

PLANNING STATEMENT

**APPLICATION FOR PHASED OUTLINE
PLANNING PERMISSION FOR 4 NO.
RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS,
ASSOCIATED DEMOLITION OF
OUTBUILDINGS WITH ACCESS FROM
PARKSIDE ROAD AND KEARSLEY ROAD**

**Land rear of 19 Parkside Road, Reading,
RG30 2BT**

Prepared by:

Woolf Bond Planning Ltd.

WBP REF: JS 8334

OCTOBER 2025



Woolf Bond Planning
Chartered Town Planning Consultants

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Site Description and Context including Planning History	4
3. The Proposal and Pre-Application	7
4. Technical Work Summary	11
5. Planning Policy and Assessment	17
6. Benefits of the Development Proposals	28
7. Conclusion	31

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an outline planning application relating to the proposed development comprising 4 no. detached residential dwellings on land rear of 19 Parkside Road, Reading. The site boundary is illustrated on the supporting red line plan (Drawing No. 22.19-101A).
- 1.2. This application is submitted for consideration following detailed pre-application discussions for the proposed development and is supported by a range of technical work which underpins and informs the scheme.
- 1.3. This Statement sets out the site context, relevant planning policies, details of the pre-application submissions and feedback received. It describes the proposals and it also includes an assessment of how the scheme has been developed to be in conformity with the relevant planning policies. It will deliver 4 new family homes within the settlement area of Reading, at a time when housebuilding is a key local and national priority.
- 1.4. This application is in outline form, with the principle of developing the site for 4 dwellings together with the means of access for consideration. Matters relating to scale, layout, design and landscaping are to be considered at the reserved matters stage.
- 1.5. Access to the proposed houses is from two locations; Parkside Road to the east and Kearsley Road to the west.
- 1.6. The application is submitted to include a phased approach in the description of development. Given the unique characteristic of the site having 2 existing vehicular access points, it is envisaged that the site could come forward in 2 pairs of 2 dwellings, depending on market conditions at the time of reserved matters preparation.
- 1.7. This application is accompanied by a range of drawings showing the proposal, as well as supporting documents including as follows:

- Topographical Survey, drawing no. Geo23-127_T (Geopoint.)
- Site Location Plan, drawing no. 22.19-010A (Spires Architects)
- Existing Building Plans, drawing nos. 22.19-025 – 029 (Spires Architects)
- Proposed Illustrative Development Layout, drawing no. 22.19-021C (Spires Architects)
- Design & Access Statement (Spires Architects)
- Ecology Survey and BNG Assessment (Turnstone Ecologists)
- Heritage Statement (TCMS Heritage)
- Highways Statement and Access Drawings (Bellamy Roberts)
- Sustainability & Energy Statement (Bluesky Unlimited)
- Tree Survey & Report (Duckworths Arboriculture Ltd.)
- This Planning Statement (Woolf Bond Planning)
- Application Form

- 1.8. The scheme includes a complete set of documents that are entirely proportionate for validation purposes.
- 1.9. No Community Infrastructure Levy form is provided because to do so at an outline stage where all matters are reserved aside access would mean that an imprecise proposed GIA figure would have to be used and in turn, legally the signatory to that CIL form would not be able to precisely answer the questions (as is required by the CIL Regulations). The proposed scheme (and its supporting information) is therefore wholly consistent with NPPF paragraph 45 that requires Local Planning Authorities to request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to an outline application.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT INCLUDING PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1. The application site comprises a relatively flat, irregular shaped area of land measuring approx. 0.33ha. It forms part of the garden area of High Hesket, 19 Parkside Road which is a large detached two storey dwelling house fronting Parkside Road. The site benefits from two vehicular access points; one from Parkside Road along the south side of the existing house (currently part of the driveway associated with the property), and a second from Kearsley Road.



Figure 1 – Google aerial image showing the site (identified with red star) and surrounding residential context as described above

- 2.2. The site is within an established residential area within Reading Borough, located in a suburb west of Reading town centre (see Fig 1 above for site context). It is in an area characterised by a variety of detached, semi-detached and flatted homes including recent redevelopment schemes which have intensified the uses and density over the years (e.g. Oakcot Gardens, Ashdene Gardens and 18 Parkside Road; further examples are detailed in the DAS). These sit alongside other mixed use and commercial buildings, such as the former Duchess of Kent Hospice to the rear of the site on Liebenrood Road (which has outline planning permission for redevelopment to a residential (C2) care home), YMCA on Parkside Road, hotels along the Bath Road and recreational and leisure uses at nearby Prospect Park.

