

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1st December 2021

Ward: Minster

App No.: 210582

Address: 18 Parkside Road, RG30 2DB

Proposal: Demolition of detached house and annex and erection of 10 dwellings, with undercroft parking, landscaping and bin stores (amended)

Applicant: Colony Developments

Deadline: 16/11/2021

Extended Deadline: 28th January 2022

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 15/2/22

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of S.106 Legal Agreement.

OR Refuse permission should the S.106 Legal Agreement not be completed by 28th January 2022 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services.

The Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the following:

Affordable Housing

- Two on-site shared ownership units (or equivalent in terms of habitable rooms) together with a Deferred Payment contribution mechanism, with a 50/50 share in profits in excess of 12% GDV on an open-book basis, capped at a total policy compliant sum, equivalent to 30% of GDV, calculated on the sale of the 9th unit **OR**
- £140k off-site commuted affordable housing contribution paid on occupation of 8th Unit together with a Deferred Payment contribution mechanism, with a 50/50 share in profits realised in excess of 12% Gross Development Value (GDV) on an open-book basis, capped at a total policy compliant sum, equivalent to 30% of GDV, calculated on the sale of the 9th unit.

To comply with Policy H3.

Employment Skills and Training Plan - Construction phase skills - preparation and delivery of an ESP or a financial contribution of £1,870 (construction). To comply with Policy CC9 and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD.

Zero Carbon Offset - All Dwellings

- Zero Carbon Offset as per SPD 2019 to provide a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a Section 106 contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as

£60/tonne over a 30-year period).

- As-built SAP calculation for all dwellings to be submitted for approval within 6 months following first occupation.
- Contribution based on SPD formula below towards carbon-saving projects calculated for all dwellings based on approved SAP calculation to be paid to the Council within 9 months following first occupation:
TER CO2 m2/yr less 35% CO2 m2/yr) = 65% of TER
65% of TER x total square metres = total excess CO2 emissions annually
Total excess CO2 emissions annually x £1800 = S106 contribution.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

AMEND AS REQUIRED

- 1) TL1 - 3 yrs
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 4) L2 - Hard and soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved
- 5) L4 - Landscape Management Plan to be submitted and approved
- 6) L5 - Tree retention
- 7) L7 - Arboricultural Method Statement to be approved
- 8) L11 - Licence for development works affecting bats
- 9) L10 - Habitat enhancement - Prior to occupation mitigation and enhancement measures, detailed in section 8 of 'The Bat Emergence/Re-entry Surveys and Mitigation Report' (Darwin Ecology, October 2021) be installed and retained thereafter.
- 10) Nesting birds Vegetation clearance outside of nesting season
- 11) CO3 - Contamination assessment to be submitted
- 12) CO4 - Remediation scheme to be submitted
- 13) CO5 - Remediation scheme to be implemented and verified
- 14) CO6 - Unidentified contamination
- 15) C2 - Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved
- 16) C1 - Hours of Construction
- 17) C4 - No Bonfires
- 18) Accessible dwellings
- 19) SU1 - SAP assessment (design stage)
- 20) SU2 - SAP assessment (as built)
- 21) SU7 - SUDS plan to be approved
- 22) SU8 - SUDS to be implemented
- 23) DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 24) DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified prior to occupation
- 25) DC6 - Cycle Parking to be approved
- 26) DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof)
- 27) DE6- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 1) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 2) IF6 - Building Regulations
- 3) IF2 - Pre-Commencement Conditions (relevant conditions above have been accepted as such by the applicant in accordance with Article 35 of the

Development Management Procedure Order 2015)

- 4) I11 - CIL
- 5) IF4 - S106
- 6) IF3 - Highways
- 7) I29 - Access Construction
- 8) IF7 - Complaints about Construction
- 9) IF8 - Encroachment
- 10) I10 - Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building
- To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.
- 11) Thames Water - The proposed development is located within 15 metres of Thames Water's underground assets. Please read our guide 'working near our assets' to ensure your workings are in line with the necessary processes you need to follow if you're considering working above or near our pipes or other structures.

Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum water pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres.

- 12) IF1 - Positive & Proactive.

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site is a 0.14ha. residential plot on the corner of Parkside Road and Westcote Road, with an existing shared vehicular and pedestrian access from Parkside Road. It comprises a three bedroom 1960s house, with a triple garage and a 3 bedroom annex over, with a small basement. It sits in a large garden and is very verdant, bounded by trees and hedges on all sides, and is covered by TPO no:10/19.
- 1.2 The site slopes from west to east (front to rear) and there is a change in levels of ca. 2.3 m between Westcote Road and the level of the garden, with a retaining wall enclosing a landscaped area with trees and shrubs on this northern side.
- 1.3 This is a well-established residential area, which comprises a range of properties including family homes, care homes, hotels and flats of varying styles and eras.
- 1.4 The application is referred to committee as it is a 'major' development.

Location Plan



View from Parkside Road
Road



View of junction of Westcote Road and Parkside
Road

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 This is a resubmission of application 200979 (12 units - refused) and the amended proposal is for:

- Demolition of the existing dwelling and annex
- Erection of a three-storey residential building with undercroft, car parking and landscaping/ amenity space.
- A total of 10 no. flats comprising:

Ground Floor

Unit 1 - 2 bed - 66.4sqm

Unit 2 - 3 bed - 81.5sqm

First Floor

Unit 3 - 2 bed - 62.9sqm

Unit 4 - 2 bed - 70sqm

Unit 5 - 2 bed - 63.5sqm

Unit 6 - 2 bed - 70sqm

Second Floor

Unit 7 - 1 bed - 50sqm

Unit 8 - 2 bed - 62.8sqm

Unit 9 - 2 bed - 63.1sqm
Unit 10 - 2 bed - 70.1sqm

- 12x no. car parking spaces and 8 no. cycle spaces.
- Landscaping.

2.2 Submitted plans and documentation (including amended details), are as follows:

Received 14th April 2021:

- Site Location Plan as Existing - Drawing no: 01-01
- Block Plan as Existing - Drawing no: 01-02
- Topo and Trees as Existing - Drawing no: 01-05
- Floor Plans as Existing - Drawing no: 03-00
- Elevations as Existing - Drawing no: 05-00
- Elevations as Existing - Drawing no: 05-01

Received 8th October 2021

- Proposed Block Plan - Drawing no: 02-10 Rev P5
- Proposed Second Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-12 Rev P5
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: 05-10 Rev P5
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: 05-11 Rev P5
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: 05-12 Rev P5
- Proposed Sections - Drawing no: 04-10 Rev P4
- Proposed Landscaping Intent Plan - Drawing no: 02-16 Rev P5
- Proposed Site Plan - Drawing no: 02-15 Rev P5 [includes roof plan]
- Proposed SUDS Plan - Drawing no: 02-18 Rev P5
- Proposed Utilities Plan - Drawing no: 02-17 Rev P5

Received 17th November 2021

- Proposed Highways Plan - Drawing no: 02-19 Rev P5a

Received 19th November 2021

- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-10 Rev P5a
- Proposed First Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-11 Rev P5a

Other Documents:

- Affordable Housing Statement, dated 7th July 2021, prepared by Colony Architects, received 13th July 2021
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, dated 2nd July 2020, Document Ref: 1312, prepared by SJ Stephens Associates
- CIL Form 1: CIL Additional Information, received 13th July 2021
- Daylight/ Sunlight Statement, dated 4th August 2021, prepared by Colony Architects, received 12th August 2021
- Design and Access Statement Rev B, prepared by Colony Architects, received 22nd October 2021
- Energy Assessment, dated 16th August 2021, prepared by Energy Calculations, received 17th August 2021

- Planning Statement, dated August 2021, prepared by Nexus Planning, received 12th August 2021
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roosts, dated May 2019, prepared by Dawn Ecology, received 14th April 2021
- SAP Report Submission for Building Regulations Compliance, dated 16th August 2021, prepared by Energy Calculations Ltd, received 17th August 2021
- Update Preliminary Roost Assessment, High level Inspection and Mitigation Report, dated October 2020, prepared by Darwin Ecology, received 12th August 2021
- Transport Statement, dated 5th August 2021, Document ref: SJ/MD/ITL16121-002, prepared by I-Transport, received 12th August 2021

2.3 *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*: the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The proposed C3 use is CIL liable and the estimated amount of CIL chargeable from the proposed scheme would be £73,345 (rounded) based on £156.71 (2021 indexed figure) per sqm of Gross Internal Area (GIA).

3 PLANNING HISTORY

190834/PREAPP - Demolition of existing dwelling house. Replaced with 14 new flats (1, 2 & 3 beds) over 3.5 storeys.

200979/FUL - Demolition of detached house and annex and erection of 3 storey building for 3x3, 3x2, and 6x1 bed flats, with undercroft parking, landscaping and bin stores **refused** 7th April 2021 for the following reasons:

1. *The proposed design of the development due to its utilitarian appearance, bulk, height, massing and plot coverage would result in the site appearing overdeveloped and a discordant addition within an area which is predominantly of low-density suburban domestic character. The proposal would therefore appear as a harmful addition to the streetscene, and fails to maintain and enhance the overall character and appearance of the area contrary to policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) and H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).*
2. *The proposed development, due to its overall bulk, height and massing, and the proposed location and amount of window openings, specifically on the southern and eastern sides, would create an overbearing development on and would result in the loss of amenity, through overlooking and loss of privacy, to neighbouring properties at Nos. 16 Parkside Road and 29 Westcote Road. As such the proposal would fail to protect the*

impact on the living environment of these properties, contrary to Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

3. *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure:*
- (i) An acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development; and*
 - (ii) An acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing within the Borough*
- the proposal fails to fails to contribute adequately to the employment, skills or training needs of local people with associated socio-economic harm, contrary to Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) and fails to adequately contribute to the Affordable Housing needs within the Borough contrary to policies CC9 and H3 (Affordable Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Affordable Housing SPD (2021)*

4 CONSULTATIONS

Statutory

- 4.1 None.

Non-statutory

Ecology

- 4.2 The application site comprises a detached house with detached summerhouse and shed surrounded by habitat suitable for use by bats (connected gardens with tree lines linking to woodland and parkland in the wider landscape). It is proposed to demolish the buildings and replace them with a block of flats with associated car parking and landscaping.
- 4.3 A Bat Emergence/Re-entry Surveys and Mitigation Report (Darwin Ecology, October 2021) has been submitted with the application. This details the results of three bat emergence/re-entry surveys carried out after a preliminary bat survey report (Darwin Ecology, October 2020). This report concluded that the property supports three soprano pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus spp.*) day roosts - bat droppings were found beneath hanging tiles to the front and rear of the building.
- 4.4 No bats were observed emerging or entering the building, however the latest report concludes that, because of the droppings, the proposals will impact upon a bat roost as such a licence for development works affecting bats will need to be obtained from Natural England.

- 4.5 Section 7 of the Bat Emergence/Re-entry Surveys and Mitigation Report (Darwin Ecology, October 2021) details a mitigation strategy to ensure that the favourable conservation status of bats can be maintained. A condition is recommended to ensure that the licence is obtained.
- 4.6 It is considered that as long as a mitigation plan such as that given in the bat survey report is provided the proposed works would pass the three tests of The Habitat Regulations, and as such receive a licence from Natural England.
- 4.7 The proposals will not affect other protected or priority species.
- 4.8 The Bat Emergence/Re-entry Surveys and Mitigation Report details how the site will be enhanced for wildlife post development. This includes a number of ecological enhancements, and a condition should be set to ensure that these are installed as advised.

Environmental Health

- 4.9 *Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building* - include informative.
- 4.10 *Contaminated Land* - Where development is proposed, the developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose or can be made so by remedial action.
- 4.11 The development lies on the site of an historic pit which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 4.12 Ideally a 'phase 1' desk study should be submitted with applications for developments on sites with potentially contamination to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether further investigation is necessary.
- 4.13 Investigation must be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action.
- 4.14 Recommended conditions as follows, to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination: CO3 - Submission of a contaminated land assessment; CO4 - Remediation scheme to be submitted; CO5 - Remediation scheme to be implemented and verified; CO6 - Unidentified contamination.
- 4.15 *Construction and demolition phases* - We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).

- 4.16 Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.
- 4.17 *Bin storage - rats* - There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas e.g. flats and hotels there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste and a condition is recommended.

Natural Environment (Tree Officer)

- 4.18 The comments on the original submission were as follows: This site was subject to previous planning application ref. 200979 (refused) on which occasion Natural Environment comments supported the proposal subject to Arboricultural Method Statement and Landscaping conditions.
- 4.19 The trees growing within the site are protected by an Area Tree Preservation Order 10/19 but the proposal at hand is similar in terms of tree retention and landscaping to the previous scheme.
- 4.20 With reference to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Project No. 1312 dated 2nd July 2020, the following are noted: This was prepared in support of the previous application but it is still mostly relevant. However, some elements are different on the current proposal, such as the location of the bin storage, therefore, some amendments are necessary to bring the TPP up to date. I therefore, recommend a final version of the AMS should be secured via condition if planning permission is granted.
- 4.21 There are 26 proposed new trees to replace the ones removed to enable development, which is positive. Details for the landscaping can be secured via condition, but there are 2 points where further information is required:
- It is unclear from the Landscape plan how many of the new trees will be managed as specimen trees (standalone) and be allowed to develop a natural crown shape - this is due to the fact that most of them are located within the existing boundary green screens. They seem to be intended more as complementary planting to fill in gaps. It would be well received if at least 1 or 2 trees along the Parkside Rd frontage and some within the gardens could be provisioned as specimen trees and allowed to grow their species ultimate size and natural crown shape.
 - The 'rear southern landscape' is one of the few places on site that offers sufficient space for a specimen tree. The previous

proposal had 4 trees at this location, which the current one replaces with only 1. Consideration to tree planting in this area should be given.

- Why are the same tree types shown as different sized circles? Does that correlate with size at planting or intended ultimate crown size to be managed as?
- The applicant/agent should be wary of the size the *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) fastigate crowns can ultimately reach - albeit this is an upright cultivar. Some of the trees provisioned are located in very close proximity with other trees or structures, which could lead to nuisance, damage or conflict in the future.
- Details with regards to new trees establishment, tree pits, watering and maintenance schedule are lacking, but these will be secured via condition.

4.22 In conclusion, this application is supported in terms of tree retention and landscaping subject to conditions.

4.23 **Planning Officer Note:** An amended plan was submitted and included additional trees in the southern landscaped area, which the Natural Environment Officer considered acceptable.

