

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 March 2020

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191924/FUL

Address: 26-30 Swansea Road and 28-32 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH

Proposal: 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.

Applicant: Elstree Land and Sovereign Housing Association

Deadline: 20/03/2020

### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 20<sup>th</sup> March 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 following:

Where Grant Funding is not obtained and used to deliver the Development as Affordable Housing the developer shall observe and perform either one of the following obligations:

- £306,577 towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough
- Or
- a minimum of 20% of the units (2 units) as affordable housing

£18,800 contribution towards additional leisure facilities within the locality

Conditions and Informatives as on the previous report (appended):

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 This application was considered at the February Planning Applications Committee when Members resolved to grant permission subject to a S106 agreement to secure 100% affordable housing on-site with the tenure to be all shared ownership, as set out in the original report on the agenda.
- 1.2 However as this was not as advised in the Update report or at the meeting officers were asked to provide a fuller explanation for the recommended decision given in the Update report. Officers have also been in further discussions with the applicant over their proposal. The rest of this report therefore seeks to clarify what can be secured by a S106 agreement and how the applicant intends to develop the site with affordable housing.

#### 2. S106 agreements

- 2.1 Firstly, a S106 agreement can only secure what is reasonably required to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Section 122 of

community infrastructure levy regulations 2010, specifically limits the use of planning obligations (Section 106 agreements). The regulations state:

A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is—

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

- 2.2 Officers have relied on what is reasonably required by the Reading Borough Local Plan. In this instance, the development is for 8 additional dwellings (a total of 9). Policy H3 of the Local Plan states that on sites of 5-9 dwellings, a financial contribution equivalent to 20% of the housing should be provided to go towards affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. In this case there were no material considerations (such as if the proposal conflicted with another policy in the Local Plan or it being a site where residential use would not normally be supported) to require a higher % of affordable housing to be secured “to make the development acceptable in planning terms”. As such, seeking to secure 100% of the units as affordable housing would fail test (a) and also (c) as asking for all of the dwellings would not be fairly and reasonably related to the scale of the development.

### 3. The Applicant’s intentions

- 3.1 Members were aware that the intention of the applicant is to provide all 9 dwellings as affordable housing and this is why the resolution to secure 100% of the dwellings as affordable was taken. However, the applicant has since confirmed that the terms set out in the S106 agreement is an important factor for them if they are to secure grant funding from Homes England. The terms as set out above are as agreed by the applicant who has explained:

*“The grant cannot be used to deliver affordable homes secured by s106 legal agreements and therefore must be used on homes which would otherwise be constructed and sold on the open housing market.*

*For Swansea Road, the grant funding will be used to deliver the proposed development on the site as 100% affordable housing, converting it from private open market housing and therefore delivering additional affordable homes through the planning system.*

*The Homes England funding rules is that there is an absolute requirement that there cannot be any restrictions on the eligibility of shared ownership buyers linked to local connection.*

- 3.2 It is understood that the applicant’s intention is to offer all 9 units for shared ownership. While this form of tenure does not meet the Council’s preference for affordable rented homes these 3 bedroom units will still be a welcomed contribution to the stock of affordable housing in the Borough. Housing officers have confirmed that they are satisfied that the provision of shared ownership in this instance is acceptable.

#### 4. Conclusion

- 4.1 For permission to be granted for the proposed residential development it needs to comply with Local Plan policies, including H3 which requires an off-site financial contribution towards providing affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. For this proposal the contribution has been calculated to be £306,577 and this is the minimum that we should secure by the S106.
- 4.2 The applicant has indicated that they would like to provide affordable housing on site and the equivalent on site provision would be 2 dwellings so this option should also be secured by the S106 as an alternative way to comply with policy.
- 4.3 However, as confirmed by the applicant, to benefit from grant funding they need to demonstrate to Homes England how they are 'flipping' unrestricted market housing to affordable housing. Therefore, by requiring that the S106 restricts all of the new dwellings to be affordable, as previously resolved by Committee, the scheme would become ineligible for grant funding.
- 4.4 It remains your officer's advice, to achieve the best affordable housing offer for this site, that you change your resolution to allow permission to be granted subject to a S106 agreement securing the terms as set out above.