- 2.3. The existing dwelling 'High Hesket' is a substantial detached two storey house constructed in 1935 in the arts and crafts style. It is accessed from Parkside Road via two gated access points onto a large gravel driveway. To the rear is an extensive garden area, measuring over 70m to the rear boundary. Given its age and architectural design, the Council advised during the pre-application process that the house can be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. A Heritage Statement supporting the application has been prepared in response to this which considers the impact of the proposed development upon the non-designated heritage asset.
- 2.4. The application site is largely laid to grass, with a variety of native and ornamental trees and shrubs established throughout. These are detailed in the Tree Survey.



Figure 2 – Application site (source: DAS)

- 2.5. There are 4 outbuildings and a glasshouse situated towards to rear of the site which have been used for domestic storage purposes associated with the main house. These will all be demolished to facilitate the proposed development. Ecology surveys have been undertaken including bat surveys of these structures to ensure they are suitable for demolition.

- 2.6. The access from Kearsley Road benefits from existing access gates and piers, which were permitted under application ref: LPA Ref: 200616, granted 10.08.2020, and implemented.



Figure 2 – Photograph of Kearsley Road access

- 2.7. The site is surrounded by established residential properties, with a number of plots having been intensified by redevelopment in recent years, specifically Oakcot Gardens on Shire's Head Close to the north (8 flats), Ashdene Gardens (large housing led scheme) to the south and 18 Parkside Road (10 flats) opposite the site frontage.
- 2.8. The site comprises excess garden land in residential use and in the urban area. The principle of redeveloping the site for housing is therefore established.
- 2.9. In planning policy terms, the site has no policy designations, is not in a Conservation Area or near to statutorily listed buildings.
- 2.10. The Environment Agency flood risk maps for planning confirm that the site is in flood risk zone 1 and not at risk of flooding from any source.

3. THE PROPOSAL AND PRE-APPLICATION

Development Proposal

- 3.1. This application is in outline for only the principle of developing the site for 4 dwellings, and access for consideration. The remaining matters of design, scale, layout and landscaping are reserved for future consideration.
- 3.2. The application is submitted as a proposed phased development. This is to retain flexibility for the applicant to bring the site forward for development in pairs; with 2 dwellings accessed from Parkside Road and 2 dwellings accessed from Kearsley Road.
- 3.3. The existing house at 19 Parkside Road is outside of the red line site application boundary, and is to be retained as existing, with a reduction in garden area to approx. 18m in length. The suitability of this retained garden area is discussed further in Section 5 of this Statement.
- 3.4. The Illustrative Site Layout (extract below) shows how the site could be developed to accommodate 4 no. dwellings. This has been informed by a thorough review and analysis of the site constraints and opportunities, including the access locations, tree positions, site levels, location and orientation of surrounding development and proximity of neighbours.



Figure 4 – Extract from drawing 22.19-021 Rev C

- 3.5. The illustrative layout shows how the site could readily accommodate 2 detached dwellings to the rear of 19 Parkside Road with access from Parkside Road itself. This access would effectively be the existing southern driveway access to 19 Parkside Road, re-aligned and extended to the side of the existing house allowing vehicle access to the rear. The site opens up and the locations of plots 1 and 2 on the illustrative plan indicate where dwellings could be sited within the site having regard to the site constraints. This would provide family sized accommodation, with garages and parking, as well as a turning space of sufficient size to allow refuse and other large vehicles (tracked on a fire appliance) to turn and exit the site in forward gear.
- 3.6. Consideration has been given to detail such as bin collection points, which are shown as 'BC' on the illustrative plan, located close to the site entrances. A suitable boundary treatment will be erected along the site access to maintain privacy and demarcate the land retained for no. 19. The existing house will have use of the existing northern access point onto the driveway.



Figure 5 – Parkside Road access adjacent to existing house

-
- 3.7. On the western side of the site, access from Kearsley Road is via the existing gates, opening up into a driveway and turning space which will serve a further 2 detached dwellings.
- 3.8. The number of dwellings proposed would ensure that existing trees are retained as far as possible, and ample space remains around the dwellings to allow for meaningful private amenity and landscaping to enhance the development and re-provide the trees required for removal.

Pre-application discussions

- 3.9. Prior to the preparation and submission of this application, detailed pre-application discussions were undertaken with the Council, namely Ethne Humphreys (planning), Sarah Hansen (trees and natural environment) and Burja Can Cetin (conservation).
- 3.10. Initial proposals were submitted on 15th April 2024 for a development of 9 dwellings (5 accessed from Parkside Road, 4 from Kearsley Road, LPA Ref: 240468/PREAPP). This included partial demolition of the garage/utility on the existing house to gain access along the northern site boundary. An on-site meeting was held on 21st May 2024 and written feedback dated 23rd May 2024. The main concerns were that the proposal for 9 dwellings required too many trees to be removed, and that relationships with neighbouring dwellings could be problematic.
- 3.11. The response invited a revised pre-application proposal, which was submitted on 17th December 2024 for 6 dwellings (3 from each access) which sought to respond to the key issues raised in the initial comments. A supplementary written response was received on 16th April 2025, which invited a further reduction to 4 dwellings for an application to be supported. This application has been prepared in direct response to the detailed pre-application advice received.
- 3.12. One query which was raised was the potential for access to the site to be gained through Ashdene Gardens, adjacent to the site's southern boundary. As the Council are no doubt aware, Ashdene Gardens was developed in the relatively recent past by housebuilder Bewley Homes.

3.13. Woolf Bond Planning has been in contact with Bewley regarding the possibility of purchasing the 'ransom strip' of retained land they own across the turning head in Ashdene Gardens, and the potential of connecting to the foul sewer located there. Discussions have stalled around the potential value of the ransom strip, and given that the application site benefits from two access points, and can connect to other existing drainage points, there is no need for access to be obtained via Ashdene Gardens. The application is therefore progressed on the basis that the 'ransom strip' land is unavailable.

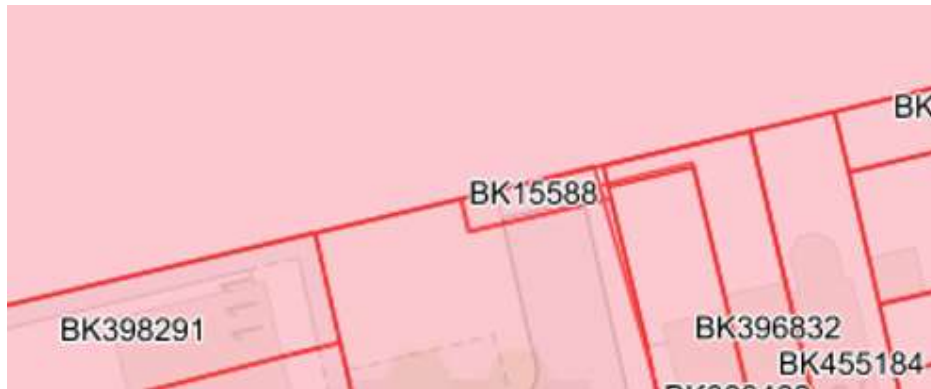


Figure 6 – Extract from Land Registry plan showing ransom strip title

4. TECHNICAL WORK SUMMARY

- 4.1. In order to establish the constraints and opportunities for development and inform the proposed site layout which is submitted for comment in this pre-application request, a number of technical reports have been prepared in respect of topography, trees, ecology, highways, drainage, heritage and energy and sustainability. The findings of these reports are summarised below.

Topography

- 4.2. The site is relatively flat, however the existing garden area includes a raised lawn near the house, with a drop of approximately 0.7m onto the wider site area. Drawing 22.19-021 Rev C shows the proposed retained garden area of 19 Parkside Road, which includes the raised lawn area, and additional land beyond.

Trees

- 4.3. An arboricultural survey was undertaken in January 2024 and reported that there are a total of 133 existing trees/groups on the site as a whole (including blue outlined land). None of these are category A. However, there are 37 category B, 89 category C and 7 category U. None of the trees present have a TPO.
- 4.4. The illustrative layout proposes to retain as many of these trees as possible, whilst recognising that some removals are necessary to facilitate development of the site.
- 4.5. The Tree Removal Plan shows clearly the trees proposed for removal, and includes only 5 cat B trees, a number of cat C trees and a few cat U trees. As well as facilitating the development, removal of the lower quality trees will open up space to allow for planting of better quality specimens post-construction, which will create an attractive landscape setting for the site and provides an opportunity to enhance the on-site biodiversity.
- 4.6. A comprehensive landscaping scheme will be developed at the reserved matters stage. The illustrative proposals enable new trees to be incorporated into the scheme design at the reserved matters stage.

Ecology

- 4.7. A Preliminary Ecological Survey was undertaken in October 2023. The habitats on site were assessed for suitability for protected fauna that occur in the region and obvious signs and incidental sightings of protected species were noted where present. The site was specifically assessed for the presence of the following; badger, bats, nesting birds, great crested newts, reptiles and stag beetles. The initial survey consisted of a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and protected species habitat suitability assessment and a Preliminary Roost Assessment. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment of an on-site pond was also completed.
- 4.8. As per the recommendations of the initial report, Great Crested Newt eDNA testing and a presence/absence survey were conducted on 18th April 2024, followed by three bat dusk emergence surveys on 29th May, 27th June, and 29th July 2024.
- 4.9. No evidence of badgers were recorded, nor great crested newts or reptiles.. Whilst Great Crested Newt are absent from the pond (and the pond is to be retained within the garden of the main house) and reptiles from the site, the site still offers limited suitability, therefore, all work on site should be undertaken following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs).
- 4.10. 4 stag beetles were recorded flying during one of the evening visits. To mitigate effects on this species, it is recommended that any deadwood and tree stumps within the construction zone will be carefully moved by hand to an unaffected area of the site under the supervision of an ecologist. If possible, the stumps or logs will be partially reburied.
- 4.11. Nesting birds use the site's trees during nesting season, but no ground nesting species were identified. The usual precautions for nesting bird season will be taken during construction phase.
- 4.12. Most of the outbuildings were assessed to have negligible potential to support roosting bats, except for building 3 a large timber shed/garage which was assessed to have low to moderate potential.

-
- 4.13. The report also identifies the brick garage attached to the main house as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. At the time the survey was undertaken, the proposals included demolition of this part of the existing house to facilitate access to the rear of the site. However, proposals have now been revised such that no demolition of the main house is proposed, and as such this structure and any bats within will be unaffected by the proposals.
- 4.14. No further survey work or protected species licence are required for the development to proceed, precautionary mitigation measures are proposed and are invited to be secured by condition.
- 4.15. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool has been used to determine the baseline biodiversity units for this site and how the proposed development will impact biodiversity by calculating the lost, retained, enhanced and created habitats using a quantitative approach.
- 4.16. There are 5.83 habitat units and 0.56 hedgerow units as the baseline on-site. At present, both habitats show a deficit/loss post-development, as no landscaping has been taken into consideration. This will come forward in detailed at the RM stage, and the BNG metric will be updated at this time to understand the impact of the proposed development on the biodiversity. Any off-site credits can then be secured to make up any shortfall to reach 10% net gain.

Highways

- 4.17. The Highways Assessment considers the suitability of the two proposed access points to accommodate the scale of development. It confirms that both existing access points are suitable in their width and geometry not only to provide vehicular access for the proposed dwellings, but also for a fire appliance and refuse vehicle when required. Tracking drawings and visibility splays are included within the Transport Statement to confirm the suitability.
- 4.18. The Statement concludes that the access would be safe and suitable to serve all users, and the local highway network and strategic road network can accommodate the traffic generated by the site during the peak periods without resulting in a severe residual cumulative impact.

-
- 4.19. Furthermore, the site is sustainably located such that there are genuine opportunities to walk and cycle to local services, facilities and employment opportunities, as well as sustainable modes of travel for onwards journeys.

Drainage

- 4.20. Given the outline nature of this application, the baseline ground conditions in respect of developing a drainage strategy have been informed by the results of a ground investigation undertaken approximately 40m south-east from the Site. The infiltration testing indicated that infiltration was appropriate for a soakaway.
- 4.21. A site-specific intrusive ground investigation will need to be conducted prior to detailed design. The investigation would include infiltration testing and seasonal ground water monitoring to ensure the water table is not too high to affect the use of soakaways.
- 4.22. Due to the local geology and the infiltration rates found through soakaway testing in nearby areas, it is considered that infiltration methods will be feasible for the disposal of surface water runoff from the proposed development.
- 4.23. It is proposed that all surface water runoff from the development will be attenuated and infiltrated via the use of porous paving and soakaways. Porous paving is proposed within part of the access road and all private parking bays and a soakaway proposed within the gardens of units 3 and 4. The porous paving and soakaways will provide attenuation storage for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100-year event plus 40% climate change event.
- 4.24. This approach accords with the policy requirement for a SuDS first approach and is implementable within the illustrative layout submitted. Further details including the requirement for a ground investigation, can be conditioned and provided at the reserved matters stage.
- 4.25. In respect of foul water disposal, given the location of existing sewage infrastructure and the site and adjoining land levels, a pumped solution is proposed. The proposed drainage strategy is included within Appendix C of the Drainage Tech Note for the proposed illustrative layout.

Heritage

- 4.26. The Heritage Assessment sets out the history and origins of the existing house 'High Hesket' and includes consideration of the importance of the house and its garden as forming part of its setting.
- 4.27. The significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset is drawn from its historic interest as a good example of a large Arts and Crafts dwelling. Although there is some doubt regarding the architect, the building has clearly been constructed substantially in accordance with plans by Willcocks and appears to have been designed by him. This provides further associative interest, of a local level, due to his importance in the Berkshire area as a prolific architect.
- 4.28. No demolition or alterations are proposed to High Hesket itself as part of the application. High Hesket will be retained within a large garden area, with a new boundary constructed across the existing lawn. It is proposed to construct a red brick boundary, similar to that found to the front and side elevations of the property, which would be most appropriate and would reflect the current setting of the building. This would provide an appropriate, enclosed private setting to the building.
- 4.29. The proposed development will result in a limited level of harm to the significance of High Hesket. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF requires this harm to be weighed, in a balanced judgement, with regard given to the non-designated status of the building and the limited impacts arising from the development, which will retain the key elements of the building's significance.

