

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Kentwood

**App No.:** 181377/REG3

**Address:** Norcot Community Centre, Tilehurst, Reading

**Proposal:** Erection of a three storey building comprising 18 (8x1 and 10x2 bed) residential units (Use Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage, a 96.4sqm (NIA) building for community use (Use Class D1), vehicle parking, landscaping and associated works.

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council

**Date valid:** 13/08/2018

**Major Application**

**13-week target decision date:** Originally 12/11/2018

**Agreed Extension date:** 31/10/2019

**26-Week date:** 11/02/2019

### RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 (unless the assessing officer on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

1. 18 residential units as social rent affordable housing units in perpetuity
2. Employment Skills Plan for the construction phase of the residential development in accordance with the Council's SPD, to be submitted and approved at least one month prior to works commencing.

### CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Approved Drawings
3. Details and samples of all materials to be used externally. Prior to commencement.
4. Construction Method Statement. Prior to commencement.
5. Bicycle parking plan to be submitted and approved. Prior to commencement.
6. Vehicle parking spaces in accordance with approved plans. Prior to occupation.
7. Vehicle access provided and lamp relocated in accordance with approved plans. Prior to occupation.
8. Bin storage provided in accordance with approved plans. Prior to occupation.
9. Details of car parking space allocation for residents and visitors. Prior to occupation.
10. Sustainable Drainage Scheme. Prior to commencement.
11. Sustainable Drainage Implementation. Prior to occupation.
12. Contaminated Land - site characterisation. Prior to commencement.
13. Contaminated Land - submission of remediation scheme. Prior to commencement.
14. Contaminated Land - implementation of approved remediation. Pre construction.
15. Contaminated Land - reporting of unexpected contamination.
16. Land gas site investigation. Prior to commencement.
17. Control of noise and Dust - CMS to be submitted prior to commencement.

18. Hours of working - construction and demolition.
19. No Bonfires.
20. Archaeological programme of work. Prior to commencement.
21. Nesting for birds.
22. Lighting scheme. Prior to commencement.
23. Biodiversity enhancements. Prior to commencement.
24. Development in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement.
22. Details of hard and soft landscaping scheme. Prior to commencement.
25. Implementation of approved hard and soft landscaping details.
26. Landscaping maintenance for 5 years.
27. Details of boundary treatments to be submitted and approved. Prior to commencement
28. Noise assessment to be submitted. Prior to commencement.
29. Only the areas specified as external terraces shall be used for such purposes and no other flat roofed areas shall be used as external terraces without permission from the local planning authority.
30. Restrict community use to D1.

**INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:**

1. Terms and conditions.
2. Building regulations.
3. A section 106 legal agreement relates to this permission.
4. Pre-Commencement conditions
5. Encroachment
6. Access construction
7. Damage to the highway
8. Works affecting the highway
9. Relocation of lamp column
10. Environmental protection information regarding the control of nuisance during construction and demolition.
11. Positive and proactive.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This site, as illustrated on the location plan below, is approximately over 1.0 ha in area and is located to the west of Lyndhurst Road. The irregular shape site is located in a residential area and is surrounded by residential dwellings on all sides - the gardens of Weald Rise and Thirlmere Avenue to the west and north west, a two storey block of flats to the north east and Lyndhurst Road and Ringwood Road to the south east. The site is accessed from Lyndhurst Road and is occupied by an existing building - the Norcot Youth and Community Centre with an associated area of hardstanding for car parking.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 The site is owned by Reading Borough Council.
- 1.3 The application is being reported to your meeting because it is within the Major category. Members should also note that the Council also has an interest in this application and therefore it has been noted as a 'REG3' application.
- 1.4 The site in relation to the wider area is shown below, together with a site photograph and aerial view.

Location Plan (not to scale)



Site aerial view



## 2.0 PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for residential development comprising 18 flats, new community space, communal courtyard garden and associated parking following demolition of the existing building.
  - 2.3 The development will provide a mix of dwellings consisting of 8 x 1-bed flats and 10 x 2-bed flats. All the dwellings are proposed to be retained as affordable units.
  - 2.4 The proposed community use element would be 96m<sup>2</sup> in size (use class D1).
  - 2.5 19 parking spaces are proposed and landscaping will be provided along the residential perimeter and within the site to soften the impact of the development.
  - 2.6 Amended plans were submitted during the course of determination of the application to address concerns raised by the officers regarding the overall scale, bulk and massing of the development.
  - 2.7 Reading Borough Council is the landowner and applicant in this instance, with this being one of a series of sites being brought forward to deliver affordable housing in the borough.
  - 2.8 In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. As per the CIL charging schedule this proposal will attract a charge of £14,675.76 (99 x the 2019 CIL rate for residential developments). However, the CIL form suggests that the applicant will be seeking social housing relief, which would result in the CIL charge being £0.
  - 2.9 The application is supported by the following documents and plans:
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL101\_rev A Location Plan
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL102\_rev D Rendered Site Plan
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL103\_rev C Roof Plan
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL104\_rev C Proposed Ground Floor
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL105\_rev C Proposed First and Second Floor
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL107\_rev C Proposed South East and North East Elevations
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL108\_rev B Proposed North West and South West Elevations
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL109\_rev C Proposed Sections A-A, B-B and C-C
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL110\_rev C Artist Impression from Lyndhurst Road
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL111\_rev B Areas for CIL CalculationsReceived 03/06/2019
- Design and Access Statement (DAS) including Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)  
Received 03/06/2019
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal  
Bat Survey  
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment  
Drainage Strategy  
Received 06/08/2018
- Arboricultural Report  
Received 05/08/2019

- 2.10 In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the provisions of the NPPF, the applicant engaged in pre-application discussions with the Council. These discussions were not conclusive at the time of submission of the application and discussions have subsequently continued throughout the extended determination period of the application.
- 2.11 The applicant has undertaken community consultation in the form of a newsletter delivered to local residents and current users of the community centre on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Following feedback from members of the public the scheme was amended and a second flyer distributed 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018. Furthermore an exhibition of the proposals was held at the community centre 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018 - all of which is detailed within the submitted Planning Statement.

### **3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

050722 Erection of Youth Centre. Permitted

940835 Incorporation of land within Norcot Community Centre for use as a car park and erection of perimeter fencing. Permitted

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

Non-statutory

RBC Transport Strategy - Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions to deal with potential noise, and land contamination issues.

RBC Consultant Ecologist - Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions

RBC Natural Environment - Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions.

RBC SUDS Officer - No objection subject to conditions

RBC Housing - Specify full support for the proposals as a RBC New Build Scheme that will be 100% affordable.

RBC Archaeology - No objection subject to condition.

Thames Water - Response received identifying that the site potentially has minor public sewers within three metres of the proposed building work. As Thames Water do not have confirmation of the exact drainage arrangements for this property, we'll contact the applicant or agent for further information. We'll ask them to enter into a build over agreement if the work is within three metres of a public sewer or one metre of a lateral drain. This could be an approved build over agreement or, if the property owner meets all of the criteria required in our online questionnaire, a self-certified agreement.

Public consultation:

The application was advertised in the local press as a major development. A site notice was also posted around the site and properties adjoining the site were consulted on this application.

As a result of the consultations 3 letters were received highlighting the following:

- Highway safety and capacity on Lyndhurst Road
- Lack of parking
- Noise of the new build

## **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

National and Local Policy

- National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Document, 2008, 2015

- Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)
- Policy CS2 (Waste Minimisation)
- Policy CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity)
- Policy CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)
- Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access)
- Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)
- Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities)
- Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing)
- Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)
- Policy CS16 (Affordable Housing)
- Policy CS20 (Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy)
- Policy CS22 (Transport Assessments)
- Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)
- Policy CS29 (Provision of Open Space)
- Policy CS30 (Access to Open Space)
- Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)
- Policy CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)
- Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

Sites and Detailed Policies Document, (SDPD), 2008,2015

- Policy DM1 (Adaption to Climate Change)
- Policy DM2 (Decentralised Energy)
- Policy DM3 (Infrastructure Planning)
- Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)
- Policy DM5 (Housing Mix)
- Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
- Policy DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
- Policy DM16 (Provision of Open Space)
- Policy DM18 (Tree Planting)

Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
- Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
- Affordable Housing SPD (2015)
- Statement of Community Involvement (2014)

- Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

## 6. APPRAISAL

### Principle of development and land use considerations, including provision of affordable housing

- 6.1 The proposals would result in the loss of the vacant Norcot Youth and Community Centre, which is approximately 151m<sup>2</sup> in size, and which forms the first consideration in establishing the principle of any redevelopment proposal at the site. In this respect, Policy CS31 applies. The proposals include a 96.4m<sup>2</sup> community use building which would offer improved and more efficient modern facilities for the local community to use.
- 6.2 Further to the above, the site is included in the Submission Draft Local Plan (March 2018) as a site allocated for residential development (13-20 dwellings) and replacement community use - which the current scheme proposes - Site Allocation WR3q.
- 6.3 The provision of 18 residential units would assist the Borough in meeting its annual and plan period housing targets, in line with Policy CS14 and emerging policy. Accordingly, the land use principles at the site are considered to be established.
- 6.4 The applicant has also stated that the 18 units proposed would all be socially-rented affordable housing units. As such, the 100% on-site provision of affordable housing is strongly welcomed as a tangible planning benefit of the proposal. Furthermore, it carries weight when applying a critical planning balance in the consideration of the application as a whole (when considered against elements such as the layout/urban grain and amenity impacts for neighbour considerations discussed below. To be policy compliant 30% of the 18 units should be secured via a unilateral undertaking legal agreement to be socially-rented affordable housing units in perpetuity.
- 6.5 With regard to the mix of units proposed, the scheme seeks to create 8x1 bed units and 10x2 bed units which is considered a suitable and appropriate mix in this instance. Indeed, the mix has been proposed in conjunction with advice from RBC Housing officers, who outline that the greatest present need for affordable accommodation is for 2 bed units. The proposal, set within the context of the size and nature of the site, therefore seeks to assist meeting the greatest housing needs in the Borough. The density of development is also considered suitable, with the proposal making an efficient use of the space/land.
- 6.6 The site is located in an area that has access to public transport and is within a residential area served by a wide range of facilities. As such the principle of the development is considered to accord with the provisions of Core Strategy CS14 that seeks to promote the provision of housing in such sustainable locations and the NPPF's core theme of 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 6.7 Given the nature of the land ownership (as specified in the introduction section above) a unilateral undertaking (rather than a Section 106) legal agreement will be drafted. This will secure the units as socially-rented affordable housing. It is considered that the obligation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the

development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Scale, appearance and design

- 6.8 Policy CS7 requires development proposals to contribute positively to the character of the area of Reading within which they are located.
- 6.9 Considering first the demolition of the existing building. It is not listed and nor is the site within a conservation area. The building, although modest in appearance, is of no particular architectural merit to warrant its retention in its own right. Within this context there is no in-principle objection to the demolition of the building in design terms, subject to its replacement being appropriate in all other aspects as detailed below.
- 6.10 In terms of the scale and massing of the proposed building, at three storeys (with single storey wing to the north east) it is acknowledged to be of a greater scale than the existing building, significantly increasing the scale and prominence of built form within the site. However, the scheme has been designed to work with the site's topography to limit the impact of the height when experienced from adjacent properties. The site naturally slopes from Thirlmere Avenue away towards Lyndhurst Road and the development has been designed to cut into the site from the existing access level on Lyndhurst Road resulting in the building being set down slightly below the gardens on Thirlmere Avenue. Given the context of the surrounding area, which comprises a range of building styles, types/ages, uses and heights, coupled with the distances to neighbouring properties and that the building would be set in to the site, there is considered to be sufficient scope for the site to incorporate a building of the proposed scale and form. When seen from all nearby vantage points the proposed scale and design approach, although different to the existing and nearby buildings, is not considered to be inappropriate. However, officers consider that the proposed massing is the maximum permissible at the site, owing to the surrounding area characteristics and ensuring appropriate balance of amenity space, parking spaces, access and landscaping to number of dwellings.
- 6.11 Turning to consider the appearance of the proposed building, the dominant brickwork and flat roof design could make it appear somewhat 'heavy' in appearance. However, the flat roof design reinforces the contemporary character of the proposed development. The emphasis on the vertical alignment of windows within facades is considered to bring some sense of order and rhythm to the development. This approach is reinforced by the use of inset brick panels to visually group the windows. It is considered that the interplay between the brickwork, glazing and balconies adds liveliness and helps to soften the mass of the building. The balconies 'wrapped' in timber fins also add some visual interest to the building.
- 6.12 The primary materials consist of red brick, to be used as plain brickwork and as inset panels of textured brick achieved through a laying pattern to add some variation to the design. Dark grey brick is proposed to identify the communal residential entrances and timber cladding is proposed to differentiate the community space. The choice of materials and vertical elevational treatment is considered to help soften the institutional appearance and be more homely. However, the success of the scheme from a design perspective will be dependent on the quality and finished appearance of the exact materials. As such, it is considered necessary to apply a condition for samples of all facing materials to be submitted / approved prior to the commencement of works. It is noted that the design is very similar to the recently approved and under construction development at Conwy Close, the Council's flagship affordable housing project.

- 6.13 To further soften the appearance of the development, soft landscaping is proposed, to include a new tree to the front entrance courtyard, planting running alongside the building and adjacent ground floor apartments and a courtyard garden.
- 6.14 The principle of the demolition of the existing building is justified and the proposed replacement building is considered appropriate in design, subject to the aforementioned materials condition. This is in line with Policy CS7.

Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers

- 6.15 Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) seeks to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Policy CS34 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) seeks to protect and mitigate development from pollution.
- 6.16 With regard to visual dominance, it is fully acknowledged that for occupiers of neighbouring properties the proposal represents a far larger neighbouring building in comparison with the existing. It is considered that the proposed scheme has taken a number of steps to maintain a suitable level of amenity for current/future occupiers of neighbouring properties. The overall height has been reduced from 4 to 3 storeys, with the flat roof further reducing the height of the building. Furthermore, the building would be 'set down' in the slope, helping to minimise the height alongside existing neighbouring properties. The 'H' shaped layout of the building also helps to minimise its impact. Given the distances to nearby properties, no material loss of light or overbearing impact is considered to arise.
- 6.17 In terms of privacy and overlooking matters, the increase in residential accommodation at the site means there will inevitably be increased opportunities for loss of privacy/overlooking for existing neighbours. It is noted that the proposals include a number of balconies; however, these are not considered to be of a size/nature to result in any significant loss of privacy, and the depth of the nearby gardens to the northwest and south east and west of the site helps to downplay any impact. The building meets the 20m back to back distance between dwellings referenced within Policy DM4 as usually being appropriate, (albeit there is also reference in the supporting text that individual site circumstances may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy) to nearby properties. In addition, new trees and planting will provide some screening along the north west boundary. Given this, and the distances to nearby properties, no significant material loss of privacy impact is considered to arise.
- 6.18 It is also important to recognised that as the units proposed are flats, and not single dwellinghouses, they will not have the benefit of permitted development rights. As such, this provides a further degree of comfort to nearby occupiers, as future occupiers of the proposed units would need to formally apply for planning permission for any future extensions/alterations. In addition, the lighting details recommended for ecological reasons to be secured via condition, would also protect the amenity of nearby occupiers.
- 6.19 Furthermore in relation to all nearby occupiers in the area, amenity during the implementation of the permission will be secured via the construction method statement measures, as secured via pre-commencement condition. In overall terms the proposals are therefore considered to comply with policy DM4 and relevant elements of policy CS34.

#### Standard of Residential Accommodation

- 6.20 Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) seeks that new development should not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of new residential properties. Policy CS34 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) seeks to protect and mitigate development from pollution. Policy DM10 seeks that new residential development is proposed with appropriate usable private or communal amenity space.
- 6.21 The internal space standards and room layouts for the proposed dwellings and flats are considered appropriate and meet the National Technical Housing Standards. Whilst single aspect, the development as a whole is considered to provide an adequate level of outlook and daylighting for future occupiers. In terms of overlooking between the proposed units, the layout of the building has been designed to ensure future occupiers will not suffer from a loss of privacy from other units within the scheme itself. Conveniently located cycle and waste storage facilities are incorporated within the scheme. Level access is provided to the ground floor apartments (and refuse and bike stores) and the community centre element has level access from the car park.
- 6.22 Given that a community use space is proposed there is a concern that noise generated by users of the community space could impact on future residents of the proposed development and residents nearby. The proposed community use element would be relatively small scale in the context of the overall scheme; indeed, it is proposed to be a facility serving residents in the immediate local vicinity. A noise mitigation scheme and facilities management plan should be submitted to include suitable measures designed to protect occupants from noise and other nuisances. This will be secured by way of suitably worded conditions.
- 6.23 Appropriate internal noise insulation between future neighbour occupiers of the proposed development would be secured under Building Regulations requirements.
- 6.24 A private communal courtyard garden is proposed for use by all residents of the development, which will have defensible planting and a path around the perimeter of the building, transitioning into a soft landscaping/grassed area. All ground floor apartments will have access to their own private patio area, with provision of private balconies for the upper units. It is not unusual for flatted developments to have limited outdoor amenity. Given this, and the proximity to nearby public recreation facilities, the proposed development is not considered to be unacceptable in terms of amenity space provision and no conflict with Policy DM10 is considered to arise. The development overlooking the communal area brings a sense of natural surveillance.
- 6.25 The development lies within the 250m buffer zone of 2 historic landfill sites which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 6.26 In terms of contaminated land, Environmental Protection colleagues recommend the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement) to ensure that future occupants of the development are not put at undue risk from contamination.
- 6.27 The proposed development is considered to provide a suitable standard of accommodation for future occupiers and subject to the above recommended conditions would accord with Policies DM4 and CS34.

#### Transport Issues

- 6.28 Policies DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015 and CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 6.29 The proposals will utilise the existing access point from Lyndhurst Road in a revised layout.
- 6.30 However, it should be noted that this section of Lyndhurst Road is not adopted highway although it is in the ownership of Reading Borough Council.
- 6.31 There is an existing lamp column located on the footway to the front of the site which forms part of the highway lighting strategy. The applicant has confirmed that the lamp column will be relocated to a suitable alternative location to be secured by condition and agreed with the Council's Highway department. These works must be undertaken with the Council's approved contractor before any works associated access is implemented. The applicant would be liable for all costs associated with relocating the lamp column.
- 6.32 The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide parking provision of 1.5 parking spaces per 1-2 bedroom flat and 1 space per 16sqm of D1 community use.
- 6.33 The Council's residential parking standards have been revised to minimum / required standards and are therefore in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states among other things that parking provision should be based on local car ownership levels. The Government response to the NPPF revisions published on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 states;
- 6.34 *"The approach to parking standards remains that minimum or maximum standards may be set locally, but with maximum standards requiring particular justification, considering the effect that limits on spaces can have on on-street parking."*
- 6.35 The plans illustrate that there will be 19 parking spaces which is below the Council's adopted standards. The applicant has confirmed that the development is intended to provide 100% affordable housing. Therefore, in line with the NPPF, a review of the car ownership levels for social housing within the immediate area has been interrogated which indicate that the car ownership levels are in the region of 0.76 spaces per unit. This would equate to 14 parking spaces.
- 6.36 The community building (floor area of the useable hall) equates to a maximum standard of 5 parking spaces. In order for this mixed use development to be acceptable in parking terms, a minimum of 5 parking spaces should be allocated to the proposed community use whilst providing 14 residential parking spaces in line with car ownership levels. In terms of visitor parking for the residential element, it is acceptable for the visitor provision to be shared with the community use. However, the proposed site plan must allocate the 5 parking spaces for the community use to ensure these spaces are retained for visitors to the community building. A car park allocation plan can be covered by way of a suitably worded condition. A total of 2 disabled spaces will be provided within the site located close to the residential and community use entrances.

- 6.37 A concrete retaining wall is illustrated on the ground floor plan which runs adjacent a adopted public footway leading to Thirlmere Avenue. The applicant has confirmed that the retaining wall is contained within the redline boundary of the site and will not impact upon the public footpath.
- 6.38 The amount of bins needed for 18 flats would be 4 x 1100 litre refuse bins and 4 x 1100 litre recycling bins for a fortnightly collection which has been accommodated within the ground floor layout. The applicant has confirmed that the Council's Waste department was consulted at pre-application stage and the location of the proposed bins stores were deemed acceptable given that refuse vehicles will have to reverse in excess of 12m.
- 6.39 In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 0.5 cycle parking spaces for each residential unit in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store plus 1 space per 50m<sup>2</sup> for the community use. This equates to a minimum of provision of 11 cycle parking spaces.
- 6.40 It is noted that 4no. external cycle parking spaces for the community building have been provided but confirmation is required regarding provision for the residential dwellings. A minimum of 9 cycle parking spaces must be provided for the residential use within a secure, lockable store. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of a suitable worded condition.
- 6.41 The proposal is considered to accord with Policies CS20 and CS24 and Policy DM12.

#### Impact on Natural Environment

- 6.42 Policy CS7 seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy CS36 seeks that development should retain, protect and incorporate feature of biodiversity and Policies CS38 and DM18 seek that the Borough's vegetation cover be extended.
- 6.43 The Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that there are no objections to the proposals subject to conditions securing tree protection and landscaping.
- 6.44 Overall, officers have assessed the submitted details and concluded that subject to conditions, the landscaping proposals would enhance the proposed development and protect the ecology of the area. The proposals would therefore accord with SDPD policy DM18, and Core Strategy policies CS36 and CS38.

#### Ecology

- 6.45 The Council's Ecologist considers that the preliminary ecological appraisal report has have been undertaken to an appropriate standard. The report states that the scrub areas are likely to be used by nesting birds in the breeding season and may be used by foraging bats. As such, it is recommended that any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (May-August inclusive) and a wildlife friendly lighting scheme should be submitted to ensure that the risk of impact upon birds is minimal. This can be secured by way of suitably worded conditions.
- 6.46 Further to the above, the report states that the existing building possesses a number of features suitable for use by roosting bats and was assess having low potential for roosting bats. The Council's Ecologist considers the findings acceptable, and that the proposals would be unlikely to affect roosting bats.

- 6.47 The recommended conditions would secure the biodiversity interests of the site in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS36.

#### Sustainability

- 6.48 Policies CS1 and DM1 seek that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. The applicant has made reference to this in the planning statement, demonstrating that a number of sustainability and energy efficient measures are proposed as part of the application including use of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), installation of photo voltaic or combined photo voltaic and solar thermal panels and low flush toilets. The photovoltaic panels located to the roof of the building would enable the development to off-set the target 20% CO2 emissions as referred to in Policy CS1. Details of photovoltaics and their installation can be secured by way of a suitably worded condition.
- 6.49 The application also includes a suitable scheme for Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) compliance with which can again be secured by way of a suitable worded condition.
- 6.50 Such measures, together with the landscaping and cycle provisions of the scheme means it is considered to comply with Policies CS1 and DM1.

#### Archaeology

- 6.51 An Archaeological desk based assessment was submitted with the application, concluding that a moderate potential for prehistoric remains, a low potential for Roman through to medieval remains and a moderate potential for post-medieval remains. Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that as the site has undergone significant past impacts, this will have reduced - but not entirely removed - any buried remains that might have survived within the site. Investigation to establish the presence of any remains associated with the earthwork to the east of the area will be required, but Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that this can be dealt with by way of a suitably worded condition.
- 6.52 The proposals would therefore accord with Policy CS33.

#### Employment, Skills and Training

- 6.53 In accordance with Reading Borough Core Strategy Policies CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities and CS13: Impact of Employment Development and the Council's SPD 'Employment, Skills and Training' the developer is required to provide for a Construction Employment and Skills Plan which identifies and promotes employment opportunities generated by the proposed development, or other developments within west Reading, for the construction phase of the proposed development. Sometimes this requires a payment to Reading UK CiC, the Council's partner, to prepare the plan usually payable at least 1 month prior to implementation and index linked from the date of issue of planning permission. The applicant will need to discuss with Reading UK CiC about how their own plan works and this will be secured within the S106 legal agreement to be signed with Council.

#### Other Matters Raised in Representation

- 6.54 All material considerations covered in the above report.

#### Equality

- 6.55 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation.

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

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in the appraisal above. As such the application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the Legal Agreement.

Case Officer - Ethne Humphreys

Plans (not to scale):



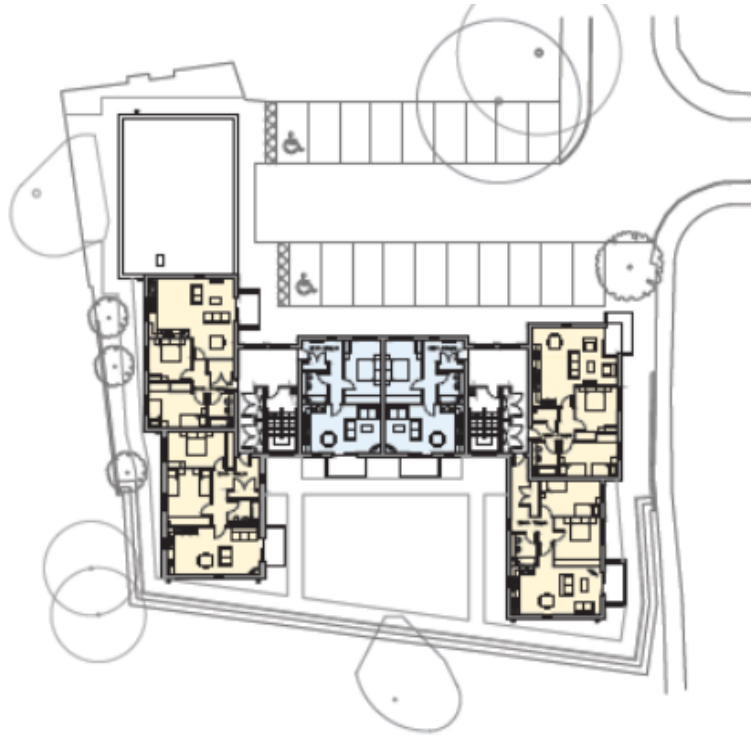
Location Plan



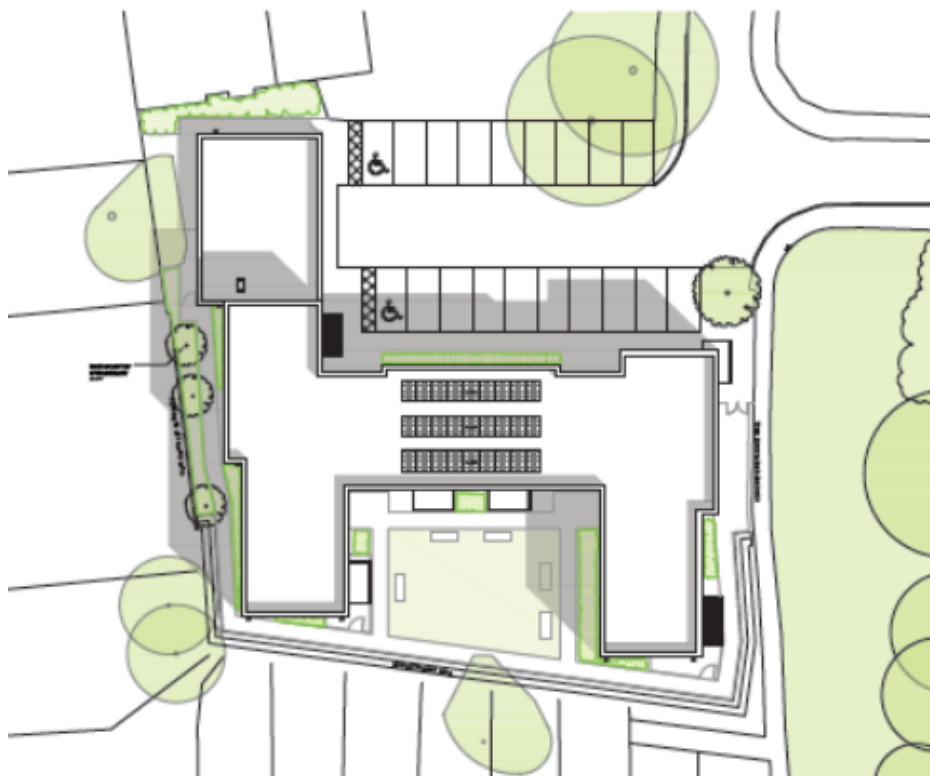
Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First and Second Floor Plans



Proposed Roof Plan



Proposed South East and North East Elevations



Proposed North West and South West Elevations



Proposed Sections



Artists Impression from Lyndhurst Road