

To: Councillor McKenna (Chair)
Councillors Sokale, Duveen, Ennis,
Lovelock, Page, Robinson, Rowland,
Stanford-Beale and J Williams

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NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 29 APRIL 2020

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 29 April 2020 at 6.30 pm. This will be an Online meeting via Microsoft Teams, and information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1. PROTOCOL FOR ONLINE MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE	-		7 - 10
The Chair will outline the arrangements for online meetings of the Planning Applications Committee. The attached protocol is due to be considered at the meeting of the Policy Committee on 27 April 2020.			
2. MINUTES	-		11 - 22
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
4. QUESTIONS	-		
5. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	-		23 - 24

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PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

9.	190848/REG3 - 72 BRUNSWICK STREET	Decision	MINSTER	53 - 68
	Proposal	Extension of existing apartment building, conversion of redundant laundry, bin store and cycle storage space to create a one-bedroom apartment and provision of new communal refuse and cycle storage facilities. Resubmission of application 181853		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
10.	191757/HOU - 10 PEGS GREEN CLOSE	Decision	NORCOT	69 - 84
	Proposal	Two storey side/rear extensions and single storey front entrance porch, loft conversion with new dormer window and two Velux windows		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
11.	190706/REG3 - 76 CIRCUIT LANE	Decision	SOUTHCOTE	85 - 94
	Proposal	Erection of one two bedroom dwelling.		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
12.	200339/FUL - BURGHELD ROAD, SOUTHCOTE	Decision	SOUTHCOTE	95 - 114
	Proposal	Removal of the existing 15m mast and erection of a new 25m lattice tower with a total of 12No. antenna (6No. EE and 6No. Huawei) along with ancillary equipment mounted on a newly formed concrete foundation measuring 5.5m x 5.6m. The existing site compound would be retained and enlarged by a further 6.6m to an overall size of 13.2m x 6.6m all enclosed by a 2.5m high Palisade fence to match that of the existing.		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		

GUIDE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS Agenda Annex

1. There are many different types of applications processed by the Planning Service and the following codes are used to abbreviate the more common types of permission sought:
 - FUL - Full detailed planning permission for development or change of use
 - OUT - Principal of developing a site or changing a use
 - REM - Detailed matters “reserved matters” - for permission following approval of an outline planning application.
 - HOU - Applications for works to domestic houses
 - ADV - Advertisement consent
 - APC - Approval of details required by planning conditions
 - VAR - Significant change to a planning permission previously granted
 - NMA - Insignificant change to a planning permission previously granted
 - ADJ - Consultation from neighbouring authority on application in their area
 - LBC - Works to or around a Listed Building
 - CLE - A certificate to confirm what the existing use of a property is
 - CLP - A certificate to confirm that a proposed use or development does not require planning permission to be applied for.
 - REG3 - Indicates that the application has been submitted by the Local Authority.

2. Officer reports often refer to a matter or situation as being “a material consideration”. The following list tries to explain what these might include:

Material planning considerations can include (but are not limited to):

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of daylight/sunlight or overshadowing
- Scale and dominance
- Layout and density of buildings
- Appearance and design of development and materials proposed
- Disabled persons' access
- Highway safety
- Traffic and parking issues
- Drainage and flood risk
- Noise, dust, fumes etc
- Impact on character or appearance of area
- Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Effect on trees and wildlife/nature conservation
- Impact on the community and other services
- Economic impact and sustainability
- Government policy
- Proposals in the Local Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Archaeology

There are also concerns that regulations or case law has established cannot be taken into account. These include:

- Who the applicant is/the applicant's background
- Loss of views
- Loss of property value
- Loss of trade or increased competition
- Strength or volume of local opposition
- Construction noise/disturbance during development
- Fears of damage to property
- Maintenance of property
- Boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights
- Rights of way and ownerships disputes over rights of way
- Personal circumstances

Glossary of usual terms

Affordable housing - Housing provided below market price to meet identified needs.

Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) - Area where air quality levels need to be managed.

Apartment-hotel - A use providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living with the amenities of a hotel. Generally classed as C1 (hotels) for planning purposes.

Article 4 Direction - A direction which can be made by the Council to remove normal permitted development rights.

BREEAM - A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of generally commercial developments (industrial, retail etc).

Brownfield Land - previously developed land.

Brown roof - A roof surfaced with a broken substrate, e.g. broken bricks.

Building line - The general line along a street beyond which no buildings project.

Bulky goods - Large products requiring shopping trips to be made by car: e.g. DIY or furniture.

CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy. Local authorities in England and Wales levy a charge on new development to be spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area.

Classified Highway Network - The network of main roads, consisting of A, B and C roads.

Conservation Area - areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by the local authority. As designated heritage assets the preservation and enhancement of the area carries great weight in planning permission decisions.

Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Competent Authority - The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing regulations within the United Kingdom. They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors.

Dormer Window - Located in the roof of a building, it projects or extends out through the roof, often providing space internally.

Dwelling - A single housing unit - a house, flat, maisonette etc.

Evening Economy A term for the business activities, particularly those used by the public, which take place in the evening such as pubs, clubs, restaurants and arts/cultural uses.

Flood Risk Assessment - A requirement at planning application stage to demonstrate how flood risk will be managed.

Flood Zones - The Environment Agency designates flood zones to reflect the differing risks of flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, Flood Zone 2 is medium probability, Flood Zone 3a is high probability and Flood Zone 3b is functional floodplain.

Granny annexe - A self-contained area within a dwelling house/ the curtilage of a dwelling house but without all the facilities to be self contained and is therefore dependent on the main house for some functions. It will usually be occupied by a relative.

Green roof - A roof with vegetation on top of an impermeable membrane.

Gross floor area - Total floor area of the house, including all floors and garage, measured externally.

Hazardous Substances Consent - Consent required for the presence on, over, or under land of any hazardous substance in excess of controlled quantity.

Historic Parks and Gardens - Parks and gardens of special historic interest, designated by English Heritage.

Housing Association - An independent not-for-profit body that provides low-cost "affordable housing" to meet specific housing needs.

Infrastructure - The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community.

Lifetime Home - A home which is sufficiently adaptable to allow people to remain in the home despite changing circumstances such as age or disability.

Listed building - Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II and II*, with I being of exceptional interest.

Local Plan - The main planning document for a District or Borough.

Luminance - A measure of the luminous intensity of light, usually measured in candelas per square metre.

Major Landscape Feature - these are identified and protected in the Local Plan for being of local significance for their visual and amenity value

Public realm - the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces whether publicly or privately owned.

Scheduled Ancient Monument - Specified nationally important archaeological sites.

Section 106 agreement - A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Sequential approach A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses.

Sui Generis - A use not specifically defined in the use classes order (2004) - planning permission is always needed to change from a sui generis use.

Sustainable development - Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for now and future generations.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) - This term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) - An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA's consent.

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Protocol for Online Planning Applications Committee

Introduction

The Coronavirus Act 2020 has paved the way for temporary changes to Regulations governing public meetings held by local authorities, including those held by local planning authorities, to allow the meetings to be conducted using media systems to be attended remotely by officers, members and the public and press.

This Protocol outlines some changes proposed to facilitate successful online meetings of the Planning Applications Committee, by reducing the number of participants and the complexity of the meetings.

Membership

While a video-link meeting is itself relatively easy to organise, the current Planning Applications Committee meetings are attended by 14 members and 5-10 officers, with public objectors and supporters, applicants/agents and ward councillors also participating in the meetings and other interested members of the public and the press in attendance.

In order to make the online meetings more manageable it is proposed to reduce the number of participants, by keeping officer attendance to a minimum and reducing the number of Committee members attending while retaining representation from all political groups.

The online meetings will therefore be attended by 10 members supported by the committee clerk, legal advisor, and the relevant planning officers.

All members attending the online meetings will be drawn from the membership of the Planning Applications Committee as it was agreed at the Annual Council Meeting in 2019 (or any subsequent review of its full membership in 2020).

The nominated members of each Group to attend the online meetings are:

Labour (6)	Cllrs McKenna, Sokale, Page, Ennis, Lovelock & Rowland
Conservative (2)	Cllrs Robinson & Stanford-Beale
Green (1)	Cllr J Williams
Liberal Democrats (1)	Cllr Duveen

Quorum

No change is proposed to the current quorum of five.

Attendance

As the online meeting is a reduced version of the full meeting to deal with the Council's response to the Emergency, it is evident that the meeting should have the full complement of councillors available to attend:

- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman should attend all meetings wherever possible.

- The Leader of each political group is responsible for ensuring that the most relevant members of Planning Applications Committee attend the meeting.
- Substitution is allowed so that where a nominated member cannot attend then another member of the full committee should attend.

Managing the meeting

The success of the online meetings will depend on the ability of the participants to interact with each other via the system and the ability of the Chair to manage the meeting despite the unfamiliar setting.

The Chair will decide a practical protocol for management of the debate and decision-making - e.g. calling of speakers, self-introduction before speaking, vote taken by asking members in turn rather than show of hands. Such a protocol can be amended from time to time and does not require Committee approval for any change.

Given the potential difficulty of tabling and circulating documents at an online meeting Standing Order 39 is amended to specify that, where councillors are pre-disposed to make any proposed amendments, these should be submitted to the Chair, all nominated members of the Committee and the Planning Manager by email at least 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting. This does not preclude any amendments to officer recommendations, which may still be tabled during the meeting as a result of the discussions during the debate.

Officers will circulate updates by email as they become available in the days leading up to the online Committee. This will avoid the need for a consolidated document to be tabled on the day of the hearing. Councillors should therefore review their emails regularly to ensure that they can track these additional documents in good time as intended.

Planning Applications to be considered

To make the online meetings focussed on the important business of the Pandemic Response and the Recovery, officers are also seeking a change to the list of applications that are delegated to officers to deal with so that fewer applications need to be considered and decided by the online Committee. This will mean that reports will still be presented for Major category applications but only where the officer recommendation is to approve, and for those other applications where officers, in consultation with the Chair, feel a committee decision is appropriate.

The Chair and the Planning Manager will agree a forward plan of applications based upon these categories:

A	Important for the Pandemic Response or the Recovery from the Pandemic
B	Matters which are otherwise important for the economic development of the town
C	Minor and Household applications which are not related to the Recovery

Classification: OFFICIAL

Category A & B applications are the matters which should be referred to the Committee.

Public participation and attendance

The normal public speaking arrangements are suspended. All people who have commented on a planning application will be invited to make written representations (word limit of 500) and submit these to the Planning Admin team by 2pm on the day before the meeting. These statements will be circulated to members of the Committee. Public participants usually prepare written notes for the meeting and the objective of public participation is still fulfilled by receiving these representations.

In addition, any formal questions submitted to the Committee will be responded to in writing only.

The facility for Ward Councillors to speak on applications will continue.

Members of the public will be able to follow the meeting 'live' in order to meet the legal requirement for meetings to be held 'in public'. Information will be published with the agenda on how to do this.

Meeting Agendas

- Introduction - Chair to explain meeting format and who is attending
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Declarations of Interest
- Information items
- Planning applications to be considered

For practicality any exempt items will be considered at a separate closed online meeting to be held on the rising of the main Committee.

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Present: Councillor McKenna (Chair);
Councillors Sokale (Vice-Chair), Carnell, Duveen, Ennis, Lovelock, McEwan, Page, Robinson, Rowland, DP Singh, Stanford-Beale, J Williams and R Williams

RESOLVED ITEMS

122. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ennis declared a prejudicial interest in Item 134 (191659/REG3 - Former Reading Family Centre) on the grounds of predetermination.

Councillor Lovelock declared prejudicial interest in Item 136 (182114/OUT - Land Adjacent Thorpe House) on the grounds of predetermination.

Councillor Singh declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 136 (182114/OUT - Land Adjacent Thorpe House).

124. QUESTIONS

The following questions were asked in accordance with Standing Order 36:

a) Viability and Affordable Housing Contributions

Councillor Sokale asked the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee:

Can the Chair of Planning Applications Committee provide a brief explanation of how viability impacts upon affordable housing contributions?

REPLY by the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee (Councillor McKenna):

Thank you for your question. I have asked officers to prepare a briefing note on this, which is attached. If you or any members of the Committee have any supplementary questions on this, you can ask them now.

(The full text of the question, answer and briefing note was made available on the Reading Borough Council website)

b) Checking Planning Conditions Have Been Met

Councillor J Williams asked the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee:

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Planning Conditions are often vital to an application being acceptable when measured against Reading's Local Plan and against the expectations of local residents. People living in an area of a new development expect that building work will be done in a neighbourly way, within reasonable hours, and without too much dust and disturbance. Reading residents expect that when conditions are set on all kinds of things like tree planting, management plans, hours of use, litter and so many others, that those conditions will be met. Some Conditions stipulate they must be met before a development can be occupied and used.

Residents often leave planning meetings disappointed in a decision taken by this committee, but at least heartened by the conditions applied. Can the Chair of Planning tell us what levels of proactive checking the Council undertakes to ensure that Planning Conditions are met and adhered to?

REPLY by the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee (Councillor McKenna):

The simple answer to your question is that unfortunately the Council is not in a position to perform routine proactive monitoring of the conditions applied to planning permissions and other approvals/consents.

This is not from a lack of will, but rather a lack of people. Similar to all of local government, budgets have been cut and so we have fewer officers to do an array of important tasks.

Instead, the planning authority must rely on other RBC departments and our residents, who are directly impacted, to bring issues regarding planning conditions to our attention. Then the Planning Enforcement Team or the relevant case officer would investigate.

Before further answering this question, it may be useful to clarify the rules relating to the use of conditions when granting planning permission.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out that the purpose of a planning condition is to enable an otherwise unacceptable development to be made acceptable by requiring further details to be approved, uses controlled or preventing undesirable works or uses from taking place.

Para 55 of the NPPF advises that Planning conditions should be (i) kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are (ii) necessary, (iii) relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, (iv) enforceable, (v) precise and (vi) reasonable in all other respects.

These are the 6 tests as established by circular 11/1995, which remain in force. These tests apply even if the applicant suggests or agrees to a condition or it is suggested by Members of planning committee or consultees.

Developers can appeal planning conditions they disagree with and if the condition does not meet these tests it will invariably be struck off by planning inspectors.

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In addition, government has confirmed that the following types of conditions are not allowed:

1. Conditions which unreasonably impact on the deliverability of a development;
2. Conditions which reserve outline application details;
3. Conditions which require the development to be carried out in its entirety;
4. Conditions which duplicate a requirement for compliance with other regulatory requirements - e.g. building regulations;
5. Conditions requiring land to be given up;
6. Positively worded conditions requiring payment of money or other consideration;

In summary the imposition of a planning condition must be justified and the terms carefully drafted if it is to pass these tests and then be enforceable if the terms are not met.

So, returning to the question - in the majority of cases developments are permitted with just a few standard planning conditions. Typically, these set a time limit for works to start (normally 3 years), require materials to closely match existing or be as shown on the plans and to ensure the approved plans are followed. Again, in the majority of cases, the developer adheres to these or can make use of the process to change small details if they need to.

It is the responsibility of the developer to comply with planning conditions by adhering to restrictions or submitting additional information for approval and complying with what has been approved. When this does not happen officers first seek voluntary compliance but could issue a Breach of Condition Notice (BCN) if needed. In exceptional cases where the breach of condition makes a development completely unauthorised officers can resort to serving an Enforcement Notice.

Taking any enforcement action is discretionary and officers will generally work with neighbouring residents and the developer to sort matters out more quickly than being forced to rely upon the often lengthy enforcement process.

The Committee should be advised that with the present Enforcement Team Leader giving notice that he is to retire our Acting Planning Manager is taking the opportunity to review the job description for this role to include some element of proactive condition monitoring. This will assist developers in meeting the duties imposed on them by Reading Borough Council acting as the local planning authority.

125. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted, at the meeting, a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the under-mentioned application, together with any additional applications which the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of an unaccompanied site visit:

191496 - MEADWAY PRECINCT, HONEY END LANE

Outline planning application (Access only. Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale Reserved for future consideration) for the redevelopment of the Meadway precinct including partial demolition, refurbishment and extension of existing retail units and creation of new retail premises within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2, 266 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), new car park and servicing arrangements, bin stores, engineering operations including re-profiling of embankment and associated landscaping, re-location of public toilets within precinct.

- (2) That the under-mentioned application, together with any additional applications which the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of an accompanied site visit:

192052 - 45 WATLINGTON STREET

Single storey rear extension, alterations to fenestration and provision of roof light to forward roof slope.

126. PLANNING APPEALS

(i) New Appeals

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a schedule giving details of notification received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding one planning appeal, the method of determination for which she had already expressed a preference in accordance with delegated powers, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(ii) Appeals Recently Determined

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted details of four decisions that had been made by the Secretary of State, or by an Inspector appointed for the purpose, which were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services tabled update reports at the meeting on the following appeal decisions:

190434/FUL - 27-43 BLENHEIM ROAD, CAVERSHAM

Erection of 3 dwellings with parking, landscaping and access from Blenheim Road.

Written representations.

Appeal dismissed.

181404/FUL - LAND TO THE REAR OF 578-584 OXFORD ROAD

Demolition of existing building and erection of two storey building containing 4 x Studio flats.

Written representations.

Appeal dismissed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;
- (3) That the appeal decisions set out in the update reports be noted.

127. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of 21 pending prior approval applications, and in Table 2 of four applications for prior approval decided between 27 January and 20 February 2020.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

128. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT - DEVELOPMENT AT FORMER COX & WYMAN SITE, CARDIFF ROAD

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to agree street names for three roads in a development site on the former site of Cox & Wyman printers in Cardiff Road. A plan of the site was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that the developer had not suggested any street names, but during consultation, comments had been received from Councillor Page, who had consulted with residents, and a list of suggested appropriate street names was set out in paragraph 4.3.

The report stated that, if none of the proposed names were considered suitable, the Committee should select an alternative from the Approved Street Names List which was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

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At the meeting, Councillor Page proposed using the following names, with the use of Road/Street/Close to be determined by officers, as appropriate:

Road 1 - Printers
Road 2 - Cox
Road 3 - Wyman

Resolved - That the following names be used for the development:

Road 1 - Printers
Road 2 - Cox
Road 3 - Wyman

129. 182137/FUL - BROAD STREET MALL, BROAD STREET

Construction of three residential buildings (Use Class C3) ranging in height from 5 to 20 storeys above Broad Street Mall(Site E to provide 42 units, Site B to provide up to 134 Units and Site A to provide up to 148 units) and provision of a podium level amenity area, Construction of a 16 storey building on South Court comprising ground and first floor retail(Use Class A1/A2/A3) and residential over upper floors (Use Class C3, Site C to provide up to 98 units), Creation of ground floor retail units (Use Class A1/A3/A4) fronting Dusseldorf Way and ground floor retail (Use Class A1/A2/A3) fronting Queens Walk, all necessary enabling and alteration works required within the existing Broad Street Mall basement, ground and upper floors, Associated car park alterations, provision of servicing and refuse storage, cycle parking, public realm, landscape, and other associated works (amended description)

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out further consultation responses received, further appraisals of affordable housing, landscape, ecology, transport and wind/microclimate, and listed drawings and submitted documents. The recommendation had been amended accordingly, including an additional head of terms for the Section 106 agreement and additional conditions.

A further update report was tabled at the meeting presenting a paper received from Historic England's Historic Places Panel of their review 'Reading Town Centre: The Abbey Quarter, Minster Quarter and Oxford Road'.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Evelyn Williams and Anthony Ihringer, and Tim Vaughan, Gary Lewis and Chris Beard representing the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 182137/FUL, subject to no new substantive consultation responses by 20 March 2020,

subject to satisfactory wind/microclimate verification and subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 23 March 2020 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report and the additional Heads of Terms set out in the update report, with the financial contribution of £633,000 “as mitigation to ensure improved capacity at local parks within Abbey Ward” to be amended to refer instead to open space in the town centre local to the development;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the additional conditions recommended in the update report and an additional condition, with wording to be developed with the applicant and the car park leaseholder, to require additional roof greening to cover the car park, with that condition to be brought back to the Committee for approval;
- (4) That the Planning Applications Committee request that further consideration be given by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on options to secure additional open space in the Minster Quarter area, including the provision of new green decking over the Inner Distribution Road.

130. 198141/FUL - HOUSE OF FRASER, THE ORACLE, BRIDGE STREET

Subdivision of three-storey retail unit (Class A1) and change of use to form: 1x flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit (Class A1/A3/A4), 1x flexible retail/restaurant unit (Class A1/A3) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at Riverside level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at lower ground level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) at upper ground level, together with alterations to the Riverside frontage and associated plant, car parking and external alterations at car park levels.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting that gave details of a further consultation response received.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 191841/FUL subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 25 March 2020 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and

Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report.

131. 191848/FUL - GREYFRIARS CHURCH, FRIAR STREET

Demolish Existing Church Centre, Construct New Three Storey Church Centre with Plant Enclosure on Roof and Single Storey Glazed Link at Ground Floor Level. Associated hard and Soft Landscaping and External Works.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave details of comments received from Reading Civic Society and further information on transport matters and noise mitigation conditions and clarified an error in the original report. The update report recommended additional and amended conditions.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved - That planning permission for application 191848/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the additional and amended conditions as recommended in the update report.

132. 191924/FUL - 26-30 SWANSEA ROAD AND 28-32 NORTHFIELD ROAD

Full planning application for the demolition of the existing 2-bedroom dwelling and garages, and erection of nine dwellings, including eight three-bedroom houses and one three-bedroom coach house, with access and parking from Swansea Road, and associated landscaping.

Further to Minute 114 of the meeting held on 5 February 2020, when the Committee had granted permission for the above application subject to a Section 106 legal agreement, the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report clarifying what could be secured by the Section 106 agreement and how the applicant intended to develop the site with affordable housing, and recommending amending the decision in relation to the Section 106 obligation on affordable housing.

