

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: 221078/FUL

Address: 4 The Mount, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RU

Proposals: New vehicular access with dropped kerb

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Date received (valid from): 21 July 2022 Target Decision date: 27 April 2023 (ext.)

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two storey detached dwelling on the north side of The Mount, on the corner with Kidmore Road in Caversham. The property has an existing access point and paved driveway from The Mount which also connects to an existing outbuilding. There are a number of TPO protected trees on site. The surrounding area is residential comprised of detached properties in varying styles. There are no parking restrictions on The Mount and as such on street parking is prevalent. The property is not listed nor in a conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for a new vehicular access point with a dropped kerb from The Mount. This would include reduction of the existing side garden space to be converted to hard standing driveway. The proposed boundary finish is extension of a low brick wall. A green embankment is proposed in between the new proposed access point and the existing with two new Sentinel pines to replace the vegetation removed as part of the extension of the paved driveway.

Plans considered:

1335/3 Location plan, dated July 2022, received 22 July 2022

1335/1 Existing site plan, dated January 2022, received 22 July 2022

Planting Specifications, White Knight Tree Care and Consultancy, dated 12 February 2023, received 13 February 2023

1335/2/H Proposed site plan, dated January 2022, received 24 April 2023

1335/4/B Proposed vehicular tracking, dated January 2023, received 11 April 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

081563 - Demolition of conservatory and replacement single storey side extension. Upgrade existing garage and first floor home office. External works to driveway. - Application permitted on 29/12/2008

111344 - Non material change to planning permission 08/01483/FUL for omission of ground floor window, balcony and glazed door on South West elevation of garage. Widening of balcony by 1m on North East elevation of garage. New low timber fence and repositioning of entrance gates. - Agreed on 6/6/2011

211564 - Lawson's cypress (T1 - T15 on Council map): Fell and stump grind in order to make way for safer driveway configuration. Replant with Irish yew.

Lawson's cypress (T2 - T16 on Council map): Fell and stump grind in order to make way for safer driveway configuration. Replant with Irish yew.

Lawson's cypress (T3 - T16 on Council map): Fell and stump grind in order to make way for safer driveway configuration. Replant with Irish yew. - Application permitted on 25/10/2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal consultees:

Trees - Approval was given for the felling of the two Lawson cypress on the frontage - T15 & T16- last year (app ref 211546). At the time, the intended new access was known and formed part of the discussion, however felling was approved on the basis of the condition of the trees only, given that no planning application, hence approval, had been submitted.

Replacements are required by a condition of the consent, with the decision letter including the advice:

The planting area proposed for replacements will need to incorporate a suitable planting pit/area to accommodate 2 new trees. Soil environment & volume needs to be suitable within the proposed planting area in order to enable the replacements to thrive. If planning approval for the new access is sought, allocating space for the replacement trees will need to be ensured. This area may need to be protected during the construction process (if a new access is permitted) or remediated on completion prior to the tree planting.

The replacements should have been planted in the 2021-22 planting season, i.e. by the end of March 2022, however agreement was given to delay this until the driveway matter was resolved in order to enable planting in the 2022-23 season.

I note that two replacements are indicated on plans and these are in a similar location to those felled, however no detail has been provided on species or how soil volume will be achieved. Species needs to be agreed via the condition attached to the consent to fell and this planning application should be the tool to agree that and ensuring appropriate planting pits.

It's disappointing given the delays that those details are not included. Whilst species could be secured via condition, greater detail is required now on the planting area and soil volume provision accommodated by the proposal. Providing the tree details now would avoid a pre-commencement condition so could also be considered.

In relation to existing trees, as pointed out by Transport DM in their response, there appears to be a change in layout around the existing access, adjacent to the Yew (T17 of the TPO) including a new wall and various ground works - existing and proposed. It would seem appropriate for the applicant/agent to have obtained arboricultural advice to devise an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (at least) to cover all the above points. The matter of ground works within the potential RPA of the Yew needs to be resolved prior to a decision in order to demonstrate that the works will not have a detrimental impact.

In conclusion, the application is currently unacceptable due to the lack of demonstration of no harm to a TPO tree (Yew) and failure to demonstrate that adequate soil volume provision is accommodated to allow replacement planting in accordance with condition 3 of tree works approval 211564.

Officer note - Amended plans have been submitted showing an acceptable replanting plan and protection to the existing TPO Yew tree.

Transport - The existing access is to remain which has been previously reconfigured and a new access introduced located further away from the junction of Kidmore Rd.

Dedicated tracking diagrams are required entering and exiting the site in forward gear, taking into account any parked cars. Clarity should be provided as to what is proposed as part of this planning application, given that the submitted drawings identify the demolition of outhouse and car port and removal of block paving from the garden.

It would appear that a wall is being provided to separate the proposed drive way that historically led to the rear of the site, this should be confirmed as it is noted that this is likely to be in the root protection zone of the adjacent tree, and therefore the Natural Environment Officer should be consulted.

A licence from the Highways department will be required to undertake all the works on the public highway, which includes the introduction of a new dropped crossing.

Officer note - Suitable tracking diagrams have been submitted.

External consultation:

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

1A Kidmore Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7LR
15 The Mount, Caversham, Reading, Berks, RG4 7RU
13 The Mount, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RU
6 The Mount, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RU
6a The Mount, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RU

No letters of representation received.

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 and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

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APPRAISAL

Design and the public realm

The proposed development would improve the appearance of the site onto The Mount. The existing boundary to be converted is overgrown with tall hedges and lacks coherence. The extension of the low brick wall, which is typical for the surrounding area, and removal and replacement of the overgrown vegetation with two new trees is considered to improve the character of both the application site and the wider street scene.

The proposal complies with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Private and communal outdoor space

Policy H10 states that “Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space.”

The application site has a relatively small garden as compared to other properties on The Mount due to its orientation and positioning. The property has no rear garden but rather two fragmented side gardens north and south of the dwelling. The proposal would include loss of the south portion of the side garden to be converted into hard standing surface and extension of the existing driveway. This represents a loss of approx. 98.6 square meters, leaving 233.55 square meters of the north portion of the side garden remaining. This loss is not considered unreasonable as over 50% of the existing garden would be retained.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Trees and hedges

Policy EN14 states *“individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended.”*

There are a number of protected trees on site subject to TPO 146/01. Previous permission was granted to the felling of two trees at the front of the property. The proposed replacement of these trees with two new Scots Pines is considered acceptable. Protection is also proposed for the existing protected Yew tree adjacent to the existing driveway which has been considered sufficient by the Natural Environment team.

Access and other highway related matters

Policy TR3 states that *“in determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.”*

The existing access is to remain which has been previously reconfigured and a new access introduced located further away from the junction of Kidmore Road. It is not considered that an additional access point will pose any risk of harm to the transport network.

Dedicated tracking diagrams have been submitted to demonstrate entering and exiting the site in forward gear, taking into account any parked cars. This has been deemed acceptable by the Highways team.

A licence from the Highways department will be required to undertake all the works on the public highway, which includes the introduction of a new dropped crossing.

Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the submitted information has been found to be in accordance with those policies and the development is therefore considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

TL1 - Time Limit

AP1 - Approved Plans

M3 - Materials to match

DC3 - Vehicle Access

L4A - Landscaping

L7A - Tree Protection Measures