

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 21 June 2023

Ward: Kentwood

App No: 221800/REG3

Address: Various Properties at Rockbourne Gardens. Cranbourne Gardens, and Ripley Road, Reading, RG30 6AU

Proposal: Property improvement works and Thermal efficiency upgrades to 22 RBC properties. Works to each property will consist of fitting new External Wall insulation, new triple glazed windows and doors, minor roof adaptations, fitting of Air Source Heat pumps, central heating upgrades and associated works. All properties located on the Old Norcot Estate, Reading. Addresses include:- 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 13 Rockbourne Gardens, RG30 6AU. 2, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 11 Cranbourne Gardens, RG30 6TS. 6, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 26 Ripley Road, RG30 6UD (Part retrospective) (Amended description)

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Extended Target Date: 23/06/23

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

Conditions to include

1. Approved plans
2. Materials – as specified

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Positive and Proactive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explains that this scheme is Phase 3 of a Council scheme to improve energy efficiency within the Council's housing stock in this part of Tilehurst, in order to achieve the Council's wider 'net zero' goals. It is considered that the proposals are suitable in design terms being relatively unobtrusive in the streetscene and aligning with changes which have already been permitted and implemented for earlier Phases. The report explains that the proposals are suitable in terms of neighbour amenity with the main consideration being the noise levels generated from the heat pumps.

1. INTRODUCTION

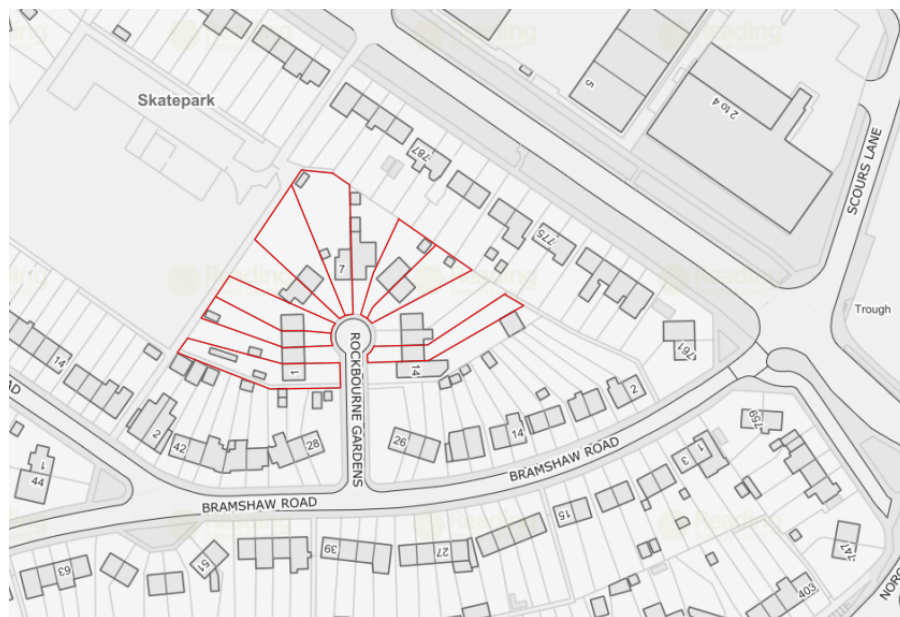
- 1.1 The proposed works are exterior alterations and repair works to terraced and semi-detached houses along Rockbourne Gardens, Cranbourne Gardens and Ripley Road. All properties are located on the Old Norcot Estate, which has a mix of similarly designed terraced rows and semi-detached residential dwellings, constructed in the mid-1920s.

- 1.2 The houses are built using a mixture of brick and block with a narrow cavity. The external walls are a mix of traditional cement mortar, pebble dash render and red brick. The main roofs are pitched with a double roman style tile. Windows and rear doors are double glazed uPVC.
- 1.3 The application is referred to Committee owing to it being for works to Council owned (Regulation 3) property.

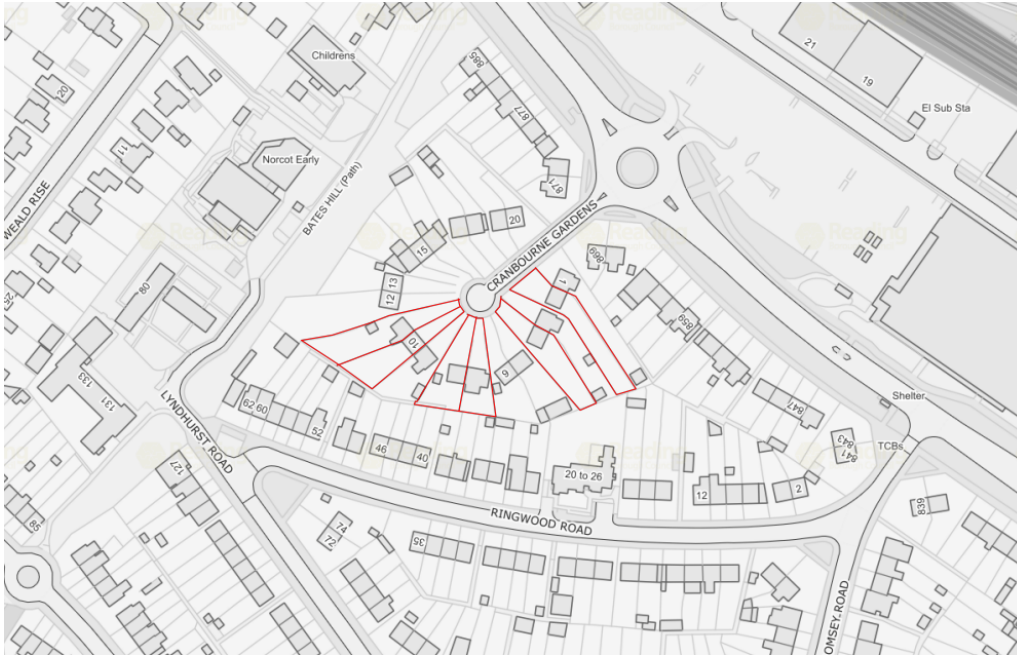
Site location plans:



Ripley Road



Rockbourne Gardens



Cranbourne Gardens

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The development proposes alterations to include 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 13 Rockbourne Gardens. 2, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 11 Cranbourne Gardens and 6, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 26 Ripley Road.
- 2.2 The submitted Planning Statement outlines that it has been identified that several elements to the properties within this application are failing or near the end of their practical life expectancy. This project seeks to improve the thermal efficiency of the properties as well as perform replacement works. The external wall insulation (EWI) system proposed is a key component of this project and aims to improve thermal efficiency through conserving fuel and power, enabling Reading Borough Council to work towards a Zero Carbon target by 2030.
- 2.3 The following works are confirmed by the planning case officer to be within the criteria for being permitted development:
 - Installation of triple glazed uPVC windows
 - Renewal of flat roof coverings
 - The fitting of Air Source Heat pumps to the side of properties. These would likely be considered Permitted Development provided they comply with the relevant criteria in terms of size, location and standards.
- 2.4 However, the following works have been confirmed to require planning permission to be granted:
 - External Wall Insulation (EWI) Systems
 - Extension of roof overhangs to gable ends or dormer style roofs to allow for EWI to be fitted under new soffit.
- 2.5 The applicant has confirmed that some elements of the proposed development have commenced therefore the application is part retrospective.
- 2.6 Plans and documents considered:

The following document was received on 23/02/2023:

ASHP – Sound Test Results

The following document was received on 26/01/2023:

PUZ-WM85VAA(-BS) Monobloc Air Source Heat Pump Product Information

The following plans were received on 13th December 2022:

PM/01-1 Rock; PM/01-2 Cran; PM/01-4 Rip; PM/01-9 Rock; PM/01-11 Cran; PM/01-10 Cra; PM/01-20 Rip

The following plans were received on 01/12/2022:

Location Plans for Ripley Road, Rockbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens;
Location Plans including boundaries Ripley Road, Rockbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens;
Block Plans for Ripley Road, Rockbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens;
PM/01-11 Cran; PM/01-10 Cra (existing elevations); PM/01-11 Cran (existing elevations); PM/01-4 Rip (existing elevations); PM/01-1 Rock (existing elevations);
FTC6 Standard Pre-Plumbed Cylinder Product Information;
PermaRock information sheet;
PermaRock drawing no: RFS002A;
PermaRock drawing no: W-RET-P-003;
RFS002A (Rev1)
W-RET-P-003 (Rev1)
Planning Statement

3. PLANNING HISTORY

220190 - Property improvement works and thermal efficiency upgrades to 31 RBC properties. Works to each property will consist of fitting new External Wall insulation, new triple glazed windows and doors, minor roof adaptations, fitting of Air Source Heat pumps, central heating upgrades and associated works. All properties located on the Old Norcot Estate, Reading. Addresses include 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 42, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 64, 66, 83, 87, 89 Bramshaw Road. 1, 4, 8 Wimborne Gardens. 158 Thirlmere Ave. 13 Ringwood Road. 61 Lyndhurst Road. 67 Lyndhurst Road. (Part Retrospective) – Application permitted on 01/04/2022 (Committee Decision)

210904 - Works consist of property improvements and upgrades of thermal efficiency measures to dwellings detailed below. All properties located on the Old Norcot Estate, Reading. Phase 1 addresses to include:- 35, 37, 39, 41, 43 Bramshaw Road RG30 6AT 69, 71, 73, 75 Bramshaw Road, RG30 6AS 377 & 379 Norcot Road, RG30 6AB. Works will see the existing render overlaid with a new external wall insulation system, replacement of new triple glazed windows, minor roof adaptations and associated works (Part Retrospective) (Amended Description). - Application Permitted on 10/09/2021 (Committee Decision)

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal Consultations

4.1 *RBC Environmental Protection*

Concerns were initially raised by the Environmental Protection Team with regards to cumulative noise arising from the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). Further discussions were had between officers and the EP Team who subsequently removed their concerns and considered there would not be harmful noise impacts to residents in the areas surrounding the dwellings relating to the application.

Public consultation

4.2 The following neighbouring properties were consulted by letter:

60 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TX
36 Ringwood Road Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
44 Ringwood Road Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
42 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TX
40 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6TX
1 Cranbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6TS
32 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6TX
50 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6TX
24 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6TX
795 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6TU
783 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
20A Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
5 Rockbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
8 Rockbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
42 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
24A Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
19 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
36 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
781 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
4 Romsey Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
28 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
62 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
32 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
46 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
13 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
56 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
38 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
777 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
33 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
35 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
58 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
4 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
9 Cranbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
25 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
779 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
3 Cranbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
54 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
5 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
787 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
6 Cranbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
13 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
14 Rockbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
2 Romsey Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
10 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
11 Rockbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire

12 Rockbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
18 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
17 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
789 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
791 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
793 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
12 Cranbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
773 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
775 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
785 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
14 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
26 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
52 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
23 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
28 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
9 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
15 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
22a Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
8 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
21 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
34 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
30 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
34 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
7 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
13 Kinson Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
9 Kinson Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
38 Ringwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
12 Ripley Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
40 Bramshaw Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
5 Cranbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
26a Ringwood Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire
2 Rockbourne Gardens, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire

Eight site notices were erected at various locations on the three roads (ie. Rockbourne Gardens. Cranbourne Gardens, and Ripley Road).

No representations have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 Adaptation to Climate Change

CC4 Decentralised Energy

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (Adopted December 2019)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

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

i) Principle of Development

6.2 The proposed works seek to refurbish and improve the thermal performance of these properties for the benefit of the occupiers. As mentioned above some of the changes fall within the definition of 'development' (section 55 of the Town & Country Planning Act) as building operations (section 55 (1A) (d), also bearing in mind 55 (2) a(ii) and the change in appearance of the existing material beneath).

6.3 The proposed finished external insulation system would have an additional depth of 115mm from the existing cement render. This will alter the character and appearance of the buildings beyond simply a change in render colour. The depth of the proposed render has the potential to alter the external appearance of window openings and doorframes.

6.4 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that "plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development". For decision making, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

6.5 As referred to in the Planning Statement submitted for this application, Reading Borough Council is committed to working towards achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. As per paragraph 4.7 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019), heat loss can be prevented by applying high levels of insulation to the roof, walls and floors. Heat loss from windows can be further reduced through double or triple glazing. The works proposed by this application aim to maximise energy efficiency by reducing heat loss from the building envelope. Policy CC2 states the refurbishment of existing building stock will be acceptable where the design of buildings use energy, materials and other natural resources. In this respect, the installation of ASHPs and thermal efficiency upgrades will lead to improvements in the energy efficiency of the dwellings subject to this application. Therefore, the proposed development aligns with the principles of Policy CC2 and in turn, contributes to meeting the principles of Policy CC3 by adapting development to meet the challenges of climate change. Therefore, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle.

ii) Design

6.6 The properties subject to this application are two storey terraced rows of houses and semi-detached pairs. The appearance of these properties previously was the same as others in the area being pebble-dash render, brown roof tiles, PVC windows, and brick porch arches.

6.7 The external wall insulation has been selected to improve energy efficiency at the relevant properties. The colour of the render finish is different from the predominantly pebble-dash render character of the surrounding area, however it is considered that

the new render coating and neutral white colour selected is not harmful to the appearance of the application properties or the surrounding area.

- 6.8 The roof adaptations proposed are for the eaves to be extended to accommodate the depth of the render. The render and finish at the depth that has been proposed/implemented will alter the appearance of openings and eaves to the affected properties, resulting in extended eaves and deep window reveals when compared to unaltered neighbouring properties. The proposed adapted roofline is not considered a significant change or harmful to the character and appearance of the proposal sites or the surrounding area.
- 6.9 The proposed replacement of the existing uPVC windows with triple glazed uPVC windows are considered 'like-for-like', whilst again improving energy efficiency to these dwellings.
- 6.10 It is acknowledged that these improvement works are also proposed to more isolated dwellings and not part of a cluster, for instance Nos. 6 and 11 Ripley Road. However, there are existing variations in appearances of dwellings within the street scene including variations to render colours, external material palettes and some additions to the original dwellings therefore the proposed alterations are not considered harmful to the visual amenities of the street scenes along Ripley Road, Rockbourne Gardens or Cranbourne Gardens.
- 6.11 The Air Source Heat Pumps proposed are small and compact in stature, at 1m in height, 0.5m in depth and width of 1m (0.5m³). These small units will be located either to the side or rear of the respective property, as a result, the inclusion of these units is not considered harmful to the character and appearance street scene or host dwelling.
- 6.12 Overall, the development is considered to be visually acceptable in respect of both alterations to each host dwelling and the cumulative change of the dwellings within the wider street scene, in accordance with policy CC7.

iii) Safeguarding Amenity

- 6.13 The physical alterations are not considered to harm the living conditions of neighbours within the surrounding area. This is largely due to the nature and scale of the works proposed. The works are not considered to harm the outlook from neighbouring properties or appear visually dominant.
- 6.14 Concerns have been raised from the Environmental Protection Team as to the impact of noise arising from the Air Source Heat Pumps on neighbouring properties. Specifications been provided for the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps which states that the sound pressure level at 1m is 45dBA. The Air Source Heat Pump proposed has been revised from a model that previously generated a sound pressure level at 1m of 47dBA. It is also confirmed within the Tender Specification that the Air Source Heat Pumps will sit on anti-vibration mounts
- 6.15 Whilst the sound pressure level is relatively low, EP officers raised a concern for the cumulative impact of the noise arising from the units based on the number of units proposed. The applicant subsequently submitted Sound Test Results for each ASHP. The results accounted for distances to the nearest habitable window of dwellings adjacent to each ASHP which ranged from 4-7m. The results state the noise experienced by adjoining neighbours from each ASHP would be either 41 or 42db, when accounting for the separation distances and screening between the units and dwellings. Officers also note that the noise limit for ASHPs installed under Permitted Development Rights is 42db at a distance of 1m from any habitable window. The

results have been reviewed by the EP Team who have conducted their own calculations and are satisfied the ASHPs would not result in a harmful cumulative noise impact to nearby residents.

6.16 As such, the proposed works are considered to protect the amenity of residents in the area, in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

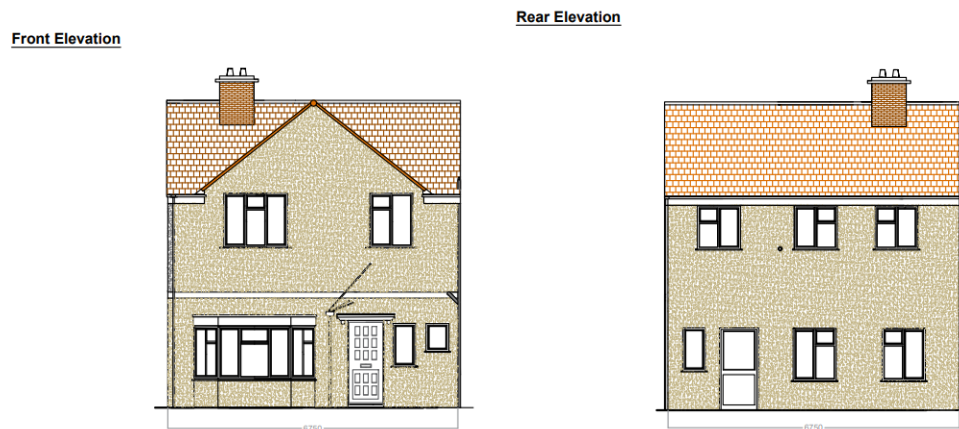
7. Equality

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

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 In addition to being accordance with policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the development is considered to suitably improve the thermal efficiency of the respective Council owned properties, whilst not harming the character and appearance of the properties or the area. It is concluded that the inherent benefits of the proposal by improving energy efficiency at these properties, as part of the Council's commitment to its Climate Emergency declaration, is considered to weigh heavily in favour of this development.

Case Officer: Joel Grist



Example existing elevations (10 Cranbourne Gardens)



Example proposed elevations (10 Cranbourne Gardens)