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28th May 2020

Your contact is:

Anthony Scholes, Planning & Building Control

Without prejudice

Dear Mr Emmett

Re: 200276/PREAPP - Pre-application advice for 34A Church Road - Two storey rear extension, internal and external alterations and replacement garage

Please accept apologies for any delay in this pre-application response. Please be advised the following comments are the informal opinion of an Officer and without prejudice to any decision that may be made should an application be submitted.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The 0.07 ha site is formed of a triangular shape with a frontage to Church Road, a main route West from the District Centre of Caversham. The existing building, is a part single storey, part two-storey colourwashed brick building with a detached single storey garage structure to the side. The building is linked with, and connected to the adjacent Grade II listed building (43 Church Road) and is within the St Peters Conservation Area, it is also opposite Caversham Court Registered park and garden.

2. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of the demolition of the existing detached garage, followed by the construction of a two-storey rear extension, replacement garage, attached to the main dwelling by a single storey linking structure.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

92-00513-LBC (920386) - To change external colour scheme from white walls/white windows and blue window frames to 'cream' walls or white windows and frames. CONSENT GRANTED 1/10/1992

120645/PREAPP - Removal of plywood debris plate and replacement with the fire retardant alternative and installation of new wood burning stove together with flexible stainless steel line. Reinstatement of chimney pot externally. OBSERVATIONS SENT 26/2/2013

170503/LBC - Removal of cement render to first floors level and impermeable masonry paint to all external elevations and replacement with lime render and mineral paint finish. CONSENT GRANTED 23/5/2017

181784/TPO - Twin stem Sycamore located on the bank to rear of garage The tree has attained approximately 25-30% of its full growth potential and appears to be impacting on the side wall of the existing garage to the extent where it's distorting it. There is also extensive squirrel damage in upper canopy. To dismantle in sections to ground level and treat stump to inhibit regeneration, Sycamore located to the rear of the house, on the bank Tree has attained 25-30% of its growth potential, and given that it's on the side of the bank, very close to the rear of the property, permission is requested to remove it. To dismantle in sections to ground level and treat stump to APPROVED 28/11/2018

4. RELEVANT POLICIES

Any application at the site would be considered within the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents would also be applied where relevant, together with national guidance (the NPPF).

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CC2: Sustainable design and construction

CC3: Adaption to climate change

CC5: Waste minimisation and storage

CC7: Design and the public realm

CC8: Safeguarding amenity

EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment

EN3: Enhancement of conservation areas

EN6: New development in a historic context

EN12: Biodiversity and the green network

EN14: Trees, hedges and woodland

EN15: Air quality

EN16: Pollution and water resources

H9: House extension and ancillary accommodation

H10: Private and communal outdoor space

TR3: Access, traffic and highway related matters

TR5: Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

5. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Design considerations
- b) Amenity Impacts
- c) Environmental protection
- d) Transport matters
- e) Sustainability

a) Design Considerations

The recently adopted Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) includes a number of new policies relating to buildings, areas, and monuments of historic significance. Specifically, policies EN1, EN3, and EN6, which cumulatively seek to ensure that all proposals which have the potential to affect elements of the historic environment, including listed buildings (including the setting of), conservation areas, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, and other features of local or national significance must protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings. In addition, Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will only be acceptable where it: respects the character and appearance of the house; respects the pattern of neighbouring properties; does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or large blank façade to public areas; and does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.

The proposal would potentially affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (CA) and also the setting of the Listed Building. The proposed extensions would be partially visible from the roadside, but the change to the garage roof pitch should be an improvement in its appearance. The small link building with the slate roof has the potential to look incongruous especially in contrast to the extension with the vertical timber cladding and a living roof and zinc roof to the rear. Overall, it is not considered that the proposal would significantly harm the LB setting or the CA but the design with respect to the link structure, could be improved. It is suggested that the link structure and its roof are made less visible, or designed in such a way that it would be clearly viewed as part of the new building and constructed with lightweight materials.

The design, due to its location, would not introduce large blank facades to public areas, nor would it result in an overbearing impact to adjoining properties. It would also respect the character of the original house, giving a clear separation between historic elements and new to allow visual identification of characterful elements of the building. The 'living roof' could also result in a net increase in biodiversity of the site.