SUDS Manager

4.24 I have looked at the SuDs submission which appears to be just a plan at this stage and as such would not be sufficient information for me to assess. The applicant would be required to provide a written statement confirming that the proposal will not worsen the surface water run off but as far as I can see this has not been provided. As such I would currently object to the proposals.

4.25 **Planning Officer note:** Following the receipt of further details the SUDS Manager confirmed that that SUDS proposal would be acceptable in principle and that there was no objection subject to the following conditions: SU7 - Sustainable drainage scheme to be approved and SU8 - Sustainable drainage scheme to be implemented and maintained as specified.

RBC Transport Strategy

4.26 The Transport Officer's comments on the amended scheme are as follows: The application now proposes a development of a block of 10 flats comprising of:
9 x 1 & 2 bed units
1 x 3 Bed units

4.27 The site is within Zone 2, 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. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed development would be

required to provide off road parking of 1 Parking space for each 1 and 2 bedroom flat and 1.5 for a 3 bedroom flat, therefore equating to a total of 11 parking spaces. In addition to this, visitor parking should also be provided at a ratio of 1 per 10 dwellings, therefore the whole development would require 12 parking spaces.

- 4.28 Submitted Proposed Ground Floor Plan (02-15 P5) illustrates 12 parking spaces of which parking spaces 4 to 10 are provided as undercroft parking dimensions of parking spaces and forecourt depths conform to the Councils current adopted standards and therefore deemed acceptable.
- 4.29 The Council's Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 - 2026 includes policies for investing in new infrastructure to improve connections throughout and beyond Reading which include a network of publicly available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public transport. The Councils Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and this includes a requirement at Policy TR5 for communal car parks for residential of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point, therefore a minimum of 1 EV charging point should be provided. Submitted Proposed Highway Plan (02 19 P4) Illustrates 2 EV points are to be provided with a further 2 proposed for the future. This provision is deemed acceptable.
- 4.30 The access will need to be a minimum of 4.8m wide to allow for two way vehicular movements. The applicant should be advised that a license must be obtained from the Council's Highways section before any works are carried-out on any footway, carriageway, verge, or other land forming part of the public highway to agree the access construction details. Revised plans illustrating 4.8m access is required.
- 4.31 Bin storage should not be located further than 10m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods and should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Bin stores have been illustrated on the Highways Plan located at the front of the site which is deemed acceptable.
- 4.32 Cycle storage should be secure and covered using Sheffield type stands. Storage is required at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per 1 & 2 bedroom flats and 1 space for the 3 bedroom unit, a minimum of 6 spaces are therefore required. The Submitted Proposed Highway Plan shows that 12 storage spaces are to be provided which include 6 located in the undercroft area. Full details of the type of provision is required, it should be noted that the use of vertical lockers would not be supported for a residential development.

A Construction Management Statement will be required for this site.

- 4.33 **Planning Officer Note:** Following the receipt of an amended Highways Plan, which adjusted the cycle storage to the provision of 8 spaces in non-vertical lockers (Rev P5a, received 17th November 2021) Transport confirmed that the cycle storage was acceptable.

Public consultation

- 4.34 As set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement, the applicant undertook their own public consultation prior to submission of the application, following the previous refusal of planning permission. This comprised an initial meeting held with neighbours, an online call with councillors and a leaflet circulated to nearby residents.
- 4.35 Following submission of the application, the following addresses were consulted by the Local Planning Authority: 4, 9c, 9d, 11a, 11b, 11c, 15, 16, 17a, 17b, 17c, 19 - Parkside Road; 27, 28, 29 - Westcote Road; Chilmington House, Armadale Court, and site notices were displayed on Westcote Road and Parkside Road. Further site notices were displayed on 29th October 2021 following receipt of amended plans.
- 4.36 Following the original submission plans, 8 no. objections (including 2 from each of no. 29 Westcote Road, 4 and 15 Parkside Road) were received, summarised as follows:

Principle

- The proposal is contrary to Policy H11 - Development of Private Residential Gardens.

Design

- The proposal does not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area where the prevailing character comprises detached dwellings of a traditional scale and character.
- Other buildings of a similar scale to the proposal are different forms of use - care homes, hostels and hotels and their scale reflects these uses.
- Height is significantly above adjacent buildings and the height is further exacerbated with the pitched roof.
- The layout brings built form closer to no. 29 Westcote Road and communal access routes and outdoor space will be for 10 households compared to 1.
- The need for additional screening and security is not in keeping with Policy H11.
- The building would be too large for the site in question and will be elevated above the existing ground level in order to accommodate the undercroft parking necessitated by such a large and overbearing development.

- The block is still too big, has too many dwellings for the size of the site, contains none (or only one unit?) of the most needed accommodation and is out of character for the area. This site is not suitable for such a building and a proposal more appropriate to the size of the plot and its location should be made.
- Appreciate the efforts made to amend the designs and propose something more in keeping with the characterful buildings with pitched roofs and gables. This is an improvement on the previous proposals and any further efforts to blend this building in with those opposite (in Parkside Road or Westcote Road) would be appreciated.

Density and mix

- Density is around 76 dwellings per hectare well in excess of the indicate density ranges for suburban areas and the proposal would be a significant uplift it site coverage compared to the existing and will be out of keeping with the surrounding properties.
- Proposals fall significantly below the requirement for family dwelling provision in H2 which is not mitigated by any other features of the development.
- There are no other developments of this density along Parkside road and the building is overwhelming amongst the other properties on that road.

Amenity of existing and proposed residents

- The proposals will be significantly closer to the property at no. 29 Westcote Road reducing the distance to 6.8m from nearly 20m, which will have a detrimental impact.
- The smaller windows on the eastern elevation suggests this facade is too close to no. 29 Westcote Road trying to solve a problem that the design and layout has created.
- The loss of privacy highlighted before is still evident as our property [no. 15 Parkside] will be facing a high rise block of flats with direct view into bedrooms.
- The balconies facing Westcote Road will directly overlook the garden of no. 28 Westcote Road and compromise privacy.
- Despite some improvements to positioning of windows no. 16 Parkside Road will still be massively overlooked by the sheer size and bulk of the building.

Traffic & Parking

- No disabled spaces and no provision of electric charging points.
- The proposed number of properties on the site will force yet more residents, visitors and trade to park on Westcote Road. I insist the council address this problem before a cyclist or child is injured on this residential road.
- It will encourage parking around the junction of Westcote and Parkside Roads.

Landscaping & Biodiversity

- The proposal will result in a significant loss of residential gardens. Additional details are required from the applicant as to how they are achieving a biodiversity net gain on this site in accordance with Policy H11 and EN12 as well as the recently adopted Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021).
- The proposed removal of trees and foliage around the proposed site will only increase the overbearing and overlooking nature of the proposed development.

Affordable Housing

- We expect the applicant to make the viability assessment available for public scrutiny in accordance with Policy H3.
- The Planning Department appears to have concentrated on getting a large Affordable Housing contribution at the expense of other Policies in the Local Plan. A proposal that complies with the Local Plan (e.g. 8 dwellings) would still generate an Affordable Housing contribution (but at a lower level than the one proposed) and satisfy Local Plan H3 as well as CC7, H10 and H11.

Other

- Documents made available through the consultation were old documents and the site notice was not properly displayed.
- Would welcome fewer properties with some family 4 bed dwellings.
- Elevations make it look like the site is all at road level, but the Westcote elevation shows a significant slope down into the site. The impact of raising the level of the site has not been addressed in the environmental assessment.
- Industrial sized 1100 litre bins are proposed, how will these be emptied? The entrance is too narrow and steeply sloped for a bin lorry to reverse in on a regular basis and the occupants could not move a 1100 litre bin up the slope to the road for emptying.

Following consultation on the amended plans 3 no. further objections were received summarised as follows:

- There are too many windows overlooking our property and garden area which will massively impact our privacy and quality of living [16 Parkside Road].
- The proposal is too big for the site and creative placement of windows is not going to change this.
- Why do all the proposals ignore planning regulations in regards to density? The site is large enough to support a maximum of 8 dwellings. This has been decided and is Policy. If 8 is not commercially viable, then the site has been overpriced. The number of dwellings proposed is 25% more than the agreed maximum in the Local Plan and is therefore, contrary to policy.

- Once the capacity of the site has been established and is in accordance with agreed policy then other points can be discussed - type of accommodation, appearance, character environmental concerns etc.
- The revisions have brought the building away from the sensitive boundaries to no. 29 Westcote Road and no, 16 Parkside Road, but this does not have a significant impact on either and the elevation facing no. 16 now has more windows.
- The dwelling mix is worse in terms of family provision.
- The section shows an odd arrangement in the roof with large void areas, suggesting the building need not be as high as it is built.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

- 5.2 The Development Plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure

Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy EN15: Air Quality

Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage

Policy H1: Provision of Housing

Policy H2: Density and Mix

Policy H3: Affordable Housing

Policy H5: Standards for New Housing
Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
Policy H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens
Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

- 5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are:
- Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)
 - Sustainable Design and Construction (December 2019)
 - Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
 - Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)

- 5.4 Other relevant documents:
- Reading Tree Strategy (2021)

6 APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Area**
- **Housing Density & Mix**
- **Transport/ Parking**
- **Landscaping & Ecology**
- **Sustainability**
- **Environmental Matters**
- **S106 obligations**
- **Equalities impact**

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The provision of a residential redevelopment would contribute towards “*ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations...*” (NPPF, Para. 8) and would also make effective use of urban land in accordance with NPPF (Para. 119). It would contribute to meeting the need for additional housing in accordance with Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP).
- 6.2 The proposed development would be in part on private residential garden land and part on previously developed land (existing house). The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed land’ excludes private residential gardens. Although priority for development should be on previously developed land, the development of private residential garden land is not unacceptable in principle.
- 6.3 The principle of development for residential is therefore acceptable subject to meeting relevant policies including those related to

design, ecology, landscaping, and parking, which are addressed in the sections below.

Design and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Area

6.4 The NPPF (Para 126) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

6.5 Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, requires all development to be of a “*high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.*” Design includes layout, landscape, density and mix, scale: height and massing, and architectural details and materials.

6.6 Policy H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens) requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

“1. The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:

- a. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
 - b. A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
 - c. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
 - d. Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
 - e. The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
 - f. The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
- 2. The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
 - 3. The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
 - 4. The proposal does not lead to tandem development;*
 - 5. The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
 - 6. The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
 - 7. The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*

8. *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and*
 9. *The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.”*
- 6.7 The local context includes a range of building types and styles including traditional forms with pitches and gables and other simpler and more modern forms of building. The properties are largely in residential use and comprise detached and semi-detached houses, care homes and blocks of flats, some up to 4 storeys.
 - 6.8 The initial submission under this current planning application was for 11 units, and following the initial consultation period officers sought some further changes. An amended scheme was submitted which included one fewer unit; a reduced footprint; reduction of the overall mass and bulk of the roofscape including closest to the adjoining properties; and some window amendments.
 - 6.9 The proposed scheme for 10 residential units is a resubmission of an earlier refused scheme (12 units - images below). One of the reasons for refusal related to design and that the appearance, bulk, height, massing and plot coverage was a harmful addition to the streetscene and failed to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area.
 - 6.10 The following assessment, therefore, reviews the amended scheme in the context of addressing this reason for refusal as well as the relevant national and local policies and guidance.
 - 6.11 As with the refused scheme, the proposal is for flats within a ‘T’ shaped form. The building comprises 3 distinct elements: the corner block, which is the highest element, and 2 wings east and south, the scale of which drops down towards 29 Westcote Road and 16 Parkside Road respectively. The building line is staggered to both front elevations (Parkside Road and Westcote Road); the corner element projects further forward than the adjacent properties, and then the wings step back.



Refused Parkside Road Elevation



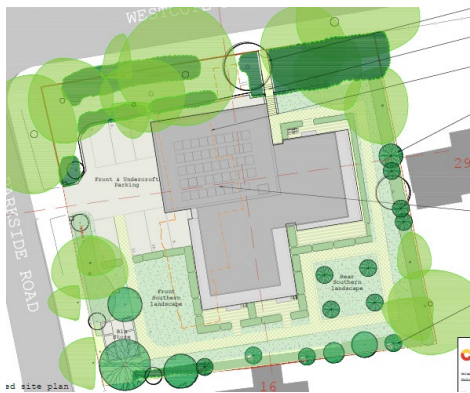
Proposed



Refused Westcote Road Elevation



Proposed



Refused Site Layout



Proposed Site Layout (red dashed outline shows the refused scheme footprint)



View from South (refused scheme)



Proposed

6.12 The main differences from the previously refused scheme are as follows:

- Significantly different in appearance with gable and pitched roofs with a more domestic residential appearance. The proposed

materials would comprise traditional red brick, clay roof tiles and the use of render;

- The bulk and massing would be reduced towards the neighbouring properties;
- The proposal would be set further from the boundaries to no. 29 Westcote Road and 16 Parkside Road resulting in a reduced overall plot coverage;
- There would be fewer and smaller windows to the east and south, with one bedroom and one living room window on the southern side of the wing closest to no. 16 Parkside Road shown as being obscure glazed, seeking to reduce overlooking;
- The majority of the living rooms would be repositioned within the layout to face the front to Parkside Road and Westcote Road;
- There would be an increase in useable amenity space from 370sqm to 404sqm;
- There would be increased screening of private areas and communal grassed areas.

6.13 The following paragraphs (6.13-6.23) include assessment against Policy H11.

6.14 It is considered that the proposed siting would retain good spacing to the adjoining properties and site to respect the building alignments on either side. The distance to the boundaries has increased compared to the refused scheme from a minimum of 9.4m to the southern boundary to 16 Parkside Road, compared to 7.4m for the refused scheme, and 6.8m to the eastern boundary to 29 Westcote Road compared to 5.5m as refused. It would be consistent with the prevailing pattern of built form to spaces including sufficient amenity space.

6.15 It would be consistent with the pattern of street access openings, retaining the existing access from Parkside Road and introducing a new pedestrian access from Westcote Road, presenting an active frontage to both streets. Boundary treatments would be retained on the site frontages and there would be enhancement of the landscaping of the site. The overall spacing between neighbouring buildings is considered adequate to reflect the rhythm and spacing of existing buildings along the roads.

6.16 Although the overall density would be higher than the surrounding single house plots, it would be comparable with other flatted schemes as explained further under the 'Density and Mix' section below.

6.17 In terms of height it would be taller than buildings either side of it, but not unusual within the area where there are examples of taller buildings. The scale of the proposal reduces closest to 16 Parkside Road and 29 Westcote Road. The pitch of the roofs and hipping assists with reducing the bulk and mass compared to the refused

scheme and it is considered that it would not be overly dominant and overbearing in the streetscene.

