



20 Culver Lane, Reading, RG6 1DT

Proposed erection of a replacement dwelling.

Planning Statement

Author:

Dariusz Kusyk BA BEng MSc - 1 Right Plan



1. Introduction

1.1. Preface

This planning statement has been prepared in support of a full application for erection of a replacement detached dwelling at 20 Culver Lane in Earley.

The following statement covers the subject and information required for submission as set National Planning Policy Framework (2024), MDD Local Plan, Borough Design Guide and Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy. This document will outline the application site history and the design strategy for the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

1.2. Site Location



Aerial photograph

1.3. Site Description

The host application site is occupied by a 1.5 storey residential detached building with two outbuildings at the back garden. The front comprises generous driveway with parking spaces and access in the



corner of the plot. The boundaries of the site include circa 2.0m close-boarded fence and soft landscaping along the front boundary. The host property is presented on the below photographs.

The application site is within the settlement boundaries and is not:

- Within Conservation Area or curtilage of a listed building;
- Within a Green Belt;
- In close proximity of protected trees;
- Within flood zone.







1.4. Surrounding Area Description

The application site is located on the corner of Culver Lane and Eastcourt Avenue. The host dwelling is surrounded by residential two storey buildings, which are relatively various in terms of their scale, appearance, architectural details or size of the plots. The existing group of residential buildings located on this side of Culver Lane include dwellings of a double storey height, usually hipped and gable roof forms and relatively mixed external materials pattern. It must be noted that although the surrounding area around the application property is characterised by relatively large size of properties, it is noticeable that the dominating scale of the dwellings is double storey with relatively high ridge levels of around 7-8m above ground level. The surrounding streetscene includes moderate soft landscaping, with hedges, young trees and sometimes front gardens and ornamental trees between the residential development at Culver Lane.

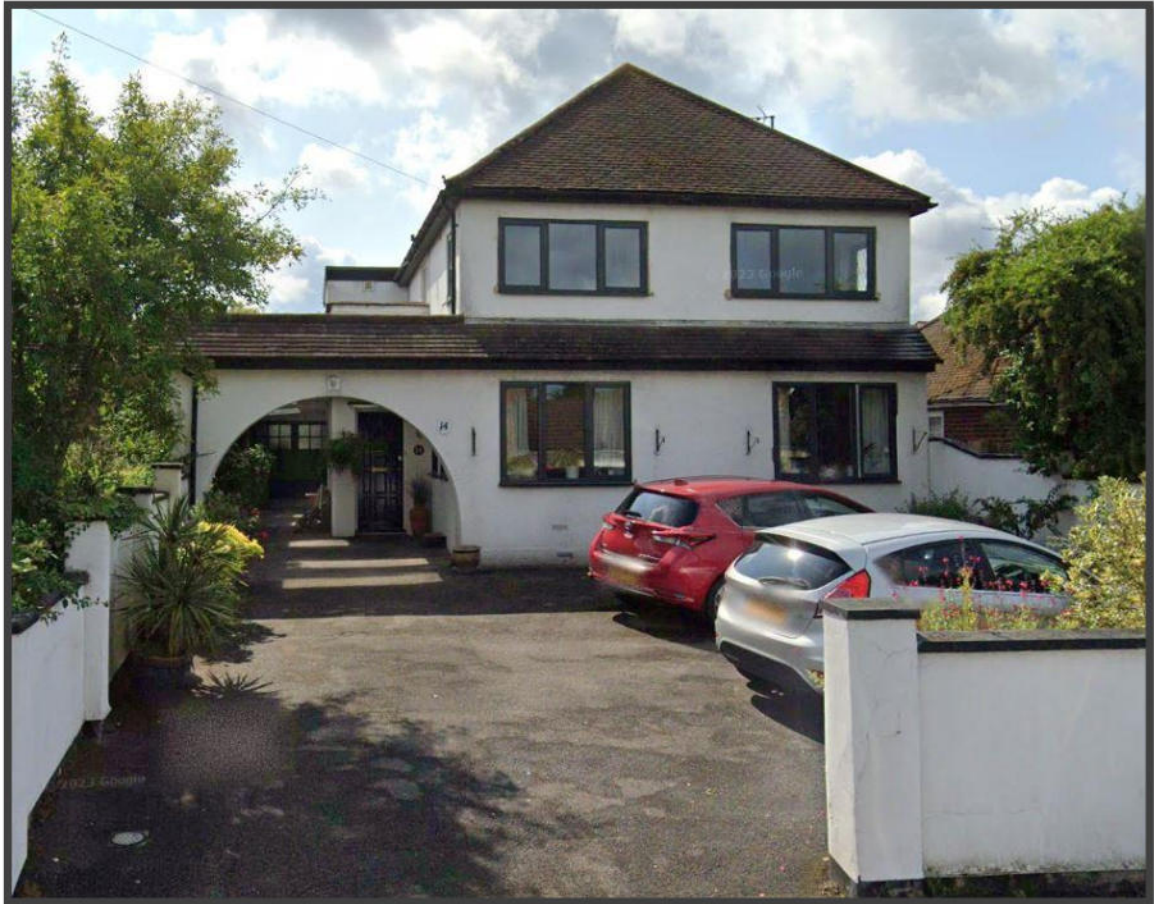
The majority of the streetscene is characterised by a dominant presence of residential type of development, however despite of prevailing type of detached and semi-detached dwellings, there is a significant level of diversity in terms of following aspects (also presented in the below photographs included in this paragraph):

- various size of plots;

- irregular building line of the properties (Culver Lane);
- boundary treatments or layout of the front gardens;
- diversity of roof forms on the ground floor level (extensions, conservatories or porches).
- fenestration and architectural details;
- roof forms of main buildings (angle, design, ridge/eaves height);
- scale/footprint/volume;
- distance from the highway.









2. Planning Policy

2.1. NPPF

Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF emphasises that *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”* and expands that in the paragraph 8, that it *“has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive:*

- *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible*



services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;

- *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

Furthermore, a decision-making in favour of sustainable development is strengthened and its significant weight is confirmed in paragraph 39, which states that *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.*

Housing Quality and Design

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that the *“high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.*

Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 133 emphasizes an important role of the design codes and guides, which should *“local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design”* and that *“their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified”*.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF comprises a list, in terms of what decisions should ensure with regards to proposed developments, inter alia:

- *“function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*



- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

2.2. Core Strategy and MDD Local Plan

Residential development location

The application property is located within the settlement limits of Wokingham Borough in Earley, therefore it stands in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP9 ‘Scale and location of development proposals’, which states that *“Development 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”*. The proposed development would also comply with the MDD Local Plan CC02 Policy ‘Development Limits’. Also, by virtue of its typically residential character, Core Strategy includes a clear assumption in favour of such redevelopment.

Housing Mix

Core Strategy Policy CP5 – ‘Housing mix, density and affordability’ says that *“Planning permission will be granted for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes.”* It then continues *“The provision of a variety of types and sizes of accommodation is desirable across the borough, so that the housing needs of as many households as possible can be met”* and *“Depending upon the character and needs of the area, it may not be necessary to include a mix of dwellings in every residential scheme, especially smaller ones”*. It is therefore considered that the proposed replacement dwelling, of a typical design for the surrounding area, is a suitable and well-fitted proposal, which would stand in accordance with the above-mentioned housing mix policy.

Accessibility

Wokingham BC Adopted Core Strategy include two policies that include the accessibility aspect. Policy CP1 relate to sustainable development and states that development will be granted to schemes that *“Provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes”* and also *“Demonstrate*



how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car". Policy CP6 relates directly to diversification of travel modes and emphasises the importance of sustainable transport, stating that planning permission will be granted for development that "Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice" and which is "located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel".

Design Quality

The overall design quality aspect is included in Core Strategy, MDD Local Plan and the Borough Design Guide. Core Strategy Policy CP1 'Sustainable development' emphasises importance of maintaining or enhancing the high quality of environment and it states that proposals should *"Provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes"*. Another relevant Core Strategy Policy is CP3, which highlights 'General Principles of Development' contains features, which are necessary in order to grant a planning permission, inter alia:

- a) Are 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;*
- b) Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme;*
- c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses;*
- d) Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species;*
- e) Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses;*
- f) Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping.*

In addition, CP3 continues and encourages in paragraph 4.19 to ensure through the Borough Design Guide, that proposed developments is of *"a high standard of design that can integrate with the character of the area is also important to achieving sustainable development in the borough"*.

Borough Design Guide SPD of Wokingham Borough Council includes numerous references to design principles in chapter 4 – 'Residential', which included more detailed guidance in terms of desirable quality of the submitted schemes. Paragraph 4.2 of the BDG SPD includes all relevant aspects, which are taken into account when assessing the proposals in terms of their character and context. It states



that “Residential development should be designed to contribute positively towards the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area”. It also contains a list of the different elements and the degree of consistency or variety, which create the character of a place, inter alia:

- “the network and hierarchy of movement, creating streets;
- the layout of development blocks and plots;
- the arrangement and form of buildings, including the building line and gaps between buildings;
- open spaces;
- the architectural design of buildings;
- the hard and soft landscape design of plots, boundaries, streets and spaces, parking areas;
- the details, decorative elements, materials and planting”.

3. Appraisal

3.1. General concept

The overall aim of the proposal is to make efficient use of the existing site and its assets, by proposing a new replacement detached, 4-bedroom dwellinghouse with high quality contemporary design, amenity spaces, internally and externally, through the above proposal. The application site is characterized with a location within settlement boundaries of Earley, which is consistent in terms of the size, design. The proposed replacement dwelling is acceptable, subject to appropriate level of impact upon the surrounding area.

3.2. Impact on the Character of the Area

Planning history

The relevant planning history for is shown in the table below.

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
251346	Householder application for the Proposed erection of an outbuilding (part-retrospective).	Awaiting decision.
243174	Householder application for proposed erection of an outbuilding.	Approved, 14/01/2025
243086	Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 232494 to change of the internal layout of the outbuilding including addition of a staircase to serve loft storage space, plus insertion of rooflights and changes to fenestration.	Approved 13/12/24



241035	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 240123 dated 27/03/2024. Condition 5, Landscaping.	Approved 13/06/2024
240123	Householder application for proposed raised roof with part single part two storey front extension, single storey side/rear extension, front driveway and boundary alterations along with demolition of chimney.	Approved 27/03/2024
232494	Householder application for the proposed alterations to the front garden to create a driveway and new vehicular access, erection of single storey rear outbuilding following the demolition of the existing detached garage plus the erection of new boundary fencing and associated landscaping (part-retrospective).	Approved 08/12/2023

It should be noted that the proposed development includes significant extensions approved under ref. 240123, which allowed to raise the roof of the extended dwelling and include double storey extension to the side and rear of the building. It is therefore considered that in principle, the proposed two storey replacement building would appear acceptable.

Below assessment will reveal that the current proposal would also result in an uncontentious visual impact in comparison with the above proposals, as it would provide a building of a reasonable mass, depth, sufficient separation distances and a high quality, in keeping design in relation to the surrounding area, similarly to the previously approved applications.

Design

The proposed development would result in a new detached residential building, with a more modern appearance, but with an uncontentious visual impact upon the existing streetscene. The two storey scale would seamlessly fit in next to double storey adjacent properties. Furthermore, one of the aims of the proposed scheme is to contain an in keeping appearance and with cohesive type and colour of used materials in comparison with the host dwelling, consistent with the numerous properties along this part of the road, what would lead to a more seamless addition of this property in relation to surrounding area.

The proposed development would provide a sympathetic design, compliant roof forms with characteristic front gable, reasonable scale of single storey elements and a reasonable eaves and ridge height of the half-hipped main roof. The proposal would include UPVC fenestration elements installed within elevations of the building, in order to provide an appropriate and highest quality design and to preserve a typical suburban appearance and character of the residential properties in the surrounding area. In wider perspective the proposal, due to a mixed design pattern around the host dwelling,



would be considered to visually fit within the surrounding area, resulting in an improvement within the streetscene.

Site Layout

The proposal would transform the site to become a reasonably scaled two storey detached property, which would be set back by circa 0.9m up to 2.8m from the boundaries on both sides. The proposal would preserve the spacious gap at the first floor level, between the proposed and existing residential buildings to the side and back. In addition, the proposed dwelling would mostly respect the building line established by the neighbouring houses on this side of Culver Lane to the front and Eastcourt Avenue to the rear. The proposed dwelling would appear uncontentious and well-balanced addition between the neighbouring double storey properties.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the existing amenity spaces would be preserved, in compliance with the established pattern in this neighbourhood and furthermore, the current proposal would present a consistent approach in terms of the spacious site layout with adequate garden space, separations and of the appropriate visual mass and built form with mitigating soft landscaping along the front and side boundaries, in relation to the neighbouring properties.

Streetscene

Given the relatively mixed appearance along the streetscene, the proposed scheme was intended to appear appropriate and to provide a high quality look in relation to the buildings in the closest proximity. The proposal has a prominent location and it would be mostly exposed and clearly visible from the Culver Lane and Eastcourt Avenue perspective, therefore it has been designed to offer attractive views from the side and front, presenting contemporary glazing, fenestration and architectural features, bringing visual interest around this corner plot.

The proposal includes contemporary materials, design and architectural features, which would result in a redevelopment of the application site, which would bring noticeable benefits for the overall visual arrangement and neatness of the host property and the along this corner of Culver Land and Eastcourt Avenue area. The proposed scheme would also propose adequate front and rear garden of sufficient size with soft landscaping to the front and along the side boundaries, which as whole would mitigate the visual impact of additional built form. The relatively poor quality existing dwelling and unattractive space would be redeveloped with an organised space, efficiently used with more sympathetic appearance from every perspective.

3.3. Impact on neighbours

Loss of Light and Overbearing



Due to the proposed development situation, overall scale and form of the replacement building and appropriate scale, depth and height of the proposed scheme in relation to the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overbearing and overshadowing arrangement would be considered to arise. The enclosure impact would not occur as the positioning of the proposed development is considered to be appropriate in scale in comparison with the existing, adjacent dwellings. Effectively, no excessive protrusion beyond the front or rear elevation lines would arise and no detrimental effect would appear as a result of the proposed development. The proposed development would be designed in compliance with the BRE Daylight and Sunlight Guidance, with no unacceptable breach of the 25° and 45° sightlines.

Loss of Privacy and Overlooking

Due to the proposal's situation, its scale, positioning of the new windows and sufficient separation distances from the neighbouring properties, no adverse changes to current overlooking arrangement would be considered to occur. The proposed upper-level windows would be facing the footpath or gardens of the host dwellings, therefore resulting in no unacceptable loss of privacy.

With regards to the first floor side elevation windows facing north (towards no. 22), these would be designed as obscure glazed and non-openable up to 1.7m above the finished floor level.

3.4. Transport, parking and waste

The proposed site is located around 0.5km from the retail shopping parade along Wokingham Road and circa 1.8km to the west from the Woodley Town Centre Shopping Precinct. Given close proximity from adjacent bus stops on Culver Lane and Wokingham Road (about 5 min walk), the application property benefits from an extensive bus service including routes. The application site therefore contains frequent links to Reading Centre, Wokingham and Earley.

The application dwelling's close vicinity to the A327 and links with the M4 for towards the east to London and Wales to the west. The broad road networks around the site also provide huge choice and possibilities of cycle routes and walking paths in and around the area. The closest local amenities are located along Wokingham Road and Shinfield Road (Woodley retail centre), which include wider range of services such as grocery shops, cafes, pubs, educational facilities, surgery or nursery. Range of services located within walking distance of circa 5min from the application site, makes it highly appropriate and sustainable for a residential development. It also lies within close proximity from main bike paths, which links this part of Earley with Reading town centre and surrounding towns and villages.



The proposed replacement dwelling would benefit from an allocated 4x parking spaces (front driveway). There is also a refuse area and lockable bike storage in the garden outbuilding, adequate for the size of the proposed development.

3.5. Sustainability

It is considered that the application site is within an existing settlement, conveniently located in a residential area of Earley with favourable access to community facilities, employment areas, open space and necessary services. Furthermore, it is considered that sustainability of the proposed residential buildings, in compliance with the relevant Local Plan Policies and NPPF, would be also significantly improved due to numerous aspects:

- Reducing air permeability to the minimum consistent with health requirements;
- Design that will reduce thermal bridging;
- Highest possible level of insulation of hot water pipes and hot water storage vessels, walls, roof and floors;
- Double glazing;
- Fitting the house minimum B rated appliances (washing machine, dishwasher etc.);
- Permeable paving where applicable;
- Recycling of waste and site waste management plan, to ensure materials arising in the construction process are recycled;
- Energy efficient internal and external lighting.

3.6. Private Outdoor Amenity Space

It is acknowledged that currently the proposal comprises a sufficient outdoor amenity space within its residential curtilage for typical outdoor activities and garden paraphernalia. The proposed dwelling would contain a circa 193.0m² private rear amenity space, which would stand in compliance with the Borough Design Guide.

3.7. Internal Amenity Space

The proposed dwellings would include an internal space of circa 248.0m², sufficient and appropriate for a 4-bedroom dwelling. The layout provides appropriate level of privacy and living quality, due to appropriate internal ground and first floor arrangement. It is confirmed, that the proposed dwelling would comply with the 'Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard' adopted by Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2015 (minimum 97.0m² up to 124.0m² for a two storey, 4-bedroom dwellings). The proposal would be considered to successfully



meet requirements in terms of minimum height, storage area, bedrooms internal area, accordingly with the Technical housing standards.

3.8. Landscaping and Tree Impact

The proposed development would be designed to minimize the impact upon the existing landscaping and it is proposed to provide additional soft landscaping to the front and side of the building, along the sidewalks and along the boundaries of the application site, which would successfully mitigate the impact of the proposed development upon the character of the surrounding area. No TPOs are on site or within close vicinity.

3.9. Biodiversity

The proposed development would be designed to provide adequate biodiversity benefits on site, by proposing additional planting around the site in order to increase level of variety of plants species in the area, which would introduce an adequate mitigation of the proposed scheme with regards to this aspect. It is considered that the proposed development would achieve new native soft landscaping, wildflowers, hedgerows, shrubs and effectively it would result in a clear and demonstrable biodiversity net gain on site.

4. Conclusion

By virtue of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that it would comply with the relevant parts of NPPF, Wokingham Core Strategy, MDD Local Plan, therefore we kindly appeal, to approve the submitted application.

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1 Right Plan