

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0495 Full planning permission

Address: 32 BRUNSWICK HILL, READING, RG1 7YU

Proposal: Change of use of the existing property from Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (Residential Children's Care Home) for up to three children.

Applicant: Junaid Baig

Received date: 13/04/2026

Target Decision date: 10/07/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a detached two storey property located on the eastern side of Brunswick Hill.



There are land level changes at the site with the level slopping down towards the east. The site has existing parking to the front however according to the council website the existing parking is not lawful.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application proposes a change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a children's care home (Use Class C2). The facility would accommodate up to three children with emotional, behavioural, learning disabilities, or mental health needs.

Plans and document submitted:

Planning Statement received 23/6/26
Design, Access and Planning Statement received 13/4/26
H-0537-01 Location Plan received 13/4/26
H-0537-02 Block Plan received 13/4/26
H-0537-03 Proposed Block Plan V1 received 13/4/26
H-0537-04 Existing Plans V1 received 13/4/26
H-0537-05 Proposed Plans V1 received 13/4/26
H-0537-06 Roof Plans V1 received 13/4/26
H-0537-07 Elevations and Sections V1 received 13/4/26
H-0537-08 Photographs V1 received 13/4/26

Planning History:

PL/10/1988: Demolition of a single storey dwelling and erection of two detached dwellings (re-submission of 10/00631/FUL). Permitted subject to legal agreement

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Transport Development Control

Reasons for Refusal:

1. Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. From the information submitted, the proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and is in conflict with local plan policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.
2. The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of secure cycle storage provision. This is in direct conflict with local plan policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Environmental Protection

No Objection

Public Consultation

A site notice was displayed at the application site and no neighbour letters of representations were received.

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

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 policies:

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H6 Accommodation for Vulnerable People

H7 Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

SPD: Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

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.

5. APPRAISAL

Land Use Considerations

The proposal would result in the loss of an existing family dwelling through its change of use to a care home, which conflicts with Policy H7 of the Reading Local Plan. This policy resists the loss of residential accommodation unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated and does not support proposals that would lead to a net loss of residential units or floorspace. In this case, the applicant has failed to provide sufficient justification or evidence of exceptional circumstances to outweigh the loss of a family dwelling. As such, the proposal would result in an unjustified reduction in the supply of housing and is therefore considered unacceptable in principle.

Residential Amenities

Policy CC8 requires that “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 ...”

Additionally, Policy EN16 states that “development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution.”

Neighbouring amenities

The proposal has not adequately demonstrated that the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers would be protected, contrary to Policies CC8 and EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. This is in relation to No.33a, 26a,b,c, 28 Brunswick Hill and the properties to the rear. Insufficient information has been provided regarding the operation of the care home, including how noise and general disturbance would be managed. Whilst reference is made to structured routines and shift-based professional supervision, this lacks substantive detail and does not provide certainty that impacts on neighbouring residents would be effectively controlled. Given that the occupants may have additional needs, there is potential for increased noise and activity, which has not been properly assessed. As such, it has not been demonstrated that the development would avoid harm in terms of noise or disturbance, or that it would safeguard neighbouring living conditions, and the proposal is therefore considered unacceptable.

Amenity of future occupiers

The proposed dwellings would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. The accommodation generally complies with the nationally described space standards and all identified habitable rooms are served by windows providing an appropriate level of outlook, daylight and ventilation.

The submitted plans also show an attic-level room within the roofspace. However, the plans do not clearly identify the intended use of this space. Based on the submitted elevations and roof form, it appears that the room is served by limited headroom and does not benefit from any windows. Given these constraints, it is unclear to what extent the space would be practically usable.

Notwithstanding this, the attic room is not labelled as a bedroom or other habitable room on the submitted plans and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to assume that it is intended for storage or ancillary purposes rather than as habitable accommodation. Had the application not been subject to the overriding reasons for refusal set out elsewhere in this report, further clarification

would have been sought regarding the intended use of this space. However, given its apparent limitations and the lack of natural light, the absence of such clarification would not in itself constitute a reason for refusal, as the space is not considered to form part of the habitable accommodation.

Highways Consideration

Policy TR3 states, "In determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment".

Policy TR5 requires that the 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.