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 February 2020

ITEM NO.8

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191924/FUL

Address: 26-30 Swansea Road and 28-32 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH

Proposal: 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.

Applicant: Elstree Land and Sovereign Housing Association

Deadline: 04/02/2020

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 30<sup>th</sup> February 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 following:

- £306,577 towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough
- Or
- Provide 100% of the units as shared ownership housing
- And
- £18,800 contribution towards additional leisure facilities within the locality

**Conditions to include:**

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement details of all external materials (including brickwork, roofing materials, glazing and reveals, chimneys, doors, guttering and downpipes)
4. Pre-commencement construction method statement (including noise & dust)
5. Pre-occupation provision of bin storage facility details
6. Pre-occupation implementation of cycle parking details provided
7. Pre-occupation notification of postal addresses (restricting parking permits)
8. No automatic entitlement to parking permits
9. Parking permit condition 2
10. Submission of security strategy and implementation before first occupation
11. Implementation of flood resilience, as set out in submitted Flood Risk Assessment
12. No development before implementation of approved remediation scheme
13. Reporting of Unidentified contamination
14. Construction hours (0800-1800 Mon-Fri; 0800-1300 Saturday; No work on Sunday/Bank holidays).
15. Implementation and retention of noise mitigation scheme
16. Pre-commencement hard and soft landscaping details (including biodiversity enhancements) and implementation
17. Demolition supervision by Ecologist
18. Remove PD rights for roof alterations (GPDO Parts B and C)
19. Pre-commencement SAP assessment - To be approved (new-build)

## 20. Pre-occupation SAP assessment (new-build)

### Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Highways informatives
3. Terms and conditions
4. Building Control
5. Party Wall Act
6. Contaminated land - reporting of unexpected contamination
7. Noise Transmission between residential properties (Building Regulations part E)
8. CIL
9. No burning of waste on site
10. Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreement
11. No parking permits informative

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises 0.29 hectares, a corner plot at the junction of Northfield Road and Swansea Road and consists of a two storey end of terrace dwelling with undercroft access on Swansea Road and a series of garages fronting Northfield Road which have historically been used for car repairs and as an MOT centre. There is a small yard area to the rear of the garages with an existing vehicular access from Swansea Road. The surrounding area predominantly consists of modest two storey terraced dwellings. To the east of the site along Northfield Road at the junction with Caversham Road is a large self-storage unit (Shurgard).
- 1.2 The site is located within the Reading Central Area as defined by the Proposals Maps (2019) and is also with flood zone 2 and an air quality management area. Northfield Road is a designated cyclerooute.

