

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 21/03/22

Application No: 220098/FUL

Address: 82-84 Whitley Street

Proposal: Single storey front extension to shop (retrospective)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Site Description and Surrounding Area

82-84 Whitley Street comprises a two storey end-of-terraced building, at the junction with Essex Street. The site is within Whitley Street Major Local Centre, but does not form part of its Key Frontage. The ground floor of the building is occupied by Exotic Food Market, a grocery shop. Residential accommodation is located at the first floor. A single storey extension, subject of this application, has been erected to the shop frontage forming a covered, outdoor display area for fresh fruit and vegetables. The surrounding area has a mixed commercial and residential character.

Proposal

The application seeks retrospective permission for the erection of a single storey front extension to the shop. The extension extends across the full width of the shop, projecting to a depth of 3.7m. Fascia signage is located to each elevation, contributing to a total height of 3.8m. An opaque roller shutter is located to the front elevation, which is raised during shop opening hours.

Plans Considered

The applicant supplied the following, received 25/01/22:

Planning Statement

Site Location

Drawing No: 220101-2 - Block Plan

Drawing No: 220101-3 - Site Plan

Drawing No: 220101-4 - Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 220101-5 - Elevations

Relevant Planning History

220099/ADV - Display of illuminated and non-illuminated fascia and hoarding signs to front and side of building, in association with single storey front extension of shop (retrospective) - to be determined

Consultation Responses

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Raised no objections to the proposal. Advised that no part of the public footway should be encroached or obstructed.

Neighbouring owners and occupiers at were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. Two letters of representation were received with regard to the following:

- The extension blocks lights to 80 Whitley Street
- The LED lighting causes distress to neighbours
- Issues regarding bin storage and vermin
- The extension causes obstruction for pedestrians and cyclists and obscures visibility of cars exiting Essex Street

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy RL1 - Network and Hierarchy of Centres

Policy RL3 - Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

Policy OU4 - Advertisements

Policy OU5 - Shopfronts and Cash Machines

Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (2022)

Appraisal

The ground floor of 82-84 Whitley Street has an established use as a grocery shop, suitable given the sites location within Whitley Street Major Local Centre. Prior to the erection of the extension subject of this application, a retractable canvas canopy was located to the shopfront:



82-84 Whitley Street Google Street View, dated May 2014

As can be seen in the image above, a consistent building line is presented along the terraced row. This building line is distorted by the extension, which exacerbates its visual impact. At a depth of 3.7m, the extension is clearly discernible when approaching from the north and south.

The external faces of the extension have a grey, metallic appearance, with the side elevations covered by large acrylic hoardings (subject of application 220099/ADV). The hoardings are particularly garish, with the overall appearance of the extension being discordant with the simple rendered facades of the host building.

By virtue of its depth and the inharmonious choice of external materials, the extension has an overscaled and incongruous appearance which creates a sense of overbearingness, detracting from the character of the original building and the visual amenity of the wider area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 and OU5 and the Shopfronts SPD.

Representations to this application raised concerns with regard to impact of the extension on neighbouring residential amenity, particularly with regard to loss of light. The image below illustrates the relationship between the extension and the closest window serving a habitable room at a neighbouring property; in this instance the ground floor window at 80 Whitley Street. This window is approximately 2.5m from the extension.



Google Street View, dated August 2021

While clearly noticeable from this window, it is considered that the extension is sufficiently distant from it that no significant harm is caused to neighbouring residential amenity in terms of loss of light or overshadowing.

Further concerns were raised with regard to unsatisfactory bin storage. Officers share these concerns, noting that the site has a cluttered and untidy appearance. Were officers minded to accept the extension, further scrutiny would be given to ensuring adequate bin storage.

Conclusion

For the reason of its excessive depth and unsympathetic design, the extension has been found to be contrary to the identified policy and guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE