

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley

App Ref: 221573/HOU

Address: 31 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

Proposals: Part 2 storey and single storey rear extension to replace single storey buildings

Case Officer: Ryan Allen

Applicant: Mr A. Catline

Date received (valid from): 20 October 2022 **Target Decision date:** 21 December 2022

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a semi-detached two-storey dwellinghouse located on Brunswick Hill, Reading. The surrounding area is the majority residential and the streetscene comprises of variety property in terms of 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 part two-storey and single-storey rear extension, set to replace the existing garage and single storey extension to the rear of the property. The two-storey element of the proposal seeks to stand at approximately 2m in depth, 2.8m in width, 5m from ground to eaves height & 6.5m in total height. The flat roof, single storey extension seeks to be erected at an approximate depth of 8.2m, 6.75m in width and 3.61m in total height.

Plans considered:

Received 20/10/22

Existing Ground Floor Plan - Drawing No. 3860/201

Existing First Floor Plan - Drawing No. 3860/102

Existing Site Plan - Drawing No. 3860/103

Existing Elevations 1 of 2 - Drawing No. 3860/104

Existing Elevations 2 of 2 - Drawing No. 3860/205

Block & Location Plan - Drawing No. 3860/200 rev. A

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Drawing No. 3860/201 rev. A

Proposed First Floor Plan - Drawing No. 3860/202 rev. A

Proposed Site Plan - Drawing No. 3860/203 rev. A

Proposed Elevations 1 of 2 - Drawing No. 3860/204 rev. A

Proposed Elevations 2 of 2 - Drawing No. 3860/205 rev. A

Received 16/12/22

Block & Location Plan - Drawing No. 3860/200 rev. C

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Drawing No. 3860/201 rev. C

Proposed Site Plan - Drawing No. 3860/203 rev. C

Proposed Elevations 1 of 2 - Drawing No. 3860/204 rev. C

Proposed Elevations 2 of 2 - Drawing No. 3860/205 rev. C

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

29 Brunswick Hill, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7YU

33 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

29 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

Letters of representation have been received as follows:

Objection

I wish to object to planning application 221573 at 31 Brunswick Hill. I reside at Number 29 and will be affected by this proposed plan.

I firstly would like to invite you to view the site from number 29 as it will show you more clearly the impact and the details in the below.

My reasons of objection are as follows:

The plans submitted have two glaring 2 omissions.

The first omission is there is no recognition of the height difference between the properties please see the proposed south and west elevations on 00517590. Brunswick Hill is indeed a hill and the street runs down the side of the Thames valley declining in a South to North orientation.

The terrace No 31 sits on is substantially higher, as they are south of No 29 therefore are uphill of No 29, this means elevations on our side of the boundary differ as our terrace is situated downhill of the plot on which No. 31 is built. Please see Photograph 6 showing the garage and its location from the front of 29 Brunswick hill.

This will make the building over bearing when viewed from our patio and garden and obliquely our living room as fundamentally the 31's ground level is at least 5 ft 4 inches, 1.62 meters, higher than 29, as measured at the start of the garage to the top of the retaining wall, see photograph 3 which is 31's ground level on entry to the garage. The plans have no recognition of this step down in any form. Photograph 3 shows the wall and has wheelie bins for a sense of scale.

I object to the new window being proposed which will directly overlook our patio and garden to the rear of number 29. There has not been a window at this point on the property see attached photographs 1 and 3.

The proposed window, as it is new as no other window exists at the moment, please see the attached photographs 1 and 3, would sit much higher when viewed from 29 than appears reasonable from the plot of number 31. From document 00517589 "proposed elevations 1 of 2" it seems to sit around 1.5 m to 2m from the ground level and is upon a plinth, to level the ground floor in the plans, which means even measuring to 31's ground level under shoots the true height of the proposal.

On this side however when you compare our measurements and to the proposed plans the bottom of the window will sit at the same height as the top of the greenhouse this is around 9ft 11 or 3 meters up from our ground level to re-enforce this point the eaves of the garage are in fact 11ft5 inches or 3.5 meters above our ground level, the eaves of number 29 sit at 16ft 4 inches 4.98 meters above ground level, the height difference when compared to the plans show thrge existing garage eaves to be only half way up the window. Due to this height difference this one storey extension actually sits nearly at our first floor level which is 9ft 3 or 2.84 meters above our ground level see photograph 5 which shows our bathroom window and the shadow that the roof line of the garage casts onto 29 and photograph 6 also illustrates this.

From photograph 1 and 3 you can see that this new window will clearly overlook our main recreational space/patio at the back of the property an area that has no window nor is overlooked currently either by 31 or 27. The proposed window is about halfway along the grey shortest in height wall about 1.5m from the end of the Greenhouse at the back of the garage. This will allow 31 to see the rear entrance of our property also the possibility of being able to also view our master bedroom albeit obliquely again being yet more reduction of privacy.

The fact that the building is to be more set back than currently will not negate the overbearing nature of the window and the total loss of privacy. As the height of the property proposed at 31 by comparison to 29 is very much higher and will have a panoramic view of our patio and garden please see photographs 7 and 8 to view the extend the proposed window could see.

The fence along the border either side of the garage is the same design of clapboard fence but there is a drop of 5ft 4 inches 1.62 metres that needs to be taken into account from the ground level of 31 to number 29, so a regular 5ft-6ft fence at our level is not appropriate and will not even reach the bottom of the window sill of this proposal even on top of the small grey wall which is two foot tall this is not enough either as that would be

8

ft high when needing a fence to be closer to 10-15 feet. Photographs 1,2,3 all show the gradual step downs. You can see how the current buildings impose upon the property without a window added in.

The second omission is the accuracy of the property boundary, shown in 00517580 & 00517586 ground floor plans, it is not correct it seems to insinuate that there is a fence and a gap of around 0.5m between the existing garage and the boundary when in fact this is closer to one course of bricks at maximum of 30 cm please see photographs 3 to 5, and that the garage and greenhouse in fact currently make up the border & Fence. Please see attach photographs 1,2,3 & 5 to show there is no fence and that this is a long-standing boundary as seen in photo. The border runs roughly down the middle or three quarters of the white painted brick retaining wall as you can see in photograph 5 by extrapolating the fence line from the higher level.

This does call in to question the accuracy of the plans and the extra considerations when you have such a height difference to take into consideration as well.

The second storey extension will affect light into the side of our property, 31 sits to the south of 29, up the hill, and as we have a window looking out onto our side access between the properties if any second storey is added this will cut down the light which will reach my property. It is consequence of this proposed action please see photograph 2 and 5 which show the relation of our window which allows light into the property.

To allow this development to go ahead would mean demolition of a wall that not only marks the border but we have no indication in these plans of any remedial works to stabilise removing a long-standing existing structure and replacing with a new structure, Why should 29 Brunswick hill be subject to the possible effects of works at number 31? When considering there is no indication on the plan to protect any retaining walls and to reinstate the border wall/fence and its height you would be pushed to agree to it.

We have received no correspondence from the owner/s of number 31 and we know that survey work has not been carried out from our side of the border in the formulation of the plans this can be seen on the survey points on any of the current plans or proposed plans. We are happy to allow access if it had actually been sought to initiate correspondence at the very least.

Proximity of works. Any demolition is noisy and intrusive works at 39 Brunswick hill and
53-

55 Argyle Road prove this. Vibration and noise can be felt and heard when in progress and these are 100-200 meters from our property not immediately next door less than 10ft away, the gap wall to wall is 5ft 10 inches, photograph 2 shows the proximity of any works to number 29. Our master bedroom and bathroom overlook the proposed site meaning

we will never be more than 10ft away of a morning when works commence so it will remove any ability to escape the works. We also have the luxury of working from home and one of our work stations is at the rear of our property in our living room meaning that we will have to endure several weeks or months of disruptive works when sitting only a few feet away.

I would also like to point out that on Brunswick hill in the past two to three years there have been multiple building works around No.29 we have had to endure: a 9 month redevelopment of number 27 our joined neighbour to an HMO which was noisy with intrusive works 6 days a week, the planning and redevelopment of 39 Brunswick hill, the ongoing redevelopment of 53-55 Argyle Road and the Reading West station redevelopment. All these have taken their toll on my physical and mental health and enjoyment of my property to allow another neighbour to develop on top of this would be subjecting us to nearly 4 years of constant disruptive works and drastically changing the environment in which I live, I appreciate this may not be known to the owners of Number 31. But I cannot blindly allow another set of disruptive works so close to my own property as it will add yet more strain at a very stressful and difficult time for everyone. I reiterate the need for a council inspection of the site to show the issues as they stand and

we are willing to communicate with Number 31 but given the short notice it is not possible to do this before the time for comments expires.

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 seeks to enhance and update the existing rear extension at the application site. These updates are considered to be favourable given the condition the existing extension stands in currently. It is considered that the modern update to the properties rear enhances the overall appearance of the property as a whole from the rear elevation and is considered to compliment the host dwelling in terms of character and design. Whilst the flat-roof design of the single-storey element of the rear extension is not entirely respectful to the host dwelling when referencing design, its siting at the rear of the property is considered favourable. This element of the proposal won't be entirely shielded from public view either, as the extension does protrude past the frontage of the property from the east elevation. However, it's considered that the siting and the lack of pattern on the streetscene render this acceptable on balance and is not considered to pose detrimental harm on the visual amenity of the area.

The two-storey rear element of the proposal is considered to be more respectful and complementary to the character of the host dwelling in terms of design. The roof of which is set down significantly from the existing ridgeline and the design of the roof is to match the host dwelling.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be 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.

An objection received raised concerns regarding the proposal's potential impact on a neighbouring property. The property in question, 29 Brunswick Hill, is set downhill from the application site. Comments received stated the potential impact of the proposal in terms of privacy, overbearing effects and sunlight/daylight issues. Given the existing situation on site with existing extensions to be removed. It is not considered that proposal in question would increase harm to the neighbouring property is permitted.

Although aforementioned siting of the application site and neighbouring property is recognised, it is paramount that impact on the neighbouring property is not further increased and any potential harm is mitigated. The two-storey element of the extension proposed does not seek to be erected greater than the width of the existing dwelling and its height is also not considered to pose further harm to the neighbouring property than already exists. The rear extension that currently exists at the application site sits on the boundary with 29 Brunswick Hill. Currently, this presents a blank façade for neighbours that is considered un-neighbourly. The replacement extension, however, seeks to be erected at 1m off of the boundary; considered to provide comfort to the neighbouring property and not pose a detrimental impact in terms of overbearing effects. The overall height of the proposal also does not seek to increase. The existing extension stands at 4m in total height and the proposal seeks to match this height. While it is important to

note that a change in roof design from pitched to flat meaning the ground to eaves height for the proposal will stand at under 4m from its deepest point, this is also because the ground slopes down towards the end of the garden plot to the rear of the property. The overall depth of the proposal seeks to decrease from the existing extension's depth by 3m, further considered to mitigate impact on residential amenity in terms of overbearing issues.

Revisions requested illustrated the removal of two windows to the north elevation. One first floor window on the two-storey aspect of the proposal and one ground floor window towards the left of the elevation in question. Both windows were considered to have the potential for a detrimental impact on privacy for neighbouring property, 29 Brunswick Hill. Revisions received illustrated the removal of the first-floor window and the ground floor window was replaced with a high-level window, being situated 1.6m from finished floor level.

Revisions also sought for significant decking included in the initial proposal to be removed or revised given officer concerns regarding privacy to neighbouring property, 33 Brunswick Hill. It is considered that due to the existing slope to the towards the rear of the garden at the application site that decking of some sort is required if significant landscaping is wanting to be avoided. However, the height of the initial decking included in plans stood at 1m; considered too high in comparison to the existing hedge line on the boundary of the two properties that stands at approximately 2.4m. Revisions illustrated a reduction to the decking height from 1m to 0.3m.

Overall, revisions received and relevant factors are considered to have mitigated residential amenity harm to neighbouring properties and the proposal is considered compliant with policies CC8 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

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
PD5