- 6.18 The traditional materials, elevational detail, gable features and pitched roofs would be reflective of other buildings in the area.
- 6.19 The proposal would utilise an existing residential site with clear and established boundaries and there would be no need for additional physical security measures.
- 6.20 It is not considered that the proposed scheme would cause significant detriment to the amenity of existing neighbouring occupants and is considered to be a significant improvement on the refused scheme and this is discussed further below under 'Amenity'.
- 6.21 The mix of units is discussed further under 'Housing Density and Mix' below and it is considered that there would be adequate units of a suitable size for family occupation, whilst ensuring effective use of this suburban site.
- 6.22 Garden land would be retained which would ensure that there would not be any fragmentation of blocks of gardens and there would be biodiversity enhancements as discussed further in 'Landscaping and Ecology' section below.
- 6.23 There would be no prejudicial effect with regard to the satisfactory development of the wider area from this redevelopment of a single plot surrounded by existing built development.
- 6.24 The overall bulk and mass and the proposed design appearance is considered to be sympathetic to the surrounding character making a positive contribution to it. It has been reduced in size and set further from the boundaries than the refused scheme and subject to the above conditions it is considered that it accords with relevant policies CC7 and H11 and has satisfactorily addressed the design related reason for refusal.

Housing Density & Mix

- 6.25 Policy H2 addresses density and housing mix and states that this will be informed by character and mix of the area; accessibility; the need to achieve high quality design; maximise efficiency of land; and the need to minimise the environmental impacts including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 6.26 The supporting text to the policy (para 4.4.7) states that, "*wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms. As a minimum, on new developments for 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, planning decisions will ensure that over 50% of dwellings will be of 3*

bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations.” (officer emphasis)

- 6.27 The amended proposal includes 1x3 bed unit and 8x2 bed units, (three of which would be of a size for 4 persons - Units 4, 6 and 10). Para 4.49 of the RBLP explains that *“taken as a whole .. homes with two or more bedrooms, capable of accommodating families, represent the majority of the need”*. Taking account of other material considerations, it is considered that this number of 2 & 3 bed flats (i.e. 90%), combined with the overall accessibility of the site, the need to make effective use of the site and the existing range of housing types and mix within the area, means that this mix of units acceptable in this case.
- 6.28 Some objections consider that a density which is higher than the range set out in Policy H2, makes the scheme unacceptable in principle. The proposed scheme would equate to a density of 71.4 dwellings per hectare (DPH), which compares to 86 for the refused scheme. Although this would be higher than the **indicative** density of 30-60 DPH for suburban areas advocated in para 4.5 of the RBLP, it is important to note para.4.4.8, which states that *“... these will not be applied as hard-and-fast rules, and the particular characteristics of a site when judged against the criteria in the policy may well mean that a density outside these ranges is appropriate.”* Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that: *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)...”*.
- 6.29 The character of the surrounding area is an important factor and the proposal would be comparable to the density of existing flatted developments in the area, examples include no. 19 Westcote Road and 15 Westcote Road. The application site is also considered to be a sustainable location being sited within close proximity of frequent premier bus routes on Bath Road and Tilehurst Road that run to and from the town centre and Reading West Railway Station to the east. In itself, the proposed density is not considered to be a reason to object to this application.
- 6.30 Therefore, in terms of mix and density, the proposed scheme is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy H2.

Residential Amenity

- 6.31 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.

- 6.32 In addition, Policy H5 sets out standards for new housing, which must be adhered to unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. Such standards relating to amenity considerations are “...a. All new build housing outside the Central rea.....will comply with the nationally-described space standard.
e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) ..”. Units 1 and 2 at ground floor would be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2)
- 6.33 Policy H10 deals specifically with private and communal space and for flats requires communal space, balconies and/ or roof gardens, and para. 4.2.40 states that “Policy H10 seeks to secure private and communal outdoor amenity areas on all residential developments, the extent of which will be guided by the site’s proximity to quality public open space.”

Existing Residents’ Amenity

- 6.34 One of the three reasons for refusal on the previous scheme was that the bulk, height, massing and the location and amount of windows, specifically on the southern and eastern side, would create an overbearing development and would result in a loss of amenity through overlooking and loss of privacy to nos. 16 Parkside Road and 29 Westcote Road.
- 6.35 It is considered that the main effect would be with regard to no. 16 Parkside Road, and whilst the proposed scheme does still include windows looking towards this and no. 29 Westcote Road, they are fewer and smaller compared to the refused scheme, more of these serve bedrooms than living rooms, and the building is set further from the boundaries with the adjacent properties.
- 6.36 As a comparison the main part of the Parkside Care Home, to the south of no. 16 Parkside Road, is a comparable distance to the shared boundary as the wing of the proposed scheme parallel to Westcote Road (17m compared to 16.5m).
- 6.37 The main impact is considered to be with respect to the first and second floor windows of the proposed wing nearest to the southern boundary (image left below) and looking towards existing windows on no. 16’s northern elevation as shown on the photo provided previously (below). The two windows at first floor serve a bedroom and those at ground floor, a study.



6.38 The southern wing is ca. 9.5 metres from the southern boundary and as can be seen from the elevation above, there are 6 windows at these levels, which are within the wing nearest no. 16. These are much smaller than the refused scheme and it is considered that the level of direct overlooking/ loss of privacy would be minimal. Three of these serve bedrooms, one a lounge and two are rooflights only, so have no direct view towards no. 16. The lounge window at first floor and one of the bedrooms is shown as obscure glazed and are served by other windows on either the west or east sides of the proposed building (see extract below). It is considered that in terms of other windows looking towards the garden that the overall increased distance to the boundaries, smaller and fewer windows combined with the tree and landscaped boundaries, is considered to be sufficient to not cause significant detriment to the amenity of no.16 from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8.



Extract from First floor Plan showing proposed obscure glazed windows

6.39 With respect to no. 29 Westcote Road, the closest east-facing windows would largely look directly towards the side elevation of no. 29, where there are no windows. The majority of the remaining windows on the eastern side of the proposed scheme would be further away from the eastern boundary than the refused scheme (ca. 15.7m compared to ca. 14.7m) at ground and first floors, and this combined with the reduced window size and retained and proposed landscaping, would also be sufficient to ensure that there would be no significant detriment to amenity and privacy.

Proposed Residents' Amenity

6.40 In terms of the amenity of the proposed residents, the proposed flats would be either double or triple aspect with no units solely north facing. There would be sufficient distance to the trees on the boundaries of the site to not shade the building significantly, and as the trees are predominantly deciduous, they would allow more daylight through in the winter months when the sun would be lower.

6.41 Windows of nearby residential buildings would not be adversely affected by the proposed scheme with respect to daylight and

sunlight and the proposed windows would be of sufficient size, number and positioning to ensure the units would receive sufficient daylight and sunlight especially to habitable rooms.

- 6.42 Each of the first and second floor units would have private balconies and the ground floor units their own private terraces. There would also be access to the communal space to the southern and eastern sides of the building and the site is also located within walking distance of the large public open space of Prospect Park.
- 6.43 The proposed dwellings and rooms within them are stacked appropriately and are of a size which would meet the National Space Standards (Policy H5).
- 6.44 The application, as amended, is therefore considered to have addressed the reason for refusal on the previous scheme with respect to amenity and would accord with the relevant policies CC8, H5, and H10.

Transport

- 6.45 The application site is in a sustainable location close to a number of bus routes.
- 6.46 The proposal would retain a joint vehicular and pedestrian access to Parkside Road and introduce a new pedestrian access from Westcote Road.
- 6.47 A total of 12 no. car parking spaces are proposed. This would comply with the Council's adopted parking standards with respect to the provision for the units themselves and in terms of visitor parking.
- 6.48 A total of 8 no. covered cycle storage spaces are proposed with ground floor Units 1 and 2 having 2 spaces each and the remaining units to share 4 no. spaces within the communal storage at the northern side of the proposed building. This would comply with our parking standards and a condition is recommended to require specific details of the cycle storage.
- 6.49 Bin storage is located in a bin store close to the Parkside Road frontage, which would comply with required standards in terms of size and pulling distance. In response to an issue raised by an objector, lorries would not come on site, but operatives would take bins off site to be emptied.
- 6.50 The scheme is considered to be acceptable in transport terms, subject to attaching a number of conditions (set out in the Recommendation above), and would therefore accord with requirements of policies TR2-TR5.

Landscaping and Ecology

- 6.51 Policy CC7 requires developments to be assessed to ensure that they *“Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, ... and appropriate materials and landscaping.”*
- 6.52 Policy EN12 states that on all sites development should provide no net loss of biodiversity and a *“net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”*
- 6.53 Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands requires new development *“...make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, ... 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.”*
- 6.54 The site is covered by a TPO and the proposal includes for the retention of all the trees along the northern boundary and the better specimens along the eastern boundary, save for some light canopy reduction of a Sycamore on the northern boundary. The proposal also includes new planting and landscaping on the eastern and southern boundaries, and enhanced landscaped communal gardens compared to the refused scheme. The ground floor units would be assigned private terraces. The overall aim of the proposed landscaping scheme is to maintain screening adjacent to the public highway.



- 6.55 The Natural Environment Officer confirmed that the proposal would be acceptable subject to securing more detail on the proposed landscaping scheme including planting sizes and densities, maintenance, boundary fencing with mammal gaps etc.

- 6.56 The submitted ecological appraisal concluded that the site is of low-moderate ecological value, but with the potential to support a small number of protected species, including bats for foraging, hedgehogs for foraging and nesting, nesting birds, reptiles and common amphibians. The habitats of most value to wildlife such as bats and birds are the buildings and trees.
- 6.57 A bat emergence /re-entry survey and mitigation report was submitted, which concluded that the property supports three soprano pipistrelle bat day roosts. The Ecology Officer confirmed that, subject to conditions requiring obtaining a licence for development works affecting bats and mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the 'Bat Emergence/ Re-entry Surveys and Mitigation Report (October 2021)' being implemented, the proposed scheme would be acceptable and accord with Policy EN12.
- 6.58 Therefore, it is considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN12, EN14.

Sustainability

- 6.59 There are several policies within the local plan which are relevant to new development to meet the aim of eliminating carbon dioxide emissions in Reading by 2030.
- 6.60 Adopted Local Plan Policy CC2 requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials. Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 6.61 Policy H5 sets out the expectations for the performance of new build homes in terms of emission, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. With respect to major residential schemes the policy states: "*...b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations. c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.*
- 6.62 Policy H5 and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a contribution of £1,800 per tonne towards carbon off-setting.
- 6.63 The submitted Energy Assessment identifies that the proposal would achieve at least 36.88% improvement of CO2 emissions, through the use of air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels.

- 6.64 As the flats are not designed to be carbon neutral there would also need to be a contribution of £1,800 per tonne towards carbon offsetting within Reading in order for the policy to be fully met (as set out in para. 4.4.6 of the RBLP). Therefore, a carbon offset payment is included as a recommended financial contribution to be secured through the S106 legal agreement.
- 6.65 Overall, subject to the conditions and obligations, the scheme would accord with measures in Policy CC2, CC3 and H5.

Environmental matters

- 6.66 ***Contamination:*** The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the proposed development lies on the site of an historic pit/scar, which has the potential to have been filled with contaminated material and the proposed development is a sensitive land use. The Officer has recommended conditions to ensure that a detailed survey and any relevant remedial measures are submitted and approved to comply with Policy EN16.
- 6.67 ***Drainage & Flood Risk:*** Policy EN18 requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions or be no worse than existing. Following confirmation that the proposed development would provide a SUDS scheme that would reduce the surface water run off, and subject to the SUDS conditions as included in the recommendation above, the scheme is considered to comply with Policy EN18.

Legal Agreement Unilateral Undertaking

- 6.68 In accordance with Policies CC2, CC9, H3 and H5, the following obligations would be sought:
- Affordable Housing:
 - 2 no (or 6 habitable rooms), shared ownership units or £140k AH contribution, paid on occupation of the 8th Unit; **and**
 - Deferred payment contribution with a 50/50 share in excess of 12% Gross Development Value (GDV) on an open book basis capped at a 30% policy compliant sum to be calculated on the sale of the 9th unit.
 - Employment, Skills and Training - construction
 - Carbon Off-Setting financial contribution based on a formula
- 6.69 Policy H3 requires “• on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing; provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate. In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.”

- 6.70 The applicant submitted a viability assessment, which has been reviewed and negotiated by the Council's Valuer and the above obligations have been agreed as acceptable.
- 6.71 In terms of the option of on-site affordable housing units it has been agreed that the Shared ownership units would reflect the mix of the scheme, i.e. 2x2 beds. The delivery of these could be based on an equivalent number of habitable rooms, i.e. 6 habitable rooms. This could mean the delivery of fewer, but larger units as shared ownership, which is considered acceptable by RBC's Housing Team, who have confirmed that they would prefer larger units.
- 6.72 As part of both options a deferred payment mechanism has been included, which ensures that a proportion of increased profits are secured for affordable housing, which is based on a reassessment of the scheme viability prior to implementation.
- 6.73 For construction skills the applicant will have the option of either developing an Employment Skills Plan in conjunction with Reading UK CIC or providing a financial contribution.
- 6.74 As set out in the Sustainability section above, to meet policy H5, a contribution will be required towards carbon off-setting.
- 6.75 The applicant has confirmed their commitment to these obligations, which would be part of a S106 legal agreement.

Equalities Impact

- 6.76 In 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.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The principle of redeveloping for additional housing is considered to be in accordance with relevant policy within the Reading Borough Local Plan and accords with the NPPF requirements to give great weight to the provision of 'windfall' housing sites within the settlement boundary. Affordable housing delivery would be secured either through on site provision or a financial contribution towards meeting the needs for affordable housing in the Borough. It would make an effective re-use of a suburban site in a sustainable location.

- 7.2 The amended design would reflect other buildings within the areas and it would respect building lines, heights, materials and overall plot coverage of equivalent sites developed for flats. The building would be sufficiently set away from neighbouring boundaries and combined with retained and proposed landscaping it is considered that the scheme would not create significant detriment to residential amenity.
- 7.3 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant, and overall officers consider this to be a supportable scheme, which accords with relevant national and local policy, and is considered to overcome the reasons for refusal under the previous scheme (190449). The planning application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement as detailed above.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Plans

Appendix B: Committee Report 3rd March 2021

Appendix C: Update Report for 3rd March 2021

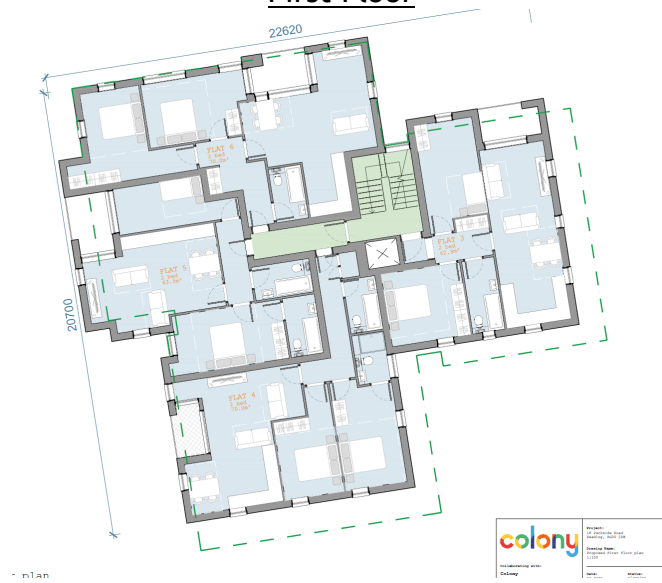
APPENDIX A: Plans

Floor Plans

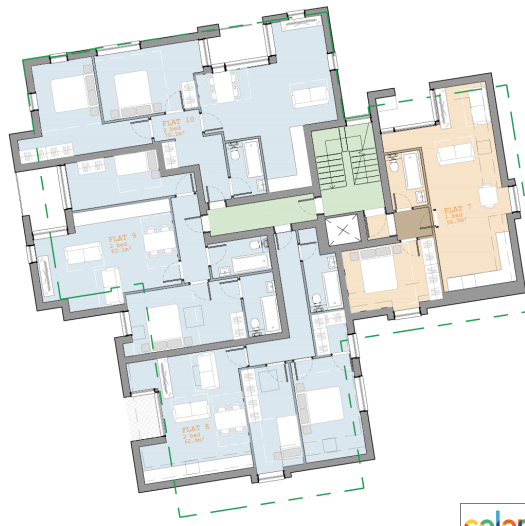
Ground Floor



First Floor



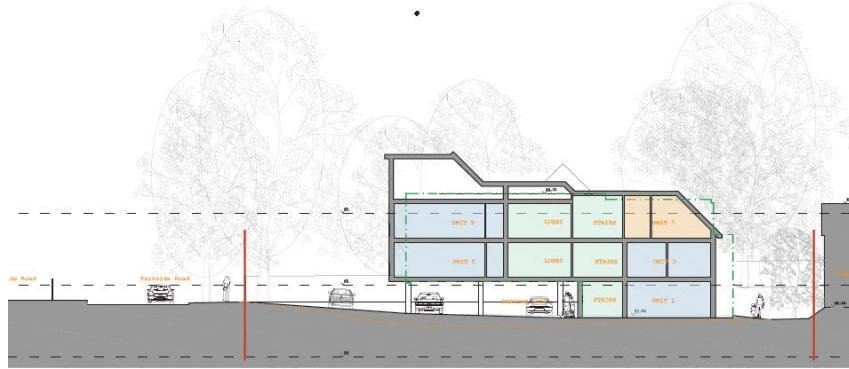
Second Floor



Elevations



Sections



Site Plan



Indicative Views

INDICATIVE VIEW - SIDE ENTRANCE



INDICATIVE VIEW - FRONT ENTRANCE



APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE REPORT 3RD MARCH 2021

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 3 rd March 2021	ITEM NO.
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Ward: Minster

App No.: 200979

Address: 18 Parkside Road, RG30 2DB

Proposal: Demolition of detached house and annex and erection of 3 storey building for 3x3, 3x2, and 6x1 bed flats, with undercroft parking, landscaping and bin stores

Applicant: Colony Developments

Deadline: 27/11/2020

Extended Deadline: 30/4/2021

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 26/2/21

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of S.106 Legal Agreement.

OR Refuse permission should the S.106 Legal Agreement not be completed by 30th April 2021 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services.

The Section 106 Legal Agreement to Secure the Following:

Affordable Housing

- £150k AH contribution paid on occupation of 10th Unit; or three no. shared ownership units.
- Deferred payment contribution with a 50/50 share in excess of 12% GDV on an open book basis capped at a policy compliant sum of £521,000 to be calculated on the sale of the 11th unit, or policy compliant 30%.

Employment Skills and Training Plan - Construction skills - preparation and delivery of an ESP or a financial contribution of £2,130 (construction).

Zero Carbon Offset - All Dwellings

- Zero Carbon Offset as per SPD 2019 a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a Section 106 contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30-year period).
- As-built SAP calculation for all dwellings to be submitted for approval within 6 months following first occupation.
- Contribution based on SPD formula below towards carbon-saving projects calculated for all dwellings based on approved SAP calculation to be paid to

the Council within 9 months following first occupation:
TER CO2 m2/yr less 35% CO2 m2/yr) = 65% of TER
65% of TER x total square metres = total excess CO2 emissions annually
Total excess CO2 emissions annually x £1800 = S106 contribution.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 28) TL1 - 3 yrs
- 29) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 30) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 31) L1 - Hard and soft landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved
- 32) L4 - Landscape Management Plan to be submitted and approved
- 33) L5 - Tree retention
- 34) L7 - Arboricultural Method Statement to be approved.
- 35) L11 - Licence for development works affecting bats
- 36) L10 - Habitat enhancement - Prior to occupation mitigation and enhancement measures, detailed in section 7 and figure 4 of the 'Update Preliminary Roost Assessment, High Level Inspection and Mitigation Report' (Darwin Ecology, Oct 2020), be installed and retained thereafter
- 37) Nesting birds Vegetation clearance outside of nesting season
- 38) CO3 - Contamination assessment to be submitted
- 39) CO4 - Remediation scheme to be submitted
- 40) CO5 - Remediation scheme to be implemented and verified
- 41) CO6 - Unidentified contamination
- 42) CO7 - Land gas
- 43) C2 - Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved
- 44) C1 - Hours of Construction
- 45) C4 - No Bonfires
- 46) SU1 - SAP assessment (design stage)
- 47) SU2 - SAP assessment (as built)
- 48) SU7 - SUDS plan to be approved
- 49) SU8 - SUDS to be implemented
- 50) DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 51) DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified prior to occupation
- 52) DC6 - Cycle Parking to be approved
- 53) DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof)
- 54) DE6 - Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 13) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 14) IF6 - Building Regulations
- 15) IF2 - Pre-Commencement Conditions
- 16) I11 - CIL
- 17) IF4 - S106
- 18) IF3 - Highways
- 19) I29 - Access Construction
- 20) IF7 - Complaints about Construction
- 21) IF8 - Encroachment
- 22) I10 - Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building
- To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the

flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.

- 23) Thames Water - The proposed development is located within 15 metres of Thames Water's underground assets and as such, the development could cause the assets to fail if appropriate measures are not taken. Please read our guide 'working near our assets' to ensure your workings are in line with the necessary processes you need to follow if you're considering working above or near our pipes or other structures.

<https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>. Should you require further information please contact Thames Water. Email: developer.services@thameswater.co.uk Phone: 0800 009 3921 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm) Write to: Thames Water Developer Services, Clearwater Court, Vastern Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 8DB

Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 3577 9483 or by emailing trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk .

- 24) IF1 - Positive & Proactive.

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.4 The site is a 0.14ha residential plot on the corner of Parkside Road and Westcote Road, with an existing shared vehicular and pedestrian access from Parkside Road. It comprises a three bedroom 1960s house, with a triple garage and a 3 bedroom annex over, with a small basement. It sits in a large garden and is very verdant bounded by trees and hedges on all sides, and is covered by TPO no:10/19
- 1.5 The site slopes from west to east (front to rear) and there is a change in levels of ca 2.3 m between Westcote Road and the level of the garden, with a retaining wall enclosing a landscaped area with trees and shrubs on this northern side.
- 1.6 This is a well-established residential area, which comprises a range of properties including family homes, care homes, hotels and flats of varying styles and eras.

- 1.4 The application is referred to committee as it is a 'major' development.

Location Plan



View from Parkside Road
Road



View of junction of Westcote Road and Parkside
Road

2 PROPOSAL

2.1 The amended proposal is for:

- Demolition of the existing dwelling and annex
- Erection of a three-storey residential building with undercroft, car parking and landscaping/ amenity space.
- A total of 12 no. flats comprising:

Ground Floor

Unit 1 - 3 bed - 74sqm

Unit 2 - 1 bed - 40sqm

Unit 3 - 1 bed - 39sqm

First Floor

Unit 4 - 2 bed - 62sqm

Unit 5 - 1 bed - 45sqm

Unit 6 - 1 bed - 50sqm

Unit 7 - 1 bed - 45sqm

Unit 8 - 3 bed - 78sqm

Second Floor

Unit 9 - 2 bed - 61sqm

Unit 10 - 2 bed - 61sqm

Unit 11 - 1 bed - 48sqm

Unit 12 - 3 bed - 78sqm

- 14 no. car parking spaces and 12 no. cycle spaces.
- Landscaping.

2.2 Submitted plans and documentation received 13th July 2020, unless otherwise stated (including amended details), are as follows:

- Site Location Plan as Existing - Drawing no: 01-01
- Block Plan as Existing - Drawing no: 01-02
- Topo and Trees as Existing - Drawing no: 01-05
- Floor Plans as Existing - Drawing no: 03-00
- Elevations as Existing - Drawing no: 05-00
- Elevations as Existing - Drawing no: 05-01
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-10 Rev P2, received 18th February 2021
- Proposed First Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-11 Rev P1, received 1st February 2021
- Proposed Second Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-12 Rev P1, received 1st February 2021
- Proposed Third Floor Plan - Drawing no: 03-13
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: 05-10 Rev P1, received 18th February 2021
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: 05-11 Rev P1, received 18th February 2021
- Proposed Elevations - Drawing no: 05-12 Rev P2, received 18th February 2021
- Proposed Sections - Drawing no: 04-10 Rev P1, received 1st February 2021
- Proposed Block Plan - Drawing no: 02-10 Rev P1, received 1st February 2021
- Proposed Site Plan - Drawing no: 02-15, received 1st February 2021
- Overlooking Section - Drawing no: 02-50, received 18th February 2021
- Proposed Landscaping Plan - Drawing no: 02-16
- Proposed Utilities Plan - Drawing no: 02-17 Rev P1 received 18th February 2021
- Proposed SUDS Plan - Drawing no: 02-18
- Proposed Highways Plan - Drawing no: 02-19 Rev P1, received 18th February 2021
- Affordable Housing Statement, dated 7th July 2020, Document Ref: -8799000, prepared by Colony Architects

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, dated 2nd July 2020, Document Ref: 1312, prepared by SJ Stephens Associates
- Conceptual SUDS Strategy Report, Rev A, dated November 2020, prepared by Innervision Design, received 17th December 2020
- Design and Access Statement, dated 23rd June 2020, Document ref: 500/DAS/DRAFT-02, prepared by Colony Architects
- Energy Assessment, dated 5th November 2020, Document ref: 015722-015731, prepared by Energy Calculations, received 5th November 2020
- Planning Statement, dated June 2020, prepared by Nexus Planning
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roosts, dated May 2019, prepared by Dawn Ecology, received 13th July 2020
- Update Preliminary Roost Assessment, High level Inspection and Mitigation Report, dated October 2020, prepared by Darwin Ecology, received 3rd December 2020
- Transport Statement, dated 19th June 2020, Document ref: SJ/MD/ITL16121-001A, prepared by I-Transport, received 13th July 2020
- CIL Form 1: Additional Information

2.3 *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*: the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The proposed C3 use is CIL liable and the estimated amount of CIL chargeable from the proposed scheme would be £92,779 based on £156.71 (2021 indexed figure) per sqm of Gross Internal Area (GIA).

3 PLANNING HISTORY

190834/PREAPP - Demolition of existing dwelling house. Replaced with 14 new flats (1, 2 & 3 beds) over 3.5 storeys

4 CONSULTATIONS

Statutory

4.1 None.

Non-statutory

Ecology

4.2 The application site comprises a detached house with detached summerhouse and shed surrounded by habitat suitable for use by bats (connected gardens with tree lines linking to woodland and parkland in the wider landscape). It is proposed to demolish the buildings and replace them with a block of flats with associated car parking and landscaping.

- 4.3 The ecology report (Darwin Ecology, May 2019) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and details the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal and a preliminary bat roost assessment. The report concludes that boundary habitats on the site could be used by nesting birds, reptiles, and hedgehog, and that the house, summerhouse, and one of the trees contain features suitable for use by roosting bats.
- 4.4 In order to confirm whether the buildings and tree host roosting bats and, if so, the type and status of the roost(s), the report recommends that further surveys be undertaken. The results of the further survey would need to be provided prior to the determination of the application, or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided for the council to determine the likely impact of the proposals upon bats, which are a protected species and material consideration in the planning process. Further information is given below.
- 4.5 *Planning policy and legislation:* All species of bats receive special protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (the SNCO - Natural England in England).
- 4.6 If a bat roost will be affected by the works, a licence for development works affecting bats (i.e. for derogation from the provisions of the Habitat Regulations) will need to be obtained before works which could impact upon the roost can commence. This involves submitting a licence application to Natural England with a detailed mitigation plan informed by surveys undertaken in accordance with national guidelines.
- 4.7 Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document has not been revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:
“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”

- 4.8 In this case, since 1) the presence or otherwise of protected species has not been established, and 2) there appear to be no “exceptional circumstances”, the application would not be in accordance with the above planning policy.
- 4.9 *Further survey requirements:* The Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Survey Guidelines state that to determine the presence or absence of bats where the building has been assessed as having “high” suitability for use by roosting bats (as is the case for the house) three dusk emergence / pre-dawn re-entry bat surveys need to be carried out. Surveys need to be carried out between May and September, with at least two taking place in the optimum period of May to August (inclusive), and with at least one being a pre-dawn survey.
- 4.10 Where the building has been assessed as having “low” suitability for use by roosting bats (as is the case for the summerhouse and tree) one dusk emergence or pre-dawn re-entry survey needs to be carried out. The survey needs to be carried out in the optimum period of May to August (inclusive).
- 4.11 *Summary* - The buildings and tree have a number of features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats, and further surveys would need to be undertaken to confirm if it hosts a bat roost and if it does how it would be affected by the proposals. The application should not be determined until the surveys have been carried out and the results submitted to the council. If this information is not provided the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided for the council to determine the likely impact of the proposals upon bats, which are a protected species and material consideration in the planning process.
- 4.12 As the surveys could now not be completed until 2021 the applicant may wish to withdraw the application.
- 4.13 ***Planning Officer note:*** Following the submission of a more detailed visual inspection survey the Ecology officer confirmed that *“The survey shows that the building hosts roosting bats and three soprano pipistrelle roosts were identified. These will be destroyed when the building is demolished but it is likely that post development the favourable conservation status of bats can be maintained. As such if you are minded to grant permission you should include the following condition:*

“Condition: Demolition of the house shall not commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy of the licence (or an email from Natural England that the site has been registered under a bat mitigation class licence) has been submitted to the council. Thereafter mitigations measures detailed in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should the applicant conclude that a

licence for development works affecting bats is not required for all or part of the works the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the council prior to commencement of the works.

