

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: 230809/HOU

Address: 35 Blenheim Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RT

Proposals: Proposed single storey side extension and new bi-fold doors to rear elevation.

Case Officer: Mr Ryan Allen

Applicant: Ms Fountain

Date received (valid from): 6 July 2023 **Target Decision date:** 31 August 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey, semi-detached dwellinghouse, located on Blenheim Road, Caversham. The surrounding streetscene is solely residential, comprises of properties varying in character and design. The property itself is not listed, nor does it fall within a conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a side-return extension, as well as the introduction of bi-fold doors to the rear of the property.

Plans considered:

Received 09/06/23

Design & Access Statement - dated N/A

Drawing No: 01 - Survey - Plans & Elevations - dated 05/23

Drawing No: 02 rev. C - Floor Plan & Elevations - dated 06/23

Drawing No: 03 - Site Plan - dated 06/23

Received 09/08/23

Drawing No: 02 rev. D - Floor Plan & Elevations - dated 08/23

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

03/05/13 - 130686/FUL - Single storey rear extension and single storey front bay - Permitted

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

33 Blenheim Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RT

37 Blenheim Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RT

Letters of representation have been received as follows:

Objections

37 Blenheim Road - We'd like to raise the following objections to the current extension proposal at 35 Blenheim Road, as previously discussed with Ms Fountain:

1) We object to the inclusion of a window in the side wall facing our property. The elevation of our property (37 Blenheim Road) is much lower than number 35. We have privacy concerns that the window would allow current, and future, occupiers a direct view down into our kitchen through our bay window directly opposite. Whilst we understand Ms Fountain is currently unsure about the need for a window our concern is that, if the application is approved to include a window, one of any size could be added at a later date.

2) We object to the drain/access being moved into the shared alleyway close to our property boundary. The extension at number 35 requires relocation of the current drain/manhole cover. We understand that the current proposal is to place in the shared access alleyway that runs between our two houses. This would bring it into close proximity of our property boundary. It also moves the drain manhole into an area of 'no-man's land' of shared access for a number of houses, rather than within the clear ownership boundaries of number 35. This causes concerns about maintenance, issues arising, and recognised ownership in the future should Ms Fountain be away for an extended period or sell her property. A further concern is that the lower elevation of our property means the rear room abutting the alley, and being close to the proposed extension location, sits well below the ground level of the alley. We are worried that re-location of the drain/manhole cover so close to our boundary wall would increase the risk of future damage to our property should there be any issues with the new drain.

3) It's unclear from the current drawings where the overhang from the sloped roof will fall and how rain water run-off will be dealt with

As mentioned above, our rear reception room sits at a lower elevation to the shared access alleyway. We've put in place measures to prevent historical damp caused by moisture levels in the alley and would object to any rain water run-off solution that would cause increased water levels to fall directly on to it.

4) It's difficult to conceptualise from the drawings whether the extension and sloped roof would cause any loss of light to our property, again due to our lower elevation. We would object to any design that further impacts light levels in our home.

As proposed works would be taking place within 3 metres of our property boundary we will also want to ensure that all necessary Party Wall agreements and due notice are in place before the commencement of any works.

33 Blenheim Road - While my property is not directly impacted by the proposed extension itself I do feel that given the slightly higher elevation of #35 it will have an overbearing effect of both the passageway and house at #37 and will have a negative effect on the overall amenity. My main concerns though may not have bearing directly in relation to planning legislation, however relate to the very limited information in the DAS. Following conversations with Ms Fountain prior to her submitting her application I do feel a couple of points need to be clarified.

1) Guarantees that the shared access across the passageway will be kept open to relevant residents that have a right of way during the construction phase e.g. when foundations will be dug, walls constructed and any associated materials and machinery etc., etc. I would ask that the continuation of unencumbered access be documented as a condition of any such planning approval.

2) It is not clear how the addition of the under stairs toilet will impact drainage access. I have already verbalised concerns to Ms Fountain that this should not be located in the passageway, but I would also like to see this again included as a condition of any planning approval.

Given the line of the sewer, creating a manhole within the boundary would be possible and should be conditional to the plans. If the scheme relies on this falling outside the boundary it raises the question of whether the extension can be viable within the plot. The passageway referred to as pedestrian access is private land that we simply have a right of access over. I am not sure on what basis it has been assumed there is a right to build out into this passageway. This would be wholly unacceptable from my perspective.

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)

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 would be of a design that is considered to be respectful to the hostdwelling, as well as the surrounding area by erecting a mono-pitched roof rather than a flat roof alternative, for instance. The scale of the proposal is minimal and therefore proportionate to the existing property. Materials sought to be used are to match existing, on the whole. However, the proposed bi-fold doors to the property's rear are to be aluminium rather than UPVC which is prominent at the property. This change is considered to be negligible as the siting to the rear means they will not be viewable from the public domain. As such, the proposal is compliant with policies CC7 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

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 seeks to be erected at a single-storey level and not exceed a height that is considered to be excessive. A footpath separates the application site and neighbouring property, 37 Blenheim Road. This established separation and minimal scale of the proposal is considered to mitigate any potential for overbearing effect the extension could pose. Initial plans illustrated a high level window to the side elevation of the proposal. This was considered to pose privacy concerns to neighbouring property 37 Blenheim Road should this not be obscured glaze, nor have opening limitations. Revisions, however, were received and accepted illustrating the removal of said window, leaving the only windows on the proposal to be those of the velux windows to the roof of the extension. Condition PD2 will be recommended to secure no new openings will be added to the side elevation of the extension at a later date. Overall, the proposal is compliant with policies CC8 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

Other matters

Matters relating to drainage and rights of access over land are private matters to be resolved between landowners.

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
AP1
M3
PD2