

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: PL/25/1086 Non-Material Amendment

Address: 129 WHITEKNIGHTS ROAD, READING, RG6 7BB

Proposal: Application for a Non-Material Amendment Following a Grant of Planning Permission PL/21/1552 to amend landscaping and front garden wall

Applicant: Dr Javaid

Received date: 31/07/2025

Target Decision date: 28/08/2025

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site sits on a large plot on the northern side of Whiteknights Road. The University of Reading Whiteknights Campus (Early Gate entrance) is located approximately 50m to the east. At the entrance of the University are a pair of gate houses that are Grade II Listed. They are the entrance to the former historic Estate for Erleigh House. Properties in the vicinity are primarily detached properties with many dating from the 1910- 1930s which are of similar size and scale. The existing property was constructed in the 1920s and was a former Vicarage to the Grade II Listed St. Peters Church, Earley.

The property is not within a conservation area, however it is a non-designated heritage asset.

2. Public Consultation

i. Neighbour Consultation

No statutory requirement for this type of application.

Internal Consultations

The following were consulted due to the scale of changes proposed in the NMA:

- RBC Conservation Officer – Object - The proposal would harm the significance of the non-designated heritage asset by introducing design and materials of low quality, dominating and not respecting the scale, appearance and relationship of the heritage asset with the street. This harm would not be balanced by any heritage benefit but only the benefit of applicants.
- RBC Planning Natural Environment – Objection to the proposals as it has significantly reduced the amount of green space that was demonstrated in the ‘approved’ plans for application PL/21/1552. It offers significantly less diversity than that shown in the approved documents. Trees that were meant to be retained have been felled and it is clear construction related activities have taken place beyond the TPZ and within an RPA of a TPO’d tree.
- RBC Ecology Consultations – Objection - The updated landscaping plans represent a loss in biodiversity compared to the original plans. This loss can potentially be offset through the inclusion of increased number of hedgehog holes across the entire site, reinstatement of the bat box(s) and the changes to the planting list to include a greater range of native and wildlife friendly planting. Furthermore, insufficient details of the bird boxes has been provided.
- TBC Transport - There are no Transport objections to this application.
- RBC - Planning Enforcement – The site had been subject to a planning enforcement investigation which has been closed on submission of the non material amendment planning application and would be re-opened in the event of a refusal decision.

A letter of representation has been received from the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee stating the reasons why 129 Whiteknights Road is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset and providing a history of the of the dwelling. Concerns were raised regarding the loss of symmetry and increased hardstanding to be partially offset by landscaping amendments.

3. Proposal

The proposed changes are sought following a RBC Planning enforcement investigation. A concrete slab for an outbuilding is shown on the plans submitted, although the covering letter states that permission for an outbuilding is currently under consideration under application PL/25/0304.

Changes in the covering letter are stated to include:

- An amendment to the access and turning area.
- Front garden paths have been widened
- Soft landscaping amended to a lower maintenance scheme
- Layout amended to provide symmetry with the house
- Addition of pleached trees alongside the main entrance path
- Additional trees moved away from the road
- Front wall moved to follow front boundary, with changes to the brick wall and piers further away from the dwelling and in brick and mortar to match the existing building.
- Revised planting
- Chequered grey and white paving leading to front door to create a level entrance
- Retention of permeable paths and patio to include resin bound gravel in 'Cappuccino' colour.
- Extension of rear garden paths and patio around the rear lawn
- Rear garden patio and proposed outbuilding concrete slab already cast

4. Plans Considered

- i. The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following documents:

Revised plans and documents received for non material application PL25/1086

250304 250304 wall of PL/21/1552, Hives architects, 30 July 2025
2822 007P16 Proposed Block Plan
2822 004P16 Existing and proposed street elevations
2822 017P8 Block plan details and comparison front garden
865-LA-P-03 Proposed outbuilding – detailed planting plan
2189 Heritage evaluation, Heritage Fusion
As received 31 July 2025

Approved plans at time of application to be superseded

2822 007P- Proposed Block Plan
865 - LA-P-01 Landscape Strategy Plan approved
As received 17 September 2021

2822 004P- Existing and Proposed street elevations
865-LA-P-02 Detailed planting plan
As received 7 December 2021

5. Relevant Planning History

201525 Erection of replacement dwelling with integral garage following demolition of existing buildings. Refused 29 January 2021

211552 Demolition of garage and single storey part of original house, proposed ground floor rear and side extensions and two storey rear extension, increased front canopy, and internal alterations. Permitted 19 January 2022

211876 Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed Side extension and outbuilding, and demolition of garage. Permitted 4 February 2022

250304 The construction of a single storey garden building to be used as leisure space. Under consideration

6. Equality Act 2010 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.

7. Relevant Planning Guidance

i. Whilst there is no statutory definition of what constitutes a 'non-material' amendment, Section 96A, part 2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that, "In deciding whether a change is material, a local planning authority must have regard to the effect of the change, together with any previous changes made under this section, on the planning permission as originally granted."

8. Relevant Policies

i. The proposed amendments are assessed for materiality – not on the basis of their planning merits. Planning policies therefore do not apply.

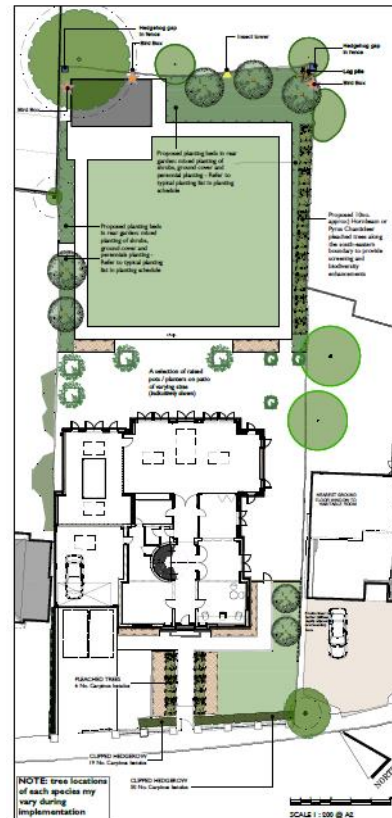
9. Appraisal



2822 004P15 Existing and Proposed Street Elevations



865-LA-P-01 Landscaping strategy plan as approved



865-LA-P-03 Proposed outbuilding – detailed planting

Proposed works submitted for the Non-Material Amendment to application PL21/1552 include revised plans that illustrate changes to the approved design at 129 Whiteknights Road.

The existing brick wall as built features wider columns and larger capstones than those previously shown on the originally approved plans. The wall dominates the site frontage, set further forwards along the front of the site, creating a hard edge to the back of the pavement in place of the less dominant wall and verge approved previously. The bricks are incongruous with the materials on the original dwelling and detract from its visual prominence. The colour of the proposed resin bound gravel (cappuccino) is considered to clash with the brick colour of the existing dwelling whilst the tarmac does not complement the building's character. There is also a notable reduction in the amount of landscaping proposed at the site. The proposed 'pleached trees added to the central path' negatively converts the existing and approved horizontal openness, supported by low-level green elements to vertical blocks, which results in a total closeness that negatively impacts the legibility of the facade of the heritage asset.

Officers consider that the changes proposed to the soft landscaping and front wall constitute a material change and will be materially different in terms of character, appearance design, scale, positioning and increased built form of the front wall and materials used for the front wall and hard landscaping.

The proposed plans also illustrate concrete hardstanding in the rear garden, which is not specified in the description and is associated with works proposed under a separate planning application 250304 'The construction of a single storey garden building to be used as leisure space.' Which is currently under consideration

In the context of the revised scheme, the property is in a prominent location it is considered that the amendments would have a material impact on the overall design and appearance of 129 Whiteknights for the reasons outlined above and changes are considered to be a material change from the permission granted under application PL/21/1552.

Additional feedback has been provided to the agent.

10. Conclusion

Overall, the amendments will significantly harm the application site creating an overly stark appearance which is distinctly at odds with the more restrained, verdant qualities previously existing at the site and evident in the wider streetscene. The proposals are material changes to the original and cannot be accommodated under the NMA procedure.

Case officer additional notes:

It is noted that the Heritage Evaluation makes reference to '2822 017P7 Block plan details and comparison front garden, 2822 007P15 Proposed Block Plan and the 865-LA-P-02 Rev B Detailed Planting Plan', whereas 2822 017P8 Block plan details and comparison front garden, 865-LA-P-03 Proposed outbuilding – detailed planting plan and 2822 007P16 Proposed Block Plan have been submitted.

The RBC natural environment team have provided feedback that 'groundwork has started within the RPA of the Beech tree with a tree protection order (TPO) (at 149 Whiteknights Road), including the installation of a new fence and patio. The AMS and TPP has clearly not been followed – tree protection was required to separate this area of the garden from construction related activities. . No works to the tree's roots were authorised with the planning consent and thus this is a case of unauthorised tree work, unless clear demonstration of the construction can be given. It should be noted that even if this concrete slab is considered to be Permitted Development, this does not override the TPO.

11. Recommendation
Refuse Non-material amendment