Reason: The building hosts a bat roost which may be affected by the proposals. This condition will ensure that bats, a group of protected species and a material consideration in the planning process, are not adversely affected by the development.”

You should also set a condition to ensure that the mitigation and enhancement measures on Figure 4 of the report are installed.”

Environmental Health

- 4.14 *Contaminated Land* - The developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose or can be made so by remedial action.
- 4.15 The development lies on the site of an historic pit/scar which has the potential to have been filled with contaminated material land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 4.16 Ideally a ‘phase 1’ desk study should be submitted with applications for developments on sites with potentially contamination to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether further investigation is necessary.
- 4.17 Investigation must be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action.
- 4.18 Recommended conditions as follows, to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination: CO3 - Submission of a contaminated land assessment; CO4 - Remediation scheme to be submitted; CO5 - Remediation scheme to be implemented and verified; CO6 - Unidentified contamination.
- 4.19 *Land Gas* - The nature of the site means there is the potential for it to have been infilled with gassing materials. The following conditions are recommended: Land Gas - site investigation, submission of a remediation scheme, and implementation of remediation scheme.
- 4.20 *Construction and demolition phases* - We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).
- 4.21 Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site

could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.

- 4.22 *Bin storage - rats* - There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas e.g. flats and hotels there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste and condition is recommended.

Natural Environment (Tree Officer)

- 4.23 I met with the consultant Arborist for this site back on 20th November 2019 to look at the trees in relation to the proposed development. Trees on site are protected in area TPO 10/19.
- 4.24 As a corner plot, trees along the north and west boundaries are the most visually significant running adjacent to the public highway. The better specimen trees are also growing along this boundary and of note, a large London Plane within the adopted highway. Elsewhere within the site the trees are small and of no notable arboricultural merit.
- 4.25 Due to the topography of the site tree roots are not expected to extend far into the site and will be restricted, particularly to the south by a tall retaining wall, which, if retained will largely prevent any damage to tree roots in this area. The current plan retains the trees along the northern boundary and the better specimens along the eastern boundary which can then be bolstered by additional new planting. The aim of the finished landscape scheme is to maintain screening adjacent to the public highway in an informal unmanaged style, similar to the existing property and other dwellings along this length of Parkside Road.
- 4.26 I am happy that the current application is a fair reflection of the points I raised on site with the applicant and their Arboricultural consultant at our site meeting and that the trees around the boundary of the site can be protected and retained on completion of the development. Notably, the northern elevation is close to the canopies of trees and that of T6 a Sycamore which will require a reduction of around 1.2. Although not ideal, this is a light canopy reduction which will not affect the wider amenity of the tree.
- 4.27 If planning permission is granted we will require a site specific Arboricultural Method Statement which details the steps to be taken in order to protect the retained trees during the course of the building works. Space is very restricted on site therefore the AMS should include information on site supervision and regular

monitoring, the details of which should be forwarded on to the Borough Council after each visit.

- 4.28 The landscape scheme is acceptable in principle although we will require more information on planting sizes and densities - post planting maintenance etc. Boundary fencing will need to include small holes for mammals etc to forage within the site.
- 4.29 Please attach conditions L1 - Hard and soft landscaping; L5 - tree retention, and L7 - Arboricultural Method Statement to be submitted and approved, if planning permission is granted.

SUDS

- 4.30 I have looked at the SuDs submission which appears to be just a plan at this stage and as such would not be sufficient information for me to assess. The applicant would be required to provide a written statement confirming that the proposal will not worsen the surface water run off but as far as I can see this has not been provided. As such I would currently object to the proposals.
- 4.31 ***Planning Officer note:*** Further to the submission of additional information the SUDS Officer confirmed that the SUDS proposal would be acceptable in principle and that there was no objection subject to the following conditions: SU7 - Sustainable drainage scheme to be approved and SU8 - Sustainable drainage scheme to be implemented and maintained as specified.

Thames Water

- 4.32 No objection subject to informatives [as included in the recommendation above]

RBC Transport Strategy

- 4.33 *The following are the initial comments from Transport based on the originally submitted scheme of 13 flats:* The site is within Zone 2, 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.
- 4.34 In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed development would be required to provide off road parking of 1 Parking space for each 1 and 2 bedroom flat, therefore equating to a total of 13 parking spaces. In addition to this, visitor parking should also be provided at a ratio of 1 per 10 dwellings, therefore the whole development would require 14 parking spaces. Each parking space should be a minimum of 2.4m wide by 4.8m long and have a forecourt depth of 6m to ensure that spaces can be manoeuvred in and out of easily. Submitted Ground Floor Plan illustrates 14 parking spaces of which parking spaces 4 to 11 are provided as undercroft parking and 8 spaces fronting the site, dimensions of parking spaces conform to the Councils current standards.

4.35 As previously advised in the pre-application enquiry, the access will need to be a minimum of 4.8m wide to allow for two way vehicular movements. The applicant should be advised that a licence must be obtained from the Council's Highways section before any works are carried-out on any footway, carriageway, verge, or other land forming part of the public highway to agree the access construction details. Revised plans illustrating 4.8m access is required.

4.36 It should be noted that the Local Plan states:

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Development should make the following provision for electric vehicle charging points:

- *All new houses with dedicated off-street parking should provide charging points;*
- *Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.*

4.37 The Design and Access confirms that EV charging points will be provided.

4.38 Tracking diagrams will be required illustrating the entry and egress of delivery and service vehicles to the site.

4.39 It should be noted bin storage should not be located further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods and should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Details of bin storage and collection should be illustrated on plans.

4.40 Cycle storage will also be required at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per 1 & 2 bedroom flats, a total of 7 spaces is required, these should be secure, conveniently located and equipped with Sheffield type stands. Details of the type and location of storage will need to be illustrated on submitted plans.

4.41 A Construction Management Statement will be required for this site.

4.42 ***Planning Officer Note:*** Amended plans were provided reducing the number of units to 12 with 14 no. car parking spaces and 12 no. cycle spaces. Further Transport comments will be reported in an update report.

Public consultation

- 4.43 The following addresses were consulted: 9c, 9d, 11a, 11b, 11c, 9c, 9d, 15, 16, 17a, 17b, 17c, 19 - Parkside Road; 27, 28, 29 - Westcote Road; Chilmington House, Armadale Court, and site notices were displayed on Westcote Road and Parkside Road.
- 4.44 Following the original submission 16 no. objections and 2 observations were received, summarised as follows:

Design

- Exterior elevations are incongruous and out of character with the rest of Parkside and Westcote Road. Architecture needs to be more sympathetic with the immediate locality, which have pitched and gabled roofs.
- Looks like an office block and would be a visual oddity.
- There are some buildings of a large scale in the locality with reflect their commercial use i.e. the BUPA Parkside Care Home nearby.
- Too severe, stark and utilitarian-looking for the area. In no way will the proposed development create anything but a negative visual impact.
- The prevailing character comprises detached dwellings of a traditional scale and character.
- Number of examples where more recent development has enhanced the character of the road. The proposal makes no effort to do this.
- Too tall and flat roof makes it look more bulky.
- Higher than the existing house and other developments and overbearing and bulky in the streetscene with limited interest.
- A significant uplift in site coverage, about 40%, and out of keeping with surrounding properties for this reason.
- Parkside road does not have a single building of this size and style.

Density and mix

- Density is around 90 dwellings per hectare well in excess of the indicate density ranges for suburban areas.
- No family housing.
- Should have houses and not flats.

Amenity of existing and proposed residents

- The top floor will overlook our house and garden [no. 29 Westcote Road].
- Little consideration to the privacy of immediate 2 storey neighbours or their outlook. The height and scale will dwarf neighbours.
- The proposal has numerous floor to ceiling windows and balconies. This design will destroy the privacy of our property and garden as well as other properties nearby.
- For the number of flats the garden space is very limited.
- Positioning of windows does not preserve privacy.

- The fenestration approach to the east elevation, which faces onto no.29 Westcote Road, is very different with limited openings and the use of high-level windows to limit overlooking opportunities, which suggest this façade is too close to no. 29.
- Walkways, communal areas and private amenity space would be close to the boundary with no. 29 Westcote Road.
- Would be significantly closer to no. 29 [compared to existing] reducing the distance from 20m to 6m.
- Balconies at elevated positions provide a watch tower effect over adjacent properties.
- No. 15 Parkside Road will be in full view of the two upper floors of the development without a solid permanent screening between my property and the development.
- Will cause extra noise and disturbance.

Traffic & Parking

- Insufficient car parking spaces and parking is already a growing issue along both roads.
- A large development on a small plot will contribute to traffic issues and make Parkside Road a worse 'rat run'.
- The access is narrow and steep and the spaces will be difficult to use, so residents will be likely to park in the street.
- Currently the safety of this road hinges solely on good visibility but it will cease to be the case with the additional cars parking along the road. Highway safety will be compromised.
- The road is totally congested and this will exacerbate the problem.
- Deficient in disabled spaces.

Landscaping

- Removal of trees which are beautiful and provide privacy.

Biodiversity

- Additional details are required from the applicant as to how they are achieving a biodiversity net gain on this site in accordance with Policy H11 and EN12. The proposals would result in the significant loss of residential gardens, which will negatively impact on the local habitat and ecology.
- The area has bats, owls, stag beetles and hedgehogs which we fear will be affected by the increased housing density and traffic.
- The mature trees are diseased and will not provide the potential concealment identified.

Affordable Housing

- Affordable Housing Statement which states that no affordable housing will be provided by the development for reasons of viability.

Other

- Where will construction lorries and cranes park and how they will negotiate the narrow roads and trees? There will be no space on the site for them and the entrance would be too steep for access.
- The council should take seriously its statutory duties to access to information. This application would not be accessible electronically to everybody who might be affected and wish to comment.
- We have experienced problems with sewers blocking in the past and this development will add significantly to the demand on the sewer.

Following the consultation on amended plans (February 2021) 15 no. objections were received, which reiterated a number of the issues above and made the following additional points:

- The removal of the top storey is welcome and the change in brick colour is an improvement, but the development is still hugely out of character and overbearing.
- Would support the redevelopment of 18 Parkside Road with an appropriate scheme to replace what has become a derelict building and a social nuisance over the last few years. However, the proposal is not.
- The density has increased with more bedrooms.
- Parking issues would be worse with more bedrooms.
- Increased occupancy in a smaller space is liable to lead to increased issues - noise, rubbish, use of balconies as unsightly storage area, parking issues etc.
- The proposed levels on the plans are incorrect by at least 1.5m. As such, there is still potential for the height of the building to be reduced which would minimise the impact on surrounding properties.
- Highway safety will surely be compromised for pupils, in addition to members of the public, due to the excess traffic and parked cars (reducing visibility) generated?
- Designated on-road car parking makes access to driveways difficult, and this will increase, as it is more likely that these spaces will be full to capacity on a more regular basis, with the proposed flat development.
- The site on which no 18 stands has a sharp drop at the back of the house. I am concerned that a cheaply built construction could endanger those who buy these apartments.
- Very poor quality soil led to the requirement for many piles for a single storey extension at no. 29 Westcote Road. No. 18 is on the same worked out gravel pit.

Ward Councillors

Minster councillors welcome the amendments to the planning application. The development has reduced slightly, and the proposal now appears to be less bearing on the local area. The new proposed development is more

aesthetically pleasing in comparison to the previous designs with more appropriate materials proposed. We have some concerns about parking.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

National Policy

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

- 5.2 The Development Plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure

Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy EN15: Air Quality

Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage

Policy H1: Provision of Housing

Policy H2: Density and Mix

Policy H3: Affordable Housing

Policy H5: Standards for New Housing

Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

- 5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are:
- Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)
 - Sustainable Design and Construction (December 2019)

- Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)

5.4 Other relevant documents:

- DCLG Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard (2015)
- Reading Tree Strategy (2010)

6 APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Area**
- **Housing Density & Mix**
- **Transport/ Parking**
- **Landscaping & Ecology**
- **Sustainability**
- **Environmental Matters**
- **S106 obligations**
- **Equalities impact**

Principle of Development

6.1 The provision of housing would contribute towards “*ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations...*” (NPPF, Para. 8) and would also make effective use of urban land in accordance with NPPF (Para. 117). It would contribute to meeting the need for additional housing in accordance with Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP).

6.2 The principle of development for residential is therefore acceptable subject to meeting other relevant policies including those related to design, ecology, landscaping, and parking, which are addressed in sections below.

Design and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Area

6.3 The NPPF (Para 124) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

6.4 Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, requires all development to be of a “*high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.*” Design includes layout, landscape, density and mix, scale: height and massing, and architectural details and materials.

6.5 At pre-application stage a number of iterations of a residential flatted scheme were presented and a final version for 12 flats

presented to the Design Review Panel on 12th March 2020 (as shown below):



- 6.6 The DRP considered that the principle of redevelopment was acceptable and that a 3 storey 't' shaped block could work if placed to respect the building lines to the south and east. They considered that the simple concept responded to the site context and that the language and form of the building was good. They commended that the design was not over articulated nor used detailing that was too elaborate.
- 6.7 They suggested that a taller element could be used to the northern corner if this enabled a smaller footprint and that parking could be moved under the north part of the site. They advised that north facing bedrooms should be avoided and that the building needed to be further from the southern boundary.
- 6.8 The pre-application proposal included three different brick types, red, buff and grey and the DRP suggested that a narrower palette be used of a similar colour with subtle variations. In terms of detailing The DRP advised that large scale drawings would provide assurance that the quality proposed could be achieved.
- 6.9 The originally submitted scheme under this application was for 13 flats in a part 3 and part 4 storey building (as below).



- 6.10 Following the initial consultation period officers raised a number of issues with the proposal with suggested amendments, summarised as follows:

- Reduce the scale - remove a floor and reduce the footprint.
- Amend the appearance to make it more domestic.
- Consider further against Policy CC8 and safeguarding amenity.
- Improve the mix of units.

