

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 200600

Address: 35 Dover Street

Proposal: Proposal for first floor extension to form a 2-bed flat to replace the existing balustrade/parapet wall, shed and entrance cupola, together with associated revisions to landscaping and access

Case Officer: David Brett

Target Date: 03/02/2023 (EoT)

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application property is currently accessed via the roof from Dover Street.

To the East of the application site is a Grade II listed building (94 and 96, Wolseley Street). To the South of the property is St. Saviours Church. Whilst this is not listed, it does have architectural merit, and as such the proposal should be carefully considered as to the impacts upon this property. Directly to the West of the property is a terrace of properties known as "Church Terrace". The end property closest to the site (No. 8) is less than 8 metres from the proposed development and has side facing windows looking directly at the property.

Proposal

The proposed scheme is to erect a further storey to the existing property for the purposes of creating a second dwelling in the form of a two bedroom flat.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following:

Plan Type	Drawing Number	Date Received
Location Plan	2661 010 P3	24 Apr-20
Existing Floor Plans	2661 013 P6	24 Apr-20
Existing Elevations	2661 014 P5	24 Apr-20
Proposed Floor Plans	2661 015 P8	24 Apr-20
Proposed Elevations	2661 016 P5	24 Apr-20
Proposed Sections	2661 018 P5	24 Apr-20
Section Elevations A-A	N/A	24 Apr-20
Section Elevation B-B	N/A	24 Apr-20
Garden Design Plan	N/A	24 Apr-20

Relevant Planning History

83/TP/898 - Erection of detached house with parking area - Approved. 16 December 1983

181846 - Proposal for first floor extension to form a 2-bed flat to replace the existing balustrade/parapet wall, shed and entrance cupola, together with associated revisions to landscaping and access - Refused on 12 April 2019. Appeal dismissed on 2 January 2020.

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers at the following properties were consulted by letter:

- Dover Street - 33, 33a, 33b, 33c, 36
- Wolseley Street - 90, 92, 94, 96, 100, 102
- Church Terrace - 7, 8
- Berkeley Avenue - St. Saviours Church

Two letters of representation were received, both objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Overbearing
- Lower value of properties in the area
- More parking issues
- Noise
- Overlooking
- Overshadowing
- The shed is unlawful
- Impact upon the listed buildings (94 and 96 Wolseley Street)
- Out of character

Transport

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development would be required to provide a total of 2 parking spaces. The submitted plans illustrate 2 parking spaces on an existing area of hardstanding. This conforms to the Council's current standards and is therefore deemed acceptable.

The site is located within a Residents Permit Parking Zone 09R where there is significant pressure for on-street parking. Therefore, it is likely that future occupants of the new flats will be able to obtain resident or visitor permits. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.

In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 0.5 cycle storage spaces should be provided per unit. Cycle storage has been proposed and for each unit and is located at ground floor level. However, we require further

information confirming that the cycle parking provision meets the Council's adopted standards in terms of layout and accessibility. This can be dealt with by way of a condition.

The new flat will be provided with an onsite storage area adjacent to the parking area, which is deemed acceptable, however it would be preferable for the bins for both flats to be located off the public highway and within the confinements of the property's boundary this should be located no further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. However, this can be dealt with by way of condition.

Given the site is located at the end of a cul-de-sac and the on-street restrictions in place a CMS is required for this development.

Transport do not have any objections to this application subject to the conditions

Natural Environment

There are no Tree / Landscape objections to the proposals. If planning permission is granted please include condition L1 (Landscaping, small scale - to be approved) to ensure suitable landscaping of the site post development. This will need to include mammalian access holes through the new boundary fence to enable hedgehogs and small mammals access to the site.

Heritage & Conservation

The proposal is for an additional flat above the existing house, thus removing the unattractive elements currently existing at roof level, although these could potentially be added to any roof extension in the future. However, due to the unusual location of No. 35, the additional storey to the building with flat roof is in a position which is in close proximity to the rear elevations of the Listed Buildings at Nos. 94 and 96 Wolsey Street and would detract from the character of the area and add an unsympathetic and dominant building within their settings.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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

CC1 PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC6 ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
CC7 DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8	SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN1	PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN4	LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS
EN5	PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH HERITAGE INTEREST
EN12	BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN15	AIR QUALITY
H1	PROVISION OF HOUSING
H3	AFFORDABLE HOUSING
H5	STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H9	HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION
TR3	ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR4	CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES
TR5	CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Council's 'Revised Sustainable Design & Construction SPD' (2019)

The Council's 'Parking Standards and Design' SPD (Oct 2011)

The Council's 'Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990' (2015)

The Council's 'Affordable Housing' SPD (2021)

Appraisal

Principle of Development

The proposed dwelling will sit above an existing dwelling, and as such there will not be an increase in the footprint of the building as a result of this application. The surrounding area consists of dwellinghouses, listed buildings and a church. Although there will not be an increase in footprint, there will be the erection of access steps, and an increase in bulk.

The existing building has minimal architectural merit, but is somewhat hidden due to the fact that the highest point is the same level as the main road. The proposed development will take on a more contemporary design, but will also increase the bulk of the building, increasing the presence it has within the local vicinity.

There are two listed buildings directly to the east of the site and St. Saviours Church directly to the south. St. Saviours Church is not listed locally or nationally; however, it does contribute to the character of the area and contains architectural merit.

Therefore when assessing this application, the key points which should be focussed upon are:

- The developments impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the street scene.
- The developments impact upon heritage assets.
- The developments impact upon neighbouring amenity.
- The developments impact upon transport.

Character and Appearance

The application site is located several metres below the road level of Dover Street. As such, the proposed additional storey would only be approximately 1 metre higher than the existing street level on Dover Street. The Council has raised concerns that when the development is viewed along Dover Street, this additional height would obstruct the views of St. Saviours Church which is behind the application site. This Church is not listed locally or nationally; however it is of architectural merit and the Council considers it to be a non-designated heritage asset. The position of the Church and its visibility at the bottom of Dover Street contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

The site is visible from a number of roads in the vicinity of the application site, including Garnet Street. This is a dead end which is linked to Dover Street via a set of pedestrian steps. Whilst the site is visible from this location, the small increase in mass and height of the proposal means it would not appear visually intrusive within this predominantly urban landscape. It is considered that the proposal would not harm the street scene when viewed from this location.

The proposal would also be visible from the bottom of Wolseley Street, where it would be viewed between the gap between St. Saviours Church and 106 'The Vicarage', as shown in Figure 14 of the appellant's statement. Whilst the application site is in a raised location behind St. Saviours Church and Wolseley Street when viewed from this location, the small increase of mass would not appear overbearing. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the street scene when viewed from Wolseley Street.

Lower Field Road lays to the west of the application site, and the site is currently well screened from this road by a number of mature trees. It is also possible to see the spire of the Grade II listed St Giles Church in this direction. Whilst these mature trees are not protected and could be removed to make the application site more visible, it is unlikely that the proposal would interrupt these views from Lower Field Road. The application site is at a much lower level than the surrounding properties and it is considered that the additional height of the proposal would not harm the views in this area or appear overbearing in the street scene.

As such it is considered that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently there is no conflict with Policy CC7 which seeks, amongst other things, that development is of a high quality that maintains the character and appearance of an area.

Impacts upon Neighbouring Amenity

The application site currently has a roof terrace which allows views of neighbouring properties on all four sides. This includes the rear gardens of properties which front Wolseley Street, the south facing elevation of No.33 and No.33A Dover Street, and the eastern elevation of No.8 Church Terrace to the west of the application site. The proposal includes a number of fenestrations on each side of the dwelling which would look upon each of these neighbouring properties. Policy CC8 of the Local Plan states that usually a back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, however individual sites may be located closer without there being a detrimental effect in privacy. In this instance, the plans demonstrate that obscured glass would be installed on the elevations that face these neighbours which would ensure adequate privacy is maintained.

The current roof terrace serves as outdoor amenity space and main entrance for the existing dwelling. There is therefore currently an element of overlooking and lack of privacy because of this existing situation. The removal of the roof terrace as outdoor amenity space will remove any direct overlooking and therefore result in less harm to privacy than is currently experienced by neighbouring occupiers. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not cause harm to the privacy of neighbouring occupiers.

The application site is in a built-up area with a number of existing tall buildings in the vicinity and this additional mass of the proposal would not be out of keeping with this pattern of development. Consequently, this increase in mass would not lead to an overbearing impact on neighbouring occupiers. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan which seeks, amongst other things, that development will not cause significant detriment to the living environment of existing occupiers.

Impacts upon Heritage Assets

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Policy EN4 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, are protected and where appropriate enhanced.

This includes: -

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission should only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

94 and 96 Wolseley Street

The application site is not located within a conservation area; however, it is located directly West of a Grade II listed building (94 and 96, Wolseley Street). The listing description for this states:

- *“II Pair of C18 houses.*
- *Originally one five bay house.*
- *Stuccoed brick with tiled roof and end chimneys.*
- *Glazing bar sash windows (removed from No 96) segmental headed flush-framed to No 94.*
- *Doorways set close together/*
 - *No 94 is six panel with lozenge overlight.*
 - *No 96 plain late C19 door with slim rectangular overlight.”*

There is a statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (listed building and conservation areas) Act 1990 'The Act' to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when dealing with planning applications.

The Framework advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is not a fixed concept; it is concerned with the way the heritage asset is experienced.

The significance of the listed buildings is focused on the frontages of the properties with the significance deriving from its historic fabric and age which pre-dates the surrounding terrace development. The proposal is at the rear of these two buildings and occupies an elevated position above the rear gardens. As such an increase in height would be noticeable from these properties. However, the principle elevation would remain Wolseley Street and the proposal would not be visible in combination with the front elevations of the listed buildings. It is considered that the increase in height with this proposal would not harm the setting of this pair of listed buildings.

St. Saviours Church

Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the effect of applications on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should be taken into account when determining planning applications. In doing so a balanced judgement will be required, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Whilst the proposal would introduce new building mass and height into this location which would partially obstruct the views of this Church, this would only be apparent when stood directly in front of the application site. Furthermore, the limited height of the proposal means the Church would remain highly visible when viewed from Dover Street. It is considered that the proposal would not harm the setting of the non-designated heritage asset when viewed along Dover Street.

Transport Impacts

The full transport consultation comments can be viewed in the consultees section (above). To summaries, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact from a transport and highways perspective, subject to various conditions being attached to a positive decision notice.

Inclusive Access

In considering this application there is due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which sets out the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The proposed access to the newly proposed dwelling is via an external lift; which sufficiently meets the required standards, and therefore provides adequate safe access for a group protected by the Equality Act 2010.

As such there are no concerns regarding this element of the application, as it complies with Policy H5, which requires all new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations.

Affordable Housing

Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; “Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading:

- on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.”

This planning application does not relate to the conversion of an existing property and therefore would need to accord with the requirements of Policy H3 and make an appropriate financial affordable housing contribution. The applicant has declined to enter into a legal agreement to secure a financial contribution if planning were to be granted. The development is therefore not considered in accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

As a Policy compliant affordable housing contribution has not been secured within this application, refusal is recommended for this application.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason for Refusal:

1. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to policies H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), and the Council’s Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2021).