

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 211768/HOU

Address: 28 Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5RY

Proposals: Single storey side and rear extension and associated works, and creation of vehicular access with associated landscaping

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Applicant: Ms Eliska Jenner

Date received (valid from): 28 October 2021

Target Decision date: 23 December 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site comprises a semi-detached dwelling. A two storey outrigger and a conservatory project to the rear. A low brick wall and metal railings/pedestrian gate extend across the site frontage. The site is located within South Park Conservation Area which has a residential character, with buildings dating to the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

The South Park Conservation Area Appraisal notes that the retention of boundary walls and railings, together with mature tree cover, give the area its coherence and provide a setting for individual properties and the character of the Conservation Area as a whole. The Appraisal states that the loss of original brick walls/railings to create frontage parking, and the use of non-traditional materials, have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for a single storey side and rear extension and associated works, and the creation of a vehicular access with associated landscaping. The extension would be facilitated by the demolition of the existing conservatory, infilling the area aside the outrigger. A box window would project from the side of the extension. The extension would have a flat roof with a parapet extending above to a maximum height of 3.2m. The extension would be finished in standing seam zinc cladding in pigment red, with Crittal style aluminium windows and doors. Two narrow windows would be installed to the existing side elevation at the ground floor. A roof light would be installed to the rearward roof slope.

Two sections of the existing front boundary wall and railings would be removed to create new pedestrian and vehicular accesses. A pedestrian gate measuring 0.9m in width would be installed directly in front of the existing main entrance, with a tiled path laid behind. A sliding gate measuring 2.4m in width, recessed back slightly from the retained boundary wall and railings, would be installed to the opposite side of the site frontage to facilitate access to a newly created off-road parking space and electric vehicle charging point. A dropped kerb and vehicle crossing measuring 3m in width is proposed forward of the sliding gate. Both gates would match the appearance of the retained railings. The existing hedge to the site frontage would be trimmed to a height of 1.8m, with a small scheme of landscaping proposed behind.

The agent supplied the following, received on 28/10/21:

Design & Access Statement

Drawing No: AP.10 - Site Location and Block Plan

Drawing No: AP.01 - Existing Floor Plans

Drawing No: AP.04 - Proposed Floor Plans

Drawing No: AP.02 - Existing Front and Rear Elevations
Drawing No: AP.03 - Existing Side Elevation
Drawing No: AP.05 - Proposed Front and Rear Elevations
Drawing No: AP.06 - Proposed Side Elevation
Drawing No: AP.07 - Indicative Rear View
Drawing No: AP.08 - Indicative Side View

The original proposal included the total removal of the existing boundary wall, railings and hedge, and the provision of bicycle and bin storage to the side of the property. The agent was advised on 21/12/21 of significant concerns held with the proposal, principally relating to the loss of the boundary wall and railings. The agent was advised that the proposals would cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and that the application was subject for refusal.

Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 04/01/22:

Drawing No: AP.04 Rev. 01 - Proposed Floor Plans
Indicative Front View x2
Detail of existing brickwork
Detail of proposed cladding

The amendment proposed the retention of much of the existing boundary wall and railings, with the provision of pedestrian and vehicular gates to the parts that would be removed. The location of the proposed off-road parking space was changed to be positioned to the side of the property. The position of the bicycle and bin storage was proposed to be moved to the front of the property. The agent was advised on 03/02/22 that the amendments broadly overcame the issues raised previously, but that there were a number of matters still to be addressed.

Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 14/02/22:

Drawing No: AP.10 Rev. 01 - Site Location and Block Plan
Drawing No: AP.05 - Proposed Front and Rear Elevations
Drawing No: AP.06 Rev. 02 - Proposed Side Elevation
Drawing No: AP.11 - Proposed Landscaping Plan and Railing Elevation

Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 15/02/22:

Drawing No: AP.04 Rev. 01 - Proposed Floor Plans

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

181243/HOU - Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing utility room.
Insertion of three roof lights - Permitted 13/09/18

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

4 Marquis Place, Granby Gardens, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5RT
30A Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5RY
30 Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5RY
26 Eastern Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5RY
5 Marquis Place, Granby Gardens, Reading, RG1 5RT

Three letters of representation have been received, raising matters summarised as follows:

- The demolition of the existing boundary wall and railings would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

- The submission is misleading and contains omissions and inaccuracies
- The creation of an off-road parking space to alleviate on-street parking issues does not outweigh the loss of the boundary wall and railings

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Advised that tracking diagrams would be required to illustrate how the vehicle would access/egress the proposed parking space. Advised that a section of boundary wall should be retained to ensure that vehicles do not overhang or block the footway, or undertake illegal manoeuvres over the footway. *Officer note: this consultation response related to the parking arrangement as originally proposed*

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee

No response received to consultation.

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)

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity
Policy EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
Policy EN3 - Enhancement of Conservation Areas
Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and the Green Network
Policy EN14 - Trees, Hedges and Woodland
Policy H9 - House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

South Park Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

6. APPRAISAL

Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CC7 requires that all development be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Policy EN3 requires that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, with positive consideration given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of Conservation Areas.

The proposed extension would infill the area aside the outrigger, following the demolition of the existing conservatory and a lean-to. The extension would have a contemporary appearance, finished in zinc cladding. The extension is sufficient in its scale and proportion that it would appear as a subservient addition to the original dwelling. While the choice of materials would differ significantly from those of the original building, the extension would not be clearly visible from public areas and is considered to be of high quality design. On this basis, the proposed extension is not considered to significantly detract from the original buildings appearance or the character of the Conservation Area.

The original proposal included the complete removal of the existing boundary wall and railings, to facilitate access to an off-road parking space at the front of the property. As noted above, one of the key characteristics of the South Park Conservation Area are boundary walls and railings to property frontages. The Appraisal notes that the loss of boundary walls and railings to create frontage parking has a negative impact on the Conservation Area. This is corroborated by Policy EN3.

Following officer comments on the original proposals, amendments have been supplied during the course of the application. The amended proposals retain much of the existing boundary wall and railings, with those parts to be removed replaced by pedestrian and vehicular gates. The proposed gates would match the style and design of the existing railings which is deemed acceptable. While the proposal would introduce a frontage parking space, at conflict with the identified policy, it would be part of an overall improvement and enhancement of the site. The proposed development is considered to be of high quality design, suitable for the Conservation Area setting. The improvements to the site frontage in terms of landscaping are considered to offset some of the harm caused by removing part of the existing boundary treatment. The amended proposals are deemed to represent an overall enhancement of the site, with no significant harm caused to the original building or the character of the wider Conservation Area.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The proposed extension would extend aside the existing outrigger, with a sufficient distance maintained to the boundary with no. 30. The extension would not be excessive in height, and would not cause any significant visual dominance, light loss or overbearing effects to neighbouring properties. A low boundary wall currently separates the application site from no. 30. A level of overlooking between the properties therefore already exists, with clear views into and out of the respective rear gardens. The provision of a box window to the side elevation of the proposed extension, along with further fenestration to the side elevation of the existing dwelling, will certainly not reduce the level of overlooking/issues of privacy that currently exists, but it is not considered to make the existing situation significantly worse. Were either the occupants of no. 28 or no. 30 particularly concerned about loss of privacy from these windows, fencing or a wall could be erected up to a height of 2m without requiring planning permission.

Transport

The proposed parking space meets the basic size requirement, as set out in the Parking Standards SPD, and would also provide access to an electric vehicle charging point. A dropped kerb and vehicle crossing is proposed to facilitate access to this space. A licence to undertake works will be required from the Highway Authority prior to commencement.

Natural Environment

The proposal includes a small scheme of landscaping, will contribute to an overall enhancement of the site. This will be secured by condition.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Application Permitted