6.11 An amended scheme was submitted, which was also reviewed by the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer.



Parkside Road



Westcote Road

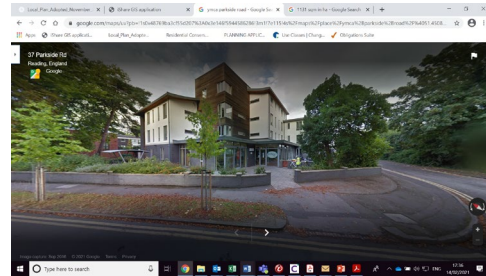
6.12 In summary the amendments were as follows:

- Reduction in the corner height by 1 storey.
- Alterations to the appearance including:
 - replacing the glass balconies for metal ones;
 - changing the brick tone to be more "earthy";
 - making the recessed top floors darker tones of brick (slate tone); and
 - emphasising the horizontal floor bands, to offset the verticality of the fenestration, thus making the building appear more residential.
- Width and depth has been reduced moving it further from no. 16 Parkside Road and no. 29 Westcote Road
- Alterations to the parking.
- Change to the mix to increase the number of 3 beds.
- Balconies added/ amended.

6.13 The local context does include a range of building types and styles, which are largely in residential use. There are a number of traditional forms with pitches and gables, but there are also other simpler and more modern forms of building.

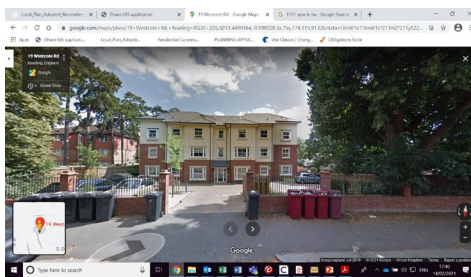


Florence Court



YMCA

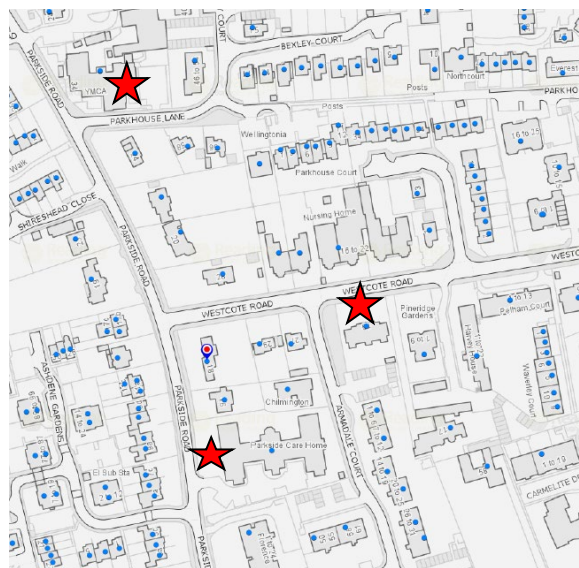
6.14 The area comprises detached and semi-detached 2 storey housing, bungalows, care homes and blocks of flats. Some of these are large buildings with some surrounding setting/ garden space and are up to 4 storeys. These include 19 Westcote Road, Parkside Care Home, and YMCA, a large modern corner building (marked with red stars on the plan below).



12 flats - 19 Westcote Road



Parkside Care Home



6.15 Although different in design to the adjacent buildings the overall layout of the proposed scheme would provide effective redevelopment of the plot, whilst maintaining sufficient distance to

neighbouring properties. It would have a plot coverage consistent with other plots within the area, whilst ensuring sufficient landscaping and amenity setting to serve the proposed residents and to retain the verdant nature.

- 6.16 The height of the proposed scheme would be higher than the adjacent houses, but would reflect heights of other buildings within the wider area. Due to the site levels it is considered that it would be less dominant and overbearing in the street scene than other similar scale buildings. The agent has confirmed that the proposal would not involve raising the height of the land above the current ground level as suggested by an objector.
- 6.17 The stagger to the building lines would break up the mass of the building. It would be sited to respect the building alignments on either side and would be a minimum of 7.5m (16 Parkside Rd) and 5.5m (29 Westcote Road) to the south and east boundaries. This would provide adequate spacing between neighbouring properties to reflect the rhythm and spacing of existing buildings along this road.
- 6.18 Although it would be taller than the houses directly either side of it, the second floor is set in and back, which reduces its overall bulk, and minimises overbearing effects, and it is considered that there would be sufficient distance to these properties to not cause significant detriment to surrounding amenity. This is addressed further in the amenity section below.
- 6.19 Its simple form and proposed use of traditional materials with different textures, would assist in enabling the proposed scheme to sit comfortably within its setting. The NPPF recognises that whilst new development needs to reflect the identify of local surroundings and materials, contemporary development should not be prevented or discouraged.



- 6.20 The proposed scheme whilst contemporary respects the scale of development in the wider area, utilises the site more effectively and presents an active frontage to each street.
- 6.21 A comprehensive landscaping scheme is proposed which includes tree planting to the southern and western sides, which will assist in it retaining its verdant nature.

6.22 It is therefore, considered that whilst the proposal is for a contemporary design, which is different to the immediately adjacent buildings, there is a range of styles and plot coverages within the area and the overall siting, density, layout, materials and landscaping make for an acceptable scheme overall, subject to conditions regarding securing materials samples and detailed landscaping, which accords with Policy CC7.

Housing Density & Mix

6.23 Policy H2 addresses density and housing mix and states that this will be informed by character and mix of the area; accessibility; the need to achieve high quality design; maximise efficiency of land; and the need to minimise the environmental impacts including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

6.24 The supporting text (para 4.4.7) states that, *“wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms. As a minimum, on new developments for 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, planning decisions will ensure that over 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations.”*

6.25 The amended proposal includes 3 x 3 bed units, which represents 25% of the total number of units. However, the proposal also includes 3 x 2 bed units, i.e. 50% 2 and 3 bed units. Para 4.49 of the RBLP explains that *“taken as a whole .. homes with two or more bedrooms, capable of accommodating families, represent the majority of the need”*. It is considered that this combined with the overall accessibility of the site, the need to make effective use of the site and the existing range of housing types and mix within the area, make this mix of units acceptable in this case.

6.26 The proposed scheme would equate to a density of 86 dwellings per hectare (DPH), which would be in excess of the indicative densities advocated in para 4.5, which for suburban areas is 30-60 DPH. In paragraph 4.4.8 it states that *“it is important to note that these will not be applied as hard-and-fast rules, and the particular characteristics of a site when judged against the criteria in the policy may well mean that a density outside these ranges is appropriate.”*

6.27 The character of the surrounding area is an important factor and the proposal would be comparable to the density of existing flatted developments in the area, for example no. 19 Westcote Road, which equates to a density of ca 100 DPH. The site is also considered to be a sustainable location being sited within close proximity of frequent premier bus routes on Bath Road and Tilehurst Road that run to and from the town centre and Reading West Railway Station to the east.

In itself, the proposed density is not considered to be a reason to object to this application.

- 6.28 Therefore, in terms of mix and density the proposed scheme is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy H2.

Residential Amenity

- 6.29 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.
- 6.30 In addition, Policy H5 sets out standards for new housing, which must be adhered to unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. Such standards relating to amenity considerations are “...a. All new build housing outside the Central Area.....will comply with the nationally-described space standard. e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3) ..”. Units 1 & 3 at ground floor would be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2)
- 6.31 Policy H10 deals specifically with private and communal space and for flats requires communal space, balconies and/ or roof gardens, and para. 4.2.40 states that “*Policy H10 seeks to secure private and communal outdoor amenity areas on all residential developments, the extent of which will be guided by the site’s proximity to quality public open space.*”
- 6.32 The proposed dwellings and rooms within them are stacked appropriately and are of a size which would meet the National Space Standards (Policy H5).
- 6.33 Most of the dwellings are double or triple aspect with no dwellings solely north facing. The trees on the south, east and west boundaries are far enough from the building to not shade it significantly, and the trees are predominantly deciduous, which would allow more daylight through in the winter months when the sun is lower.
- 6.34 Windows of nearby residential buildings would not be adversely affected by the proposed scheme.
- 6.35 The proposal includes balconies for all first and second floor units, and the ground floor units their own private space. In addition, there would be communal space available to the southern and eastern sides of the building. The site is also located within walking distance of the large public open space of Prospect Park.

- 6.36 The proposed scheme includes windows looking towards adjacent sites. With respect to the windows on the southern side (to no. 16 Parkside Road) within the wing of the building closest to the boundary, the majority of these would be facing the side of the no. 16 where there are no windows. There would be some limited oblique views into the rear amenity space. However, windows within the southern elevation of the other wing (parallel to Westcote Road), would be at ca 15.3m (ground/first floors) & 16.2m (second floor) from the boundary with no. 16 and it is considered that this distance, combined with tree and landscaped boundaries, would be sufficient to not cause significant detriment to the amenity of no. 16.



View from south (outline of 16 Parkside Road in black)



Section to show angle of vision/ distance

- 6.37 With respect to no. 29 Westcote Road, similarly the closest east facing windows, would largely look directly towards the side elevation of no. 29, where there are no windows. It is considered that the remainder of the windows on the eastern side of the proposed scheme, which would be at a distance of ca 14.7m (ground & first) and 16.4m (second), combined with the retained and

proposed landscaping, would also be sufficient to ensure that there would be no significant detriment to amenity and privacy. There are existing similar relationships, for example the relationship between Parkside Care Home and no. 16 Parkside Road.



View from the east (outline of 29 Westcote Road in black)

- 6.38 The scheme is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies CC8, H5, and H10.

Transport

- 6.39 The application site is in a sustainable location close to a number of bus routes.
- 6.40 The proposal would retain a joint vehicular and pedestrian access to Parkside Road and introduce a new pedestrian access from Westcote Road.
- 6.41 A total of 14 no. car parking spaces are proposed. This would comply with parking standards with respect to the provision for the units themselves. In terms of visitors the Council's parking standards require one space per 10 flats, and as there is some unrestricted parking on Westcote Road and some limited time bays on Parkside Road, it is considered that this visitor parking could be accommodated on street, without significant detriment to highway safety.
- 6.42 A total of 12no. covered cycle storage spaces (Sheffield type) are proposed with ground floor Units 1-3 having 2 spaces each and the remaining units to share the 6no. spaces within the communal storage at the northern side of the proposed building. This would comply with standards and a condition is recommended to would be provided which would comply with policy.
- 6.43 Bin storage is located in a bin store to the Parkside Road frontage, which would comply with required standards.
- 6.44 The scheme is considered to be acceptable in transport terms, subject to attaching a number of conditions (set out in the

Recommendation above), and would therefore accord with requirements of policies TR2-TR5.

Landscaping and Ecology

- 6.45 Policy CC7 requires developments to be assessed to ensure that they *“Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, ... and appropriate materials and landscaping.”*
- 6.46 Policy EN12 states that on all sites development should provide no net loss of biodiversity and a *“net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”*
- 6.47 Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands requires new development *“...make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, ... 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.”*
- 6.48 The site is covered by a TPO and the proposal includes for the retention of all the trees along the northern boundary and the better specimens along the eastern boundary, save for some reduction of a sycamore on the northern boundary. The proposal also includes new planting and landscaping on the eastern and southern boundaries, landscaped communal garden and areas of private amenity space assigned to the ground floor units. The overall aim of the proposed landscaping scheme is to maintain screening adjacent to the public highway.
- 6.49 The Natural Environment Officer confirmed that the proposal would be acceptable subject to securing more detail on planting sizes and densities, maintenance, boundary fencing with mammal gaps etc.
- 6.50 The submitted ecological appraisal concluded that the site is of low-moderate ecological value, but with the potential to support a small number of protected species, including bats for foraging, hedgehogs for foraging and nesting, nesting birds, reptiles and common amphibians. The habitats of most value to wildlife such as bats and birds are the buildings and trees.
- 6.51 A bat survey was submitted, which identified that there was the potential for bat roosts. A further high level inspection was undertaken by the applicant’s ecologist and an updated assessment and mitigation report were submitted. The Ecology Officer confirmed that, subject to conditions requiring obtaining a licence for development works affecting bats and mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the ‘Update Preliminary Roost Assessment, High level Inspection and Mitigation Report’ being implemented, the proposed scheme would be acceptable and accord with Policy EN12.

6.52 Therefore, it is considered to accord with Policies CC7 and EN12 and EN14.

Sustainability

6.53 There are several policies within the local plan which are relevant to new development to meet the aim of eliminating carbon dioxide emissions in Reading by 2030.

6.54 Adopted Local Plan Policy CC2 requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials. Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.

6.55 Policy H5 sets out the expectations for the performance of new build homes in terms of emission, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. With respect to major residential schemes the policy states: “...*b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations. c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes.*

6.56 Policy H5 and the Council’s Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a contribution of £1,800 per tonne towards carbon off-setting.

6.57 The submitted Energy Assessment identifies that the proposal would achieve at least 35% improvement of CO2 emissions, through the use of air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels.

6.58 To ensure that policy would be fully met, the recommendation includes for a financial contribution, secured through the S106 legal agreement, for carbon offsetting.

6.59 Overall, subject to the conditions and obligations, the scheme would accord with measures in Policy CC2, CC3 and H5.

Environmental matters

6.60 ***Contamination:*** The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed, as raised by an objector, that the proposed development lies on the site of an historic pit/scar, which has the potential to have been filled with contaminated material land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use. The Officer has recommended conditions to ensure that a detailed survey and any relevant remedial measures are submitted and approved to comply with Policy EN16.

- 6.61 **Drainage & Flood Risk:** Policy EN18 requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions or be no worse than existing. The SUDS officer has confirmed that the proposed SUDS information would be acceptable. Standard SUDS conditions are included in the recommendation for the submission and approval of a final SUDS strategy.

Legal Agreement Unilateral Undertaking

- 6.62 In accordance with Policies CC2, CC9, H3 and H5, the following obligations would be sought:

- Affordable Housing:
 - £150k AH contribution, paid on sale of 10th Unit or 3 no, shared ownership units;
 - Deferred payment contribution with a 50/50 share in excess of 12% GDV on an open book basis capped at a policy compliant sum of £521,000 to be calculated on the sale of the 11th unit, or policy compliant 30%.
- Employment, Skills and Training - construction
- Carbon Off-Setting financial contribution based on a formula

- 6.63 Policy H3 requires “• on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing;For sites of 10 or more dwellings, provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate. In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.”

