

**BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**

**Ward:** Abbey

**App No.:** 200931/FUL

**Address:** 22a Waylen Street

**Proposal:** Conversion of existing storage and distribution use to 1x2 bed dwelling, including upward extension to rear, and associated works

**Applicant:** Mr Neil Marshall

**Deadline:** 16/11/21

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Delegate to Assistant Director, Planning, Transport & Regulatory Services to:**

- (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement, or**
- (ii) REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed within 3 months (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).**

**The legal agreement to secure the following:**

- an Affordable Housing contribution of £16,250 towards affordable housing in the Borough in accordance with Policy H3 index-linked from the date of the permission, to be paid on the commencement of the development.**

Subject to conditions and informatives.

**Conditions**

1. Standard time limit
2. Approved plans
3. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Materials and finishes to be approved including cladding, fenestration and roof slates - to be in accordance with submitted Design and Access Statement.
4. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Landscaping, a small scheme of hard and soft landscaping to be approved
5. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Arboricultural Method Statement
6. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Construction Method Statement
7. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Contaminated Land Assessment
8. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Remediation Scheme, to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use
9. PRE-COMMENCEMENT - Notwithstanding the approved drawings - details of cycle parking to be submitted.
10. PRE-OCCUPATION - SAP Assessment (as built) produced by an accredited energy assessor
11. Refuse and recycling, space for storage to be provided in accordance with approved plans.
12. Permitted development rights removed - (i) no enlargement of the dwellinghouse (no extensions) and (ii) no addition or alteration to its roof (no roof extensions)
13. Permitted development rights removed - no new openings
14. Permitted development rights removed - restricting use of roof
15. Standard hours of construction/demolition
16. No burning of waste on site
17. Implementation and verification of approved remediation scheme
18. Unidentified contamination
19. Access closure with reinstatement of kerb
20. Parking permits - notification of address

21. Parking permits - informing occupiers

22. Use as a two bedroom dwelling only

#### Informatives

Terms

Building Control

Pre-commencement conditions

S106

Complaints about construction

Encroachment

Contamination

Highways

Noise between residential properties

CIL

Parking permits

Advice about TPO trees and trees in Conservation Areas

Positive and proactive

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 22a Waylen Street comprises a narrow, L-shaped plot within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area. The site originally formed part of 22 Waylen Street, a large villa. Set back from the Waylen Street building line is this historic two storey outbuilding. Single storey extensions fill the extent of the plot to the rear of the outbuilding. The site is currently vacant, most recently in use as a workshop/storage.
- 1.2 Immediately to the rear of the site are parking areas serving properties on Waylen Street and Russell Street. Sycamore trees growing adjacent to the site overhang its south-west corner. The surrounding area is residential in character, with a variety of built forms between two and three storeys in height.
- 1.3 The application was called in for determination at Planning Applications Committee by Councillor Page due to the constrained nature of the site in a conservation area setting.



## Site Location



Aerial view of site (front)



Aerial view of site (rear)





