into neighbouring dwellings.
- 5.12 Policy H10 of the RLP seeks to protect outdoor amenity space. The application site benefits from a generous sized garden, which will only be minimally reduced by the built form of the new dwelling. As such, a substantial amount of private amenity space will remain.
- 5.13 Again, the virtually identical proposal in this regard has already been considered acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring dwellings and there is no difference in terms of upper floor windows or the size of the dwelling proposed by this application. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity.

Highways and parking

- 5.14 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF states that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users and any significant impacts on the transport network or on highway safety can be mitigated. Paragraph 115 is clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 5.15 Policy TR5 of the RLP states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. In this case, there is a large driveway to the front providing space for at least three cars to be parked off-road. Whilst the proposal will result in the loss of a car parking space within the garage, as it will be made smaller internally, it will provide space for cycle parking. There is no change to the existing accesses to the property.
- 5.16 Again, the previous proposal for the extension was deemed acceptable in terms of parking provision and no objection was received by the Reading Borough Council Transport Department. It is considered therefore that this proposal remains in line with existing planning policies in this regard.

Ecology

- 5.17 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other things) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species including bats.
- 5.18 Policy EN12 of the RLP states that 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.
- 5.19 At the time of the previous application PL/23/0726, a preliminary bat roost assessment was carried out (November 2023). Whilst no evidence of roosting bats was found during the internal or external survey, there were a number of potential bat roost features suitable for crevice-dwelling bats, with the property overall having moderate suitability for roosting bats. A condition was imposed on that permission to ensure the relevant further surveys/licencing work is carried out as required to establish the status of bats on the site prior to the bat roost features being removed.

- 5.20 A licence was subsequently applied for and the evidence in this regard submitted to the Local Planning Authority, pursuant to Condition 5 of PL/23/0726. This condition was discharged in May 2025 (ref PL/25/0700). The works potentially affecting bats have already therefore been carried out in accordance with the relevant licence.
- 5.21 In terms of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, it is considered that this site is exempt given that it would not be affecting more than 25m² of habitat, given that the existing site is a residential dwelling and garden and the footprint of the house is virtually no larger than existing.
- 5.22 The proposal is therefore considered to be in line with the relevant policies in this regard.

Affordable Housing

- 5.23 Paragraph 65 of the NPPF states that provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas. This proposal is not a major development and nor is it in any such designated rural area.
- 5.24 Paragraph 4.4.20 of the RLP explains however that there is evidence of exceptional need for affordable housing in Reading and as such, Policy H3 of the RLP seeks a financial contribution of 10% on sites of 1-4 dwellings. However, the policy states that the replacement of a single dwelling with another single dwelling, as in this case, is exempt from the requirement.
- 5.25 Confirmation by email was received from the case officer, Louise Fuller, on 9th September that this proposal would be treated as a replacement dwelling for the purposes of this policy and as such, no affordable housing contribution would be required.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.26 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) applies in Reading, with the charges set out in the CIL Charging Schedule January 2015.
- 5.27 However, in this case, the applicant has applied for the self-build exemption as the development is to be their own home, and they will own and occupy it as their principal residence for a minimum of three years following completion of the works, in line with this exemption's requirements. The relevant forms in this regard accompany the planning application.
- 5.28 Whilst CIL has been paid on the previously approved development, confirmation has been received from the CIL Officer, Neal Gascoine, that this development can be exempt from CIL following submission of the relevant forms, and the CIL already paid on the previous development here can be refunded.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposal is for the erection of a new dwelling in place of an existing dwelling at 147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham. The new dwelling would be a chalet bungalow, as existing, of the same ridge height as the existing property and its appearance would integrate well into the mixed street scene which does feature many chalet bungalows.
- 6.2 A virtually identical application for extensions to the existing dwelling was approved under reference PL/23/0726 and development is underway. However, during the course of the development it became clear that it was necessary to build a new dwelling rather than construct extensions, and construction stopped. Therefore the submission of this application is to regularise the situation in this regard.
- 6.3 The differences between this proposal and PL/23/0726 are minimal in terms of the appearance of the completed development. The only changes relate to the removal of the chimney, a minor change to windows and doors on one side of the ground floor, and internal layout changes. The previous proposal has already been deemed acceptable in terms of its impact on character, residential amenity, highways and ecology, subject to the relevant conditions and there is no material difference between the applications in terms of the impacts in this regard.
- 6.4 Confirmation has been received from the case officer that this proposal will be exempt from any contribution towards affordable housing, given that it is in effect, a replacement dwelling. The CIL Officer has also confirmed that this development can be exempt from CIL also following submission of the relevant self-build exemption forms, which have been submitted with this application, and the previous CIL paid can be refunded.
- 6.5 It is therefore considered that the proposal is in line with the relevant national and local planning policies in this regard and can be granted permission.