- 6.64 The applicant submitted a viability assessment, which has been reviewed and negotiated by the Council’s Valuer and the above obligations have been agreed as acceptable. Shared ownership units would reflect the mix of the scheme, i.e. 1x1, 1x2 and 1x 3bed.

- 6.65 For construction skills the applicant will have the option of either developing an Employment Skills Plan in conjunction with Reading UK CIC or providing a financial contribution.

- 6.66 As set out in the Sustainability section above, to meet policy H5, a contribution will be required towards carbon off-setting.

- 6.67 The applicant has confirmed their commitment to these obligations, which would be part of a S106 legal agreement.

Equalities Impact

- 6.68 In 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.

CONCLUSION

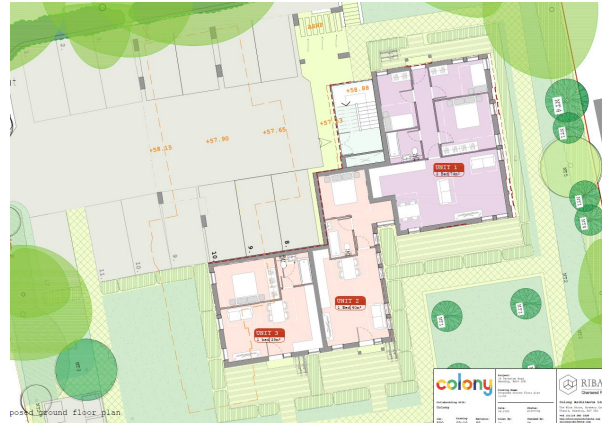
- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The principle of redeveloping for additional housing is considered to be in accordance with relevant policy and a contribution would be secured towards meeting the needs for affordable housing in the Borough. It would make an effective use of a suburban site in a sustainable location.
- 7.2 Although the design would be contemporary it is considered that there are a range of styles of buildings within the area and it would respect building lines, heights, materials and overall plot coverage of equivalent sites developed for flats. The building would be sufficiently set away from neighbouring boundaries and combined with retained and proposed landscaping it is considered that the scheme would not create significant detriment to residential amenity.
- 7.3 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, and amendments secured, which are considered to satisfactorily address policy issues and overall officers consider this to be a supportable scheme, which accords with relevant national and local policy. The planning application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement as detailed above.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: Plans

Floor Plans

Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Elevations



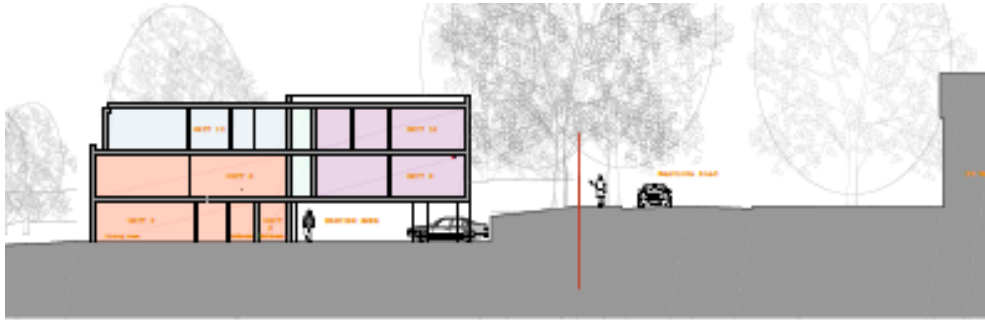
Westcote Road Streetscene 1:200



Side (South) Elevation 1:200



Sections



Site Plan



APPENDIX C: UPDATE REPORT 3rd MARCH 2021

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 12

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 3rd March 2021

Ward: Minster

App No.: 200979

Address: 18 Parkside Road, RG30 2DB

Proposal: Demolition of detached house and annex and erection of 3 storey building for 3x3, 3x2, and 6x1 bed flats, with undercroft parking, landscaping and bin stores

Applicant: Colony Developments

Deadline: 27/11/2020

Extended Deadline: 30/4/2021

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 26/2/21

RECOMMENDATION:

As on main report, but with the following amendments:

The Section 106 Legal Agreement to Secure the Following:

Affordable Housing

- £150k AH contribution paid on occupation of 10th Unit, ~~or three no. shared ownership units. together with a Deferred Payment contribution with a 50/50 share in excess of 12% GDV on an open book basis capped at a total policy compliant sum of £521,000 to be calculated on the occupation of the 11th unit.~~

OR

- Three on-site shared ownership units or equivalent in terms of habitable rooms together with a Deferred Payment contribution with a 50/50 share in excess of 12% GDV on an open book basis capped at a total policy compliant sum of £521,000 ~~to be calculated on the sale of the 11th unit, or policy compliant 30%. equivalent to 30% calculated on the occupation of the 11th unit.~~

Additional Condition:

28. Obscure glazing to first floor full height windows on the southern side.

1. AMENDED INFORMATION

Transport

- 2.2 Following consultation on the amended plans and further discussion between the Officer and the agent an amended ground floor plan was submitted (*received 03-10 Rev P2, received 18th February 2021*), which increases the overall parking provision to 14 no. on site car

parking spaces. The Transport officer provided further comments on these amendments and confirmed:

“In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed development would be required to provide off road parking of 1 Parking space for each 1 and 2 bedroom flat and 1.5 for a 3 bedroom flat, therefore equating to a total of 14 (rounded) parking spaces. In addition to this, visitor parking should also be provided at a ratio of 1 per 10 dwellings, therefore the whole development would require 15 (rounded) parking spaces. After reviewing car ownership data the proposed provision of 14 parking spaces as illustrated in the amended plan 3-10 P2 is acceptable.”

- 2.3 Transport has reiterated that cycle storage would need to be covered secure storage. A condition requiring such details is already included in the recommendation in the main report.
- 2.4 A further revised drawing has been submitted by the applicant (3-10 P3), which shows proposed and future electric vehicle charging points as required by Policy TR5.
- 2.5 Further details for bin storage are required and a condition as on the main report is maintained.
- 2.6 The amended scheme is considered to be acceptable in transport terms, subject to attaching conditions, and would therefore accord with requirements of policies TR2-TR5.

Site Levels

- 2.7 Following further resident submissions and disagreement over the site levels as presented, the applicant’s agent has revisited the topographical survey data and has prepared the following statement and amended drawings (see Appendix 1) as follows:

“Concerns have been raised during the consultation process that there is a significant increase in building height and ground levels. The initial explanation offered to the planning officer was that there would be no significant adjustments, but as a result of ongoing residents’ concerns, the officer has sought further clarification. It is correct that the general site levels to the rear gardens would remain similar to the existing. Whilst the driveway and undercroft parking would be raised slightly to lessen the overall gradient for the parking area and to allow disabled access. The raised levels would mainly be to the Parkside Road aspect and less so to the rear amenity, where the levels would be generally equal or less than the neighbouring properties.

Further topographic data has been provided to clarify the exact level changes and comparisons with context and all elevation sections have been updated to reflect this, alongside elevation gridlines to aid the understanding of height variations. Any

indicative levels of the neighbouring properties have been refined, in particular the garden to No. 29 which now reflects a better illustration of the relationship to the site and proposal.

With respect to the floor levels and building heights the existing house has a ground floor level of 57.32. The proposed building would have a car park/external level of 57.75 and ground floor level of 57.90, raising the levels by only 430mm and 580mm respectively. It is estimated that the building ground floor level would be very similar to that of No.29 if not slightly lower.

The tallest part of the proposal is 66.35, with the two wings, addressing No. 29 Westcote Road and no. 16 Parkside Road, lowered to 65.95. When compared to No.29 at 65.43, and No.16 at 64.52 the increase in height would be 550mm and 1455mm respectively, which is reasonable given the taller element of the proposal would be ca 14m from the boundary to no. 29 Westcote Road and the slight increase on the corner plot could be accommodated.”

- 2.8 Officers are satisfied that sufficient information has been presented to demonstrate what the effect of the proposed development would be with respect to its overall height and in its context, and does not change the assessment as set out in the main report.

Residential Amenity

- 2.9 Additional points have been raised, specifically by the residents of number 16. Parkside Road, which include reference to an inaccuracy within the report with respect to windows present on the northern side of their property (see comments and photos in Appendix 2; photos from no. 29 Westcote Road are included in Appendix 3). The officer confirms that this was an error, and as the application was received during Covid restrictions, had utilised information such as streetview, and other mapping systems, which allow a range of views. The side windows were not clearly picked up. In light of the confirmation that there are side facing windows at no. 16 Parkside, the officer has re-reviewed the effect of the proposed scheme with respect to overlooking/ loss of privacy in terms of those side facing windows.
- 2.10 The residents have advised that there are four no. windows: 2 at first floor serving a bedroom, and two at ground floor serving a study (see photo below).



- 1.10 It is considered that the main issue would be with respect to the effect of the proposed windows at first and second floor levels within the wing nearest no. 16. The latest proposed southern side of the building (05-12 Rev P2, rec 18/2/21) includes 4 no. high level windows and two full height windows at first floor and two slim windows at second floor (see below).



- 1.11 As the rooms these windows serve also have windows on the east and west elevations (front and back - from Parkside Road) the applicant has confirmed that the first floor full height windows would be obscured glazed, and a further condition is included in the recommendation above. In terms of the second floor windows these are very slim windows at ca 9m from the nearest point of no. 16, and it is considered that the level of direct overlooking/ loss of privacy would be minimal, and combined with landscaping along this boundary it is considered that this would not cause significant detrimental harm to the amenity of no. 16 in accordance with Policy CC8.

Section 106 obligations - Affordable Housing

- 1.12 Since the completion of the main report there has been further negotiation between the applicant and the Council's Valuer with respect to the Affordable Housing Contribution. It has been agreed that in the case of delivery of the option of three on-site shared ownership units, that this could be based on an equivalent number of habitable rooms, i.e. 9 habitable rooms. This could mean the

delivery of fewer, but larger units as shared ownership, which is considered acceptable by RBC's Housing Team, who have confirmed that they would prefer larger units.

- 1.13 This is still considered to accord with the relevant Policies CC9 and H3 and the recommendation for approval is maintained, subject to some minor changes to the Heads of Terms in the recommendation as above.

Ecology

- 1.14 For further clarification, further bat surveys would be undertaken between mid-May and August 2021 and the results of these would inform the licensing process and the type of license that would be required (condition 8 of the main report).

- 1.15 The applicant has provided an updated report (*Update Preliminary Roost Assessment, High Level Inspection and Mitigation, rec 2/3/21*) Report, which makes it clear that that the proposed mitigation measures, which include bat roosting features, bird boxes, bee bricks, hedgehog gaps, and wildlife beneficial landscaping scheme would provide biodiversity net gains to meet Policy EN12. The amended mitigation plan is included in Appendix 4. The measures within the amended document would be specifically referenced within recommended condition 9 as set out in the main report.

Sustainability

- 1.16 The applicant has submitted an updated Energy Assessment, which relates to the 12 unit scheme. This confirms that the proposed scheme would continue to achieve an overall reduction in Co2 of 36.97% with the proposed used of heat pumps and photovoltaic panels in accordance with Policy H5.

Written Statements

- 1.17 Written statements have been submitted by those members of the public who are registered under 'public speaking' and are included in Appendix 5. below.

Conclusion

- 1.18 Having reviewed the additional information the officer recommendation is not altered, save for the amendments to the S106 heads of terms, and an additional condition regarding windows, as above.

Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: SITE LEVELS/HEIGHTS PLANS



 <p>ILLUSTRATED BY: [Name]</p>	<p>DESIGNER: [Name] ARCHITECT: [Name]</p>	 <p>RIBA Chartered Practitioner</p>
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APPENDIX 2: FURTHER COMMENTS AND PHOTOS FROM NO. 16 PARKSIDE ROAD - provided by Mark Ashton & Lisa French

We have been shocked so see the committee report today ahead of the committee meeting on Wednesday in regards to the re development of 18 Parkside Road. Despite multiple objections from ourselves and many of the local residents the main objections all seem to have been ignored or given an unsatisfactory response and in some cases blatant lies.

We purchased our property just over 8 years ago when at the time we were up against 2 local developers and the family selling the house chose to sell to us as we wanted to renovate the property as our forever home. We love the fact that the houses on the road are all different shapes and sizes and full of character in this historic Reading Road. 16 Parkside Road is a lovely plot size and the garden is very private We are nearing the end of our renovation after 8 long years but it now feels like the joy it once brought is about to be destroyed.

Please see below in particular the points on the committee report we feel we need to comment on [*Planning officer note: extracts from the committee report in red*]

6.14 The area comprises detached and semi-detached 2 storey housing, bungalows, care homes and blocks of flats. Some of these are large buildings with some surrounding setting/ garden space and are up to 4 storeys. These include 19 Westcote Road, Parkside Care Home, and YMCA, a large modern corner building (marked with red stars on the plan below).

The application keeps making reference to Parkside Care Home and that this proposed development is in some way comparable. The site on which that building sits is 4 times the size and in keeping in design with the houses in the area. Please see below photo of Parkside Care Home next door in line with our home. The building is set back with the 2nd floor in the pitched roof, the windows on the 1st floor are considerably smaller than the ones proposed at 18 Parkside Road and the windows on the 2nd floor are tiny, covered with shutters and hold some sort of generator room. There simply is not the feeling of being over looked by this building as the developers have been considerate and careful with their design. The one big thing to point out that this is a very quiet care home - not a residential block housing over 30 occupants. The developers have built a fitting amenity as opposed to maximizing profit on the site at 18 Parkside Road forsaking local character and residents privacy and well being.



6.15 Although different in design to the adjacent buildings the overall layout of the proposed scheme would provide effective redevelopment of the plot, whilst maintaining sufficient distance to neighbouring properties. It would have a plot coverage consistent with other plots within the area, whilst ensuring sufficient landscaping and amenity setting to serve the proposed residents and to retain the verdant nature.

Please see below photos of all the houses on Parkside Road next to and adjacent to 18 Parkside Road - these are all residential and all of the same character and charm of Parkside Road. How in anyone's mind can these proposed plans think that this "office block" style of building will be a visual benefit to the area?





6.16 The height of the proposed scheme would be higher than the adjacent houses but would reflect heights of other buildings within the wider area. Due to the site levels, it is considered that it would be less dominant and overbearing in the street scene than other similar scale buildings. The agent has confirmed that the proposal would not involve raising the height of the land above the current ground level as suggested by an objector.

As you can see from the below photos this proposed development will undoubtedly tower over our back garden ensuring we will lose all privacy which was one of the reasons we purchased our home.



