

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: 230350/HOU

Address: 16 St Davids Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7PX

Proposals: Proposed first floor side extension and garage conversion, raising of double garage roof.

Case Officer: Gary Miles

Applicant: Mr and Mrs S A & H Nagarajan & Padmanabhan

Date received (valid from): 16 March 2023 **Target Decision date:** 27 June 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a large 1970's detached dwellinghouse, located on the corner of the turning head of St Davids Close - the NE elevation fronts the public highway as does the existing NW elevation. By the nature of how the property is sited in the Close - it doesn't have any direct neighbours, or any adjacent neighbouring elevations and windows within close proximity. St David's Close is characterised with detached properties of similar character and style, constructed using a mixture of red brick with white cladding to the first floor elevations and red tiled pitched roofs, with distinct gaps between properties. A number of properties have been subject to single storey and double storey extensions and some properties have constructed a front porch of differing styles over the years. The property is not listed nor is it within a conservation area.

Site visit date: 9th November 2022 (for previous application 221499)

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Proposed first floor side extension and single garage conversion, raising of double garage roof. The proposal includes converting half of the garage in to a habitable room to be used as a home gym and an enclosed porch with pitch roof. Anthracite grey upvc doors and windows in existing and proposed.

The ground floor element of this proposal has been approved (221499) although not yet built.

Plans & Documents considered:

Application Form - dated 16/03/23

Drawing no: DC-03 - Existing Elevation - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-04 - Proposed Plans - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-05 - Proposed Elevations - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-06 - Boundary Wall - dated 14/03/23

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 21st March 2023

Drawing no: DC-04R - Proposed Plans - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-05R - Proposed Elevations - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-06R - Boundary Wall - dated 14/03/23

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 31st March 2023

Drawing no: DC-04R1 - Proposed Plans - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-05R2 - Proposed Elevations - dated 14/03/23

Drawing no: DC-06R - Boundary Wall (revised) - dated 14/03/23

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th April 2023

Tree Constraints Plan - dated May 2023
Arboricultural Impact Assessment - dated 15th May 2023
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18th May 2023
Drawing no: DC-05R3 - Proposed Elevations - dated 14/03/23
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 23rd May 2023
Tree Protection Plan - Dated May 2023
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 26th May 2023

Officers have worked with the agent to make changes and agree to the proposed changes. Part of the application included a 2m wall with double gates around the perimeter of the property. This would not look subservient and would spoil the open plan feel of St Davids Close. The agent provided amended plans reducing the height of the wall to 1m.

In an email dated 20th April 2023 I explained that although the proposed boundary wall had been reduced in height it would still harm the existing open character and pattern of the street, I recommended the proposed boundary wall was removed from this application to which the agent agreed.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

221499 - Proposed single storey side extensions and rear extension, following demolition of existing utility and proposed garden gate as shown on Block Plan - Permitted Dec 2022

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

7 Haldane Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7PS
15 St Davids Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7PX
3 Haldane Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7PS
5 Haldane Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7PS

No letters of representation have been 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

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)

TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

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.

The proposal includes a first floor side extension over the ground floor element of this proposal which was approved in December 2022 (ref 221499) although not yet built. The first floor side extension has been designed to a high standard mimicking the roof line of the existing property. The front elevation is set back and the ridge set down from the existing property - it is considered the first floor side extension will look subservient to the original property and the wider streetscene.

Officers raised concerns with the agent regarding the proposed front elevation and the fact that the enclosed front porch was on the large size and out of character with the rest of the Close. Different options for the porch were considered - I suggested it should be completely removed as it was too large and out of character. The agent then made reference to an existing porch at No.15 St Davids Close and a property who had just secured planning for a front porch at No.9 St David's Close. Both the porches in question are very different in terms of scale and design, and the proposed front porch for 16 St David's Close is no different. It was agreed that the front porch could stay but the footprint reduced in size - the porch includes a pitched roof which envelopes over the porch and beyond either side (Drawing No: DC-05R2). Although the design of the proposed porch is different to anything else, there is no set precedent for front porches within the Close and on this basis officers are satisfied with the proposal.

Original plans submitted by the agent showed the window above the stairs being changed to a much larger picture window. Officers raised concerns about this as it made the front elevation look unbalanced, the agent agreed to amend the plans to keep the original window (Drawing No: DC-05R2) the property will look more balanced in terms of appearance and scale.

Officers had concerns regarding the colour choice for the new windows and doors. The agent confirmed the colour as *RAL 7016 (Anthracite Grey) of Rehau company*.

Officers have worked with the agent to secure good quality plans, the proposed extension will be constructed using similar brickwork and roof tiles to match the existing property. Officers believe the overall appearance will be acceptable in the context of the existing house and will enhance the existing streetscene rather than detract. The proposed changes are considered acceptable in terms of design, quality and scale and thus comply with policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019 and the Design Guide to House Extensions 2021.

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.

The proposal includes a first floor side extension over the ground floor element of this proposal which was approved in December 2022 (Ref:221499) although not yet built, the first floor side extension includes a small bathroom window to the side elevation and an additional bedroom window to the front and rear elevations. By the nature of how the property is sited in the Close - it doesn't have any direct neighbours, or any adjacent neighbouring elevations and windows within close proximity. On this basis officers do not believe the proposals will be harmful to privacy. Due to the positioning of the property officers do not feel the proposal will be overbearing to neighbouring properties, nor will the proposal be harmful to sunlight or daylight due to the positioning of the property within St David's Close. It is therefore considered compliant with policies CC8 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

Trees

Policy EN14 states that 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.

The Natural Environment Officer was consulted. The officer had concerns regarding the loss of the mature silver birch in the front garden. A tree survey and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) were requested on 28th April 2023.

The agent supplied the Tree Constraints Plan and AIA on 18th May. The Natural Environment Officer responded: *The attached is sufficient to demonstrate that the development is acceptable in relation to trees. It unhelpfully does not include an AIA plan to show the development in relation to RPAs but comparing the Block plan to the Tree Constraints Plan, it appears to be low, or extremely limited, impact.*

The proposal complies with policies CC7 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Transport

As the proposal includes a part garage conversion the Transport Officer was consulted: *The application will result in the reduction in size of the double garage. While the length of the remaining part of the garage can be accepted, the width is less than the recommended 3m, however additional parking has been illustrated on the submitted location plan.*

There are no Transport objections to this application, proposed parking provision is acceptable and there are no changes to the existing dropped crossing serving the property.

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:

TL1 - Time Limit (Standard)

AP1 - Approved Plans (Standard)

M3 - Materials (As Specified)

DC1 - Vehicular Parking (As Specified)

L6 - Tree Protection Measures (As Standard)