

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGULATORY SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 3 March 2020

Ward: Battle

App No.: 201843

Address: 39 Brunswick Hill

Proposal: Conversion of existing dwelling and two storey side and part three/part single storey rear extensions to provide 8 flats with associated parking and amenity space and demolition of existing garage

Applicant: Mr Eric Benjamin

Date received: 18 December 2020 (valid 22 December 2020)

8-week target decision date: 16 Feb 2021 (Agreed extension of time to 31/3/2021)

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to i) **GRANT** full planning permission, subject to conditions and satisfactory completion of a section 106 legal agreement or ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 31st March 2021 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

The legal agreement is to include the following heads of terms:

1. Affordable housing contribution of £20,000 (payable prior to occupation of the 5th unit)
2. Deferred affordable housing contribution mechanism;
3. Should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units subdivided then contributions to affordable housing would apply on a cumulative basis;
4. Contribution of £5, 000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for alterations to the on-street parking bays on Brunswick Hill and relocation of lamp post (payable prior to commencement of development)

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of sample of materials
4. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation and maintenance of a hard/soft landscaping scheme, including boundary treatments
5. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements
6. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of an access control strategy

7. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of a construction method statement (including noise and dust control measures)
8. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a design stage report demonstrating that the development would achieve a BREEAM Very Good standard
9. Pre-occupation submission and approval of post construction certificate confirming that the development has achieved the BREEAM level approved under condition 8
10. Pre-commencement submission and approval and subsequent implementation of SuDS scheme
11. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a level 1, archival recording of existing building and garage in accordance with Historic England guidelines;
12. Pre-occupation notification - no access to parking permits
13. Pre-occupation notification of addresses - no access to parking permits
14. Pre-occupation submission, approval and provision of bin store details (pest control)
15. Pre-occupation provision of cycle store
16. Pre-occupation provision of vehicle parking spaces
17. Pre-occupation provision of widened vehicle crossover
18. Pre-occupation provision of new driveway access
19. Pre-occupation submission and approval and subsequent implementation of an electric vehicle charging point
20. Pre-occupation implementation of glazing and ventilation specifications
21. Control of construction hours (0800-1800 Mon-Fri, 0900-1300 Sat & not on Sundays or Bank Holidays)
22. Monitoring for unexpected contamination
23. No burning of waste on site
24. Unit mix as proposed only - no change permitted

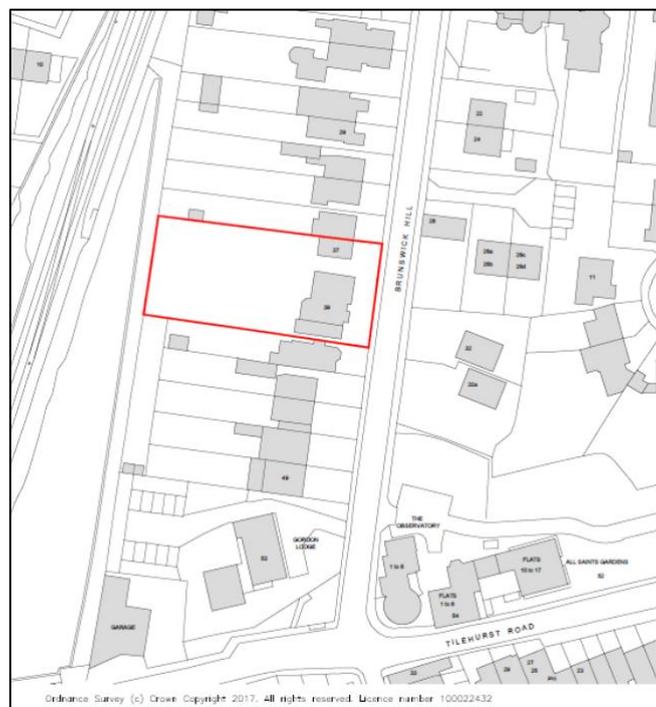
Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Pre-commencement conditions
3. Terms and conditions
4. Need for Building Regulations approval
5. Construction nuisance informative
6. No Parking Permits
7. Highways
8. Building Regulations Approved Document E
9. Bats and work to roof
10. Community infrastructure levy (CIL)- Liable

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application relates to the conversion of a substantial Edwardian detached house on the west side of Brunswick Hill, a residential road running north from Tilehurst Road. The site is 0.14 hectares, with a 25-metre frontage and 56 metre depth, equating to 1400 square metres in area).

- 1.2 Brunswick Hill slopes downhill from south to north and contains a variety of types and sizes of dwellings, though they are predominantly two storey. Opposite the application site is a gap in the street scene where the houses are set down at a lower level from the road. There has been some more modern infill in the road, including at number 35 adjacent to the application site.
- 1.3 Number 39 has a three storey gable on the front elevation and a two and a half storey element on its southern side. It is a grand property in a 'Queen Anne Revival' style and dates from the early Twentieth Century. Internally, the property is largely unaltered, although a previous application site visit in 2017 found evidence of informal subdivision to create separate accommodation over the basement and part of the ground floor.
- 1.4 There is a single storey detached garage on the northern side of the dwelling (probably original or of similar age to the property itself) and this is also in partially separate residential use as a dwelling/artist's studio, although there is no kitchen or bathroom, these facilities being shared with the tenanted unit in the basement/ground floor of the main house.
- 1.5 The property has a large rear garden that backs on to vegetated railway land, and beyond, the railway, which is sunk into a cutting at this point beyond the pedestrian access slope down to Reading West station. The subject property is the largest plot within the immediate area, being nearly twice the width of the prevailing plots. The garden has a brick wall running down the North, East (front) and South sides and a wooden fence on its Western frontage towards the railway. The garden is a mature mix of lawn, vegetable garden and shrubs and some fruit trees.



Location plan



Site photo - View from Brunswick Hill

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 This planning application follows a number of planning applications over the same site. The most recent previous application was for conversion and extension of the property to create 9 flats ref. 191915 (PAC report (and update report) and plans for this application attached as appendix 1 and 2 to this report). This application was refused at Planning Applications Committee on 3 June 2020 for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its bulk, mass and scale and detailed design in relation to the host dwelling, a non-designated heritage asset, would harm the overall character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. The proposal is considered to not respond positively to the local context or sufficiently respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) and H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

2. In the absence of a completed S106 Legal Agreement the proposal fails to secure an acceptable Affordable Housing contribution towards meeting housing needs in the Borough and fails to provide for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to amend parking restrictions in the Controlled Parking Zone on Brunswick Hill to allow the creation of a vehicular access. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policies CC9 (Securing Infrastructure), and H3 (Affordable Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

2.2 A subsequent appeal (ref. APP/E0345/W/20/3254293) against this decision was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate (appeal decision attached as appendix 3 to this report) with the principal reason being:

- *Harm to the character and appearance of the building and the wider area as a result of the excessive bulk and massing of the proposed 10m rear extension*

2.3 Prior to this most recent appeal decision there have been four other applications for residential development on the site dating back to 1989 which unlike the application subject of the most recent decision all sought to demolish and replace the existing building rather than extend and convert it. Nonetheless, these four previous applications were also all refused and two of them also dismissed upon appeal. The planning history of the site is set out in section 4 of this report.

2.4 Within the three appeal decisions referred to above it has been established that whilst the building is unlisted and has been found to be unsuitable for the inclusion on the Council's Local List, it possesses sufficient architectural significance to warrant its treatment as a non-designated heritage asset in accordance with Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. The most recent appeal decision stated that:

Brunswick Hill contains a variety of residential properties in a mix of age and style. No 39 is an Edwardian villa and is one of the largest and most notable buildings in the street. An earlier appeal decision¹ notes the interesting composition of well-detailed architectural elements, which include a distinctive curved oriel window, a four centred arch over the entrance, stone dressings around windows, and a background of crisp, red brick in which diapering and bands are picked out in blue headers. The building's exuberant scale is part of its character and distinguishes it from Victorian houses further down the street.

The building is unlisted and has been rejected for inclusion on the Council's local list. Nevertheless, I concur with previous Inspectors² that it possesses more than sufficient architectural significance to warrant its treatment as a non-designated heritage asset. Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) confirms that the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application. A balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.5 This application has been called-in for Committee determination by the request of Ward Councillor Page due to the planning history on the site and local interest.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for conversion of the existing dwelling and two storey side and part three/part single storey rear extensions to provide 8 flats with associated parking and amenity space and demolition of existing garage.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

191915	2-storey side and 3-storey rear extension and conversion of dwelling to contain 8 flats (6 x 1-bed, 2 x 2-bed) parking, demolition of existing garage and associated works	Refused at committee 3/6/2020 (Appeal APP/E0345/W/20/3254293 Dismissed 1 October 2020)
190522	Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings	Refused at committee 4/9/2019 (Appeal APP/E0345/W/19/3237799 dismissed 23 January 2020)
171719	Erection of part two/part three storey building containing 10 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.	Refused 07/03/2018 (Appeal APP/E0345/W/18/3200081 dismissed 14 November 2018)
05/00886/OUT	demolition of nos 35-39 and erection of 4no townhouses	Refused 1/11/2005.
891317/891318	demolition of existing house and garage, construction of 10 flats with associated car parking	Refused 18/5/1989.

5. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Transport

No objection subject to conditions and s106 obligations to secure the following:

- Provision of the proposed vehicle parking spaces, widened vehicular cross over, access driveway and cycle and bin stores prior to occupation of the units.
- Submission, approval and implementation of a scheme of electric vehicle charging prior to occupation of the units
- Submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of development
- Restriction of access to on-street parking permits for future occupiers of the units.
- S106 obligation to fund TRO works to change the on-street residents parking and shared use bays and relocation lamp column on Brunswick Hill to facilitate widened vehicular access to the site

RBC Planning Natural Environment Team

No objection subject to conditions to secure submission and approval of a hard and soft landscaping scheme, including replacement tree planting, prior to the commencement of development.

RBC Ecologist

No objection subject to a condition to secure submission and approval of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements prior to the commencement of development.

RBC Environmental Protection

No objection subject to conditions to secure the following:

- Implementation of the all glazing and ventilation in accordance with the proposed specifications prior to occupation of the units
- Monitoring condition for any unexpected contamination
- Control of construction hours to the Councils standard noisy construction working hours of between the hours of 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, with no noisy works taking place at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.
- Submission and approval of pest control measure for the bin store prior to occupation of the units

RBC Conservation and Urban Design Officer

The proposed design has evolved taking on board comments by the Planning inspector at the last appeal. The southern side elevation is slightly set back and has a hipped roof such that the host building, a non-designated heritage asset, would still be seen as the main feature of the site.

However, the proposed rear extension still appears dominant in scale. Recommends that the first floor rear flat (flat 6) be incorporated within the roof space which

would allow the ridge height of the rear extension to be reduced to achieve greater subservience to the host building. No objection subject to these amendments.