6.27 The character of the surrounding area is an important factor and the proposal would be comparable to the density of existing flatted developments in the area, for example no. 19 Westcote Road, which equates to a density of ca 100 DPH. The site is also considered to be a sustainable location being sited within close proximity of frequent premier bus routes on Bath Road and Tilehurst Road that run to and from the town centre and Reading West Railway Station to the east. In itself, the proposed density is not considered to be a reason to object to this application.

This proposed development also keeps comparing itself to the flats at 19 Westcote Road. As you can see from the photos, I took this morning this building is most defiantly in keeping with other buildings near by, the 2nd floor within the gable roof line and sympathetically designed along with consideration to neighbours by having no windows on the side. We would welcome a development along these lines.



6.36 The proposed scheme includes windows looking towards adjacent sites. With respect to the windows on the southern side (to no. 16 Parkside Road) within the wing of the building closest to the boundary, the majority of these would be facing the side of the no. 16 where there are no windows. There would be some limited oblique views into the rear amenity space. However, windows within the southern elevation of the other wing (parallel to Westcote Road), would be at ca 15.3m (ground/first floors) & 16.2m (second floor) from the boundary with no. 16 and it is considered that this distance, combined with tree and landscaped boundaries, would be sufficient to not cause significant detriment to the amenity of no. 16.

Please see below a photo of this side of our house (excuse render - we are mid renovation) where there are in fact 4 windows - one being our home office where Lisa works all day and the other being our bedroom - to say there are no windows on this side of our house is a lie.



6.37 With respect to no. 29 Westcote Road, similarly the closest east facing windows, would largely look directly towards the side elevation of no. 29, where there are no windows. It is considered that the remainder of the windows on the eastern side of the proposed scheme, which would be at a distance of ca 14.7m (ground & first) and 16.4m (second), combined with the retained and proposed landscaping, would also be sufficient to ensure that there would be no significant detriment to amenity and privacy. **There are existing similar relationships, for example the relationship between Parkside Care Home and no. 16 Parkside Road.**

This is the side aspect of our house from Parkside Care Home - how is this similar when they have been respectful and have only one window facing our house - which is in fact just a stair well window.



6.24 The supporting text (para 4.4.7) states that, *“wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms. As a minimum, on new developments for 10 or*

more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, planning decisions will ensure that over 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations.”

6.25 The amended proposal includes 3 x 3 bed units, which represents 25% of the total number of units. However, the proposal also includes 3 x 2 bed units, i.e. 50% 2 and 3 bed units. Para 4.49 of the RBLP explains that “*taken as a whole .. homes with two or more bedrooms, capable of accommodating families, represent the majority of the need*”. It is considered that this combined with the overall accessibility of the site, the need to make effective use of the site and the existing range of housing types and mix within the area, make this mix of units acceptable in this case.

Sorry, but this requirement is not being met, no amount of arguing can change that. If the developer was serious about offering quality family accommodation, then the 50% target would be met. If developers can offer the explanation above and get planning approval, then what is the point in having the regulations in the first place? If this guidance is not adhered to then there is no incentive for developers to offer decent family sized dwellings.

One more point on this and just a general observation. Reading is bursting at the seams with flats, everywhere you drive there are new developments popping up, some of which are massive in size such as the Thames Quarter complex and the ongoing construction of Kennet Island. Is there truly still that much demand for flats in Reading? I find it hard to believe when you can see multiple for sale and to let signs outside many existing developments throughout Reading. A quick search on the internet on Rightmove shows 1935 flats available to rent in Reading and 1215 flats available for sale as of 1st March 2021. Add other sites into this and that is a pretty big number.

Reading is desperate for quality family housing. A development that concentrated on high quality homes would be far more suitable for the plot and location than yet more flats.

6.41 A total of 14 no. car parking spaces are proposed. This would comply with parking standards with respect to the provision for the units themselves. In terms of visitors the Council’s parking standards require one space per 10 flats, and as there is some unrestricted parking on Westcote Road and some limited time bays on Parkside Road, it is considered that this visitor parking could be accommodated on street, without significant detriment to highway safety.

This is, an incredible assumption that it will be okay for visitors to park on Westcote Road. As local residents, Mark walks to work everyday via Westcote Road and there is always large number of cars parked along here on both sides of the road, including up on pavements. With Covid restrictions currently in place the parking issue isn’t as bad but I can guarantee that once Covid restrictions are lifted we will see people who

don't live in the area dumping their cars and walking to Reading West Station or in some case all the way to Reading town centre. Believe me, this happens an awful lot as I see it with my own eyes.

Many households have more than one car so even with 14 car parking spaces planned this will not be enough for the number of occupants in the building. Add in visitors and it will result in a significant number of cars parked along Westcote Road.

The parking bays on Parkside Road are already full at night as time restrictions do not apply so that rules that out as an option for visitors to park in. In summary, the parking issue has not been addressed, in my opinion can't ever be as the development is simply too big and dense for the plot size. If this is approved, Westcote Road will become an absolute nightmare for the residents living along there. The road will also be extremely difficult and dangerous for motorists to navigate along.

In closing we want to add that we are not against the development of the site, in fact welcome it. But please try to ensure we preserve the beautiful charm of this old Reading road and be respectful to all the neighbouring properties and their privacy.

APPENDIX 3: PHOTOS FROM 29 WESTCOTE ROAD AND 16 PARKSIDE ROAD
- provided by Mr. Dodson

Site Photos – 29 Westcote Road & 16/18 Parkside Road RG30 2DL



Road entrance into 18 Parkside Road – note steep angle – too steep to be able to park across the slope hence new ground level has to be raised for proposed development.



Looking at the south end wall of 18 Parkside Road from across entrance to 16 Parkside Road. Note fence line which is constant along the boundary to where it joins 29 Westcote Road fence line.



View from road entrance of 29 Westcote Road looking across to boundary with 18 Parkside Road. Both buildings in worked out gravel pit.

Note summer house in 18 Parkside Road garden behind silver car cover.



View from 29 Westcote Road showing retaining wall of level car parking area and corner of roof of summer house in garden of 18 Parkside Road





This picture has the laser level line transferred and projected from top of the fence along the boundary between 18 Parkside Road and 16 Parkside Road shown projected onto the back of the summer house.



Height between lines ~0.5m

This picture has the laser level line from the front door threshold of 29 Westcote Road projected onto the rear of the summer house showing that it is ~0.5m below the 18/16 Parkside Road fence line.

The Colony drawing number '500 05-11 1:200 Westcote Road elevation' shows the ground level of the new development to be ~0.5m above the threshold of the front door of 29 Westcote Road.

Thus the proposed new site level is approximately at the same level as the top of the boundary fence between 18 and 16 Parkside Road.






This is also approximately in line with the top of the retaining wall seen in the picture below that runs right across the north of the 18 Parkside Road site.



Retaining wall running across north/Westcote Road side of site

APPENDIX 4: UPDATED BIODIVERSITY MITIGATION PLAN



-  6 x Green & Blue Bat Block integrated bat boxes
-  2 x Schwegler 1FD bat boxes
-  2 x Green & Blue Swift Block swift boxes
-  2 x interconnected Green & Blue Bat Block integrated bat boxes to create a maternity roost feature suitable for pipistrelle bats.
-  2 x bee bricks

APPENDIX 5: WRITTEN STATEMENTS

A) Chris Dodson OBE - 29 Westcote Road

A need for an appropriate development at 18 Parkside Rd is recognised. However, this is not an appropriate development because:

- It would make a negative contribution to the character of the immediate area with inappropriate scale, overall bulk and density of occupation.
- The design density of the proposed development is overwhelmingly out of keeping with the immediately surrounding properties and nothing less than an eyesore. The fact that other developments nearby have such a density - 'two wrongs do not make a right'.
- The proximity to neighbouring properties categorically does not minimise exposure to such an overbearing and architecturally inappropriate structure.
- When new drawings were submitted to the planning portal on 18th February 2021, it was the first time they showed site lines for no 16 Parkside, it became clear that they proposed the whole site be lifted ~2m above the existing ground level - this will exacerbate the intrusive sight lines into surrounding properties and gardens (the new ground level is at the height of the top of fences of surrounding properties and gardens) and effectively 'adds a floor' in terms of appearance from adjoining properties and the street scene. The drawing 'Overlooking Section 500 02-50' with Section A-A does not show the 2m lift of the site and so the overlooking sightlines shown are not real, they are a great deal worse. An engineer has used a laser level to determine the existing building ground level (>1.5m below our front door threshold at 29 Westcote Road) and compared that with the new proposed sections which show the ground floor of the new development throughout to be some 0.5m above our front door threshold level. We therefore suggest the committee is being totally misled under 6.16 of the Committee Report in front of you.
- We feel strongly that the drawings were trying to hide from us the fact that the intent was to lift the building and the land that surrounds it over 2metres, above standard fence height. This would result in people effectively walking at the top of our fence height looking down on our property and gardens. At the same time it lifts the building and effectively reinstated the floor they said that they had removed in response to our objections.
- The residents of surrounding properties consider this proposal to be a blight on our immediate area which leads us to question why this application has any support within Reading Borough Council. This is a clear attempt to build as many units as possible to maximise profits with no regard to design quality and our immediate neighbourhood's character, unique assets and current density.

We ask you to reject this application and seek an appropriate more family friendly development on this site **built from the existing ground level.**

B) Mark Ashton & Lisa French - 16 Parkside Road

We are extremely disappointed that we are still objecting to the proposed redevelopment of 18 Parkside Road for the same reasons that we have submitted now on several occasions. Minimal concerns raised by ourselves and local residents have been addressed, to the point of actually being ignored. We want to clarify again that we are not against the redevelopment of 18 Parkside Road, but not in its current form.

Below is why we are objecting to the proposed development including breaking several key planning committee policies.

- It is clearly too large and dense for the plot size. Little consideration has been given to the size and quality of the dwellings. This is presumably to maximise developer profit. Squeezing 12 flats (possible 33 occupants) onto a plot that has for many years been a single family house is excessive to say the least.
- The southern boundary will now sit much higher so in effect the bottom of the new building will be in line with the top of our fence line. This isn't demonstrated on the plans at all which we feel is underhand and quite deliberate.
- The privacy of our property and surrounding buildings will be destroyed by the sheer size and overbearing nature of the development. This issue is amplified by the size of the windows and the glass balconies that are planned to overlook all adjacent properties. The architectural features proposed do not lend themselves to the rhythm of surrounding buildings as outlined in planning committee policies. A few trees and some trellis are not going to solve the issues with privacy on any of the boundaries.
- The design is ugly and not in any way in keeping with other surrounding buildings. The building offers nothing positive to the landscape and character of this prominent Reading area. How is this design even being considered in this location when the houses in this area feature pitched and gable roofs and brick and render finishes? This development is more in keeping with an office block suited to the town centre. Other recent developments in the area such as Westcote Road, specifically 5 & 19 have been designed sensitively and importantly with no over looking windows on both sides of the building to protect the privacy of nearby neighbours. The complete opposite is true of 18 Parkside Road.
- This size development will in turn create issues with traffic and parking. Parkside Road already has limited parking and is used as a rat run. It is already recognised that parking is a problem on Westcote Road, with cars parked on pavements both sides already. This will just add to the problem, especially when you factor in visitor traffic. Speed restrictions along both roads in recent weeks already slows there are traffic issues. The development offers only

- 13 parking spaces when a minimum of 14 are required. The fact this allows just one space for all visitors to 12 flats is a major concern.
- Under current policy a building with over 10 dwellings must have 50% of properties with 3 beds. This is not the case with this development, currently only 25% of units will be 3 beds. There is clearly little emphasis here for the provision of family-sized housing which again is another key part of planning policy.

C) Sue Spooner - 9B Parkside Road

The amended plans do not in any way make the design of the proposed development appropriate for Parkside or Westcote Roads. The flat-roofed boxy style of the design is completely out of keeping with nearby properties which all have pitched roofs and gables. Other recent developments of houses, flats and care homes on both roads have been exemplary in following the local design style, and have therefore blended in to and enhanced the appearance of the street. This rectangular, office-block style of development might be appropriate for a city centre, but is completely out of place in the middle of traditional Victorian-style housing. Having such an ugly, large development on a prominent corner plot will greatly detract from the appearance of both streets and will completely dominate neighbouring houses.

I am also very concerned about the impact that such a dense development will have on traffic and parking on Parkside and Westcote roads. Clearly there will not be sufficient parking provided within the precincts of the property itself for such a large number of flats, which will mean that residents of the flats and their visitors will have to park on Parkside or Westcote roads. These roads are too narrow to have cars parked on both sides, so this is likely to greatly inconvenience existing residents as well as make driving down the streets very difficult. It is also likely to result in cars parking on the pavement which will be dangerous for pedestrians.

I appreciate that redevelopment of this plot is reasonable, but I really hope that the Council will reject these plans to conserve the beauty and character of the area.

D) Dr. J A (“George”) Nowacki and Mrs Helen Nowacka - 4 Parkside Road

The proposed design is completely out of keeping in a long-established road with many houses around 100 years old and the newer properties (Bewley Homes development) carefully designed to blend in with the older houses.

1. Reading Local Plan Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm.

High design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located, (with respect to: density and mix, scale, height and massing and architectural details and materials.

NOT MET

2. H11, Development of Private Residential Gardens:

Relationship with surrounding area, integration with surrounding area, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.)

NOT MET

Just look at the elevations showing adjacent buildings, Drawing no. 500-05-10 and new buildings opposite. No attempt at blending or integrating.

3. Revised Parking Standards and Design (SPD Oct 2011)

The Standard for flats in Zone 2 stipulates 1.5 car spaces for 3-bedroom flats and 1 car space for 1 and 2 bedroom flats plus 1 visitor's space. This comes to $3 \times 1.5 = 4.5$ plus $9 \times 1 =$ plus 1. A total of 14.5 spaces. There should also be parking provision for 9 bicycles. The developers offer 12 car parking spaces only.

NOT MET

Parking in Parkside Road is restricted and cars are already parked on both sides of the road (and pavements) in Westcote Road. These roads are used as a rat-run in non-lockdown times.

4. Local Plan for Housing

50% of new-build developments of 10 or more dwellings outside Central Reading to be family units (i.e. 3 or more bedrooms) The proposal offers 25%

NOT MET

The proposal is trying to cram too many dwellings into a plot occupied by one family house with no regard to blending with adjoining properties. It is surprising that the Planning Officer recommends Approval when the proposal does not meet the criteria set by the Planning Committee. It would save a lot of Committee time if the Planning Officer guided developers to present proposals that met Planning Committee Policies and Guidelines. If the Planning Committee does not enforce its policies, there is no incentive for developers to comply.