

26 June 2024



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Whitley
Planning Application Reference:	231793
Site Address:	142-144 Whitley Wood Lane
Proposed Development	Demolition of existing single-storey buildings and two-storey rear extensions, and replacement with a two-storey side and rear extension to convert to 11 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and 3 ground floor commercial units, and two-storey new build to the rear to provide 3 x 2 Bed three person (2B3P) houses alongside associated parking, cycle and refuse storage.
Applicant:	Whitley Wood Properties Ltd
Report author	Anthony Scholes
Deadline:	31 July 2024
Recommendation	<p>Subject to the satisfactory provision of ecological (bat) surveys and no objections raised Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) GRANT full planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms, and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission orii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 31/07/2024 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)
S106 Terms	AFFORDABLE HOUSING – to secure the sum of £65,000.00 towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in Reading Borough, payable on first occupation of the development and index linked from the date of permission.
Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Time Limit (Standard)2. Approved Plans3. Materials (To Be Approved)4. Construction Method Statement (pre-commencement)5. Vehicle Parking (As Specified)6. Vehicular Access (As Specified)7. Cycle Parking (Details to be provided)8. Refuse and recycling (Details to be provided including method for control of rats)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. EV Charging Points (Details to be provided) 10. SAP Assessment Minor – Design Stage 11. SAP Assessment Minor – As Built 12. Landscaping Small Scale to include all proposed biodiversity measures (pre-commencement) 13. Boundary Treatment (pre-commencement) 14. Use of roof restricted 15. Habitat Enhancement Scheme (pre-commencement) 16. Noise Mitigation Scheme (Internal) (to be submitted) 17. Contaminated Land Assessment (to be submitted) 18. Remediation Scheme (to be submitted) 19. Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification) 20. Unidentified Contamination 21. Hours of Construction/Demolition 22. No Bonfires 23. Habitat Enhancement Scheme (pre-commencement) 24. HMO Tenant Management Plan (to be submitted) 25. Mechanical Plant (Noise assessment required) 26. Ventilation & Extraction (to be submitted prior to installation of any extraction equipment) 27. Commercial Extensions/Alterations Restricted 28. PD rights removed (dwellings) 29. Delivery and Servicing Plan (To be approved) 30. Delivery hours restriction (9am – 5pm) 31. Waste Collection Hours Restricted – Commercial (9am – 5pm)
<p>Informatives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terms 2. Pre-commencement conditions 3. Building Control 4. Complaints about construction 5. Encroachment 6. CIL 7. S106 8. Noise between residential buildings 9. Highways 10. Access construction 11. Advice to adhere to approved Arboricultural Method Statement 12. Positive and Proactive – Approval 13. Contamination

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The proposal is recommended for approval subject to a S106 legal agreement being completed and the conditions set out above.
- 1.2 This report describes the proposal submitted by Whitley Wood Properties Ltd for the redevelopment of no. 142-144 Whitley Wood Lane. Demolition of existing single-storey buildings and two-storey rear extensions, and replacement with a two-storey side and rear

extension to convert to 11 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and 3 ground floor commercial units, and two-storey new build to the rear to provide 3 x 2 Bed three person (2B3P) houses alongside associated parking, cycle and refuse storage.. The main concerns discussed within this report relate to the land-use principles, design, amenity impact, transport and biodiversity implications, and the agreed affordable housing contribution.

2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1 The site is located on the corner of Whitley Wood Road and Whitley Wood Lane, at the roundabout junction forming one of the corners to the Engineers Arms Roundabout. The existing building comprises retail space at ground floor with residential accommodation above. Beyond the site to the north is a single storey commercial building currently occupied by a barber and beyond that is a staggered row of two-storey Victorian housing (interspersed with the occasional newer building). An area of mid-twentieth century housing lies to the south and west of the site with the contemporary block of flats at Engineers Court located across the roundabout to the east.



Figure 1 - Location Plan

- 2.3 The application is a 'minor' development according to the Reading 'Scheme of Delegation' (over 1,000 sqm.) and has been called in by ward Councillors due to concerns with the proposals for this prominent site, therefore is presented to Planning Applications Committee for a decision.

