

Planning and Development
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

Our ref: 4271

20 December 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

PLANNING STATEMENT

201 Reading Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 1LJ

We are engaged by Mr Riorden Welby to provide the following letter (Planning Statement) to support an application for the following development proposal:

Demolition of an existing house and detached garage. New house and detached garage

The application is submitted with the following drawings:

- Site location plan – 290-X-10-00 P1
- Existing Block Plan - 290-X-10-02 P1
- Existing Floor Plans - 290-X-20-00 P1
- Existing Section - 290-X-30-00 P1
- Existing Elevations - 290-X-40-00 P1
- Existing Elevations - 290-X-40-01 P1
- Existing Garage Floor Plans - 290-X-20-10 P1
- Proposed Block Plan - 290-P-10-02 P6
- Proposed Floor Plans - 290-P-20-00 P7
- Proposed Sections - 290-P-30-00 P4
- Proposed Elevations – 290-P-40-00 P5
- Proposed Elevations – 290-P-40-01 P5



- Proposed Garage - 290-P-20-10 P3
- Proposed Axonometric Studies – 290-P-60-00 P1
- Proposed Axonometric Studies – 290-P-60-01 P1
- Proposed Front Elevation Colour Study – 290-P-40-10 P1

The Application Site

The application site [the site] is located within the settlement of Wokingham on the north side of the Reading Road (A329). It is occupied by a single detached dwellinghouse and garden, extending to approximately 0.2 hectares. The railway line between Wokingham and Reading runs along the rear of the property.



Figure 1. Site location and context (Source: GoogleEarth)

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with residential properties on both sides of the Reading Road. This includes the neighbouring development on Aspen Place which was granted planning permission in 2009 for the erection of 4 detached dwellings with garages plus improvements to access.

A search of the Council's online planning register reveals no planning history for the site itself.

The Proposed Development – Self Building Dwelling

The existing dwelling is in a poor state of repair and is indeed of significant works to make suitable for modern living. It has therefore been decided that it would be more appropriate to demolish the existing



house and construct a new custom build replacement that confirms to modern construction and energy efficiency standards.

The new dwelling, which is to be occupied by the Applicant and their family, is a four bedroom detached dwelling together with a detached garage. The new house will sit over the footprint of the existing house, on the same building line as the neighbouring houses. It has a traditional appearance, articulated with an attractive porch and sash style windows.

The proposed garage will sit forward of the house within the front garden. It is single storey and would be constructed in materials to match the main house. It will have room for two cars.

Planning Assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that development proposals should be determined in accordance with the local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of this application, we have given regard to the following Development Plan documents which are of relevance to the proposal:

- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy – January 2010
- Wokingham Borough Management Development Delivery Local Plan – February 2014
- Planning Policies and Constraints Map

The Council is working on a new Local Plan which will put in place their planning strategy for the period to 2040. Once adopted, it will replace the current Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans. However, this is not expected to be adopted until at least December 2025 and possibly not until 2026. It therefore has little weight in planning decisions.

Also relevant is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policy aims and objectives. It sits outside of the statutory development plan but is a material planning consideration.

Principle of Development

The Core Strategy, Policy CP1 seek to allow sustainable forms of development, which is then echoed by the Local Plan Policy CC01, that places a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Core Strategy Policy CP9 then identifies where the Council aims to located new development, stating that proposals within development limits will be acceptable in:

- 1) *The major development locations of Earley, Green Park, Shinfield (North of M4), Twyford, Winnersh, **Wokingham** and Woodley;*



- 2) *The modest development locations of Arborfield Garrison, Pinewood (Crowthorne), Finchampstead North, Ruscombe, Shinfield, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross and Wargrave.*
- 3) *The limited development locations of Arborfield Cross, Barkham Hill, Charvil, Finchampstead, Hurst, Riseley, Sindlesham, Sonning and Swallowfield.*
- 4) *The boundary of the Science Park proposed under policy CP16 as defined in the Managing Development Delivery DPD.*

The application site falls within the built-up limits of Wokingham, so is in a location that accords with '1' above. In essence the principle of development in this location should be deemed acceptable unless adverse impacts exist that make the proposal unacceptable. As we go on to conclude, there are no adverse impacts that prevent planning permission being granted.

Design and Layout

Core Strategy Policy CP3 sets out general principles relating to design, function and amenity of development proposals. In addition, the Council has a Borough Design Guide that recommends that the existing built form should be used to inform proposals. In this case, the local area is urban in character and is set amongst other residential development. This tends to be of mixed form and no one architectural style prevails.

Notwithstanding the mixed local design, the proposed home has taken a relatively traditional route, albeit using the choice of materials and fenestration to upscale the quality of design, particularly in comparison with the existing house. This will therefore have a positive impact on the streetscene, noting that the existing dwelling makes little contribution to the character of the area. What is proposed is a larger dwelling than the existing house, but is still set in from the site boundaries, maintaining good separation distances to the neighbours, and would not appear overly cramped within the plot.

The existing building line would also be kept and whilst the new home would extend further back than the existing house, this is not out of keeping with neighbouring properties that also extend backwards, noting the elongated plot shape. The garage would then sit to the front of the house, but this would not be the only example of this, including the neighbouring dwelling.

Windows on the flank elevations are to be obscured glazed to prevent the possibility of overlooking. The exception being the windows on the side return of the rear wing projection. However, these are set in from the boundary so will not give rise to loss of privacy or amenity.

Like the existing dwelling, the proposed home will also benefit from a large garden at the rear providing generous private amenity space. There is further space to the front, providing sufficient onsite parking provision. No change is proposed to the existing access.



Trees and other Landscape Features

Trees and hedgerows are often identified by the Council as forming part of the landscape that contributes to the provision of an attractive setting for buildings and helps to integrate development with its surroundings and can have nature conservation value.

Whilst the site does contain a number of trees including those with Tree Preservation Orders, as shown on the below figure. A Tree Impact Assessment is provided with the application.



Figure 2. Tree Preservation Orders
(Source: Wokingham Borough Council Protected Tree Map)

It is anticipated that all the existing trees will be retained, unless for sound arboricultural reasons. The proposal is therefore acceptable in this respect.

Highways and Parking

Core Strategy Policy CP6 relates to managing travel demand and seeks to allow development proposals that provide choice for sustainable modes of transport and do not cause highway problems. In this case, the site is located within the urban area where there is a choice of public transport options. It is also possible to cycle to nearby shops and services. It is therefore in a sustainable location.

Notwithstanding the above, Local Plan Policy CC07 requires proposals to comply with the Council's parking standards. In this case there is on site parking provision for two cars within the garage and additional space within the garden for additional car parking, whilst maintaining the ability to enter and leave the site in forward gear.



Biodiversity Net Gain Statement

The requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was introduced under the Environmental Act 2021, which mandated the delivery of at least 10% BNG with new developments. Its purpose is to ensure that development will result in more or better quality natural habitat than there was before development.

However, certain developments are exempt from BNG rules, including self-build and custom build applications. The following conditions must however be met to qualify for an exemption as a self-build or custom build.

The development must:

- consist of no more than 9 dwellings
- be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares
- consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

In the case of this application, the proposed development is to be constructed for the Applicant who has been involved in the design process with the Architect. The proposed development is for a single dwelling and the site is less than 0.5 hectares and so meets the above requirements.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge on new developments to deliver the infrastructure needed in the area.

A development is likely to be CIL liable if:

- The increase in floor area is 100sqm or more for retail and residential development, not including new dwellings.
- It includes new dwellings.
- The conversion/change of use of a building(s) to a CIL liable development is proposed, and where the building has not been used lawfully for a continuous period of at least six months in the last three years.

A proposal for residential development would therefore be CIL liable. However, no CIL is payable for Self/custom building developments. The Applicant will therefore apply for self-build exemption.

Conclusions

The proposed development site is within an urban area whether the Council's policies seek to direct new development, because it is a sustainable location. It also replaces an existing house and so the principle of development accords with the aims of the Council's Development Plan.



The new dwelling has also been designed to be in keeping with its surrounds whilst also introducing a design of high quality that improves on the character and appearance of the area. It will also be constructed to modern building standards that requiring high standards of energy efficiency. The proposal will not give rise to any impacts to neighbouring amenity and accords with the Council's requirements on highway and parking considerations. There will also be no adverse impacts in relation to trees and ecology.

Accordingly, the proposed development complies with the aims of the Council's Development Plan policies and no material planning considerations weigh against it. As such, our recommendation is that planning permission should be approved.

Kind Regards

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