

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: 220192/FUL

Address: 31 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HE

Proposals: Two-storey rear extension with the addition of three dormer windows along the west elevation. Single storey side extension.

Case Officer: Beatrice Malama

Applicant: Mr James Pardoe

Date received (valid from): 14 February 2022 **Agreed Decision date:** 14 September 2022

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two storey detached chalet style dwelling house located north-east of Northcourt Avenue and located opposite the site across the street is an open field and beyond is Pearson Court. The site is one of the ten similar styled properties on this part of Northcourt Avenue which have a combination of redbrick and rendered exterior walls with gable end pitched roofs. The rear gardens for these properties fall within an Air Quality Management Area. A view of the area using aerial photos shows that a number of these houses have made various alterations to the original buildings. Alterations include roof dormers and side and rear extensions. The surrounding area is predominantly large, detached residential properties of varying design.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for a two storey rear extension and a single storey side extension. The rear extension would extend full width and 4m deep from the existing rear wall, and the side extension would measure 5.4m wide by 2.3m deep. The proposal includes three dormer windows within the roof slope of the north-western elevation and five new velux windows in the southern elevation. Exterior walls would be a combination brick and of render.

Plans considered:

Drawing No. 1 edition 1 - Existing Floor Plans

Drawing No. 2 edition 1 - Proposed Floor Plans

Drawing No. 3 edition 1 - Existing Elevations

Drawing No. 5 edition 1 - Existing and Proposed Block Plans

Proposed Elevations - 31 Northcourt Avenue

Location Map - 31 Northcourt Avenue

Received on 11 February 2022

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal - RBC Ecology

Initial comment from Ecology is as below:

The house may be used by roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so how bats will be affected by the proposals, a bat survey will need to be carried out. The survey will

need to be carried out prior to determination of the application or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided for the council to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process).

In response, the agent on 19th April 2022 submitted additional information to show that the bat survey was not required. However, as the information provided was not adequate to conclude that the proposal would not harm any protected species, RBC Ecology requested that a formal bat survey be conducted and a report submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the determination of the application. Below is the comment received on 9th May 2022.

“Most bats roost in crevices such as gaps under tiles etc. There are also records of bat roosts in the area, two within 100m and the gardens and trees at the rear of the property and elsewhere nearby provide good bat foraging habitat. Furthermore bats often roost in properties such as this one. As such, our advice is that unless a bat survey report by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist, is provided that the application be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided for the council to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process”.

A preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report Ref: R3153/a was received by the Local Planning Authority on 15th July 2022 and the ecologist was re-consulted. The following ecology comment was received.

“The bat survey (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, July 2022, ref: R3153/a) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There are therefore no objections to this application on ecology grounds”.

External

Confirmation that the site notice was displayed was received on 29th March 2022 and the following addresses were consulted by letter.

34 Shinfield Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 7BW
29 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 7HE
33 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HE

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)

H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

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.

31 Northcourt Avenue is one of the ten shallow bungalows north-east of Northcourt Avenue which have a combination of redbrick and rendered exterior walls with gable end pitched roofs and thus have a uniform character. Although a number of these properties have made some alterations to the original buildings, these have not significantly altered the original character of the buildings.

The proposal is for a two storey rear extension and a single storey side extension to be located near the rear end of the existing house. The proposal includes three dormer windows within the roof slope of the north-western elevation, five new velux windows in the southern elevation and a new small front facing window to be located above the existing first floor window. Exterior walls would be a combination of brick and render. The proposed development would mimic the permitted development at 33 Northcourt Avenue - the adjoining neighbouring property but with a few notable differences.

Given the design and the choice of exterior finishing materials, the proposed development is not considered to cause harm to the character of the original building. In addition, similar developments currently exist on the street therefore the proposal aligns with the prevailing street scene.

Overall the proposed developed is not considered to harm the character of the building, the neighbouring properties and the street scene as the proposed development would match other nearby properties with similar developments.

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 would introduce new side facing windows however these would only be openable above 1.7m from floor level. In addition, the proposed dormer windows would be obscured glazed and there are no existing windows in the southern elevation of no. 29 as such any overlooking and loss of privacy concerns are eliminated. However, in order to ensure that the amenities of the adjoining properties continue to be protected, a condition is attached.

Regarding access to natural light and overbearing effects, since the existing separation gaps between the neighbouring upper floors would be retained, the amount of natural light received by the adjoining properties would not likely reduce significantly. This is in addition to the orientation of existing buildings which have north and south facing side elevations and the existing relationship with neighbouring buildings. Further, given the size of the proposed development and the relationship with adjoining neighbouring properties, the proposal is not considered to have any overbearing effects on the neighbours.

With regard to garden and other outdoor amenity space, given the size of the proposed rear and side extensions in relation to the existing garden space, the amount of useable amenity space would not be reduced to an unacceptable degree.

In light of the above, the proposal is not considered to cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of neighbouring occupants. This aligns with the policies identified above.

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

Application Permitted

CONDITIONS

Time Limit (Standard)

Approved Plans

Materials to Match

Obscure Glazing and non-openable up to 1.7m above floor level