The site is located within Zone 2 (Primary Core Area) of the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD, where accessibility to public transport and local services is generally good. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed children's care home is unlikely to generate a significant increase in vehicle movements compared to the lawful residential use of the site, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the operational parking requirements of the development can be satisfactorily accommodated.

The applicant has not provided details of staffing levels or shift patterns and, consequently, it has not been possible to assess the likely parking demand associated with the proposed use against the Council's adopted parking standards. This is of particular importance given the extensive parking restrictions operating within the surrounding area, which limit opportunities for overspill parking on the public highway.

The submitted plans indicate the availability of two existing parking spaces within the site's frontage. However, it is not evident that these spaces benefit from a lawful vehicular access as such it is considered the site does not benefit from any off-street parking. Irrespective of this matter, the plans fail to demonstrate that vehicles would be able to access and exit the site safely, as no visibility splays or detailed access arrangements have been provided.

In addition, whilst cycle parking is proposed, the submitted details do not demonstrate that the facilities would be secure and covered in accordance with the requirements of the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD. As such, the proposal fails to demonstrate that adequate provision would be made for sustainable modes of transport.

Accordingly, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would provide satisfactory parking, access and cycle parking arrangements, and the development is therefore considered to conflict with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD.

The Highways authority have been consulted and are in objection.

Design Consideration

Policy CC7 seeks to ensure that development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area, having regard to matters such as layout, landscape, density, scale, height, massing, architectural detailing and materials.

The proposal does not involve any significant external alterations to the existing building and consequently would result in very limited change to the wider street scene. The development would introduce cycle and refuse storage facilities adjacent to the parking area. Whilst these features add a degree of visual paraphernalia to the site, they are commonplace within urban environments and are not considered out of keeping with the character of the area.

The information submitted in respect of the cycle and refuse stores is limited and additional clarification would ordinarily have been sought regarding their detailed design and appearance. Whilst their siting adjacent to the parking area has the potential to contribute to a more cluttered appearance, it is considered that alternative locations within the site could have been explored through the application process. As such, although a different arrangement may have been preferable from a design perspective, the impact would not be so significant as to warrant refusal of the application on design grounds alone.

Overall, subject to the detailed design of the ancillary structures, the proposal is not considered to result in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the area and would broadly accord with the objectives of Policy CC7 in this regard.

Other Matters

Whilst it is acknowledged that some of the matters identified above may have been overcome through the submission of additional information, the Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant and sought further details to address these concerns. The additional information provided was insufficient and did not satisfactorily address all of the issues raised. It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit a scheme that is policy compliant, and in the absence of sufficient information to demonstrate compliance, the application cannot be supported.

6. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is considered unacceptable. It would result in the unjustified loss of an existing family dwelling, contrary to Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, and insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the development would not harm neighbouring amenity or that adequate parking, access and cycle parking arrangements can be achieved. The Highway Authority has also objected to the proposal. As the applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with Policies H7, CC8, EN16, TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the application is recommended for refusal.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Reasons for refusal:

1. The proposed development would result in the loss of an existing family dwelling through its change of use to a care home, leading to a net loss of residential accommodation. The applicant has failed to demonstrate any exceptional circumstances or overriding planning justification that would warrant the loss of this dwelling from the Borough's housing stock. In the absence of such justification, the proposal would undermine the objective of maintaining and delivering a sufficient supply of homes. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the objectives of Chapter 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to support the delivery and retention of housing to meet identified needs.
2. The proposed development fails to demonstrate that the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers would be adequately safeguarded. In particular, insufficient information has been



provided regarding the operation of the care home, including staffing levels, shift patterns, visitor activity, deliveries, servicing arrangements and other day-to-day operational impacts. As a consequence, the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that the development would not result in unacceptable levels of noise, disturbance, comings and goings, or other adverse impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC8 and EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed development would provide satisfactory vehicle parking, access and cycle parking arrangements. In particular, the absence of details relating to staffing levels, parking demand, lawful vehicle access and compliant cycle storage prevents the Local Planning Authority from fully assessing the transport implications of the proposal. As such, it has not been demonstrated that the development would provide safe and suitable access, adequate parking provision, or appropriate facilities for sustainable transport. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the Revised Parking Standards and Reading Design SPD, and paragraphs 116 and 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework.