

Memo

To: Anthony Scholes, Planning

From: Amy Daly, Assistant Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC: GS Ecology

Date: 15th June 2026

Re: **Consultation on an Application**

Planning Application Ref: PI/26/0666

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 70 Whitley Street, Reading, RG2 0EQ

Proposal: Erection of 2no. single-storey one-bedroom dwellings

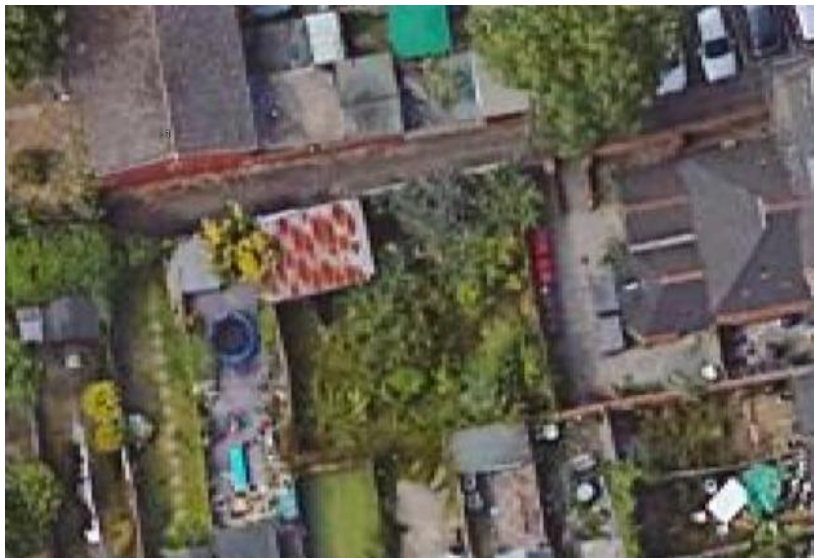
The Natural Environment Team gave pre-application advice for this site in 2022 (application reference: 220551), which highlighted the need for soft landscaping and green amenity space. The site is within an Air Quality Management Area and also directly abutting a Conservation Area (with the application blue line), adding further weight to the importance of soft landscaping to positively enhance the verdant character of the Conservation Area.

With reference to the Proposed Ground Floor Plan, 8th January 2026, Drawing No. 9424 PL-04.02, Rev 01, I note the site is proposed to be entirely hard surfaced apart from some assumed hedging shown (not labelled). This is not sufficient to mitigate the impact of the increased development. The need for this level of hard surfacing is not clear as no parking is proposed. The Planning Statement, states this is a '*car-free development*' and discusses the concerns of overdevelopment at pre-application stage. This remains a concern as the site is almost entirely developed apart from the hedging. This is both negative on landscaping grounds and also limits the green amenity space for future occupiers, with no justification for why this level of hard surfacing is needed. At pre-application stage, significantly more green space was demonstrated to us than what is currently proposed.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

There is existing vegetation on the site, and the extent of which it needs to be removed has not been demonstrated on any plans. It is not clear whether the site has any existing trees; however, development must not lead to a net loss in tree numbers hence any tree and vegetation removals need to be demonstrated.



Google Maps

To conclude, I am currently not supportive of this application as the level of hard surfacing shown is unnecessary, arguably overbearing, and unclear why it is needed. There is very limited green amenity space for future occupiers, and the impact of the increased development has not been sufficiently mitigated. Air Quality Management Areas and Conservation Areas are priority areas for tree retention and replanting, as per our adopted tree strategy – minimal planting/soft landscaping has been demonstrated and this level of hard surfacing, without being justified, is not supported.