Berkshire Archaeology

No objection

Reading Civic Society

No comments received.

Public consultation

Letters were sent to neighbouring properties on Brunswick Hill. In total, 18 objections have been received (this number includes a group objection letter from 15 households), these can be summarised as:

- Impact on parking/traffic impacts;
- Extension is too large and harms character of original building and surrounding area;
- Retention of the frontage of the property is
- Impact on utilities (sewer/water);
- Neighbour amenity impacts of proposal (overlooking and noise)
- Drainage impacts of hardstanding;
- Loss of outbuilding;
- Overbearing nature of development;
- Lack of natural light/windows to some rooms;
- Residents are working towards applying for Brunswick Hill and Argyle Road to be recognised as a Local Area of Special Character (LASC) within the aim of ensuring applications such as this within the local area respond to the architectural scale, height and massing of the neighbourhood.

6. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

6.1 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”.

The following policies and documents are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- CC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CC2 Sustainable design and construction

CC3	Adaption 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
EN6	New development in a historic context
EN10	Access to open space
EN12	Biodiversity and the green network
EN14	Trees, hedges and woodland
EN15	Air quality
EN16	Pollution and water resources
H1	Provision of housing
H2	Density and mix
H3	Affordable housing
H5	Standards for new housing
H8	Residential conversions
H9	House extension and ancillary accommodation
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

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
 Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
 Revised S106 Planning Obligations (2013)
 Affordable Housing (2013)

Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)
 Section 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)
 Department for Transport Manual for Streets
 Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues raised by this planning application are:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) Design and impact on the character of the area
- (iii) Mix of units

- (iv) Amenity of future occupiers
- (v) Impact on neighbouring properties
- (vi) Transport and parking
- (vii) Natural Environment
- (viii) Affordable Housing
- (ix) Sustainability
- (x) Other Matters

(i) Principle of development

7.2 The application site currently contains a large detached Edwardian property within residential use. The extent of the current accommodation is such that it would only be suitable for a very large family or subdivided to smaller units as appears to be the case currently, albeit this is somewhat informal. The site is within close proximity to high frequency bus routes along Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road and adjacent to Reading West Station. The proposed development would extend the current building to provide 8 dwellings with a mix of unit sizes (1 and 2-bedroom flats) in a sustainable location. In making best use of the land available and meeting an established need for housing, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy H1 (Provision of Housing).

7.3 Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) states that proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, provision and location of adequate car parking and treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing. The policy sets out a number of specific criteria in respect of these matters which will be addressed within this report.

7.4 The development site is located within an established residential area, characterised by detached or semi-detached single residential dwellings, with a number of flatted developments (closer to Tilehurst Road), and other uses (including a public house and church). The proposal seeks to convert the existing single dwelling into 8 flats. A survey of the area, specifically measured 50m from the subject property, has found that there are 16 properties within 50m of the subject dwelling. Of the 16 dwellings only no's 26 and 32 Brunswick Hill (12.5% of properties) have been converted to flats. Of that, it appears both flats at no.32 Brunswick Hill are within C4 (HMO use). With the remaining 14 properties (87.5% of properties) still single dwelling houses (C3 use class). As such, the proposed conversion of the subject dwelling would result in 18.75% of properties within 50m of the subject site being flats. This approach to assessing the mix of uses in the area is based on that used in the Article 4 Area where changes of use to small HOM use C4. The relative percentages demonstrate that converting the property to flats in this instance would not, individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm the existing mixed and sustainable community, as required by Policy H8. The principle of the conversion of the property for use of flats was not one of the reasons for refusal of the previous application ref. 191915.

(ii) **Design and the impact on the character of the area**

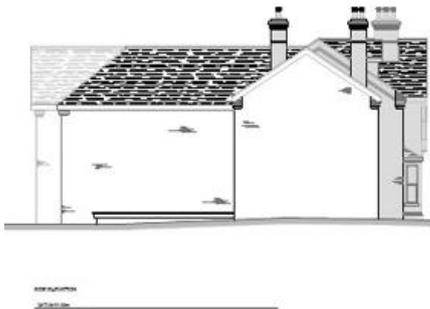
7.5 In design terms, the proposal includes two main elements: the two-storey side extension, and the part 3 storey/part single storey rear extension.

7.6 Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) seeks to ensure all extensions to a house would: respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling; respect the pattern of neighbouring properties, location and arrangement of windows, and avoid overbearing, or large blank facades to public areas. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development proposals maintain and enhance the character of the surrounding area. Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) seeks that historic features and elements of the historic environment, including their setting, are protected and where possible enhanced. Policy EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) states that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development.

