

## 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 8m<sup>2</sup> is acceptable however if an area of between 8m<sup>2</sup> and 15m<sup>2</sup> 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 15m<sup>2</sup>, 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 8m<sup>2</sup> is acceptable, however if an area of between 8m<sup>2</sup> and 15m<sup>2</sup> 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 15m<sup>2</sup>, 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 (11.5m<sup>2</sup> 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 7.5m<sup>2</sup> 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:**

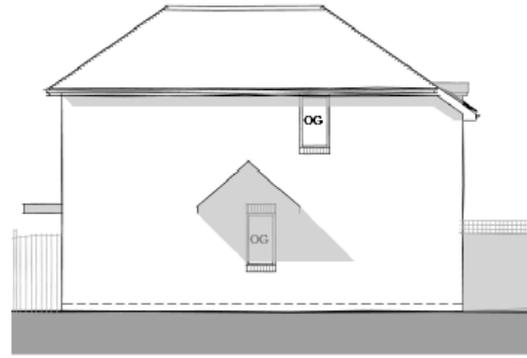
| Plan Type                            | Description | Drawing Number | Date Received |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Location & Block Plans               | Existing    | N/A            | 1 May-19      |
| Block Plan, Elevations, Floors Plans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



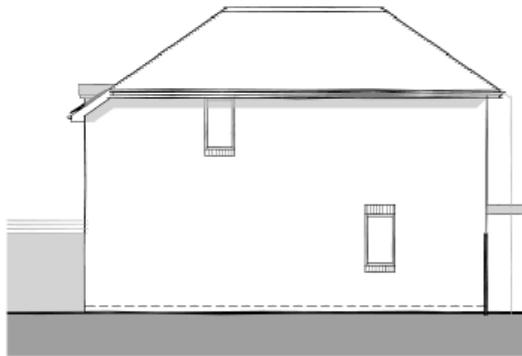
Proposed Block Plan



Front Elevation



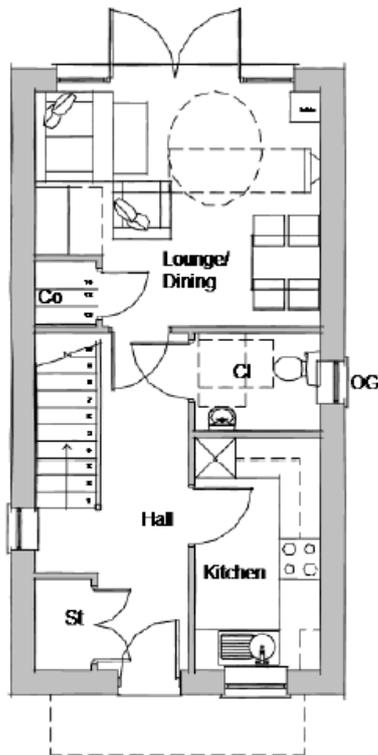
RHS Elevation



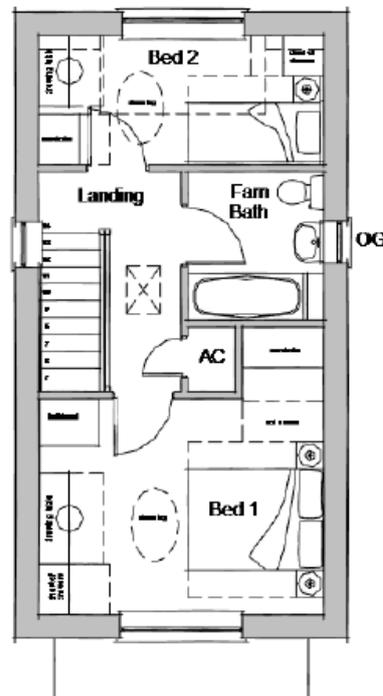
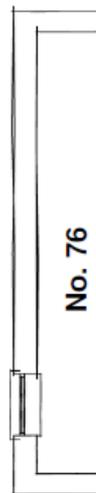
LHS Elevation



Rear Elevation



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

