

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

MS RACHEL LAWSON

PLANNING STATEMENT

**37 KERRIS WAY
LOWER EARLEY
READING
RG6 5UW**

**Full planning application for the erection of 1no. detached dwelling
following the demolition of an existing double garage – self build**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This town planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application by Ms Rachel Lawson for the following:

'Full planning application for the erection of 1no. detached dwelling following the demolition of an existing double garage – self build'

- 1.2 The statement is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning History
- Planning Policy Context
- The Planning Application
- Summary and Conclusions

- 1.3 This statement will examine all relevant planning policies both local and national and will demonstrate that the application proposal is both sustainable and in full compliance with policy guidance.
- 1.4 The site already has planning permission for a detached 4-bed dwelling under ref.240920 (granted 25 June 2025). This application incorporates two changes; Firstly, a small ground floor addition is proposed onto the rear elevation; and secondly, the revised proposal will be for a self-build development.
- 1.5 Reference will be made in particular to the fact that the Council does not have a five-year supply of housing. The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2025 (published 31

July 2025) is that at 31 March 2025, the Council could only demonstrate a 2.5 year housing land supply.

- 1.6 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Roost Assessment (AA Environmental).

2 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site comprises a detached two storey dwelling with a detached double garage and driveways. It is located within a larger than average plot in an area that is characterised by modern properties with a mock Tudor style design. The site is positioned at the head of a cul-de-sac and is accessed via a private drive leading from Kerris Way which also serves Nos. 33-41 Kerris Way. There are several small domestic fruit trees and bushes within the garden of the property. Whilst the planning records show that there were historically some TPO trees just beyond the rear garden boundary wall (on a verge in Elm Lane), these are no longer present having been removed by the Council a number of years ago and never replaced. The Council's records do not appear to have been updated to reflect this change (see pre-application response letter).
- 2.2 To the north / east of the site are other detached two-storey dwellings in Kerris Way, which are of a similar mock Tudor design to that of No 37. To the north west of the site are a row of two storey detached dwellings (Rivendell, Glen Rosa and Jaycroft) which are of a similar design and appearance to the dwellings in Kerris Way but are accessed directly from Elm Lane. There is a path and cycle track beyond the southern boundary of the site which links Kerris Way to Elm Lane.
- 2.3 The site is located within the major development location (i.e. those settlements with the greatest range of facilities and services) of Earley as defined on the Council's Policies Map. Within these locations, Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy confirms that major development would be acceptable. The site is sustainably located close to bus stops on Rushey Way where a frequent service to Reading is provided. It is also within walking / cycling distance of Earley railway station and is close to supermarkets, food halls, local shops, recreational facilities and other services.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Relevant planning applications at this property are summarised below:

240920 – Full application for the erection of 1no. detached dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. Followed by the demolition of the existing double garage. Approved 25 June 2025.

122152 – Proposed erection of two storey and single storey side extensions to dwelling. Refused. 09 March 2012.

121682 – Proposed erection of a two storey and single storey extensions to dwelling. Approved 04 July 2012.

031203 – Proposed variation to condition 5 of consent 18094 to allow use of garage for residential purposes. Approved 06 March 2003.

031202 – Proposed variation to condition 9 of consent 14279 to allow use of garage for residential purposes. Approved 06 March 2003.

020135 – Proposed change of use of part of house from residential to office and storage use plus conversion of garage to storage use. (Retrospective). Refused 07 November 2002.

3.2 Prior to the most recent grant of permission under Ref.240920, the application site had been the subject of formal pre-application advice with a view to obtaining views of officers prior to submission. The pre-app. response letter confirmed support in all areas and the approval of full permission was subsequently granted in 2025.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

i) **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

- 4.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 2). The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.3 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).
- 4.4 Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or
 - ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework

taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

4.5 Paragraph 39 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.6 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decision 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. Indent (d) of para.125 states that planning 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 is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively...’

4.7 Paragraph 129 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- Local market conditions and viability;
- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4.8 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with design. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

ii) **The Development Plan**

a) **Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)**

4.9 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CP1:** Requires that a number of criteria are met. These include: maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

- **Policy CP3:** Requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. Paragraph c) requires that sites are used to their full potential.
- **Policy CP6:** The policy is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:
 - Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
 - Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
 - Improve existing infrastructure;
 - Provide appropriate parking;
 - Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
 - Enhance road safety;
 - Do not cause highway problems.

b) Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

4.10 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CC01:** Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- **Policy TB06:** Policy TB06 deals with development of private residential gardens. It states that proposals should make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - Relationship to built form and spaces;

- A layout that integrates with the surrounding area;
- Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments;
- Compatibility with general building heights.

The site should be of a size to accommodate the development in terms of setting, spacing, amenity space, landscape and parking and should meet highway standards. Unacceptable forms of 'tandem development' should be avoided and the layout should minimize the exposure of private rear gardens to public areas

iii) Supplementary Planning Documents

Borough Design Guide SPD

- 4.11 The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues. The revised guidance has now been adopted by the Council.
- 4.12 The guidance sets out a number of key urban design objectives, as follows:
- Context and character;
 - Connection and accessibility;
 - Sustainable communities;
 - Sustainable development;
 - Inclusive design process.
- 4.13 In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.

- 4.14 Section 4 concerns residential development. Garden size should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. The guidance states that the Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided that space is useable. Useable gardens should be roughly rectangular in shape; receive direct sunlight for some of the day; be capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying and outside storage space; and should provide a secure external access to the rear garden for cycle storage. The application proposal meets these requirements in full.
- 4.15 The guidance sets out the minimum privacy and amenity distances as follows:
- Front to front across a street: 10m
 - Rear to rear of dwellings: 22m
 - Flank to boundary: 1m
 - Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 12m
- 4.16 The proposed development meets all of the above standards.
- 4.17 The guidance also states that all dwellings must provide adequate internal space in an appropriate layout to accommodate a range of lifestyles. Living areas and bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a range of private and communal activities. The standard for minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space is 31sq.m (based on 6 bed spaces). Double bedrooms should be a minimum of 12sq.m and single bedrooms a minimum of 8sq.m. Guidance is also given regarding storage space and room configurations. The proposal comfortably meets all of the above standards.
- 4.18 The guidance states that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight for new and existing properties. New housing should be designed to provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling; be dual aspect where possible; avoid north facing, single aspect flats; and to have no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This can be

assessed using the methodology set out in report BRE 209 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight'.

5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

5.1 The application proposal is for the erection of 1no. detached dwelling (self-build).

5.2 This chapter of the statement assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and specifically against the following considerations which are set out below:

- The principle of development;
- Character and appearance of the area;
- Living conditions of existing and future occupiers;
- Trees and biodiversity
- Access and Parking

i) The Principle of Development

5.3 The application site is located within the defined major development location of Earley in the Proposals Map which is the highest category of settlement in the borough. The application proposal will make efficient use of land within a sustainable location close to shops, schools, employment opportunities and a range of other local services and facilities. The proposal therefore receives strong support from central Government (NPPF) as well as adopted CS policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and Policy CC01 of the MDD. The principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to compliance with other policies set out in the development plan and the NPPF. In addition, and as stated above, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing and supply and therefore this proposal will make a small contribution towards this deficit.

5.4 As stated above, the site also has planning permission for a detached dwelling (Ref.240920) with the only difference between the two proposals being a small

extended area at ground floor level and changing the development to a self-build project.

ii) Character and appearance

- 5.4 The proposed dwelling would be in a similar location to the existing double garage to be demolished. The front building line will be set 1.8m further to the south east than the front of the existing garage structure to ensure that the dwelling meets and exceeds the Council's guidance for a 45 degree horizontal line of sight from neighbouring habitable windows on the front of No.35 (see site layout plan below).
- 5.5 The new dwelling would front onto the shared access in a similar manner to Nos 33 and 35 Kerris Way. Whilst it would be sited slightly forward of No 35, Nos 33 and 35 are already staggered in relation to each other and the proposal would not therefore appear unduly prominent or out of keeping with the street scene or the wider character of the area. The proposed dwelling would in fact reflect the siting of the host property, No.37 albeit in the opposing corner.
- 5.6 The size, scale, height and design of the proposed dwelling would reflect that of No.37 Kerris Way and other adjoining dwellings. The proposal would therefore be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would reflect the existing pattern of development.
- 5.7 In terms of compliance with MDD Policy TB06 (development of private gardens), the proposal is compliant in the following way:
- The proposal would respect the existing pattern of development and would reflect the space around buildings. The amount of space provided around the dwelling is also commensurate with that of the surrounding development;
 - The proposal would integrate with the surrounding area in respect to built up coverage, rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas etc;
 - The dwelling would be accessed in the same manner as the existing garage to be demolished and there would be no change in this regard;

- The balance of hard and soft landscaping is appropriate and reflects that of the adjoining dwellings and the existing situation;
- The proposed dwelling would be two storey in height and would reflect the height of neighbouring dwellings (see street scene);
- Materials will reflect those displayed in the immediate locality;
- The proposed dwelling would be located in a plot which would be of a similar size to adjacent dwellings. There would be no additional exposure of private boundaries to public areas.

5.8 The proposal is essentially a resubmission of the earlier consented scheme with the only additional built form being to the rear of the property at single storey level and therefore not readily visible from the street scene. On the basis that the relationship with the public realm remains unchanged there should not be any new issues raised in regard to character.

5.9 In conclusion on this issue, the proposed new dwelling would be of a high-quality design that reflects local context and would therefore respect the existing character and appearance of the area. The proposal meets Policies CS1 and CS3 of the CS, Policy TB06 of the MDD as well as the design objectives set out in paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

iii) Living conditions of existing and future occupiers

5.10 The proposed siting of the dwelling would ensure that there will be no unacceptable overlooking of neighbouring properties or loss of light. The dwelling will be designed to comply with the Council's minimum internal space standards. Whilst irregular in shape, the proposed garden would be generous in size and would exceed a depth of 11m (14m) to the south west of the rear elevation, providing for a high standard of amenity for future occupiers.

5.11 As stated above, the positioning of the front main wall will avoid any conflict with habitable room windows on the front elevation of No.35. The flank wall has been set

in by 1m from the boundary with No.35 in accordance with BDG standards. The additional single storey extension to the rear which is the only change to built form from the extent permission would also be set in by 1m from the boundary with No.35 and would not affect any existing habitable room windows.

- 5.12 The 45 degree horizontal line of sight from the mid-point of neighbouring habitable room windows on the front elevation of No.35 has also been illustrated and this confirms that the standards are comfortably met and exceeded in this regard.
- 5.13 The proposal would therefore create a satisfactory living environment for the new home and existing surrounding property in accordance with Policy CP3 of the CS, Policy TB07 of the MDD as well as paragraph 135 of the NPPF (i.e. a high standard of amenity will be provided for existing and future users).

iv) Trees and biodiversity

- 5.14 The original pre-application response letter confirmed that the protected trees to the south of the application site, located on a highway verge (outside of the application site) have all been felled by the local authority. Furthermore, it states that replacement trees were specified in 2006 and 2020. However, to the applicant's best knowledge, these replacements have not as yet been planted by the local authority. The verge to the south is therefore devoid of any planting.
- 5.15 The garden comprising the application site is characterised by the existing garage; double width driveway; an area of hard standing on the corner as it sweeps around to the dwelling at No.37; and some low-lying fruit trees and overgrown large shrubs. To achieve the redevelopment of the site, some of these large shrubs and fruit trees will require removal (some limited clearance has already taken place). However, there is some scope to retain some of these features further back into the site and this is illustrated on the site layout plan. The extent of hard standing at the front of site remains largely unchanged. The need to provide parking in accordance with adopted standards limits the extent of soft planting potential to the front of the proposed new dwelling.

- 5.16 In summary, the application proposes to retain green infrastructure where possible, and the applicant is happy to accept the same soft landscaping condition that was imposed on the earlier planning permission. There is not considered to be any conflict with Policy CC03.
- 5.17 The applicant previously undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment (AA Environmental) and this confirmed that the site was of low ecological value, with no evidence of bats or other species recorded. The garage itself was considered to be of 'negligible' potential for bat roosting and therefore no further survey was recommended. There are no ecological constraints to the proposals and as such a series of specific and generic mitigation measures are recommended.

v) Highways and parking

- 5.18 The proposed new dwelling would utilise the same access as the existing double garage, albeit slightly widened to provide for the third parking bay. The parking bays will be set further away from the access thereby representing an improvement in terms of turning/reversing etc. The proposals also include the retention of No.37's existing driveway, which provides two tandem parking spaces and the construction of a new smaller driveway to provide an additional third space for the existing dwelling. The provision of three spaces for both the existing and proposed dwellings meets the Council's parking standards. This revised proposal does not change the number of bedrooms in respect to Council parking requirements and therefore this part of the proposal remains as permitted in 2025.
- 5.19 There are no overriding highway reasons why the proposals should not be granted permission. Given the fact that the development can be accommodated without raising any transportation or highway issues, the proposal is considered to be compliant with CS Policy CP6.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The site is within the defined major development location of Earley. The proposal will make the efficient use of underutilised land within a highly sustainable location close to shops, schools, employment opportunities and a range of other local services and facilities. The proposal therefore receives strong support from central Government (NPPF) as well as adopted CS policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and Policy CC01 of the MDD. The principle of development has already been established through a virtually identical permission granted in 2025 under application ref.240920 with the only differences being the small additional ground floor rear projection and the proposals change to being for a self-build development.
- ii) The proposed dwelling would be located on a large plot and would reflect the density, character and appearance of the existing cul-de-sac. The proposal is consistent with the aims of MDD Policy TB06. The proposals meet the design requirements set down with CS Policies CP1 and CP3, the Borough Design Guide and paragraphs 131-141 of the NPPF.
- iii) Generous separation distances are provided between existing and new dwelling which meet the BDG standards including the additional ground floor built form at the rear. As a result, the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of the adjoining properties. The proposals will provide for a high-quality living environment for future residents. The proposal meets CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 136 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users will be provided.
- iv) Parking and access are provided in accordance with adopted standards and are identical to those already approved under ref.240920. This proposal does not alter the amount of parking required compared to the earlier consented

scheme. The site is accessible to local schools and shops and is close to existing bus links. The proposals are consistent with the requirements of CS Policy CP6.

- v) The proposal will not harm any trees or other landscape features of amenity value. The existing garden is largely devoid of any trees of amenity value, characterised by some fruit trees, large shrubs and blackberry bushes. The frontage is already hard surfaced.
- vi) The site is of low ecological value with no evidence of bats or other protected species recorded. The garage is considered to be of 'negligible' potential for bat roosts.