

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/23/0549

Address: 25 Tredegar Road, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8QE

Proposal: New 5 bedroom, two storey dwelling to be built on the land on The West Side Of 25 Tredegar Road.

Applicant: Mr B Shehu

Received date: 24 April 2023

Target Decision date: 6 November 2025 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the south side of Tredegar Road and forms part of the private garden amenity space of no. 25 Tredegar Road, which is a two storey residential dwelling. No.25 is the end property in a row of similar two storey detached dwellings. Adjacent to the west of the site is Highdown Wood which is a designated Local Wildlife Site and forms part of an area of Public and Strategic Open Space as defined by the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, Policies EN7 (EN7Nd – Beech Wood) and EN13 (The North Reading dry valleys and Chilterns Escarpment major landscape feature). There is also a designated 'Green Link' which connects Highdown Wood to Furzplatz Woodland across Tredegar Road. The Woodland Area also forms part of a wider Major Landscape Area. To the southern boundary of the site is Highdown School.

The site levels slope down from north to south along Tredegar Road.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a single two storey dwelling in the garden area of no. 25 Tredegar Road and subdivision of the plot between the existing and proposed dwelling. A new vehicular access is proposed from Tredegar Road.

The following plans and documents were considered:

The GHA Trees, Tree Survey and arboricultural impact assessment, dated 31 July 2023 (Ref: GHA/DAQ/160222:23)

Planning Statement

Ecological Statement

CIL form

Application form

The GHA Trees, Tree Protection Plan, dated July 2023

The GHA Trees, Arboricultural implications assessment (AIA 01), dated 12 June 2019

As received by the LPA received 28 February 2024

Drawing No: 04523-03 – Site Plan (bird box locations)

Drawing No: CM/23066 sheet 1 of 1, dated March 2023

Drawing No: 1807/300 Rev D – Block Plan (proposed)

Drawing No: 04523-09 – Proposed First Floor Plan

Drawing No: 1087/101 – Rev A – Site Plan (existing)

Drawing No: 04523-01 – Landscape Plan

Drawing No: 04523-02 – Section A-A & Proposed Levels (including fencing details)

Drawing No: 04523-10 – Proposed Second Floor and Roof Plan (Labelled Proposed Ground Floor Plan)

Drawing No: 04523-08 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 04523-11 – Proposed Elevations

The Creative Design & Structure Ltd, Schedule of materials date 13 March 2023
Construction Method Statement, dated 29 February 2023
The Ecology by design, preliminary ecological appraisal, dated January 2019
The Creative Design & Structure Ltd, biodiversity statement dated 13 March 2023
The Robert Rigby Architects, Design & Access Statement

As received by the LPA received 24 April 2023

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Transport Development Control – No objections.
- RBC Ecology – No objections, subject to conditions, and BNG secured by s106.
- RBC Natural Environment – No objections, subject to conditions.

A site notice was displayed; letters were also sent to adjoining and nearby properties (no's 15-40 Tredegar Road (inclusive); 4-7 Penn Close; Highdown School, Surley Row; 1 Morlais).

One letter of representation has been received from Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA) requesting the scheme be rejected due to the loss of trees on site.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/18/1176 - 1 x two storey four bedroom dwelling (amended description). Approved 26 March 2020 (Lapsed)

PL/18/0300 - Erection of five bedroom detached dwelling house. Withdrawn 22 May 2018

PL/23/0366 - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 , 4 , 5, 9, 10 and 19 of application 181176. Application Closed (as permission to which it related had lapsed)

5. EQUALITY 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:

National Policy and Guidance
National Planning Policy Framework 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance

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

EN7: LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

EN8: PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN13: MAJOR LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary planning documents

Affordable Housing (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Planning obligations under section 106 (2015)

Local Plan Partial Update (May 2025)

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.

It is noted that as per the planning history above, a previous application for a similar development was granted in March 2020 (now lapsed). It should be noted that this application, whilst material in consideration to the proposal, was assessed under the previous Local Plan, albeit a decision was issued after the adoption of the current Local Plan. A further previous application was withdrawn on 22 May 2018 in response to issues raised by the case officer (PL/18/0300).

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 Tredegar Road are all 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.

