

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13 NOVEMBER 2019

Ward: Whitley

App No: 190705/REG3

Address: Land adjacent to 4 Camelford Close, Reading, RG2 8AW

Proposal: Erection of detached 3 storey 4 bed dwelling

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date validated: 01/07/19

Target Date: 21/08/19

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 1st November 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 residential unit as an affordable rented housing unit in perpetuity
- No internal subdivisions to create multiple dwellings or further bedrooms

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Approved plans
3. Levels control condition
4. Materials to be approved
5. Energy efficiency standards to be met
6. Landscaping - details to be submitted for approval
7. Landscaping - implementation
8. Landscaping - maintenance/replacement
9. Arboricultural method statement required
10. Arboricultural method statement to be followed
11. Control of hours of construction
12. Construction method statement
13. Control of noise and dust during construction
14. No burning of waste on site
15. Vehicle parking spaces to be provided in accordance with approved plans
16. Vehicle access to be provided in accordance with approved plans
17. Bicycle parking to be approved
18. Bin storage to be approved

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Building Regulations
3. Encroachment
4. Construction and demolition
5. Highways
6. Pre-commencement conditions

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Unilateral Undertaking legal agreement8. Community Infrastructure Levy9. Positive and proactive |
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 The application site comprises a plot of land, clear of all structures, at the junction of Camelford Close and Merton Road North. Historically the site has had a community-type use, with a temporary building incorporating play facilities, welfare services and a community hall. The community use of the site commenced prior to 1998, with the buildings demolished during 2006. The community uses relocated initially to an Oxford Road site, and now operate from South Reading Community Centre. The site has been vacant since 2006. Fencing erected around the perimeter of the site precludes public access, but mitigates against anti-social activities that were taking place.
- 1.1.2 The site is generally flat, laid to lawn and is bounded by some shrubs and fencing. A semi-mature tree is located to the north-west corner of the site. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, generally comprised of two storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings. The site in relation to the wider urban area is shown below, together with a site photograph and an aerial view.



Site location (application site edged in black)



Site photograph



Aerial view looking north

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a three storey, four bedroom disabled compliant detached dwelling. The dwelling would have a

simple pitched roof form, with a dormer window located to the rearward roof slope. The proposed second floor would otherwise be contained within the pitched roof space. The proposal includes the provision of four off-road parking spaces, access and landscaping. The dwelling would benefit from a front and rear garden. Existing fences to the south, east and partial-north of the site would be retained.

- 2.2 The application is being referred to Planning Applications Committee for a decision as Reading Borough Council is the applicant. This application forms one of a series of sites being brought forward to deliver affordable housing in the Borough.
- 2.3 The proposed development would be CIL liable, though the agent has completed a CIL form seeking social housing relief, which would result in the CIL charge being £0.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

970385/REG3 - Single storey extension to community centre - Permitted 14/01/98

061007/FUL - Erection of two storey community centre - Permitted 12/02/07

171736/PRE - Advice sought for the erection of a pair of 3 bed semi-detached dwellings

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 4 Camelford Close and 12, 14, 16 33 and 35 Merton Road North were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. One letter of representation was received with regard to the following:

- A three storey dwelling would not be in keeping with the character of the area
- Overlooking would occur to the rear gardens of dwellings on Camelford Close

(i) Reading Borough Council Natural Environment

- 4.2 There are no objections to the proposal. The site is located within a 10% or less canopy cover area, as defined in the Council's Tree Strategy. Tree planting policies are not mentioned in the DAS. There is an expectation that such sites will incorporate tree planting to increase the overall number of trees on the site, i.e. replace any trees lost plus additional planting. Should planning permission be granted, conditions should be applied to ensure suitable tree and landscape planting on site. Any new boundary treatments would need to include gaps for small mammals to pass freely.
- 4.3 A simple scheme of tree protection will also be required to ensure that the retained trees at the front of the site can be adequately protected and retained during the course of the building works. This can be agreed as a pre-commencement condition.