3. The proposal

- 3.1. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing single storey buildings on the site, which include a shopfront facing onto Whitley Wood Lane, and other structures to the rear of the site. The proposal also seeks to demolish the existing two-storey rear extension. Following the demolition of the single storey buildings, the applicant is seeking permission for the construction of a two-storey side and rear extension to the main building. The main

building would contain a ground floor Class E (use presently unknown) with the ability to have three separate tenancies, whereas above ground would be a Sui Generis House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for up to 11 persons. In addition to the extensions and alterations, the proposal included a two-storey 'mews' style building to the rear of the site which is proposed to contain three two-bed dwellings. The proposal includes 4 no. parking spaces, one for each 'mews' style house, and one designated for delivery to the commercial ground floor space. The proposal also includes adequate waste storage, bicycle storage, and private amenity for the individual dwellings.

- 3.2. The proposed two-storey side extension would be set back from the main elevation, and set down from the ridge height of the proposal. It would be brick clad, with full height glazing at ground floor. The two-storey rear extension would be the full width of the original dwelling and is sought to be rendered.
- 3.3. The proposed HMO includes additional bedrooms within the loft space, to facilitate this, the proposal includes a small front facing flat roof dormer window, and a box dormer window of the rear of the two-storey rear extension. At first floor, the HMO would contain 4 bedroom, 3 bathrooms, 1 w.c. two living/dining areas, and a 14.2m² communal kitchen area. Within the loft, the proposal includes two bedrooms and a storage area.
- 3.4. The 'mews' style building sought would contain 3 x 2-bed dwellings, each provided with their own car parking space. The applicant has also included 1 no. larger parking space for delivery and servicing of the ground floor class E use(s). Within the rear area of the site, the three dwellings are provided with 28.8m² front garden areas, and a bin and bicycle store structures. The HMO is provided with a separate bicycle store structure. All bicycle and bin store structures are proposed with green roofs.
- 3.5. The proposal also includes the lowering of the boundary wall to Whitley Wood Road to 1.2m for the retained length. There would be three additional pedestrian access points to the rear of the site, and a widened access, including dropped kerb.
- 3.6. Submitted plans and documents:

Location Plan

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL08 - Proposed Bin and Cycle Stores

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL07 - Existing and Proposed Sections

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL06 - Existing and Proposed Elevations

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL05 - Existing and Proposed Roof Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL04 - Existing and Proposed Second Floor Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL03 - Existing and Proposed First Floor Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL02 - Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL01 - Existing and Proposed Block Plan

Design and Access Statement (in two parts)

As received 12 December 2023

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL09 - Existing and Proposed Street Elevations

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL08 – Rev A – Proposed Bin and Cycle Stores

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL02 - Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plans

Transport Note – Ref: R-22-0154-001A-TN 142-144 Whitley Wood Lane (A)

Amended Design and Access Statement (in two parts)

As received 5 January 2024

Amended Design and Access Statement (in two parts)

HMO design compliance statement

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL09 – Rev A – Existing and Proposed Street Elevations

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL08 – Rev B – Proposed Bin and Cycle Stores

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL07 – Rev A – Existing and Proposed Sections

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL06 – Rev A – Existing and Proposed Elevations

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL05 – Rev B – Existing and Proposed Roof Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL04 – Rev B – Existing and Proposed Second Floor Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL03 – Rev B – Existing and Proposed First Floor Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL02 – Rev C – Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plans

Dwg No. 7184-ECE-PL01 – Rev B – Existing and Proposed Block Plan

Dwg No. 7184-PL11 – Proposed Landscape Plan – Commercial Street Frontage

Dwg No. 7184-PL11 – Proposed Landscape Plan – Dwellings Street Frontage

As received 12 March 2024

3.7. Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The development would be CIL liable and a charge is likely to be approximately £92,343.00.

4. Planning history

- 4.1 190974/FUL - Demolition of existing shop and workshop and the erection of seven 2-bedroom and two 1-bedroom flats with associated parking – Application Withdrawn on 11/08/2020
- 4.2 211932/OUT - Outline application for the demolition of existing retail units and ancillary buildings and redevelopment to provide ground floor retail uses with ancillary office space, and 12 dwellings (Class C3) on the upper floors (Landscaping reserved for future consideration). – Application Refused on 19/01/2022.

5. Consultations

5.1. Non-statutory:

RBC Natural Environment – No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC Transport – Generally considered acceptable, with minor amendments required, an update report will be prepared addressing outstanding matters.

RBC Environmental Protection - No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC – Archaeology – No concerns or conditions recommended.

RBC – Ecology – No concerns regarding biodiversity enhancements, awaiting bat surveys anticipated to be carried out by 20th June, clarification to be provided via update report.

Public:

Letters were sent to:

6 – 30 (all) Copenhagen Close

132, 134, 136, 138, 142, 144, 144a, 169, 173, 175, 177, 177-179, 179a Whitley Wood Lane

1 – 18 (all) Engineers Court, Whitley Wood Lane

Land Rear of 142-144 Whitley Wood Lane

26 Dovecote Road

1 – 10 (all) Howard Villas, Whitley Wood Road

5.2 Four letters of representation were received during the two publicity periods. Comments are summarised as below:

- Parking and highways concerns;
- Not enough parking spaces on site to accommodate development need;
- Concern about vehicles accessing the front of the site near pedestrian crossing, roundabout, and bus stop (*Officer note: revised plans removed access to front of property for vehicles*)
- Positive comments on design of proposal, and redevelopment to address existing anti-social behaviour concerns around the site;
- Concerns with people stopping out front of driveways while accessing existing shops, and increase with proposed development, including delivery vehicles;
- Concerns about ongoing maintenance of buildings post approval;
- Concerns regarding overdevelopment of the site

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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

6.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant national / local policies / guidance are:

National Planning Policy Framework (2023). The following chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

2. Achieving Sustainable Development

6. Building a Strong Competitive Economy

8. Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

9. Promoting Sustainable Transport

11. Making Effective Use of Land

12. Achieving Well-Designed Places

14. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
CC9: Securing Infrastructure
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Design Guide to Shop Fronts SPD (2022)

Design Guide to House Extensions 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:

Reading Borough Council Tree strategy (2021)

7. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

Land use principles

Design Considerations and Effect on Character

Residential Amenity

Transport/ Parking

Environmental Matters

Natural Environment

Sustainability

Affordable Housing

Equalities impact

Land use principles

- 7.1 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”
- 7.2 The NPPF defines brownfield land as “land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.”
- 7.3 Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the intensity of development states: *“The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations.”*
- 7.4 The subject site has been a mixed use site, with ground floor and its outbuildings in use as commercial (now Class E) for some time. The upper floor was in residential use prior to the site becoming derelict. Given the site seeks to redevelop the site to provide a similar mixed use development, with retail/commercial to replace the existing ground floor uses, and additional dwellings to the rear, and an HMO to the upper floors, the principle is considered acceptable, subject to all other considerations outlined below being satisfied.
- 7.5 Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states that conversions will only be acceptable where: *“The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing”*. In accordance with the Residential Conversions SPD, a calculation of the number of dwellings converted to HMO’s or Flats within a 50m radius has been undertaken. Of the 23 properties within the 50m radius, 3 have been converted to flats or HMOs (1 HMO, 2 to flats), equating to 13% of those in the area. As such, the conversion is not considered to harm the community through significant loss of single family housing in accordance with policy H8.

Design Considerations and Effect on Character

- 7.6 Policy CC7 (Design and The Public Realm) states that “all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area”.

7.7 The proposed development involves a number of aspects which will be addressed individually.

Two-storey and loft side and rear extensions, including dormers

7.8 The proposed development includes the demolition of the existing single storey rear extension, and two-storey rear extension and replacement with a two-storey side and rear extension, including loft accommodation.

7.9 Reference is made to policy H9 'House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation' when discussing this proposal, as well as the Council's adopted Design Guide to House Extension SPD (2021) as the proposal could be assessed as for a house extension given the property may have originally been a house, or pair of semi-detached dwellings.

7.10 The guidance on house extensions seeks to ensure extensions to a house would respect the character and appearance of the original dwelling, as well as character of nearby properties, and protect adjoining amenities.

7.11 The extension to the side along Whitley Wood Lane would be set down from the ridge line of the existing building, and setback from the front wall of the proposal. It would contain similar detail to that of the ground floor shop front for the main building, and smaller windows at first floor compared to that of the existing first floor. There are no proposed front or rear dormers in the extension. Overall, the extension would appear subservient to the main building, and present a compliant extension in line with the guidance for house extensions.

7.12 In terms of the character and appearance of the area. Whitley Wood Lane is predominantly residential in nature, with the subject site, the adjoining barber shop, and the convenience store opposite the exceptions. The scale of buildings nearby are a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings of two-storeys within relatively narrow plots. Though, two single storey buildings are near the application site, including immediately adjacent.

7.13 The scale of the side extension would make the proposal building slightly wider than the prevailing character of buildings within the street. However, based on the fact that it will only become slightly wider than nearby semi-detached dwellings, this is not considered to harm the character and appearance of the area.

7.14 To the rear, the proposal would replace the existing two-storey rear extension with a full width two-storey rear extension. This element of the proposal would be of a similar appearance to the existing and is not considered to harm the character and appearance of the area or the host building.

7.15 At loft level, the proposal includes a small front facing dormer window, and a large box dormer over the two-storey rear extension. The front facing dormer, though not a feature of the area, would be small scale, and aligned to the windows below, the scale of the dormer would be complimentary and would not be harmful to the host building, or the area. To the rear, the large box dormer on the rear of the original property would provide additional loft accommodation for the HMO. Though not usually supported under planning policies, permitted development rights have made them a feature of the area, including the site opposite having a large box dormer visible from Whitley Wood Road. As such, the box dormer to the rear is not considered sufficiently harmful to justify objection to this application.

Dwellings to Rear

7.16 The proposal includes the demolition of the various outbuildings which cover a significant portion of the rear garden of the site. These are sought to be replaced with three attached 2-bed dwellings over two-storeys with a flat roof, first floor veranda's, and individual front garden areas. The ground floor is proposed to be brick clad, with the upper floor to be rendered. As well as the construction of the dwellings to the rear, the proposal includes

reduction of the brick wall to 1.2m, and a number of new openings. There will also be carparking, a small amount of green space, a bike and bin store for the dwellings, and a bike store for the HMO.

- 7.17 This area of the site, currently partly hidden from view by a ~1.8m brick wall, includes block walled buildings, with corrugated mono-pitch roofing. The proposal will occupy a similar footprint to those existing buildings. The roof height would be 5.7m at its highest point.
- 7.18 The proposal, would be relatively low scale, compared to a full height two-storey building, as evidenced by the height relative to the eaves of the two-storey side extension proposed. It would be toward the rear and side of the site and would appear as a lower scale 'mews' building attached to the main building. As such, it would be considered to not harm the character and appearance of the area, and overall would improve the current situation of poor quality structures to the rear of the site.

Shop Fronts, boundary treatments and landscaping

- 7.19 The three Class E units to the ground floor would include large amounts of glazing to provide an active frontage. The frontage to Whitley Wood Lane would include a 1.2m high boundary wall to no. 138 and is indicated to provide soft landscaping, including trees, and grassed areas. There is also a bicycle stand for the commercial units at this frontage.
- 7.20 To the Whitley Wood Road frontage, the existing block wall will be lowered to 1.2m and rendered to match. A number of segments of the wall will be removed to facilitate pedestrian access and ease of access for bin servicing. The area behind the wall has been proposed to include 3 no. residential car parking spaces, one for each 2-bed dwelling to the rear, and 1 no. servicing bay for the commercial units.
- 7.21 Within the site, there would be a small green space, not specifically for any use, a bin and bike store for the three 2-bed dwellings, and a separate bike store for the HMO. Each of these will be green roofed structures. The 2-bed dwellings are also provided with 27m²-30m² front garden areas. This will provide some defensible space to each unit and private amenity space. The front gardens will be fenced and gated, details of which could be secured by condition. The indicative landscaping plans show some planting behind the lowered wall.
- 7.22 Overall, the comprehensive design of the site has allowed for a reasonable mix of green space and hardstanding to be provided. To the frontage, the active shop fronts would be a positive enhancement of the current shop fronts, with a refurbishment of the main building to a modern glazed design. The side extension component would also introduce an attractive commercial premises for potential let. The existing frontage is poor, with hardstanding dominating the frontage and illegal vehicle movements causing highways issues within close proximity of the pedestrian crossing and roundabout. The installation of landscaping to the frontage will improve the site's appearance, and a detailed landscaping scheme will be secured by condition, which will include an appropriate method for ensuring the frontage cannot revert to vehicle parking.
- 7.23 To the rear, and secondary frontage, the opening of the site by reduction in height of the boundary wall will be more in keeping with a residential site. Though parking of vehicles will be prominent, the number of spaces as revised is limited, and is considered balanced between policies CC7 and Transport policies. The provision of small front gardens will protect the dwellings' key living areas from direct overlooking and provide a reasonable amount of amenity space.
- 7.24 Overall the site's layout, detailed design, materiality, and allocation of space between private and communal use will see a much improved corner from the existing situation and is considered to comply with the above mentioned policies including CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Residential Amenity

- 7.25 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties,”*
- 7.26 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) sets standards for new housing, including internal space requirements for new build housing. Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) also includes requirements for space within dwellings. The Residential Conversions SPD also highlights requirements for HMO’s, and reference and discussions were held between the Council’s HMO licensing team to ensure that HMO licensing requirements were considered at design stage.
- 7.27 For the HMO, the proposal is for an 11 person HMO with five double bedrooms, and one single bedroom. Under the requirements of Policy H8, HMO’s should be provided with sufficient communal facilities and space. The SPD refers to kitchen space, and the HMO standards look at access to and provision of bathrooms and w.c’s. The proposal has four double bedrooms at first floor, and one double and one single at loft level. The first floor also contains two living/dining rooms, and a separate kitchen. There are 3 bathrooms (1 shower room) and a separate w.c. at first floor. All bedrooms exceed the recommended size requirements contained within Council’s policies. The communal space, with a large kitchen, which is able to accommodate all the HMO licensing requirements, is acceptable. The two separate living/dining areas are also of a good size that is considered to comply with the requirements with this regard. In line with the Adopted Residential Conversions SPD, *“... with a significant number of residents living together this is considered more likely to result in conflict between the users.* The proposal therefore was revised to include two separate dining/living rooms, and a kitchen in a separate room, and as such is considered acceptable in this regard. The new construction works, and conversion will have to ensure to comply with building regulation requirements that sufficient sound proofing will be provided between the ground floor and first floor to limit noise and disturbance between the uses.
- 7.28 To the rear, the proposed 2-bed 2-storey dwellings all comply with the minimum gross internal floor areas and storage requirements contained within policy H5. It is noted that Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) stated that dwellings should be provided with private amenity space, and provides a guide that this space should be equivalent to the gross internal floor area. In this instance, the gardens are approximately half the size of the dwellings (27-30m²). They are provided with first floor balconies in addition to this (12.4m² each). This level of amenity space is considered sufficient to provide for sitting out, children’s play etc. as intended by policy H10. Given the waste and cycle storage is separate, this will allow greater use of these outdoor amenity areas.
- 7.29 All dwellings, and the proposed HMO would be provided with a good level of daylight/sunlight, outlook and by virtue of the layout would not have undue privacy issues by virtue of overlooking, nor would they cause any overlooking to neighbouring properties.
- 7.30 Adjoining the site, to the north is a barber shop (no. 138 Whitley Wood Lane) with an outbuilding to the rear which I not in residential use. To the west, along Whitley Wood Road, is a carpark associated with Howard Villas. Due to the distance to other properties to the west the proposed development would not have any overbearing impacts on adjoining properties by virtue of the design and overall height, nor, cause any loss of daylight/sunlight or privacy concerns.
- 7.31 As commercial units are proposed within the site, with servicing occurring at the rear and near to the 2-bed dwellings hours of deliveries and waste collection will be secured by condition to mitigate disturbance caused to future residents.

Transport/Parking

- 7.32 Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.
- 7.33 The proposal includes an extended dropped kerb to access the rear of the site via Whitley Wood Road. There are three parking spaces; one for each 2-bed dwelling, and a commercial service bay. There is 6 cycle spaces for the HMO and 6 cycle spaces for the three dwellings in separate storage sheds. A bin store for the dwellings contains space for individual waste and recycling bins (240L) whereas the commercial and HMO are provided with 1100L bulk bins, within separate storage areas of the main building.
- 7.34 Transport officers are content to accept that 1 servicing bay would be acceptable based on the site specific circumstances. With regard to parking provision, it is acknowledged that the parking provided would not meet the space requirements outlined within the adopted SPD which would require a minimum of 8 spaces for the residential component. An original scheme presented included 8 parking spaces, and a loading bay to the Whitley Wood Lane frontage. This was resisted on other policy grounds. A number of policies within the Reading Local Plan relate to sustainable development and reduced use of natural and non-renewable resources, this is also supported by the text of the Draft Reading Transport Strategy 2040 which seeks (among other things) to influence travel patterns, improve air quality and connect people and places better.
- 7.35 Whitley Wood, and the subject site, is acknowledged to be generally a car dominated residential neighbourhood, with most dwellings containing multiple car parking spaces. However, the site is within good proximity to employment land, being the area of various industry, retail, and other employment around the A33. The site is also serviced by the Emerald (5) bus into Reading Central. Buzz 9 is also accessed nearby which loops to Green Park Station and the Town Centre.
- 7.36 As noted above, though the site is lacking in car parking compared to the Council's adopted SPD, and there were a number of concerns raised by residents, the site is highly accessible to alternative means, as well as being close to places of employment and other local services which would be accessible by walking or cycling (i.e. schools, convenience shopping, cafes etc.) that would mean that future occupants could easily access all their needs without use of multiple vehicles. Therefore the provision of car parking for the houses combined with the oversupply of cycle parking space and access to public transport is considered to provide for the transport needs for future residents in line with the above mentioned policies and documents.

Environmental Matters

- 7.37 Noise – Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) require development to not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties. The subject site was identified by Council Environmental Health officers as having a garage use which may have contaminated the land.
- 7.38 Contaminated land – Policy EN16 states that “development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.” A set of conditions relating to contamination, remediation, and construction management are included to address this.
- 7.39 A noise assessment was not submitted with the proposal which demonstrated that the proposal would not cause disturbance to future residents of the scheme. It is not anticipated that this would be likely given the use class E as sought by the applicant, however a condition requiring an assessment to be carried out and submitted prior to commencement of the development is recommended. Noise and disturbance matters will also be included

in a construction method statement condition. A condition is also considered necessary to secure details of bin storage areas to manage potential for rats to infiltrate waste bins and areas.

Natural Environment

- 7.40 The application site is absent of any significant vegetation, by virtue of its built form, plot coverage and past uses. As noted within the report above, landscaping has been proposed within the site, including the Whitley Wood Lane frontage, and the rear of the site. Green roofs have been provided on the bin and bike stores to add green coverage. The landscaping details, including full details of means of preventing vehicles accessing the shop front area will be secured by condition and are considered acceptable.
- 7.41 Policy EN12 requires all development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity. Amended National Requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain for all developments only applies to applications lodged after April 2024. As such, no net loss would only apply in this case. The applicant has submitted initial information to demonstrate no net loss as a result of the development.
- 7.42 With regard to bats, and protection of habitat. A preliminary survey was submitted which recommended emergence surveys to be carried out. As these are seasonal, they were scheduled from the 4th of June, and were delayed by weather. As such, the surveys are ongoing, with a final survey to be undertaken on the 20th of June. Following this, a report will be prepared and reviewed by the Council's ecologist. Should any update be given prior to committee, this will be contained in any update report. However, delegation is sought to allow officers to approve subject to an acceptable bat survey result to be confirmed by RBC's ecologists if Committee agree with the recommendation to Grant permission.

Sustainability

- 7.43 The overarching sustainability policy, Policy CC2 requires proposals for new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials. The proposed development, by virtue of the significant demolition, and reconstruction to facilitate the conversion would be most applicable to a SAP methodology in lieu of a BRE AAM which might normally apply to conversions. As such, conditions will require applicable standards in line with Policy H5 relating to a 19% improvement on the dwelling emission rate, and water consumption.

Affordable Housing

- 7.44 The applicant has submitted valuations in order to provide a policy compliant 10% contribution toward off-site affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. The valuations calculate a contribution equivalent to £65,000.00 which has been agreed by the applicant. The Council's valuations section has been contacted for comment on submitted valuations, and any commentary on the valuations will be provided in an update report.

Equalities Impact

- 7.45 When determining an application for planning permission 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 by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this 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 proposed development.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal would result in a tidying of the application site to provide additional housing on a brownfield site. The overall design and layout is considered reasonable relative to the accessibility of the site, and would positively enhance the character and appearance of the

area. The ability for some commercial uses at ground floor, and pleasant frontage would give opportunity for sitting out associated with a use of the site.

- 8.2 In accordance with the NPPF it would result in sustainable development, utilising previously developed land in a sustainable location.
- 8.3 It is considered that the scheme would address all material matters and that there would be no significant detrimental effects resulting. The application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions.

Proposed Elevation (Whitley Wood Lane)



3 Proposed North Elevation
SCALE 1:100 @ A1

Proposed Elevation (Whitley Wood Road)



8 Proposed West Elevation
SCALE 1:100 @ A1

Proposed Site Plan



