

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: 230811/HOU

Address: 78a Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ

Proposals: Proposed single-storey front porch and double-storey side extensions following demolition of an existing garage and utility room.

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Applicant: Mr Maruthi Harsha Datla

Date received (valid from): 12 June 2023 **Decision date (ext):** 8th September 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two storey detached dwelling located on Northcourt Avenue. The property is not a listed building, nor does it fall within a conservation area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential.

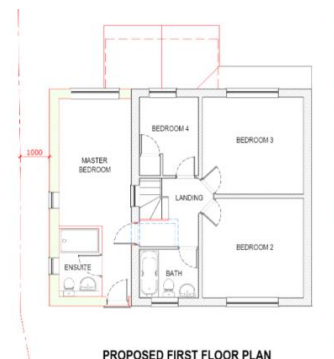
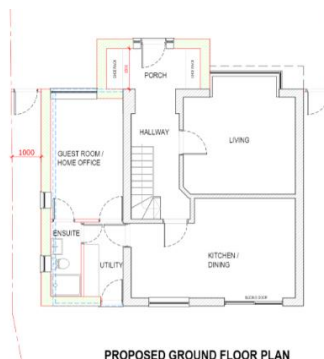
Site visit date: 13/07/2023

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for a proposed two storey side extension to replace the existing attached garage. The width of the proposed extension would be approximately 3.1m and the depth of the proposed extension would be the same as the existing dwelling. The proposal also includes a new front entrance porch.



Plans considered:

Drawing No. RG27HQ-PP-101 - Existing Floor Plans received 12th June 2023

Drawing No. RG27HQ-PP-100 rev A - Location and Site/Block Plans received 7th August 2023

Drawing No. RG27HQ-PP-104 rev A - Proposed Elevations received 7th August 2023

Drawing No. RG27HQ-PP-103 rev A - Proposed Floor Plan received 7th August 2023

Drawing No. RG27HQ-PP-102 rev A - Existing Elevations received 7th August 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

970457 - Erection of 4 five bedroom detached houses. REFUSED

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

78 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ

80 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ

78a Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ

One letter of objection has been received with regards to the following:

- Scale and dominance
- Proximity to boundary
- Loss of sunlight/daylight
- Loss of local character

Discussions with agent

Officers had concerns regarding the original plans submitted. The proposed two storey side extension abutted the boundary with no.78 and the width of the proposed extension was more than half the width of the original house. The agent was advised to reduce the width of the proposed extension and retain a gap between the extension and the side boundary. Subsequently, revised plans were submitted to illustrate a 1m reduction in width.

Ecology

The application site comprises a two-storey detached house where it is proposed to demolish the garage and add a two-storey side extension. The site is adjacent to a designated green link as per policy EN12. The property is on a designated green link as per policy EN12. It is surrounded by habitat that is suitable for use by commuting and foraging bats including large, connected gardens linking The Cowsey Local Wildlife Site with deciduous woodland and playing fields associated with Leighton Park School 180m to the east. As such, given the location of the property, and the extent of the works to the roof, there is a risk that the proposals may affect roosting bats and a bat survey report will need to be provided.

Following the comments above, a bat survey was requested and received. The bat survey (Crossman Associates, August 2023, ref:S1176.004) concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There are therefore no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

RBC Natural Environment

The proposals in themselves (as described in the description of development) don't raise any concerns. However, the original block plan submitted showed 3 parallel parking spaces:



It is noted (from Google St View) that the existing drop kerb doesn't align with the existing access:



I assume this mis-alignment may be due to the unacceptability of extending the drop crossing to the south (left) as a result of likely damage to tree roots, which are evident in the pavement.

It is unclear whether the existing access to the property (fencing) will need to be widened to the south to allow for the 3 parking spaces; certainly I assume the panel to the north (right) of the access will need to be removed. It appears that 1-2 spaces could be serviced by the existing drop crossing but the third would mean the car driving over the pavement, which I assume may happen at the moment. This is unlikely to be an acceptable situation to Highways.

For clarity, as indicated above, the extension of the drop crossing to the south would raise serious concerns over root damage to the street Lime tree and would not be supported unless trial excavations (a license to dig would be required) under arb supervision demonstrate that the crossing could be extended without serious harm to the tree.

In conclusion, if the parking, as shown, forms part of the formal consideration of this application, it is not supported on tree grounds due to the resulting drop crossing widening required.

Following the comments above, the agent submitted a revised the Block Plan/Site Plan to show the existing 2 parking spaces and maintain all existing situations regarding dropped kerb and access to the driveway.

Transport

As two parking spaces are retained and there are no proposed alterations to the access, this is seen as an existing provision; Given the driveway access is wider than the vehicle crossing it could lead to vehicles bumping up the kerb which is an illegal activity the applicant would be advised to widen out. However as this is an existing situation and is not affected by the proposal for this development Transport would not have any grounds to object to it in this instance.

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)

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.

In terms of design, the proposal is considered suitable and respects the host dwelling. The proposals are considered in keeping with the existing dwelling and would integrate well. The proposed two storey side extension would largely maintain the same footprint as the existing side garage. The proposed porch is considered subservient in relation to the front elevation of the property and it is set back from the street. The host dwelling is an infill plot with a different design to other properties within the street. There is a variation in the style and scale of the surrounding properties. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would be harmful to the character of the house or the wider street scene. The materials proposed are considered acceptable; there is a variety of cladding within the street and therefore the proposal would not be considered out of character for its location.

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 its positioning and single storey nature, there are no identified risks regarding the proposed porch in relation to privacy and overlooking, overbearing effects, or loss of sunlight and daylight.

With regards to the proposed two storey side extension, the proposal would be stepped in from the boundary with no.78 Northcourt Avenue by 1m. At ground floor level, the proposal would be similar to the existing arrangement due to the existing single storey attached garage. Although the neighbours would notice the additional form at first floor level, there would be a 6.255m gap retained between the proposed extension and the first floor side elevation of no.78 Northcourt Avenue. Due to the separation between the proposed extension and the neighbouring property, it is not considered that the proposed extension would cause overbearing effects to this neighbour. It is considered that although there would be some additional impact from the side extension with regards to outlook and loss of light, it is not considered to be significantly different to the existing arrangement, and not so significantly detrimental to warrant refusal on this basis. The proposed hipped roof form helps to reduce the impact of the side extension. On the original plans submitted the proposed side addition protruded an additional 1m beyond the existing side elevation. Following officer comments, revised plans were received with the side extension pulled in so that sufficient separation between the dwellings remains and the scale of the extension is reduced. The proposed extension has two first floor side facing windows, these windows are to be obscure glazed and this will be secured via a condition attached to the planning permission. Therefore, there are no identified risks in relation to privacy and overlooking.

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

Obscure Glazing

No new openings

Vehicle Parking (as specified)