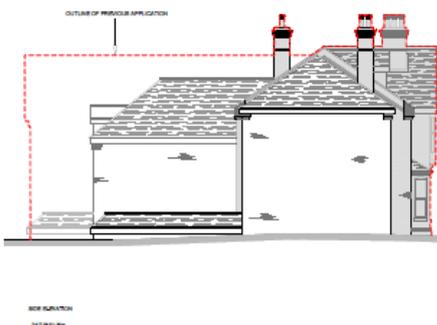
7.7 The proposed two-storey side extension would adjoin the south flank elevation of the property and would be 3.2m width. The extension would be set-down from the ridge height of the main dwelling and set-back from the main façade and includes architectural detailing to match the front facing windows of the main dwelling. The two-storey extension is largely the same as that considered under the previous application and appeal. It should be noted that within the most recent appeal decision the Planning Inspector did not object to the side extension and stated that:

‘the proposed extension on the southern gable would be modest in width and set back from the principal façade with a lower ridge height. It would be a subservient addition which maintains the legibility of the original building. The retention of the substantial chimney stacks, both prominent features within the local area, would assist in this regard. Although the extension would close the gap with 41 Brunswick Hill, I do not share the Council’s concern that this would be read as an awkward relationship. Overall, I find that this component of the scheme would cause no material harm to the street scene’

7.8 The separation from the two-storey side extension to the neighbour at no. 41 would remain the same (2.2m) as considered under the appeal. The main difference to the two-storey side extension from the appeal scheme is that the roof of the extension is now proposed to be hipped rather than a gable. Officers consider that this is an enhancement of the scheme as it makes the extension appear more subservient to the host building and also softens the transition to the neighbour at no. 41 when viewed from the street. The design and subservient nature of the extension are such that it is considered to integrate satisfactorily with the host dwelling and street-scene.



Elevation Plans for previous application ref. 191915



Proposed elevations for current application (dotted line shows comparison with proposals under application ref. 191915)

- 7.9 To the rear of the property a part three/part single storey rear extension is proposed. The three-storey part of the extension would have a depth of 7.2m and the hipped roof of the extension would be set 1.5m below the ridge of the roof of the main house whilst the north flank wall of the extension would be set in 1m from the north flank elevation of the main house. Beyond the 7.2m three storey rear extension a further 3.3m deep single storey and hipped roof element is proposed.
- 7.10 The most significant change between the current proposals and that dismissed following the appeal for the previous application is the reduction in depth of the proposed three storey rear extension which has been reduced from 10.5m to 7.2m in depth. In addition, and following comments received from the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer, amended plans have been submitted which have also reduced the ridge height of the extension by 1m such that the first-floor rear flat (flat 6) is now situated within the roof space of the extension and served by three rear facing dormer roof projections within a hipped rather than gable roof form. Whilst the total depth of the extensions remains the same as the appeal scheme, as is shown on the comparative elevation drawings the reduced depth and height of the three-storey element and change in roof form from gable to hipped results in a notable reduction in the scale and massing of the rear extension.
- 7.11 As set out earlier in this report the bulk and massing of the rear extension was the sole reason for the Planning Inspector dismissing the appeal against the previous application. When discussing the proposed rear extension, the Inspector stated that:

'It would project from the existing back wall by more than 10 m and the depth of the building, measured along its most prominent northern flank, would more than double as a result. Attempts have been made to articulate the mass of the extension by stepping it in and setting down the ridge height. The northern wall would also be broken up using fenestration and patterned brickwork. However, these design measures do not go far enough to mitigate the excessive bulk of the development.'

No 39 is already one of the largest buildings in the street and its scale is part of the character. Nevertheless, the addition of a disproportionate rear extension in the manner proposed would overwhelm the building to the detriment of its significance as a heritage asset, notwithstanding the lack of any formal local or national designation. Furthermore, the resultant depth of the building would jar with surrounding residential properties which are of more domestic scale.'

- 7.12 The rear extension proposed under the current application retains the patterned brickwork and fenestration style reflecting that of the main house as well as the set in from the north flank elevation. Furthermore, the formerly proposed rear Juliet style balconies to the rear upper ground floor level have been replaced with standard windows which is considered more reflective of, and in keeping with, the character and appearance of the existing house and other properties nearby. The

three proposed rear dormer projections align with the position of the upper and lower ground floor windows below and are modest in scale, whilst their pitched roof form is also considered reflective of the character of the host dwelling and the existing dormer to the front roof slope of the house. These measures together with the reduced height of the rear extension and introduction of a rear hipped rather than gable roof form and reduction in depth of the rear three storey element from 10.5m to 7.2m is considered to result in an extension which integrates satisfactorily with and appears subservient to the existing dwelling. In this respect it is considered that the extensions would preserve and respect the significance of the host non-designated heritage asset.

- 7.13 In dismissing the appeal under the previous application the Planning Inspector also raised concern that the scale of the proposed rear extension would harm the surrounding residential properties which are of more domestic scale, albeit noting that no. 39 is already one of the largest buildings in the street and that its scale is part of its character. The existing plot size at 26m in width and 58m in depth (1413m² in area) is also, in terms of area, more than 3 times the size of the other residential plots within the immediate vicinity of the site. Given the very significant plot size even with the proposed extensions a separation distance of over 30m would be retained to the rear boundary of the site allowing creation of generous landscaped communal garden and parking area whilst notable separation would be retained to both side boundaries with a distance of 4m to the boundary to no. 41 and 9.3 from the boundary with no. 35 following the proposed demolition of the existing detached side garage.
- 7.14 The massing and design changes of the proposed rear extension relative to the previous scheme dismissed on appeal, notably the reduction in depth and height of the three storey rear element and introduction of hipped roof form, together with the significant plot size and separation to boundaries that would be retained are such that the proposals are considered proportionate to the site and would not be significantly out of keeping with the character and grain of the surrounding area.
- 7.15 It is proposed that the extensions would incorporate detailing and materials to match that of the host property including brick work, timber windows and doors patterned brick work and matching lintels. A condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of the detailed materials prior to the commencement of development to ensure high quality finishes are to be used.
- 7.16 The proposals are considered to have overcome the reasons for dismissal of the appeal for the previous application (ref. 191915). The proposed change of use and extensions are considered to integrate satisfactorily with the host non-designated heritage asset in a manner which preserves and respects its significance, and which respects the general character of the surrounding area. The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, H8, H9, EN1 and EN6 subject to the recommended conditions.

(iii) Mix of units

7.17 Policy H2 of the Local Plan indicates that the appropriate density and mix will be informed by assessing the characteristics including land uses in the area; the level of accessibility; the requirements for good design; and the need to minimise environmental impacts, including impacts on adjoining occupiers. Policy H8 sets out that in cases of conversion of houses to self-contained flats at least 25% of the units should be suitable for family accommodation in that they have at least 2-bedroom units. The proposals are to create 8 flats and the proposed mix of 2 x two-bedroom units, 5 x one-bedroom units and 1 x studio unit meets the 25% requirement. As set out in paragraph 7.4 of this report the conversion and extension of the property to create flats is not considered to be detrimental to the existing mixed and sustainable community in terms of loss of single-family housing this location and proposals are considered to accord with Policies H2 and H8.

(iv) Amenity of future occupiers

7.18 Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H8 (H8 (Residential Conversions) seeks that development proposals should not provide unacceptable living conditions for future occupiers in terms of a range of factors including privacy, lighting, internal space, outlook, noise and disturbance. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that new residential development is provided with suitable private or communal outdoor amenity space). Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) requires that future occupiers of development are not adversely impacted by pollution.

7.19 When considering the previous appeals both for demolition and re-build of the dwelling and also for retention and extension of the building the Planning Inspectorate found that there would be no conflict with the need to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The internal layout of all proposed flats under the current proposals would continue to be satisfactory, with all flats containing a primary outlook over the front or rear garden for all living rooms and bedrooms which are considered to be served by suitable daylighting and the floor spaces of all flats meeting the nationally prescribed space standards. Measures to manage noise transmission between flats within the development would be secured under Building Regulation requirements.

7.20 The development would be served by a generous landscaped communal garden amenity space to the rear of the site. One of the proposed 2-bedroom family units within the scheme would be located at lower ground floor level and would have direct access to the amenity space from the living room. All other units within the development would be able to access the amenity space via landscaped paths to the perimeter of the building. Policy H10 sets out that 1 to 2-bedroom flats outside central Reading should be served by 25m² of private or communal amenity space, which for a scheme of eight 1- and 2-bedroom units equates to 200m² of amenity space. The application proposes an amenity space of over 250m² and therefore exceeds with this requirement. The proposed amenity space is considered to be of

good quality with soft landscaping proposed and ample areas for sitting out, children's play and outdoor storage and drying areas.

- 7.21 A noise assessment and mitigation scheme has been submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Officers who are satisfied that the proposed glazing and ventilation specifications would ensure acceptable internal noise levels for future occupiers of the flats. Implementation of the glazing and ventilation specification would be secured by way of condition. A vibration assessment has also been submitted which demonstrates that future occupiers would not be adversely impacted by vibration from the railway line to the rear of the site. The application is also accompanied by an air quality assessment and the Environmental Protection Officer is satisfied that the air quality levels at the site are acceptable for residential occupation and that the proposed development would not significantly impact upon air quality conditions at the site.
- 7.22 The proposals are considered to comply with Policies CC8, H8, H10 and EN16 in terms of provision of acceptable levels of amenity for future occupiers, subject to the recommended conditions.

(v) Impact on neighbouring properties

- 7.23 Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H8 (H8 (Residential Conversions) seeks that development proposals should not result unacceptable impacts upon the living conditions of existing surrounding occupiers in terms of a range of factors including privacy, lighting, internal space, outlook, noise and disturbance. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that development does not result in harmful pollution to sensitive receptors such as existing residential dwellings.
- 7.24 The development has the potential to impact on neighbouring properties through the increase in scale of the extended building and additional disturbance caused by the increased intensity of residential use. However, it is relevant that harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties was not raised as a concern by the Planning Inspectorate in dismissing the previous applications on the site which notable were for larger buildings and greater numbers of flats.
- 7.25 The proposed three storey rear extension would retain sufficient separation (4m) to the south site boundary with no. 41 Brunswick Hill such as to avoid any undue overbearing impact. The proposed three storey and single storey rear extensions would respect a 55-degree angle from the rear ground and first floor windows of no. 41 such that no adverse loss of light is considered to result. No. 41 does not incorporate any side facing windows (aside from a secondary side window to the rear conservatory) and the proposed two storey side extension would not result in any loss of light to habitable rooms. The proposed two storey side extension would be positioned 0.8 from the side boundary with no. 41 - this extension would not impact on any amenity space areas of no. 41 and is not considered to result in an overbearing addition. The proposed rear extensions would be set 9.7m from the

north side boundary with no. 35 Brunswick Hill. This significant gap is considered sufficient to prevent any adverse loss of light or overbearing impact.

- 7.26 The development will result in additional residential activity when compared to the present situation, with additional comings and goings and access to and use of the parking area to the rear of the site access by new driveway along the northern boundary of the site. This may be noticeable from surrounding properties and will be most acutely felt by the occupants of No. 35, where long lengths of the common boundary will change from garden to hard-surfacing. But No. 35 has a long garden itself, and there remains sufficient space within the plot to accommodate the access road and it is not considered that eight dwellings would result in a substantial number of sustained vehicle movements or uncharacteristic uses at unsocial hours. Officers consider that the residential amenity to No. 35 would not be significantly harmed.
- 7.27 A construction method statement would be secured by way of condition to ensure the construction works are carried out in manner which does not result in undue noise, dust and other disturbances to existing surrounding occupiers.
- 7.28 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC8, H8 and EN16 in respect of impact on existing surrounding occupiers, subject to the recommended conditions.

(vi) Transport and parking

- 7.29 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 7.30 The site is located on the western side of Brunswick Hill which is in close proximity to frequent bus services travelling along Tilehurst Road. The proposed flats will be accessed from Brunswick Hill via the existing access which will be widened to 4.8m to facilitate two-way vehicular traffic for a distance of 8.5m from the edge of the carriageway. A driveway is proposed on the northern side of the building, reducing in width to 3m for a short section. A parking courtyard is located at the rear of the site, comprising of 8no. parking spaces. The site is situated within a designated Resident Permit Holders zone and a permit-holders only bay currently runs across the site frontage terminating just before the existing access. A shared use bay commences from this point across the vehicular access.
- 7.31 The proposed widening of the access would require changes to the residents parking and shared use parking bays. This process involves changes a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). In addition, and as illustrated on the site plan, the lamp column adjacent to the existing vehicular access would need to be relocated to accommodate a widened access point. Costs associated with the changes to the TRO, on-street signage, markings and relocation of lamp column would be paid by

the Applicant prior to commencement of works on site and this would be secured by way of a section 106 agreement.

- 7.32 Future residents of the properties would not be entitled to apply for a residents parking permit for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This would be secured by condition and would ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.
- 7.33 In respect of parking provision, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per 1-2 bedroom flat. The development provides a total of 8 parking spaces which complies with Council's adopted parking standards and the proposed parking layout is acceptable.
- 7.34 Policy TR5 seeks that residential developments of at least 10 spaces should provide an active electric vehicle charging point. Whilst this development is for 8 units and falls below the threshold it is proposed to secure a charging point by way of condition to align to future proof the development and in accordance with the wider sustainability policies of the Local Plan. Policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) seeks that uses energy and resources efficiently and incorporates measures to adapt to climate change.
- 7.35 In accordance with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 4 cycle parking spaces is required to be provide for a development of eight 1- and 2-bedroom flats. The site layout provides for secure cycle storage to the rear of the building adjacent to the access road which provides for convenient access. A proposed bin store is conveniently located at the front of the site which will provide easy access for refuse collection and would be discreetly hidden behind the existing brick front boundary wall.
- 7.36 Given the extent of the works proposed and location of the site within a residential area a construction method statement would be secured by way of condition to ensure the construction works are carried out in a manner which would not adversely impact on the surrounding highway network.
- 7.37 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 and to be acceptable in respect of transport relates matters subject to the recommended conditions and s106 obligations.

(vii) Natural Environment

- 7.38 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable. Policy EN14 (Trees Hedges and Woodlands) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal,

and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended with new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site.

- 7.39 A tree survey has been submitted with the application. There are thirteen existing trees on site, nine of which have been surveyed as being Class C trees (poor quality) and four as being Class U trees (dead/dying). Nine trees are proposed to be removed from the site as part of the proposed development. The Natural Environment Officer raises no objection to removal of these trees on the basis that they are not significant specimens whilst the proposals include replacement planting of seventeen trees to mitigate for their loss which would result in a net gain in tree coverage on the site.
- 7.40 The Natural Environment Officer advises that one of the trees to be planted will need to fulfil the requirements to replant a previously removed beech tree that was protected by TPO 105/05 and removed in 2014. This will need to be another beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) planted as close to the position of the original tree as practicable to provide it with sufficient future space to reach maturity without interfering with access or light. Details of the proposed hard and soft landscaping works, including tree planting, would be secured by way of condition.
- 7.41 A bat survey has been submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by the Councils Ecological Consultant who is satisfied that the building has limited potential for use by roosting bats. The site backs on to a railway corridor, with connected gardens with trees to the north and south and a line of trees 40m southeast. Since the site is connected to habitat of good ecological value a scheme of biodiversity enhancements including bat and bird boxes and wildlife friendly planting is to be secured by way of condition.
- 7.42 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies EN12 and EN14 and to be acceptable in respect of natural environment matters subject to the recommended conditions.

(viii) Affordable Housing

- 7.43 Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires that for development proposals for between 5 and 9 dwellings, the Applicant should make a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 20% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. The policy goes on to state that where, as a result of viability considerations, proposals fall short of the policy target the onus is on the developer to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.
- 7.44 The Applicant submitted a viability assessment as part of the application. The report outlines the facts and figures and contends that the development would not be viable with the inclusion of an affordable housing contribution. The Council's Valuations Section have reviewed the viability information submitted with the current application and have determined that the scheme would not be viable with the full contribution. Instead, a financial contribution of twenty thousand pounds

(payable upon occupation of the 5th unit) has been agreed as achievable together with a deferred contribution mechanism to ensure the Council shares in any future uplift in value of the site should the total sale value exceed the figures set out in the viability appraisal. This contribution, together with the deferred payment mechanism, would be secured as part of a section 106 legal agreement and on this basis the proposals are considered to accord with Policy H3.

(ix) Sustainability

- 7.45 Policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) seeks that uses energy and resources efficiently and incorporates measures to adapt to climate change. Policy CC2 also states that all minor category (less than 10 units) residential conversions are required to meet a BREEAM Very Good Standard as a minimum.
- 7.46 The proposed development incorporates a number of sustainability measures including high rated insulation to roofs, walls and floors, energy efficient lighting fittings, provision of natural lighting to all habitable rooms, water saving fittings and rainwater harvesting. Submission of evidence to confirm compliance with BREEAM Very Good standard would be secured by way of condition.
- 7.47 The development incorporates sustainable drainage proposals through use of soakaways and permeable surfacing for new areas of hardstanding. A detailed SuDS scheme and its implementation is proposed to be secured by condition.
- 7.48 The proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of sustainability matters and to accord with Policies CC2 and CC3 subject to the recommended conditions.

(x) Other Matters

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.49 The proposed development would be CIL liable. The total floor space of the development is 581.1m² and the net gain in floor space as a result of the proposals would be 238.5m². Given the existing floor space is in use as a dwelling CIL would be chargeable upon the net gain in floor space and would equate to a levy of thirty-seven thousand three hundred and seventy-five pounds (£37375).

Archaeology

- 7.50 Berkshire Archaeology have advised that they have no concerns relating to buried archaeological heritage at the site and that no further action is required by the Applicant in this respect.

Matters Raised in Representations

7.51 All matters raised in representation are considered have been addressed in the appraisal section of this report.

Equality Act

7.52 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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, 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.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the previous appeal dismissal on the site and the relevant Reading Borough Local Plan Policies as set out within the report. The officer recommendation is to grant full planning permission subject to the conditions and section 106 legal agreement heads of terms set out in the recommendation box at the top of this report.

Case Officer: Matt Burns

Appendix 1: Application ref. 191915 PAC Report & Plans

Appendix 2: Application ref. 191915 PAC Update Report

Appendix 3: Application ref. 191915 Appeal Decision (ref. APP/E0345/W/20/3254293)

Plans & Documents Considered:

Drawing no.s

20-J3471-01 rev B - Proposed Site Plan

20-J3471-02 rev B - Proposed Refurb Floor Plans

20-J3471-03 rev B - Proposed Elevations

20-J3471-04 rev B - Proposed Street Scene & Site Section

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 19th February 2021

20-J3471-05 - Proposed Bin and Cycle Stores

20-73471-06 - Existing Buildings

20-J3471-07 - Proposed Details Plan

20-J3471-CP - Context Plan

20-J3471-LP - Location Plan

Paragon Acoustic Consultants Groundborne Vibration Screening Assessment ref. 4122_VNM_1

GHA Trees Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report ref. GHA/DS/128560:19

GHA Trees Tree Protection Plan

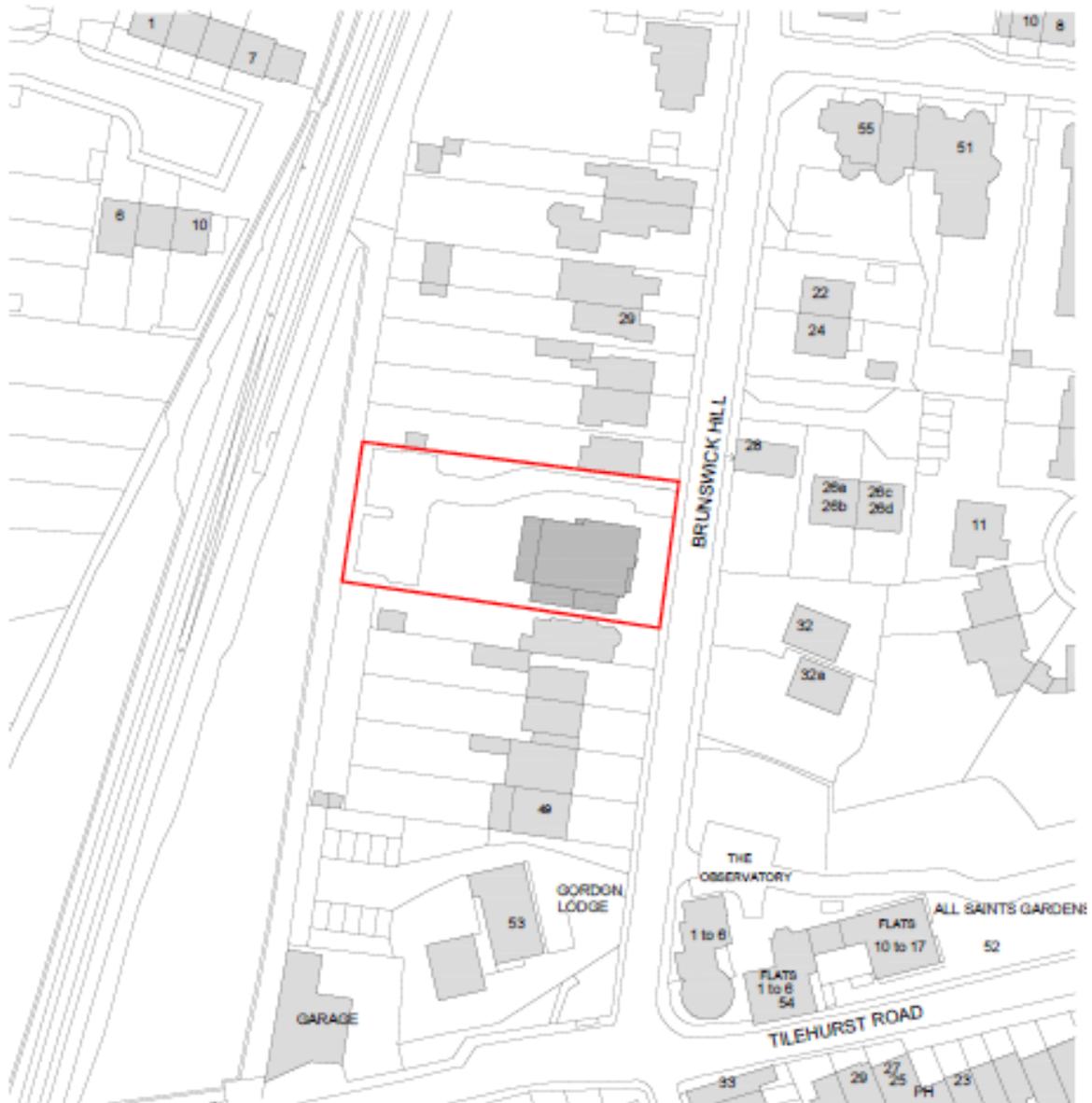
Air Quality Consultants Air Quality Assessment ref. J7062A/1/F1

Paragon Acoustic Consultants Environmental Noise Assessment ref. 4122_ENA/001

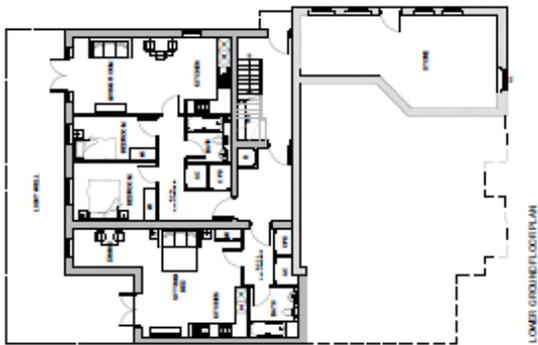
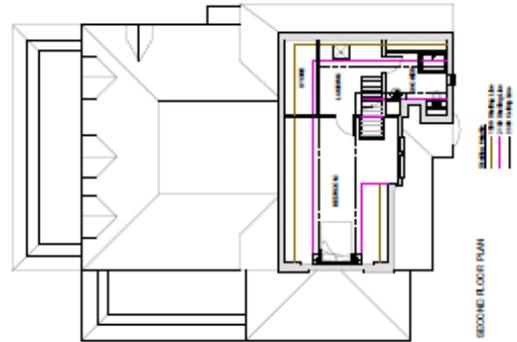
Davis Planning Ltd Planning, Design, Access and Sustainability Statement

Arbeco Bat Building Assessment ref. ARB1079

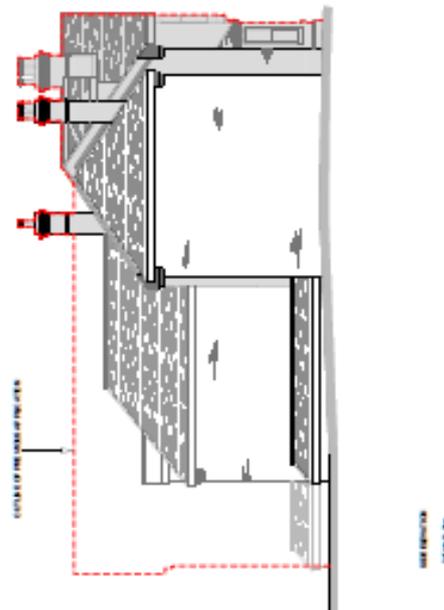
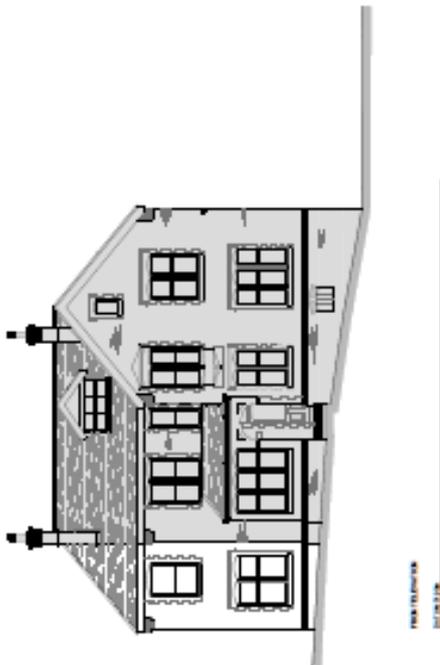
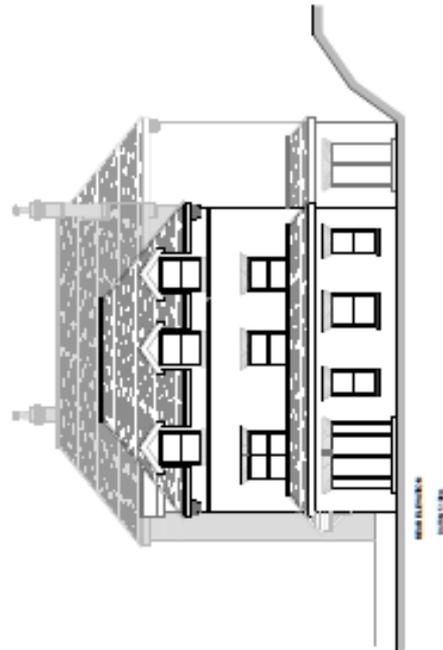
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18th December 2020



Proposed Block Plan



Proposed Floor Plans



Proposed Elevations (dotted line showing outline of previous proposals under application ref. 191915)

