

## Planning Statement

Wokingham Borough Council  
Shute End  
Wokingham  
Berkshire  
RG40 1BN

### **By Online Only**

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **PLANNING APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT DWELLING 11 OLD BATH ROAD, SONNING, READING RG4 6SZ**

On behalf of our client, Mr Paul Odell, we are writing to request planning in respect of planning proposal: 1) replacement dwelling; and Outbuilding

#### *Architectural drawings for replacement dwelling*

- POBR - PL - 101 - Location And Block Plan
- POBR - PL - 103 - Existing Landscaping
- POBR - PL - 104 - Proposed Landscaping
- POBR - PL - 300 - Existing Plans
- POBR - PL - 301 - Existing Plans
- POBR - PL - 302 - Existing Roof and Front Elevation
- POBR - PL - 303 - Existing Elevations
- POBR - PL - 500 - Proposed Ground
- POBR - PL - 501 - Proposed First
- POBR - PL - 502 - Proposed Second and roof
- POBR - PL - 600 - Proposed Elevations
- POBR - PL - 601 - Proposed Elevations
- POBR - PL - 602 - Proposed Outbuilding

### ***Site and Surroundings***

The pre-application site is located in an established residential area in Sonning, in a discreet location facing Old Bath Road. The Old Bath Road was the original link from Reading to Maidenhead which is now downgraded to just a service road for all the residential houses due to the new A4 being routed to the north of the site.



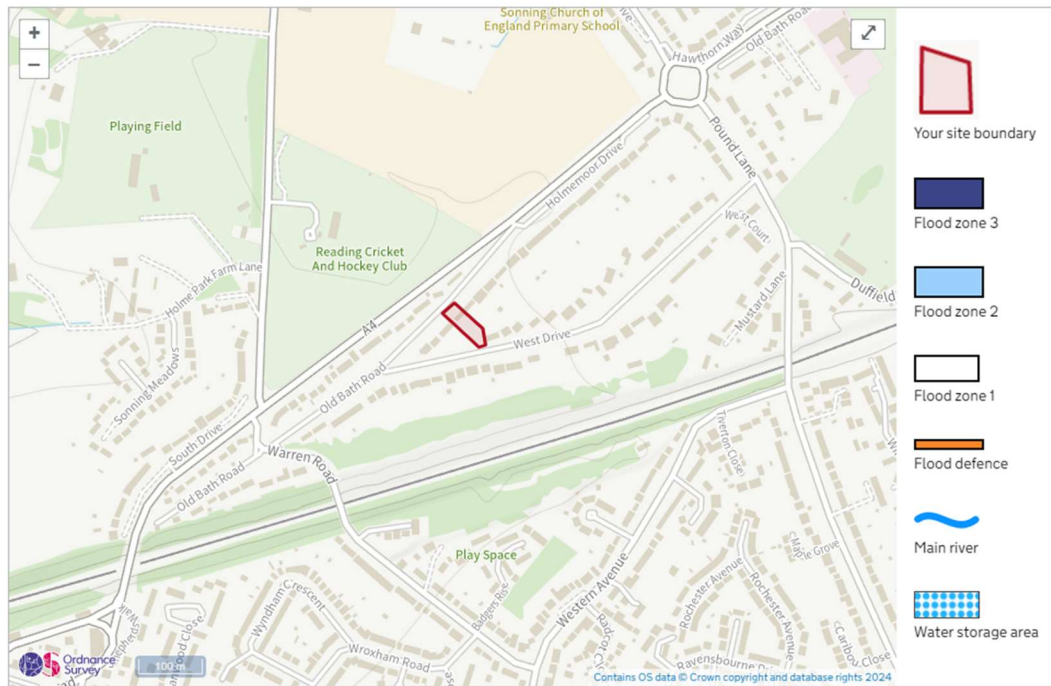
*Source: Google Earth (May 2024) showing the pre-application site outlined in red*

The pre-application site has an area of approximately 0.22 hectares, and it comprises a 2 storey three bedroom detached dwelling with roof accommodation and areas of hardstanding and garden. It is bordered by Old Bath Road to the northwest, West Drive to the southeast and residential properties and associated gardens on two other sides. West Drive is also an established residential private road with a variety of houses set in spacious surroundings. Many of the houses in both Old Bath Road and West Drive have been extended, some substantially. In addition, replacement dwellings have also been incorporated over a period of time. Please see the google image above.

The existing dwelling appears to have no recent extensions/alterations. The existing dwelling has reached his lifespan and in need of significant modernising to make the best use of the large plot. Due to the work required to get it to a modern standard, it is considered more economically viable to replace the existing dwelling.

An in and out access is provided from Old Bath Road, with ample parking available in the front grounds. The existing plot is approximately 25 metres wide and benefits from large front and rear gardens. The pre-application site is screened well with mature landscaping on all boundaries, therefore only the existing dwelling has modest appearance within the street scene.

The pre-application site is neither located within a conservation area nor identified as a statutory Listed Building having any special architectural or historic merits, either nationally or locally. In fact, the site is not assigned any particular designations on the adopted Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy Policies Map.



Source: Flood Map for Planning (May 2024)

The pre-application site falls within Flood Zone 1, as defined on the Government's website (Flood Map for Planning), which is the lowest designation of flood risk. In accordance with the Government web-based National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), most uses are considered acceptable within Flood Zone 1, from a flood risk point of view, including residential development.

### **Planning History**

The entire pre-application site falls within the jurisdiction of Wokingham Borough Council. A planning history search using the Council's website reveals that there have been no planning applications relating to the site, dating back to 1998.

It is likely that there are historic planning applications which are not available to view on the Council's online system. These can be researched at the Council offices; however, in our view, any historic applications which are not available to view on the Council's online system are likely to be of little relevance now.

In summary, there have been no recent application for the replacement development or providing a new dwelling on the pre-application site. It is worth noting that, as mentioned above, number of neighbouring properties have extended with a similar scale and size and sub-divided plots to provide additional new dwellings.

### **The Proposal**

The proposal is for the replacement of the existing dwelling with 2 storey detached dwelling with roof accommodation. The new dwelling layouts respect the formed build lines and the separation distances between the rears of the properties exceed current requirements.

For this dwelling, ample off road parking is available in the driveway in front of the property. For the replacement main dwelling there will be additional an integral garage as shown on the attached ground floor plan. This will allow parking for car and three cycle spaces including EV Charging point

## ***Planning Policy Context***

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the Borough consists of the Core Strategy (adopted in January 2010), the Managing Development Delivery (MDD, adopted in February 2014, and Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted in January 2023). There is no neighbourhood plan for the area.

## ***Key Planning Considerations***

The key planning considerations for the proposed development are:

- Principle of development
- Design and Character
- Residential Amenity
- Sustainability, Access and Parking
- Landscape and Trees
- Ecology

## ***Principle of development***

Planning policy at national and local level encourages re-use or intensification in the use of underused, vacant, or previously developed land and buildings, where there will be an appropriate increase in the efficient use of the site, particularly in areas with excellent access to public transport or road network such as the pre-application site. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines 'previously developed land' and the pre-application site is classified as 'previously developed land'.

Paragraph 123 of the NPPF sets out 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". Paragraph 124 of the NPPF goes on to state that "planning policies and decisions should...promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively".

The Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The pre-application site is located within settlement limits (Limited Development Location) and as such both replacement dwelling and a new dwelling should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 (General Principles for development) of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

At present, the pre-application site has underused surplus garden land. All the properties to the north of the pre-application sites have smaller gardens and provides sperate dwellings which have the access from West Drive. There are a number of neighbouring properties that have either had replacement dwellings erected, or considerable extensions constructed. The pre-application site is the last property in Old Bath Road which has substantially large garden and capable of providing a new dwelling at the rear of the existing dwelling. The proposed replacement dwelling would provide high quality energy efficient new family dwellings. As

such, the principle of development should be considered acceptable, subject to compliance with other development plan policies.

### ***Design and character***

Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that 'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'. Policy CP3 (General Principles for development) of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is 'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life'. The site is in a relatively discreet location just to the north-east of the junction of Old Bath Road and West Drive. The location is an established residential area mostly consisting of detached dwellings on large plots which are set back and screened from the road, both streets have a spacious, green character with large trees and hedges. The pre-application site benefits from being one of the larger plots on Old Bath Road.

The existing dwelling is a detached 2 storey building with accommodation in the roof, 3 bedroom dwelling. The proposal is to replace the existing dwelling with a large two storey, four bedroom detached dwelling with a bar, cinema and games rooms would be located in the loft. As mentioned above, it should be noted that there are a number of properties within the vicinity that have been demolished and replaced with larger modernised dwellings similar to the current pre-application proposal.

The replacement dwelling will be built in the same location as the existing property. The vehicle access and orientation of the property will remain the same, and maintain the current front and rear building lines at Old Bath Road.

It should be noted that the surrounding area is dominated by two storey dwellings with accommodation in the roof along Old Bath Road and West Drive, where building styles are varied but predominantly substantial in footprint. Careful consideration has been given to its design and detailing. The scale of development is in line with neighbouring properties and is in context with the street scene and the character of the area and therefore meets Core Strategy CP9 (Scale and location of development proposals).

The NPPF supports the principle of sustainable development. It calls for good design in that the context of the area should be considered, and that improving the character and quality of an area should be importance. The dwelling on Old Bath Road characterised by individually designed dwelling. It is this lack of repetition on individual plots and green nature of the street which adds to the pleasant character of the area, and in this regard, the development is regarded as appropriate. It respects it's two immediate neighbourhoods but also stands out as an individually designed building in its own right. The proposed development is characterised of the dwelling types in the area in terms of general scale, bulk, height and materials, would meet and exceed all Internal Space Standards laid out in Policy TB07 (Internal Space Standards) from the Wokingham MDD Local Plan.

The Home will be designed as an eco-friendly, low-energy house for healthy living. Thermal insulation values far exceed current UK standards, and all windows would be double/triple-glazed. The applicant intends to install photovoltaic panels on the roof and means to reduce the use of gas. This will achieve low energy target as far as possible and the detail information will be submitted in support of an application.

Overall, it is considered the new design would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area as there are other houses in the area of similar size and scale which

benefit from a similar setting. Therefore, the proposal in accordance with Policies CP1, CP3 and CP9 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB07 and from the MDD Local Plan, and the NPPF.

### ***Residential amenity***

There are a number of trees and mature hedges that sit on the boundary, which screen the properties from one another. The Boroughs Design Guide states that all new dwellings must provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight to new and existing properties. The general rule of thumb measures this using the 45 degree angle rule. As a result of the large grounds that the pre-application site sits in, and distances to the neighbouring properties, there are no breaches to the 45 degrees rule, accordingly it is considered that the proposed dwellings would not have any impact on the daylight and sunlight from the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings.

Layout and design has been carefully done to avoid any potential overlooking and overbearing impact to and from as well as immediate neighbouring properties. The views out of the rear of the building towards West Drive (over 80m away) will be filtered through the existing mature tree planting, causing no concern of overlooking. There will be further landscape planting which would strengthen the current screening.

Whilst the footprint of the proposed replacement dwelling is larger than that that is existing, the width of the two storey element of the house has been carefully considered, it is considered that the proposed bulk and massing of the overall proposal would be broadly similar to the immediate neighbouring properties. Accordingly the proposed house is not considered to appear overbearing.

The proposal would increase the footprint of the dwelling, the remaining amenity space would be over 50metres in length, and this also meets the minimum requirements set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD. The proposed development would result in an acceptable living environment for the future occupants. The layout of the house is designed to be accessible to all, including those with mobility issues and will be built in accordance with the current Building Relations.

Overall, whilst the proposed house is higher and larger than the existing dwelling, the separation to the side boundaries is generous and would limit any impact to the neighbouring occupants. The boundaries of the site are delineated by trees which would also screen the dwellings from the neighbouring properties. It is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

### ***Sustainability, Access and Parking***

The main Bath Road A4 is the main link road between Reading in the west and Maidenhead and Twyford in the east. The road gives good access to the M329 and in turn to the M4. The pre-application site also benefits from public transport facilities as there are two bus stops (Holmemoor Drive) located, within 210 metres (2-3 minutes walking) from the pre-application site on The A4 Bath Road in either direction of the site. These are served by the 128 and 850, bus routes which provide frequent and regular services towards High Wycombe, Twyford & Wokingham, Maidenhead and Reading. A range of other shops and services can be accessed using bus services from the pre-application site.

No changes are proposed to the scheme's vehicular access from the road. For the replacement dwelling, in and out access points will be retained as they are, and the existing building line will largely be retained, as will most of the existing vegetation.

Overall, in terms of the site's sustainability, the site enjoys good public transport facilities and connectivity with the local road network. The site is also situated within walking distance (800m radius) of the local shops, supermarket and services. The future occupiers of the pre-application site would not need to travel a long distance for their day-to-day requirements. The site is considered to be highly sustainable due to its location and connectivity with the local road network.

### ***Landscape and Trees***

The adopted Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping ) of the MDD Local Plan relates to Green Infrastructure in the Borough and indicates that proposals should protect and retain existing trees.

The existing large plot contain mature landscaping, mostly along the boundaries and the rear of the site. The proposed development would retain the existing trees as many as possible. A full landscaping scheme will be provided in support of a full planning application which include trees and shrubs to assist enhancing the character of the area. The landscaping scheme include a detailed arboricultural assessment, permeable surfacing, details of boundary treatment and retained and proposed trees.

### ***Ecology***

The pre-application site is located within habitat that matches that where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough. A detailed Preliminary Ecological Assessment and bat survey will be submitted along with a full planning application. Furthermore, under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, a Biodiversity Net Gain will also be provided demonstrating that the proposal would increase at least 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

### ***Conclusions***

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan state that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The pre-application site is located in an established residential area and comprises a new development that complies with the relevant policies stated in the Local Plan, the principles of the Design Guide and other material considerations that are set out in this report. Overall, it is considered that the proposed new-build would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, noting the surrounding context. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would have any harmful impact on the character and appearance of the site and the area, in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the adopted Core Strategy. The proposed dwelling would have a satisfactory appearance, the impact on neighbouring amenity would be acceptable and the proposed amenity space is sufficient. The development is satisfactory with regard to trees and landscaping, highways access, parking, drainage and ecological concerns.

The proposed replacement dwelling is a contemporary update of the existing house.. The works will be carried out to an exemplary standard. In addition, the dwelling will be highly energy efficient and sustainable and would have a positive impact on the environment. Detailed landscape, ecology and energy reports will be submitted with a full planning application.

