

2 Conisboro Way

Design & Access / Planning Statement

2 Conisboro Way, Reading, RG4 7HT

June 2026 - Revision -

Introduction

Project Name 2202- 2 Conisboro Way

Site Location 2 Conisboro Way, Reading, RG4 7HT

Client Mark and Sapna Odlin

Current Stage Planning Submission

First Issue June 2026

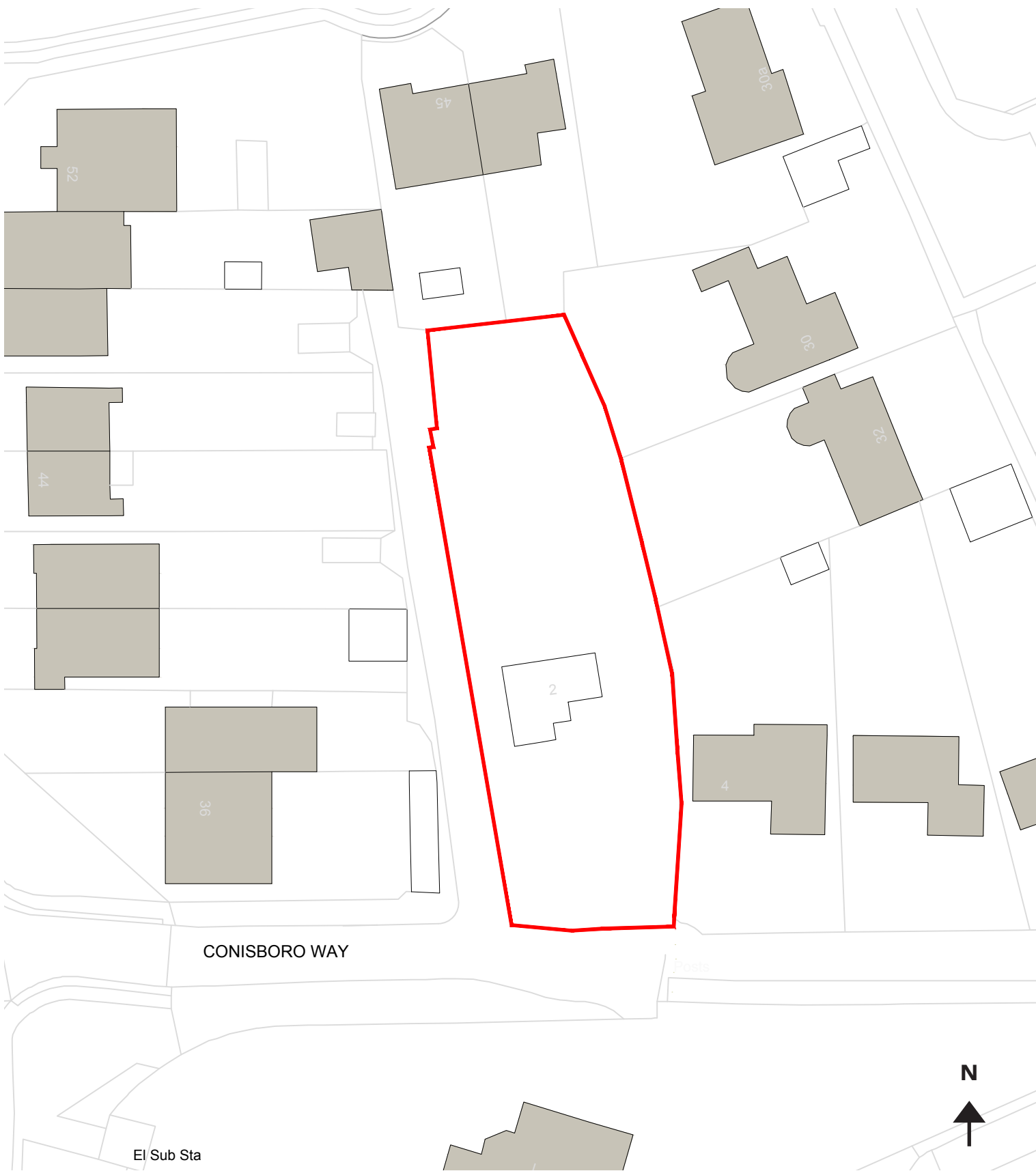
Introduction This report has been prepared to support the planning application for a new build replacement dwelling and annexe building which is entirely ancillary to the main house.

The existing site includes a single storey house which is to be demolished to make way for the proposals.

This is a self build project for the applicants, Mark & Sapna Odlin, who will use the new house as their family home.

Meynell Gunton & JDRM Architects are trading names of JDRM Architectural Design LLP

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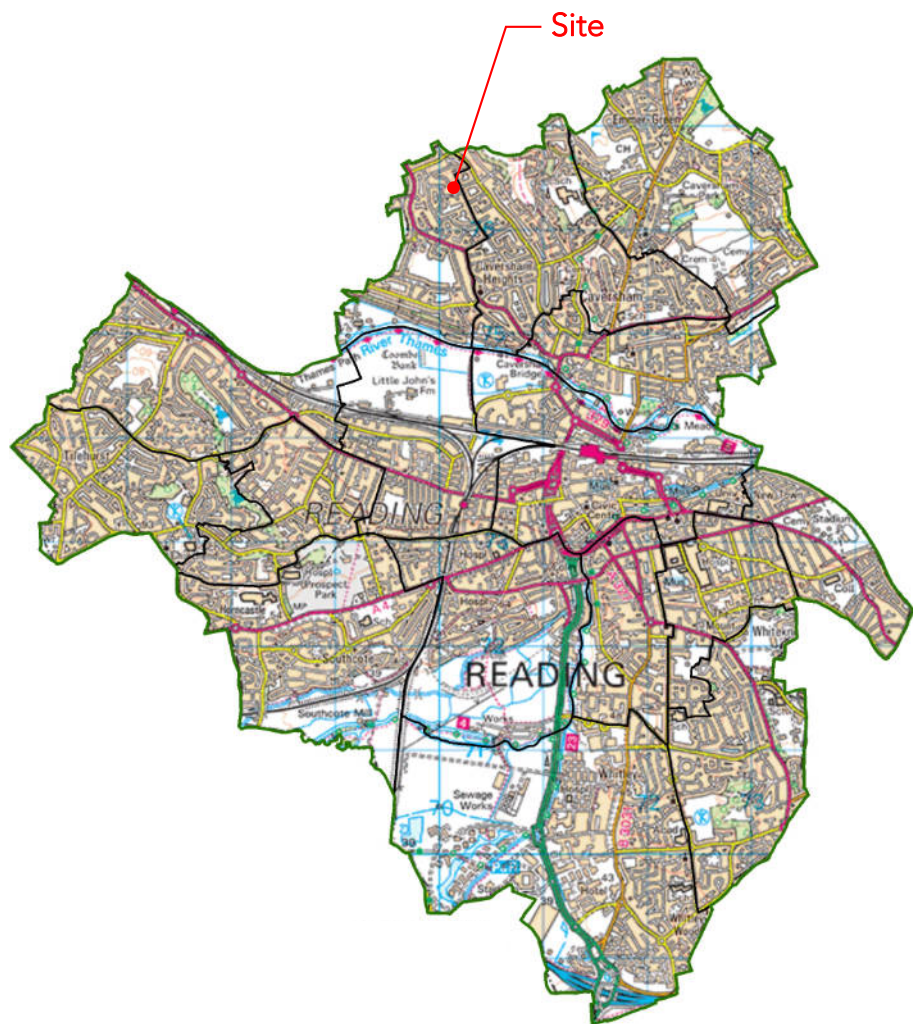
Site Location Plan

Scale: 1:500 @ A3

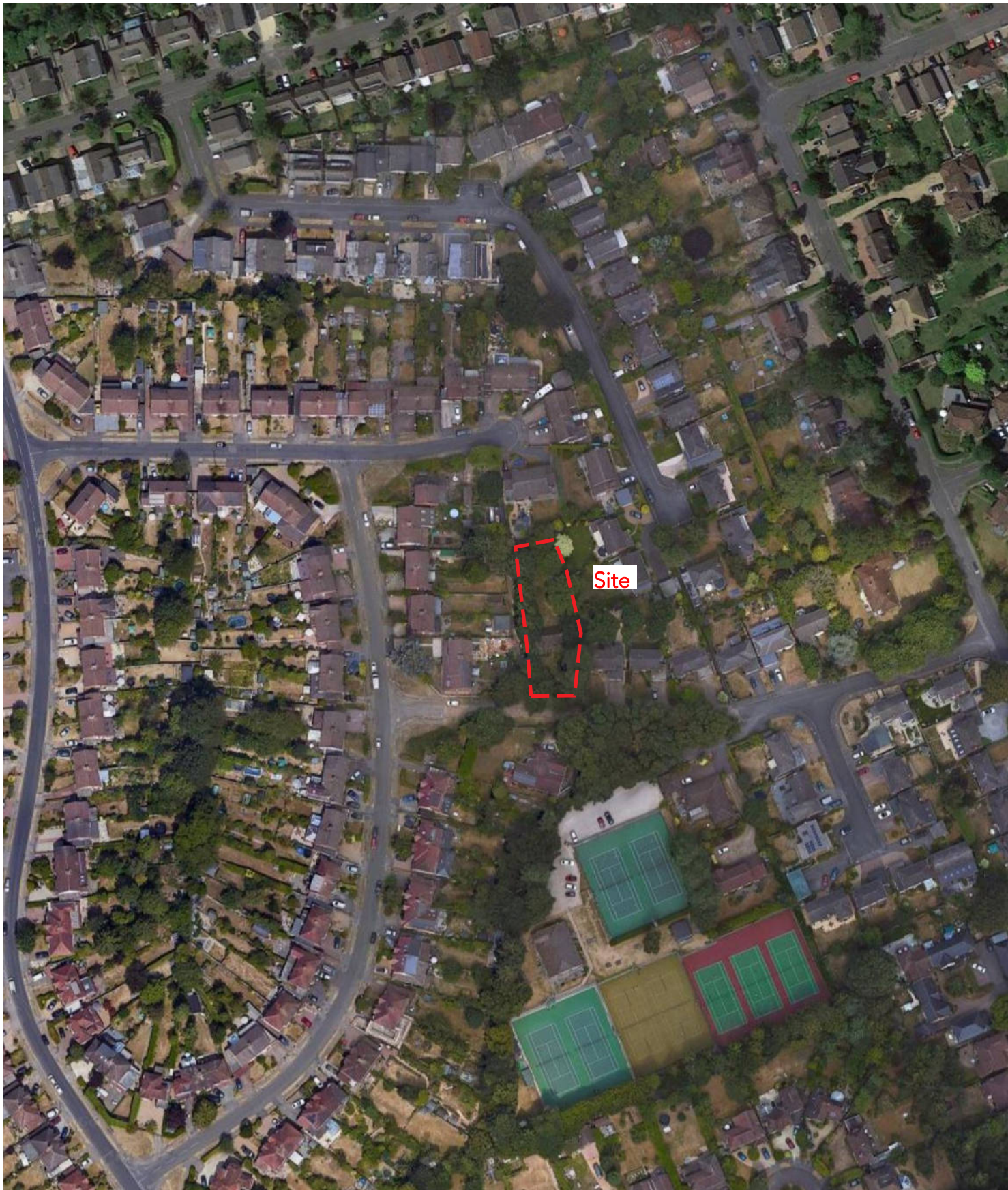
Location

Site Location The site is located in the Caversham area of Reading and is reached via Geoffreyson Road from the west. Conisboro Way itself is a short road with access to one other house and a track leading to garages behind houses on Geoffreyson Road.

The site is accessible by bus from the centre of Reading via stops on Conisboro Avenue or Upper Woodcote Road.



Map of Reading showing site location



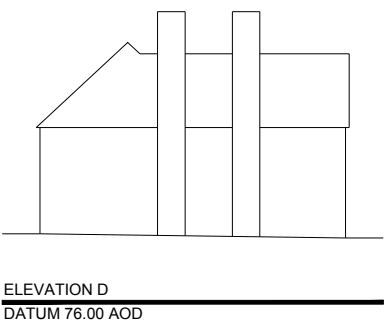
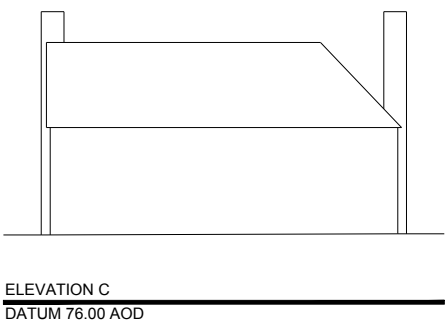
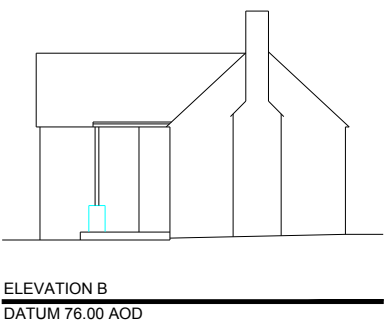
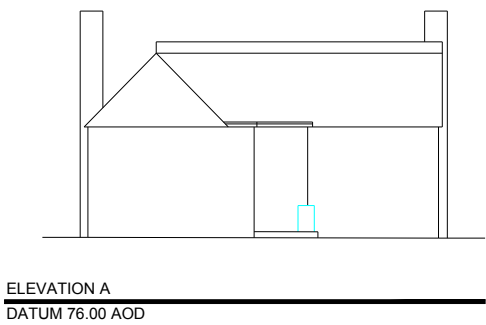
Aerial photograph showing the wider context

BACKGROUND, CONTEXT & DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

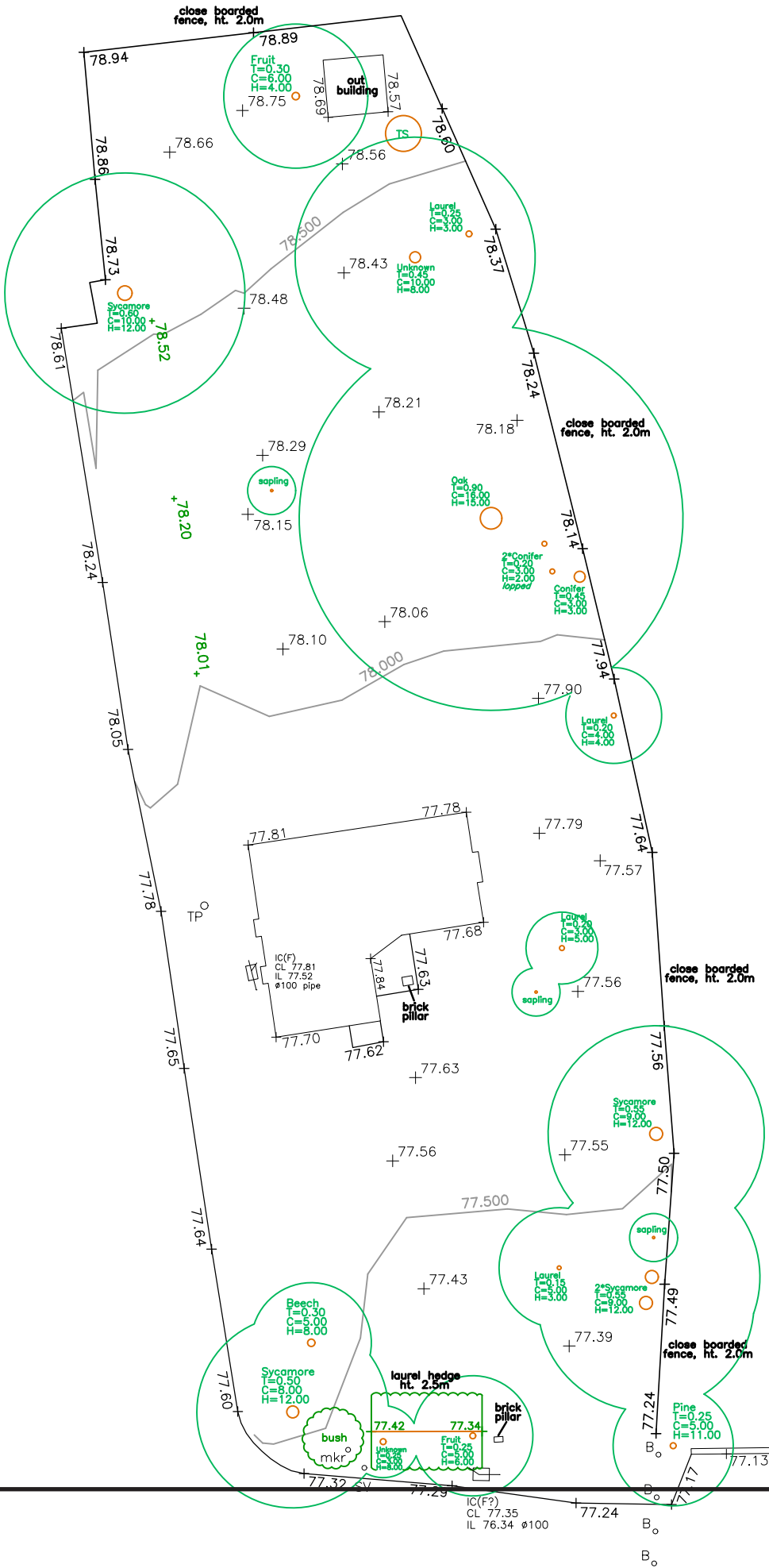
Existing Site Survey

A full topographical survey of the site has been undertaken to confirm existing site levels and relationships with the surrounding area.

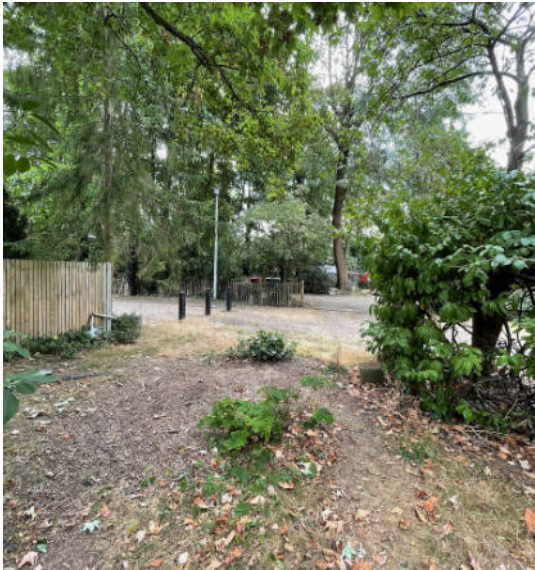
This included outline elevations of the existing building.



Existing elevations of the house. Scale 1:200



Existing Site Photos



Site Analysis - Constraints and Opportunities

The site occupies a deep strip to the rear of houses, away from the street frontages of Queensborough Drive and Geffreyson Road. Access is from Conisboro Way at the south edge of the site which is currently unpaved.

Currently the site has several mature trees including trees subject to TPOs. Further information on the existing trees is given on the next page.

Overlooking distances to neighbouring windows are generally above 16-18m to the boundary meaning this should not be a significant constraint to development. There is a risk of oblique overlooking at the eastern boundary, however this has been overcome through careful window orientation and screening in the proposals.



Site Analysis - Topography, Tree and Vegetation

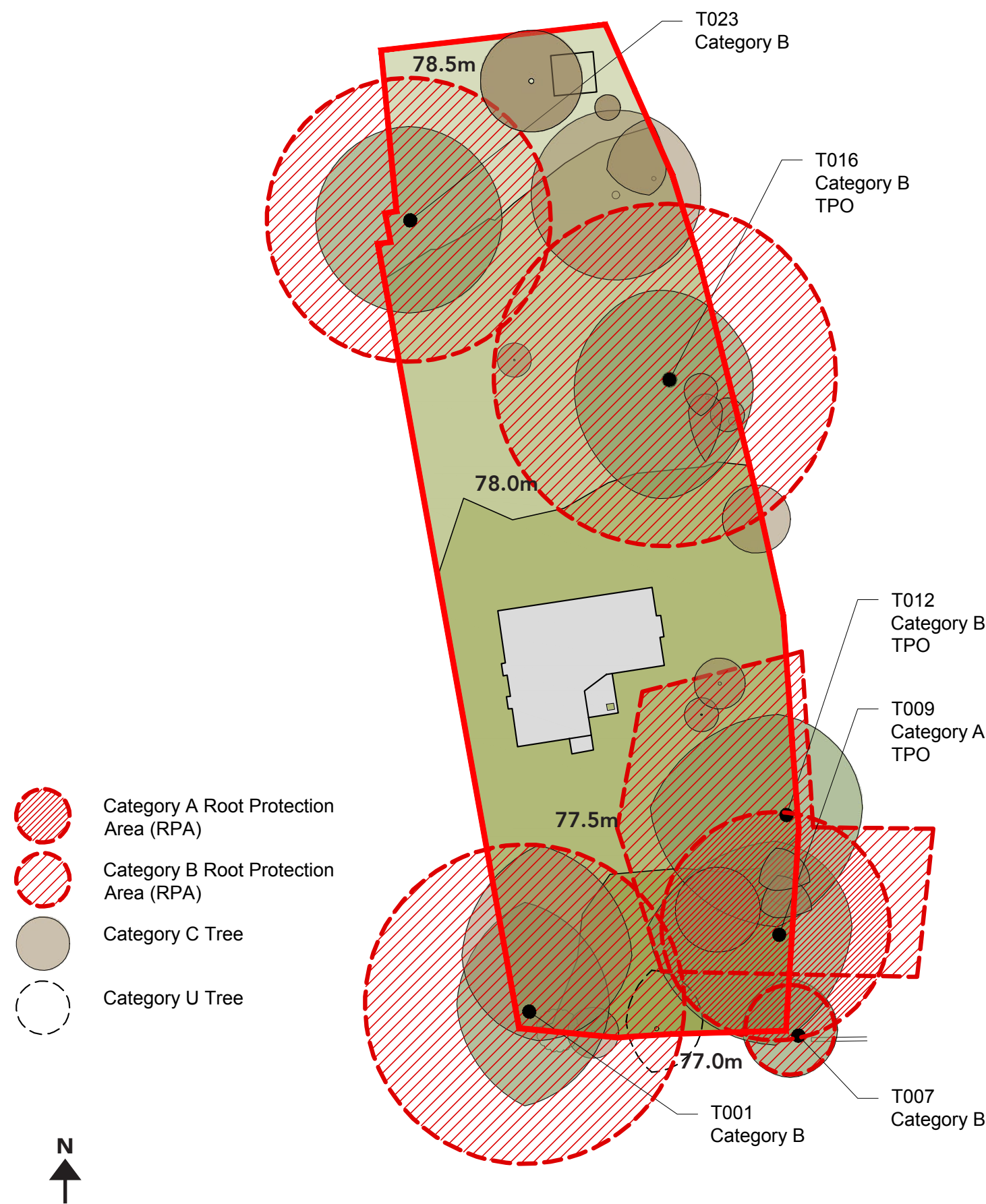
The topography of the site is relatively simple, the ground levels increase by approximately 1.5m from south to north. The level change is relatively consistent and there are no significant sudden changes of level in the existing topography.

Contours on the adjacent site plan are set at 0.5m vertical intervals with lighter colours representing higher areas. The height measurements are given as distance above Ordnance Survey Datum.

The site includes a number of mature trees which will have been carefully considered in the design proposals. Three of these trees are subject to Tree Protection Orders (TPO) which means any works to the trees will require consent. These have been confirmed as T009, T012 and T016 on the adjacent plan.

A tree survey has been completed by Duckworth Associates to inform the proposals. This survey has identified five category B and one category A trees. Trees in category C are of less importance, and category U trees are trees of poor health or condition meaning they are unsuitable for retention.

A full arboricultural impact assessment and mitigation plan has been provided as part of this application to demonstrate how the existing trees will be protected and further consideration of this is set out in the landscaping section later in this report.

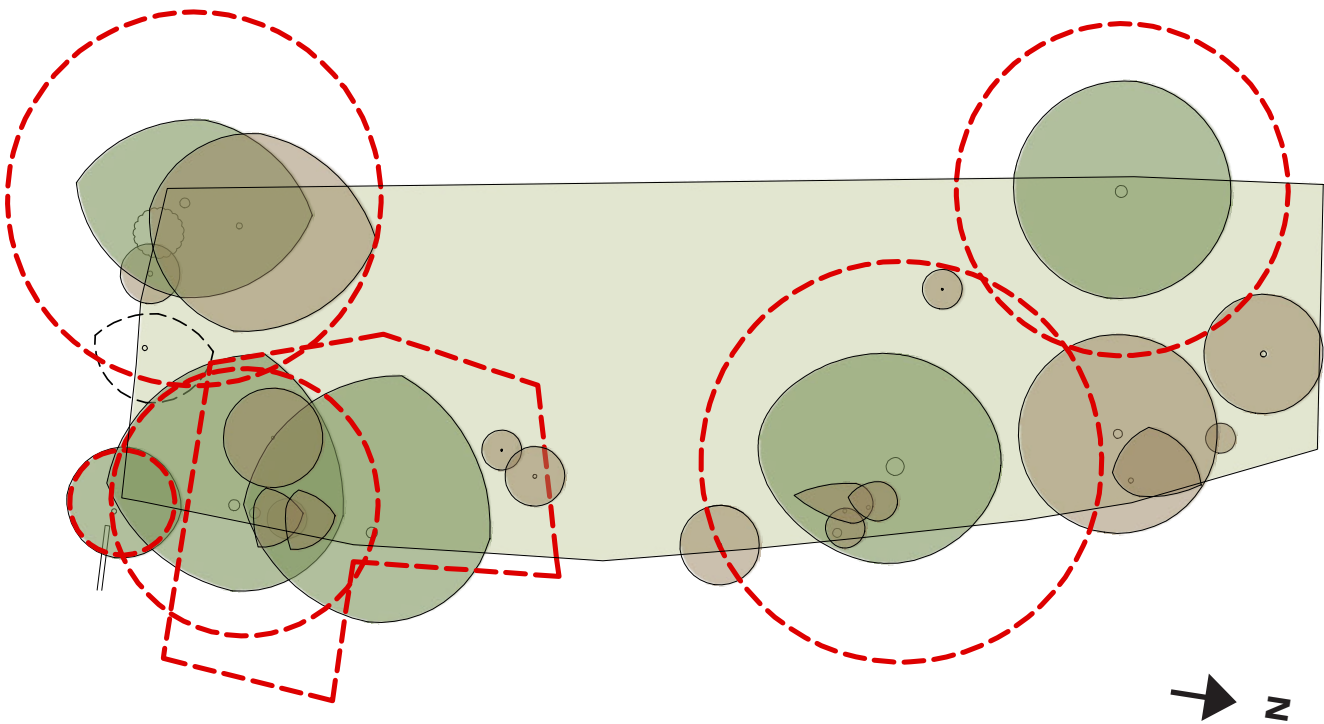


Design Development - Site Strategy

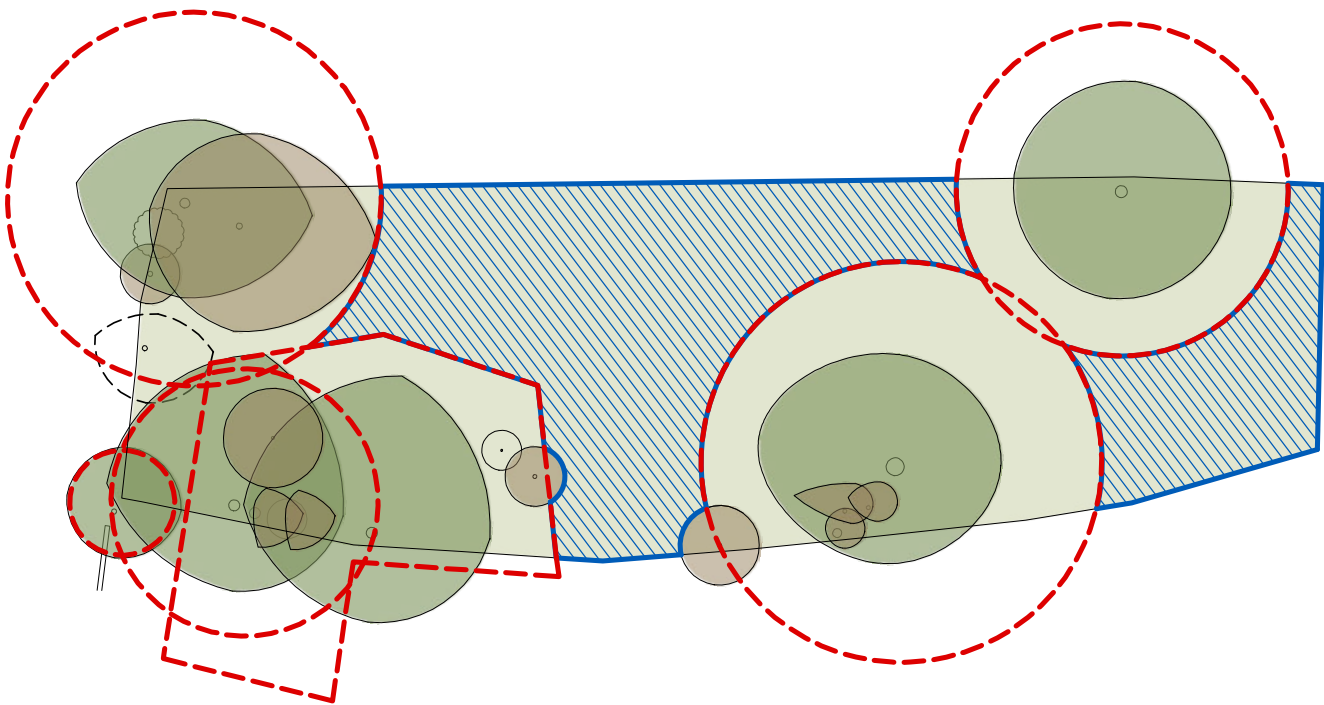
Introduction As set out in the earlier analysis, the defining and primary restriction to any development of the site is the presence of the existing mature trees and in particular those with tree preservation orders imposed on them.