Due to the generous size of the existing plot the proposed subdivision would not result in a plot that would be out of keeping in size 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 and in particular a significant set back from the road frontage which is characteristic of the dwellings to this side of Tredegar Road.

At two storeys the proposal would be in keeping with the scale of other properties in the road. The design of the dwelling with gable roof, buff brick and render finish 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 window placement, this is not considered to detract from the dwelling's appearance within the street.

The slope in levels down towards the application site also assists in the assimilation of the proposed dwelling within the road.

The plot is considered to be of an adequate size to accommodate the proposed dwelling and the proposal is considered to contribute positively to the character of the area. It is proposed to provide a new

independent access to the site from Tredegar Road and the proposal would not result in a tandem form of development.

The application, has been considered on the plans presented, and is assessed with regard to amenity space, privacy and design in its current form. The ability to extend under permitted development rights may give rise to additional impacts on neighbours, the Streetscene and character of the area, or the future residents of the development. Permitted development rights are therefore sought to be removed on this basis to protect these aspects from uncontrolled extensions to the dwelling hereby permitted.

The proposal is considered to accord with Policy CC7 and H11.

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Policy EN7 and EN13 respectively seek to protect the identified local green space from insensitive adjoining development, and development that would detract from the major landscape features, which the application site abuts (EN7Nd – Beech Wood; and The North Reading dry valleys and Chilterns Escarpment major landscape feature). Policy CC7 also 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 Policy EN14 seek that the Borough's vegetation cover be extended. Policy EN12 refers to the Borough's Green Network including local wildlife sites and green links and seeks that new development shall demonstrate how the location of landscaping will maintain or link to the existing green network.

There are a number of trees within the site the canopies of which join with offsite trees within the adjacent wooded area. This area of land adjacent to the property, known as Highdown Wood (and woodland on the other side of Tredegar Road) is part of a designated Major Landscape Feature (Policies EN7, EN13). Two trees (an Oak and Horse Chestnut) growing on or adjacent to the property are subject of a Tree Preservation order TPO 5/18. Highdown Wood is also designated Local Wildlife Site whilst there is also a designated 'Green Link' which connects Highdown Wood to Furzplatz Woodland across Tredegar Road.

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. The provisions of the legislation which relate to this, include transitional arrangements which state: *"Biodiversity net gain has only been commenced for planning permissions granted in respect to an application **made on or after 12 February 2024**. Permissions granted for applications made before this date are not subject to biodiversity net gain."* As such, the current application, lodged in 2023, does not qualify for mandatory biodiversity net gain. Notwithstanding, policy EN12 requires all development not to result in a net loss in biodiversity and a net gain wherever possible. EN12 also seeks to ensure that permission not be granted for development that negatively impacts local wildlife sites.

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 larger family homes such as the proposal are considered together to clearly outweigh the biodiversity value of the site. It is considered that the on-site biodiversity loss is clearly demonstrated in line with Policy EN12 in this instance. Further to this, in order to mitigate the impacts of the development, an off-site biodiversity credit is proposed to be purchased by the Applicant. This will be in line with the biodiversity credits scheme set up to support the delivery of mandatory biodiversity net gain. The off-site provision of 1.28 area habitat units, and 0.03 linear habitat units would offset the on-site loss and is sought to be secured by s106. This is considered against the tests within regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The off-

site provision would be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms (EN12), directly related to the development (offsetting the loss on site); and fairly and reasonably related to the scale and kind of development.

The development proposes the removal of a number of trees on and adjacent the site. Trees immediately adjacent to the highway and a young Council-owned tree growing within the highway verge have collective and future amenity value, being prominent in views around the curve and hill of Tredegar Road. These trees also connect visually with the adjacent woodland area.

The tree officer identified that trees along the western boundary tend to have asymmetrical canopies and act as a buffer for the trees growing centrally within the offsite woodland group. Trees within the group are taller and more slender (etiolated). The removal of peripheral trees may therefore have implications for the stability of other trees within the group heightening the anxiety of future occupants of the property regarding their stability. Following the submission of amended plans and reduction in the footprint of the dwelling a number of these peripheral trees can now be retained.