Energy & Sustainability

- 4.30. The Energy & Sustainability Statement includes an energy strategy showing how selected energy efficiency, low carbon and renewable energy measures have been considered and those which will be incorporated into the proposals at the detailed design stage.
- 4.31. The four houses are assumed to be broadly similar in scale and design and therefore SAP calculations, which have been prepared for a house of a similar

design and specification have been used to provide an accurate estimation of emissions from the site. The calculations are based on Part L 2021 and use the construction specification set out in the Statement.

- 4.32. The fabric insulation standards and the construction specification of the houses will exceed the minimum required by the Building Regulations.
- 4.33. It is proposed to install an air source heat pump into each house.
- 4.34. In addition, it is assumed that each house can sustain photovoltaic panels and the calculations are based on the installation of 6 x 400W panels being installed to each unit. The panels are assumed to be inclined at circa 45 degrees and orientated towards either the southwest or southeast.
- 4.35. The residual emissions from the site are 1.496 tonnes of CO₂, a 75% reduction.
- 4.36. The water efficiency standards for the houses will be less than 110 litres per person per day (including 5 litres for external water use). A sample water efficiency calculator is included within the Statement. The above can be secured by the imposition of an appropriately worded condition(s).

5. PLANNING POLICY AND ASSESSMENT

5.1. The site is within the Reading Borough Council authority area. The current development plan comprises the Local Plan (2019). Relevant material considerations include the Affordable Housing SPD (2021), Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011) and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019). The Council submitted The Local Plan Partial Update for Examination in May 2025. No hearing dates have yet been scheduled. Given the untested nature of the Local Plan Update it carries limited weight in the determination of planning applications.

5.2. The policies within the Local Plan which are considered relevant to this application are listed as follows and expanded upon below:

Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2 – Sustainable Design in Construction

Policy CC3 – Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC5 – Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development.

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy EN12 – Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14 – Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

Policy EN18 – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems

Policy H1 – Provision of Housing

Policy H2 – Density and Mix

Policy H3 – Affordable Housing

Policy H5 – Standards for New Housing

Policy H10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy H11 – Development of Private Residential Gardens

Principle and General Policies

5.3. The site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Reading, the largest town in the area, and the focus for development. It has no restriction

designations and can be considered 'white land' free of constraints for development purposes.



Figure 8 – Local Plan Proposals Map Extract (site location identified with red star)

- 5.4. Local Plan Policy CC1 sets out the Council's Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, and seeks to adopt a positive approach to considering development proposals which reflect the presumption set out in the NPPF. The benefits of the scheme as set out in Section 6 of this Statement, and are submitted in the context of the NPPF presumption and priorities.
- 5.5. Policy CC2 requires applications to consider sustainable design in construction. As far as this can be considered at this outline stage, the submission is accompanied by an Energy & Sustainability Statement.
- 5.6. Policy CC3 Adaptation to Climate Change requires all developments to demonstrate how they have been designed to accommodate climate change. The submitted Drainage Tech Note explains how surface water runoff will be accommodated on site, and the Tree and Ecology reports set out the limited proposed tree removal and outline the space retained within the illustrative site layout for landscaping planting, detail to be considered at RM stage.

-
- 5.7. The requirement of Policy CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage have been considered through the inclusion of bin collection points and turning areas within the illustrative site layouts, to accommodate waste collection vehicles.
- 5.8. The site is considered to have good accessibility on foot and by bicycle to existing services and public transport routes. The proposed scale and density of development on site has not been limited by its level of accessibility, rather the other identified site constraints. The illustrative layout has therefore been prepared positively in response to Policy CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development.
- 5.9. Policy CC7 Design and the Public Realm seeks to ensure all development are high quality and in keeping with the established character and appearance of the area. Details such as design and materials will be considered at a later stage. In so far as the illustrative layout shows how the proposed quantum, of development could be accommodated on the site, the layout as shown responds to the layout, siting, orientation and spacing of neighbouring dwellings, as well as being informed by the site specific features. The resulting density of 12dph has been guided by the pre-application feedback received from planning and natural environment officers to balance the retention of existing trees and ensure there is ample space within the resulting development for future landscape planting.
- 5.10. This low density will also give flexibility at reserved matters stage for the design and siting of the proposed dwellings, as well as ensure there is scope for the required level of car and cycle parking provision, generous private amenity space and sufficient retained garden for the existing house. It also ensures the relevant parts of Policy CC8 Safeguarding Amenity will be accommodated. The Design & Access Statement sets out further explanation and justification for the scheme as proposed.

Built and Natural Environment

- 5.11. Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment is of relevance to the application, as during the pre-application process the council's historic environment officer identified the existing building 19 Parkside Road as

a building of potential historic interest, assigning it the description of a non-designated heritage asset. The Local Plan policy does not cover this type of building, however the NPPF at chapter 16 includes 'non-designated heritage assets' and para. 216 sets out that;

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage-asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or less and the significance of the heritage asset.” (our emphasis)

- 5.12. The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which sets out the significance (local) of the identified non-designated heritage asset, and concludes that the proposal will result in limited harm to the setting of the building. This will be weighed in the planning balance.
- 5.13. The submitted Ecology Report and BNG Assessment respond to the requirements of Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network), as well as the national requirement for 10% net gain in biodiversity on development sites. The submitted information confirms that no protected species have been identified on the site, and as such the proposed development can proceed without harm with a precautionary approach.
- 5.14. The BNG Assessment sets out the baseline habitat score for the site. A final BNG value will be produced at RM stage once landscaping is proposed. Any uplift not achievable on-site can be met through securing off-site credits.
- 5.15. In evolving the scheme from the 9 originally proposed in the first pre-application submission to the 4 proposed in this application, the proposed number of trees to be removed has been reduced, as kept as a minimum to facilitate development of the site. Similarly boundary vegetation is proposed for retention where possible, which will ensure the protection of many of the site's existing biodiversity supporting features. This responds positively to Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands in so far as is possible.

- 5.16. With regard to Policy EN18 Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems, details of how the proposed illustrative layout responds to these requirements are set out in the accompanying Drainage Tech Note. The Note sets out how the underlying bedrock and nearby infiltration testing confirms that the ground is likely suitable to utilise infiltration methods for attenuating surface water run off. A detailed SuDS scheme will be prepared for submission at RM stage once the exact siting, layout and scale of proposed dwellings are known.
- 5.17. A comprehensive landscaping scheme which focusses on providing native species along with biodiversity enhancements will be prepared for the reserved matters stage.

Provision of Housing

- 5.18. Policy H1 Provision of Housing sets out the Council's headline figure of requiring at least 15,847 homes over the Plan period 2013 to 2036 (an average of 689 per year). The existing Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and past the fifth anniversary of its adoption in November 2024. Consequently, consistent with paragraph 78 of the NPPF, the required housing target is to be calculated under the Standard Method. The latest calculation (taking account of the affordability ratios published 24th March 2025 and the dwelling stock data released 22nd May 2025), Reading Borough's housing requirement is for a minimum of 1,011 dwellings per year. According to the latest published figures in the Council's AMR 2023-2024 (Dec 2024), the deliverable supply is 4,311 dwellings (Table 8.3). This contrasts with the revised five year requirement for 5,308 dwellings (1,011 x 5 + 5% buffer). Consequently the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land as the supply is 997 dwellings short or 4.06 years.
- 5.19. This is a **significant shortfall** and **important material consideration in favour of the application for 4 dwellings**, particularly given the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing, and requirement to use urban land effectively.
- 5.20. This also results in the tilted balance being engaged at para. 11dii) of the NPPF.

- 5.21. The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by the character and mix of the area in accordance with Policy H2. The proposed development results in a density of 12dph. Given the identified site constraints and following pre-application feedback, the provision of family homes in this location at this low density is the Council's preferred form of development for the site. The exact mix will be specified at RM stage.
- 5.22. For this site of 4 proposed dwellings, the affordable housing requirement set out by Policy H3 is for a financial contribution of 10% of the housing to be provided. The applicant is agreeable to this in principle. The exact amount of contribution will be determined at a later stage once the housing mix and resulting GDV is known.
- 5.23. Policy H5 requires that all new build developments are in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards. The detailed floorplans will demonstrate this to be the case as the RM stage, and this requirement can be secured by condition if deemed appropriate.

Residential Amenity Space

- 5.24. Policy H10 requires suitable outdoor amenity space for all new dwellings. The illustrative site layout plan shows how safe and secure private amenity space can be achieved for the proposed new dwellings. Consideration has been given as to the garden area to be retained for 19 Parkside Road. Originally this was proposed as the raised lawn area closest to the house, with the change in land level forming a natural boundary.
- 5.25. However in response to pre-application feedback from officers this has been extended further to 18m include additional land, resulting in a generous garden area for the retained house of 535sqm. It is important to note that the existing house is on a particularly wide plot (28m), and there is also ample grounds to the front of the property for residential enjoyment in addition to the more private amenity space to the rear. The illustrative layout also indicates how proposed plot 1 could be sited away from the rear boundary of the existing house with the proposed turning area in the intervening space. This will further assist in

maintaining the large plot character for High Hesket, and retaining its setting in the context of it being a non-designated heritage asset.



Figure 9 – Extract from drawing no 22.19-021 C showing retained garden area

Policy H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens – assessment

5.26. The Council's Policy H11 requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where it meets 9 criteria (in *italics* below with the scheme response to each):

1. It makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;

5.27. The proposed development is of an appropriate density which respects the character of the area and site-specific constraints. It includes 4 detached houses, which are in keeping with the character of the original house, and surrounding development. Design is for consideration at a future RM stage, and will be carefully considered to ensure high quality design and materials which respect and reflect the local vernacular.

2. The site is of an adequate size to accommodate the development;

- 5.28. The site is 0.33ha which is more than adequate to accommodate the low density development proposed of 4 dwellings. The Illustrative Site Layout drawing shows one way in which the development of the site could be accommodated, with ample room for manoeuvring, landscaping and private amenity space.

3. The proposal has a suitable access;

- 5.29. As demonstrated on the submitted plans and in the accompanying Highways Report, the site has 2 existing points of access which have been confirmed as suitable for use to access the proposed new dwellings. Each access point will provide access to 2 of the new dwellings. Tracking has been carried out which confirms that a refuse vehicle and fire appliance can enter, turn and exit each access in a forward gear.

4. The proposal would not lead to an unacceptable tandem development;

- 5.30. The proposal as shown on the Illustrative layout plan would create a comprehensive development of surplus garden land in an established residential area which has seen numerous development schemes for intensified residential development in recent years (detailed in the DAS).

5. The design minimises the exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;

- 5.31. The proposed development can be designed to ensure that there are no amenity issues arising with neighbours, and create defensible boundaries between the proposed plots whilst maintaining an appropriate relationship with the existing dwelling at 19 Parkside Road.

6. It does not cause detrimental impact on residential amenities;

- 5.32. The layout is illustrative but demonstrates that suitable relationships can be achieved with neighbouring dwellings, particularly given the spacious nature of the site, and focus on developing the more central areas.

7. The emphasis is on the provision of family housing;

- 5.33. The illustrative layout shows detached family housing. It is anticipated that at the reserved matters stage, the scale of the proposed dwellings will be 3-5 bedrooms depending on internal layout.

8. There is no adverse impact on biodiversity;

- 5.34. The accompanying BNG Assessment sets out the baseline biodiversity value for the site. In order to deliver the proposed housing, there will clearly be a change in the BNG value on site. Landscape proposals at the RM stage will focus on re-providing those habitats which are to be removed/reduced to facilitate development of the site, with any deficit between on-site provision and requirement being met through off-site credits.

9. The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

- 5.35. The site is the last undeveloped piece of land in the vicinity which has yet to undergo residential development. No further development is anticipated immediately adjacent to this site.
- 5.36. The above analysis of the proposed development site and illustrative layout against the 9 criterion of Policy H11 clearly demonstrate compliance with the policy such that development of this garden land site can be supported. This is even more important in the context of a lack of 5 year housing land supply and the engagement of the tilted balance.

NPPF (2024)

- 5.37. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (with a minor update in Feb 2025) and sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is a material consideration of particular standing in the making of planning decisions.
- 5.38. The NPPF (Dec 2024) re-affirms the Government's objective to 'significantly boost the supply of housing' (para. 61) and recognises the inter-connected value

which new housing can bring to sustainable development in terms of economic, social and environmental benefits (para. 8). Chapter 11 focusses on how to make effective use of land, whilst para. 73 identifies small and medium sites as making an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement for an area, and can often be built out quickly.

5.39. Para. 125 (d) is particularly relevant here in that it states that decisions should *“promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.”*

5.40. The NPPF provides policy support in respect of additional housing in sustainable locations (paras. 110 & 115). The site is located within the defined urban area and within easy travelling distance to a range of services and facilities by a choice of modes of sustainable transport. The scheme is therefore wholly compliant with NPPF paragraphs 110 and 115 in terms of its locational sustainability.

5.41. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives of achieving sustainable development:

- An **economic** role – to support growth, innovation and improved productivity and to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- A **social** role – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, ensuring that a sufficient number of homes can be provided in a well-designed environment.
- An **environmental** role – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land.

5.42. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11. The Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply and so the presumption in favour of sustainable development is also engaged, which for decision-taking means that;

“where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed place and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”

- 5.43. The application therefore falls to be determined under paragraph 11d(ii) of the NPPF, where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. For the application this means weighing the benefits against any identified harms, with only significant and demonstrable harm capable of outweighing the clear benefits.
- 5.44. The only harm identified is limited harm in respect of the non-designated heritage asset. This is clearly outweighed by the numerous benefits of the scheme, including provision of market family housing, financial contribution towards affordable housing, high quality design which makes effective use of land and the scope for a comprehensive landscaping scheme to deliver green and biodiversity benefits.

6. BENEFITS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 6.1. The Council have a housing land supply deficit. In such circumstances, NPPF paragraph 11, part (d) is engaged whereby the most important policies for determining the application are out of date. In this case, there are no policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance that would provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed.
- 6.2. The assessment of the scheme therefore falls to paragraph 11(d), part (ii). This requires that any adverse impacts of granting permission would need to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The tilted balance is very much engaged. In this instance there is only minor harm to a non-designated heritage asset. This is clearly outweighed by the substantial benefits of providing housing at a time of identified housing need, family housing for which there is an identified local need, contribution to affordable housing, as well as the general benefits which arise from a new housing scheme including social and economic benefits of house building.
- 6.3. The site lies in a sustainable location, within an established residential suburb servicing Reading town. The scheme makes effective use of underutilised urban land and will deliver 4 new family sized dwellings. Additionally, it will make an important financial contribution towards providing for affordable housing within the Borough, in line with the policy requirement.
- 6.4. This is exactly the form of development encouraged by Paragraph 78 of the NPPF which recognises the important contribution small and medium sized developments can make to meeting the housing requirements of an area. Paragraph 74(d), in particular, applies great weight to the benefits of windfall applications that utilise suitable land within settlement boundaries to delivery housing.
- 6.5. Such an approach is further supported in national policy with paragraph 125(c) of the NPPF requiring planning decision to:

“promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively”

6.6. Further, it offers a number of other important benefits. These are listed below:

- A contribution of 4 new homes towards the Borough’s housing supply at a time of acknowledged (and substantial) housing land supply deficit.
- Provision of 4 family sized dwellings, where there is an identified need for additional family housing.
- Financial contribution towards affordable housing.
- Retention of existing house in its original form, with a generous garden area.
- An illustrative layout that positively responds to the surrounding layout, siting and orientation of neighbouring dwellings.
- Further landscaping will provide a visually well-contained development, in keeping with the character and form found in the vicinity.
- Provision of on-site biodiversity habitats.
- An energy efficient scheme that complies with policy standards.
- Provision of employment during the construction process.
- Contribution towards economic growth through additional residents in the area adding to the vitality and viability of local services.
- Additional income from CIL receipt.

6.7. Cumulatively, the above benefits carry very substantial positive weight in favour of the proposals. Conversely, the only disbenefit that attracts any negative weight is the limited harm to the non-designated heritage asset. In the context of the balanced judgement set out at NPPF para. 216, this limited harm is clearly outweighed by the significant benefits brought about by the proposal.

- 6.8. In the context of the Council's current lack of five year housing land supply, the application falls to be determined under the tilted balance set out at paragraph 11d(ii) of the NPPF, where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. For the application this means weighing the benefits against any identified harms, with only significant and demonstrable harm capable of outweighing the clear benefits. The limited harm identified is clearly outweighed by the numerous and substantial benefits, such that the scheme represents sustainable development and can be approved.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The proposed development for 4 new family sized dwellings on this underutilised site within the settlement area is considered to represent a suitable opportunity for additional residential development in the Borough. It is in an identified sustainable location, close to numerous services, facilities and public transport links within Reading, which services and facilities would be supported by the future occupiers, representing a small but notable social and economic benefit.
- 7.2. This Statement has considered all of the supporting technical reports, pre-application advice and relevant Local Plan policies, together with material considerations which demonstrate that this application is suitable for the type and quantum of development proposed. The site can be developed in a sustainable manner, with suitable access and drainage, a limited impact on trees, ecology and heritage matters, with 4 new houses at a time of identified housing need.
- 7.3. The application seeks outline planning permission with access only at this stage. All matters pertaining to detailed design, layout, scale and landscaping are reserved for future consideration.
- 7.4. The site and proposed development has been positively assessed against the Council's criteria for residential garden development in Policy H11, and in any case, would result in a suitable form of development supported by national planning policy.
- 7.5. The proposals have been demonstrated to accord with the relevant policies in the Local Plan and the NPPF, and as such can be supported by the Council.
