

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: 220057/HOU

Address: 51 Westwood Glen, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5NW

Proposals: Erection of fence to surround land to the East of Property and its change of use to residential garden.

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Applicant: Mr Daniel White

Date received (valid from): 8 March 2022

Target Decision date: 3 May 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site comprises a two storey semi-detached dwelling, located at the junction with Lower Elmstone Drive. A single storey side extension (as approved under application 211176/HOU) was under construction at the time of the application submission. The sideward site boundary curves from front to rear. Part of the land was formerly a wide grass verge of the highway, but has recently been stopped up. The dwelling is clearly visible from public areas, to the front, side and rear. The surrounding area is residential in character, of a mix of styles and design. The site topography slopes gradually in a northerly direction.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for the erection of fence, to enclose the land which has been stopped up, to form part of the garden of 51 Westwood Glen. The fence would be close-boarded, standing at a height of 1.8m.

The applicant supplied the following, received on 14/01/22:

Drawing No: GIS00232 - Plan for Stopping Up of Highway

Subsequently the applicant supplied the following, received on 15/03/22:

Drawing No: 01 - Site Location, Block Plan and Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 02 - Existing and Proposed Elevations

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

131319/CLP - Use of no. 51 & no. 53 Westwood Glen as one property - Permitted 08/11/13

191415/HOU - Single storey side extension - Permitted 31/10/19

211176/HOU - Single storey side extension - Permitted 10/09/21

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter:

30 Westwood Glen, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5NW

30A Westwood Glen, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5NW

23 Lower Elmstone Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5EB

25 Lower Elmstone Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5EB

27 Lower Elmstone Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5EB

28 Lower Elmstone Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5EB

29 Lower Elmstone Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5EB

53 Westwood Glen, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5NW

4.2 One representation has been received, with regard to the following:

- Querying land ownership

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Confirmed that the land subject of the application has officially been stopped up, and is no longer public highway. Raised no objections to the proposal.

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)

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)

6. APPRAISAL

Policy CC7 requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area. The Design Guide to House Extensions SPD provides specific guidance on the erection of fences/walls. The guidance states that proposals that would close off views or change the character of a street will be resisted, unless positive improvement can be demonstrated. The guidance also states that proposals should ensure that a closed off effect is not created in an otherwise open plan street scene, particularly relevant in areas where the character is spacious and verdant.

The junction of Westwood Glen at Lower Elmstone Road is characterised by wide, open spaces on each side of the highway; a prominent feature of the street scene which is clearly visible when approaching from the north, south and west. These spaces make a positive contribution to the overall character of the area. A 1.8m high close-boarded fence in this location would constitute a visually dominant form of development, resulting in harm to the open, landscaped character of the area.

During the course of the application the applicant was invited to supply amended plans, to reduce the height and visual prominence of the fence. No amended plans have been forthcoming so the decision has been taken to determine the application on the basis of the plans originally supplied.

7. CONCLUSION

By virtue of its height and proximity to the highway, the fence would constitute a visually dominant form of development, resulting in harm to the open, landscaped character of the area. The proposal is therefore of poor design, contrary to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021).

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Application Refused