

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0273 Full planning permission

Address: 23 CHURCH END LANE, TILEHURST, READING, RG30 4XA

Proposal: Construction of single storey 2 bed dwelling with parking and amenity space

Applicant: Mr Cobb

Received date: 20 February 2025

Target Decision date: 14 November 2025 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the east side of Church End Lane and forms part of the private garden amenity space of no. 23, which is a two storey semi-detached residential dwelling. No.23 is the end property in a row of four similar two storey semi-detached dwellings. The building line along the four dwellings is consistent, and Church End Lane has large setbacks to the front of dwellings on the east side. Opposite the site, is a significant variation of built form, and setbacks providing sufficient variation to the character and appearance of the area. Adjacent to the east of the site is are properties along Riley Road, at the corner of Stanham Road, these dwellings all front Riley Road. The site is flat and contains some vegetation toward the rear. The site currently contains a 1.8m high fence to the front boundary, and adjoins another rear garden (no.1 Riley Road) surrounding by a 1.8m high fence that would remain in place.

The application site is not located within a conservation area, is not a listed building, is not located within an air quality management area, is not contaminated land. The rear garden of no.23 is partly within a 'Green Link' (Policy EN12).

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following plans and documents were submitted with the application:

Drawing No: P22-042-01-91-002 Rev B – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: P22-042-01-91-001A – Existing Location Plan

Drawing No: P22-042-02-02-002 Rev C – Proposed Site Plan

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2025

The 'Pro Vision' BNG Assessment v2 Technical Note

The 'Pro Vision' Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 26 March 2025

Drawing No: P22-042-02-02-002 – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: P22-042-02-03-001 – Proposed Floor Plans

Drawing No: P22-042-02-05-001 – Proposed Elevations

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 17 March 2025

The 'Pro Vision' Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 27 February 2025

Drawing No: P22-042-02-03-001 – Proposed Floor Plans

Drawing No: P22-042-01-91-001 – Existing Location Plan

Drawing No: P22-042-02-02-002 – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: P22-042-01-91-002 – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: P22-042-02-05-001 – Proposed Elevations

Application Forms

CIL form

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 20 February 2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Transport Development Control – No objection, subject to conditions.

RBC Ecology Consultant – No objection, subject to conditions.

Two site notices were placed at the site, one on Church End Lane, and one on Riley Road (directly behind application site).

Three objections were received and are summarised as follows:

- The plot size fails to integrate with the area, and the building is too large for the plot;
- The building line on Church End Lane is disrupted by the proposal;
- The garden does not respect the size of similar spaces in the area;
- The back-to-back distance is less than 20m/25m;
- Glare would be produced by solar panels;
- Concern about a new dropped kerb, and drain;
- Concerns around parking on verge during construction, and noise and disturbance (including hours);
- Lack of screening to properties to the rear;
- Garden is too small;
- Concern around maintenance of fencing to rear boundary;
- Concern around landscaping proposed to rear;

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/1201 - New single 4 bedroom dwellinghouse with associated off-street parking and amenity landscape works. WITHDRAWN 31 October 2024

PL/14/0421 – Erection of a detached dwelling. REFUSED 9 July 2014

PL/14/1183 – Erection of a detached dwelling. REFUSED 16 September 2014

PL/14/1947 – Pre-application enquiry for erection of 2-bedroom or 3-bedroom detached dwelling. ADVICE GIVEN

PL/15/0319 – Pre-application enquiry relating to a new residential house - 2 bedroom detached and study. ADVICE GIVEN

5. EQUALITY

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

National Planning Policy Guidance

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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant and would be applied to any future proposal:

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3 Adaption 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 Woodlands
EN15 Air Quality
EN16 Pollution and Water Resources
H1 Provision of Housing
H2 Density and Mix
H3 Affordable Housing
H5 Housing Standards
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 Parking

Supplementary Planning Documents & other relevant documents/guidance

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Reading Tree Strategy (2021)
DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards (2015)

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'.

The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Submission marks the beginning of a process of public examination led by an independent Inspector. Due to the stage of examination, the draft Local Plan can be afforded limited weight.