The report explained that, on 5 February 2020, the Committee had resolved to grant permission subject to a Section 106 agreement to secure 100% affordable housing on-site with the tenure to be all shared ownership, as set out in the original report. As this had not been as advised in the update report or at the meeting, officers had been asked to provide a fuller explanation for the recommendations in the update report. The report gave further details of the regulations regarding Section 106 planning obligations and how

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the applicant intended to provide all nine dwellings as affordable housing, but the proposed obligation could help the applicant to secure grant funding from Homes England. The original and update reports submitted to the 5 February 2020 meeting were appended to the report.

A further update report was tabled at the meeting which explained that further changes had been agreed to the Section 106 agreement to ensure that those on Reading's waiting list for affordable accommodation would be given priority to be allocated the two affordable rent houses. The recommendation had been amended accordingly.

Daniel Bradbury and Jenny Grote, representing the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

That, further to Minute 114 of the meeting of Planning Applications Committee held on 5 February 2020, the decision of the Committee on 5 February 2020 be amended to the following:

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 191924/FUL subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 20 March 2020 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the 4 March 2020 update report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives in the 4 March 2020 update report, with the additional transport conditions in the 5 February 2020 update report and an additional informative regarding facilitation of access for building recording as agreed on 5 February 2020.

(At the beginning of the item, the Committee resolved to waive Standing Order 36A (3) c), to allow the representatives of the applicant to speak on the application without another person having given notice to speak in accordance with Standing Order 36A (2)).

133. 192052/HOU - 45 WATLINGTON STREET

Single storey rear extension, alterations to fenestration and provision of roof light to forward roof slope.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Objector Helen Attwater and the applicant's agent Zoe Smith attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved - That consideration of the application be deferred to allow an accompanied site visit.

134. 191659/REG3 - FORMER READING FAMILY CENTRE, NORTH STREET

Two buildings of four and five storeys providing 41 dwellings as affordable housing units including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access, parking and hard and soft landscaping.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave further information on trees and landscaping, comments received from Berkshire Archaeology and carbon off-setting, contained an updated list of drawings and plans and had appended the updated drawings. The update report recommended three additional conditions and an amendment to the carbon off-setting contribution in the Section 106 legal agreement.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Councillor Ennis declared a prejudicial interest in this item on the grounds of predetermination, made a statement as Lead Councillor then left the room and took no part in the debate or decision. Nature of interest: Councillor Ennis was the Lead Councillor for Housing and had formed a predetermined view on the application.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 191659/REG3 subject to completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 25 March 2020 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, with the amendment recommended in the update report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the additional conditions recommended in the update report.

135. 190980/OUT - 2 & 4 SEND ROAD, CAVERSHAM

Demolition of 2 & 4 Send Road. New development comprising of 14 x 1 bed flats and 2 x 2 bed flats. Access proposed from Send Road & Forge Close.

It was reported at the meeting that this application had been withdrawn.

136. 182114/OUT - THORPE HOUSE, COLLIERS WAY

Outline application for proposed residential redevelopment to provide 6 no. 3-bedroom dwelling houses.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out details of further objections and a residents' petition received and corrected a typographical error in the original report.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Mrs HO Fortnum, and Mr Wollenburg on behalf of the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Councillor Lovelock declared a prejudicial interest in this item on the grounds of predetermination, made a statement as Ward Councillor then left the room and took no part in the debate or decision. Nature of interest: Councillor Lovelock had formed a predetermined view on the application.

Councillor Singh declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in this item, moved to the public gallery and took no part in the debate or decision. Nature of interest: Councillor Singh lived next door to the application site.

Resolved -

That application 182114/OUT be refused for the reasons set out in the original report, with the informatives as recommended.

137. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 138 as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act.

138. S215 NOTICE - WORKS IN DEFAULT

The Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval to carry out works in default on two addresses where notices under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 had been served but no voluntary compliance had been achieved.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report and the provisions of Sections 215-219 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be noted;

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 4 MARCH 2020

- (2) That the Council's Planning Enforcement Officers be authorised to take the action required to comply with the Section 215 notices at the addresses set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 of the report.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 6 & 7).

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 11.03 pm)

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
Date:	29 APRIL 2020		
TITLE:	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
AUTHOR:	JULIE WILLIAMS	TEL:	0118 9372461
JOB TITLE:	ACTING PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 Normally this report would accompany a list of sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit might be appropriate before the meeting of the next Committee (or at a future date) and to confirm how the visit will be arranged.
- 1.2 However, with the current measures to enforce social distancing it would not be acceptable for officers to recommend that Councillors make any site visits for the time being.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you agree that no site visits shall take place until the current social distancing measures are lifted.

3. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 3.1 The purpose of the planning service is to support the delivery of economic and sustainable growth while providing appropriate regulation to secure an attractive and safe town. We do this by maintaining planning performance and developing policy and systems to secure sustainable development. This contributes to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-21:
 - Securing the economic success of Reading;
 - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs;
 - Keeping Reading’s environment clean, green and safe;
 - Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

- 4.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. We encourage car sharing and the use of alternative transport modes to and from site visits.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 5.1 Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Officers when assessing an application and when making a recommendation to the Committee, will have regard to its duties Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Reading Borough Council Planning Code of Conduct.

Local Safety Practice 2013 Planning Applications Committee site visits.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	29 APRIL 2020		
TITLE:	PLANNING APPEALS		
AUTHOR:	JULIE WILLIAMS	TEL:	0118 9372461
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Julie.Williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on the status of various planning appeals.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the appeals received and the method of determination as listed in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 That you note the appeals decided as listed in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.3 That you note the Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions provided in Appendix 3 of this report.

3. INFORMATION PROVIDED

- 3.1 Please see Appendix 1 of this report for new appeals lodged since the last committee.
- 3.2 Please see Appendix 2 of this report for new appeals decided since the last committee.
- 3.3 Please see Appendix 3 of this report for new Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions since the last committee.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough and to meeting the 2018-21 Corporate Plan objective for “Keeping Reading’s environment clean, green and safe”.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.
- 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**
- 6.1 Planning decisions are made in accordance with adopted local development plan policies, which have been adopted by the Council following public consultation. Statutory consultation also takes place on planning applications and appeals and this can have bearing on the decision reached by the Secretary of State and his Inspectors. Copies of appeal decisions are held on the public Planning Register.
- 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**
- 7.1 Where appropriate the Council will refer in its appeal case to matters connected to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 8.1 Public Inquiries are normally the only types of appeal that involve the use of legal representation. Only applicants have the right to appeal against refusal or non-determination and there is no right for a third party to appeal a planning decision.
- 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1 Public Inquiries and Informal Hearings are more expensive in terms of officer and appellant time than the Written Representations method. Either party can be liable to awards of costs. Guidance is provided in Circular 03/2009 “Cost Awards in Appeals and other Planning Proceedings”.
- 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 10.1 Planning Appeal Forms and letters from the Planning Inspectorate.

Appeals Lodged:

WARD: KENTWOOD
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/20/3248047
CASE NO: 191907
ADDRESS: 7 Oakham Close
PROPOSAL: Two storey side and rear extension, provision of front and rear box dormers and roof lights
CASE OFFICER: Tom Hughes
METHOD: Householder Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 23.03.2020

APPENDIX 2

Appeals Decided:

WARD: WHITLEY
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3242949
CASE NO: 191408
ADDRESS: "Waylands Volvo Reading", Unit 20, Sentinel End, Reading
PROPOSAL: Construction of new access and egress for cars in to/from the existing car dealership customer forecourt on to Perkins Way.
CASE OFFICER: Richard Eatough
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 25.03.2020

WARD: PEPPARD
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3241189
CASE NO: 181038
ADDRESS: 33 The Horse Close
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing bungalow, two replacement detached dwellings
CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 25.03.2020

WARD: CAVERSHAM
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3240025
CASE NO: 191325
ADDRESS: 28 Clonmel Close
PROPOSAL: Two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension
CASE OFFICER: Tom French
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED

DATE DETERMINED: 08.04.2020

WARD: Thames
APPEAL NO: APP/TPO/E0345/7536
CASE NO: 191031
ADDRESS: 7a Dellwood Park
PROPOSAL: Fell one Oak tree in rear garden
CASE OFFICER: Sarah Hanson
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 08.04.2020

WARD: KENTWOOD
APPEAL NO: APP/TPO/E0345/7458
CASE NO: 190544
ADDRESS: 2 Ferndale Close
PROPOSAL: Fell one Lawson cypress in rear garden
CASE OFFICER: Sarah Hanson
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 08.04.2020

WARD: MAPLEDURHAM
APPEAL NO: APP/TPO/E0345/7682
CASE NO: 191592
ADDRESS: Blaggrave House, Upper Warren Avenue
PROPOSAL: Fell one False acacia tree in the front garden
CASE OFFICER: Sarah Duckworth
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 15.04.2020

APPENDIX 3

Address Index of Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.

- 2 Ferndale Close - TPO
- 7a Dellwood Park - TPO
- Blaggrave House, Upper Warren Avenue - TPO

Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions attached.

Appeal No: APP/TPO/E0345/7458

Planning Ref: 190544

Site: 2 Ferndale Close, Tilehurst, RG31 6UZ

Proposal: Fell one Lawson cypress in the rear garden

Decision level: Delegated

Method: Written Representation

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

Date Determined: 8 April 2020

Inspector: Richard Duggan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Lawson cypress in question is one of 14 trees on the property protected by TPO 109/06; 10 of which are Lawson cypress.
- 1.2 An application to fell the Cypress in question, supported by an arboricultural report, was received in April 2019 for two reasons:
 - 1) The tree's crown is supported by a stem, that has a tight, weak, included union.
 - 2) The tree is located in a well-used garden and there is a possible risk of harm or damage if one of the stems were to fail.
- 1.3 In relation to amenity, the arboricultural report stated that *'the tree forms part of a larger group of evergreens but, in itself, is not particularly valuable or visible from outside the site'*. Officers did not agree with this statement; the tree being highly visible from Ferndale Close, being the front (western) tree of those in the south side of the rear garden hence that its loss would be noticeable.
- 1.4 The Arboricultural Report stated, in the Tree data schedule, that the tree was in 'fair' physiological and structural condition. The Tree survey schedule explanatory notes defined 'fair' structural condition as: *'some structural defects noted but remedial action not required at present'*. This indicated that structural defects present did not require the tree to be felled. The justification for felling presented in the report stated that the tree has a *'tight, weak, included union'*; that *'there is a possible risk of harm or damage if one of the stems were to fail'* and that *'to retain this tree within an acceptable level of safety would require the crown to be significantly reduced, which would both greatly reduce any amenity value it provides and would involve continued resources to maintain it'*. Officers considered these comments to be in conflict with the structural condition. No detailed information on the examination of the fork and the potential risk this presented, taking into account the growth form of the specific tree and nature of this species, was provided.
- 1.5 Officers commented that a multi-stem form is not unusual for Lawson cypress and it would be unreasonable to fell all trees of this species with this form in the Borough. The stems of the tree in questions are very upright in nature hence the leverage on each, due to the upright angle, and risk failure from, e.g. high winds, is much reduced compared to a multi-stem tree where the co-dominant stems are growing apart at an angle. Officers did not agree that the risk presented by the tree was such that felling was justified. Given this, along with the inconsistencies within the Arboricultural Report and the limited discussion on the tree's structural condition, it was considered that insufficient justification had been provided for the removal of the tree on safety grounds hence the application was refused on 5 July 2020.

2 SUMMARY OF DECISION

- 2.1 The Inspector considered the main issues to be the amenity value of the Lawson Cypress tree and the impact of felling it on the character and appearance of the area, and whether there are sufficient grounds to justify felling it.
- 2.2 The Inspector considered the tree to form part of the verdant setting and that its removal would have a harmful effect on the locality and the character and appearance of the area. The Inspector agreed that *'the Appellant's arboricultural report does not provide any*

evidence which identifies a present danger or concludes that the tree is immediately dangerous and hence needs to be felled' and that based on the structural condition there was insufficient grounds to justify felling the protected tree.

2.3 The Inspector concluded that:

With any application to fell a protected tree a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken. The essential need for the works applied for must be weighed against the resultant loss to the amenity of the area. In this case there has simply been insufficient evidence put forward to justify the removal of a significant protected tree.

Felling the tree at this time would mean the removal of a healthy tree which otherwise would likely to continue to enhance the visual qualities of the appeal property well into the future. I consider that its removal would have a detrimental effect on the local environment and would be harmful to the visual amenity and character of the area.

The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services Comment:

This appeal decision is welcome given that the comments made by the Planning Inspector upholding Officer's assessment of amenity and the supporting evidence submitted, hence that insufficient reasons for felling had been provided. The decision is particularly welcome given the Council's climate emergency declaration and the need to retain trees for their contribution to climate change mitigation.

Case officer: Sarah Hanson

Appeal No: APP/TPO/E0345/7536

Planning Ref: 191031

Site: 7a Dellwood Park, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7NX

Proposal: Fell one Oak tree in the rear garden

Decision level: Delegated

Method: Written Representation

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

Date Determined: 8 April 2020

Inspector: Richard Duggan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The property is one of a few which are part of the extension to the original Dellwood Park. The property contains one protected tree (the Oak in question) and there are protected trees in neighbouring properties to the south (in Dellwood Park) and west (in Orwell Close), all of which were retained during the development of Dellwood Park.
- 1.2 In 2019, the applicant sought assistance from the Council to force the owners of 20 Orwell Close (to the rear) to reduce the height of their trees (a row of protected Sycamores) which were resulting in light loss to the garden of 7A Dellwood Park. Unfortunately, negotiations were not successful.
- 1.3 In June 2019, an application to fell the Oak in the rear garden of 7A Dellwood Park was received, the reasons for felling given as:
'Fell due to shady conditions and low/no amenity value. Tree is only visible to 7, 7A & 7B Dellwood Park. Oak leaning towards the house due to the nearby Sycamore screen canopies which are covered in dense Ivy, now growing taller than the Oak tree, blocking light from the south'.
- 1.4 Officers were satisfied that the Oak tree provided sufficient amenity value to warrant a TPO as the tree can be seen from the front of the property and further down Dellwood Park and can clearly be seen from the north end of Orwell Close, i.e. the tree can therefore be seen from a public place and be viewed by various local residents.
- 1.5 Whilst it was appreciated that this is the only tree in the applicant's control, hence the only one they can potentially remove to improve light levels, the semi-mature Oak appeared to be in good condition and was one of many trees retained and protected during the development of the original Dellwood Park and the later extension of this. It provides amenity value, contributing to the overall tree coverage in this verdant area hence the felling was not considered reasonable and was refused on 17 July 2019.

2 SUMMARY OF DECISION

- 2.1 The Inspector considered the main issues to be the amenity value of the Oak tree and the impact of felling it on the character and appearance of the area, and whether there were sufficient grounds to justify felling it.
- 2.2 The Inspector agreed that the Oak provided amenity value to the area and that its felling would not significantly alter the amount of light within the garden or entering the house. The Inspector concluded that:

With any application to fell a protected tree a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken. The essential need for the works applied for must be weighed against the resultant loss to the amenity of the area. In this case there has simply been insufficient evidence put forward to justify the removal of a significant protected tree.

Felling the tree at this time would mean the removal of a healthy tree which otherwise would likely to continue to enhance the visual qualities of the appeal property well into the future. I consider that its removal would have a detrimental effect on the local environment and would be harmful to the visual amenity and character of the area.

The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services Comment:

This appeal decision is welcome given that the comments made by the Planning Inspector upholding the amenity value assessment by Officers and that insufficient reasons for felling had been provided. The decision is particularly welcome given the Council's climate emergency declaration and the need to retain trees for their contribution to climate change mitigation.

Case officer: Sarah Hanson

Appeal No: APP/TPO/E0345/7682

Planning Ref: 191592

Site: Blaggrave House, Upper Warren Avenue

Proposal: Fell one False acacia in the front garden

Decision level: Delegated

Method: Written Representation

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

Date Determined: 14 April 2020

Inspector: Richard Duggan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 An application to fell the mature False acacia was received in October 2019 based on the following concerns:

The tree grows over the roof of the property and garage causing problems with the guttering.

The tree makes the front rooms of the property very dark.

The tree has thorns which are a concern regarding the risk to dogs and grandchildren standing on them.

Concern about roots and the stability of the tree and potential damage to the property.

1.2 Officers confirmed that the tree was in good condition and provided multiple environmental benefits, all of which are important in view of the Council's climate emergency declaration.

1.3 Officers acknowledged that the issues raised were regrettable but were some of the inevitable consequences of living in any area with mature trees. As such, these reasons alone would not support an application to fell a healthy protected tree. Officers concluded that allowing a tree to be removed to alleviate shading, leaf drop or risk of thorns in feet would be a drastic action and would set an unacceptable precedent for deciding similar applications in the future. The felling was therefore refused on 4 November 2019 with alternative, lesser works being approved to help alleviate the concerns.

2 SUMMARY OF DECISION

2.1 The Inspector considered the main issues to be the amenity value of the False acacia tree and the impact of felling it on the character and appearance of the area, and whether there were sufficient grounds to justify felling it.

2.2 The Inspector commented that *'the tree contributed positively to the wider character and appearance of the area, being one of a number of mature tree species close to the appeal property and interspersed throughout this verdant and attractive residential area and that it, along with the other trees, plays a significant part in softening views of the built environment'*.

2.3 In relation to the nuisance issues raised, the Inspector did not consider that the living conditions of the residents were affected to such a degree that felling the tree is required and that the work approved would help alleviate the issues. As no technical or professional reports relating to damage to the building had been supplied, the Inspector dismissed those concerns as a reason for felling. Whilst the concerns relating to the thorns was acknowledged, the Inspector commented that such things were a *'natural and ordinary consequence of having a tree of this species within a residential environment and inevitably carry little weight in favour of tree removal'*.

2.4 The Inspector concluded that:

With any application to fell a protected tree a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken. The essential need for the works applied for must be weighed against the resultant loss to the amenity of the area.

Felling the tree at this time would mean the removal of a healthy tree which otherwise would likely to continue to enhance the visual qualities of the appeal property well into the future. I consider that its removal would have a detrimental effect on the local environment and would be harmful to the visual amenity and character of the area.

The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services Comment:

This appeal decision is welcome given that the comments made by the Planning Inspector upholding the response of Officers to the concerns raised and that insufficient reasons for felling had been provided. The decision is particularly welcome given the Council's climate emergency declaration and the need to retain trees for their contribution to climate change mitigation.

Case officer: Sarah Hanson

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	29 APRIL 2020		
TITLE:	APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL		
AUTHOR:	JULIE WILLIAMS & RICHARD EATOUGH		
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER (ACTING) & TEAM LEADER	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of new applications and decisions relating to applications for prior-approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO 2015) as amended.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At your meeting on 29 May 2013 a report was presented which introduced new permitted development rights and additional requirements for prior approval from the local planning authority for certain categories of permitted development. It was agreed then that a report be brought to future meetings for information and to include details of applications received for prior approval, those pending a decision and those applications which have been decided since the last Committee date.

4 TYPES OF PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The categories of development requiring prior approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015, or amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)(Amendment) Order 2016 that are of most relevance to Reading Borough are summarised as follows:

- **Householder development - single storey rear extensions.** GPDO Part 1, Class A1(g-k).
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office, pay day loan shop or casino to A3 restaurants and cafes.** GPDO Part 3 Class C.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office or pay day loan shop to Class D2 assembly & leisure.** GPDO Part 3 Class J.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial and professional or a mixed use of A1 or A2 with dwellinghouse to Class C3 dwellinghouse.** GPDO Part 3 Class M*
- **Change of use from an amusement arcade or a casino to C3 dwellinghouse & necessary works.** GPDO Part 3 Class N
- **Change of use from B1 office to C3 dwellinghouse** GPDO Part 3, Class O*.
- **Change of use from B8 storage or distribution to C3 dwellinghouse** GPDO Part 3, Class P

- Change of use from B1(c) light industrial use to C3 dwellinghouse GPDO Part 3, Class PA*
- Change of use from agricultural buildings and land to Class C3 dwellinghouses and building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building to the C3 use. GPDO Part 3 Class Q.
- Change of use of 150 sq m or more of an agricultural building (and any land within its curtilage) to flexible use within classes A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1 and D2. GPDO Part 3 Class R.
- Change of use from Agricultural buildings and land to state funded school or registered nursery D1. GPDO Part 3 Class S.
- Change of use from B1 (business), C1 (hotels), C2 (residential institutions), C2A (secure residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) to state funded school D1. GPDO Part 3 Class T.
- Temporary use of buildings for film making for up to 9 months in any 27 month period. GPDO Part 4 Class E
- Development under local or private Acts and Orders (e.g. Railways Clauses Consolidation Act 1845). GPDO Part 18.
- Development by telecommunications code system operators. GPDO Part 16.
- Demolition of buildings. GPDO Part 11.

4.2 Those applications for Prior Approval received and yet to be decided are set out in the appended Table 1 and those applications which have been decided are set out in the appended Table 2. The applications are grouped by type of prior approval application. Information on what the estimated equivalent planning application fees would be is provided.

4.3 It should be borne in mind that the planning considerations to be taken into account in deciding each of these types of application are specified in more detail in the GDPO. In some cases the LPA will first need to confirm whether or not prior approval is required before going on to decide the application on its planning merits where prior approval is required.

4.4 Details of any appeals on prior-approval decision will be included elsewhere in the agenda.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Changes of use brought about through the prior approval process are beyond the control or influence of the Council's adopted policies and Supplementary Planning Documents. Therefore it is not possible to confirm how or if these schemes will contribute to the strategic aims of the Council.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

6.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Statutory consultation takes place in connection with applications for prior-approval as specified in the Order discussed above.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Where appropriate the Council must have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising from this Report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Since the additional prior notifications were introduced in May 2013 in place of applications for full planning permission, the loss in fee income is estimated to be £1,302,012.

(Office Prior Approvals - £1,181,519: Householder Prior Approvals - £75,942: Retail Prior Approvals - £12,622: Demolition Prior Approval - £2867: Storage Prior Approvals - £5716: Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval - £4672: Shop to Leisure Prior Approval - £305: Light Industrial to Residential - £18,270)

Figures since last report

Office Prior Approvals - £1290: Householder Prior Approvals - £330

- 10.2 However it should be borne in mind that the prior notification application assessment process is simpler than would have been the case for full planning permission and the cost to the Council of determining applications for prior approval is therefore proportionately lower. It should also be noted that the fee for full planning applications varies by type and scale of development and does not necessarily equate to the cost of determining them.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)(Amendment) Order 2016.

Table 1 - Prior-approval applications pending @ 17th April 2020

Application type CLASS A - Householder

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200520	41 Blenheim Road, Reading, RG1 5NG	Redlands	Rear extension measuring 3.865m and 5.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.05m and 2.50m in height to eaves level.	02/04/2020	19/05/2020		£110
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200497	282 Southcote Lane, Reading, RG30 3BL	Southcote	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.6m, and 2.47m in height to eaves level.	28/03/2020	08/05/2020		£110
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200341	23 Shepherds Lane, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JJ	Mapledurham	Rear extension measuring 5m in depth, with a maximum height of 3m, and 3m in height to eaves level.	27/02/2020	28/04/2020		£110

Office to Residential Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200151	Reada Court, Vachel Road, Reading, RG1 1NY	Abbey	Change of use from Class B1(a)(offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 9 x 1 bedroom flats.	30/01/2020	26/03/2020		£4062
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200211	20 Greyfriars Road, Reading, RG1 1NL	Abbey	Change of use from Class B1(a)(offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 43 flats.	07/02/2020	03/04/2020		£19770
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200471	14 Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AR	Caversham	Change of use of first and second floors from class B1(a) (Offices) to C3 (Dwelling House) to comprise of 3 x 1 bed flats.	20/03/2020	15/05/2020		£1290

Telecommunications Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments
Telecommunications Notification - Prior Approval	190789	Land At Mere oak Busway, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield, Reading, RG7 1NR	Whitley	installation of a 20m Monopole, supporting 6 no. antennas, 3 no. equipment cabinets and a meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto.	14/05/2019	09/07/2019	

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/Cafe - Class C	200403	172 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7PL	Abbey	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Retail, betting office or pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services)) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3).	12/03/2020	07/05/2020		£366
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/Cafe - Class C	192006	25 Church Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7AA	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Retail, betting office or pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services)) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3).	17/12/2019	04/04/2020		£366

Demolition Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Demolition Prior Approval	200202	Talbot House, 2 Ross Road, Reading, RG1 8EL	Abbey	Application for prior notification of proposed demolition.	07/02/2020	06/03/2020		£366

Retail Prior Approvals applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Retail Prior Approval	200068	576 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1EG	Battle	Change of use of ground and first floors from Class A1 (shop) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise of 2 x 1 bed flats with private access to both.	16/01/2020	12/03/2020		£828
Retail Prior Approval	200294	35 Prince Of Wales Avenue, Reading, RG30 2UH	Battle	Change of use from retail (A1) to 1 bedroom flat(C3).	24/02/2020	20/04/2020		£366
Retail Prior Approval	200129	20 Coldicutt Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DU	Caversham	Change of use from A1 to C3 Dwellinghouse (Flat x 1).	26/01/2020	22/03/2020		£366
Retail Prior Approval	200274	108 Southampton Street, Reading, RG1 2QX	Katesgrove	Internal changes to allow for three residential flats C3 (dwellinghouses) as well as plans to retain existing shop space Class A1.	19/02/2020	16/04/2020		£1290
Retail Prior Approval	200383	12 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JG	Redlands	Change of use of ground floor from Class A1 (shops) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 1 x flat.	09/03/2020	07/05/2020		£366

Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Solar equip - S2 P14 Class J	200146	Tesco Superstore, Portman Road, Reading, RG30 1AW	Battle	Notification for Prior Approval for the Installation, Alteration or Replacement of other Solar Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the Roofs of Non-domestic Buildings, up to a Capacity of 1 Megawatt.	30/01/2020	16/04/2020		£366

Light Industrial to Residential pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Light Industrial Prior Approval	200498	3 Tidmarsh Street, Reading, RG30 1HX	Kentwood	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Premises in Light Industrial (B1(c) to Residential (C3), converting 150 sqm of Storage into 4 X 1-bed dwellings.	31/03/2020	04/06/2020		£1752

Prior Notification applications pending - None

Storage to Residential Prior Approval applications pending - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications pending - None

Table 2 - Prior-approval applications decided 19 March 2020 to 20 April 2020

Application type CLASS A - Householder

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200212	3 Forest Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6XE	Kentwood	Rear extension measuring 5m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.19m, and 2.96m in height to eaves level.	10/02/2020	19/03/2020	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200317	14 Edenham Crescent, Reading, RG1 6HU	Minster	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3m, and 2.5m in height to eaves level.	25/02/2020	01/04/2020	Application Withdrawn
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	200049	55 Donnington Road, Reading, RG1 5NE	Redlands	Rear extension measuring 4m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.50m, and 2.50m in height to eaves level.	11/01/2020	30/03/2020	Application Permitted

Retail to Residential applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Retail Prior Approval	200260	6 Malthouse Lane, Reading, RG1 7JA	Abbey	Change of use of ground and first floors from Class A1 (shop) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise of 2 x 1 bed flats.	17/02/2020	09/04/2020	Application Withdrawn
Retail Prior Approval	192004	940 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TJ	Kentwood	Change of use of the ground floor from A5 to C3 Dwellinghouse (Flat x 1).	17/12/2019	07/04/2020	Prior Approval Notification - Approval
Retail Prior Approval	192005	940 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TJ	Kentwood	Change of use of the basement from A5 to C3 Dwellinghouse (Flat x 1).	17/12/2019	07/04/2020	Prior Approval Notification - Approval

Telecommunications Prior Approval applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Telecommunications Notification - Prior Approval	200140	Queens Road Car Park, Queens Road, Reading, RG1 4AR	Abbey	Application for Prior Notification of proposed development by telecommunications code system operators the installation of 6 antenna, 2 transmission dishes, 1 equipment cabinet and ancillary development thereto on the rooftop of the host property and a meter cabinet at ground level.	29/01/2020	25/03/2020	Prior Approval Notification - Approval

Demolition Prior Approval applications decided - None

Office to Residential Prior Approval applications decided - None

Prior Notification applications decided - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications decided - None

Light Industrial to Residential applications decided - None

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications decided - None

Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications decided - None

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Agenda Item 8

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	29 APRIL 2020		
TITLE:	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE - 2019/20		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	JULIE WILLIAMS	TEL:	0118 937 2461 (72461)
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER (acting)	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on how the Planning Service has performed over the past year in terms of meeting government set targets for dealing with planning applications, success at planning appeals and other measures.
- 1.2 Detail on the types of applications handled and other services provided is also presented for the year 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existing approach to measuring the performance of Local Planning Authorities (LPA.s), introduced by the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013, is based on a LPA.s performance on the speed of determining applications and the quality of their decisions. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) collate data from LPA.s to enable performance tables to be published on a quarterly basis. LPA.s are at risk of being designated as “underperforming” if targets are not met over the preceding 24 months. This would allow applicants to have the option of submitting their applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate (who act on behalf of the Secretary of State) for determination.
- 3.2 The MHCLG published new criteria for designation late in 2018; “Improving planning performance - Criteria for designation” as follows:
 - a. For applications for major development: less than **60 per cent** of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant;
 - b. For applications for non-major development: less than **70 per cent** of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant.
 - c. For applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is **10 per cent** of an authority’s total number of decisions on applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

4. PERFORMANCE AGAINST MHCLG TARGETS

Speed

- 4.1 Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal within the statutory time limits set by MHCLG unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant. The statutory time limits are normally 13 weeks for applications for major development (when an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment a 16 week limit applies) and 8 weeks for all other types of development.
- 4.2 However, local planning authorities can agree with the applicant to extend the time limit (sometimes with a Planning Performance Agreement or a simple extension of time) for all types of planning applications, including householder applications. Typically this has been the route taken in Reading with officers and applicants preferring to negotiate a better outcome than simply refusing a planning application because the time is running out. This also deals with the concept of “the Planning Guarantee” which requires the planning application fee to be refunded to applicants where no decision has been made within 26 weeks, unless a longer period has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the local planning authority. (Regulation 9A of the 2012 Fees Regulations).
- 4.3 The Council’s performance on speed of determination of planning applications as shown in the most recently published (21st March 2019) performance tables is:
- 100% of major development applications within the statutory determination period or an agreed extended period.
 - 88.9% of all non-major development applications within the statutory determination period or an agreed extended period.

Quality

- 4.4 It is disappointing that the quality of decisions made by local planning authorities is measured only by the proportion of all decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal. The threshold for designation on applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is 10 per cent of an authority’s total number of decisions on applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.
- 4.5 Currently there are no up to date tables published by MCHLG on performance on the quality of decisions made but using our own data we have calculated that 1.3% (11 appeals allowed against out of 816 decisions, as reported in the Statutory Returns) of this authority’s decisions on applications made during the assessment period have been overturned at appeal.
- 4.6 I am therefore pleased to report that while this has been a year when resources have been stretched Reading’s Planning Service has still managed to perform well and has met MHCLG’s performance criteria.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION PERFORMANCE & INFORMATION ON OTHER SERVICES

- 5.1 The following Table 1 provides a breakdown on the types of planning applications handled with a comparison with preceding years. Previous reports have provided data on the split between applications determined within 8 and 13 weeks and those determined with an extension of time. However, this no longer considered relevant as it clear that going beyond the statutory date is acceptable as long as it is by agreement with the LPA and the applicant.
- 5.2 As can be seen the number of applications decided in 2019/20 has dropped on all types of applications when compared to previous years.

Table 1: Application Performance in 2019/20 for the Planning Service compared with previous years.

Description	MCHLG 2019 Target	17-18	18-19	19/20
Number and Percentage of major applications decided within: (i) statutory 13/16 weeks, or (ii) the extended period agreed with the applicant.	60%	29 93%	33 97%	22 100%
Number and Percentage of all other minor applications decided within (i) statutory 8 weeks or (ii) the extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	234 88%	200 90%	178 86%
Number and Percentage of other applications (including householder applications) decided within (i) statutory 8 weeks or (ii) the extended period as agreed by applicant.	70%	698 90%	652 94%	528 90%
Number and Percentage of householder applications (not for prior approval) decided within (i) statutory 8 weeks or (ii) the extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	464 88%	446 94%	342 84%

5.3 Table 2 below sets out the number of Prior Approval applications processed and our performance on those applications for householder and office to residential developments. The high performance on these types of application reflects the fact that if prior approval applications are not decided within the prescribed 42 or 56 days approval is given by default.

Table 2: Prior Approval Performance

Indicator	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of (and performance on) all Prior Approval applications	135 (96% in time)	90 (96% in time)	60 (96% in time)
Number of Householder Prior Approvals	67	59	34
Number of Office to residential Prior Approvals	21	26	14

5.4 The Council also receives requests for pre-application advice, for approval of details required to discharge of conditions attached to planning permissions and for approval of works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and in trees in Conservation Areas. Table 3 shows the number of each type of application received over the last 3 years.

TABLE 3: No. of applications received including those for miscellaneous development management advice or approval.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
All types of applications	2355	2217	2005
Pre-application advice	233	180	166
Approval of details required by condition, ADJ, NMA, EIA SCO and SCR.	390	450	338
Works to TPO/CA trees	202	204	216
Total	3180	3051	2725

5.5 Applications submitted across the board have reduced in number when compared to previous years apart from those for works to protected trees.

6. PLANNING APPEALS

6.1 The information on appeals (para 4.5 above) shows that performance in defending decisions to refuse continues to be well within target. The following table provides further detail for the past 3 years.

6.2 The appeal performance in terms of appeals dismissed (meaning the reasons for refusing permission were upheld) improved slightly from last year rising from 70% to 75% of decisions issued. Officer recommendations to refuse permission are scrutinised to ensure the reasons for refusal can be defended with only 9.3% out of 816 applications decided, as reported in the Statutory Returns, being refused in 2019/20. Appeal statements are checked to ensure that a robust defence of the decision is presented. It is relevant that the Council has not been asked by Planning Inspectors to pay the costs for an appellant for making an unsubstantiated decision.

TABLE 4: Section 78 Appeals against the refusal of planning permission

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
APPEALS LODGED	38	41	50
NUMBER OF APPEAL DECISIONS	43	37	47
APPEALS ALLOWED	8	11	11
APPEALS DISMISSED	34	26	35
SPLIT DECISIONS	0	0	0
APPEALS WITHDRAWN	1	0	1

7. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

7.1 The Planning Enforcement Service has one corporate performance indicator, which is to resolve complaints within the relevant target period identified for different types of complaint in the Council's Enforcement Plan. Performance against this indicator for 2019/20 was very good with 72% of enforcement complaints being resolved within 13 weeks of receipt against a target of 60%.

7.2 Table 5 below provides more detailed information on cases received and enforcement activity during 2019/20 compared to previous years. During the year 2019/20 the planning enforcement

team resolved 221 cases whilst 228 new complaints were registered. The backlog of registered investigations now stands at 8 compared to 192 last year.

TABLE 5: Planning Enforcement statistics

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total number of enforcement cases received	251	285	228
No. of cases closed	252	276	221
No. of cases on hand at end of year	181	190	200
Enforcement notices	6	6	8
Planning contravention notices	11	6	6
Breach of condition notices	0	2	0
Section 215 notices	0	0	4
Listed Building Enforcement notice	0	0	0
Temp Stop Notice	0	0	0
Stop Notice	0	0	0
Appeals against enforcement notices	3	4	3
New enforcement prosecutions	1	0	0

8. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 8.1 Planning services contribute to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough as set out in some of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:
1. Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities
 2. Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs
 3. Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
 4. Ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 9.1 Statutory consultation takes place on planning applications and appeals and this can influence the speed with which applications and appeals are decided. Information on development management performance is publicly available.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10.2 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that the development management performance set out in this report has no adverse impacts.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 11.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators is a statutory requirement and a requirement of MHCLG. In addition a number of the work related programmes referred to in this report are mandatory requirements including the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the development plan.

13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1st April 2020

Ward: Minster

App No: 190848/REG3

Address: 72 Brunswick Street

Proposal: Extension of existing apartment building, conversion of redundant laundry, bin store and cycle storage space to create a one-bedroom apartment and provision of new communal refuse and cycle storage facilities. Resubmission of application 181853

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date validated: 24 May 2019

Target Date: 19 July 2019

Extended deadline: 29 May 2020

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to:

i) GRANT Full Planning Permission, subject to a Unilateral Undertaking, securing the use of the flat for affordable housing purposes or an off-site financial contribution, being entered into by 29 May 2020, unless a later date is agreed.

Conditions to include:

Standard

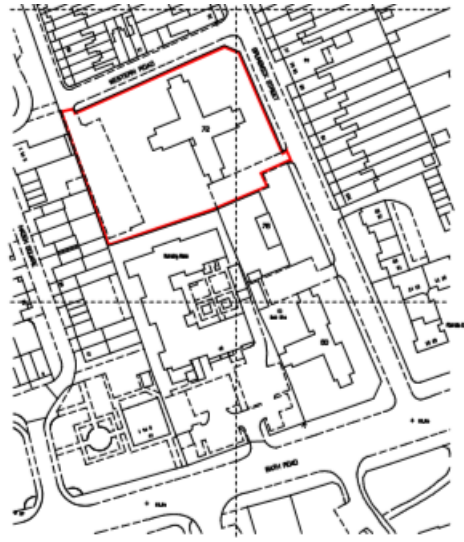
1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)
2. Use of materials (to match existing)
3. Approved plans, including tree protection plan
4. To be used for affordable housing purposes only.
5. Provision/retention of new cycle/bin storage
6. Provision/retention of amended laundry facilities

Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Terms and conditions
3. Need for Building Regulations approval

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 72 Brunswick Street is an apartment block located on the western side of Brunswick Street. The application site is approximately 60 metres north from the corner of Brunswick Street and Bath Road. Opposite the site, across the road, is the boundary to Downshire Square Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The apartment block has the shape of a plus sign (+). The apartment block is three storeys tall, and the section of this building which is the subject of this application is located on the ground floor on the north-east side of the apartment block (top-right of the '+').



LOCATION PLAN (1:1250)

- 1.3 This previous application 181853 was withdrawn before a positive decision notice was issued. It was withdrawn because the Committee had resolved to grant on the basis that the accommodation, which was below our normal internal space standards, was for occupation for a temporary basis only; as was stated within the design and access statement. This temporary use is no longer proposed and an extension to the property has been included to resolve the internal space concern.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Originally the application sought full planning permission for the conversion of the communal bin store, cycle store and laundry room to a new one-bedroom apartment. The bin stores and cycle stores were proposed to be replaced by creating new external storage facilities for these; however the laundry room would not be replaced.
- 2.2 From consultation response, it became clear that the laundry rooms of the apartment blocks were not “redundant” as stated in the planning application; and therefore through negotiation, new plans were provided.
- 2.3 The amended proposal now provides one small communal laundry room in each apartment block, as well as providing external cycle and bin storage facilities.
- 2.4 The existing layout of the area to be converted consists of three rooms and has two individual accesses. The cycle storage room has its own access, which is accessed from the west, and the bin store and laundry room are accessed from the east. The proposed conversion will include the demolition of the internal wall which separates the cycle storage room from the other rooms in both proposals; and then blocking up one of the doorways. A small extension is proposed to the east to provide additional floorspace to the proposed flat.
- 2.5 Diagrams relating to the proposal can be viewed at the end of this report.

Assessed Plans

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Date Received
All Plans	Existing & Proposed	16/037/01 Rev D	24 May-19

Information submitted with the application includes:

- Cover letter
- Plans
 - Location Plan
 - Block Plan (existing & proposed)
 - Elevations (existing & proposed)
 - Floor plans (existing & proposed)
- Design and Access Statement
- CIL form

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 App No.181853 - Conversion of redundant bin store, laundry and cycle storage area to create a one-bedroom apartment, new refuse and cycle storage facilities and soft landscaping. Approved at Committee subject to unilateral undertaking but was **withdrawn** on 6 February 2019 because the applicant decided that they did not want it to be used as temporary accommodation.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Statutory:
None

- 4.2 Non-statutory:

4.2.1 **RBC - Transport Development**

The site is in a highly sustainable location with strong public transport links. A number of regular bus services operate along Bath Road and Tilehurst Road connecting the area with Reading Town Centre.

The Council has a Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) which outlines the required parking provision for various uses in support of Policy CS24. The site is located in Zone 2, where the required parking provision for a one-bedroom apartment is 1no. parking space per unit.

No new car parking spaces form part of this proposal. The Design and Access statement states the proposed accommodation will often be used as temporary accommodation. As such, vehicular ownership among future occupants is likely to be very low (if not nil). As such, the actual demand on parking facilities in the surrounding area is unlikely to materially increase.

The Council's adopted standards states that a lower parking provision is acceptable providing it will not lead to highway safety issues as a result. Therefore, a survey of the existing car parking conditions in vicinity of the site has been submitted.

The car parking surveys indicate that the surrounding residential streets are heavily parked up during evenings and weekends. However, during the survey periods, the potential demand for one additional parking space

could be accommodated within the surrounding area. In view of this, the additional demand for parking from the proposed one-bedroom apartment is unlikely to result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

It is clear that the former store provided cycle parking for the flats. The proposal will see the re-provision of cycle storage lockers near the parking area although the number of lockers will not accommodate the whole site. Therefore, the number of storage lockers should be increased to 8 to meet the demand for the site. Alternatively, Sheffield stands can be provided within a lockable covered store which may be a more cost effective option. However, I am happy to deal with these details by condition.

The proposed apartment will share bin storage facilities with the existing residents which is acceptable.

In view of the above, there are no transport objections to this application subject to [a] condition.

4.2.2 **The Waste Operations Team** were consulted on 18th June 2019. No response was received, however their comments on the previously submitted application are as follows:

“181853 - 72 Brunswick Street

- There...[are] already bin enclosures in place, so this has already gone ahead. The addition of one flat could affect the amount of bins that is needed, so the addition of one more store unit may be necessary to house 2 smaller bins.”*

4.3 Public consultation:

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 33 Brunswick Street
- 9 Reservoir Crescent
- All of the flats contained within 72 Brunswick Street

4.3.1 No letters of representation have been received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

5.2 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Construction and Design
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC6: Accessibility and Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- H2: Density and Mix
- H3: Affordable Housing-
- H5: Standards for New Housing
- H6: Accommodation for Vulnerable People
- H8: Residential Conversions
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance

EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

- 5.3 RBC Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents
“A Design Guide to House Extensions” (2003)
“Parking Standards and Design” (2011)
“Residential Conversions” (2013)

6. APPRAISAL

- (i) Legal context

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- (ii) Main Issues

6.2 The main issues are considered to be:

- (i) Principle of Development
- (ii) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area
- (iii) Impact on amenity
- (iv) Impact upon heritage assets
- (v) Parking
- (vi) Affordable Housing
- (vii) Other Matters

- (i) Principle of Development

6.3 The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Reading where the principle of sustainable development/re-development is acceptable, subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the development plan.

6.4 Whilst Policy H8 relates to the conversion of existing residential dwellings to apartments, some of its provisions could be applied in this instance. The policy specifically states that proposals for residential conversions will be considered acceptable assuming that the proposed conversion would not have an adverse impact on a variety of factors, including:

- Amenity
- Character of the surrounding area
- Intensification
- Privacy
- External amenity space
- On-site parking
- Bin storage

6.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 68(c) of the NPPF (2019) states Local Planning Authorities should: “support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions - giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes”. The Council’s Development Plan equally supports this approach to

residential development subject to compliance with other specific policies concerning the existing use of the site.

- 6.6 The proposal would provide an additional dwelling to the Borough's housing stock. The principle of which aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting meeting annual housing targets; as well as Policy H3 (Affordable Housing). The application site is also situated within a residential area, whereby its location and accessibility is considered to accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development).
- 6.7 It should be noted that the previous application had a Committee decision to grant on the basis of a S106 to ensure the flat was only used for temporary periods of time due to its cramped nature.
- 6.8 As mentioned above, this current application proposes a small extension in order to provide additional floor space for the proposed flat to enable it to meet adopted internal space standards. This therefore allows for the flat to be inhabited on a full-time basis by an occupant. The intention is for the flat to be used solely for people on the Council's Housing Register.
- 6.9 The principle of the development of the site is therefore acceptable subject to the compliance with any other relevant policy requirements.
- (ii) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area
- 6.10 The proposal proposes to add a small single storey extension to the current building. It is considered that this extension will not significantly change the external appearance of the apartment block, and all the materials will match the existing apartment block. As such there will not be a detrimental impact upon the surrounding character of the area or the street scene from a design perspective.
- 6.11 The proposal involves the installation of an external bin storage facility and an external cycle storage facility. The bin store will have an overall height of 1.816 metres, and an overall base depth of 1.33 metres (the roof depth will be 1.4 metres). The overall width of the four unit bin store will be 6.2 metres, which contains four 1.45 metres wide doors. Each door can open 175° and requires a clearance of 1.465 metres. It should be noted that the bin store is already in place.
- 6.12 The cycle storage units are designed by a company known as 'Velo-Safe'. A bank formed of 7 Velo-Safe Lockers, in an alternating formation so that the triangular shapes interlink with one another will give a front width of 3.9 metres, and a rear width of 3.38 metres. The length will remain 1.9 metres. Both proposals will have seven of these Velo-Safe Lockers.
- 6.13 These storage facilities for both bins and bicycles are considered to be positioned in reasonable locations and will not have an overbearing impact upon the surrounding area.



Proposed cycle storage lockers.



Bin storage

(iii) Impact on amenity

- 6.14 The proposal will provide soft landscaping along the northern elevation, which will create a buffer zone from the property and will help to ensure the privacy and amenity of future occupants is protected. This is especially important as the proposed flat is located on the ground floor. The provision of this soft landscaping is looked upon favourably and should be sufficient to overcome any privacy concerns.
- 6.15 There will not be an adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties due to overlooking, overshadowing or harm to outlook as a result of the proposed development.
- 6.16 The previously submitted application raised concerns about the removal of the laundry room, as this was still used by residents.
- 6.17 This current proposal seeks to re-provide a communal laundry room for residents of the flats, which is considered necessary due to the number of objections received on the previous application specifically relating to the removal of the laundry room. As such this is looked upon favourably.
- 6.18 Policy CC8 relates to ‘safeguarding amenity’ and states, “*Development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of:*
- *Privacy and overlooking;*
 - *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
 - *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
 - *Artificial lighting;*
 - *Vibration;*
 - *Dust and fumes;*
 - *Smell; or*
 - *Crime and safety”.*
- Policy CC8 can be read in conjunction with Policies H8 and H9. The proposed scheme is considered to safeguard the amenity of future and existing residents.
- 6.19 Policy H8 seeks to ensure that proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats create no unacceptable adverse impacts to other residential properties such as noise and disturbance, which could arise from element like the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other

properties. Further to this, bin and cycle storage should be of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access.

6.20 In addition to this, the minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²) space standards are:

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) ¹			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5

The proposed flat will have a gross internal floor area of 37.4m² and will provide a shower room. The bedroom will be 10.16 square metres, which is also compliant with the Nationally Described Space Standards. As such the proposed flat is considered to be acceptable.

6.21 The proposed scheme complies with Policies CC8, H8 and H9 of the Local Plan (November 2019). There will not be a detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties, nor the occupier of the proposed flat.

(iv) Impact upon heritage assets

6.22 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.23 Policy EN1 of the Local Plan requires that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment (including their settings) are to be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

This includes:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

¹ Notes:

1. Built-in storage areas are included within the overall GIAs and include an allowance of 0.5m² for fixed services or equipment such as a hot water cylinder, boiler or heat exchanger.
2. GIAs for one storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room) in dwellings with 5 or more bedspaces. GIAs for two and three storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room). Additional sanitary facilities may be included without increasing the GIA provided that all aspects of the space standard have been met.
3. Where a 1b1p has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m², as shown bracketed.
4. Furnished layouts are not required to demonstrate compliance

Planning permission should only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

6.24 The application site is not located within a conservation area, nor is it listed; however, the site does lie relatively close to the Downshire Square Conservation Area and the Grade II listed building of the Water Tower at 42 Bath Road.

6.25 Due to the location of the extension proposed and the minor external alterations, it is considered that there will not be any detrimental impact upon the views of the Conservation Area or the setting of the Listed Building and therefore no harm to heritage assets as a result of permitting this application. The application is therefore considered to comply with Policy EN1.

(v) Transport/Parking

6.26 As existing 72 Brunswick Street has an external area for the storage of four bins. As for cycle storage, as existing there is room in the cycle store room to lock six bicycles to the wall, however, while the room is capable of storing more than six bikes there is no facility to secure them directly to the wall. The proposed cycle storage 72 Brunswick Street will be located to the east of the proposed flat, and north of the existing (and proposed) external bin storage facilities. The cycle storage facilities will comprise of individual cycle lockers (Velo-Safe), which are formed from interlocking cone shapes. There are proposed to be seven of these cycle lockers.

6.27 The full comments from Reading Borough Council's Transport Officer can be viewed above in the 'consultations' section.

6.28 To summarise, there are no transportation concerns, with the addition of a condition to re-provide cycle parking.

6.29 The condition suggested, is for plans of the cycle stores. However, it is considered that the proposed Velo-Safe lockers are sufficient without plans needing to be submitted. As such this condition will not be put on, but a different condition will be added to ensure that seven Velo-Safe lockers are provided in the location shown on the proposed block plan.

(vi) Affordable Housing & CIL

6.30 Policy H3 applies when proposals will create a new dwelling and normally an off-site financial contribution is secured for site with less than 10 dwellings. In this case the applicant is Reading Borough Council with the intention to use the dwelling to provide additional affordable housing for local people. This would usually be secured via a Unilateral Undertaking as is recommended. An off-site contribution clause is recommended to cover the unlikely situation of the on-site provision not coming forward.

6.31 CIL would apply to the proposal, subject to the usual reliefs or exemptions set out in the CIL Regulations. The CIL charge would be £5,878.53

(vii) Other Matters

6.32 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

6.33 There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Disabled Access

6.34 The proposed flat is at ground floor, and the door is wide enough (30 inches) for a wheelchair to enter. This is deemed acceptable.

Energy

6.35 The Design & Access statement says; “*Compliance with building control will ensure that the insulation and revised openings are in accordance with current energy efficiency guidelines and confirm that the development is in accordance with CS1 of the development plan*”. This is deemed acceptable.

7. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed development will involve a minor extension, which will not cause any detrimental harm to the character of the area or the street scene as a result of permitting planning permission. In addition to this, heritage assets in the local vicinity will not be impacted as a result of the proposal.

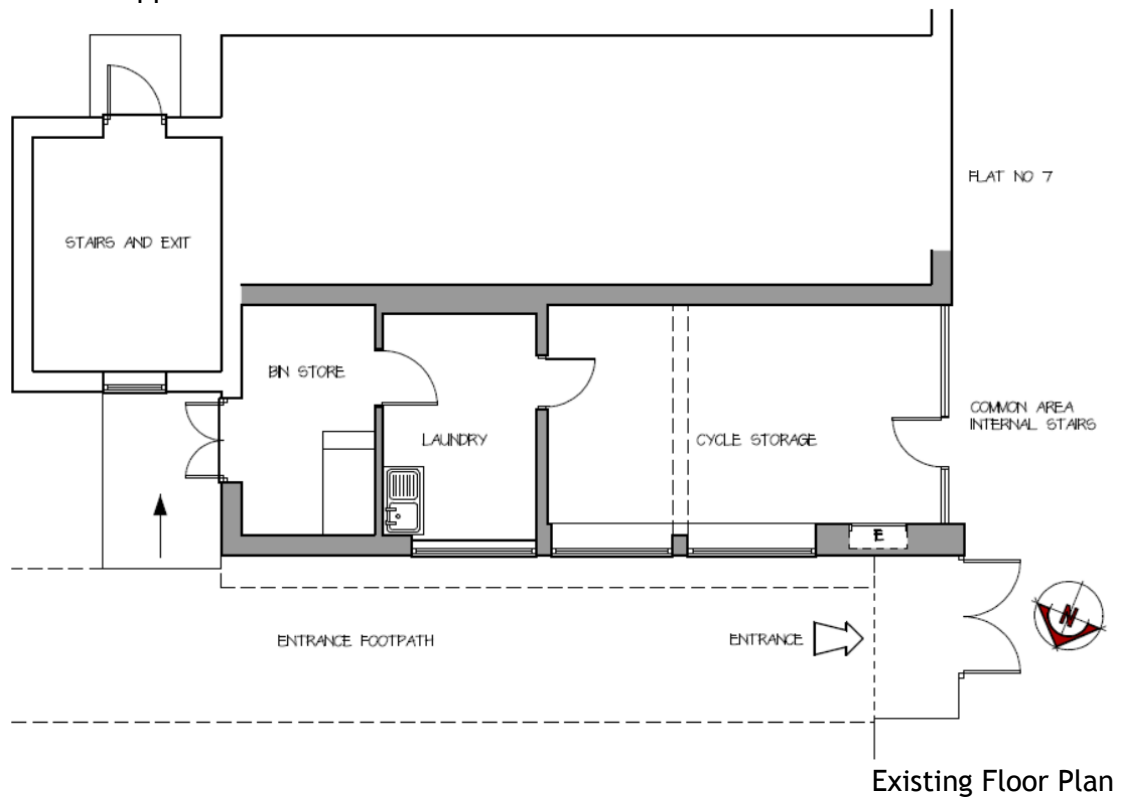
7.2 From an amenity perspective, the flat meets the standards set out in national guidance and will be used for the purposes of affordable housing. As such it is considered that any residents of the flats will not be negatively impacted as a result of living here.

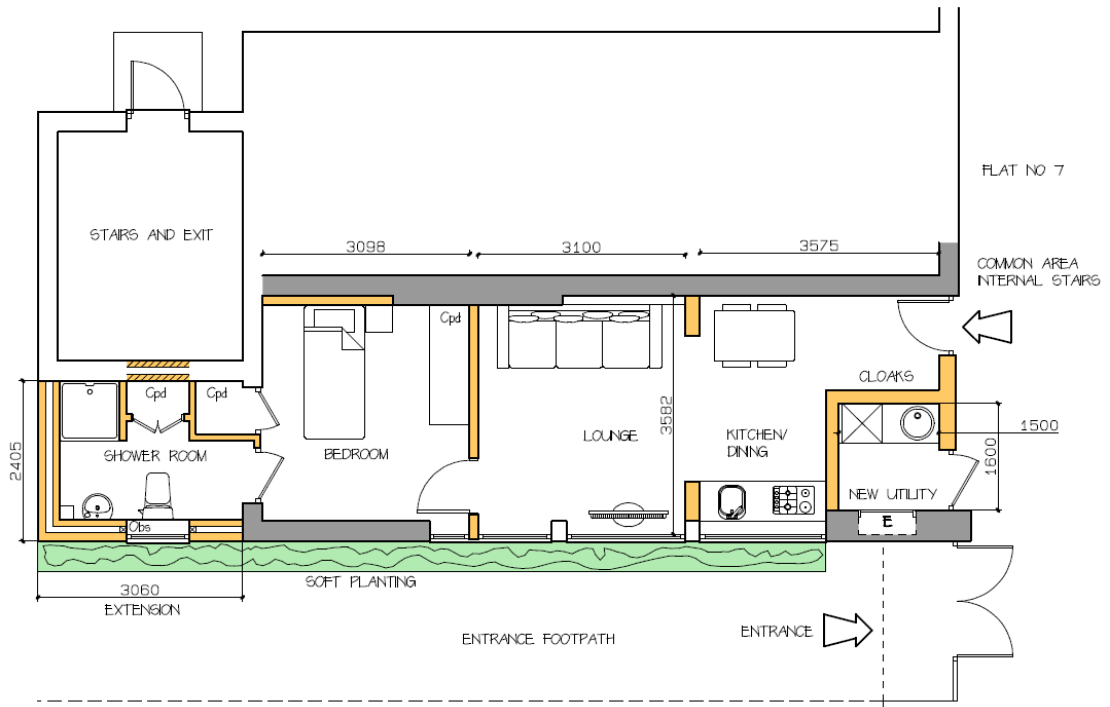
7.3 The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms and respects the Equality Act 2010. As such the Officer recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

Case Officer: James Overall



Application site





Proposed Floor Plan



Existing Northern Elevation

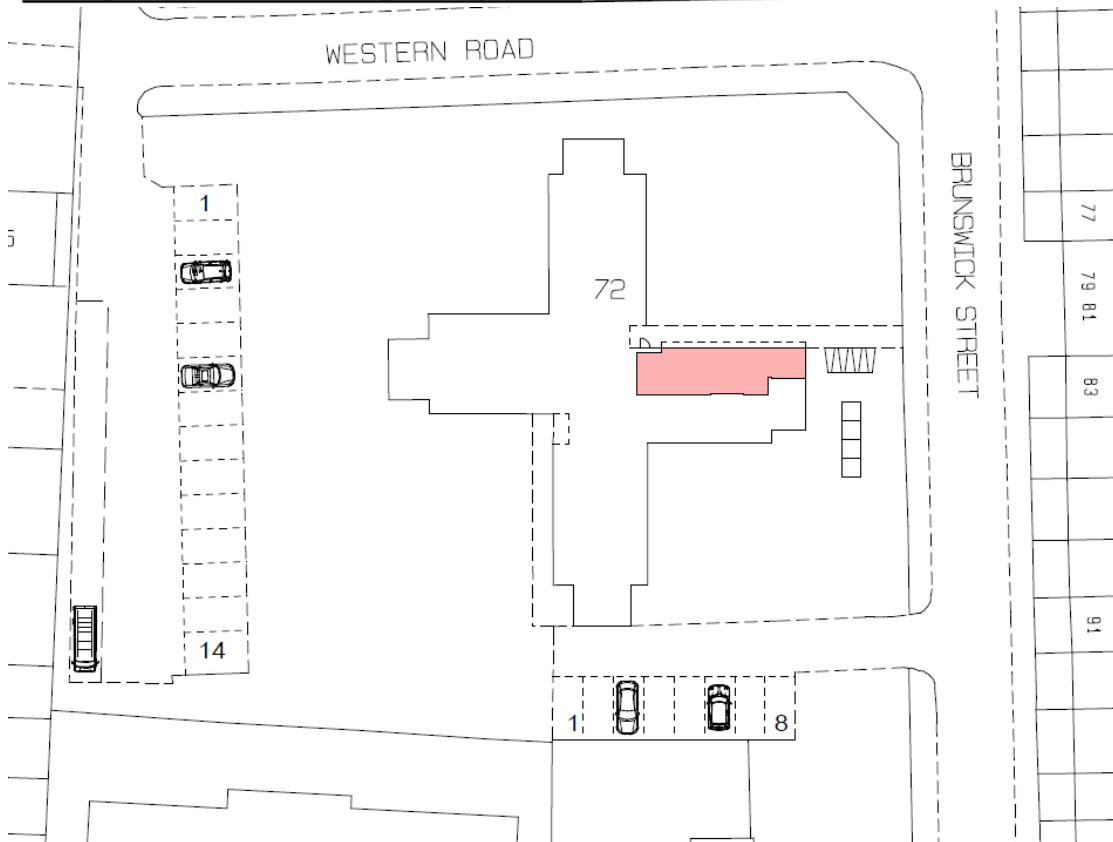


Proposed Northern Elevation

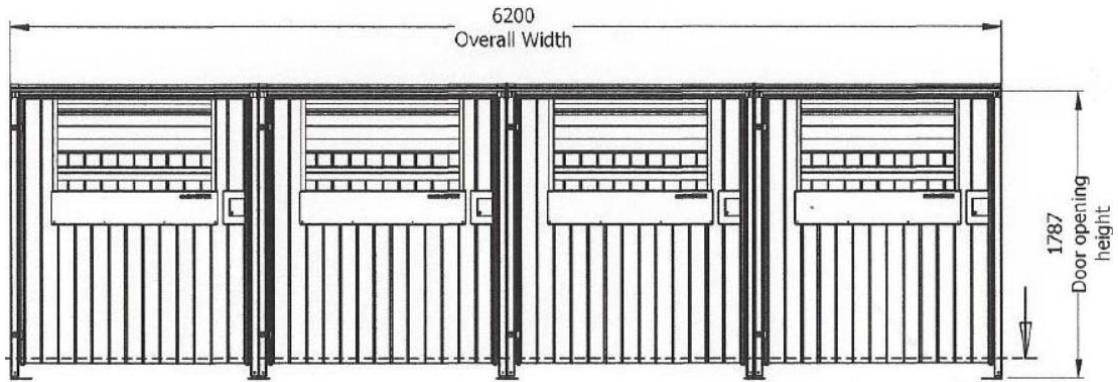


Existing Eastern Elevation

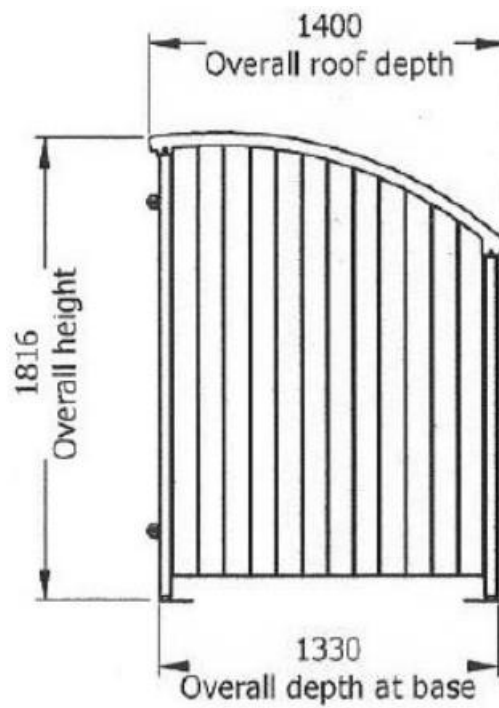
Proposed Eastern Elevation



Proposed Site Plan



Front elevation of proposed bin store



Side elevation of proposed bin store

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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 29 April 2020

Ward: Norcot
App No.: 191757/HOU
Address: 10 Pegs Green Close, Reading
Proposal: Two storey side/rear extension and single storey front and rear extensions, loft conversion with new dormer window and 2 Velux windows.
Applicant: Mrs Akhtar
Date application valid: 8th November 2019
Extended deadline: 8th May 2020
Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 8th May 2020

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) Standard Time Limit
- 2) Approved Plans
- 3) Matching Materials
- 4) Prior to commencement, full details are to be submitted for vehicle movements entering and exiting the site
- 5) Vehicle parking spaces to be provided prior to occupation and retained in accordance with approved plans and details
- 6) Vehicle access to be constructed prior to occupation.
- 7) Details of landscaping and boundary treatment of front garden to be approved, implemented and thereafter retained as approved.
- 8) First floor side facing window serving the bathroom shall be fixed non-opening and glazed with obscure glass on parts below 1.7m as a minimum when measured from the floor level of the respective rooms, before occupation of that room, and shall be permanently maintained thereafter as non-opening and obscure glazed.
- 9) No windows, other than those shown on the approved plans shall at any time be placed in the side elevation (western facing no.8), or the side elevation of the first floor bedroom (eastern facing no. 9) of the building/extension hereby permitted without the grant of a separate planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.
- 10) Permitted development rights to be removed for Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A (extensions).
- 11) Demolition of existing garage within 3 months of commencement

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 1) Terms and conditions
- 2) Building control approval
- 3) Encroachment
- 4) Highways
- 5) CIL - chargeable
- 6) Positive and proactive

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is a two-storey semi-detached house on the northern side of Pegs Green Close within a wholly residential area. It has an existing driveway and detached garage, which is set back within the plot. Other properties within the Close have secured planning permission for side and rear extensions, e.g. nos. 6 and 7.
- 1.2 The application has been called-in to Planning Applications Committee by Norcot Councillors, due to amenity concerns raised by neighbours. The previous application here was also determined by Planning Applications Committee.



2.0 PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The scheme comprises a two-storey side extension and a two-storey rear extension on the north-western corner of the property. The scheme also includes loft conversion involving a small dormer to the rear roofslope and a front porch.

The proposal would result in the demolition of the existing garage and partly changing the front garden to parking area.

- The front porch would measure 2.18m wide, 1.0m deep and 3.67m high (eaves 2.64m)
- The two-storey side extension would be 2.7m wide, set down from the main roof by 0.47m and set back from the front elevation by 1.2m. It would extend for 11.34m in depth, 4.5m of which would project beyond the existing rear building line of the host dwelling.
- A single storey element of the side extension protrudes a bit further than the two-storey element. This protrudes 0.53m further to the side, 0.7m further to the front (creating a setback of 0.5m from the front elevation). This single storey element will be 0.3m from the curtilage

boundary (at the closest point), which increases to 1.9m at the furthest point (due to a flared boundary).

- Windows - there would be two front facing rooflights, one ground floor side facing window, and first floor bathroom window. To the rear, there would be ground floor doors and window, and a first-floor window and a pitched roof dormer window.

The proposed materials would match the existing property.

2.2 The following plans and supporting documents have been assessed:

- Location Plan, received 11th November 2019
- Site/ Block Plan - Drawing no: MZ10 Rev E, received 17th March 2020
- Proposed Ground Floor Layout - Drawing no: MZ14 Rev E, received 21st January 2020
- Proposed First Floor Layout - Drawing no: MZ15 Rev G, received 21st January 2020
- Proposed Second Floor Layout - Drawing no: MZ16 Rev A, received 4th November 2019
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: MZ17 Rev H, received 16th March 2020

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

10 Pegs Green Close - 190357 - Two storey side/rear extension and single storey front and rear extensions, loft conversion with new dormer window and 2 Velux windows - Refused 31/7/19 and appeal dismissed.

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory

4.1 None

(ii) Non-statutory

RBC - Ecology

4.2 RBC Ecology comments state, *“The application site comprises a semi-detached house and a detached garage where it is proposed to erect a two-storey side/rear extension, single storey front entrance porch and a dormer window, to convert the loft, to incorporate two rooflights, and to demolish the existing garage.*

The bat survey report (Crossman Associates Ecological Consultants, April 2019) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats. As such, since the proposals are unlikely to affect bats or other protected species”.

RBC - Transport

- 4.3 The Transport comments state, “Plans indicate that the existing detached garage located to the rear of the property is to be demolished therefore displacing 1 car parking space as well as parking provision along the side of the property.

Submitted plans illustrate 2 parking spaces on the front drive, however it should be noted that no part of a vehicle should overhang on to the public footway. To facilitate the proposed parking layout the existing dropped crossing would need to be widened and adjustments made to the landscaping; please note an extended dropped crossing cannot be within 1m of a lamp column. The access will need to be illustrated on revised plans; a license obtained from the Highways Department”.

It should be noted that an amended plan was received which showed the parking spaces to be fully within the site boundary, without overhanging the public footway. This amended plan also slightly widened the site entrance but kept the dropped curb the same width.

(iii) **Public/ local consultation and comments received**

- 4.4 Notification letters were sent to 4-9 Pegs Green Close (consecutive) and a site notice was displayed. Nine responses were received from five neighbours, which are summarised as follows:

- The extension is too large and is out of keeping with the character of the area.
- The extension will dominate the close and be overbearing.
- Suspected suspicion that the property will be turned into an HMO.
- Most of the Planning Inspector’s faults with the previous application have not been overcome by this submission.
- There will be an increase in the volume of traffic within the close, which is already tight and restricted.
- If permitted, the construction will be disturbing and noisy, which will disrupt neighbouring properties.
- Neighbouring properties will be overshadowed.
- Loss of symmetry with No.9
- The extension will cause a terracing effect.
- The gap between the properties in the close is a crucial factor in determining the appearance and character of the close.
- Encroachment of privacy will occur through overlooking.
- The proposed porch is not in keeping with the character of the area.
- The proposed scheme does not comply with the Residential Extensions SPD.
- If planning permission is granted, a condition should be put on to prevent use as an HMO.
- There are concerns that subsidence and other damaging occurrences may happen during construction.
- There are outlook concerns.
- Two parking spaces is insufficient for this property.
- If planning permission is granted, a condition should be put on to remove permitted development rights for extensions.

- There are concerns about the storage of materials if planning permission is granted.
- There are concerns about the dropping of part of the curb, as it removes off street parking.
- House prices in the close will be detrimentally impacted.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 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.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)
Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
Policy TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG (2003)

6.0 APPRAISAL

Main considerations:

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Principle of Development
- ii) Design and Appearance
- iii) Residential Amenity
- iv) Parking
- v) Community Infrastructure Levy
- vi) Other Matters

(i) Principle of Development

- 6.1 The application seeks permission for extensions to an existing residential dwelling. Such domestic works are supported in principle by Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Local Plan (2019) subject to a number of criteria ensuring the effects of such extensions and alterations

respect its context and are not harmful. These considerations will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

Previous Appeal

6.2 The previous application was dismissed at appeal based on the following reasons:

- Insufficient subservience is generated in the design for it to be sympathetic to the host building
- The proposed two-storey side extension, porch and alterations to the front garden would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene.
- The length and height of the single-storey element of the proposed extension sited along the neighbouring boundary as it would have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of occupiers of No 9 having regard to outlook and loss of light.

It should however be noted that the Inspector “*consider[ed] this [proposed scheme] to be a finely balanced matter requiring a subjective planning judgement*”. Plans of the dismissed proposal are appended to this report.

(ii) Design and Appearance

6.3 Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it:

- Respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;
- Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line; Respects neighbour’s amenities and does not present a large blank façade to public areas.

6.4 The Council’s Design Guide on house extensions states that on semi-detached houses rear extensions should not normally be longer than 4 metres in depth, but that exceptions to this might be accepted if the house and garden can host an extension of a longer depth. The proposed extension would be 4.5m in depth, and would be two-storey, sited 3.08m from the shared boundary with no.9, and 2.39m (at the furthest point) along the shared and splayed boundary with no.8. Given the size of the existing dwelling, its private rear garden and the dimensions of the proposed rear extension, the proposal would not appear disproportionate in scale to the main house and would be compliant with Policy H9 and the Design Guide.

6.5 The proposed rear dormer would be modest in scale with a pitched roof that would be set within the roof slope and would be in proportion with the scale of the rest of the house in terms of overall size and window shape. This feature would also comply with Policy H9 and the Design Guide.

6.6 It must be recognised that there are existing side extensions within the immediate area, albeit the majority are single-storey, except for no. 6. The Council’s Design Guide states that two-storey side extensions should normally be designed to be smaller in scale than the main house, which can be achieved by setting them back and down from the main house and set them

in from the side boundary. The proposed extension does increase the size of the property and will be visible from the street but is now designed to appear subservient to the main house. It has been set in from the shared boundary with no.8. as supported by the Design Guide, and this gap increases further back due to the splayed nature of the boundary. The ridge height of the side and rear extensions would be 0.45m lower than the original ridge. It would also be set back at both ground and first floor level from the front elevation.

- 6.7 This scheme differs from the dismissed appeal in that the current application proposes a more subservient addition to the dwellinghouse and completely removes the single storey rear addition which ran along the boundary with the adjoining neighbour and the Inspector previously considered detrimental. The two storey side extension has been set in away from the neighbouring boundary as well as the front elevation. Given the application property's location at the end of the cul-de-sac the extension will be noticeable when approaching up Pegs Green Close but officers feel that sufficient has now been done to the design to limit its impact on the street. Further to this, whilst the two-storey extension towards the rear has been pushed slightly over towards No.9, it does comply with the 45 degree rule, and will not overshadow the neighbouring property.
- 6.8 The proposed porch measures 3030mm in height but is stated within the application to be no higher than 3000mm. Under permitted development (without obtaining planning consent from the Council), porches can be constructed up to a maximum of 3000mm in height with a maximum of 3 square metres (gross external area), and not allowed to be within 2 metres of a boundary curtilage adjacent to a highway. The 30mm discrepancy could be a measurement error, but in either case, it is not considered to be excessive or fundamentally result in any greater material harm on the character or appearance of the area. It would have a pitched roof design and materials which respect the host dwelling. In this regard it is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the appearance of the street or the surrounding area.
- 6.9 As the proposal would result in the loss of most of the side drive as well as the garage the application includes removing a small amount of the front garden to create an additional car parking space. It would utilise the existing dropped curb, and as such there will not be a loss of on-road parking in the close. Further to this, these works could be undertaken under permitted development rights (without planning permission from the Council). Considering the front boundary wall will be maintained, as well as some of the floral landscaping, it is considered that this element of the proposal will not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene or affect highway safety which will be covered later in this report.
- 6.10 Whilst it is noted that the second car-parking space cannot be accessed independently, this is a typical situation on domestic sites and can be clearly seen within the photograph below. It should also be noted that front garden landscaping including the removal of boundary walls can occur without the need for planning permission on properties not listed or in conservation

areas. As there is a valid concern that removal of all landscaping and the boundary wall entirely would be harmful to the appearance of the street it would be reasonable to impose a condition to ensure that the landscaping and boundary wall is retained as shown on the proposed plans.



- 6.11 It should be noted that there is an existing large oak tree at the far end of the rear garden, however no trees are proposed to be removed as a result of the development and the development would not come close to this tree.
- 6.12 In summary, it is considered that the proposed extensions and alterations to the house have now been sufficiently amended to address the concerns raised by the previous application and as noted by the Planning Inspector. The reasons for dismissal, which can be found within the 'Principles' section above, are considered to be overcome by this application and the proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy and supporting guidance.

(iii) Residential Amenity

- 6.13 Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity seeks to ensure that an extension to a house does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.
- 6.12 In terms of two storey extensions the Design Guide states that they should not normally be closer than a line taken at 45 degrees from the middle of any window of a habitable room in a neighbouring property. The proposed plans show a 45-degree line from the nearest habitable room window at no. 9. The proposed rear extension would not impinge on this line. This combined with the orientation of the site would ensure that there would not be a significant detrimental effect with respect to overshadowing and loss of daylight/sunlight.
- 6.13 In addition to this, the rear extension is situated 3.08 metres from the boundary with No.9, and although it is 4.5 metres deep, it is not anticipated to cause any harm with regards to outlook. The single storey element would have a partially flat and partially mono-pitched roof and would therefore

reduce in height from 3.6m down to 2.6m along its depth, which would minimise any harmful effect with respect to no. 9.

- 6.14 In terms of the two-storey extension's relationship to no. 8, although the proposal would appear close to the boundary from the front, they would in fact splay away from each other to the rear due to the siting of the properties. This is considered to reduce any harmful overshadowing to a level appropriate to a conventional side-to-side residential relationship.
- 6.15 With regard to the potential for window to window overlooking, the proposal includes a single side facing first floor window serving a bathroom. A condition is recommended requiring this to be obscure glazed. A small rear dormer is also proposed serving a children's 'den' (playroom). It is not considered that there would be any additional overlooking from this dormer which does not already exist from existing rear facing first floor windows.
- 6.16 Policy H10 relates to private amenity space. Although there would be a relatively large increase in the footprint of the dwelling the majority of this would be on an area currently used as a driveway and garage. There would still be a large private rear garden remaining which would accord with the requirements of the policy.

(iv) Parking

- 6.17 The overall off-road parking shown is for 2 no. spaces. This complies with parking standards and the concerns raised by the Council's Transport Officer have been overcome. Conditions and informatives are recommended.

(v) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 6.18 The gross internal floorspace of the proposed scheme (including the loft conversion) would exceed 100sqm and therefore would be liable for CIL. There are certain exemptions for residential extensions subject to relevant conditions. CIL does not form part of the decision making for the application and an informative is included in this regard.

(vi) Other Matters

- 6.19 Some of the letters of representation refer to the existing use of the property as an HMO. The applicant has confirmed that it is being rented for an interim period, as a C4 HMO (up to 6 persons), for which planning permission is not required. The applicant has also confirmed that the intention is that the property, once extended, would be their family home.

(vi) Equality

- 6.20 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

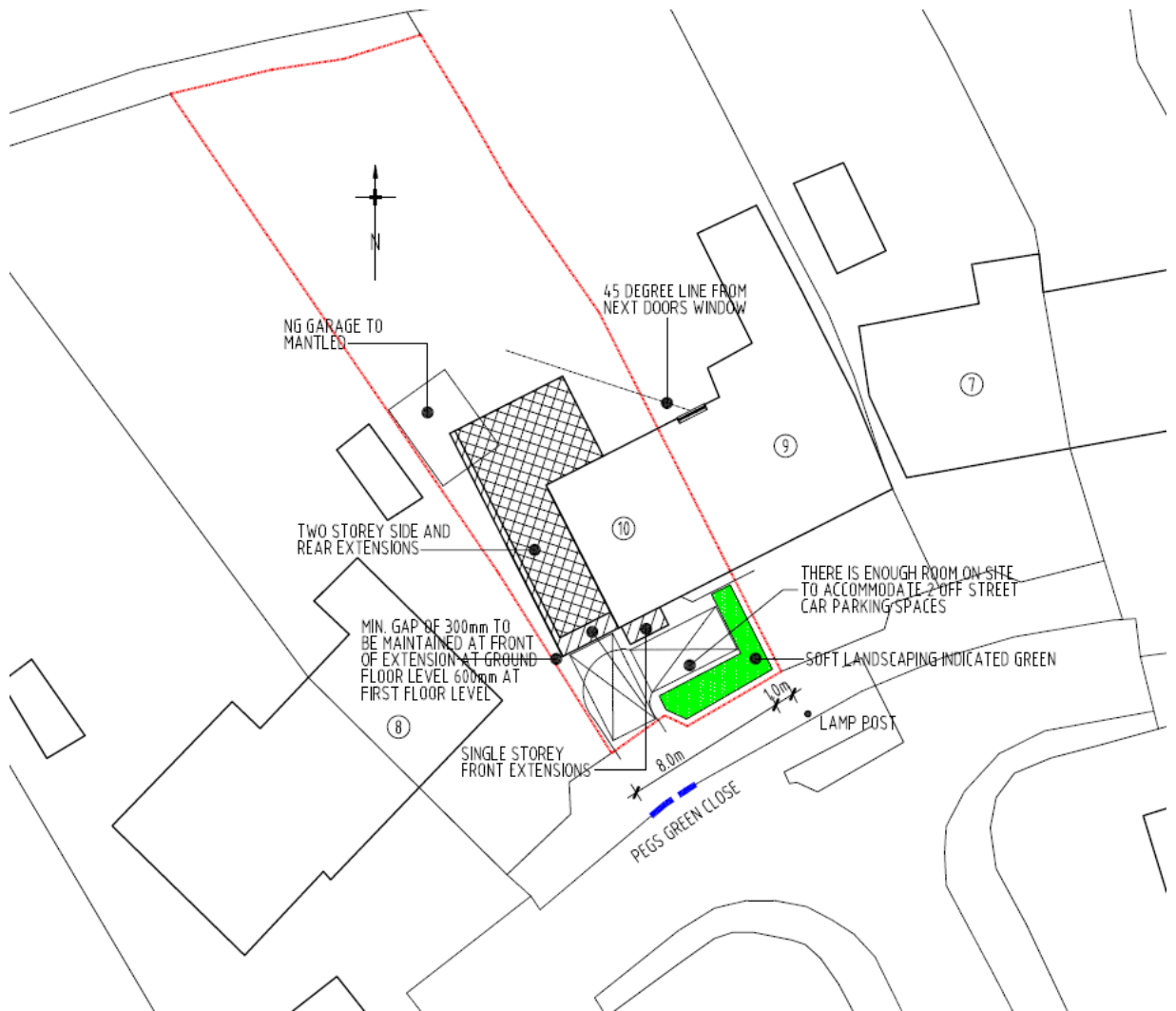
- 6.21 There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application.
- 6.22 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

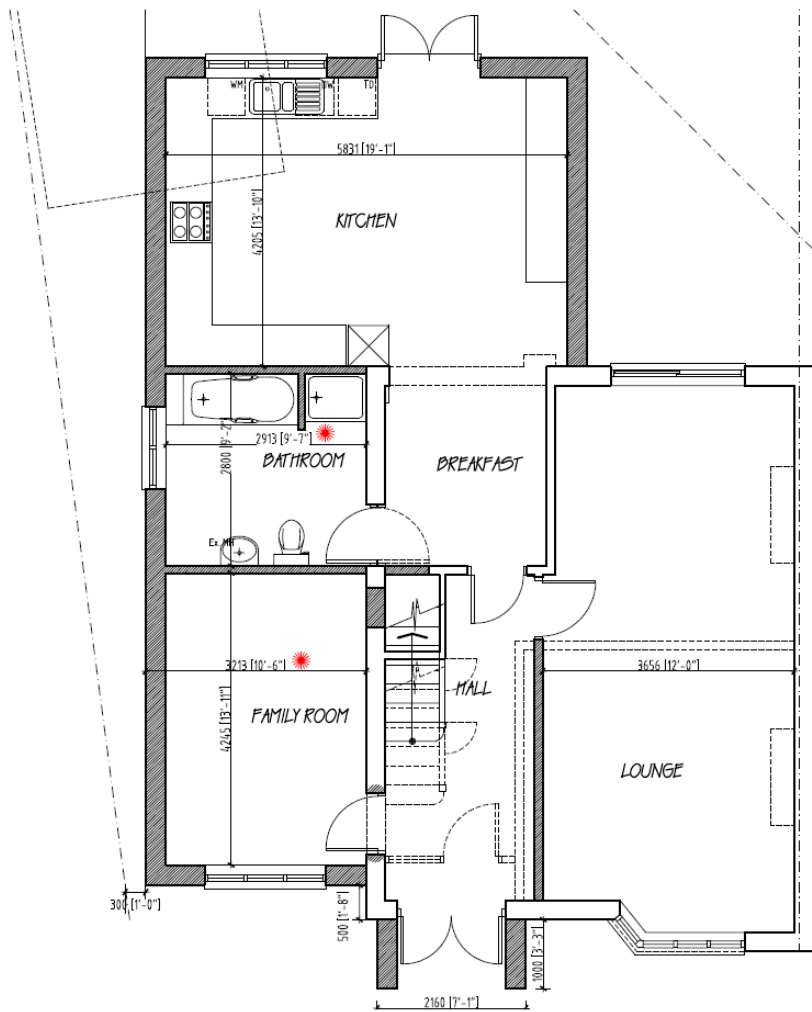
7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The reasons the Inspector found for dismissing the appeal on the previous application can be found in the 'principle' section above and the plans for the dismissed scheme are also appended to this report. It is considered that the concerns have been addressed within this current amended scheme, as the single storey extension element of the proposal has been removed entirely; the front garden/boundary will remain largely intact, which aids in retaining the appearance of the close; and the two-storey side extension has been designed in a way which is now far more subservient.
- 7.2 The proposed development as amended would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and would not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the original building or neighbouring properties or amenity. It is considered that the proposal would not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of any existing or new occupiers or neighbours. As such the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above policies and the proposed scheme is recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatives as set out in the recommendation above.

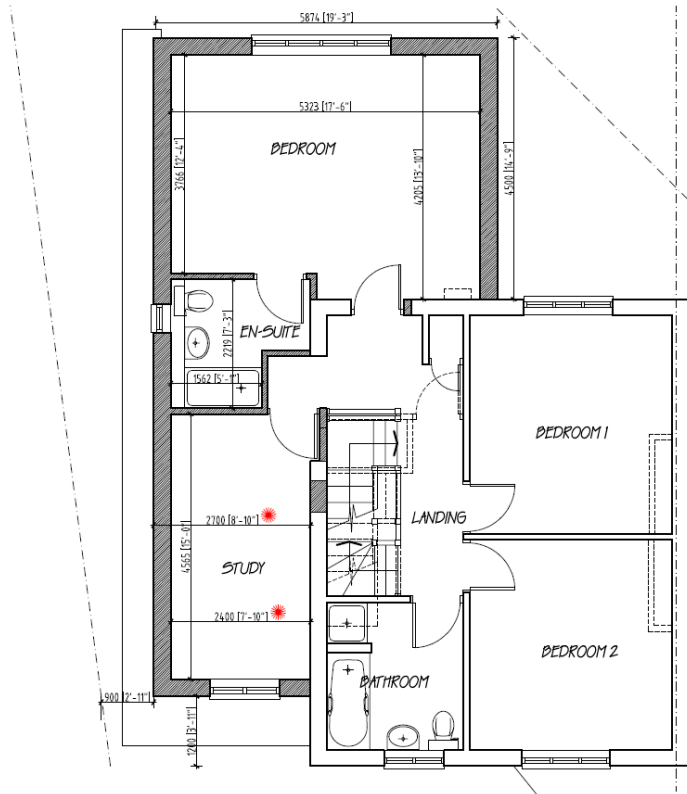
Case Officer: James Overall

APPENDIX 1: PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

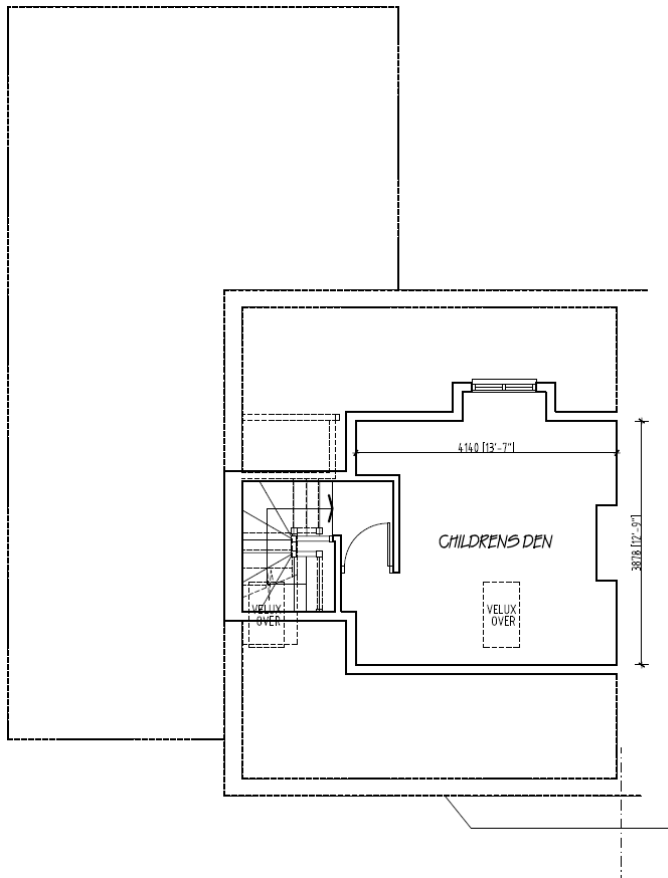




Ground Floor Plan

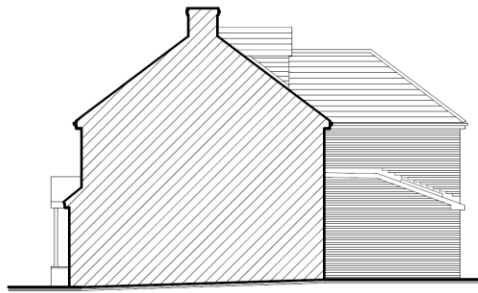
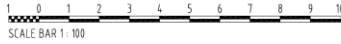
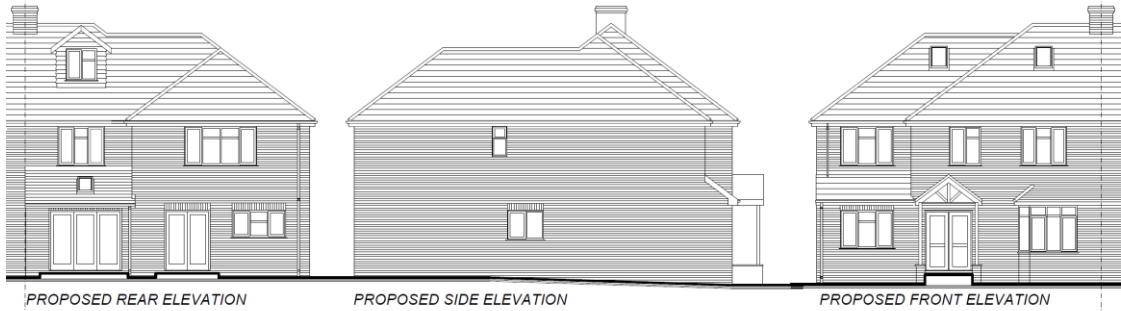


First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Plans from previous application and dismissed appeal



REV.C. REMAINING SIDE ELEVATION ADDED AT PLANNING OFFICERS REQUEST 25th MAY 2019
 REV.B. TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION FLANK WALL STEPPED IN BY 300mm AT PLANNERS RECOMMENDATION 23rd MAY 2019
 REV.A. REVISED FOLLOWING ADVICE FROM PLANNING OFFICER 18th MAY 2019

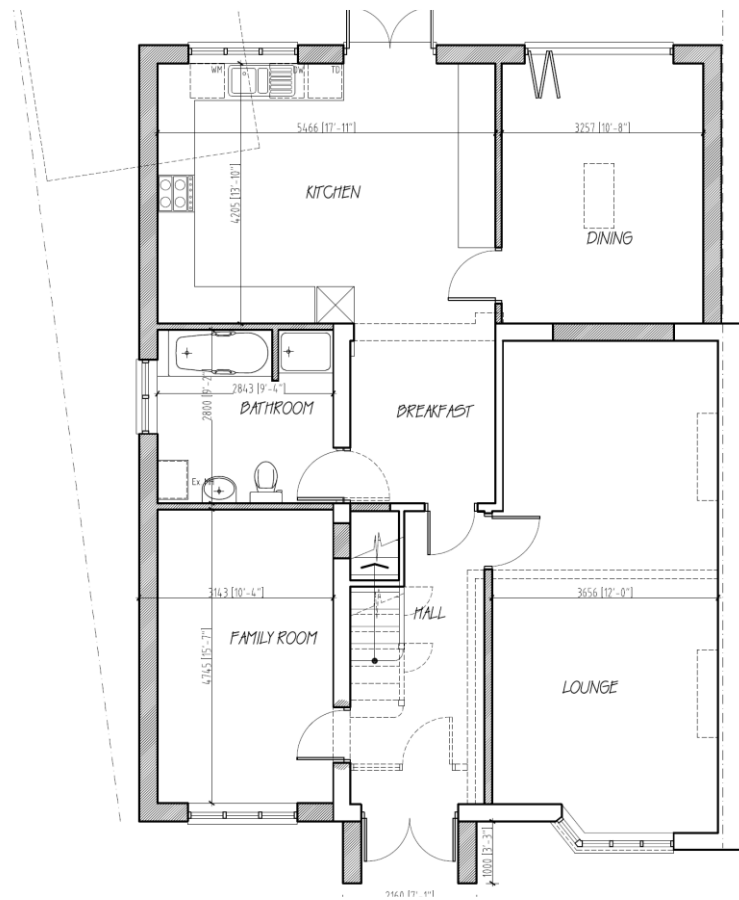


RICHARD FENN DESIGNS LIMITED
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PROPOSED TWO STOREY SIDEREAR, EXTENSION AND SINGLE STOREY FRONT AND REAR EXTENSIONS, LOFT CONVERSION WITH NEW DORMER WINDOW AND TWO VELUX WINDOWS TO 10 PEGS GREEN CLOSE, READING BERKSHIRE for MRS AISHAH AKHTAR

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

DATE	SCALE
FEBRUARY 26th 2019	1 : 100
DRAWING No.	REVISION
MZ17	C



NOTE
 ALL MATERIALS INTENDED TO BE USED ON NEW EXTENSION ARE TO MATCH EXISTING. THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN PREPARED WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF AN ACCURATE SITE SURVEY. ALL BATHROOM AND KITCHEN FITTINGS AND LAYOUTS ARE INDICATIVE ONLY.

REV.A. TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION FLANK WALL STEPPED IN BY 300mm AT PLANNERS RECOMMENDATION 23rd MAY 2019

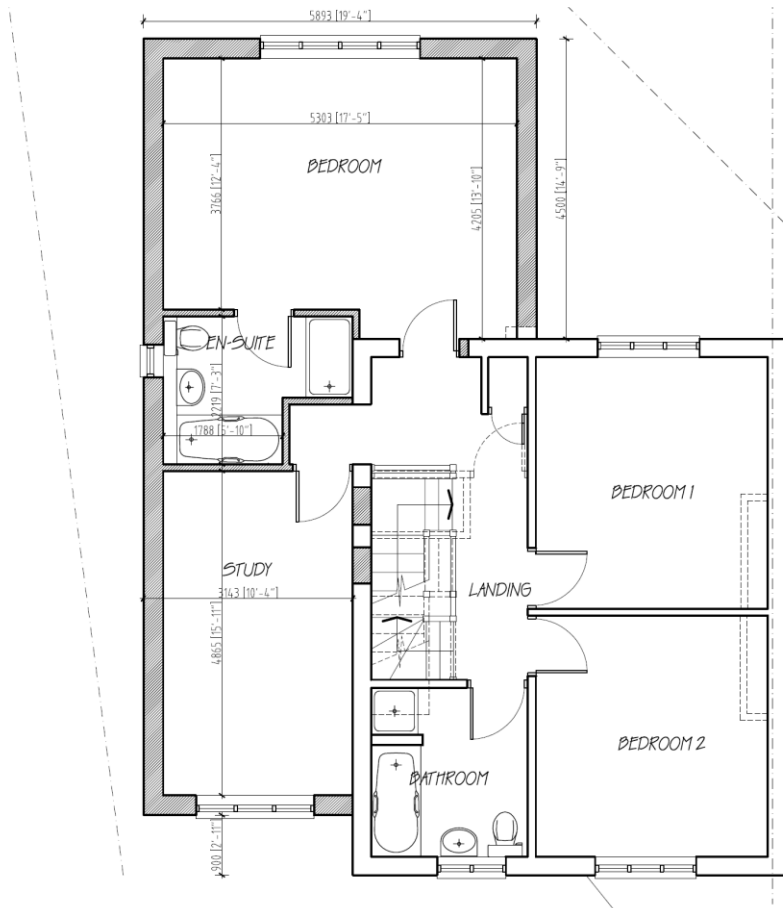


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PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT

DATE	SCALE
FEBRUARY 26th 2019	1 : 50
DRAWING No.	REVISION
MZ14	A



NOTE
 ALL MATERIALS INTENDED TO BE USED ON
 NEW EXTENSION ARE TO MATCH EXISTING
 THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN PREPARED WITHOUT
 THE BENEFIT OF AN ACCURATE SITE SURVEY.
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 AND LAYOUTS ARE INDICATIVE ONLY

REV A. TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION FLANK WALL STEPPED
 IN BY 300mm AT PLANNERS RECOMMENDATION 23rd MAY 2019

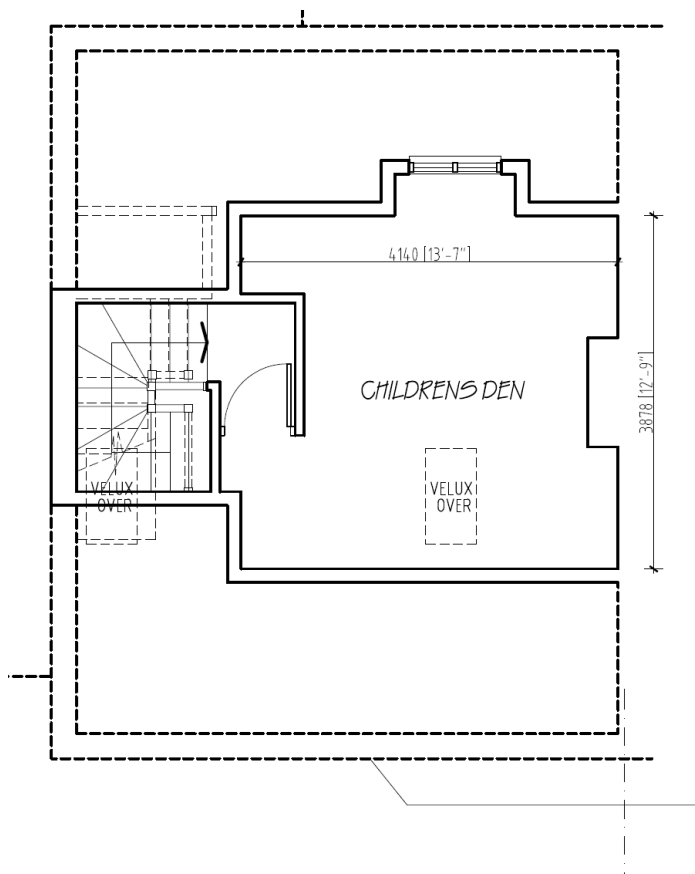
RFDL

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PROPOSED TWO STOREY SIDE/REAR EXTENSION AND
 SINGLE STOREY FRONT AND REAR EXTENSIONS,
 LOFT CONVERSION WITH NEW DORMER WINDOW AND TWO
 VELUX WINDOWS TO 10 PEGS GREEN CLOSE, READING
 BERKSHIRE for MRS AISHAH AKHTAR

PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT

DATE	SCALE
FEBRUARY 28th 2019	1 : 50
DRAWING No.	REVISION
MZ15	A



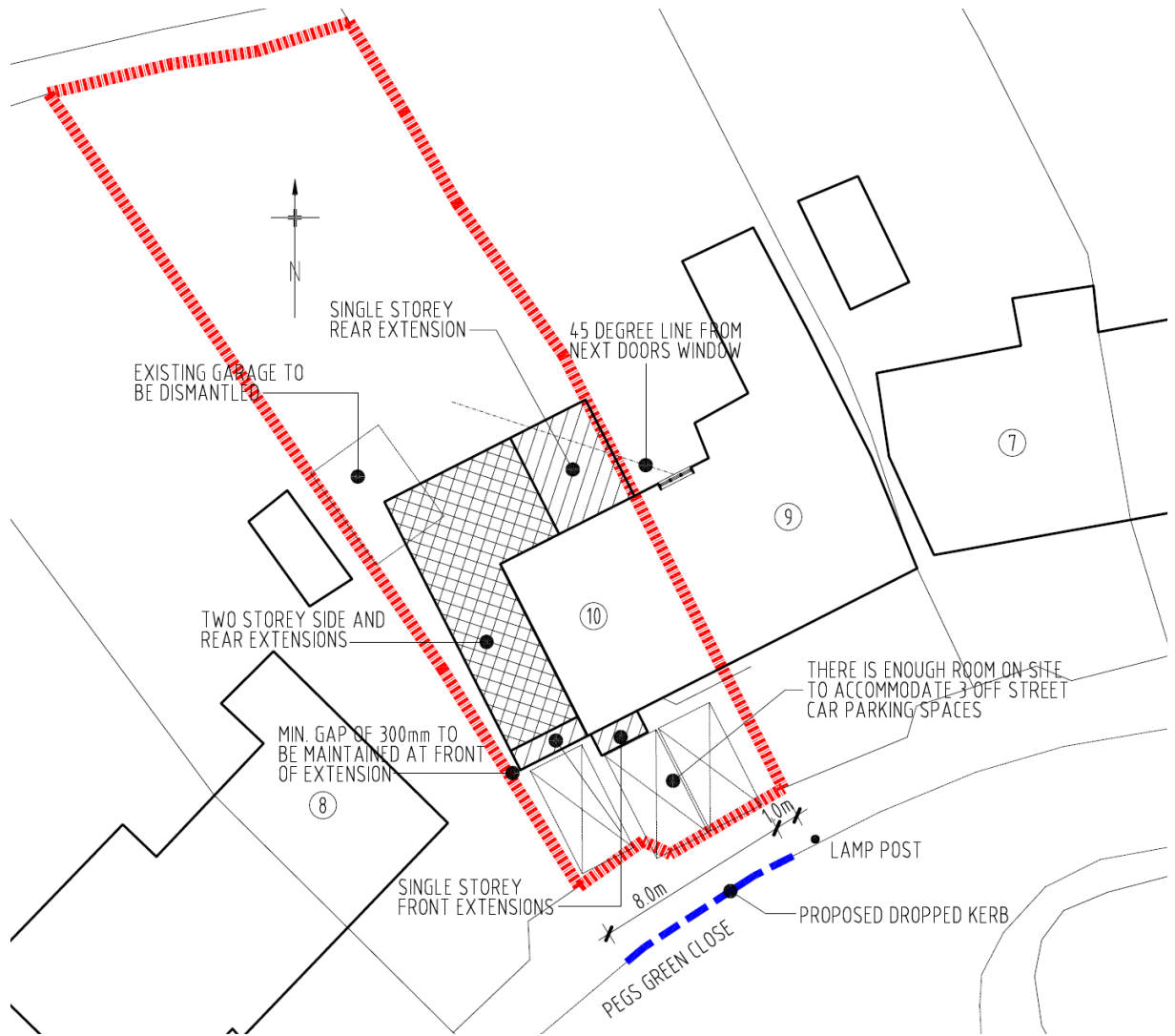
RFDL

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PROPOSED TWO STOREY SIDE/REAR EXTENSION AND
 SINGLE STOREY FRONT AND REAR EXTENSIONS,
 LOFT CONVERSION WITH NEW DORMER WINDOW AND TWO
 VELUX WINDOWS TO 10 PEGS GREEN CLOSE, READING
 BERKSHIRE for MRS AISHAH AKHTAR

PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR LAYOUT

DATE	SCALE
FEBRUARY 28th 2019	1 : 50
DRAWING No.	REVISION
MZ16	



COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 29 April 2020

Ward: Southcote
App No: 190706
Address: 76 Circuit Lane
Proposal: Erection of one two-bedroom dwelling
Applicant: Reading Borough Council
Date validated: 1 May 2019
Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 30 October 2019
Extended deadline: 29 May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to:

- (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a Unilateral Undertaking (Section 106) or
- (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 29th May 2020 (unless the planning officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the sole use of the dwelling for affordable housing or an off-site financial contribution towards providing affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)
2. Materials - Schedule to be submitted and approved
3. Approved plans
4. Control of Noise and Dust - CMS to be submitted
5. Hours of Working - Construction and Demolition Phase
6. Construction Method Statement to be submitted (Transport)
7. Vehicle Parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
8. Vehicle access provided in accordance with approved plans
9. Bicycle Parking provided in accordance with approved plans
10. Refuse and Recycling provided in accordance with approved plans
11. Elective Vehicle Charging Point to be provided
12. Hard & Soft Landscaping details to be submitted
13. Hard & Soft Landscaping - carried out in accordance with approved details
14. Planted materials maintained for 5 years
15. BREEAM

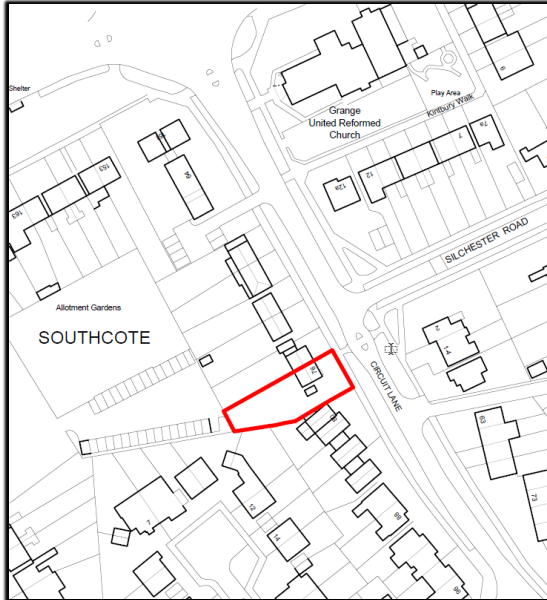
Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Terms and conditions
3. Need for building regulations
4. Do not damage the verge
5. Access Construction
6. Bonfires

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposed scheme seeks planning permission for an additional dwelling infilling an existing gap between 76 and 80 Circuit Lane.
- 1.2 The locality is mainly residential characterised by semi-detached and terraced houses.

Location Plan



Block plan



2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The scheme is to provide a two-bedroom detached property. The proposed dwelling will have private amenity space to the rear, and off-street parking in a similar arrangement to other houses in the street.
- 2.2 The application has been submitted by Reading Borough Council for the sole purpose of providing a unit of affordable housing to help with the Borough’s needs.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Reference No.	Address	Detailed Description	Outcome
171862	76 Circuit Lane	Pre-application advice for proposed residential development	Observations sent on 20 Dec-17 - Uncompliant with the Local Plan, cannot be supported. This was due to the pattern of development and the property being too close to No.80

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Statutory:
None
- 4.2 Non-statutory:

Transport

- 4.2.1 The loss of an area of grass verge up to 8m² is acceptable however if an area of between 8m² and 15m² of public highway/Council maintained grass verge is considered for removal, it will need to be replaced by a suitable permeable bituminous/tarmacadam material appropriate for use on the public highway and approved by the Council. This material will be applied to all the crossing area to reduce the impact of surfacing a verge area. It would appear the area in question is slightly more than 15m², however in this instance Transport will accept the increased loss, however a condition will be applied to ensure a permeable surface is used.
- 4.3 Public consultation:
- 4.3.1 A site notice was displayed and the application was advertised in the local Press. Letters were also sent to the following properties:
- 74 Circuit Lane
 - 80 Circuit Lane
 - 10 Glennon Close
 - 11 Glennon Close

No letters of interest have been received during the lifetime of this application.

5. RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

- 5.1 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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC6: Accessibility and Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- H1: Provision of Housing
- H2: Density and Mix
- H3: Affordable Housing
- H5: Standards for New Housing
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:
Reading Borough Council’s Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD
Reading Borough Council’s Revised Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
Reading Borough Council’s Affordable Housing SPD

6. APPRAISAL

Main Issues

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- (i). Principle of development
- (ii). Design and appearance
- (iii). Transport and parking
- (iv). Residential amenity
- (v). Landscaping and ecology
- (vi). Equality
- (vii). Other Matters

(i) Principle of Development

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 68(c) of the NPPF (2019) states Local Planning Authorities should: “*support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions - giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes*”. The Council’s Development Plan equally supports this approach to residential development subject to compliance with other specific policies concerning the existing use of the site.

6.3 The proposal would provide an additional dwelling to the Borough’s housing stock. The principle of which aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting meeting annual housing targets; as well as Policy H3 (Affordable Housing). The application site is also situated within a residential area, whereby its location and accessibility is considered to accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development).

6.4 The principle of the development of the site is therefore acceptable subject to the compliance with any other relevant policy requirements.

(ii) Design and appearance

6.5 Policy CC7 requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is situated.

6.6 The proposed dwelling has been designed in such a way the design is deliberately subdued so as to not compete with the very different designs of the houses on either side. The design also helps with the change in the height of the neighbouring properties as there is a notable height difference. In this regard the proposed design is considered acceptable.

6.7 The proposed materials are listed as follows:

- Roof - Plain clay tiles (to be selected)
- Walls - Selected multi stock bricks
- Fenestration - Casements windows and french doors (colour to be confirmed)

A condition will be applied to ensure the materials are acceptable in the context of others used in the area.

6.8 The dwelling will be located slightly behind the building line of No.76; however, the porch canopy will protrude beyond this. It is noted that No.76 also has a porch

canopy, and therefore it is unlikely that this feature will have a detrimental impact upon the character of the area or the pattern of development.

- 6.9 The proposed dwelling takes up less than 50% of the allocated plot, and it is considered to infill the gap sufficiently without detrimentally impacting upon the prevailing pattern of development in the area. Overall the design and layout of the new house meets policies CC7 & H5.

(iii) Transport and Parking

- 6.11 Circuit Lane is a classified road (C403) and is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

- 6.12 There is currently no on-site parking associated with 76 Circuit Lane. The proposed development would introduce a new dropped crossing onto Circuit lane and provide parking. The proposed dwelling, in accordance with the adopted SPD, will have off street parking for two vehicles. Whilst (even) No.s 72-76 do not have off street parking, it is a characteristic of this area, as No.80 onwards and past No.72 all have off street parking. In accordance with Policy TR5 as the proposal includes off-street parking provision should be made for an electric charging point to be secured by planning condition.

- 6.13 The proposed drop kerb crossing will result in the partial loss of the grass verge outside the property. In accordance with the Reading Borough Council's Vehicle Crossing Policy it states that vehicle crossings applications will not be approved in locations where there would be a substantial loss of public highway/council-maintained grass verge and/or have a detrimental effect on the local environment/street scene.

- 6.14 The loss of an area of grass verge up to 8m² is acceptable, however if an area of between 8m² and 15m² of public highway/Council maintained grass verge is considered for removal, it will need to be replaced by a suitable permeable bituminous/tarmac material appropriate for use on the public highway and approved by the Council. This material will be applied to all of the crossing area to reduce the visual impact of surfacing a grassed verge area.

- 6.15 It would appear the area in question is slightly more than 15m², however in this instance the Transport department have accepted the increased loss, however a condition will be applied to ensure a permeable surface is used.

- 6.16 As such there are no transport, access and parking concerns raised with the application.

(iv) Residential Amenity

Future occupants

- 6.17 Policy CC8 states that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution and seeks to protect residential amenity.

- 6.18 The property will have a gross internal area (GIA) of 72.17 square metres and will be two storeys. This is compliant with the Nationally Described Space Standards, which sets the minimum at 70 square metres, for a 2-bedroom property hosting 3 persons

over 2 storeys. The usable rear garden space of the property measures 104.19 square metres, which is considered acceptable for the size of the dwelling.

- 6.19 Bedroom 1 is proposed to host two persons and will measure 14.66 square metres. This bedroom is greater than the minimum requirement specified by the Nationally Described Space Standards (11.5m² floor space, and width greater than 2.75 metres).
- 6.20 Bedroom 2 is proposed to host one person and will measure 8 square metres. The bedroom has a width of 4.2 metres and a depth of 1.9 metres. The Nationally Described Space Standards requires a single bedroom to have a floor area of at least 7.5m² and is be least 2.15m wide. Whilst the bedroom falls below the minimum width, it is considered acceptable in this instance since the property has generous living space in the remainder of the house, is providing a much-needed affordable housing and the total floor space of the bedroom is greater than the minimum required.
- 6.21 It is considered that the amenity of the occupants will not be acceptable as the internal living space and external garden area meet standard requirements.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.22 With regard to neighbouring amenity, the property proposes four side facing windows - two looking towards No.76 and two looking towards No.80. Both sets are split with one at first floor and one at ground floor. The ones facing towards No.76 will serve bathrooms and are marked as being obscured glazing. The ones facing towards No.80 will serve hall/landing areas and are not marked as being obscured glazed.
- 6.23 Due to the orientation and relationship of the proposed dwelling to No.80, which has no windows on the facing elevation, it is not considered that there will be any harm caused by these side facing windows. Further to this, since the windows do not serve habitable rooms, their use will be limited to people passing by when using the internal staircase. As such it is considered it is unlikely that there will be overlooking as a result of the proposal.
- 6.24 In terms of overshadowing, the proposed dwelling passes the 45-degree test, and it is therefore considered that there will not be any harmful level of overshadowing or loss of light caused to neighbouring properties.
- 6.25 As for outlook, No.80 faces slightly towards the proposed dwelling, however not at an extreme angle. It is considered that due to the orientation of No.80 there will not be any detrimental impact with regards to outlook for the occupants at No.80. For the neighbours at no76 there will be some overlooking from rear windows but not significantly different to the views from no.74 and as one might expect in a residential estate such as this.
- 6.26 Overall the amenity of future occupants and existing neighbours is adequately addressed and Policy CC8 is met.

Landscaping and Ecology

- 6.27 Policy EN14 states, *“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 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”.

6.28 Planting is proposed in front of No.76; which is considered to comply with Policy EN14. Details have not been provided for this planting, and as such this will be secured via condition.

(vi) Equality

6.29 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

6.30 There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

(vii) Other Matters

Affordable Housing

6.31 Policy H3 applies when proposals will create a new dwelling and normally an off-site financial contribution is secured for site with less than 10 dwellings. In this case the applicant is Reading Borough Council with the intention to use the dwelling to provide additional affordable housing for local people. This would usually be secured via a Unilateral Undertaking as recommended. An off-site contribution clause is recommended to cover the unlikely situation of the on-site provision not coming forward.

CIL

6.32 CIL would apply to the proposal, subject to the usual reliefs or exemptions set out in the CIL Regulations. The CIL charge would be £11,343.68.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 With an agreement to provide for affordable housing and appropriate conditions the proposal is found acceptable. The proposed development is not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character of the area, nor will it have a detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties. Further to this, no concerns are raised with regards to transport. As such planning permission is recommended for approval.

Case Officer: James Overall

Plans:

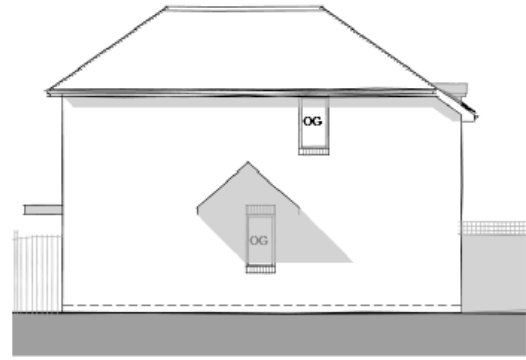
Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Date Received
Location & Block Plans	Existing	N/A	1 May-19
Block Plan, Elevations, Floors Plans	Proposed	202 Rev B	21 Oct-19
Site Sections	AA & BB	203	1 May-19



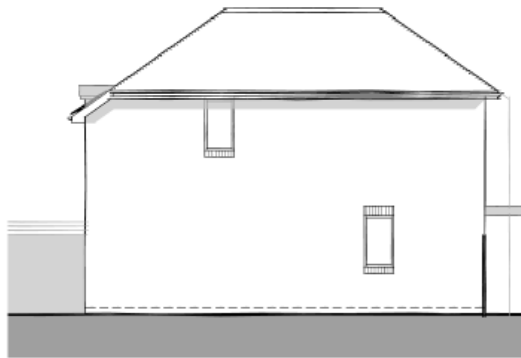
Proposed Block Plan



Front Elevation



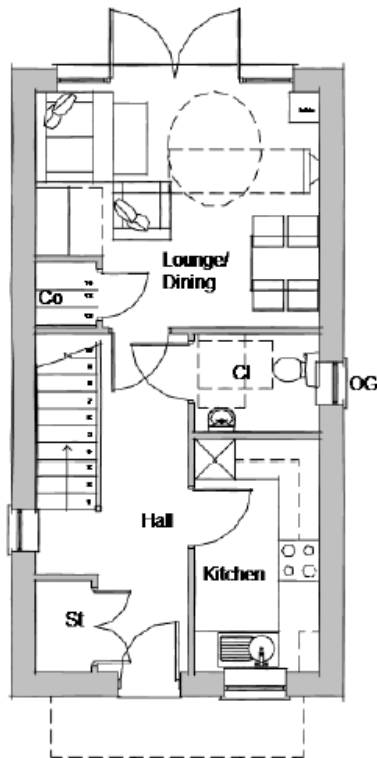
RHS Elevation



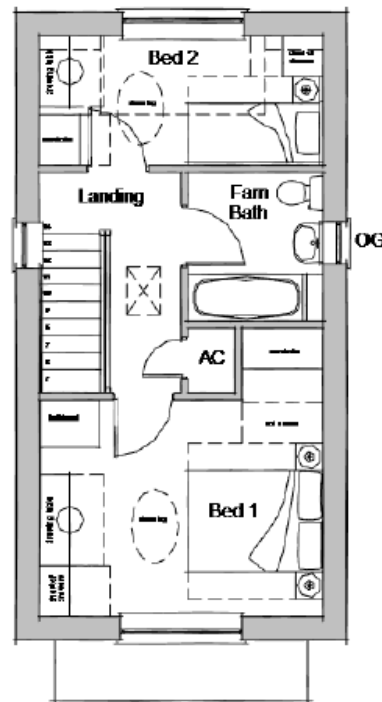
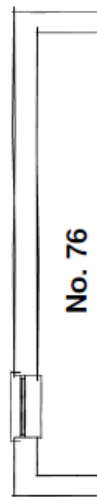
LHS Elevation



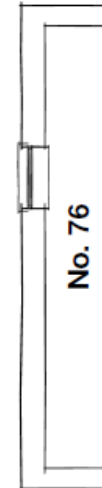
Rear Elevation



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 29 April 2020

Ward: Southcote

App No.: 200339/FUL

Address: Burghfield Road Southcote

Proposal: Removal of the existing 15m mast and erection of a new 25m lattice tower with a total of 12No. antenna (6No. EE and 6No. Huawei) along with ancillary equipment mounted on a newly formed concrete foundation measuring 5.5m x 5.6m. The existing site compound would be retained and enlarged by a further 6.6m to an overall size of 13.2m x 6.6m all enclosed by a 2.5m high Palisade fence to match that of the existing

Applicant: Wireless Infrastructure Group

Date validated: 2 March 2020

8-week target decision date: 27 April 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Full Planning Permission

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition
3. Removal of existing monopole

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.
2. Terms & conditions
3. Highways works

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is located to the south of the existing SSE electricity sub-station, adjacent to the main access for the site on the west side of Burghfield Road and contains an existing 15m high telecommunications monopole with antennas and ground based ancillary equipment cabinets surrounded by a metal palisade fence. The site is located approximately 800m south of the A4 Bath Road and about 150m north of the boundary with West Berkshire District. The substation site is in an open agricultural area 200m north-east of Holybrook Farm. The River Kennet is located around 300m to south of the site with an industrial estate located directly to the south of the river channel. The nearest residential dwellings are in Lea Close some 140 metres north of the site with a brook, railway tracks and Southcote Linear Park in between.

- 1.2 The site is set below the ground level of Burghfield Road, behind an embankment to the east as Burghfield Road rises up to the north to the bridge over the railway line. That embankment is vegetated by a hedgerow of up to 10 metres in height. Taller trees of around 12-18 metres in height are located further to the north east and west.
- 1.3 There is an existing 16m high lattice telecoms tower located some 175m to the south west of the site just north of Holy Brook Farm.
- 1.4 Immediately to the north within the sub-station site are transformers and a single storey control building, this is bordered to the north by a raised (3 metres high) railway track. Further north is Holy Brook itself, then extensive mature planting and an open field. The substation site is located within and on the western edge of the Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows Major Landscape Feature Area which extends to the east and north of the site. Southcote Linear Park area of Local Green Space is also located around 100m to the north of the site on the north side of the railway line.



Site Location Plan



Existing monopole

- 1.5 The existing 15m high telecommunications monopole was originally refused by Planning Applications Committee in 2005 under telecommunications prior approval application ref. 050068. The application was refused on the grounds of siting and appearance with the monopole considered to be a harmful and dominant structure in the local area, particularly when viewed from Southcote Linear Park and Lea Close to the north. A second reason for refusal regarding failure to demonstrate that there was not an alternative more suitable site for the monopole that in the local area that would have a lesser visual impact was also applied.
 - 1.6 However, this proposal was allowed by the Planning Inspectorate on appeal (ref. APP/E0345/A/05/1183889). In allowing the appeal, the Inspector acknowledged the site's sensitive location but only identified limited harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and concluded that the benefits of the monopole in providing improvements to network coverage for nearby residential areas would outweigh this harm. The Inspector was also satisfied that alternative sites had been satisfactorily investigated.
 - 1.7 The current application is on the committee agenda because the Council's scheme of delegation requires all applications for new/replacement telecommunications masts to be determined by Planning Applications Committee.
- 2. PROPOSAL**
- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to replace the existing 15m high and 0.5m wide telecommunications monopole with a new 25m high 'lattice' tower of between 1.2m and 1.8m in width, with a total of 12No. antennas (6No. EE and 6No. Huawei) and 4No. EE 600mm diameter dishes. The antennas would be located at the top of the mast and would have a

maximum width of 4.4m. The proposed lattice tower would be mounted on a newly formed concrete foundation measuring 5.5m x 5.6m located to the north and directly adjacent to the existing concrete base and monopole. As a replacement scheme, the existing monopole is to be removed as part of the proposals. The existing site compound would be retained and enlarged by a further 6.6m to an overall size of 13.2m x 6.6m all enclosed by a 2.5m high Palisade fence to match that of the existing. The existing concrete base would be retained to house the 6No. new ground-based equipment cabinets (for EE/H3G).

- 2.2 The proposed upgrade of the existing established telecommunications base station and the proposed lattice tower would host EE Ltd, who require this larger tower due to the height of the surrounding clutter between the site location and the cell coverage area, in order to provide improved coverage to existing customers. The tower would continue to provide 2G, 3G and 4G coverage for EE's customers within this area providing them with mobile, voice, text and data services, as well as being optimised to include the upgrade of 5G equipment. The tower would also provide opportunity for additional operators to site share in the future, reducing the number of masts within the locality as well as providing improved coverage for the emergency services network(s).
- 2.3 A declaration has been submitted by the applicant confirming compliance with the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Electricity substation permitted in 1960 and an extension to the control building was also permitted in 1998.
- 3.2 04/00113/TELE - 15 metre pole with 4 x antennas, 2 x 600 mm dishes radio equipment housing and ancillary development - Refused.
- 3.3 04/00755/TELE - Installation of a telecommunications pole with antennas, radio equipment housing and ancillary development - Withdrawn.
- 3.4 050608/TELE - Provision of a 15m monopole and a ground based equipment cabinet - Refused. Allowed on appeal (ref. APP/E0345/A/05/1183889).

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 RBC Natural Environment - Notes that that the existing trees along the Burghfield Road boundary are fairly small and doesn't envisage that the extension of the concrete base will be harmful in this respect.

The key point is the extension of height from a 15m mast to a 25m tower, which is significant. This will take the tower above the height of adjacent trees and increase its visibility from the surrounding area, including the road and adjacent Local Wildlife sites. Notes that only an elevation has

been submitted just to show what the tower will look like whereas it would seem appropriate that visuals from further afield should be provided in respect of the requirements of Policy OU3 and the impact of telecommunications development on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Objects to the application on the basis that it fails to demonstrate that the replacement tower would not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape and Major Landscape Area.

4.2 RBC Transport - No comments received at time of writing this report.

4.3 RBC Ecology - No comments received at time of writing this report.

4.4 Berkshire Archaeology - The proposed new telecommunications tower lies immediately adjacent to an existing facility that was subject to an archaeological watching brief in 2004 (Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 2006). The watching brief did not identify any remains of archaeological significance.

On the basis of the results of the earlier watching brief and in view of the small area of below ground impact for the current proposal, an archaeological response would not be proportionate and therefore no further action is required in relation to the buried archaeological heritage. No objection.

4.5 West Berkshire Council - No comments received at the time of writing this report.

Public Consultation

4.6 No. s 71-109 Brunel Road and no.s 14-35 Lea Close were notified of the application by letter. A site notice was not displayed.

4.7 One letter of objection has been received raising the following comments:

- *There have been numerous reports regarding the introduction of 5g rollout some in favour but the majority against. Until a comprehensive review is carried out regarding this rollout of the 5g network it should not be installed. The installation of this 5g network without the proper safety reviews being carried out would be a flagrant abuse of our basic human rights and an abuse of the duty of care towards the population in the close proximity to this mast.*

4.8 If any further representations received these will be detailed in an update report or reported verbally at the committee meeting.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 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'.

- 5.2 Full Planning Permission has been applied for as the development exceeds permitted development rights under Class A, Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Full Planning Permission has been applied for as the development exceeds permitted development rights under Class A, Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). This is because the width of the proposed tower exceeds that of the existing monopole by more than a third. It should be noted that a replacement mast of 25m in height could be erected under permitted development rights as long the width of the mast did not exceed this requirement; albeit any such proposal would still be required to go through the prior approval process where the LPA would be required to assess the visual impact of the mast on the surrounding area and either give or refuse prior approval.
- 5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:
- 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework 2019
Part 10 - Supporting high quality communications infrastructure
Part 12 - Achieving well designed places
Part 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 5.5 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
Policy CC7 Design and the public realm
Policy EN7Wr Southcote Linear Park Local Green Space (LGS)
Policy EN8 Undesignated Open Space
Policy EN12 Biodiversity and the green network
Policy EN13 Major landscape features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy EN14 Trees hedges and woodlands
Policy EN16 Pollution and water resources
Policy TR3 Access, traffic and highway related matters
Policy OU3 Telecommunications development

6. APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF 2019 sets out that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Paragraph 113 states that the number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged.

- 6.2 Policy OU3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:
- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area or on the significance of a heritage asset;
 - The apparatus will be sited and designed to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column ‘swap-outs’ or concealment/ camouflage options; and
 - Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that no preferable alternative sites are potentially available which would result in a development that would be less visually intrusive.

Impact on Visual Amenity

- 6.3 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan) as well as recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
- 6.4 In addition to Policy OU3 as set out above Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that all development is of high design quality which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area with respect to issues such as scale, height, massing and landscape impact. Policy EN13 (Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Beauty) also sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development which would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature. Policy EN8 (Undesignated Open Space) requires that there is a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space. Policy EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space) requires that development does not result in loss of or jeopardise public enjoyment of designated Local Green Spaces (LGSs).
- 6.5 The proposed replacement lattice tower and associated equipment would be located within the confines of the existing substation site; therefore, no loss of undesignated open space will occur. The substation site is located over 100m south of Southcote Linear Park such that there would be no loss of this designated LGS. Furthermore, this separation is such that the proposed development is not considered to jeopardise the use or enjoyment of this LGS.
- 6.6 The lattice tower structure (including antennas and dishes at the top of the tower) is the only element of the proposal that is considered to be visible to a level that could be considered discernible from public vantage points, with the proposed extended concrete base and 6 ground level equipment cabinets and palisade fencing being screened to longer range

views by existing vegetation and the change in levels between the substation site Burghfield Road to the east.

- 6.7 The key assessment is the impact of the increase in height, width and change in form of the replacement lattice tower upon the character and views within the surrounding area and Kennet and Holy Brook Major Landscape Feature compared to the existing 15m high monopole.
- 6.8 The existing monopole, whilst partially screened by the existing hedgerow and trees surrounding the substation site, is visible to immediate views from Burghfield Road and the surrounding countryside particularly views north towards Southcote and west and east across the site. The existing vegetation screening is most effective in screening views south from Southcote towards the countryside where the existing tree lines largely obscure the monopole, albeit the antenna to the top of the monopole is still visible. The existing monopole is also evident in longer range views from the wider countryside and from within the Major Landscape Feature Area to the east and north of the site.
- 6.9 Officers requested a views assessment of the impact of the increased height of the structure upon the surrounding area from the Applicant given the site's sensitive location, however this has not been provided. The Council's Natural Environment Officer also considers that such an assessment is necessary to properly assess the impact of the development of the surrounding area and Major Landscape Feature. Given the absence of this assessment from the application documentation, the Natural Environment Officer has raised objection to the proposed development on the basis that the application fails to demonstrate that the increased height and width of the telecommunications tower would not detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding area and the character and appearance of the Major Landscape Feature.
- 6.10 However, notwithstanding the above officers must assess the application and proposed development based on the plans and documentation that have been submitted.
- 6.11 At 10m taller than the existing monopole, the proposed replacement 25m high lattice tower would clearly be more a more visible and prominent structure. In terms of appropriate design, the lattice style structure, whilst wider, would present a more lightweight appearance than a solid monopole. The existing vegetation and trees, none of which are to be removed as part of the proposals, would screen the lower parts of the tower to some immediate and long-range views as with the existing monopole. However, the increased height would project up above the surrounding tree line making it visible to wider range of views whilst the bulky antennas and dishes to the top of the mast would increase its visual prominence, negatively affecting views from the Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows Major Landscape Feature and Southcote Linear Park Local Green Space. This would be particularly evident looking south across the site from Southcote towards the open countryside, where the existing monopole is most effectively screened by trees and vegetation.

- 6.12 There is an existing telecommunications lattice tower located around 100m to the south in open countryside just north of Holy Brook Farm. This structure is 16m in height and therefore would not provide the necessary height to provide the network coverage sought by the lattice tower proposed as part of this application. In considering the visual impact on the wider area officers accept that it is preferable for a taller lattice tower, such as that proposed, to be located within an existing large substation site which is already established within the countryside, rather than an isolated site such as that near Holy Brook Farm in the middle of green fields. Albeit it is acknowledged that the re-use of an existing site does not diminish the impact of the increased height.
- 6.13 Based on the information provided, Officers conclude that the proposed larger replacement telecommunications lattice tower, antennas and dishes would result in a development which detracts from the amenity and character of the surrounding area both in terms of immediate and long-range views from within the surrounding countryside and Major Landscape Feature. However, taking into account that the application relates to an existing telecommunications base station site within an established electricity substation which is encouraged by the NPPF and Policy OU3, as well as the existing presence of the monopole to be removed, the degree to which the development detracts from surrounding character must be considered against the positive benefits of the telecommunications development.

Alternative Sites

- 6.14 The proposal would accord with the requirements of the Paragraph 1115 of the NPPF and Policy OU3 in that the works propose an upgrade to an existing telecommunications base station as opposed to creating a new base station in an alternative and non-established location. Whilst not currently proposed as a site share between different telecommunications operators, the application makes clear that the size and location of the mast mean that it is suitable and would be available for share with other operators which could avoid the need for the installation of another mast elsewhere within the Borough or creation of a new base station site that is not in an established location.
- 6.15 The supporting information submitted with the application does not explore alternative locations for the tower on the basis that the proposed works relate to an upgrade of an existing base station and therefore the principle of telecommunications apparatus on the site is already established. Whilst the proposals do relate to upgrade of an existing site this does not mean that alternative locations should not be considered, particularly those which could potentially have a lesser visual impact. However, in this instance given the open character of this part of the borough and the scale of the mast required to provide the necessary level of network coverage for residents and the emergency services network, Officers are of the opinion that less exposed sites locations are likely to be difficult to identify and therefore re-use and upgrade of an existing

established site is the preferred approach. Furthermore, the character of the built-up areas of this part of the Borough do not include particularly tall buildings where there could be potential for provision of alternative roof-based equipment as opposed to ground-based monopoles/towers.

Other

- 6.16 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that *“Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure”*. The requirement is also outlined in the supporting text to Policy OU3.
- 6.17 The applicant has provided an International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) certificate to support this planning application. This certifies that the proposed development would be in full compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. The ICNIRP guidelines are the most up-to-date and relevant tool to ascertain the acceptability of telecommunications development within the planning process. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should not substitute their own "opinion" on health issues for that expressed by ICNIRP.
- 6.18 On balance, the suggested health risks associated with this development (as raised by the objector) and the fear and/or stress associated with these perceived risks are outweighed by the reassurances provided by the technical information submitted by the applicant. As such, the proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of health-related issues.
- 6.19 No audible noise is anticipated from the structure. The surrounding area receives audible noise from vehicles, trains and a constant low hum from the substation. Consequently, there will be no adverse effects.
- 6.20 The tree officer is satisfied that the proposed position of the extended concrete base and its location within an established substation is such that the proposals would not result in any detrimental impact to existing trees and vegetation. Comments from the Council's Ecologist will follow in an update report or be reported verbally at the committee meeting.
- 6.21 Berkshire Archaeology raises no objection to the proposals on the basis that the site is located within an established base station site such that archaeological implications would be limited.
- 6.22 In terms of transport impacts the substation site has its own existing access such that construction works will be able to take place away from the highway. However, any more detailed transport comments will be provided in an update report or reported verbally at the committee meeting.

Matters raised in representations

- 6.23 The issues relating to the health impact of the proposals have already been addressed in paragraphs 6.16 to 6.18 of this report.
- 6.24 However, the objector also raises the matter the impact of the perceived health effects of the development upon their Human Rights. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act (HRA) relates to enjoyment by residents of their home life. The grant of planning permission for development which may have sufficiently serious effects on the enjoyment by local residents of their home life may in principle affect Article 8, although such cases are likely to involve extreme facts. In addition, Article 8(2) allows public authorities to interfere with the right to respect the home if it is “in accordance with the law” and “to the extent necessary in a democratic society” in the interest of “the well-being” of the area.
- 6.25 Under S.70 of the 1990 Planning Act, Parliament has entrusted planning authorities with the statutory duty to determine planning applications, and has said (S.70(2)) that in dealing with such an application the authority “shall have regard” to the development plan and to “any other material considerations” which will include HRA issues.
- 6.26 The courts have held that a “balance” has to be struck in planning decisions between the rights of the developer and the rights of those affected by the proposed development. This involves the balance between:
- on the one hand the specific interests of the individual objector as documented (see above), and
 - on the other hand, the interests of the applicant to obtain the planning permission he has applied for, and lastly
 - the interests of the wider community, as expressed in Lough (2004) in the following terms “in an urban setting it must be anticipated that development may take place” and that it “is in the public interest that residential developments take place in urban areas if possible”.
- 6.27 In this respect the applicant has applied for planning permission for the development as required by planning legislation. As referred to in paragraphs 6.16 to 6.18 of this report above, the NPPF is clear that for telecommunications development LPAs should not substitute their own opinion on health matters where a development demonstrates that it is meeting ICNIRP guidelines which are the internationally set guiding principles for such matters. An ICNIRP certificate demonstrating adherence to these guidelines has been submitted by the Applicant as part of the application as required. Officers therefore consider that the development would not conflict with the HRA.

Equalities impact assessment

- 6.28 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief,

gender/sex, or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is considered that the benefits of the proposed development in providing improved network coverage for nearby residents and the emergency services network, together with the fact that the proposals are for an upgrade of an existing telecommunications base stations and are designed to be shared with other operators therefore reducing the potential for new telecommunication base stations and masts to be established elsewhere in this locality, are considered to outweigh the extent to which the increased height of the mast would detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding area and the character of the Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows Major Landscape Feature.
- 7.2 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN7Wr, EN8, EN12, EN13, EN14, EN16, TR3 and OU3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted, subject to suitable conditions.

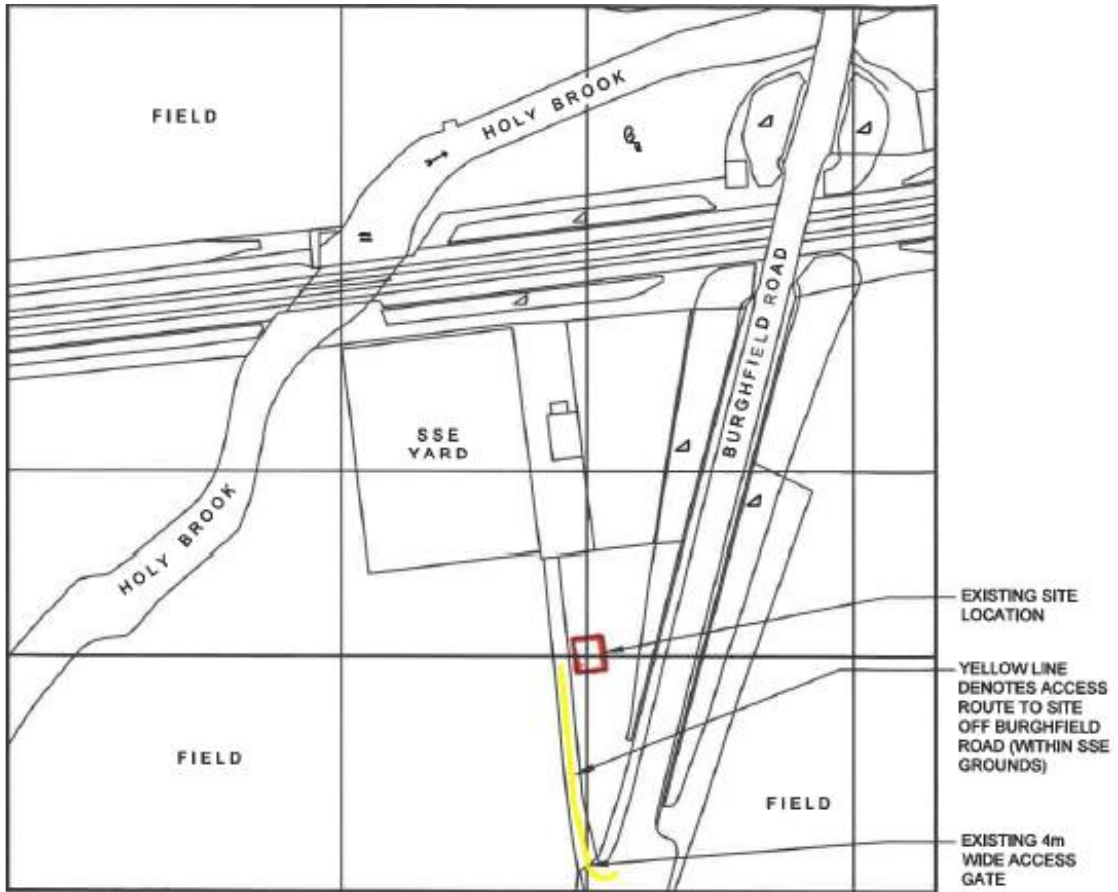
Drawings and Documents Considered:

Drawing no 100 rev E - Location and block plans
Drawing no 101 rev E - Crane/cherry picker location plan
Drawing no 102 rev E - Existing site plan - ground level
Drawing no 103 rev E - Existing site elevation
Drawing no 104 rev E - Proposed site plan - ground level
Drawing no 105 rev E - Proposed site elevation
Drawing no 107 rev E - MBNL headframe plans

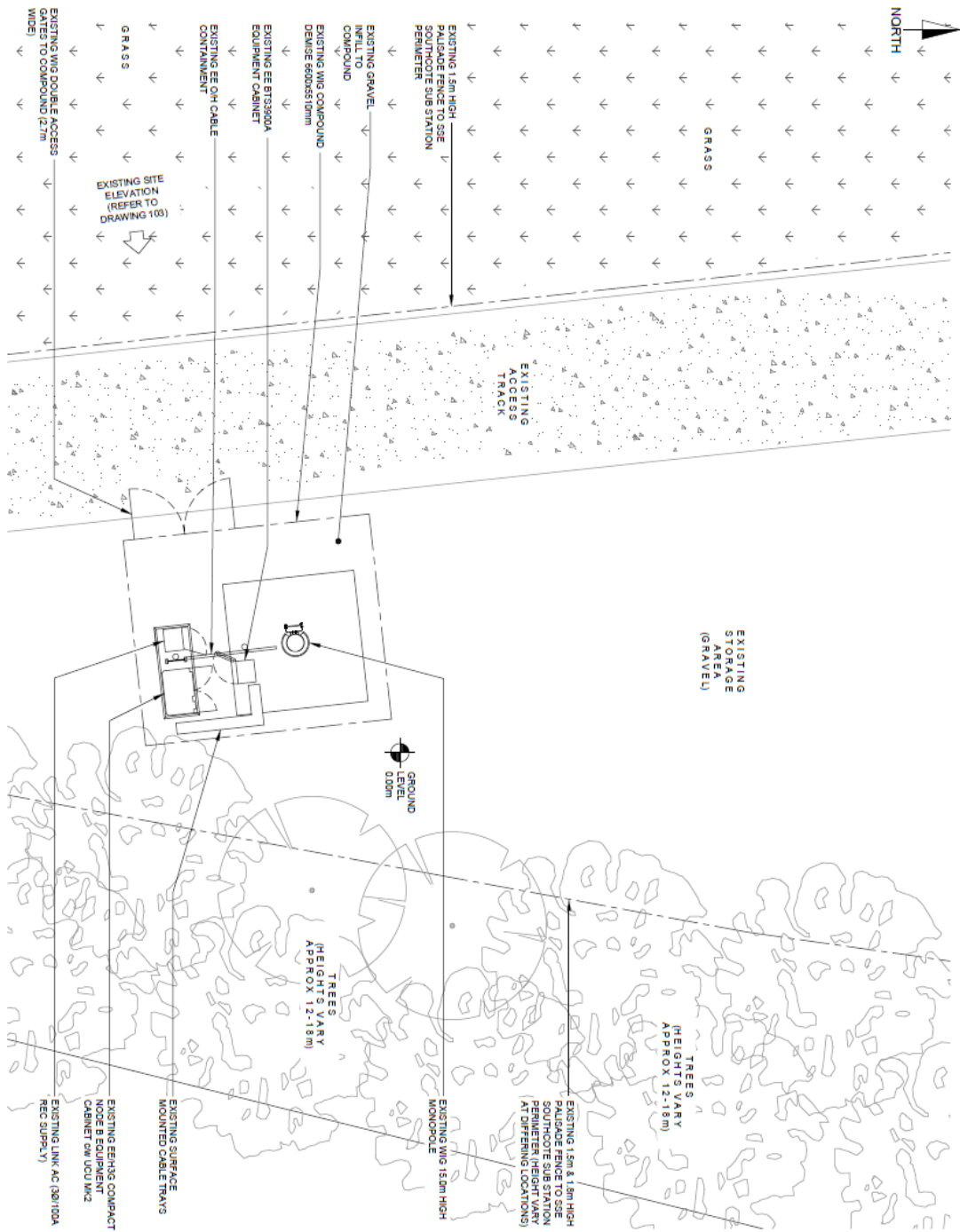
ICNIRP declaration certificate

Harlequin group supporting statement rev 1

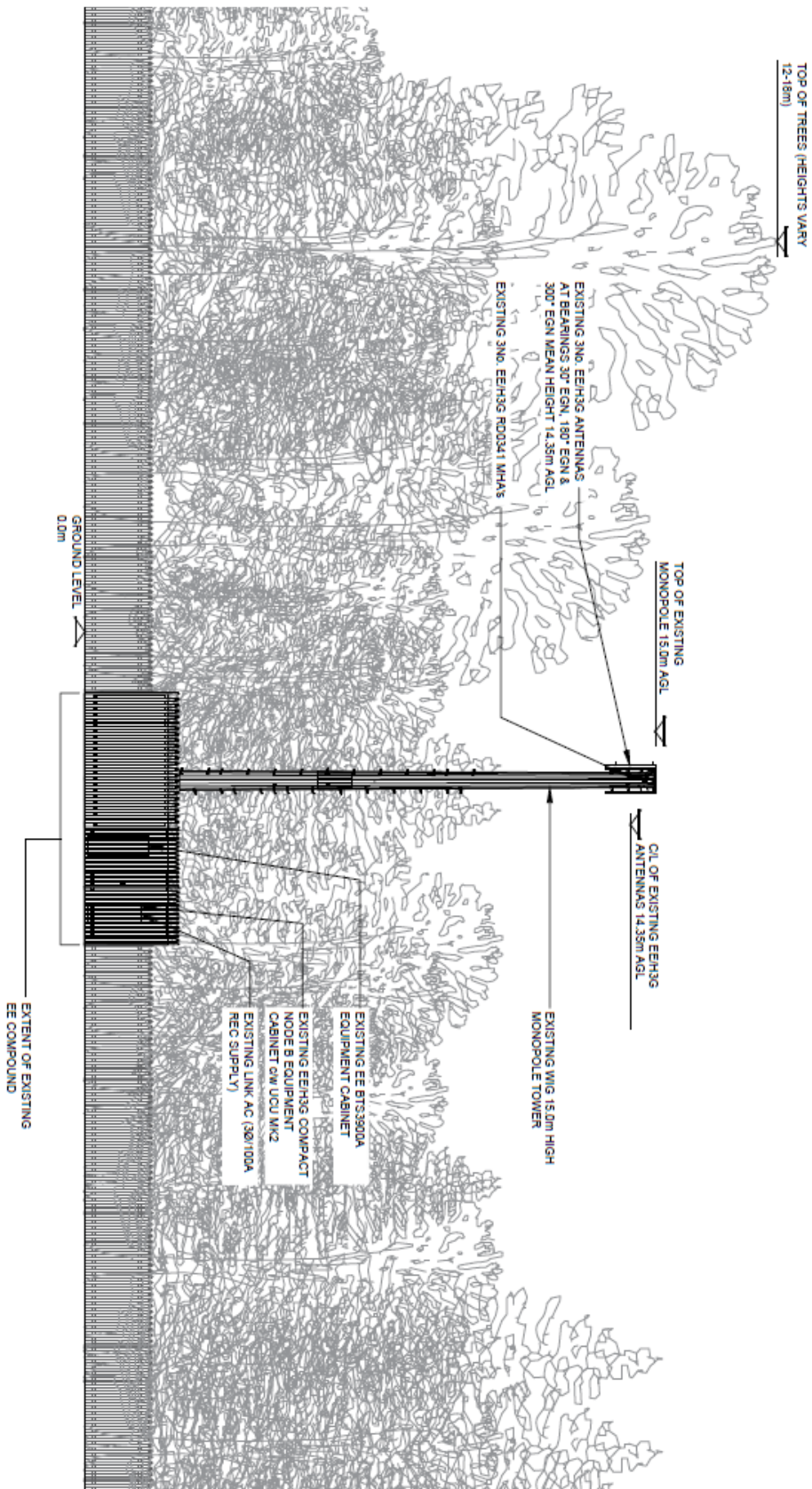
Case Officer: Matt Burns



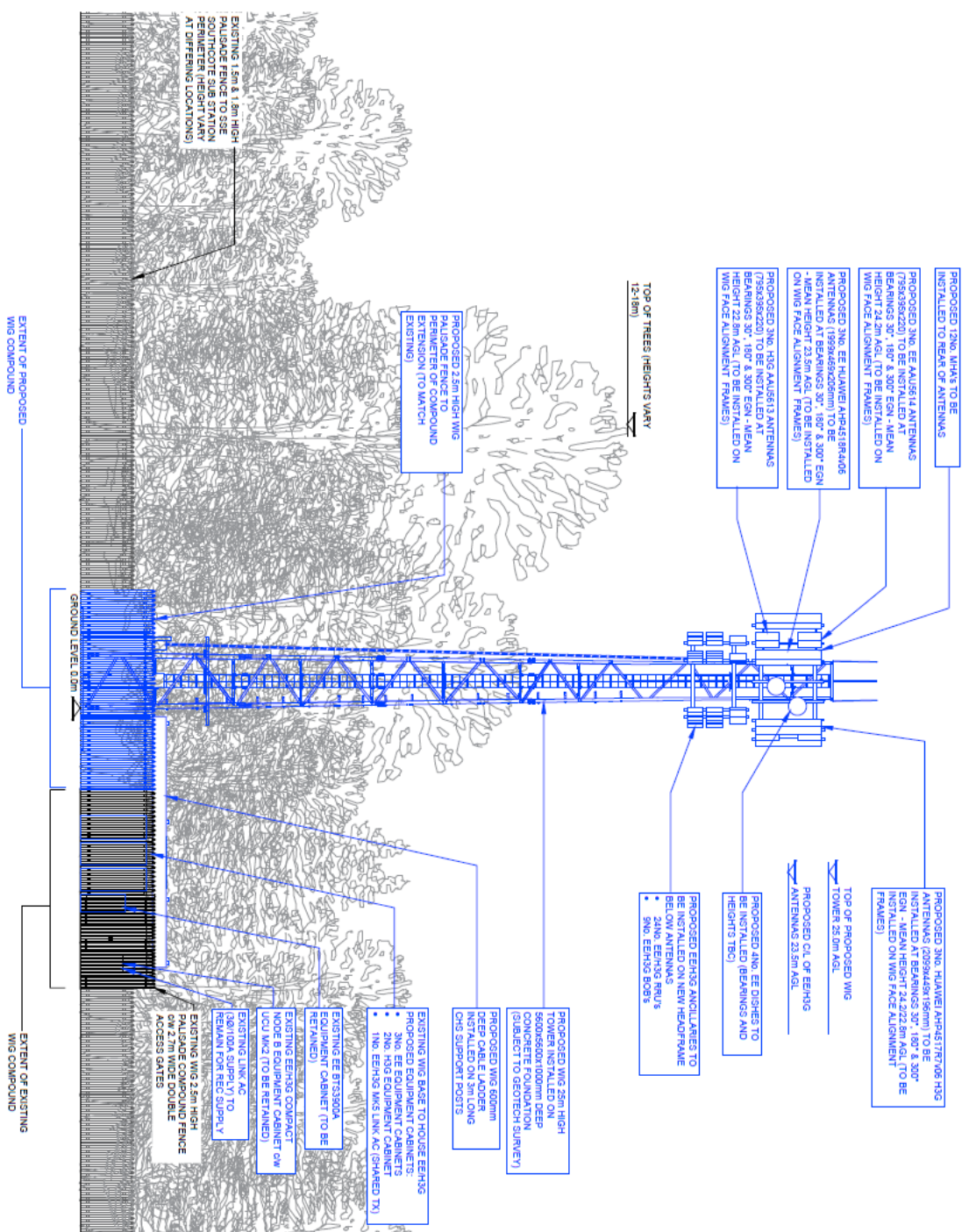
Site Plan



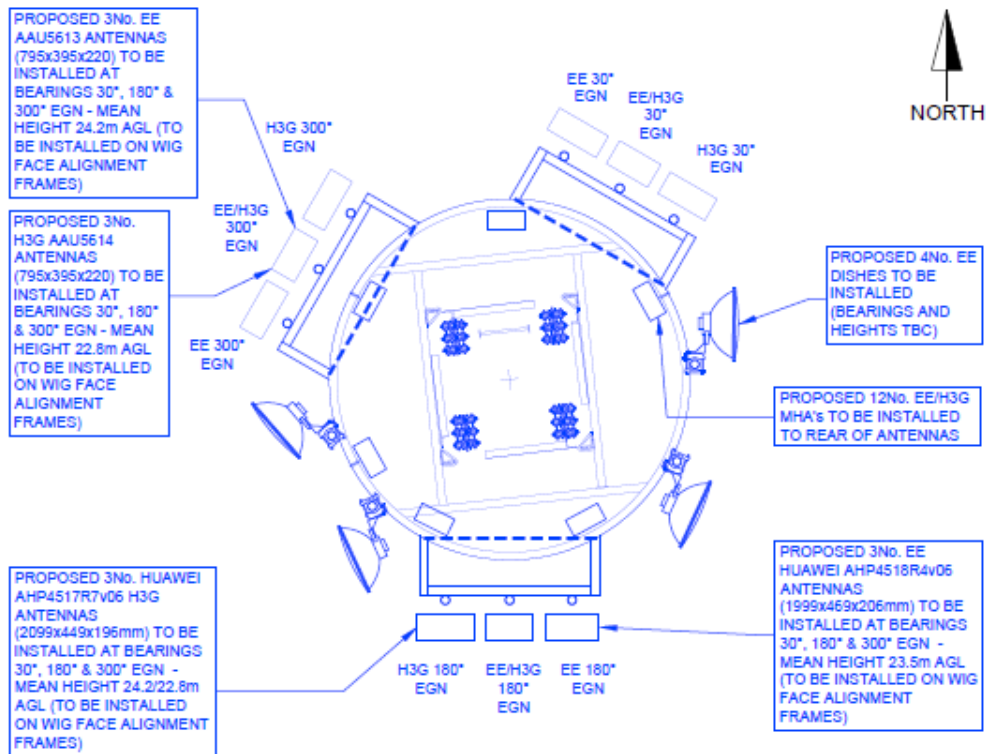
Existing Site Plan



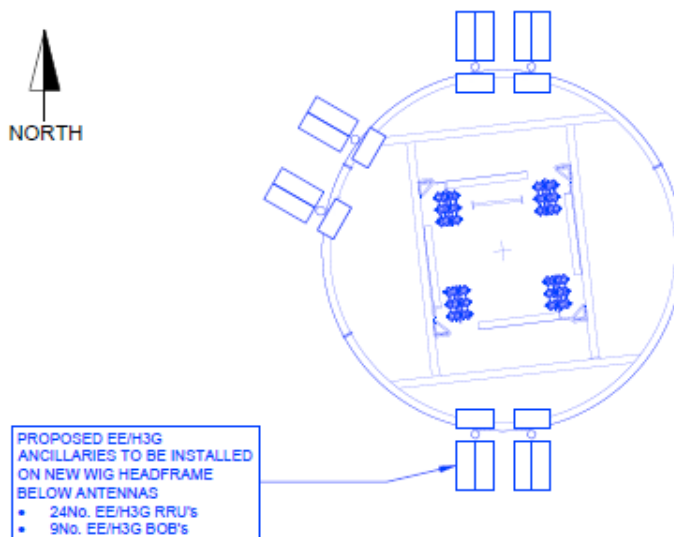
Existing Elevation



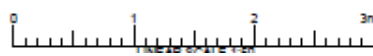
Proposed Elevation



PROPOSED EE/H3G ANTENNA PLAN AT 23.5m AGL



PROPOSED EE/H3G ANCILLARY PLAN



Proposed Headframe Section

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