

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 08 SEPTEMBER 2021

Ward: Kentwood

App No: 210904/REG

Address: 35 Bramshaw Road, Reading, RG30 6AT

Proposal: Works consist of property improvements and upgrades of Thermal efficiency measures to dwellings detailed below. All properties located on the Old Norcot Estate, Reading. Phase 1 addresses to include:- 35, 37, 39, 41, 43 Bramshaw Road RG30 6AT 69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road, RG30 6AS 377 & 379 Norcot Road, RG30 6AB. Works will see the existing render overclad with a new external wall insulation system, replacement of new triple glazed windows, minor roof adaptations and associated works (Part Retrospective) (Amended Description).

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date validated: 28/04/2021

Target Date: 19/08/2021

Extended target date: 10/09/2021

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

Conditions to include

1. Approved plans
2. Materials - as specified

Informatives to include:

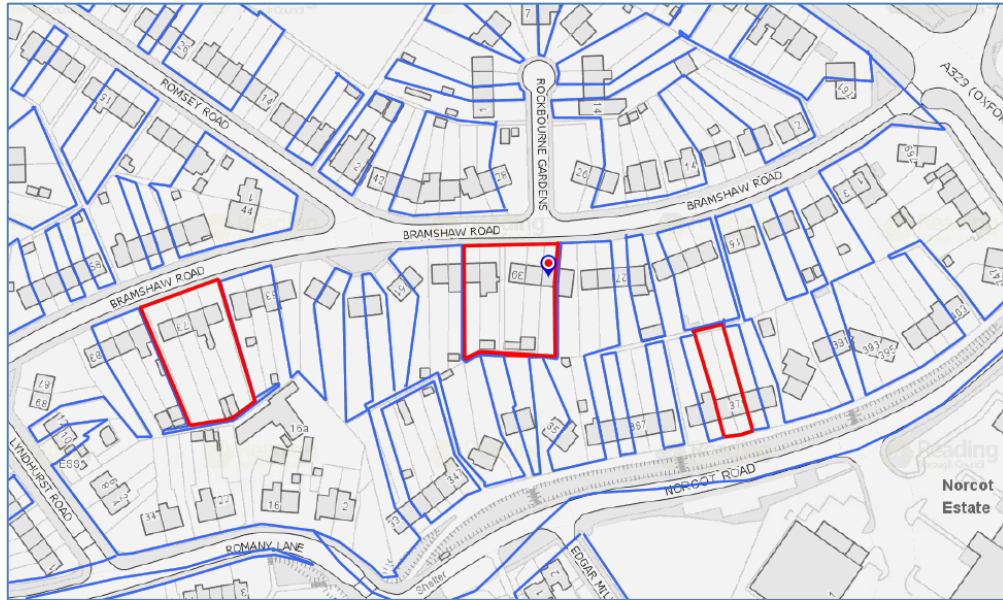
1. Terms and conditions
2. Positive and Proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposed works are exterior alterations and repair works to terraced houses along Bramshaw Road and Norcot Road, Tilehurst. All properties are located on the Old Norcot Estate, which has a mix of similarly designed terraced rows and semi-detached residential dwellings, constructed in the mid-1920s.
- 1.2 The houses are built using a mixture of brick and block with a narrow cavity. The external walls have a traditional cement mortar and pebble dash render. The main roofs are pitched with a double roman style tile. Windows and rear doors are double glazed uPVC.
- 1.3 The properties identified within this application are failing or near the end of their practical life expectancy. This project seeks to improve the thermal efficiency of the properties as well as perform replacement works. The external wall insulation (EWI) system proposed is a key component of this project and aims to improve thermal efficiency through conserving fuel and power, enabling Reading Borough Council to work towards a Zero Carbon target by 2030.

- 1.4 At the time of writing this report, the works proposed within this application are near completion, subject to the renewal of the front timber doors. Therefore, retrospective planning permission is sought for the works as outlined within this planning application. The application is referred to Committee owing to it being for works to Council owned (Regulation 3) property.

Site Location Plan



NOTE: The three areas outlined in red on the above plan are where the groups of houses, which are the subject of this planning application, are located. The multiple blue lines in the area indicate the extent of Council ownerships in the area.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The development proposes alterations to 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road, and 377 & 379 Norcot Road. The applicant believed that the nature of the works being carried out, being mainly repairs and refurbishment, meant that planning permission was not needed and so has pressed on with the project.

The following works are confirmed by the planning case officer to be within the criteria for being permitted development:

- Installation of triple glazed uPVC windows
- Renewal of flat roof coverings
- Structural repairs (External)
- Renewal of pitched roof tiles

- 2.2 However, the following works have been confirmed to require planning permission to be granted:

- External Wall Insulation (EWI) Systems
- Extension of roof overhangs to gable ends or dormer style roofs to allow for EWI to be fitted under new soffit.

- 2.3 The applicant submitted this part retrospective planning application as soon as this advice was given to obtain the appropriate permission.

3. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED:

The following plans and documents were submitted on 2nd June 2021:

- Elevations - PM/01-37 b
- Proposed Elevations - PM/02-37 b
- Retained Window and Sill - EWI System with Uninsulated Reveal and PPC Aluminium Oversill - W-RET-P-002A
- Overhanging Eaves - Ventilated Soffit Board - RFS002A
- Norcot Estate Improvements - Planning Statement
- PermaRock Silicone^{Ultra} K Finish Specification Document
- PermaRock External Wall Insulation Systems Care & Maintenance Advice Document
- Location Plan
- Mineral Fibre External Wall Insulation System Specification Sheet

The following plans were submitted on 14th June 2021:

- Site Plan (69-75 Bramshaw Road) - PM/69-75 Rev 1
- Site Plan (377 & 379 Norcot Road) - PM/377/379 Rev 1
- Site Plan (35-43 Bramshaw Road) - PM/35-43 Rev 1

The following amended plan was submitted on 24th June 2021:

- Location Plan (also demonstrating other Council owned properties)
Received on 24/06/2021

The following amended plan was submitted on 25th June 2021:

- Location Plan (also demonstrating other Council owned properties)
Received on 25/06/2021

4. PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation

5.1 The following neighbouring owners and occupiers were consulted by letter:

17 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AT
19 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AT
21 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AT
33 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AT
45 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AT
67 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AS
77 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AS
349 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
351 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
353 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
355 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
357 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
359 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
375 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
381 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AB
The Kiln, 16A Romany Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AP
22 Romany Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AP
24 Romany Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AP

26 Romany Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AP
28 Romany Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6AP
Reading Borough Council, Sustainability Team

A site notice was sent to the applicant on 25th June 2021 and received on 25th June 2021. No responses have been received at the time of writing.

Internal Consultations

- 5.2 A response from the RBC Sustainability Team was received on 14th July 2021 confirming their involvement in the project.

Officer Comment: As the RBC Sustainability Team have confirmed that they are involved in the project, it can be assumed that they support the proposed works.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

- 6.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3 Adaption to Climate Change
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (Adopted December 2019)

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Principle of Development
- ii) Design
- iii) Safeguarding Amenity

i) Principle of Development

- 7.2 The proposed works seek to refurbish and improve the thermal performance of these properties for the benefit of the occupiers. As mentioned above some of the changes fall within the definition of 'development' (section 55 of the Town & Country Planning Act) as building operations (section 55 (1A)

(d), also bearing in mind 55 (2) a(ii) and the change in appearance of the existing material beneath).

- 7.3 The proposed finished insulation system would have a depth of 115mm from the existing cement render. This will alter the character and appearance of the buildings beyond simply a change in render colour. The depth of the proposed render has the potential to alter the external appearance of window openings, doorframes, and result in the loss of eaves.
- 7.4 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that “plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. For decision making, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 7.5 As referred to in the Planning Statement submitted for this application, Reading Borough Council is committed to working towards achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. As per paragraph 4.7 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019), heat loss can be prevented by applying high levels of insulation to the roof, walls and floors. Heat loss from windows can be further reduced through double or triple glazing. The works proposed by this application aim to maximise energy efficiency by reducing heat loss from the building envelope. Therefore, the proposed development aligns with the principles of policy CC3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, which seeks existing development to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change through building improvements.

ii) Design

- 7.6 The properties subject to this application are two storey terraced rows of houses. The appearance of these properties previously was the same as others in the area being pebble-dash render, brown roof tiles, PVC windows, and brick porch arches.
- 7.7 The external wall insulation has been selected to improve energy efficiency at the respective properties. The colour of the render finish is different from the predominantly pebble-dash render character of the surrounding area, however it is considered that the new render coating and natural white colour selected is not harmful to the appearance of the application properties or the surrounding area. (See photographs of before and after below).
- 7.8 The render and finish at the depth that has been proposed/implemented has altered the appearance of openings and eaves to the affected properties, resulting in extended eaves and deep window reveals when compared to unaltered neighbouring properties. The adapted roofline is not considered a significant change or harmful to the character and appearance of the proposal sites or the surrounding area.
- 7.9 The proposed replacement of the existing uPVC windows with triple glazed uPVC windows are considered like for like, whilst again positively improving energy efficiency to these dwellings. The roof adaptations proposed are for the eaves to be extended to accommodate the depth of the render.
- 7.10 It is noted that there is a loss in the detailing of some of the properties (see Appendix 1); these include the loss of red brick archways, along with a

change from red brick to render at ground floor level to 69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road. The loss of such features is not considered harmful in this instance due to the inherent benefits of the proposed works and varying character of the surrounding area.

- 7.11 With regards to the long-term care and maintenance of the external wall insulation; information has been provided detailing procedures for ongoing inspections and maintenance. This includes instructions for cleaning the render, as well as attaching fixtures and fittings to the render.
- 7.12 Overall, in terms of the appearance of the refurbished and altered properties along Bramshaw Road and Norcot Road the changes are considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policies CC7 and H9.

iii) Safeguarding Amenity

- 7.13 The proposed works are not considered to harm the living conditions of neighbours within the surrounding area. This is largely due to the nature and scale of the works proposed. The works are not considered to harm the outlook from neighbouring properties, appear visually dominant or harmful when assessed against the criteria listed under policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 7.14 The development is considered to result in a betterment for existing and future occupiers at the dwellings subject to the works proposed within this application. It is noted that reveals of windows at the proposal sites are deeper as a result of the external wall insulation, however, the additional depth is not considered to result in a harmful loss of light or harm to outlook for occupiers.
- 7.15 Therefore, the proposed works are considered in accordance with policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

8. Equality

- 8.1 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 and disability. 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.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In addition to being in accordance with policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the development is considered to suitably improve the thermal efficiency of the respective Council owned properties, whilst not harming the character and appearance of the properties or the area. It can be concluded that the inherent benefits of the proposal by improving energy efficiency at these properties, as part of the Council's commitment to its Climate Emergency declaration, is considered to weigh heavily in favour of this development.

Case Officer: David Brett

Appendix 1: Before and after photos compiled by Case Officer.



**69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road
Google Streeview image from July
2019**



**69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road
Site Photo taken on 18/08/2021**



**73, 75 Bramshaw Road
Google Streeview image from July 2019**



**73, 75 Bramshaw Road
Site Photo taken on 18/08/2021**



**69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road
Google Streeview image from July 2019**



**69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road
Site Photo taken on 18/08/2021**



35, 37, 39, 41, 43 Bramshaw Road
Google Streetview image from October
2020



35, 37, 39, 41, 43 Bramshaw Road
Site Photo taken on 18/08/2021



35, 37, 39 Bramshaw Road
Google Streetview image from October
2020



35, 37, 39 Bramshaw Road
Site Photo taken on 18/08/2021



377 & 379 Norcot Road
Google Streetview image from October
2020

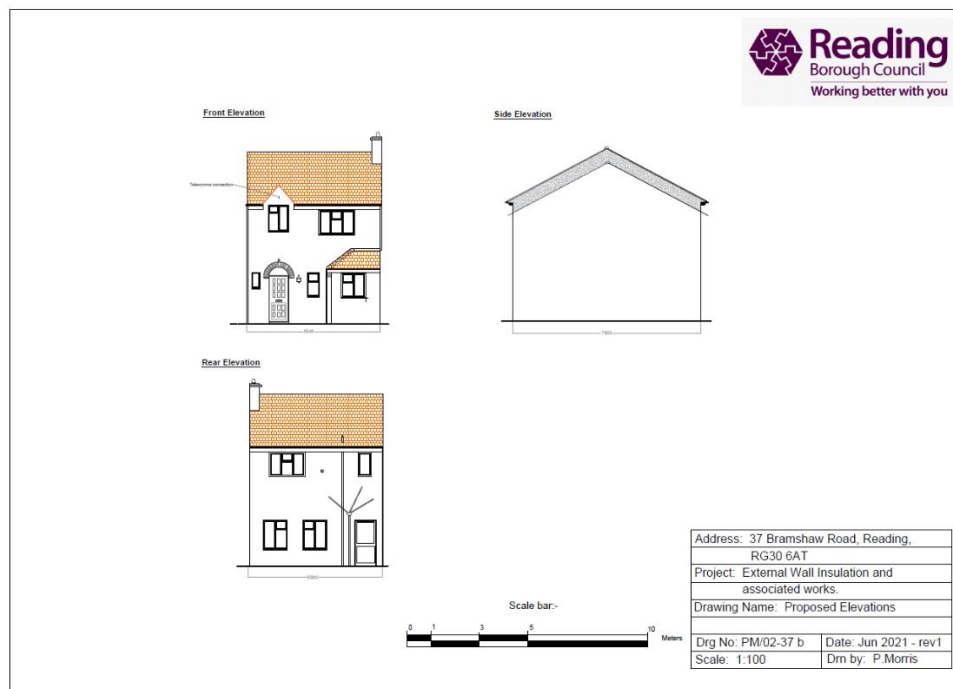


377 & 379 Norcot Road
Site Photo taken on 18/08/2021

Appendix 2: Plans



Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations