

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: 220230/HOU

Address: 22 Gurney Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LE

Proposals: Ground and first floor extensions following demolition of existing garage.

Case Officer: Beatrice Malama

Applicant: Martin Aves

Date received (valid from): 17 February 2022 **Target Decision date:** 14 April 2022

Site Visit: 10 October 2022

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Gurney Close is a located within a predominantly residential area comprising of two storey chalet style and single storey dwelling houses of different sizes and styles. Many houses on Gurney close are built of brick with gable end pitched roofs and small to medium sized rear gardens. The area is characterised by different types of extensions.

The application site is a two storey chalet style dwelling house located at the end Gurney Close. The house is built of brick with a gable end pitched roof. Due to its location at the end of the street, the property has a relatively larger back garden than most of the properties on Gurney Close. The property, like other properties within the immediate surrounding, has made some alterations to the original house which include a flat roofed single storey rear extension. The building is not listed and does not fall within a conservation area however the western half of the plot falls within an air Quality Management Area.

Site Photos:



Figure 1: 22 and 24 Gurney Close frontage

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application is for a two storey side extension, first floor rear extension with a balcony and single storey side extension. The new storey side extension in the western elevation would be 10.2m long by 3.6m deep. The first floor rear extension including the balcony would be full width of the existing house and a maximum depth of approximately 9.5m. The new single storey side extension in the eastern elevation would be 3m deep by 6.3m long. All the new elevations, except the new front elevation, would have flat roofs. Exterior wall finishes would be a combination of stained timber boarding, painted smooth render and brickwork.

Plans considered:

Drawing No. 21/18/01 - Existing Floor Plans

Drawing No. 21/18/02 - Existing Elevations

Drawing No. 21/18/03 - Proposed Plans and Elevations

Drawing No. 21/18/04 - Site, Block and Location Plans

Received on 17 February 2022

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning ref: 160470/HOU - Erection of front porch and single storey side & rear extension - Application Permitted - 26/ 7/2016

Application ref: 181224 - Demolition of existing garage and construction of new single storey side extension - Application Permitted - 7/ 9/2018

4. CONSULTATIONS

Evidence that a site notice was displayed on 2 March 2022 was received and the following addresses were consulted by letter.

192A Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7JU

182a Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JU

20 Gurney Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LE

24 Gurney Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LE

Two objection letters from adjoining properties have been received and the summary of objections is as follows:

- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Adverse impact on natural light
- Harm to outlook
- Design and finishes out of keeping with the existing house and surrounding area.
- Increased number of bedrooms would result in increased occupancy and consequently increased demand on parking.

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)

TR3 (Access Traffic and Highway-related Matters)

TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 Character and Appearance

- 6.1.1 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.
- 6.1.2 Gurney Close and the surrounding area is characterised by bungalows and chalet style two storey dwelling houses. Extensions to original houses are a common feature of the area. There are different types and sizes of extensions within the area.
- 6.1.3 22 Gurney Close is a two storey chalet styled dwelling house located at the end of the street. The building is built of brick with a gable end pitched roof. There is an existing detached side garage located on the western boundary and within the property's rear garden. There is an existing flat roof single storey rear extension measuring approximately 6m deep by 7.5m wide.
- 6.1.4 The proposed development would include a two storey and an upper floor extension in the western side elevation, an additional floor on top of the existing rear extension and a single storey side extension to the eastern side of the property. The new rear elevation would include a full width balcony. The new western side elevation would have a combination of brick and stained timber exterior and would have a combination of pitched roof in the front and the rest would be flat. The new upper floor rear extension and the single storey eastern side extension would have flat roofs. The new eastern side elevation would be a combination of brick (the lower half) and render (the upper half).

- 6.1.5 The proposed development both singularly, but also cumulatively would result in a substantial increase in the overall size of the house and would significantly alter the character and appearance of the original building. As a result of the extensions, the original house would be more than double the size of the original house. The scale of the proposal particularly the first floor extensions which would be an overdevelopment together with their flat roof design does not integrate with the character of the existing house nor that of surrounding properties. In addition, the use of three different exterior wall finishes would further detract from the appearance of the host house and the neighbouring properties. This is contrary to the requirements of policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation). On this basis the application is recommended for refusal.

6.2 Residential Amenity

- 6.2.1 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.
- 6.2.2 The new two storey side extension in the western elevation would be constructed on the property boundary with 24 Gurney close. This would bring the western side elevation of the host house much closer to no. 24.
- 6.2.3 There are existing windows of habitable rooms in the east facing elevation of the neighbouring property. As a result of the new two storey side extension, the neighbouring property would likely experience a reduction in the amount of natural light received. The applicant has not submitted any daylight/sunlight assessment to show lack of harm to the amount of light that the neighbouring property would be able to receive as such it is difficult to establish if the proposal would not cause harm to the living environment of the neighbouring property. In addition, given the scale and location on the property boundary, the proposal would likely result in an overbearing impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring occupiers. The proposed two storey side extension impacts too heavily on the neighbour's boundary given it has quite a large roof. This would create a quite enclosed space in the eastern side elevation of no. 24 and would create an oppressive and intrusive feeling on the neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.2.4 Whilst the proposed two storey side extension would not overlook the neighbouring property and would not cause loss of privacy, the proposed upper floor rear extension including the balcony *would* overlook the adjoining properties which would result in loss of privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring properties especially 192A Upper Woodcote Road which is located to the rear of the site. The introduction of a new upper floor in the rear elevation of the site with a full length and very wide opening and a full width balcony would create new harmful views. Given that 192A Upper Woodcote Road is a single storey dwellinghouse, the feeling of being overlooked would be much greater. This is exacerbated by the fact that a number of windows in the southern elevation of 192a face directly to the site's rear elevation. The applicant however does not appear to have acknowledged this and therefore no mitigation measures have been provided as part of the application.
- 6.2.5 Although it is acknowledged that there are existing trees along the northern side boundary which would provide some form of screening between neighbouring properties, the amount of screening that would be achieved from this would not be the same

throughout the year as such this would not be relied upon as a means of protecting the amenities of neighbouring properties.

- 6.2.6 In view of this, the proposed extension in its current form has been found to conflict with Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). This therefore forms the second reason for refusal.

6.3 Transport Matters

- 6.3.1 The proposal would result in the loss of an existing detached garage and the proposal has not made provision for alternative parking arrangements. Were the application otherwise acceptable, the applicant would have been advised to provide this information.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be unacceptable for the reasons set out below.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Application Refused

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. The application proposes extensions to the rear of the property at first floor, two storeys to the western side and single storey to the eastern side which are all flat-roofed, extensive in nature and finished with brick, painted render and stained timber, which would be harmful to the host property and the character of the suburban area through their size, scale and design. As such the application is considered to be harmful to the visual amenities of the area contrary to policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's SPD, A Design Guide to House Extensions (2021).
2. The application would introduce a new large opening and a full width balcony to the rear of the property at first floor, which would introduce new views and cause overlooking/privacy concerns to adjoining properties. Further, the proposal would introduce a long side flank wall which would impact too heavily on the neighbour's boundary and would create a quite enclosed space in the eastern side elevation of no. 24 and would create an oppressive and intrusive feeling on the neighbouring occupiers. For reasons of harm to privacy and overbearing effects the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's SPD, A Design Guide to House Extensions (2021).

Informatives

- Plans refused
- Positive and proactive requirement
- No pre-application advice