(ii) Reading Borough Council Transport Development Control

- 4.4 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 SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of two spaces for the proposed dwelling. The SPD establishes minimum parking space dimensions of 2.5m x 5m, with spaces not to overhang any part of the footway. The submitted Site Plan illustrates four parking spaces, to be served by a new access from Merton Road North. This is in excess of the Council's minimum standards, and is therefore deemed acceptable.
- 4.5 The applicant should be advised that a license must be obtained from the Council's Highways section before any works are carried out on any footway, carriageway, verge, or other land forming part of the public highway, to agree the access construction details. Images also identify a utility cover adjacent to the proposed dropped crossing, which should be illustrated on revised plans. Any relocation of the utility cover would need to be agreed with the Council's Highways section. These works should be undertaken with the Council's approved contractor SSE, as they have the correct accreditation to complete the work at the applicants expense.
- 4.6 The proposed development is required to provide a minimum of two cycle parking spaces for a C3 dwelling. The cycle spaces should be in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store. In this instance, a garden shed would be acceptable. Details of cycle storage can be secured by pre-commencement condition.
- 4.7 A bin collection area has not been identified on the submitted plans. Bin storage should be located no further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Details of bin storage can be secured by pre-commencement condition.
- 4.8 The applicant should be made aware that a construction method statement will be required for this development. Details can be secured by pre-commencement condition.

(iii) Reading Borough Council Environmental Protection

- 4.9 EP's Standing advice regarding the potential for noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction phase of the development is relevant to the proposed development. Conditions and informatives are recommended accordingly.

(iv) Reading Borough Council Ecological Consultant

- 4.10 No objections to the proposed development.

(v) Office for Nuclear Regulation

- 4.11 Emergency planners within West Berkshire Council are responsible for the preparation of the Burghfield off-site emergency plan, required by the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPPIR) 2001. Adequate assurance has been provided that the proposed development can be accommodated within their off-site emergency planning arrangements. The proposed development does not present a

significant external hazard to the safety of the nuclear site. ONR does not therefore advise against permitting this development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Reading Borough Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015)

Policy CS1 - Sustainable Construction and Design
Policy CS2 - Waste Minimisation
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 CS24 - Car/Cycle Parking
Policy CS31 - Additional and Existing Community Facilities
Policy CS34 - Pollution and Water Resources
Policy CS36 - Biodiversity and Geology
Policy CS38 - Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015)

Policy SD1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy DM1 - Adaption to Climate Change
Policy DM4 - Safeguarding Amenity
Policy DM5 - Housing Mix
Policy DM6 - Affordable Housing
Policy DM10 - Private and Communal Outdoor Space
Policy DM12 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy DM18 - Tree Planting

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
Revised S106 Planning Obligations (2013)
Affordable Housing (2013)

Other relevant documentation

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

Emerging Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

The new Reading Borough Council Local Plan is at an advanced stage. The Inspector's report into the Proposed Modifications has now been received and the new local plan is proposed to be adopted by the Council on 4th November 2019. The following policies are of relevance to this application:

Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy CC3 - Adaptation to Climate Change
Policy CC4 - Decentralised Energy
Policy CC5 - Waste Minimisation and Storage
Policy CC6 - Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity
Policy H1 - Provision of Housing
Policy H2 - Density and Mix
Policy H3 - Affordable Housing
Policy H5 - Standards for New Housing
Policy H10 - Private and Communal Outdoor Space
Policy H11 - Development of Private Residential Gardens
Policy TR1 - Achieving the Transport Strategy
Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and the Green Network
Policy EN14 - Trees, Hedges and Woodland
Policy EN15 - Air Quality
Policy EN16 - Pollution and Water Resources

6. APPRAISAL

(i) Principle of development

- 6.1 The NPPF states that LPAs should 'encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value'. The NPPF definition of 'previously developed land' is taken to include the land which was occupied by a permanent structure, and associated fixed surface infrastructure. As per its pre-existing community use, the development site is considered to meet this definition of previously developed land.
- 6.2 The site has remained vacant, fenced and inaccessible to the public for in excess of 13 years. The redevelopment of the plot would provide the opportunity to enhance the appearance of the site, making active use of the land and corresponding to the prevailing residential use of the area. The provision of a dwelling would be in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy. The provision of a four bedroom dwelling would be suitable for family occupation, in accordance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM5 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document. Given the pre-existing use of the land, Policy DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document does not strictly apply in this instance, although its requirements (and that of emerging Policy H5) can be used as a guide. The principle of the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to meeting other policy considerations as set out below and an assessment to whether there would be a loss of any existing community facility (vi).

(ii) Character and appearance

- 6.3 Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The application site is located within a mature residential area, which generally comprises two storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings. Established building lines are presented, particularly to the eastern side of Merton Road North. Plots in the vicinity of the application site vary in shape and size, but each of the neighbouring dwellings sit comfortably with decent outdoor amenity space provision. The proposal, contrary to that which was considered at pre-application stage, is for a single detached property. Detached dwellings do not constitute the prevailing built form in the area, however the dwelling would be set within a sizeable plot with a comfortable distance maintained to the boundaries. The site itself is considerably larger than the average plot size in the vicinity, but is constrained by the retained tree in the corner of the plot. Officers also consider that this lower density and change in the pattern of development is suitable in this instance because the proposed dwelling would provide a disabled compliant, affordable unit of housing, suitable for occupation by a larger family. The opportunities to provide similar type accommodation across the Borough are rarely forthcoming and afforded weight in this determination.
- 6.4 The application site occupies a larger plot than its immediate neighbours, a reflection of its pre-existing use and the corner location. Notwithstanding this, the proposed dwelling has been sited to complement the established building line and orientation to Merton Road North. The spacing between the proposed dwelling and its immediate neighbour at 35 Merton Road North is consistent with the spacing between dwellings in the area generally. This is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.5 As noted above, dwellings in the surrounding area are generally of two storeys, though varying in style and design. As per the description of development, a three storey dwelling is proposed. Despite this, the proposed second floor would be largely contained within the proposed pitched roof form. Additional headroom would only be provided through the provision of a modest rear dormer window. The dormer would be set within the roof slope, and the window opening would be of size, shape and alignment consistent with other window openings below. Though slightly higher than its immediate neighbours, the proposed ridge height is generally consistent with the prevailing heights of dwellings in the locality. Drawing No: 106 provides useful clarification in this regard.
- 6.6 No details have been submitted regarding the materials to be used on external facades of the proposed dwelling, although materials in the area are typically red brick and tile. Accordingly a condition is recommended to provide details of materials to be used, prior to development commencing beyond foundation level. Subject to materials being agreed, the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy.

(iii) Residential amenity

- 6.7 The amenity of neighbouring dwellings and future occupiers of the site is assessed with regard to loss of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight and visual dominance and overbearing effects of a

development. Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document states that a back to back separation distance of 20m is usually appropriate.

- 6.8 The proposed dwelling would be oriented towards Merton Road North, with first floor windows and a dormer rearward-facing. A distance of 14m would separate the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling and the eastward site boundary with 4 Camelford Close. At this proximity, a degree of overlooking would occur to the rear garden of 4 Camelford Close. However, the relationship between the proposed dwelling and 4 Camelford Close would be that of a side-to-back orientation, which to a degree mitigates the impact of overlooking. A similar relationship is pre-existing between 4 Camelford Close and 35 Merton Road North. While it is acknowledged that a degree of overlooking would occur, it is not considered that this would constitute significant harm such to warrant refusal of the application. Due to the siting of the dwelling within the plot, and the separation distances to the site boundaries, it is not considered that any significant harm would occur with regard to loss of sunlight and daylight or visual dominance and overbearing effects of the development.
- 6.9 The internal arrangement of rooms is considered to provide a good standard of living accommodation for future occupiers, with the overall floor space exceeding the national space standards. All rooms would be regular in size and shape, providing suitable outlook and natural daylight, sunlight and ventilation. However, this is considered a sizeable dwelling, much larger than its neighbours and would certainly accommodate a large family in need of affordable accommodation. Whilst officers are content with the bulk of the property, control needs to be retained on the use of the building. For this reason, officers recommend that the s106 agreement precludes any internal subdivisions of the development.
- 6.10 Policy DM10 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document requires dwellings to be provided with functional, private outdoor space. As a guide, the useable private outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates. The dwelling would benefit from an ample rear garden, which satisfies the requirements of this policy.

(iv) Transport implications

- 6.11 As per the consultation response from Transport Development Control, the proposal is appropriate in terms of access and on-site parking provision. Subject to conditions relating to vehicle parking provision, cycle and bin storage and a construction method statement, the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document. Officers note that there is technically an over-provision of parking being supplied, but with the conditions and obligation (above) proposed, do not object this the additional parking space.

(v) Trees and landscaping

- 6.12 A semi-mature tree is located to the north-west corner of the site. Hedging forms part of the boundary treatment around the site. Both would be retained as part of the proposed development. The site is located within a 10% or less canopy cover area, as defined in the Council's Tree Strategy. There is an expectation that such sites will incorporate tree planting to increase the overall number of trees on site. The Proposed Site Plan

indicates three areas within the site where tree planting and soft landscaping is proposed. This is considered to be acceptable as it would help to soften the impact of the proposed development, in accordance with the Council's Strategy. Full landscaping details, including the protection of the retained tree, would be secured by the recommended conditions.

(vi) Sustainability

6.13 The applicant has not provided any specific information relating to sustainable design and construction. The recent publishing of the Inspector's report in relation to the emerging Local Plan gives weight to Policy H5 - Housing Standards. The policy requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. In light of this conditions are recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

Although part of a planning condition, these new requirements will be administered through Building Regulations. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.

(vii) Legal agreement

6.14 Given the nature of the land ownership, a Unilateral Undertaking legal agreement will be drafted. This would secure the proposed dwelling as affordable rented accommodation. It is considered that the Undertaking would comply with the NPPF and Community Infrastructure Levy 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.

(viii) Loss of community facility

6.15 Policy CS31 of the Core Strategy states that proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility. A temporary community building was historically located on the site. The building was used for a variety of community uses, before being demolished in 2006. The community uses relocated to other sites in the Borough, and now operate out of South Reading Community Centre. Since demolition the site has laid vacant for in excess of 13 years. Officers are therefore satisfied that the viable community use of the site has ceased, with the uses adequately accommodated elsewhere at a nearby, purpose built facility which has recently undergone extensive refurbishment. The loss of land previously used for community purposes is mitigated sufficiently by the provision of a disabled compliant, affordable dwelling which is suitable for occupation by a large family. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS31 of the Core Strategy.

(ix) Equality

- 6.16 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.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal will make use of suitably located previously developed land for a much needed type of affordable housing. It will provide a good standard of accommodation with adequate amenity, landscaping and parking for the occupants; whilst equally ensuring there is no significant harm to the character or appearance of the area or amenity of nearby occupiers.
- 7.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy. As such, with due regard to all other material considerations, full planning permission is recommended, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the legal agreement.

Plans considered

Design and Access Statement

Drawing No: 100 - Site Location

Drawing No: 104 - Proposed Site Plan

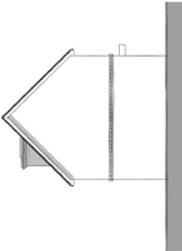
Drawing No: 105 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Drawing No: 106 - Proposed Sections

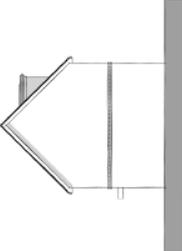
Drawing No: 107 - Proposed Section (received 10/05/19)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Drawing No: 105 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations



LHS Elevation



RHS Elevation

Materials:

clay tiles to be



N



First Floor



Second Floor

PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

REAR OF CAMELFORD CLOSE, READING, RG3 8AW

PLANNING

105