Proposed Site Strategy The retention of the mature and high quality trees on the site was a essential aspect of the applicants brief. We have therefore developed a strategy where any new dwelling must not detrimentally impact the RPA of all the existing category A and B trees, this includes the three trees subject to TPOs.

This provides a clearly defined developable area of the site focussed along the western boundary with opportunities to expand the developable area to the full width of the site limited to a space between trees T012 and T016.



Existing site with root protection areas shown in red

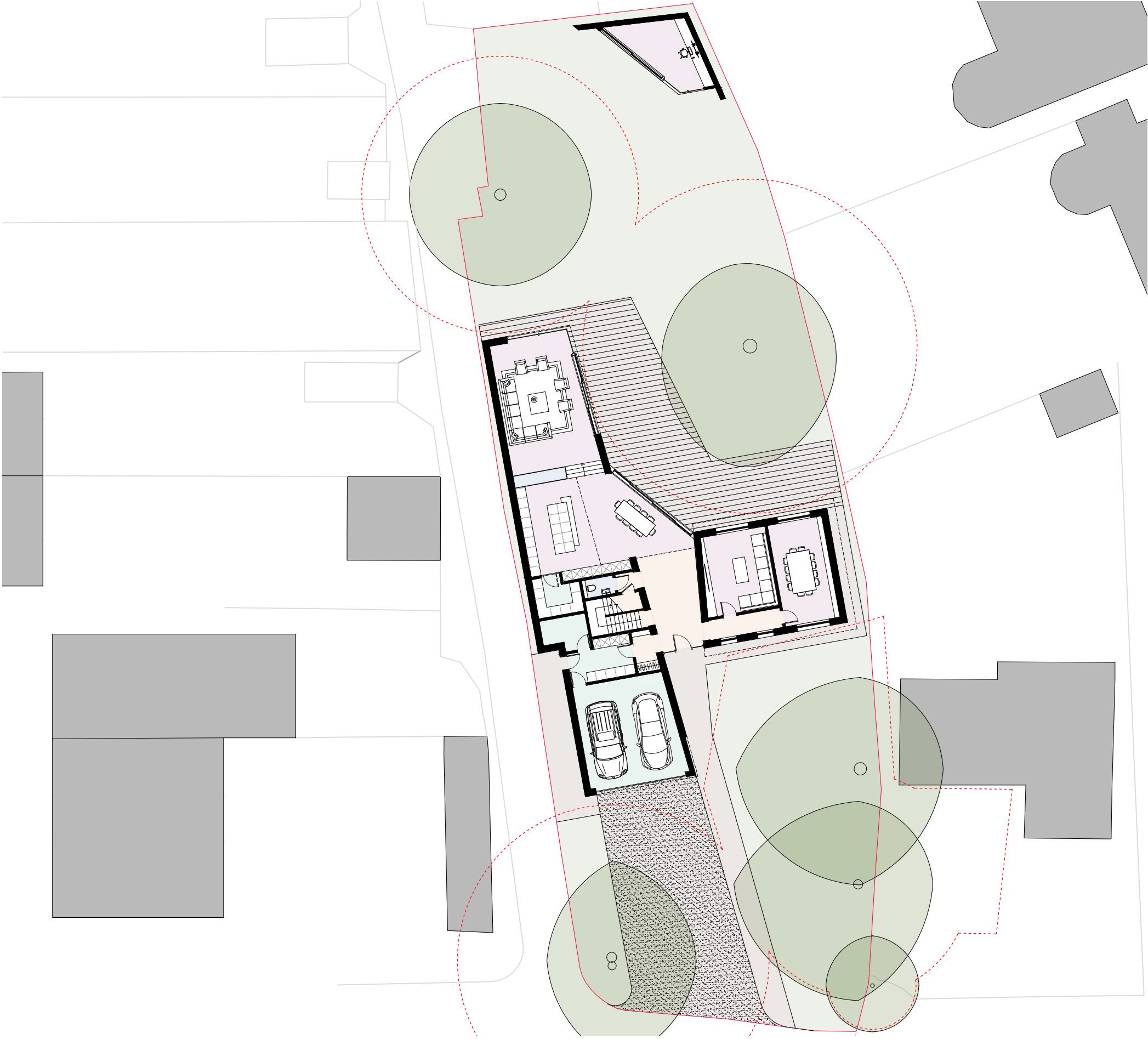


Proposed Site Strategy Diagram, blue hatch denotes developable area.

Design Development - Initial Proposals

The limited developable area identified in the site strategy requires an unconventional layout that is a significant departure from the existing housing typology in the surrounding area. This early iteration of the scheme occupied the full width of the application site to accommodate the required spaces set out in the client's brief.

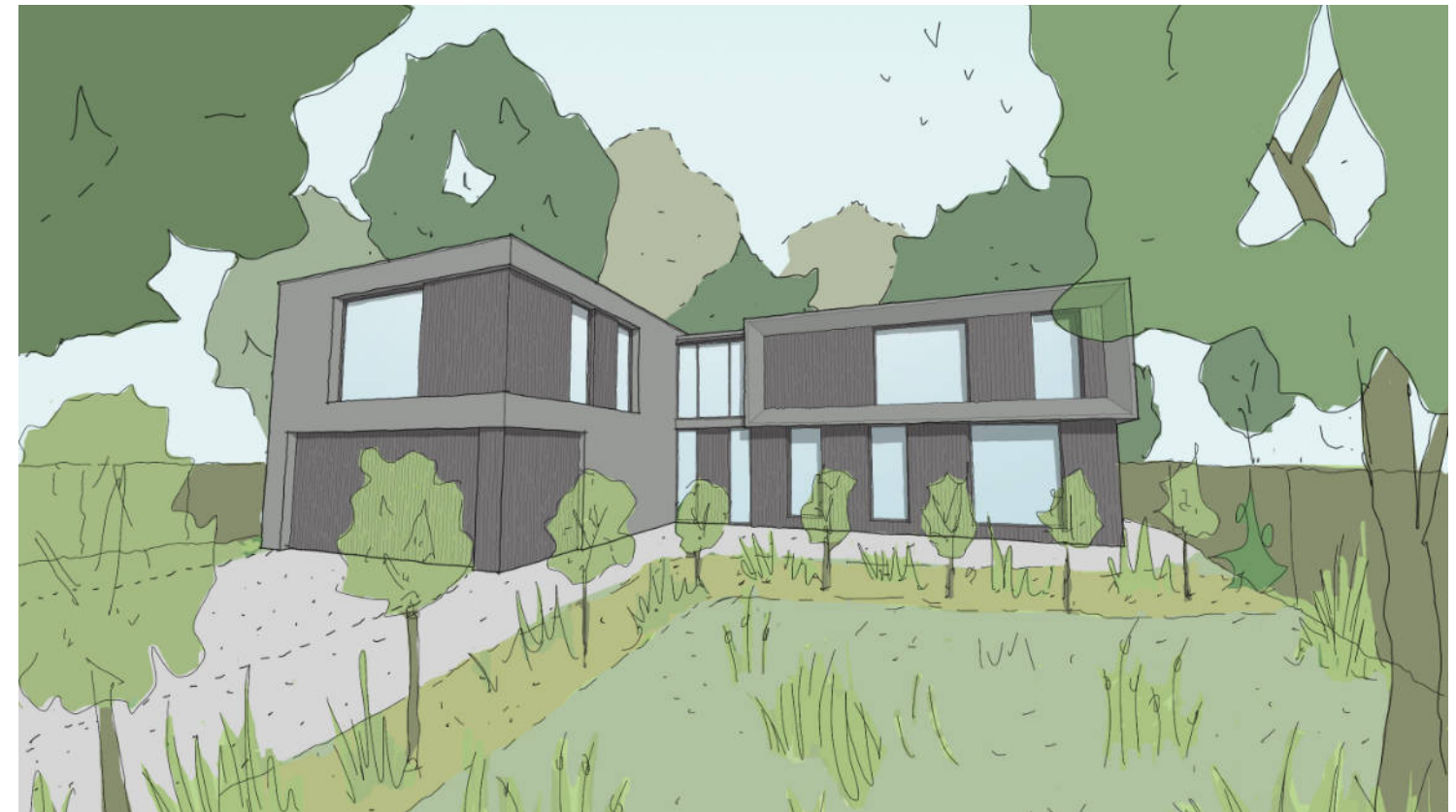
Fundamental aspects of the proposals were present from this early iteration, with the main living spaces having dramatic views out towards the feature trees that dominate the site. and the tapered arrangement along the western boundary to avoid any development within the Root Protection Area of the existing trees.



Design Development - Initial Proposals

Concept Sketches Initial sketches of the proposals show the mixed material composition, although actual materials had not been finalised at this stage.

The projecting shroud around the first-floor windows on the eastern side of the house was introduced to provide a number of benefits, it reduces the risk of overheating from midday and afternoon sun by overhanging both the first and ground-floor windows, and it also prevents any overlooking from the first-floor windows to the rear façade of 4 Conisboro Way.



Initial Concept Sketch



Initial Concept Sketch

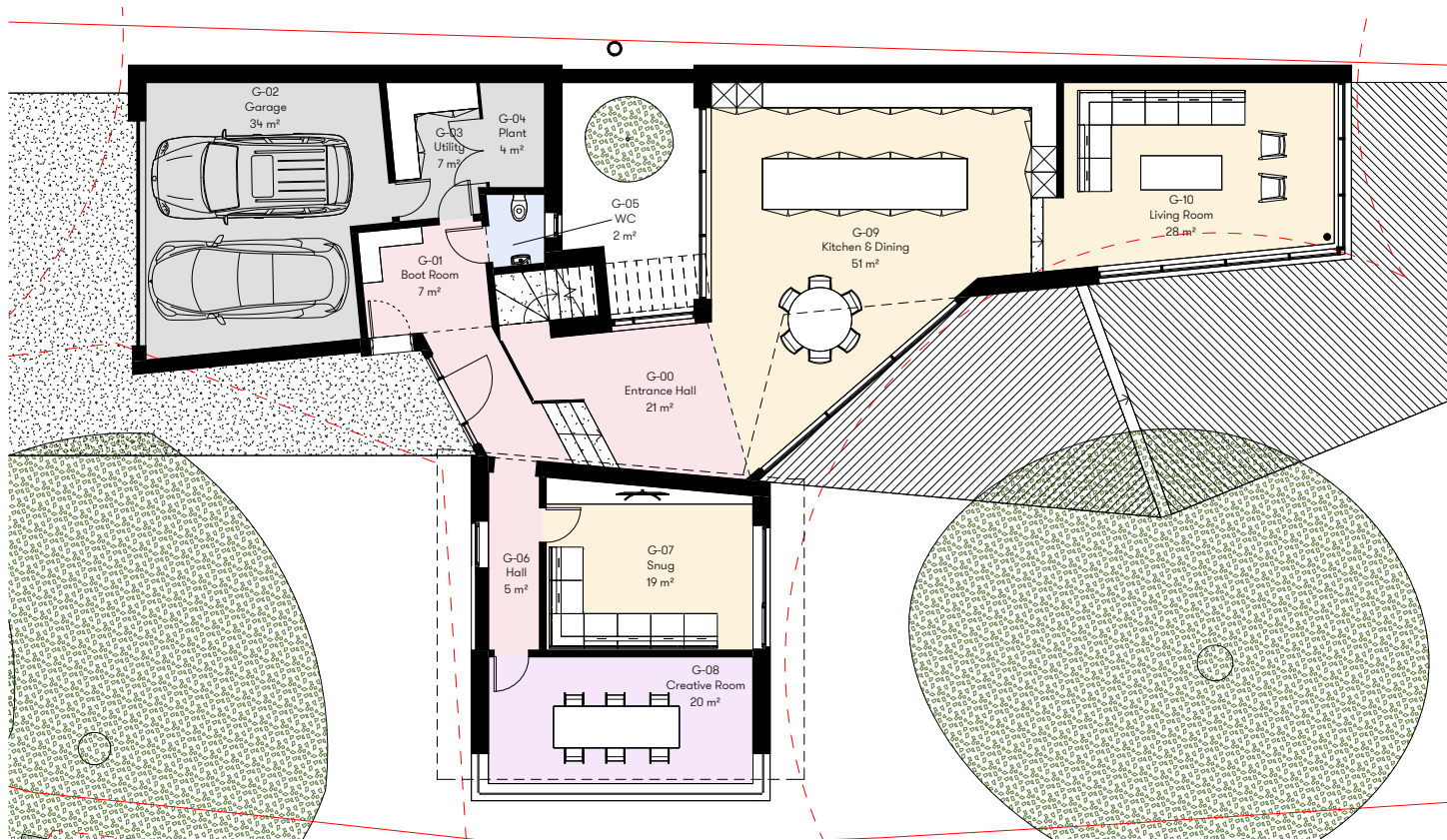
Design Development - Pre-App Submission

Pre-App Proposals A pre-application advice submission was made to Reading Borough Council in November 2022. Prior to this submission the proposals were refined and developed. This included the introduction of a courtyard garden to the western side of the house to help break up the bulk of the building and provide additional outlook from rooms within this area.

Pre-App Feedback The pre-application feedback was received in December 2022. The feedback stated that the whilst the design of the proposals was a substantial departure from the design of dwellings in the surrounding area, it is not considered harmful as it would be obscured from the highway by the surrounding houses and trees.

Concern was raised about the height and size of the dwelling due to its proximity to the site boundary and the potential to appear overbearing to 4 Conisboro way.

The feedback received was used to update the proposals to address the concerns raised.



Pre-App Submission - Ground Floor Plan (NTS)



Pre-App Submission - Front Elevation (NTS)

Design Development - First Submission

Original Planning Submission

A formal planning application was submitted in April 2023.

The scheme submitted included a number of amendments to the design to address the pre-app comments. These changes included a substantial reduction in the overall height of the building achieved by splitting the ground floor levels to allow the volume and height of the building to more closely follow the rising topography of the site without compromising root protection areas.

External materials were also significantly amended to break up the volume of the building and make it better blend into the site.

Amended Planning Drawings

During the course of the application amendments were submitted to address concerns raised by the planning officer. These amendments included a removal of the proposed metal cladding and an alternative layout for the first floor which reduced the impact of the building on the neighbouring house at 4 Conisboro Way.

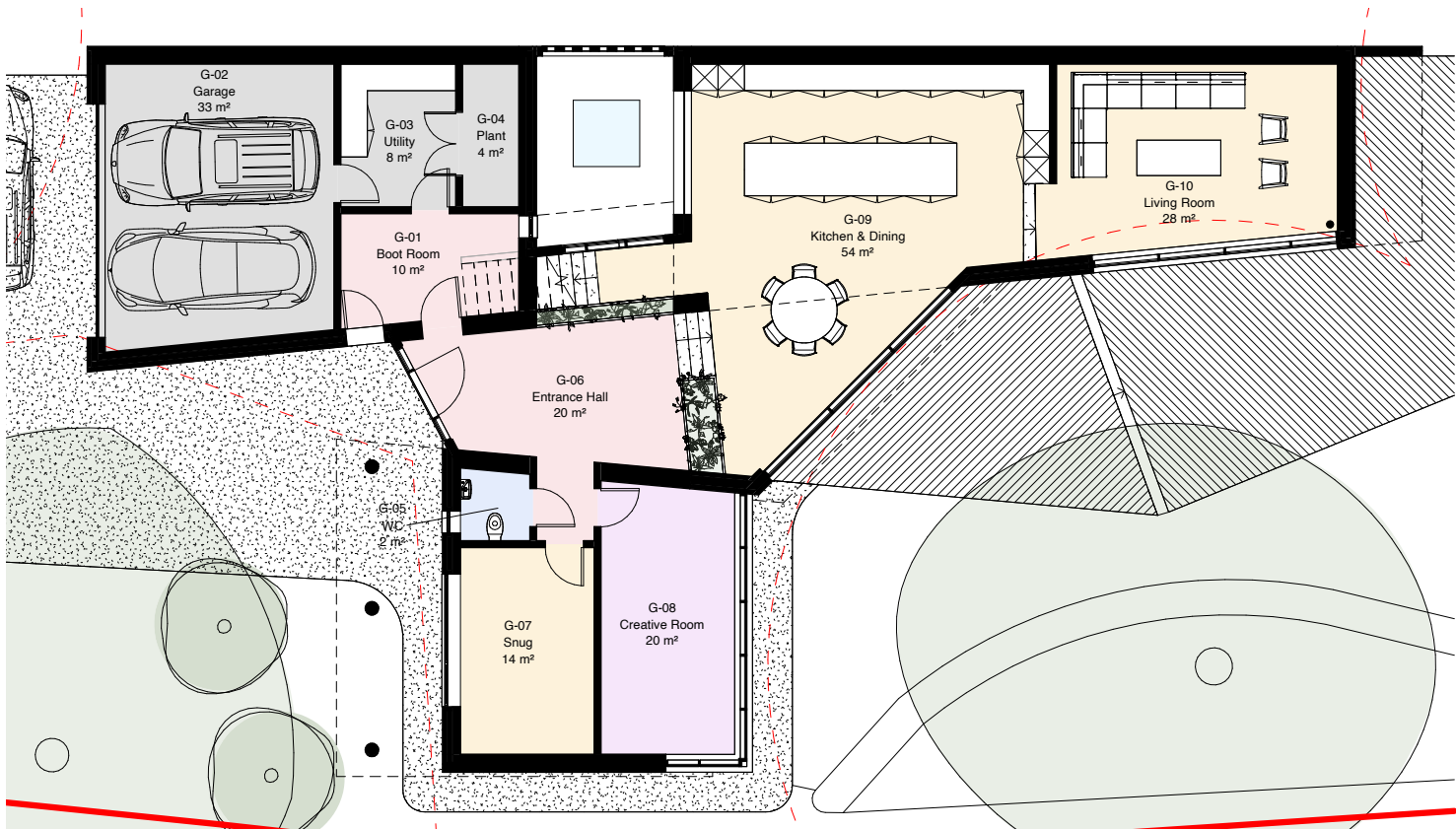


Original Scheme Visual

Previous Reasons for Refusal

This application was refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed dwelling by reason of its excessive scale, extensive footprint and prominent siting, including a long blank façade to the western boundary and a loss of vegetation and space for soft landscaping, would result in a visually dominant, overdeveloped form of development which fails to respond positively to its local context with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the area. Contrary to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. Due to their design and layout first floor bedrooms 1 and 4 lack an acceptable level of access to natural sunlight/daylight. No sunlight/daylight assessment has been submitted, therefore due to insufficient evidence submitted by the applicant, the proposal is contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.



Original Scheme Ground Floor NTS

Design Development - First Submission

- 3. The layout and proposed window design would result in a perception of overlooking to neighbouring dwellings in Carlton Road, harmful to the amenity of neighbours. In addition the use of the annex as temporary accommodation poses a risk of harm to amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of disturbance. This is contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 4. No revised Biodiversity Net Gain calculations have been submitted, and therefore there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate no biodiversity net loss. This is contrary to Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

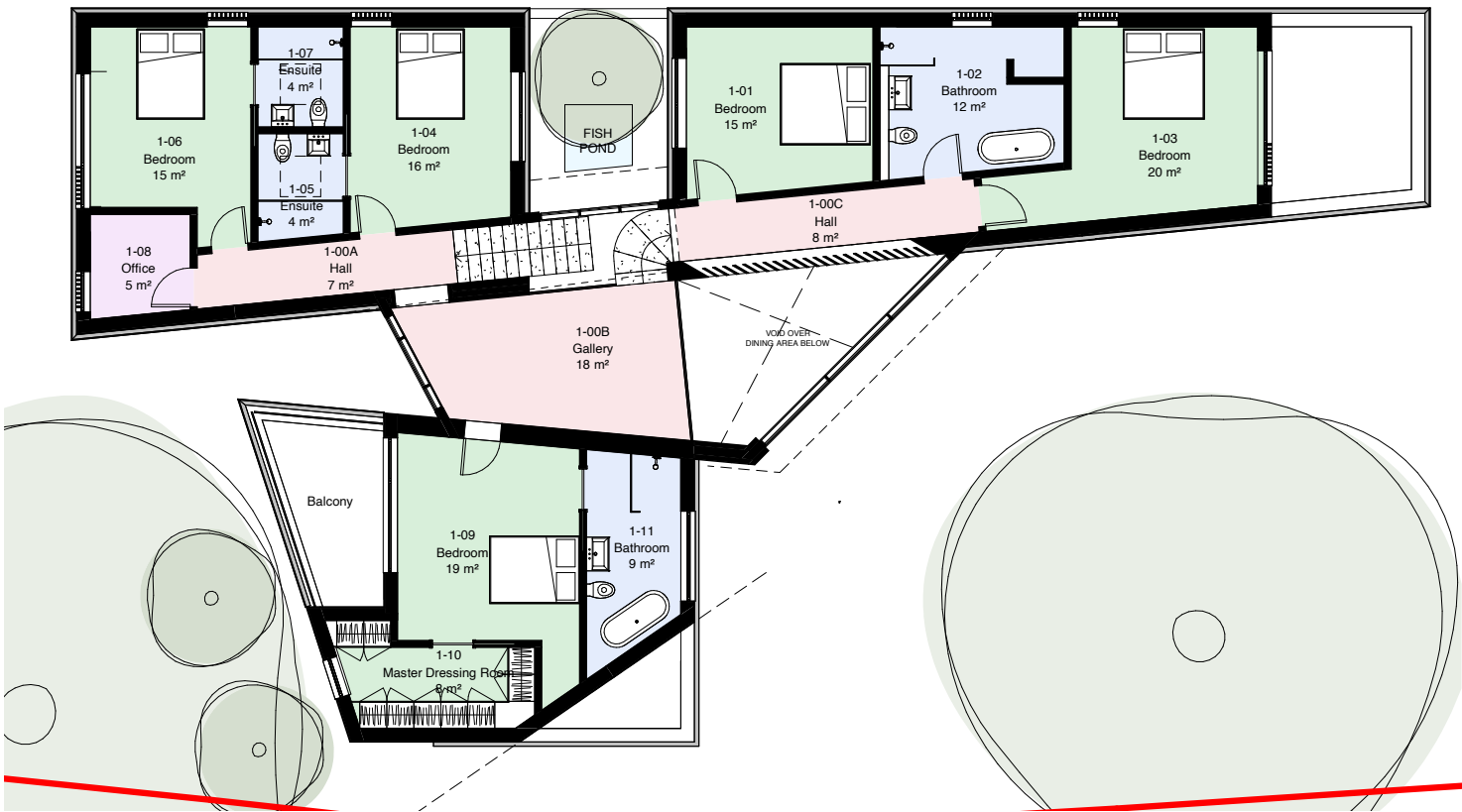
The scheme within this new application has been updated to address the previous reasons for refusal as set out below:

- 1. The bulk, scale and footprint of the building has been substantially reduced with a particular focus on the western boundary. The building has been moved away from this boundary and reduced in length at ground floor and more substantially at first floor level. The first floor is more articulated. The western facade has been detailed to give the appearance of a brick boundary wall at ground floor. This would be a typical boundary treatment for what would otherwise be an unused side elevation which faces onto a private road to which the application site does not have any right of access.
- 2. Whilst we were not given the opportunity to submit a daylight assessment which would have demonstrated adequate daylight levels for these rooms, the revised scheme no longer features a courtyard which addresses this concern.
- 3. The design has been amended to remove any east facing glazing to remove any perception of overlooking from neighbouring properties.
- 4. The previous submission was compliant with BNG requirements however we were not given the opportunity to submit a report demonstrating this. A BNG calculation is included with this new submission demonstrating a biodiversity gain.

Full details of the revised design included in this application is set out in the next section.



Amended scheme Front Elevation NTS



Amended scheme First Floor NTS

Design Development - Second Submission

Second Submission A second planning application was submitted in November 2023 for a revised design, which had been adjusted to address the previous reasons for refusal.

Whilst the fundamental design strategy of allowing the root protection areas of the existing trees to define the footprint of the building was retained, the overall size of the design was significantly reduced.

Particular attention was given to reducing the impact of the western facade. The overall length of the building was reduced, part of the western portion of the building was made single storey, and the remaining two-storey areas were substantially broken up through a stepped facade.

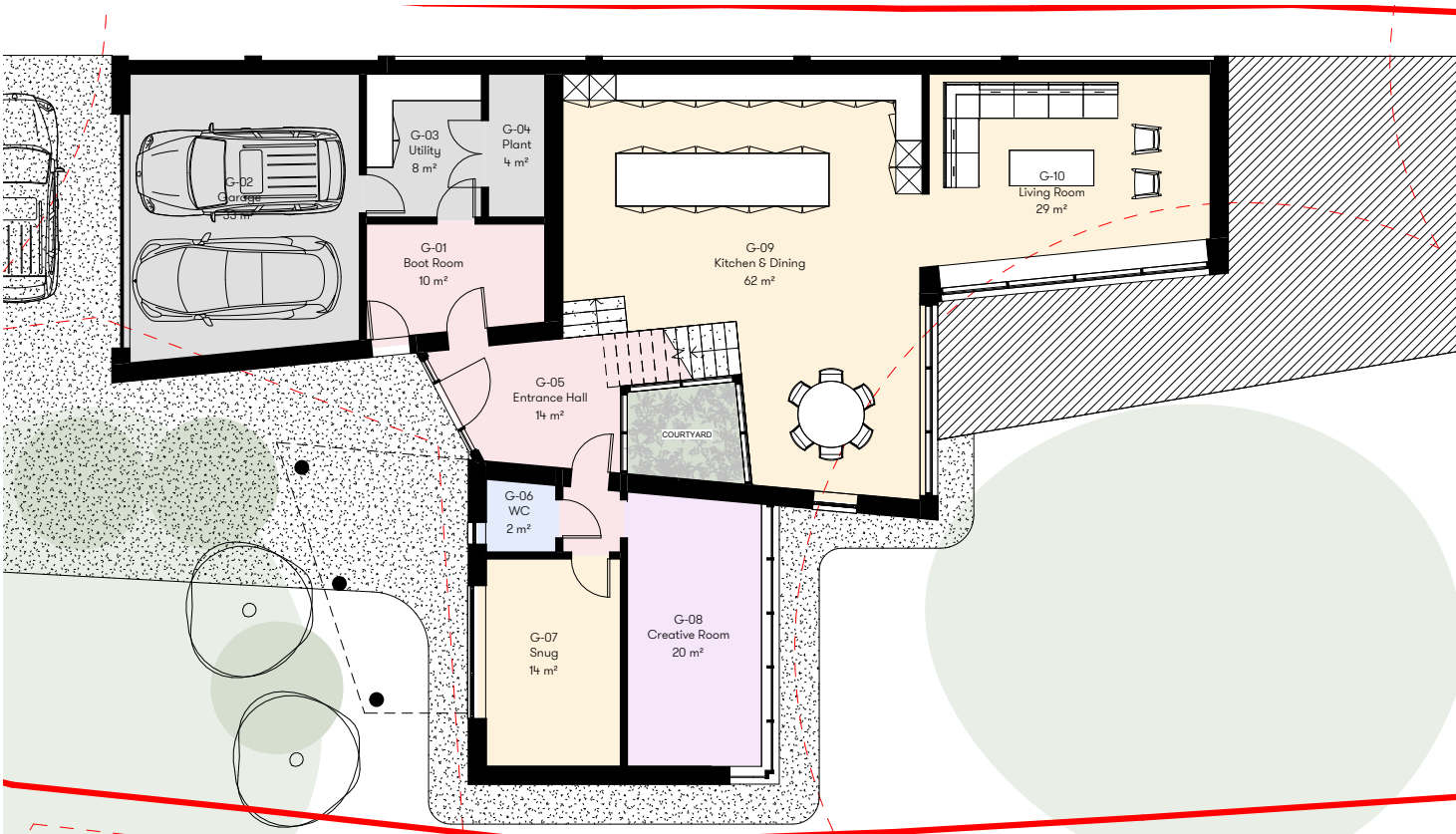
During the course of this application, the proposals were presented to the Reading Design Review Panel. The panel was generally supportive of the proposals and suggested some minor adjustments, including the introduction of areas of horizontal timber cladding to further break up the timber elements of the facade.

At the same time, the planning officer requested that the eastern facade be pulled further away from the boundary.

Suggestions from both the Design Review Panel and the planning officer were incorporated into the proposals through design amendments.

This second application was refused for the following reasons:

- The proposed development, by reason of its excessive scale, layout and plot coverage, would fail to maintain the existing spacious vegetated character of the site and surrounding area, and would fail to allow sufficient space for replacement planting. As such, the proposal would result in a visually dominant, overdeveloped form of development which fails to respond positively to its local context, with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 131, 135 and 136 of the NPPF 2023.
- The proposed development, by reason of its excessive scale, layout and plot coverage, together with insufficient landscaping, would result in an unacceptable net loss in biodiversity within the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Schedule 7A of the TCPA 1990, as inserted by



Second Submission Ground Floor Plan NTS



Second Submission First Floor Plan NTS

Design Development - Second Submission

Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021.

- *The proposed fenestration to the rear of the proposed dwelling, by reason of its size, layout and elevated position, would result in a perception of overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbouring dwellings on Hilltop Road and Carlton Road, with consequent harm to the amenity of occupiers of those dwellings. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

Appeal Decision The applicant submitted an appeal against this decision. The appeal was dismissed on 8 May 2025; however, the Inspector considered each of the reasons for refusal in turn and concluded:

- *I have identified above that the appeal scheme would not result in significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants or to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above regarding biodiversity, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.*

It is therefore understood that the scheme’s compliance with Reading Borough Local Plan Policy EN12, in relation to no net loss of biodiversity, remains the only issue that needs to be addressed to ensure that the previously submitted design is acceptable.

The design proposals for the house and annexe building within this new application are unchanged from those submitted as an amendment to the second planning application, which addressed the Design Review Panel and officer comments. They are also the same proposals that were subsequently considered by the Inspector at appeal. The only difference between this application and the previous application is the omission of the landscape proposals from the application documents.

A copy of the appeal decision is provided in Appendix B.



Second Submission 3D Visualisation Front Facade (This visual predates the DRP design amendments)



Second Submission 3D Visualisation Rear Facade (This visual predates the DRP design amendments)

CURRENT PROPOSALS

Introduction & Use

Introduction The proposals have been updated to address the previous reasons for refusal.

The bulk of the building along the western elevation has been substantially reduced by reducing the length of the building at ground floor and making the northern most portion of the house single storey.

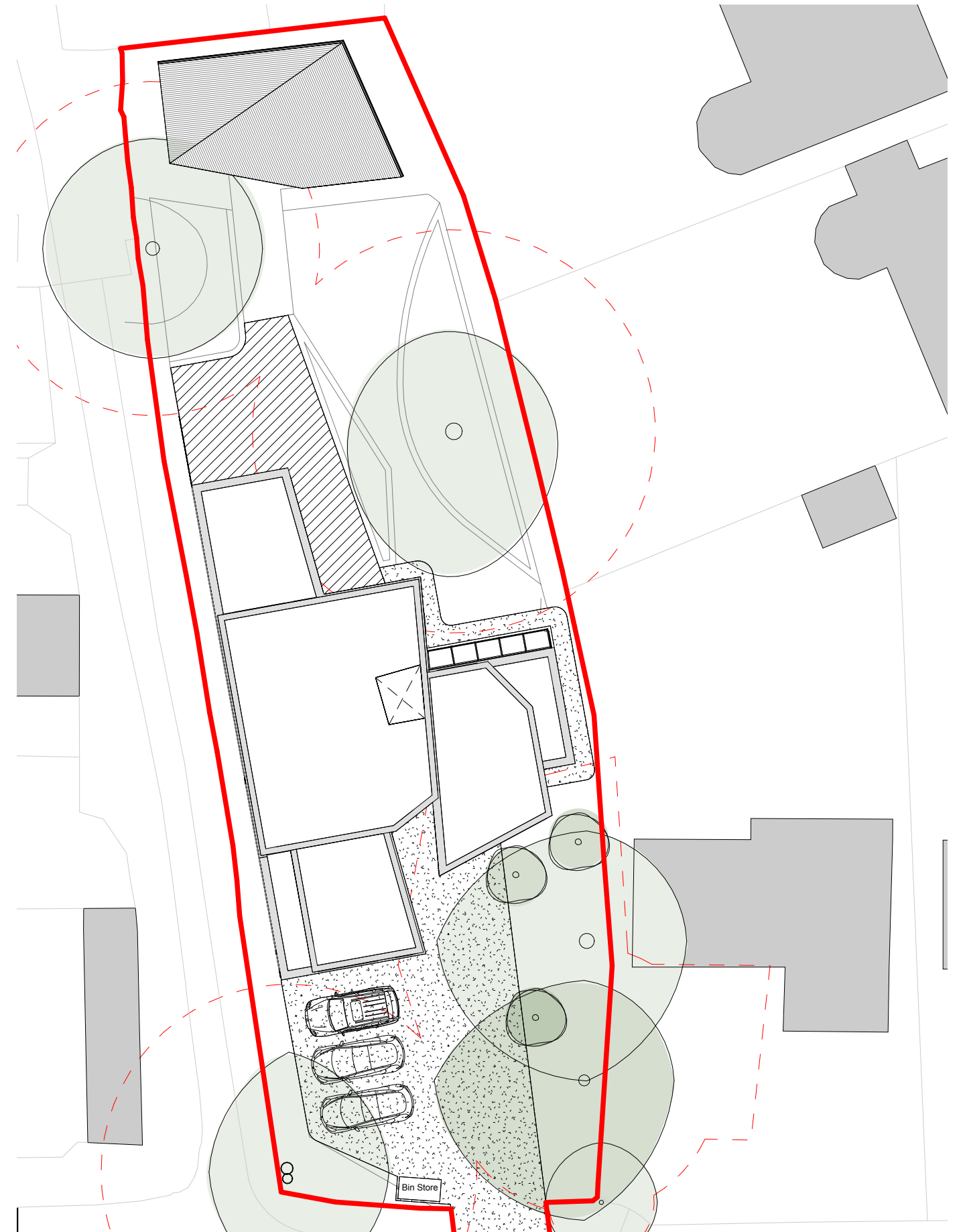
Towards the front of the house the first floor has been stepped away from the boundary to add further definition and interest to this elevation.

The whole building has also been moved away from the Western boundary of the site.

Use The site currently falls within the C3 Dwellinghouse use class and the proposals within this application will also fall within this same use class.

The annexe to the rear of the site will be entirely ancillary to the main dwelling house. This space is intended to contain a single room to be used as a garden studio for exercise or work.

The layout of the site means that the annexe building cannot ever receive the benefit of its own independent access or garden space. Access will always be required via the main house and therefore there is no potential for this building to be used independently of the main house. Regardless, we welcome the application of any condition the local authority may consider appropriate to provide further reassurance of the annexe's ancillary relationship.



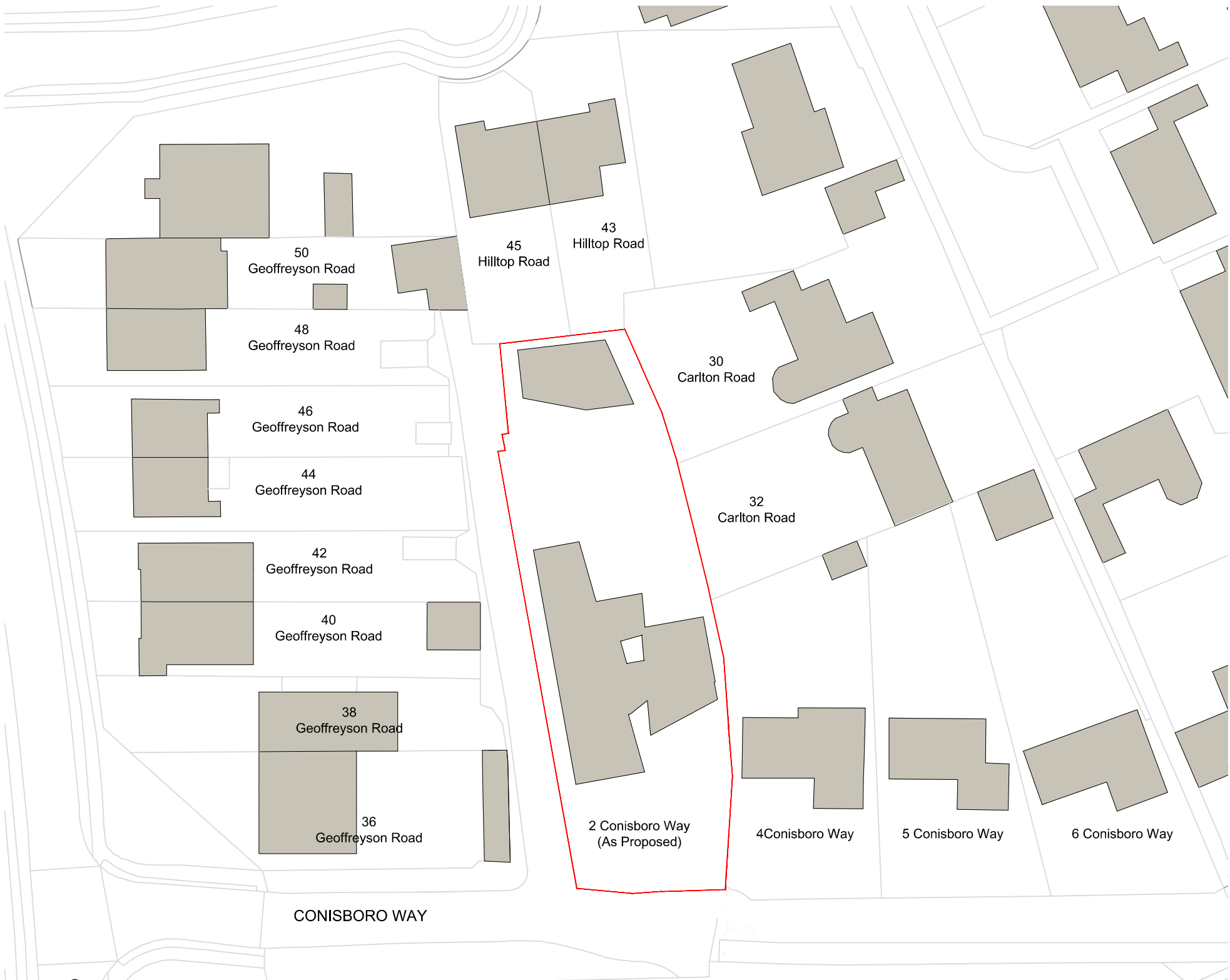
Amount

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed house is larger than those in the surrounding area, it is also the case that the overall site area of 1063m2 is substantially larger than any of the surrounding dwellings and it, therefore, has the capacity to comfortably accommodate a larger home.

The built footprint of the proposals, including the annexe is 331m2, therefore, once the proposals are built, 31% of the site area will be developed.

The below table sets out the ‘developed area’ of each of the dwellings surrounding the application site. These vary from 19% developed in the case of 32 Carlton Road to 43% developed in the case of 50 Geoffreyson Road. There are three houses in the immediate area that have a higher proportional developed area percentage than the application site will have following completion of the proposals.

Site	Site Area (m2)	Built Footprint (m2)	Percentage Developed
50 Geoffreyson Road	349	150	43%
36 Geoffreyson Road	408	143	35%
40 Geoffreyson Road	328	112	34%
2 Conisboro Way (As Proposed)	1063	331	31%
43 Hilltop Road	285	71	25%
38 Geoffreyson Road	332	92	28%
45 Hilltop Road	293	79	27%
30 Carlton Road	603	144	24%
42 Geoffreyson Road	312	74	24%
6 Conisboro Way	622	132	21%
4 Conisboro Way	553	117	21%
48 Geoffreyson Road	345	68	20%
32 Carlton Road	524	100	19%
46 Geoffreyson Road	318	51	16%
5 Conisboro Way	543	87	16%
44 Geoffreyson Road	326	52	16%



Scale

The house has been designed to follow the sloping topography of the existing site. This is driven by the need to accommodate the root protection areas of the existing mature trees which means the external ground levels cannot be lowered. To accommodate the preservation of the Root Protection Areas the building is tiered in line with the sloping topography, with the lowest levels at the front of the site and the level of the ground floor (and the roof line) increasing towards the rear in step with the topography. Further details of how the levels relate to the root protection areas are set out in the landscaping section.

The eastern part of the house which is closest to 4 Conisboro Way has a roofline below the existing ridge of this house, this is despite the fact that the proposed dwelling is further set back and therefore the natural topography of the site is higher in this location in comparison to the more forward location of 4 Conisboro Way.



Layout

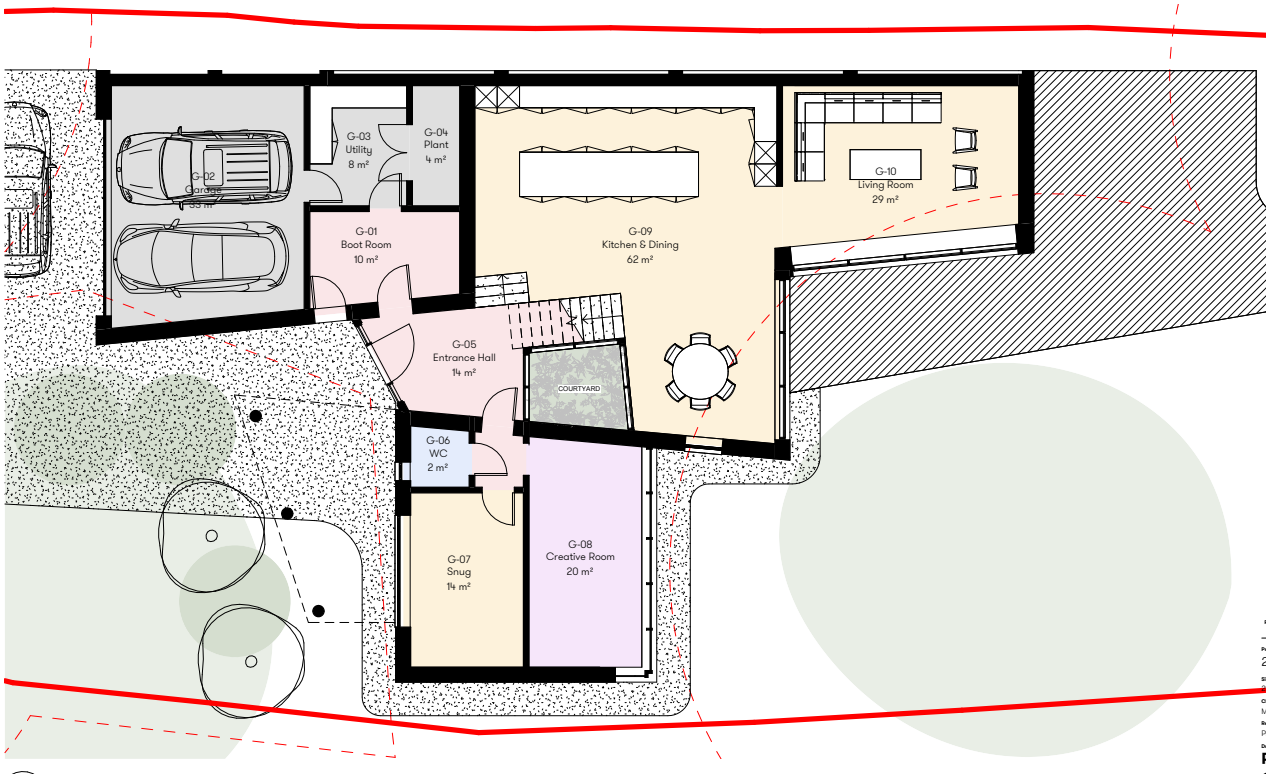
Internal Layout The layout of the house has been heavily influenced by the need to avoid the root protection areas of the existing mature trees. The house occupies the 'developable area' identified in the site strategy diagrams included earlier in this report.