Photograph of front elevation



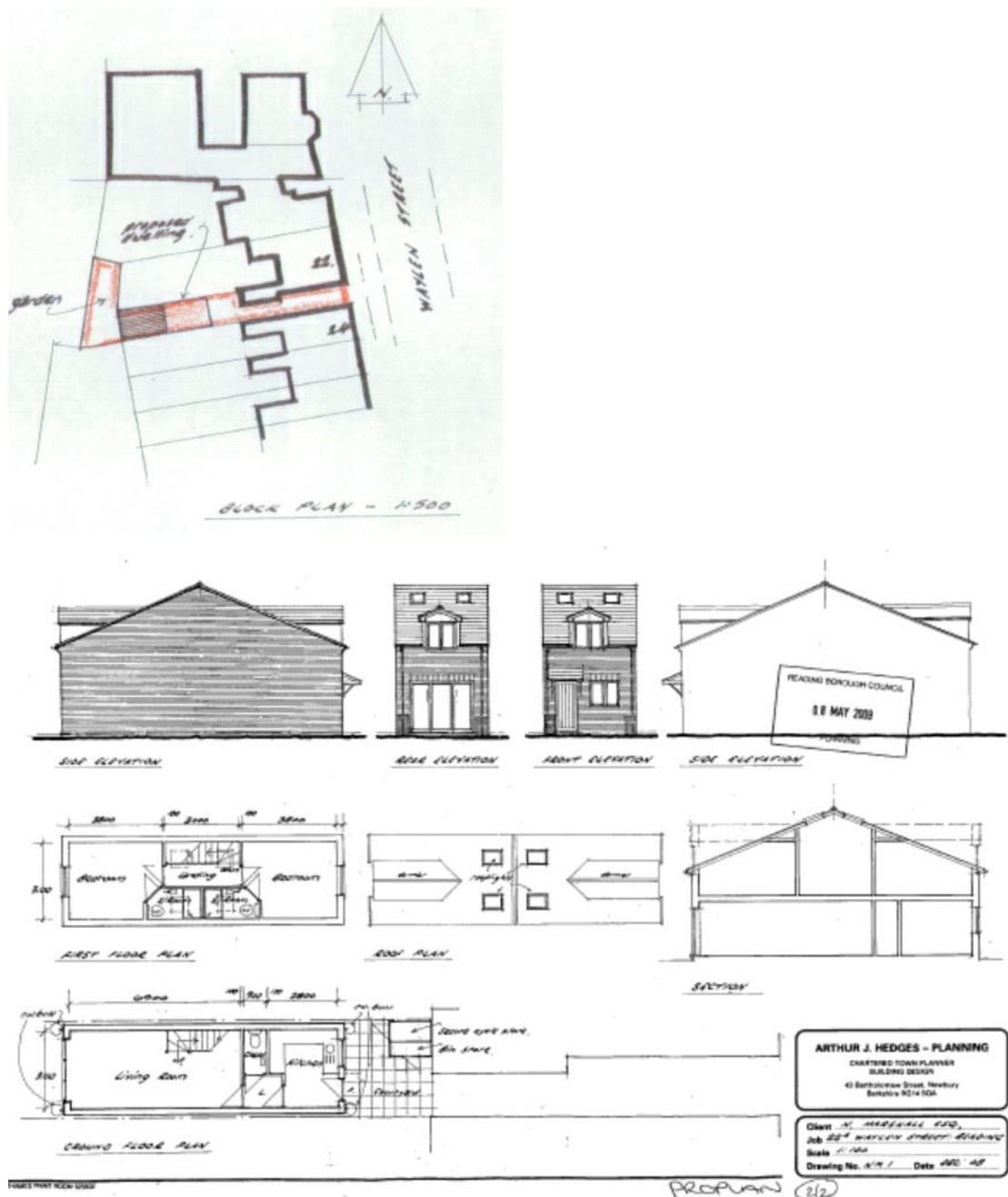
Photograph of site frontage

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the existing building to a 1x2 bed dwelling, with an upward extension to the rear and associated works. To the site frontage, a contemporary porch extension and 1m high boundary wall would be erected. To the rear, the building would have an angled design, with two small triangular courtyards created. The upper floor extension would have a pitched roof and a timber-clad gable end. Upper floor glazing would be to the southward side elevation only. The site would have no rear access.
- 2.2 The agent supplied the following, received on 03/07/20:  
Design & Access Statement  
Heritage Statement, ref: AH\_190-DHG-3MX by Archway Heritage, dated 28/04/20  
Heritage Statement Appendix 11 - Site Plans and Maps  
Heritage Statement Appendix 12 - Site Photographs  
Affordable Housing Statement  
Drawing No: 02-00 - Site Location  
Drawing No: 02-01 - Existing Site Plan  
Drawing No: 03-00 - Existing Floor Plans  
Drawing No: 05-00 - Existing Front and Side Elevations  
Drawing No: 05-01 - Existing Side Elevation and Section  
Drawing No: 05-02 - Existing Section  
Drawing No: 03-10 - Proposed Floor Plans  
Drawing No: 03-11 - Proposed Roof Plan  
Drawing No: 05-10 - Proposed Elevations  
Drawing No: 05-12 - Proposed Section
- 2.3 Officers raised concerns with the initial proposal relating to the provision of outdoor amenity space, use of materials, cycle/bin storage, and arboricultural matters. Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 29/01/21:  
Drawing No: 03-10 Rev. A - Proposed Floor Plans  
Drawing No: 03-11 Rev. A - Proposed Roof Plan  
Drawing No: 05-10 Rev. A - Proposed Elevations  
Drawing No: 05-11 Rev. A - Proposed Side Elevation and Section  
Drawing No: 05-12 Rev. A - Proposed Section
- 2.4 Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 12/04/21:  
Tree Survey by Arbtech, dated 27/07/20  
Arboricultural Method Statement by Arbtech, dated 17/08/20  
Drawing No: Arbtech AIA 01 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment  
Drawing No: Arbtech TPP 01 - Tree Protection Plan
- 2.5 Officers advised of discrepancies with the amended plans, and sought clarity on the use of materials. Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 18/10/21:  
Drawing No: 03-10 Rev. B - Proposed Floor Plans  
Drawing No: 05-11 Rev. B - Proposed Side Elevation and Section

## 3. PLANNING HISTORY

090574/FUL - Demolition of office, stores and workshop. Erection of 2-bedroomed house - Refused 03/07/09  
*Officer note: see below, proposed site plan and elevational drawings*



Officer note: this proposal was for the erection of a two-storey house, with a more conventional design, but sited to the rear of the plot. The application was refused on three grounds. Firstly, due its the siting, density, scale and design, the development would have been out of character with the scale and rhythm of the terrace and existing pattern of development, causing harm to the character of the conservation area. Secondly, due to its siting overlooking, visual dominance and overshadowing would have been caused to the rear of no.s 22 & 24 Waylen Street, with an equivalent level of overlooking back towards the proposed dwelling. The third reason for refusal was due to the absence of a completed S106 legal agreement

161207/UPA - Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of Use from Storage or Distribution Buildings (Class B8) and any land within its curtilage to Dwelling houses (Class C3). The proposed development comprises the change of use from storage (B8) to Residential (C3), converting 98 sqm of Storage into 1 bed dwelling. Prior notification under Class P, Part 3 of

Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 - Prior Approval Refused 09/09/16

*Officer note: this application was refused on the grounds of failure to demonstrate the lawful use of the building, therefore not meeting the basic technical requirements for consideration under an application for Prior Approval.*

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

##### Reading Borough Transport Development Control

- 4.1 Raised no objections to the proposal as there would be no material change to the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site. Advised that unauthorised parking could be controlled via the administration of the Residential Parking Permit Scheme. Suggested conditions relating to parking permits, access reinstatement, bin/cycle storage and a CMS.

##### Reading Borough Ecology

- 4.2 Raised no objections to the proposal as it was considered unlikely that they would affect bats or other protected species.

##### Reading Borough Environmental Protection

- 4.3 Advised that the pre-existing use of the site has the potential to have caused contamination of the land, and that the proposed development is a sensitive land use. Recommended conditions relating to the requirement for submission of a Contaminated Land Assessment and remediation scheme, and further conditions relating to the implementation of that scheme. Further conditions recommended relating to the construction/demolition phase.

##### Reading Borough Natural Environment

- 4.4 Raised concerns with the proposed development regarding the future impact of the proposal on Sycamore trees growing adjacent to the site. Noted that the Tree Protection Plan includes appropriate measures to mitigate direct development impact on these trees, but required a more succinct, site specific Arboricultural Method Statement be supplied. Advised that this could be secured via pre-commencement condition.
- 4.5 Noted that given the extent of the development, significant on-site planting would be unlikely, but a small scheme of landscaping should be secured by condition.

##### Reading Borough Conservation and Urban Design Officer

- 4.6 No response received to consultation.

##### Reading Civic Society

- 4.7 Offered support for the proposal, noting that it would be an attractive, innovative and imaginative design.

- 4.8 Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 22-24 (odds) Waylen Street were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. No letters of representation were received.

## **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) which also states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.
- 5.2 The following national and local planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

### National Planning Policy Framework

#### Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3 - Adaption to Climate Change

Policy CC6 - Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy EN3 - Enhancement of Conservation Areas

Policy EN6 - New Development in a Historic Context

Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14 - Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy EN15 - Air Quality

Policy EM3 - Loss of Employment Land

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 TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

### Supplementary Planning Documents:

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (2015)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Other relevant documents:

Tree Strategy (2020)

Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal (2020)



## 6. APPRAISAL

### 6.1 The main issues to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact on the character of the area
- Density, mix and affordable housing
- Impact on the amenity of existing and future occupiers
- Transport
- Natural environment
- Sustainability

#### Principle of development

### 6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The general principle of provision of new housing in this location would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1. Although it is apparent that this remains very much dependent on the detailed design of the proposals within this constrained site.

### 6.3 The loss of the pre-existing workshop/storage use of the building must also be considered. The building has most recently been associated with a small plumbing/heating business, and is now vacant. The site is not located within a Core Employment Area and Policy EM3 states that these circumstances the loss of employment land must be considered against a number of criteria including the accessibility of the site, viable continued use or redevelopment for employment uses, availability of similar accommodation elsewhere and whether an employment use is appropriate for the location.

### 6.4 The building has been vacant for a significant period of time, without market interest for the existing use. The building is not in an optimum location for access to the strategic road network. The site is also located within a predominantly residential area where a light industrial use could result in harm to the amenity of surrounding occupiers and potentially the character of the conservation area. As such the proposed loss of employment land is considered to be acceptable in in this location, in accordance with Policy EM3.

### 6.5 The broad principle of the proposal for residential development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policies CC6, H1 and EM3 although the overall acceptability remains heavily-dependent on the design and the effect on character, as discussed below.

#### Design and impact on the character of the area

### 6.6 Policy CC7 aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is proposed in terms of layout, landscape, density, scale, height, massing, architectural detail and materials. Policy EN1 states that heritage assets, including their settings, will be protected and where possible enhanced. The policy goes on to state that proposals should seek to avoid harm to heritage assets in the first instance but that any harm identified would require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits. Policy EN3 seeks that development proposals preserve and enhance the special character of conservation areas.

- 6.7 As set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal, many properties along Waylen Street are in a poor state of repair, with cluttered facades and uneven frontages as a result of boundary walls being removed. The absence of greenery to front gardens is also a negative aspect of the streetscape.
- 6.8 A detailed heritage statement has been submitted with the application and considers the impact of the proposals on the significance of Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area. The heritage assessment shows that the building has been subject to a variety of alterations and additions over its history, evident in the form of a single storey extension filling the rear part of the plot. It is officers' view that the existing building has a limited contribution to the character of the area, by virtue of its narrow plot width and recessed building line. The building's long-term vacancy is also considered to detract from its significance and general contribution to the character of the area.
- 6.9 Amended plans and additional details have been sought during the course of the application. Red brick in Flemish bond pattern has been selected to reflect the style of the surrounding buildings. To the frontage, the existing timber sash window would be preserved, with secondary glazing installed behind. A contemporary porch extension would be constructed on fibre cement panels and a frameless glass door. The upper storey of the rear extension would have a timber clad gable wall, treated with clear lacquer to ensure longevity. The remainder of the extension would be clad in grey slate and grey hung slate tiles. These external materials would be secured by way of a suitably worded condition. The proposal has been designed to retain some of the building's original character, whilst introducing contemporary elements. The design would be a departure from the generally traditional appearance of the conservation area, although it is apparent that the change would in fact be relatively minimal when viewed from Waylen Street. To the front, the alterations and addition of a small porch would fit with the existing scale, layout and appearance and could not be described as obtrusive. These changes would still allow the original form and appearance to be discerned when viewed as part of the Waylen Street frontage. The main changes would be to the rear and viewed in the context of the less visually sensitive commercial yard which adjoins the site to the west. The constrained irregular site would not allow existing building forms or plot layouts and therefore lends itself to a good quality contrast to the prevailing character. This is considered to be well executed to the rear within the new building responding well to the site in terms of its form, appearance and appropriate scale. Overall it is considered that the introduction of this particular high quality, design-led scheme into this particular site-context would represent an enhancement to the conservation area.
- 6.10 Furthermore, the site has been vacant for a long time, and a proposal to bring the site back into viable use is considered to be of benefit to the conservation area. The contemporary design approach is considered to be the correct approach in the circumstances for the reasons set out above and the result would be a good quality design that contributes positively to the character of the surrounding area. On this basis, the proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN1 and EN3.

#### Density, Mix and Affordable Housing

- 6.11 Policy H2 states that development proposals should provide an appropriate mix of units based on the character and mix of units found in the

surrounding area. Waylen Street contains a variety of residential properties including single dwellings and flats. The proposed 1x2 bed unit is considered to be suitable for family occupation, and is appropriate for the site's location just outside the defined Reading Central Area. Amended plans have been sought during the course of the application to address a third bedroom originally proposed to the upper floor of the existing building. The room is not deemed to be of a sufficient size to accommodate a bedroom. This has now been changed to a study and will be secured to remain as such by condition.

- 6.12 Policy H3 states that development proposals of between one and four dwellings should provide an affordable housing contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. In accordance with the adopted Affordable Housing SPD, this equates to a contribution equivalent to 5% of the Gross Development Value of the scheme. The agent has supplied three independent valuations to enable an appropriate contribution to be calculated. The applicant has agreed to a policy compliant contribution of £16,250, to be secured by way of a S106 legal agreement.

Impact on the amenity of existing and future occupiers

- 6.13 Terraced rows of housing extend either side of the application site, with parking courts located immediately to the rear. The proposed upper floor extension would occupy the L-shaped part of the site, approximately 18m distant from the rear elevation of 22 Waylen Street. First floor glazing would be located only to the southward elevation of this extended part, looking out directly over the parking courts. Glazing at the ground floor would be largely obscured by close-boarded timber fencing. The proposed arrangement of windows is not considered to cause any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenities in terms of loss of privacy through direct overlooking. Given single storey extensions already occupy the entirety of the plot depth, the proposed development is not considered to cause any greater degree of harm in terms of visual dominance or overbearing effects. A condition is applied removing future development rights of the property to alter or enlarge the roof space. The proposals are not considered to cause harm to the amenity of surrounding occupiers in accordance with Policy CC8.
- 6.14 Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of future occupiers. Policy H5 sets out the standard to which all new build housing should be built. In particular new housing outside of the defined Reading Central Area should adhere to national prescribed space standards. Policy H10 seeks that residential developments are provided with adequate private or communal outdoor space.
- 6.15 Though the proposed dwelling would have an unusual, angular design it would comfortably exceed the minimum gross internal floor area as set out in the prescribed space standards. Two bedrooms would be provided, each of a sufficient size. Due to the constraints of the site, the opportunities for the provision of glazing are somewhat limited. The proposed ground floor bedroom would be provided with two high level windows only. This would afford fairly limited outlook only, however this is balanced by the room being of a decent size. Where the proposed use to be as a house in multiple occupation, officers would be more concerned about the outlook from this bedroom as it would be likely that the occupant would spend the majority of their time in the house there. Given the proposals are for the use as a single dwelling, officers have taken a slightly more relaxed approach to the

outlook from this bedroom. The upper floor bedroom would be provided with windows of sufficient size, with no harm to outlook. On this basis, the proposal is considered to provide a sufficient standard of accommodation for future occupiers. A condition is recommended removing the future permitted development right for new openings, to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties.

- 6.16 The angular design of the rear element enables the provision of two courtyard spaces, totalling approximately 30sqm in floor space. While this is less than spaces that generally characterise the area, officers are satisfied that the development as a whole provides adequate amenity space provision. A condition removing permitted development rights to extend the dwelling across the garden is recommended to ensure the spaces are retained.
- 6.17 The site has formerly been occupied as a workshop/storage use associated with a plumbing/heating business. There is the possibility that the historic use of the site would have introduced contaminants to the land and therefore recommended conditions are attached to secure the submission and approval of a contaminated land assessment and remediation scheme prior to commencement of the development. Conditions are also recommended to secure a construction method statement including noise and dust control measures, and adherence to the Council's standard working hours for construction activities. The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC8, H5 and H10 on this basis.

#### Transport

- 6.18 Policies TR3 and TR5 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters. The site is located within walking/cycling distance of the town centre, bus routes and local services.
- 6.19 Waylen Street has on-street parking on both sides of the carriageway. Shared user parking bays can be utilised by permit holders at any time and by non-permit holders for up to two hours between 8am-8pm. At all other times the bays revert to permit holders only.
- 6.20 In accordance with the Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development is required to provide one off-road parking space. No off-road parking spaces are proposed in this application. In order that the proposed development does not exacerbate existing parking pressures in the area, future residents of the development will not be entitled to a residents parking permit. Suitably worded conditions and an informative will be applied to that effect.
- 6.21 In accordance with the SPD, the development is required to provide two cycle spaces in a secure, covered store. A covered store is shown to the site frontage however this could appear as a poorly integrated obtrusive feature at odds with the otherwise high-quality design of the scheme and the need to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. A condition is recommended to secure details of cycle parking which may be more appropriately located in the rear garden, which would also be more secure.
- 6.22 A location for bin storage is also proposed to the site frontage. This simple storage location is considered to be appropriate for the proposed house. It is apparent that a bulky, poorly integrated freestanding store would not be appropriate in this location in heritage terms.

6.23 Given the site location close to the town centre and on a busy road with parking restrictions, a condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of development on site.

6.24 Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with the identified policy.

#### Natural Environment

6.25 In terms of landscaping, the existing site does not contain any trees or vegetation. Given the constrained nature of the site, provision of landscaping within the development is challenging and moreover, may reduce light and outlook to the dwelling itself. The proposals include small areas of planting to the front and rear, with these details to be secured by condition. In overall terms the proposals would represent a small enhancement and net gain in terms of greening on the site and within the conservation area.

#### Sustainability

6.26 Policy CC3 seeks that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy H5 seeks that all new housing development achieves a 19% improvement above the dwelling emission rate as described in the Building Regulations and that the development is built to achieve the higher water efficiency standard as described in building regulations. Adherence of the development to these standards would be secured by way of conditions. Other sustainability measures incorporated within the development include a net increase in greening and landscaping across the site, use of high quality and energy efficient materials and provision of car free development. On this basis the proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC3 and H5.

#### Equalities Impact

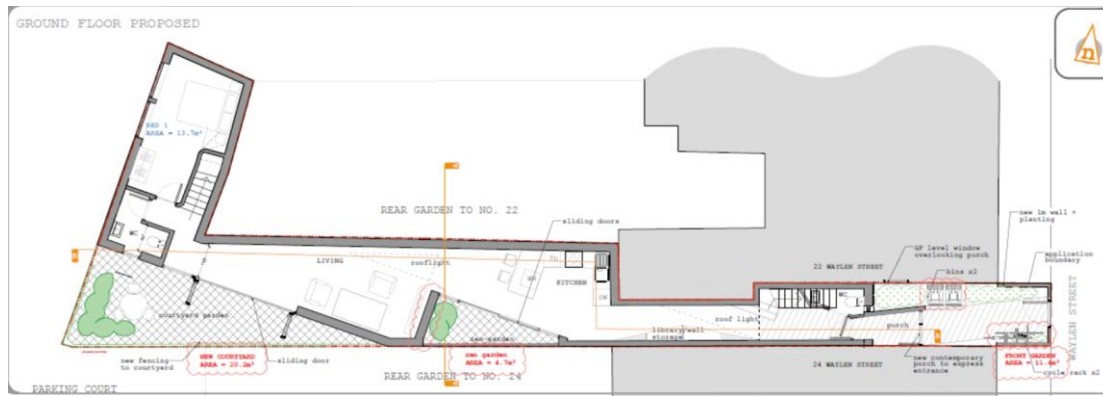
6.27 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups as identified in the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

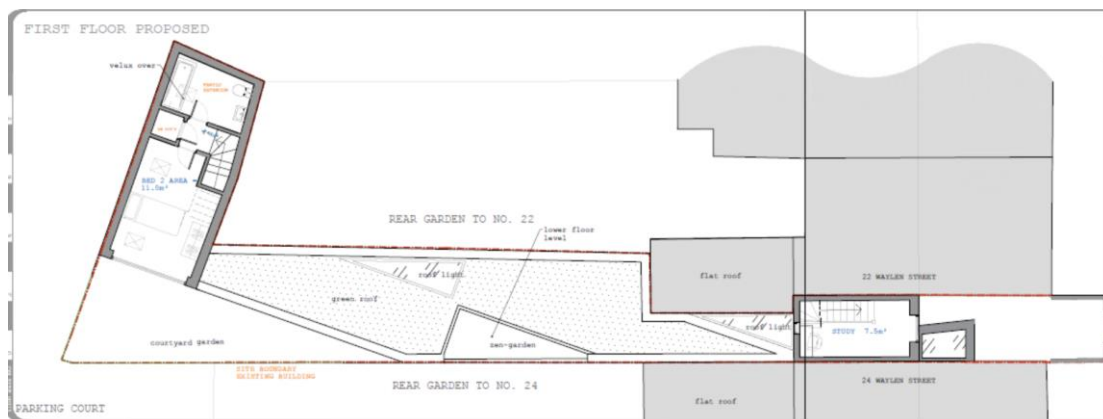
7.1 The proposals have been assessed against relevant policies contained within the Reading Borough Local Plan, with due regard to supporting local and national policy guidance and all other material considerations. The proposed development is considered to represent imaginative and high-quality design which responds well to the constrained and irregularly shaped site and which would enhance the conservation area. The proposal is recommended for approval, subject to conditions and the completion of the legal agreement.

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

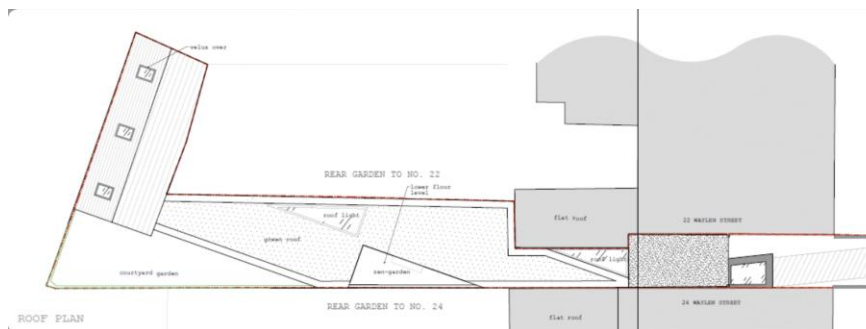




### Proposed Ground Floor Plan



### Proposed First Floor Plan



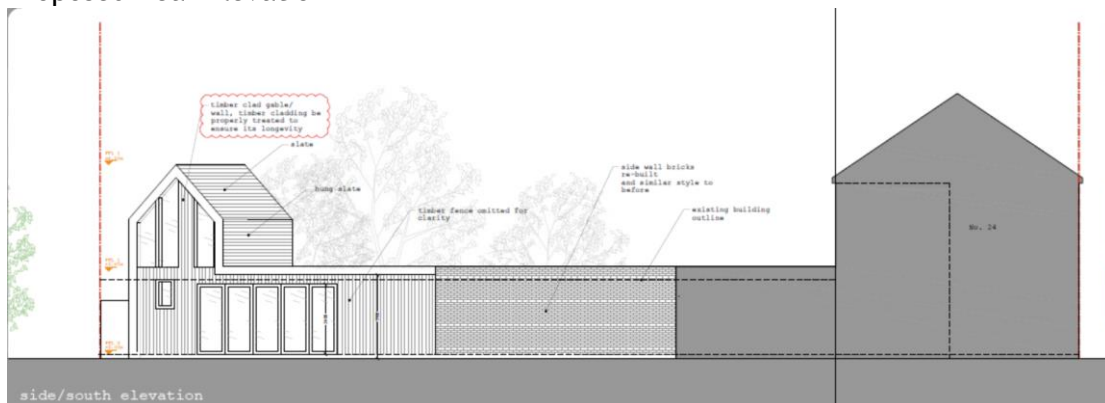
### Proposed Roof Plan



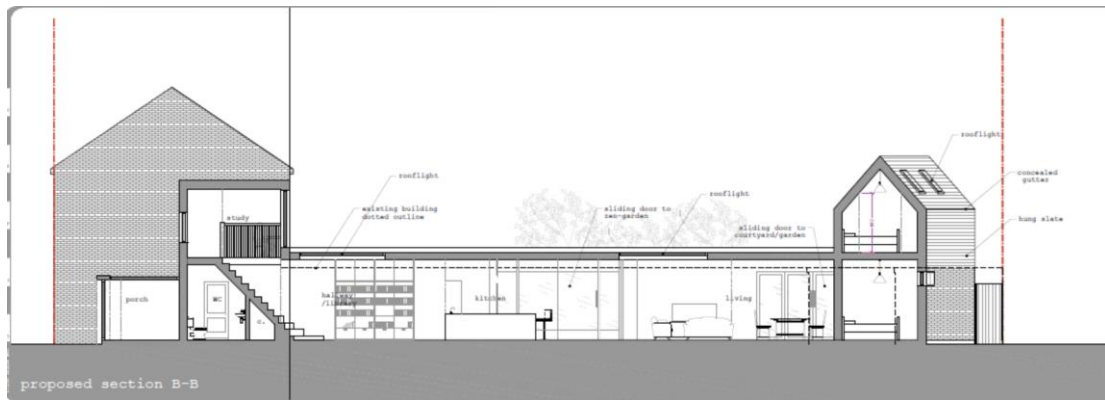
Proposed Front Elevation



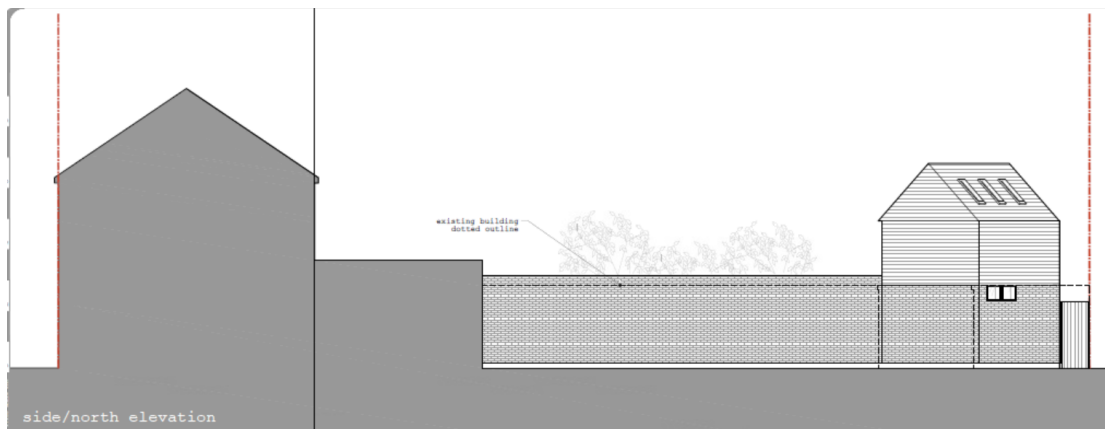
Proposed Rear Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



Proposed Section



Proposed Side Elevation



Illustrative image - viewed from Waylen Street - from Design and Access Statement





Illustrative views from neighbouring yard to the rear.