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The NPPF seeks to make an effective use of land through as much use as possible of brownfield land. The definition of previously developed land (brownfield land) excludes residential gardens. Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, that does not mean that the development of private residential garden land is unacceptable in principle, rather than previously developed land should be the first choice for housing development.

Policy H11 'Development of Private Residential Gardens', seeks to ensure that sites are appropriate for residential development, including but not limited to: the character and appearance of the area, a focus on family-sized dwellings, provision of a biodiversity net gain. It is important to note that a site such as this, considered a windfall site, has an important role in meeting the Council's housing targets. The proposal may be acceptable for additional housing, as considered further below.

Design and, character and appearance of the area

Policy CC7 seeks that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the area of Reading within which they are located.

The residential dwellings to this part of Church End Lane are a mix of semi-detached dwellings (east side) and detached dwellings (west side) set in similarly sized plots apart from the application site at no. 25 which has a much larger total private amenity space than the other plots in the road by virtue of the significant side garden where the additional dwelling is proposed to be located. Along Riley Road, a mix of semi-detached and detached properties also exist. The character of the area is therefore mixed

Due to the generous size of the existing plot the proposed subdivision would not result in plot that would be out of keeping with those found elsewhere within the road. Adequate garden space would be provided for both the existing and proposed dwelling. The footprint of the proposed dwelling is also reflective of those found in the surrounding area whilst the position of the dwelling within the site would retain adequate separation to the site boundaries. The building line would be brought forward by the proposal. Given the proposal is single storey and encroaches forward to an area that is already surrounded and adjoined by a 1.8m high fence, it is not considered that this building line being brought forward would result in significant harm to the character of the area, including being shielded from view by neighbouring fencing to a degree.

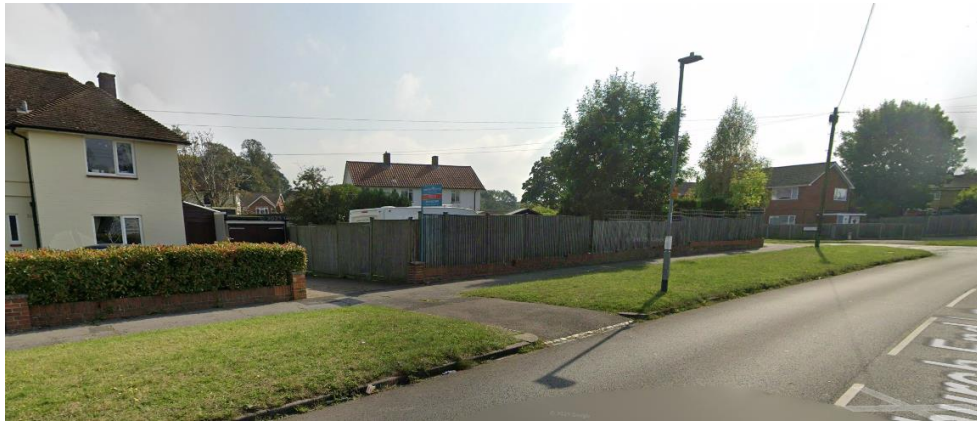


Figure 1 - Street view image of the site with adjoining fencing

The scale of the proposal would be in keeping with the scale of other properties in the road. The design of the dwelling with a pitched roof, rendered walls and solar panels is also considered to integrate satisfactorily within the street-scene. Whilst the dwelling incorporates some more contemporary features than other properties within the street, particularly in terms of roof design, this is not considered to detract from the dwellings appearance within the street.

The proposal, whilst reasonable, is considered on balance to be acceptable and not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Policy CC7 seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy EN12 seeks that development should retain, protect and incorporate feature of biodiversity and protect the identified green links from insensitive adjoining development. Policy EN14 seek that the Borough's vegetation cover be extended.

From 12 February 2024, all developments (barring specific exemptions) which are given permission are considered to be given permission on the condition that they provide a 10% biodiversity net gain.

With regard to no net loss of biodiversity, policy EN12 also states: *"In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is "no net loss" of biodiversity."* In this instance, in light of the overwhelming need for housing within Reading, including concerns around the Council's position on 5-year housing supply, the significant need for family sized homes such as the proposal are considered together to clearly outweigh the biodiversity value of the site. In this instance, the provision of off-site no net loss in biodiversity through the automatically applied BNG condition to secure: 0.0345 Habitat Units (details to be approved by LPA prior to commencement of the development).

The proposed development does not include the removal of any trees on the site. The proposal does include additional landscaping to the frontage, which includes 1 new tree.

Subject to secure approval and implementation of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping the proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN7, EN12, EN13, and EN14, including the mandatory BNG condition to offset on-site Biodiversity loss.

Amenity

Policy DM4 seeks to safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupiers whilst Policy CS34 seeks to protect existing and future occupiers from the impacts of pollution.

Due to the sites location at the end of a line of semi-detached houses the neighbouring property with the most potential to be impact upon by the proposed new dwelling is no's 1 and 3 Riley Road. The proposed being single storey, would not introduce any undue overlooking to these neighbouring properties. The proposal, would be ~20m from the rear of the two-storey dwellings at 1 and 3 Riley Road. The location, and orientation of these dwellings would result in oblique views into the proposed dwelling. Combined with the distance and oblique angles, the proposal would not result in harm to the amenity of future occupiers in this regard. The rear garden would be subject to some overlooking, however this is a common relationship within the area.

The proposed dwelling itself would provide for a good standard of amenity for future occupiers as a family home. All rooms are considered to be of adequate size and to be served by good outlook and daylighting.

A construction method statement would be secured to manage impacts upon surrounding occupiers. The proposal is considered to accord with Policies CC7, CC8, H11.

Transport

Policies TR1, TR3, and TR5 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD a development would be required to provide on-site parking provision for 1.5 spaces for a 2 bedroom dwelling. The proposals include provision 1 on-site vehicle parking spaces in the form of a single driveway parking space which conforms to Council standards in terms of size. The proposed single parking space, though less than the requirements, is considered sufficient for the area, and accessibility. The proposal is unlikely to result in significant harm to the operation of the transport network, given sufficient roadside parking exists in the area, and there are no existing problems with street parking.

The proposals also seek to provide a new independent access to the plot. Plans have been submitted as part of the application which demonstrates visibility splays from the access point which adheres to Council standards. Formation of the new access point would require partial removal of a grass verge between the site and the road and the application proposes that the grass verge to be removed would be replaced with a permeable surface and therefore also adheres to Council standards. A license from the Highway Department would be required to create the new dropped kerb access.

The site is considered to be of adequate size to accommodate suitable bicycle and bin storage. The proposal would accord with Policies TR1, TR3, and TR5.

Affordable Housing

The application includes provision of an additional dwelling and would therefore be required to contribute towards off-site affordable housing provision within the Borough. In accordance with Policy H3 this would equate to a contribution equivalent to 5% of the GDV of the proposed new dwelling. The applicant has

agreed to make a policy compliant contribution of £20,000.00 which will be secured by way of a section 106 legal agreement.

Other Matters

Sustainability

The appropriate level of sustainable construction in accordance with policy CC2 and H5 would be secured the appropriate building regulations requirements.

Representations

The majority of objection points have been addressed within the above assessment. Concerns around the maintenance of fencing to the rear of the plot is not considered to be a material planning consideration and would be a private matter between landowners.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The levy for the proposal would be £11,043.12 based on a total floor area of 60.03m² based on a calculation as of 28 October 2025, subject to indexation as necessary. An informative would be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

Permitted Development Rights

The proposed development has been considered and is found to be acceptable in its current state. The uncontrolled extensions possible under multiple permitted development rights may compromise the living conditions of future occupants or neighbours. As such, a number of permitted development rights are recommended for removal by condition.

8. CONCLUSION

The application, in providing an additional dwelling assists the Council in meeting its housing targets pursuant to policy H1 of the RBLP, which weighs in favour of the proposal. The provision of 'family sized' dwelling is positive. The minor step forward of the building line is considered to weight slightly against the proposal, as does the undersupply of carparking. Notwithstanding, a sustainable development in a highly accessible location offsets any parking undersupply. The reduction to 1 parking space also provides additional landscaping to the front to further offset negatives of the scheme. It is considered, that the planning balance weighs in favour of granting permission subject to conditions.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT.