

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: 230450/HOU

Address: 21 Heron Island, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DQ

Proposals: Erection of a rear extension at ground, first and second floors and conversion / alterations to roof to form habitable accommodation with rear roof terrace and two front roof lights.

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Charij

Date received (valid from): 5 April 2023 **Decision date (ext) :** 4th August 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a three storey semi-detached residential dwelling located on Heron Island. The front and rear elevations of the property face the river. The property is not a listed building, nor does it fall within a conservation area.

Site visit date: 12/05/2023

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a rear extension at ground, first and second floor levels and the conversion and alterations of the roof space to form habitable accommodation, including raising the height of the roof and a new rear facing roof terrace. The proposal also includes bricking up the ground floor front elevation doors, and inserting two roof lights in the front elevation roof slope.

Plans considered

Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-00.1 - Location and Block Plan received 5th April 2023

Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-01.1 - Existing Ground and First Floor Plans received 5th April 2023

Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-01.2 - Existing Second Floor and Roof Plans received 5th April 2023

Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-02.2 - Existing Side and Rear Elevation Plans received 5th April 2023

Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-02.1 - Existing Side and Front Elevation Plans received 5th April 2023
Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-02.4 - Proposed Side and Rear Elevation Plans received 10th July 2023
Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-02.3 - Proposed Side and Front Elevation Plans received 10th July 2023
Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-01.4 - Proposed Second Floor, Loft and Roof Plans received 10th July 2023
Drawing No. 21-21HI-P-01.3 - Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans received 10th July 2023



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

030955 - Amendment to permission 02/01082/FUL - accesses from lift to floors rerouted, resulting in overall reduction in width of lift shaft; installation of oriel window to bedroom 2nd floor on north elevation. - PERMITTED

020132 - Addition of lift shaft on side of building and access to lift front facing river. Lift and shaft to be three storeys high. - PERMITTED

940215 - Conversion of existing car port to a river room, replace the existing garage door and extend the rear (north) first floor balcony. - PERMITTED

950627 - Addition of lift shaft on side of building and access to lift. - PERMITTED

970725 - Erection of conservatory under the existing rear balcony deck. - PERMITTED

4. CONSULTATIONS

Discussions with agent

Planning officers had concerns regarding the original plans submitted due to the scale of the proposed windows. In order to comply with the guidance within the SPD, windows and doors should be appropriate in terms of size, scale and/or placement. Ecology also had concerns regarding the size of the proposed windows due to the *light spillage onto the river adversely affecting the wildlife*. The agent was advised to reduce the size of the windows to overcome these concerns.

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

22 Heron Island, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DQ
20 Heron Island, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DQ
19 Heron Island, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DQ

8 letters of objection have been received with concerns regarding the following:

- Space for contactor/delivery vehicles, increased traffic and damage to the roads
- Covenants
- Scale
- Out of keeping
- Noise disruption
- Structural impact and concerns regarding party wall

Officer note: Construction noise and disturbance are not material planning considerations and cannot be taken into account, nor fears of damage to property and roads, and Covenants.

The material considerations will be covered in more depth below.

Environment Agency - No comments received

Natural Environment - *As the site is on the Thames - a 'treed corridor' in our Tree Strategy and in line with the aim to ensure a net gain in greening on every site, it would be appropriate to secure some landscaping to mitigate the increase in built form, including at least one appropriately sized tree species in the rear garden.*

Officer note: Further to the above comments received from the Natural Environment Officer, the agent agreed to a pre-commencement condition (in line with section 100ZA(5) and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018) for a scheme of hard and soft landscaping to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify means of treatment for hard surfaced areas, means of enclosure including mammal gaps where appropriate, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate, and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting. This is to ensure that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Ecology - *The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbtech, April 2023) concludes that the house is unlikely to host roosting bats.*

The proposals will introduce an extension within 5 metres of the River Thames and includes very large windows facing the river. This is likely to result in significant light spillage onto the river and adversely affect the wildlife that uses it. Artificial light at night can significantly and adversely affect wildlife. It disrupts the life cycle and behaviour of invertebrates, bats, fish, and other wildlife. This is particularly true where it illuminates important habitats, such as the River Thames (a Priority Habitat in the NPPF). There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that light pollution is one of the major factors behind the recent significant decline in invertebrate abundance and diversity and biodiversity loss more widely.

The proposals will result in an increase in artificial light at night over the river Thames (a priority habitat), adversely affect the wildlife that uses it, and reduce the ecological status of the river. The proposals will therefore not comply with planning policy.

Officer note: Further to the above comments received from Ecology, revised plans were received to significantly reduce the size of the proposed windows.

Transport - *The proposed works do not change the existing parking arrangement for the property, as the single garage is to be retained.*

There are no Transport objections to this application, however given the property is located at the end of a no through road, residents will be impacted during construction therefore a CMS will be required for this development to ensure there is minimum disruption and no access issues.

Officer note: Further to the above comments from Transport, a pre-commencement condition (in line with section 100ZA(5) and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018) has been agreed with the applicant for the approval of a Construction Method Statement. This is to secure vital details in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
TR3 (Access Traffic and Highway-related Matters)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)
EN18 Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

Although the proposed extension is large in scale, it is considered acceptable in relation to the scale of the host dwelling and its positioning at the rear.

The depth of the rear extension at first and second floor levels measures 3.92m from the original rear wall of the dwelling and therefore complies with the guidance on rear extensions with the SPD. The maximum depth of the ground floor rear extension is 5.54m, although this exceeds the depth within the SPD the extension does not extend beyond the ground floor rear elevation of the attached neighbouring property, furthermore, the extension is considered subservient to the host dwelling.

The extension is contained at the rear of the site and will not be visible from the front of the property. Due to the location of the site and the position of the proposed extension, it will also not be visible to surrounding neighbouring properties within Heron Island.

The alterations at the front of the property consist of infilling the existing double doors with brick to match existing, and raising the height of the existing roof in line with the attached neighbouring property and inserting two front facing roof lights. These alterations are considered minor in scale and are not considered harmful to the host dwelling or the neighbouring properties. There are other properties within the vicinity with roof lights, and the proposed roof height would not exceed the roof height of the adjoining property.

In terms of design, the proposal is considered to complement the character of the existing building and the proposed materials would match the existing.

The proposed rear window sizes have been reduced so that they are appropriate in terms of scale and placement, and they reflect the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

Due to the position of the proposed extension, behind the rear/side wall of the attached neighbouring property at no.20 Heron Island, there are no identified risks of the proposed extension appearing overbearing to this neighbour. Due to the sufficient distance between the proposed extension and the neighbouring property at no.22 Heron Island, there are also no identified risks of the proposed extension causing any harm to this neighbour in terms of overbearing effects.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, there are also no identified risks in relation to loss of sunlight and daylight to the neighbouring properties.

With regards to privacy and overlooking, the proposed roof terrace is set within the roof and the set back of the balustrade means that the accessible area is screened by structure to both sides. Although additional views will be created by the additional windows in the rear elevation, these views will be limited to overlooking the river and therefore there are no identified risk to the residents or amenity of the neighbouring properties.

Flood Risk

As the proposal site is within flood zone 3, it is required that a flood risk assessment report be carried out and produced to support this application. The submitted report highlights that the finished floor levels will be no lower than the existing ground floor level. Construction will utilise flood resistant materials and services will be placed as high as practicable to reduce impact of flooding. The report concludes that it is considered that overall flood risk to the proposed development, as is the case for the existing dwelling, is high, but acceptable, when taking into account the scale and nature of the project and the proposed mitigation & resilience measures which would be introduced. As such, the development is considered to be in general compliance with local planning policy and the NPPF.

As the area increased by the proposed development is minimal it is considered that the development is not likely to create any significant risk. A compliance condition is recommended to ensure that the measures stated are carried out. This is in accordance with EA [Standing Advice](#) and Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Ecology

There was a concern regarding the size of the windows on the original plans submitted due to the amount of light spillage onto the River. Ecology confirmed that smaller windows would likely be acceptable. Therefore, revised plans were received significantly reducing the size of the windows. It is not considered that the harm caused to wildlife from the proposed windows would be significantly different to the existing arrangement. As such, the development is considered to be in compliance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION - GRANT

Recommended Conditions:

Time limit

Materials

Approved Plans

Landscaping (to be submitted)

Construction Method Statement (to be submitted)

Flood Protection Measures