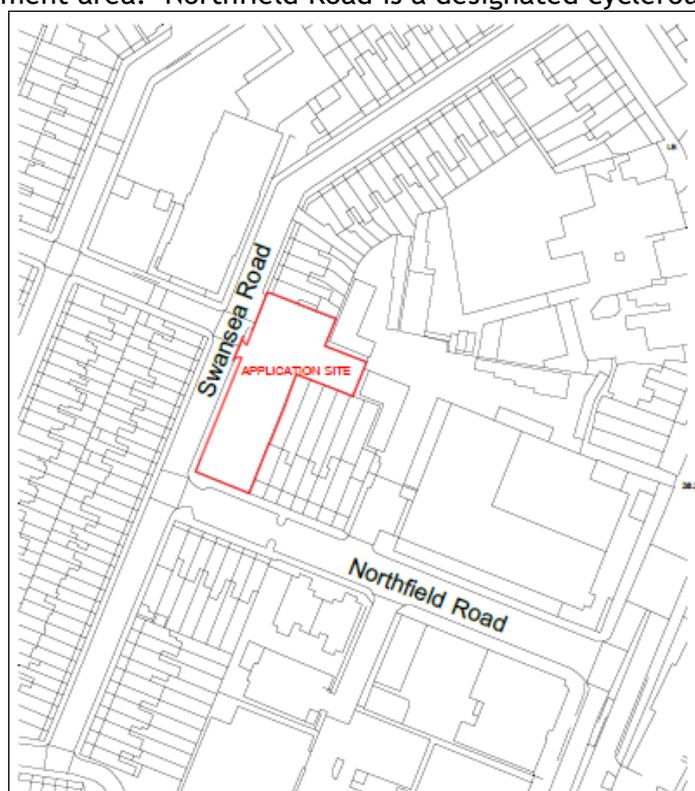


Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

## 2 PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing two storey dwelling and garages and erection of 8 x two storey terrace dwellings with rooms in the roof space and 1 x two storey coach house with rooms in the roof space with parking and access from Swansea Road.

2.2 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

Flood Risk Assessment Odyssey November 2019  
Sequential Test Savills November 2019  
Air Quality Assessment Syntegra Consulting November 2019  
Geo-Environmental Report Enzygo October 2019  
Noise Assessment Cass Allen November 2019  
Bat Roost Assessment Aspect Ecology October 2019  
Affordable Housing Statement November 2019  
051901-EL-01 Presentation Planning Layout  
051901-EL-02 Supporting Planning Layout  
051901-EL-03 Location Plan  
051901-SS01 Street Scene 01  
051901-SS02 Street Scene 02  
051901-GS Garden Scene  
051901-A-E1 House Type A - Proposed Elevations  
051901-A-E2 House Type A - Proposed Elevations  
051901-A-P1 House Type A - Proposed Floor Plans  
051901-B-E1 House Type B - Proposed Elevations  
051901-B-P1 House Type B - Proposed Floor Plans  
051901-C-E1 House Type C - Proposed Elevations  
051901-C-P1 House Type C - Proposed Floor Plans  
051901-CS-01 Cycle Shed  
7062 / ASP3 Landscape Strategy Plan B  
34824\_T Topographical Survey  
As received 4 December 2019

051901-SS01 Street Scene 01 - Rev A  
051901-SS02 Street Scene 02 - Rev A  
051901-B-E1 House Type B - Proposed Elevations - Rev A  
051901-B-E1 House Type B - Proposed Elevations - Rev A  
051901-C-E1 House Type C - Proposed Elevations - Rev A  
As Received 24 January 2020

2.3 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):  
In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. However, there are currently discussions with the applicant regarding the final CIL Liability calculation and further commentary will be provided in the update Report

## 3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.3 None, although pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority was sought before submission of the planning application.

## 4 CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- 4.3 RBC Ecologist - No objections, subject to conditions.
- 4.4 RBC Waste management officer- The proposed development would provide adequate bin store for the number of flats. Residents would be responsible for moving the bins out for collection days.
- 4.5 RBC Natural Environment Officer - No objection subject to conditions to ensure appropriate landscaping.
- 4.6 RBC Environmental Protection Officer - No objections subject to conditions.
- 4.7 RBC Transport Officer - comments awaited, response to be provided in the Update report.

#### 4.8 Public

26 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH  
 47 Swansea Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EZ  
 13 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH  
 63 Swansea Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EZ  
 14 Northfield Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8AH  
 20 Northfield Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8AH  
 16 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH  
 65 Swansea Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EZ  
 45 Swansea Road, Reading, RG1 8EZ  
 49 Swansea Road, Reading, RG1 8EZ

- 4.6 One comment has been received, objecting to the façade treatments for the proposed dwellings.
- 4.9 Four comments have been received in support of the redevelopment of the site, with one comment suggesting the re-use of the building as a café.

## 5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.3 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”.

#### 5.4 Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019):

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
 CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction  
 CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change  
 CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage  
 CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development  
 CC7: Design and the Public Realm  
 CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
 CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
 EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment  
 EN10: Access to Open Space  
 EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
EN15: Air Quality  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
EM3: Loss of Employment Land  
H1: Provision of Housing  
H2: Density and Mix  
H3: Affordable Housing  
H5: Standards for New Housing  
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
CR1: Definition of Central Reading  
CR2: Design in Central Reading  
CR6: Living in Central Reading

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:  
Affordable Housing (2013)  
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)  
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)  
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

## 6 APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Flood Risk
- Impact on surrounding and future occupiers
- Standard of Residential Accommodation
- Mix of units
- Transport
- Landscape/ecology
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters
- Equalities impact

### Principle of development

6.3 The site is not located within a designated core employment area and therefore there would be no in principle objection to loss of the existing vehicle repair and MOT use. Moreover, the site is predominantly surrounded by residential dwellings and therefore loss of this use is likely to be beneficial to the amenity of existing nearby occupiers in terms of removal of a source of potential noise and disturbance.

6.4 The existing building fronting Northfield Road to be demolished, is in a state of disrepair and although reflective of the character of the area, the building is not considered to have any particular distinctive architectural merit. The commercial building fronting Swansea Road is prominent within the street, being built up to the boundary of the pavement, and appears to be better maintained than the other buildings on the site. Further, there are no specific protections afforded to these structures, as such the loss of such there would be no objection to their removal, subject to the proposed replacement

buildings being of good design quality and contributing positively to the character of the area.

- 6.5 The principle of a residential development on the site is considered to accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development) whilst the proposal would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing).

#### Flood Risk

- 6.6 The site is located within flood zone 2 and the NPPF (2019) defines residential dwellings as a 'more vulnerable' development in terms of flood risk. The NPPF sets out that 'more vulnerable' development in flood zone 2 is required to undertake that it passes the flood risk sequential test. In addition, Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage) sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development that would increase risks arising from flooding.

- 6.7 The sequential test seeks to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities in their decision-making should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of river or sea flooding). Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 2 be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required.

- 6.8 The Council's latest 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' (May 2017) notes that, 'there are not sufficient sites to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in Reading on sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2'. Therefore, subject to a detailed sequential test assessment being submitted as part of any application. The onus is on the applicant to present a detailed sequential test for any development (where applicable) and demonstrate the case to the local planning authority. The sequential test area would include land within the whole of the Borough.

- 6.9 Residential development is classified as 'more vulnerable' in national policy. In accordance with the NPPF, 'more vulnerable' development in flood zone 2 is not required to undertake the exception test.

- 6.10 The applicant has provided a site-specific flood risk assessment which outlines a number of requirements to ensure the flood resilience of the proposed dwellings (i.e. higher electrical sockets, flood resistant external materials). Additionally, the applicant has undertaken a sequential test in line with Government guidance and has demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites for the proposed development. A condition is recommended to ensure flood resistance measures are carried out as specified in the accompanying flood risk assessment.

#### Design Considerations and effect on character

- 6.11 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area and Policy CR5 (Design in Central Reading) seeks to create appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces.

- 6.12 The proposed continuation of the terraced form of development to both the Northfield Road and Swansea Road frontages is considered appropriate and

would integrate well with the surrounding area. Whilst the proposed plot sizes are small and narrow, this is in keeping with the character and urban grain of the surrounding area and is considered appropriate in this location. In extending the existing terrace, the proposal would also maintain the existing uniform building line and roof pitch/profile alignment which is considered important to the character of these Victorian/Edwardian terraced streets. The elevational drawings (revised during the consideration of the application) indicate a good level of architectural detailing to the front elevations, with the window and door surrounds, including lintel details, brick detailing, 'chimneys' and careful use of materials to match surrounding dwellings to tie in to the traditional architecture of the area.

- 6.13 The proposal also includes sizeable flat roof dormers in the main roof slope of the dwellings adjoining the two-storey attached projections. The scale of these dormer projections would take up most of the rear roof slope. Whilst not normally a design solution suggested in the Council's House Extensions SPG, in this case this is considered to be an appropriate design solution to facilitate the large 3-bedroom units and it should also prevent the opportunity for any future piecemeal dormer extensions. It is considered appropriate to remove the future pd rights to further extend the roofs of these dwellings.
- 6.14 The form of the proposed coach house (a dwelling with vehicular access underneath) is also considered to be in keeping with the area as such arrangements are commonly found in these terraced streets. The proposed brick boundary wall and metal entrance gates to the Swansea Road frontage are also considered to suitably link together this part of the street-scene. The proposals utilise the irregular shape of the site well to provide off-street parking to the rear hidden from view from the street frontages.
- 6.15 Policy H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space seeks that proposals for residential development are provided with small but adequately usable private or communal amenity space in keeping with the character of similar spaces in the surrounding area. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.
- 6.16 The applicant has considered the security implications of an open vehicle accessway to the rear courtyard. Concerns are with unregulated parking and unauthorised trespass. This matter is considered to be capable of being dealt with by a suitably-worded security condition to meet the concerns of Policy CC7.

Impact on surrounding and future occupiers

- 6.17 Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.
- 6.18 The siting and orientation of the dwellings are considered to prevent any undue overlooking or loss of privacy to surrounding occupiers. The closest relationship would be from the rear windows of the properties on Northfield Avenue to the upper floors of the coach house which would be situated 10m to the side of the rear garden of the existing dwelling at no. 26 Swansea Road. This separation is considered sufficient, given this would be a side-on relationship and would affect only the end part of the adjacent property's rear garden.
- 6.19 The siting and orientation of the building is considered such that there would be limited impact on existing surrounding properties in terms of any loss of light or overbearing.

- 6.20 The proposed private parking court is considered to be located a suitable distance from existing dwellings such that noise and disturbance from cars coming and going would be limited and visually, less intrusive than the high levels of on-street parking that currently takes place on surrounding streets.
- 6.21 A construction method statement would be sought, to include measures for control of noise and dust to ensure existing surrounding occupiers would not be adversely affected by the proposed development during construction works.
- 6.22 Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and CR6 (Living in Central Reading) seek that future occupiers are provided with a suitable standard of amenity. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that future occupiers are adequately protected from the impacts of pollution. EN15 (Air Quality) sets out that given the site is located within an air quality management area and would introduce a sensitive use (i.e residential) any detrimental effects on that use must be mitigated. The applicant has submitted supporting evidence that has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Protection Officer. The report concludes that no additional measures are required for air quality mitigation in this instance due to the distance of the proposed dwellings from Caversham Road and the EP officer agrees with this view. A condition is recommended for the implementation of the approved noise mitigation measures.
- 6.23 The proposals are considered to provide for a suitable standard of accommodation with all units being of adequate size and served by good levels of outlook and daylighting. Policy H5 of the Local Plan requires that all new-build housing outside the town centre be built to meet the Nationally described space standards. The proposed development would comply with these requirements, although the site itself is within the Central Area, where these standards do not apply.
- 6.24 The development also lies on the site of a historic warehouse which has the potential to have caused contamination and the proposed residential development is considered a sensitive land use in this respect. The Environmental Protection Officer has reviewed the supporting documentation and the remediation of the site has been agreed and can be secured by condition.

#### Mix of units

- 6.25 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) states that developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types and sizes, ideally a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units. Although the proposal is for 9 three-bedroom dwellings, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2016) carried out by the Berkshire Planning Authorities outlines the greatest need for housing within Berkshire (including South Bucks) being for 3-bedroom houses (42% of the need to 2036). As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

#### Transport

- 6.26 Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Local Plan seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development. At the time of writing, a formal Transport response is awaited and any further clarifications shall be provided in the Update Report.
- 6.27 In terms of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, Swansea Road and

Northfield Road are within Zone 2 of the primary core area, but on the periphery of the Central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.

- 6.28 In accordance with the Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide parking provision of 2 parking spaces each for the 3 bedroom dwellings. Therefore, the required total parking provision for the development would be 17 spaces. Only 9 parking spaces are to be provided, which falls significantly below the Council's current parking SPD requirements, however given the site's close proximity to the town centre and Reading Station, a lower provision is considered acceptable.
- 6.29 Only one access point to the site will be retained from Swansea Road, therefore all other access(es) will need to be closed up and kerbs realigned with the public footway. The proposed access is suitable for 2-way traffic entering and exiting the site, and appears to meet the appropriate standards for visibility. An informative is recommended to ensure the 'historic accesses' (including those with cobbled paving) are reprovided/evident in the eventual design and clarification on this matter will be provided in the Update report.
- 6.30 Any permission would need to be subject to a condition preventing future occupiers of the development from being eligible to apply for residents or visitor parking permits. The applicant has agreed to a condition to secure the appropriate number of on-site electric vehicle charging points in accordance with Policy TR5. In line with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, each dwelling is provided with 2 secure cycle parking spaces in a secure and covered location. The bicycle storage as shown on the plans will be secured by condition. Bin storage should also be identified on the proposed plans and should not be further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. The Transport response will confirm/update these matters and advise on policy compliance.

#### Landscaping/Ecology

- 6.31 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development should contribute positively to the area of Reading within which it is located, including by way of landscaping. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to protect the Borough's vegetation cover from damage or removal and sets out that new development shall make provision for tree planting. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) states that development proposals should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity.
- 6.32 The application site is a dense urban location, within an area of the Borough identified as having a tree canopy cover of 10% or less in the Council's adopted Tree Strategy. There are no existing tree or landscape features on the site of any note, such as would be a constraint of the development of the site or worthy of retention in its redevelopment. The inclusion of new areas of soft landscaping are welcomed, although there is limited space in the site for substantial tree planting.
- 6.33 Given the proposal would involve demolition of a number of buildings, some of which are in a poor state of repair, a bat survey has been undertaken. The conclusions of this report are that the building may host suitable habitat for bats, and that oversight by a trained ecologist is required during its demolition, and this has been approved by the Council's Ecologist. A condition is

recommended to ensure works are carried out with supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, and that biodiversity enhancements (i.e. bat boxes) are integrated in the development.

#### Sustainability

- 6.34 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) states that new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. In addition, this policy sets a higher water efficiency standard for all new dwellings. These requirements will be secured by condition.

#### Affordable Housing

- 6.35 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 8 additional dwellings units, would be liable for a contribution towards affordable housing of £306,577.
- 6.36 At this time, the applicant has proposed to enter into a section 106 agreement for the provision of the units as 'shared ownership' (an affordable housing tenure) **OR** to pay the above financial contribution. The Local Plan sets a target of 70% affordable rent, and 30% shared ownership units to be provided within the Borough over the plan period. The scheme would be considered to be above the policy requirements in this regard. In addition, it would not specifically be meeting the identified need (more emphasis on affordable rent).
- 6.37 Although the proposed provision would not be specifically in line with the policy requirements, the provision of 100% of the units as shared ownership would assist Reading in meeting part of its identified need. As such, it is considered that securing the above would be acceptable. In addition, the applicant has suggested inclusion of a requirement within the section 106 for the priority of those eligible to purchase being from the Reading area. Further discussion is ongoing between Reading Housing Development and the applicant at the time of writing and clarification will be supplied in the Update Report.

#### Other Matters

##### CIL

- 6.38 The proposed development would result in the demolition of a large commercial unit. The unit appears to have been vacant for some time and as such is likely not to offset any of the CIL charge. Notwithstanding this, an indication of the CIL charge will be provided in an update report. It is noted that affordable units (of either social rent/affordable rent or shared ownership) are likely to qualify for an exemption from the CIL charge.

#### **Equalities Impact**

- 6.39 When determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. 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. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above. In summary, the development is considered acceptable in regard to:

- Demolition and replacement of the existing structures would clean up a long disused site;
- The existing structures are not sufficiently high quality to restrict the demolition and the replacement dwellings have been designed to integrate sympathetically within the streets;
- The parking, garden space, bin and bicycle storage are all acceptable; and
- The provision of affordable housing of either form proposed is acceptable in policy terms.

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

# 8 PLANS

## ELSTREE LAND

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presentation planning layout

28-32 northfield rd and 26-30 swansea road, reading



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Presentation Planning Layout 18.10.2018 (revised)  
 1:200 @ A1 scaling  
 051101-EL-01

## ELSTREE LAND

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- Proposed new buildings
- Existing buildings
- Proposed new parking
- Existing parking

- Proposed new trees
- Existing trees
- Proposed new landscaping
- Existing landscaping



supporting information layout

28-32 northfield rd and 26-30 swansea road, reading



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Supporting Information Layout 18.10.2018 (revised)  
 1:200 @ A1 scaling  
 051101-EL-02



House Type A  
Plot 9

House Type C  
Plot 8

House Type C  
Plot 7

House Type A  
Plot 6

No 28 Northfield Road

No 24 Northfield Road



11.01.01.01

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## APPENDIX 2 - UPDATE REPORT 5 FEBRUARY 2020

### UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

ITEM NO.

Ward: Abbey

App No: 191924/FUL

Address: 26-30 Swansea Road and 28-32 Northfield Road, Reading, RG1 8AH

Proposal: 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.

Applicant: Elstree Land and Sovereign Housing Association

Deadline: 04/02/2020

#### AMENDED RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 30th February 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 following:

- £306,577 towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough
- Or
- An equivalent provision of on-site affordable housing (tenure to be agreed)
- And
- £18,800 contribution towards additional leisure facilities within the locality

#### Additional transport conditions:

1. Vehicle parking as specified
2. Vehicular access as specified
3. Access closure and re-instatement
4. Pre-commencement provision of visibility splays
5. EV Charging points to be provided prior to occupation

### 1. Affordable Housing Contribution

- 1.1 The Recommendation above amends the main Agenda report by confirming that the alternative proposal for an on-site provision must be capped at an equivalent level to the off-site contribution. There are ongoing discussions with the Council's housing officers about the level and tenure of any on-site provision.

### 2. Community Infrastructure levy (CIL)

2.2 The applicant has confirmed that 457m<sup>2</sup> of the existing buildings were in use up to November 2019, this is also confirmed by the Councils Business Rates team. As such, the 457m<sup>2</sup> of floor space to be demolished would be off-set from the proposed floor space. The chargeable floor space for the new development would (minus the demolition relief) amount to £61,456.00. Although, as noted in the main report, the applicant would be likely to seek CIL relief for provision of affordable housing.

### 3. Waste management

3.1 Waste officers have confirmed that the RCP (Refuse collection point) as shown on the proposal plans is sufficiently close to the public highway for waste operators to collect. As such, residents would be responsible for placing bins in the RCP on collection days.

### 4. Transport officer comments

4.1 In addition to the comments in the main report (section 6.27) the access from Northfield Road will need to be closed up and kerbs realigned. The proposed access is suitable, however no details appear to have shown the visibility splays required for this access. Notwithstanding, a visibility splay of 2.4m x 43m, will need to be illustrated, but this can be dealt with by way of condition.

4.2 Since the writing of the main report, tracking diagrams have been provided which demonstrate that all parking spaces are suitable for cars entering and leaving all parking spaces.

4.3 Transport officers have confirmed that policy TR5 would require all parking spaces to be provided with electric vehicle charging points and would be dealt with by condition.

4.4 Transport officers have confirmed the acceptability of all transport matters. Additional conditions are required as follows:

- Vehicle parking as specified
- Vehicular access as specified
- Access closure and re-instatement
- Pre-commencement provision of visibility splays
- EV Charging points to be provided prior to occupation

### 5. Boundary Treatments

5.1 Although not specifically mentioned in the main report, condition 16 for details of hard and soft landscaping is proposed to include means of enclosure and boundary treatments. The applicant has confirmed by e-mail that the front boundary treatments are agreed to be brick walls in lieu of planting as shown on the illustrations and this can be covered within condition 16.

## 6. **Building Recording**

- 6.1 A number of comments have been received in relation to the local historic interest of the building. As per the main report, the loss of the existing structures is considered acceptable due to the limited architectural merit. As such, it is considered that a condition requiring the historical recording of the building would not be warranted in this instance.

**Case officer: Anthony Scholes**