The house is mainly located along the west side of the site with a smaller portion spreading across the width of the site which is facilitated by a break in the root protection areas.

The western portion of the house tapers towards the rear to accommodate the larger root protection area of the oak tree (T016) which is a key feature of the site. This part of the house contains the main living areas which have been orientated and positioned to take in views of this tree.

The ground floor plan is split into two levels which increase in height from front to back in line with the existing topography. This split-level arrangement allows for access into the garden without the need to dig within the root protection areas of the existing trees.

At first floor, the layout is again split into separate levels to follow the site topography whilst minimising the overall height of the building. The eastern part of the building projects from the ground floor, sitting forward, and supported on columns. The rear of this section is chamfered to avoid overshadowing of ground floor windows of 4 Conisboro Way.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan (NTS)



Proposed First Floor Plan (NTS)

Access

Vehicular & Pedestrian Access

Vehicle and pedestrian access to the site is facilitated by a new crossover located centrally along the southern boundary which provides vehicle access onto a new driveway with external parking for three cars. There is sufficient area for vehicles to turn within the site boundary and leave in forward gear.

A garage is provided with two additional parking spaces, it is acknowledged that the garage does not meet the council's minimum size standards to be counted towards the overall site parking provision as these standards presume that only part of the garage will be used for parking. The minimum parking provision of three vehicles is therefore achieved entirely via the external parking and the garage is supplementary to this.

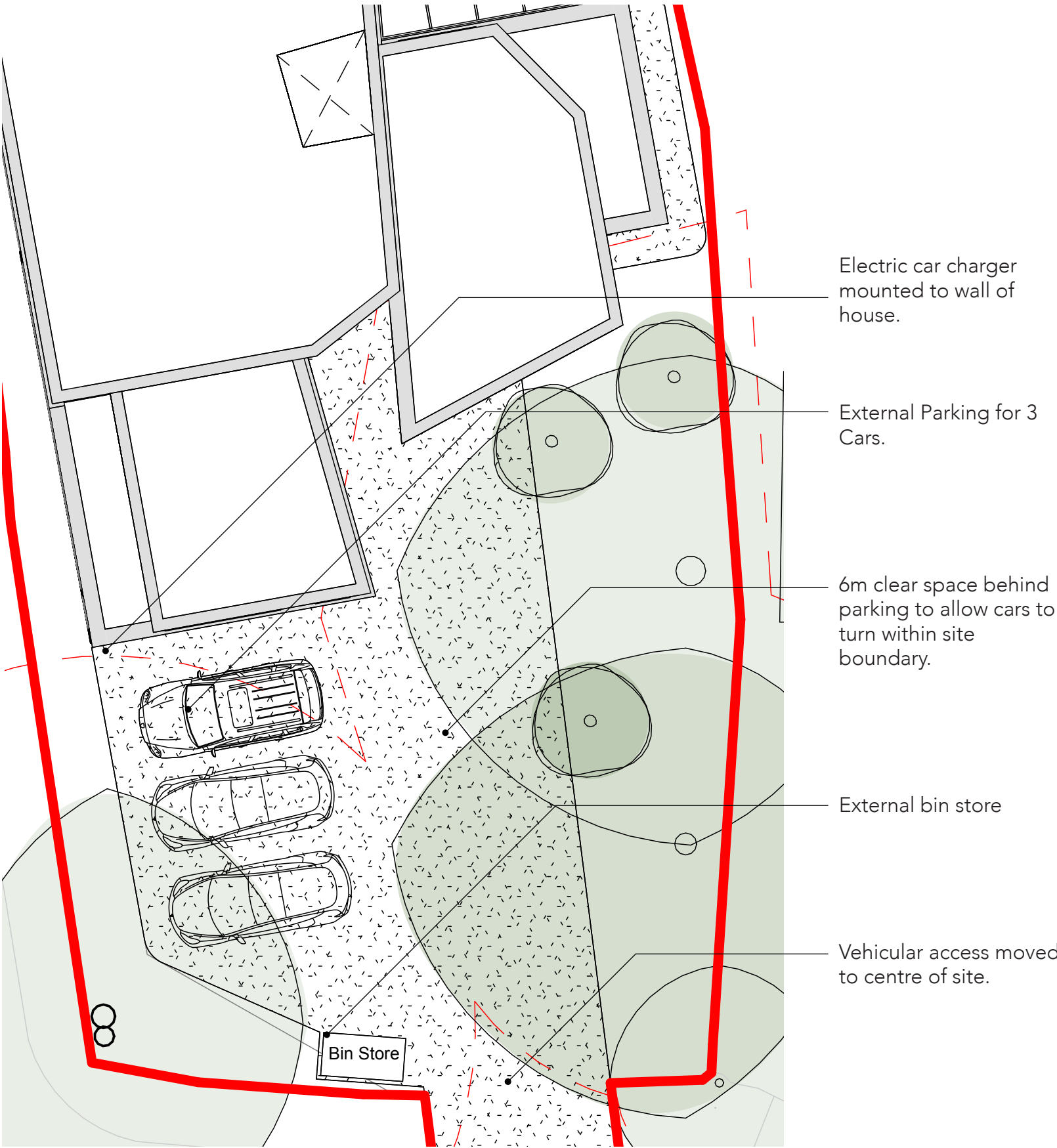
The garage will also provide secure storage for cycles, avoiding the need for an external store.

General waste and recycling bins will be stored within an enclosure adjacent to the parking area close to the site entrance.

Future Adaptability

Whilst a split-level ground floor arrangement has been required to accommodate the existing topography and the root protection areas, this has been designed to allow the future adaptation of the floor plan to include a stairlift that can access both the kitchen area and the first floor.

Additionally, the Utility Room is designed to allow its future conversion into a kitchen space and the ground floor WC is large enough to be converted into a wheelchair-accessible shower room. This would allow a future wheelchair user to have step-free access to cooking, washing, bedroom and living spaces within the entrance storey.



Appearance & Landscape

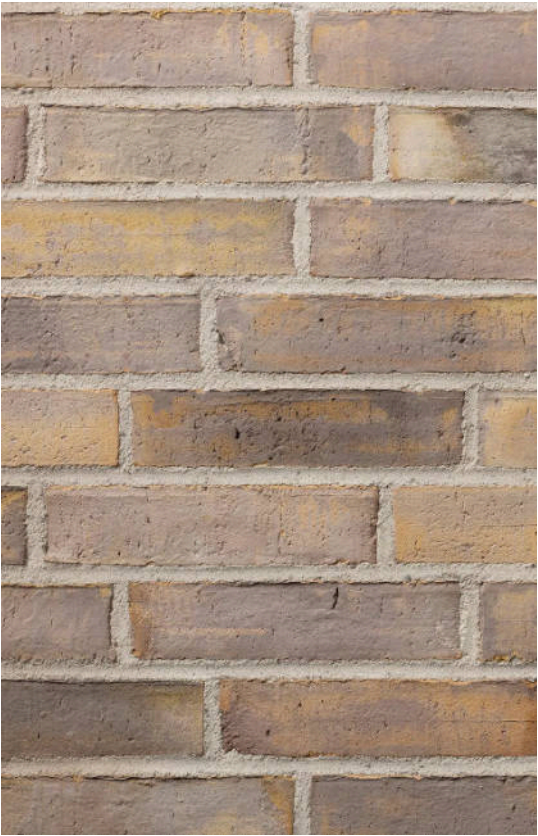
Materials A mix of external materials has been proposed to break up the visual appearance of the house.

The lower levels feature light-coloured multi brickwork that grounds the proposals on the site. Along the western boundary, the brickwork has been detailed to give the appearance of a traditional brick boundary wall with inset panels framed by brick piers. This façade will also feature stainless steel espaliers to support climbing plants as set out in the landscape proposals.

The first-floor is clad in timber to provide a lighter visual appearance. In several areas the timber cladding continues across windows in the form of vertical louvres. Along the western façade this reduces any perception of overlooking towards the gardens along Geoffreyson Road, this is in addition to all windows along this boundary being obscure glazed and non-opening.

The timber will be untreated and will weather to a natural grey finish in the first few years following the completion of the works.

Landscape A detailed landscape plan has not yet been produced, details are anticipated to be secured via condition.



Visual - Front Elevation



Visual - Rear Elevation



PLANNING ANALYSIS

Relevant Planning Policies

Planning Introduction The local planning authority for the site is Reading Borough Council. The proposals on the site will be assessed against national and local planning policy, the key policy documents for this site area as follows:

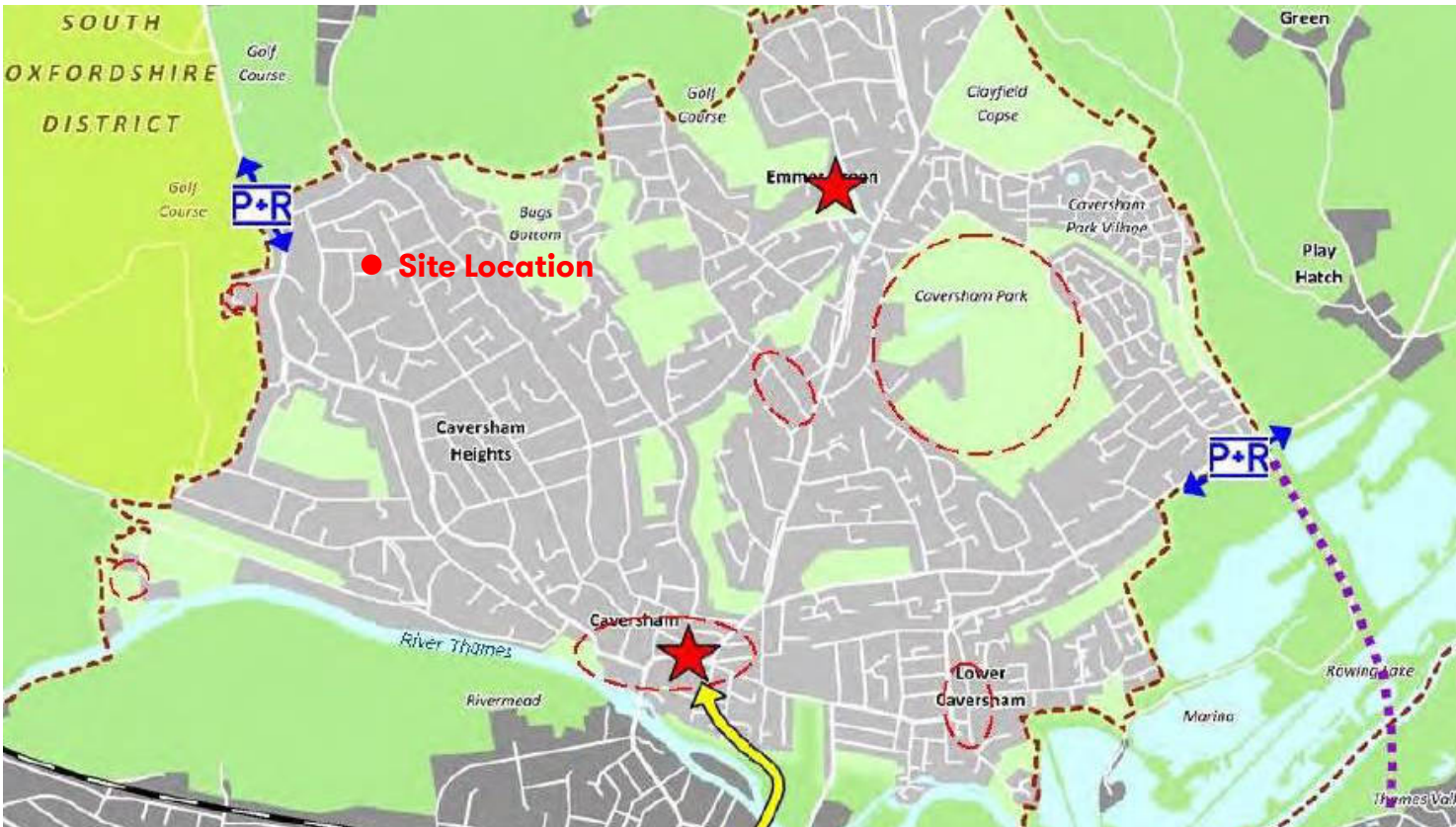
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Key policies from each of the above documents are set out later in this section.

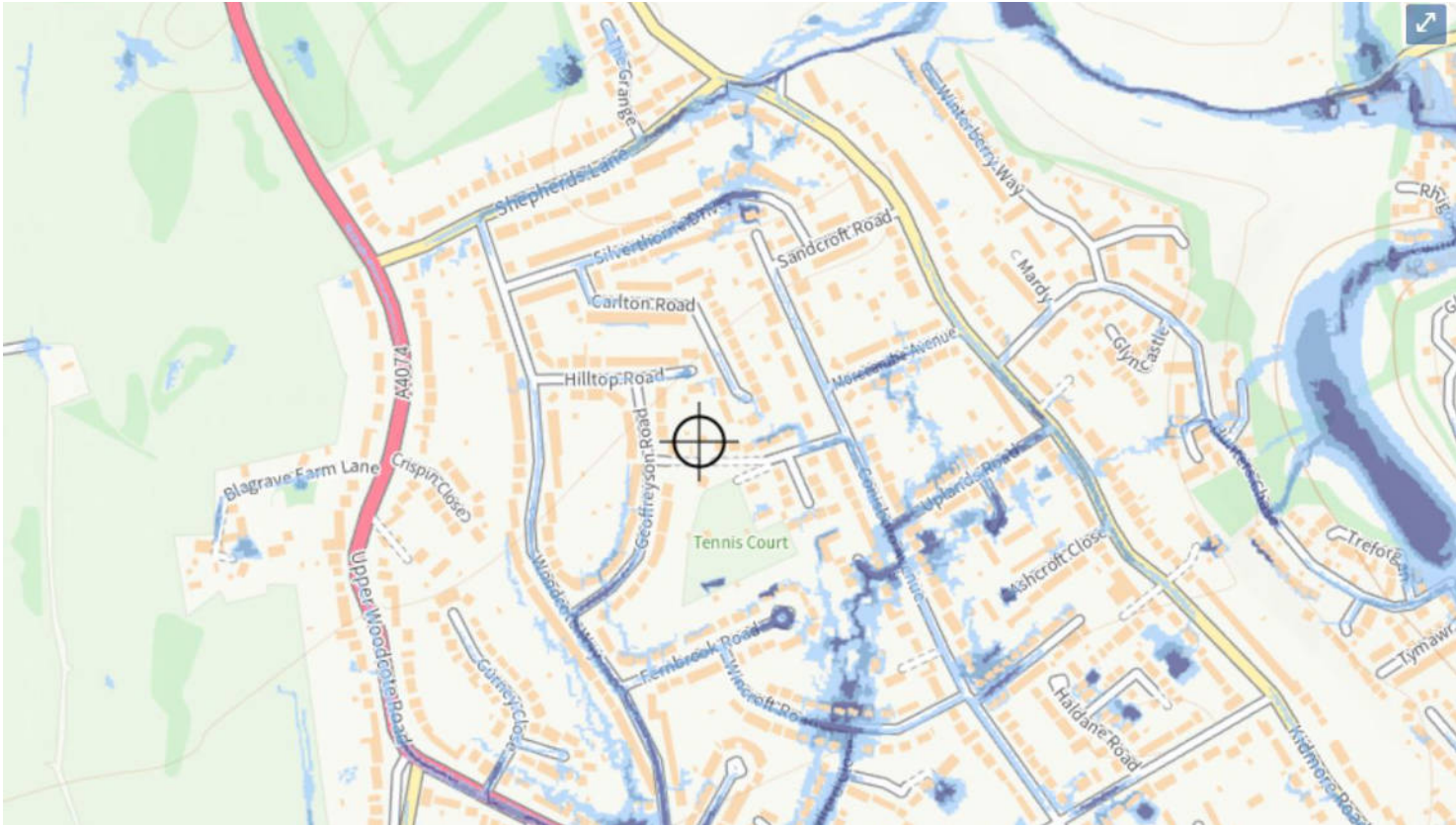
Classification of the Site The site is located in the Caversham area of Reading, in largely residential surroundings. Caversham is at the edge of the local authority boundary with South Oxfordshire District Council bordering the suburb at the north west.

The site is not located within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Conservation area and therefore the additional restrictions that apply in those settings are not relevant to this project.

We have searched the national flood risk register and the site is listed as having a “very low risk” of both surface water and coastal / river flooding. Flood risk will not therefore be a constraint to development.



Extract from Reading Borough Council Local Plan showing town centres (star), cluster of heritage assets (red dashed) and local authority boundary (brown dashed) (NTS)



Flood Risk Map showing flood risk areas in blue

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework The National Planning Policy Framework is the high level national framework setting out how local authorities must determine applications. It includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development which requires authorities to approved proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Reading Borough Local Plan **CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION** Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:
- Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;
 - Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;
 - Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and
 - All development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in river flooding levels as a result of climate change.

Reading Borough Local Plan (Continued) **CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE** Development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives:

- Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place
- Continuity and enclosure
- Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping
- Ease of movement and permeability
- Legibility - clear image and easy to understand
- Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time
- Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;

Relevant Planning Policies

**Reading Borough
Local Plan
(Continued)**

- Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

The position of habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces will be particularly important. A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.

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EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

a) The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:

- Sites with identified biodiversity interest - Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and the River Thames and all its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal); and
- Areas with potential for biodiversity value and which stitch the Green Network together – designated Local Green Space and open green spaces, and existing and potential Green Links.

New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.

b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:

- Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and
- Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.

In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and

Relevant Planning Policies

**Reading Borough
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(Continued)**

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. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS

Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.

New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

New build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:

- a. All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.
- b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations⁷⁹
- c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.
- d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target

**Reading Borough
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(Continued)**

emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.

e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) (see below).

f. On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be ‘wheelchair adaptable’ as defined in part M, whilst homes where the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating an individual may be ‘wheelchair accessible’.

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.

The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.

Relevant Planning Policies

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TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:

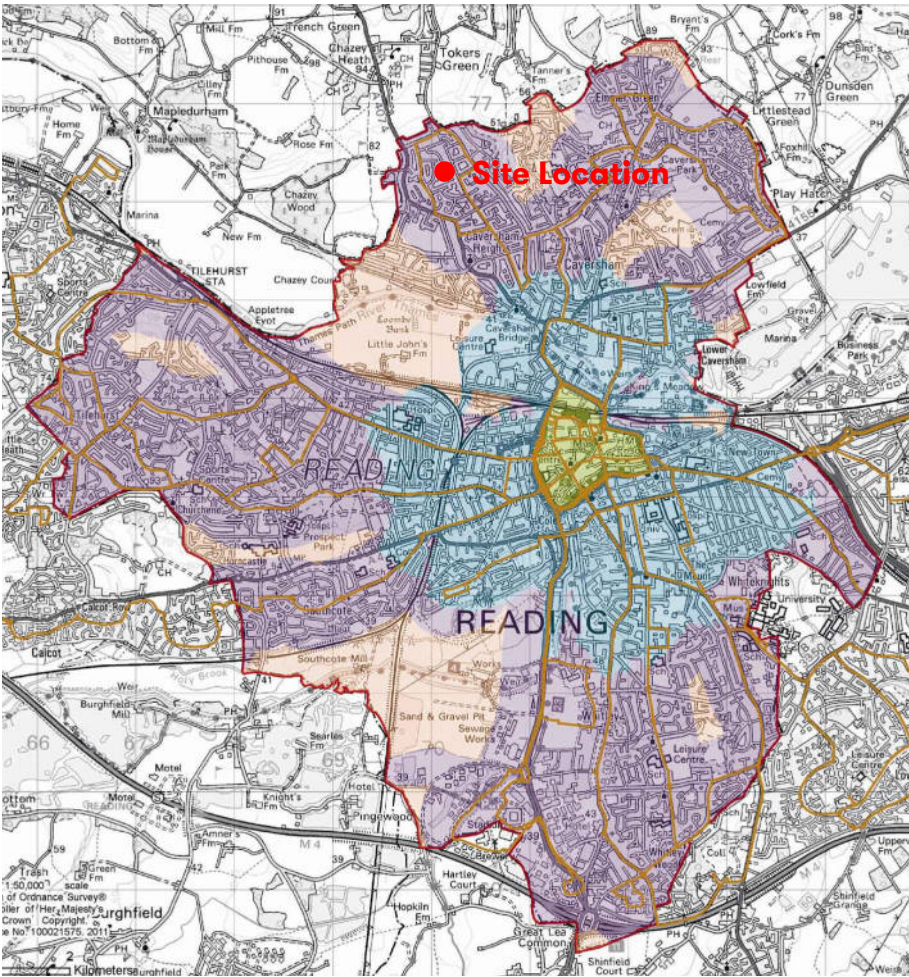
- All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points;
- Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.2202-03-Design, Access and Planning Statement

Relevant Planning Policies - Other Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD

This policy sets out parking requirements for new developments. The site is located in Reading Borough Council's zone 3 for parking meaning a new build house with four bedrooms or more will require 3 parking spaces. A new house with 2 or more bedrooms will require 3 bicycle parking spaces. This SPD also provides guidelines on the expected sizes and layout of parking.

Garage spaces will be counted as parking spaces towards meeting this requirement subject to meeting minimum sizes.



Reading Borough Council Parking Zone Map from the Parking Standards and Design SPD (Oct11) showing the site in Zone 3 (shaded in purple)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

In this SPD, planning requirements are set out for sustainable design. For residential developments a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations is required.

Guidance is also provided on how to improve sustainability in residential developments and how to meet core policies in the local plan (CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5, EN18 and H5).

For residential development a fabric first approach is suggested whereby efforts are made to specify high performance building materials to minimise energy use across the life cycle of the building.

Analysis of Proposals

Principle The site is currently occupied by a single detached dwelling house and the proposals are also for a single detached dwelling house, albeit one larger in size.

The proposed scheme is fully compliant with the local plan and the relevant policies as set out below.

Design The design of the house is a direct response to the substantial existing trees positioned throughout the site. The layout of the house has been developed to minimise development within the Root Protection Areas of these trees and this has necessitated a layout which is somewhat unconventional.

Further development of the design has been undertaken since the previous planning application in response to the reasons for refusal. This has included a significant reduction in the length of the building along the western boundary and a more substantial reduction in the bulk of the building at first floor level.

The height of the house increases towards the rear of the site in line with the existing increasing ground levels. This is in line with the built topography of the surrounding houses which sit at a higher level the further north they are. The overall height of the house remains below that of the houses in the immediately surrounding area.

The size of the house has also been reduced to pull it away from the Western boundary. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed house is larger than those in the surrounding area, it is also the case that the overall site area is substantially larger than any other in the surrounding area and the proposals and therefore proportionally similar to the neighbouring pattern of development.

A mix of brickwork, and timber cladding has been proposed to break up the bulk of the building and provide visual interest along both side elevations. Additionally, the western elevation will feature espaliers to allow the growth of plants across the façade to provide further visual interest.

The proposals are therefore fully compliant with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan.

Energy Efficiency & Sustainability The building has been designed with a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency with high amounts of insulation. The layout of the house also facilitates high levels of cross ventilation.

Whilst there are some large areas of glazing, these are mainly limited to the northern facade, or overshadowed by other areas of the building and not therefore subjected to direct sunlight and solar gain during the hottest hours of the day. Additionally, roof overhangs have been designed to further reduce overheating risk and surrounding trees will further mitigate these issues.

Heating and hot water will be provided via an Air Source Heat Pump.

It is noted that the requirement for small residential developments to achieve a minimum of 19% improvement in regulated emissions over the target emissions rate in the 2013 Building Regulations is now out of date as the building regulations have recently been updated to require a significantly greater than 19% improvement compared to the 2013 Regulations.

An energy and sustainability statement has been provided in Appendix A which further elaborates on these matters.

The proposals are therefore fully compliant with the requirements of policies CC2, CC3 and H5 of the Reading Local Plan.

Transport The proposals include the provision of 3no. external parking spaces, this meets the minimum requirements of 3 spaces for dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms. In addition to this, there is an integrated double garage, however, it is acknowledged that this does not meet the minimum size set out in the local parking guidance to count towards the overall site parking provision, hence the additional external spaces have been provided. The garage also provides secure bicycle storage for the house.

Analysis of Proposals

Transport (Continued)	A single electric car charger will be provided adjacent to the external parking spaces. There is sufficient space for vehicles to turn and leave the site safely in forward gear. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan.	Provision of Amenity Space	The proposals leave a substantial private garden space for the benefit of the house which is more than comparable to other houses in the immediate area. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy H10 of the Reading Local Plan.
Impact on Neighbour Amenity	The design of the house has been carefully considered to avoid any potential harmful amenity impacts on the neighbouring properties. Overlooking is avoided as 'back-to-back' distances significantly exceed 20m in all instances with the exception of 38 Geoffreyson Road where the 'back-to-back' distance is approximately 18m, however, all windows along the façade facing the Geoffreyson Road properties are proposed with obscured glazing, fixed frames, and with timber louvres across them to reduce any actual or perceived overlooking. The house is positioned closest to the existing property at 4 Conisboro Way. As the position of the proposals is slightly behind this neighbouring house, the first floor has been angled to remain outside the 45 degree line of the closest ground floor windows of this neighbouring property to avoid any overshadowing or sense of overbearing. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy CC8 of the Reading Local Plan.	Trees	From the outset of the design, the existing mature trees of amenity value have been the driving force behind the proposals in terms of both protecting those trees and making them the focal point of the design. The footprint of the building has been entirely defined by the Root Protection Areas of the existing trees with only minimal encroachment which will not cause any harm as confirmed in the supporting Arboricultural statement. Detailed proposals for the hard landscaping within the Root Protection Areas has been provided within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment which confirms that this aspect of the proposals will not have a negative impact on the trees. The house itself is set away from the crown of the main trees within the site and is not therefore likely to result in any future 'pressure to prune'. Indeed, since the proposals have been designed to take in key views of the main trees any future pruning or removal of these trees would diminish the principle of the design. It is acknowledged that leaf fall onto the roof could be a future maintenance consideration, however, that is also the case for the existing house and can be overcome through robust and thorough detailing which can be secured via condition if the local authority considers this necessary. The proposals are therefore fully compliant with policy EN14 of the Reading Local Plan.

Ecology Bat Emergence Surveys were completed in August 2022. These surveys confirmed that the existing house does not support bats. A copy of the Bat Emergence Survey report has been included with this submission to address the protected species considerations associated with the demolition of the existing dwelling.

The existing site is an overgrown and unmaintained private domestic garden, all of which forms part of the domestic curtilage of the existing dwelling. It is reasonable to assume that any future occupier of the existing house, or a new house on the site, would seek to cut back the overgrown foliage and restore the garden to a more conventional domestic setting. This could include substantial areas of hard landscaping or maintained lawn, which would have limited ecological or biodiversity value.

The previous appeal decision confirmed that the proposals are exempt from the statutory requirement to provide mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. However, the Inspector also concluded that Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan remains relevant and that the proposals need to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity.

The current application has therefore been prepared on the basis that compliance with Policy EN12 can be addressed through a proportionate and site-specific package of biodiversity enhancement measures. As the proposal is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, a statutory biodiversity metric has not been submitted at validation stage. Having reviewed the Council's local validation requirements and the Proposals Map, the applicants do not understand this to be a validation requirement for this application.

The applicants are committed to delivering meaningful biodiversity enhancements as part of the development. However, rather than fixing those measures before the appropriate methodology has been agreed, it is proposed that the detailed landscaping and biodiversity enhancement measures are secured by condition. This would allow the final measures to be developed in consultation with the Council's ecologist and secured through the submission and approval of a suitable Habitat Enhancement Scheme.

This approach would allow the retained garden areas, replacement planting, native species landscaping and integrated wildlife features to be considered together as part of a coordinated landscape and ecology strategy. It would also allow any technical points relating to the baseline position and proposed enhancements to be resolved in a practical and proportionate way.

The proposals are therefore considered to provide a clear route to compliance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, with the final biodiversity enhancement measures capable of being secured by appropriately worded planning conditions.

Annexe Building Due to the layout of the site, the proposed annexe building could never have the benefit of its own independent access and would always, therefore, be truly ancillary to the existing house. We welcome any conditions the local authority feels are necessary to further secure the ancillary relationship.

Conclusion

Conclusion The proposals, as submitted, represent a high-quality and carefully considered form of development. The design is deliberately different from the surrounding housing, but this difference arises directly from the particular constraints and opportunities of the site. The layout, footprint and form of the building have been shaped by the need to respond to the existing mature trees, the root protection areas, the relationship with neighbouring properties and the unusual backland nature of the site.

The previous appeal decision is a material consideration in the assessment of this resubmission. Whilst the appeal was dismissed, the Inspector did not uphold the Council's concerns in relation to the character and appearance of the area or the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. The appeal decision therefore confirmed that the design, scale, layout and relationship with neighbouring properties were not the matters preventing the scheme from being acceptable.

The single remaining issue identified by the Inspector was the need to demonstrate compliance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan in relation to no net loss of biodiversity. This resubmission has been prepared on that basis. The applicants accept the Inspector's conclusion and are seeking to establish a clear and proportionate route by which the requirements of Policy EN12 can be addressed.

As set out elsewhere in this statement, the applicants consider that the detailed biodiversity enhancement measures can be appropriately secured by condition, through the submission and approval of further landscaping details and a Habitat Enhancement Scheme. This would allow the final measures to be developed in consultation with the Council's ecologist and would ensure that any approved biodiversity enhancements are properly secured, implemented and maintained.

The proposals provide the opportunity to deliver a replacement self-build family home on an existing residential site in a way that responds positively to its constraints. The scheme would retain the most important trees, provide a carefully controlled relationship with neighbouring properties, and replace the existing dwelling with a coherent long-term solution for the site.

For these reasons, and subject to appropriately worded conditions to secure the final biodiversity enhancement measures, the proposals are considered to comply with the relevant national and local planning policies. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

APPENDIX A

ENERGY STATEMENT

Energy & Sustainability Statement

Introduction This statement has been prepared in response to the Reading Borough Council Sustainable Design Checklist for Residential Developments as set out in Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Energy / CO2 The development has been designed to use energy from the sun effectively without introducing risks of overheating. There are several large areas of glazing on the northern and southern facades which will allow the building to benefit from solar gain, however, the majority of large areas of glazing have been limited to the northern side of the house. This maximises internal daylight levels whilst minimising the risk of overheating from excessive direct sunlight during the afternoon.

Glazing on the south elevation is either directly shaded from the midday sun with roof overhangs and late afternoon sun by shadowing from adjacent building projections. Glazing on the west elevation is limited due to issues related to overlooking but this also helps to minimise overheating risk.

Overheating risk is further mitigated by the existing trees on the site, the large areas of glazing in the main living spaces have been proposed to overcome the lower daylight levels which will be caused by overshadowing from these trees.

The layout of the house will facilitate large volumes of natural cross ventilation to provide passive cooling to the interior spaces.

All lighting will be from low-energy LEDs and the house will be fitted with a Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery System to provide a comfortable internal environment whilst minimising heat losses from extract ventilation.

The building has been proposed with provision for high levels of thermal insulation with larger roof and wall build-ups than would be typical on similar dwellings in the surrounding area, this is a partial driver of the height of the building being slightly greater than the eaves height of surrounding houses, those houses do not feature high levels of insulation which requires thicker building fabric.

Heating and hot water will be supplied via an air source heat pump. PV solar panels were considered for the roof however these were dismissed due to overshadowing from the surrounding trees reducing their effectiveness.

The integrated garage provides ample space for cycle storage for all occupants.

The proposals are fully compliant with Reading Local Plan policy H5 as the house is fully compliant with the nationally-described space standards, will be built to the higher water efficiency standard (this can be secured via condition), it will exceed the 19% improvement over the 2013 building regulations (as these have been updated to require greater than 19% improvement) and the house is accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the building regulations.

As this is a minor application for a single replacement house, no Section 106 contribution is required to offset regulated emissions from the proposals.

Water Whilst at this stage in the design process sanitary fittings have not been selected or specified, this will be completed to ensure that the potential consumption of wholesome water by persons occupying the new dwelling will not exceed the optional requirement of 110 litres per person per day and a water efficiency calculation will be produced as required by the Building Regulations to demonstrate this. It is assumed that this will be secured by condition.

Due to the large root protection zone areas, a rainwater harvesting system has not been considered to be appropriate as this will require large areas of excavation to install.

Materials External materials have been selected for their durability and long life span. Brickwork is characteristic of the local area and provides a robust substrate where vegetation has been proposed to be grown up the side of the building. Timber has a low embodied energy and it is proposed to use a durable species that will be left untreated but installed in a well-ventilated substrate to maximise life span without reliance on future maintenance which could become neglected.

Energy & Sustainability Statement

It is anticipated that the main structure of the building will be timber frame which has a substantially lower level of embodied energy than masonry or concrete load-bearing structures.

**Surface Water
Run-off**

The house is not located in a flood risk area and being purely domestic property is not anticipated to create any pollution risks.

All external surfaces have been designed to be fully permeable and SuDs compliant and do not, therefore, increase the risk of surface water runoff.

As this is a minor development for a single replacement domestic dwelling, it does not need to demonstrate compliance with the other requirements of policy EN18 of the Reading Local Plan.

Waste

The design minimises the amount of waste that will need to be sent to landfill, the house follows the existing natural topography of the site and all hard landscaping is proposed above the existing ground levels, this minimises excavation and the amount of spoil which must be removed. The redistribution of the remaining spoil from foundation excavations across the site was considered but deemed inappropriate as this would have a negative impact on the Root Protection Areas of the existing trees.

There will be some waste generated from the demolition of the existing house, wherever possible this will be reused in the proposals such as in hardcore for building sub-bases but this is subject to the waste being free of contamination. Due to the age of the existing building, it is anticipated that it will contain asbestos which will limit what can be reused and recycled. The building will be subject to a full demolition asbestos survey prior to the commencement of the works and any identified Asbestos Containing Materials will be removed by an appropriately licensed contractor.

The proposals included provision for storage of separate recycling bins in line with the local waste collection scheme.

Pollution

There are not anticipated to be any onerous noise pollution sources generated by the proposals.

An external lighting scheme has not yet been progressed, however, these details can be secured via condition if the local authority wishes to ensure that light pollution from external lighting is minimised.

The proposals include the provision of an electric car charger to allow future occupiers to switch to electric vehicles.

Only insulation products that have a low Global Warming Potential will be used with those featuring high levels of CFC, HFC and HCFC blowing agents in their manufacture avoided.

As heating and hot water will be provided via an Air Source Heat Pump there will be no onsite sources of atmospheric pollution.

Health & Well-being

The layout of the house has been designed to maximise internal daylight levels in a considerate way that minimises the related risk of overheating.

There is a large private garden amenity space for use by the occupants and the layout has been designed in compliance with part M4(2) of the building regulations to ensure future adaptability as the needs of the occupants change.

Management

Details of how the construction site will be set up have been set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment document. If the council requires further details of the construction site set-up, this can be secured via condition which will allow this to be coordinated with the chosen building contractor.

Ecology

The applicants are committed to delivering meaningful ecology and biodiversity enhancements as part of the proposals. As the detailed landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures are to be agreed through the application process, it is proposed that these are secured by condition through the submission and approval of a suitable Habitat Enhancement Scheme. This would allow a coordinated and enforceable approach to long-term biodiversity improvement on a site which is otherwise an uncontrolled domestic garden, subject only to the existing TPO constraints.

APPENDIX B

APPEAL DECISION

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2025

by **B Astley-Serougi BA(Hons) LLM MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 May 2025

Appeal Ref: **APP/E0345/W/24/3353393**

2 Conisboro Way, Caversham, Reading RG4 7HT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mark and Sapna Odlin against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 231590.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling house and construction of replacement dwelling house.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was issued on 12 December 2024. Whilst some paragraph numbers have changed, the relevant paragraphs and parts of paragraphs identified as directly affecting this case have not been amended. Therefore, in this case it has not been necessary to consult the parties on the revised Framework.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the biodiversity within the site;
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants on Hilltop Road and Carlton Road with regard to privacy.

Reasons

Biodiversity

4. The proposed development would replace the existing bungalow, 2 Conisboro Way (No 2), with a two storey dwellinghouse and ancillary annexe. No 2 is currently in a significant state of disrepair. The appeal site is somewhat overgrown and has a relatively high number of trees, three of which have Tree Preservation Orders. The appellant has previously cleared some of the land.
5. Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (RBLP) requires no net loss on all development sites. The appellant considers that Policy EN12 is not relevant to the appeal scheme. However, the application was validated by the Council in

November 2023. Mandatory BNG was introduced for small sites in April 2024 and consequently, the proposed development is subject to Policy EN12. Therefore, although the appeal scheme would qualify for a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) exemption given it is a small site and self-build under the mandatory BNG requirement outlined in the Environment Act 2021, it is still required to provide no net loss according to local policy. The Policy does also state that a net gain should be provided wherever possible, consequently whilst a net gain should be provided, it is not a mandatory requirement.

6. Planning Practice Guidance states that it is inappropriate for plans or supplementary planning documents to include policies or guidance which are incompatible with this framework, for instance by applying biodiversity net gain to exempt categories of development or encouraging the use of a different biodiversity metric or biodiversity gain hierarchy. I have identified above that Policy EN12 requires no net loss rather than a mandatory net gain. Consequently, it does not conflict with the Framework and the exemptions to mandatory BNG.
7. The Council dispute the validity of the BNG calculations contained within the Biodiversity Impact Calculation (BIC) report dated 28 March 2024 given that eight trees would be removed for the development and have not been included. Nevertheless, it finds that the appeal scheme would result in a net loss of biodiversity. Policy EN12 of the RBLP outlines the hierarchy of action following a biodiversity net loss. It establishes that in exceptional circumstances where the need for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site and it has demonstrated that the impacts cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for on-site, then off-site compensation shall be calculated.
8. Whilst the BIC report states that the appellant has agreed to commit to purchasing offsite credits, I find that they have not adequately demonstrated that the need for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site. Nevertheless, even if this was the case, there is limited evidence before me to demonstrate that the appellant cannot avoid, mitigate or compensate on-site for the net loss in biodiversity.
9. Given the above, the appeal scheme would result in an unacceptable loss of biodiversity. Therefore, it would conflict with Policy EN12 of the RBLP insofar as it seeks to ensure development does not result in a net loss of biodiversity.

Character and Appearance

10. The site is accessed via a private road from Geoffreyson Road. The surrounding area is characterised predominantly by detached and semi-detached dwellings apart from 1 Conisboro Way which is a white render bungalow. The plot is relatively large when compared to the other residential plots adjacent to the appeal site.
11. The built form in the surrounding area is generally consistent in character in terms of both the material palette and roof design for example. The appeal scheme would introduce a relatively large dwelling in comparison to the neighbouring dwellings and as such it could appear incongruous. However, given that the appeal site is on a larger plot than the nearby residential plots and incorporates a flat roof design, it would not be unreasonable for the development to be larger. Consequently, the relative space for vegetation and replacement planting would be

adequate given the overall size of the plot. Furthermore, the Council state that the proposed style of development is not considered unacceptable.

12. Interested parties have raised concerns regarding the Garden Room (Annexe) stating that it would be excessively large and result in an overly dominant built form which would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. They have also referenced an application at The Old Rectory in Bedford¹ in relation to a development resulting in an unacceptable overbearing impact on adjoining residential occupiers. I do not have the details of the application before me and therefore cannot be certain that it is wholly comparable to the appeal scheme before me. Nevertheless, the Council do not consider it to harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and given that it would be set back from the boundary, I find no reason to disagree.
13. Concerns regarding the design of the main dwelling have also been raised, referencing the relationship of the appeal scheme to nearby properties. I have identified above that the scale is acceptable given the size of the plot. Moreover, the Council did not raise concerns regarding the modern design of the appeal scheme and I find no reason to disagree. Each application is determined on its own merits and therefore the number of objections to previous applications on the grounds of design are not a significant planning consideration in this case.
14. The set back of the proposed development in the plot has also been raised by interested parties who have concerns that this would further exacerbate its dominance. The Council has not indicated concerns regarding the proposed development and the building line of Conisboro Way. Given the location of the plot, it is somewhat isolated from other dwellings on Conisboro Way. Consequently, I find that the set back would not harm the surrounding character of the area.
15. Given the above, the appeal scheme would not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore comply with Policy CC7 of the RBLP insofar as it seeks to ensure development is of high design quality and would maintain and enhance the character and appearance in which it is located.

Living Conditions

16. The appeal scheme would be cited on a plot that is surrounded by other dwellings. The Council has indicated concerns regarding the perception of overlooking and loss of privacy as a result of the appeal scheme upon the living conditions of the occupants of dwellings located on Hilltop Road and Carlton Road. This is because the proposed development would incorporate large windows and transparent doors on both the ground and first floor rear elevations.
17. The introduction of a two-storey dwelling on a plot with an existing bungalow would not result in a significant change in the built form of the area given the existing relationship between the appeal site and the adjacent dwelling houses. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not result in a perceived loss of privacy for the aforementioned dwellings.
18. Moreover, Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (RBLP) does not refer to a perception of loss of privacy. It instead states that a distance of 20

¹ Planning Application Ref: CB/22/00805/FULL

- metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the context of individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer. Whilst interested parties have highlighted that certain distances would be below 20 metres, these would not be unreasonable given the location of the plot in relation to existing dwellings. Therefore, given that the Council acknowledge that the appeal scheme would largely achieve the required separation distances, the Council has not adequately demonstrated that the appeal scheme would result in significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants in this respect.
19. An interested party has referred to the possible effect of the proposed development upon their health and wellbeing due to the perception of overlooking. Given that I have limited substantive evidence before me to demonstrate the extent of the impact upon their health and wellbeing, I have attached limited weight to this matter in my determination of this appeal.
20. I have identified above that the introduction of a two-storey dwelling would result in a change in the built form of the area as well as the relationship of the plot with neighbouring properties. The Council has not highlighted outlook as a putative reason for refusal. Nevertheless, there is limited evidence before me to demonstrate that the set back of the appeal scheme within the plot would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring properties regarding outlook.
21. Furthermore, interested parties have raised concerns regarding a loss of daylight and sunlight. Whilst this has not been identified as a reason for refusal by the Council, given the distance of the appeal scheme from neighbouring dwellings, there is limited evidence to suggest that there would be an unacceptable impact upon daylight and sunlight enjoyed by the habitable rooms in these dwellings. Another concern has been the diffusion of light due to the large size of the fenestration. The Council has not raised this as a concern and there is limited evidence to suggest that the glazed windows and doors would cause an unacceptable level of light to diffuse into neighbouring gardens and dwellings.
22. Concerns have been raised regarding noise and disturbance from the use of the proposed annexe should it at a later date be used as living accommodation. The Council has not raised concerns regarding noise and disturbance and furthermore, there is limited evidence before me to suggest that the annexe would be used as living accommodation. I have determined this appeal on the evidence before me.
23. Therefore, given all of the above, the appeal scheme would comply with Policy CC8 of the RBLP insofar as it seeks to safeguard the amenity of existing residential properties with regard to privacy and overlooking.

Other Matters

24. Interested parties have raised concerns regarding the effect of the proposed development upon protected species, specifically bats. Given the findings in the bat emergence survey dated August 2022, and in the absence of significant evidence that protected species are likely to be affected by the proposal, further information in this respect would not be necessary.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

25. I have identified above that the appeal scheme would not result in significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants or to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above regarding biodiversity, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

B Astley-Serougi

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