It is not considered that the proposal would result in a significant loss of private amenity space for the existing dwelling and would be acceptable in this regard.

b) Amenity impacts

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that: *"Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.."* Note: Noise and disturbance will be covered in a separate section below.

The proposed development has been sufficiently set-off the boundary to the adjoining property to negate any possible impacts in terms of outlook. In addition, the orientation would be unlikely to result in a significant loss of daylight/sunlight to the adjoining property. As above, it is not considered that the extension would be overbearing to the adjoining property. The side facing doors for the bedroom at ground floor, would likely be screened from views from the rear garden of the adjoining property by fencing. However, no details have been provided of the existing fencing, and as such should be shown in any future application to ensure this relationship is appropriate in this regard.

The proposed terrace to the rear of the first floor bedroom (as proposed) would also have the possibility to reduce privacy to adjoining properties, particularly the rear garden and rear facing windows, as well as the privacy of occupants of no.34a with regard to this sitting out area. As such, it is considered that an element of privacy screening be considered and shown on a sectional plan (it appears that some form of structure is shown, however this should be clarified).

c) Environmental protection

Natural Environment (trees)

There is a protected Lime tree (T8 of TPO 70/03) to the front of the property within the curtilage of Woodrow Court. The property and its surrounds are within the St. Peters Conservation Area which also affords a certain level of protection to the trees in the area. The property is also within the identified Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where the preservation and retention of large canopy trees is of greater importance.

In view of this, the impact of the proposed development on trees will need to be considered. Based on a desktop assessment of the application, although the extension directly to the rear of the property is not expected to impact on trees, the moving back of the garage footprint, away from the road, may impact on trees particularly if it involves any excavation into the raised bank.

In view of this, any future planning application is to be supported by a BS:5837 tree survey and plan. If the build requires excavation into the bank within the root protection area (RPA) of trees then an Arboricultural Impact Assessment is likely to be required. However, if the garage does not require any excavation within the bank / or RPA of trees then it is likely that we will only need a short Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) to outline the steps, which will be taken in order to prevent any harm to the TPO Lime tree at the front of the property during the course of the building works.

Natural environment (Ecology)

The buildings may host 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 to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process).

A presence / absence bat survey is normally undertaken in two stages, firstly a preliminary roost assessment, whereby the inside and outside of the building is surveyed for bats and signs of bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.

If bats are found or features within the building have the potential to support roosting bats and these will be affected by the proposals, further dusk emergence and or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during the bat active season (i.e. between May and the end of August/ sub optimally until mid-October) would need to be carried out. The applicant would then need to submit the results of the survey(s) along with any associated mitigation strategy prior to determination of the application.

Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey bats.

You are advised to take these matters into account when progressing your proposals.

d) Transport matters

The proposed development does not result in the loss of any on-site carparking, nor does it increase the intensity of the use of the property. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

e) Sustainability

The proposed measures to address policy CC2 and CC3 are considered appropriate and would be acceptable.

6. PROCEDURAL POINTS

Submitting a valid application - Prior to the submission of any future application you are advised to consider the Council's validation checklist (available via the website), which provides details as to the level and nature of information required to validate an application. The determination period for the Council to consider your application will only begin once all the necessary information to validate the application has been received. This should include:

- All necessary part 1 requirements
- Ecological survey/reports (minimum Phase 1 report as outlined above)
- Materials Details
- Existing and proposed plans
- Planning Statement
- Vehicle parking and waste collection details

Wider consultation in advance of any submission - In line with paragraph 189 of the National Planning

Policy Framework, you are encouraged to engage with your neighbour prior to submission of an application.

7. CONCLUSION

In summary, the development is in general terms considered to be an acceptable design response that would conserve and enhance the appearance of the conservation area, and the setting of the adjoining listed building. Although an alternative design response to the linking element should be considered to appear more congruous with the proposed modern extension. This advice is given on a without-prejudice basis and not all policies have been considered. This advice is in good faith and will not over-ride the formal consideration of a planning application by the Council. The responses received from consultees may also affect the

decision period if matters are raised which were not addressed at pre-application stage or require consideration before a decision is made.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact me on the number given above.

Yours Sincerely,

Anthony Scholes

Anthony Scholes

Senior Planning Officer