The proposals would retain trees along the western boundary of the site. Officers are satisfied that this would retain a sufficient buffer between the proposed development and the adjacent woodland. There are similar relationships and some closer relationships between existing dwellings and the Furzeplatz Woodland opposite the application site which is also a designated local wildlife site. The application site is already in use as a residential garden and could be subject to erection of structures such as outbuildings under permitted development rights without the need for planning permission. The application does not propose to provide any external lighting. It is proposed to secure a hard and soft landscaping scheme by way of condition which would include a requirement for native species planting whilst the additional on-site biodiversity enhancements proposed as part of the submitted ecological appraisal could also be secured by way of condition. In addition, the proposed access would necessitate the removal of a tree within the verge. A condition is recommended to secure its replacement, it would require separate permissions from the Council, however, this would not be an unacceptable 'Grampian' condition. Though it is on land outside the control of the applicant, it is reasonable to suggest that the Council would approve the relocation and re-provision of the tree elsewhere within the verge.

Given the proposed retention of trees along the western boundary of the site to provide a buffer with the adjacent woodland, limited biodiversity value of the application site itself and subject to conditions to secure a landscaping scheme of native planting and on-site biodiversity mitigation/enhancement measures officers are satisfied that the proposal would not adversely impact upon the adjacent woodland wildlife site or green link and would accord with EN12, and EN13.

Subject to conditions to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted arboricultural report, method statement and tree protection plan and to secure submission, approval and implementation of the scheme of hard and soft landscaping the proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN7, EN12, EN13, and EN14.

Amenity

Policy CC8, and H11 seek to protect existing and future occupiers from the impacts of pollution.

Due to the site's location at the end of a line of detached houses the neighbouring property with the most potential to be impacted upon by the proposed new dwelling is the host dwelling at no. 25, which is 12.5m at its nearest point to the proposal. The proposed dwelling does not incorporate any ground, first or second floor windows to the east elevation facing no. 25 such that there would be no undue overlooking or loss of privacy. Separation distance to the east boundary of the site with no. 25 is also sufficient such that it is not considered that the proposal would appear unduly overbearing in relation to no. 25.

The separation distance to no. 30 (~24m), on the opposite side of Tredegar Road, is considered to be sufficient to prevent any undue overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing impacts. To the rear of the site is Highdown School and to the west Highdown Wood such that there would be no adverse impact impacts in theses directions.

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. In addition, the retained trees on the western boundary would not create unacceptable loss of light or affect amenity space to such a degree that would be harmful, or create significant pressure to prune in the future. The roof space level 5th bedroom and office would be served only by roof lights which is not considered unreasonable in this instance given the good standard of amenity provided to the primary bedrooms at first floor level.

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 2 vehicles for a 3+ bedroom dwelling. The proposals include provision 2 on-site vehicle parking spaces in the form of a garage and single driveway parking space which both conform to Council standards in terms of size.

The proposals also seek to provide a new independent access to the plot from Tredegar Road. 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 licence 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 £31,250.00 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. A condition is recommended to be attached to secured

details of compliance prior to occupation to secure the 19% improvement upon 2019 Building Regulations, and the improved water efficiency standards under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations.

Representations

CADRA have provided a representation against the proposal on the basis that the proposal would result in the loss of trees on site. It is noted that clearing of the site has occurred prior to application being lodged.

Officer Note: No additional tree clearing is proposed, with the bulk of trees removed between 2018 and 2022, landscaping will be secured by condition to enhance the garden area of the new dwelling.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The levy for the proposal would be £52,060 based on a total floor area of 283m² based on a calculation as of 24 October 2025, and would be subject to indexation as necessary. An informative would be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

8. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The application, in providing an additional dwelling to assist the Council in meeting its housing targets pursuant to policy H1 of the RBLP, would weight in favour of the proposal. The provision of good sized dwelling, with sufficient amenity space, located in a way that ensures no impacts on neighbouring properties is considered positive and weighs in favour of the proposal. The loss of on-site biodiversity, is considered to weight slightly against the proposal, though this is offset off-site by an appropriate mechanism to result in neutral weight. It is considered, that the planning balance weighs in favour of granting permission subject to conditions.

GRANT full planning permission subject to the following conditions and completion of a section 106 legal agreement.