

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: 201166/HOU

Address: 11 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BY

Proposals: Proposed boundary with 925mm high brick wall with railings on top and matching 2000mm high railings for gates with brick piers 2100mm high fronting on to Whiteknights Road.

Case Officer: Julie Williams

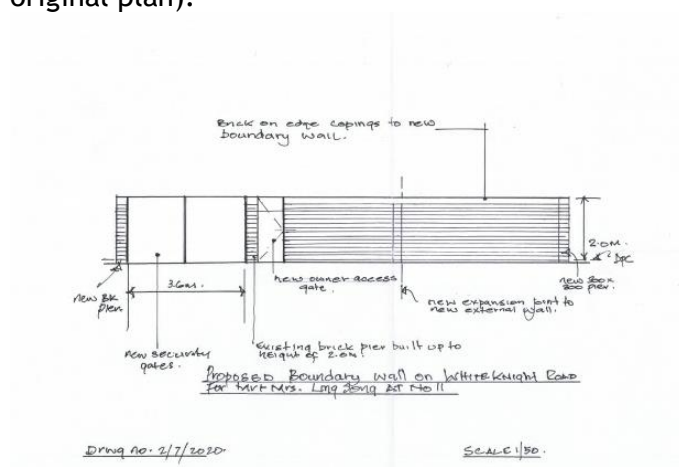
Date received (valid from): 18 August 2020 Target Decision date: 15 June 2021

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application site comprises a two storey detached dwelling, located to the north of Whiteknights Road. The University of Reading Whiteknights Campus is located to the south of the site. An original attached garage to the westward side of the dwelling has been altered, extended to the rear and converted to habitable accommodation. A further single storey extension projects the length of the original eastward side elevation and slightly forward of the principal elevation. No planning permission exists for either extension. The surrounding area is residential in character, comprised of detached dwellings of differing styles.



The proposed development is to change the existing low brick wall front boundary. The original scheme was a solid brick wall and found to be unacceptable in appearance - see original plan):



The design was then amended to part wall/part railings as shown on submitted on 4th June 2021.

Plans considered:

Location & Site Plans and Drawing 2/7/2020 (shown above) received 18 August 2020
Amended Drawing P/GW/2037/1



PLANNING HISTORY

210328/HOU - Single storey rear extension. Refused - appeal pending.

CONSULTATIONS

Statutory or Internal consultations:

Transport:

There are no objections to the gate as there are already gates in situ, however there is a concern whether the proposed 2m high fence will obstruct visibility, therefore visibility splays of 2.4m x 70m are requested.

Transport were asked to comment on the amended plans replacing solid fence with wall and railings on top and confirmed comments as before.

Public consultations:

The following addresses were consulted by letter on 25 August 2020 and then reconsulted on amended plans in June 2021.

13 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BY
9 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BY

One letter of representation received against the original and amended plans.

The objector states on the amended plans:

We have a number of concerns:

- There are no other houses close by with a similar style of wall. Those immediate houses from No 15 upwards are open fronted with no front wall. From No 11 down to Eastern Avenue, all the houses have low walls with hedges of shrubs and flowers behind them.
- No mention is made of what building materials are intended to be used and how they are to blend in with neighbouring houses.
- The proposed wall is out of keeping with its neighbours. There is one house some 200 metres further along Whiteknights Road, with a similar arrangement to that proposed, but there the wall is lower than the proposed wall and the house set back and lower than the road, so it does not dominate the surrounding houses.
- The height of the proposed wall and its piers is significantly higher than the existing brick pier between No 9 and No 13. The existing pier is 146cm high from a concrete base. At 2100cm the

proposed height of the new pier with its capping stone would be 64 cm above the height of the existing pier and dominate it and the front of No 9, giving a feeling of oppression to neighbours.

- *The proposal does not show precisely on what line the proposed wall is to be built. It does not show how the boundaries and existing fences and gate pillars are to be protected. Their integrity needs to be protected.*
- *The current pier between No 9 and No 13 is jointly owned. No permission has been requested from No 9 for it to be demolished and a new pier as indicated in the application, built. Will the proposed pier where the wall abuts the boundary to No 9 be free standing and the existing pier be untouched? The existing pier supports the front gates to No 9 and its north face supports the post for the close board fencing between the two properties.*

Officer note: The applicant's agent was made aware of the concerns that relate to party wall aspects – shown in italic type above. The matters to do with appearance are addressed below.

Ward Councillor Josh Williams also made contact regarding the proposal and previous planning history.

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 & GUIDANCE

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with policies in 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 current development plan is:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

SPG/SPD

- A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG (2021)

ASSESSMENT

The consideration of the proposed development was hampered by the imposed lockdowns in place when first submitted, by a new application submitted for extensions (see planning history above), a change in agent and case officer and questions raised by an enforcement investigation started in late 2019 following allegations that the single property had been subdivided to two dwellings without planning permission.

Officers were concerned for the appearance of the original design and shared the concerns of the neighbour in terms of fitting in with the character and appearance of the main house and area. However, reaching a recommendation on the amended proposal was delayed until it could be confirmed if a breach of planning control had taken place at the property. The enforcement investigation confirmed that as of December 2021 the property was a single dwelling and so the case could proceed.

Some of the concerns raised by the neighbour (boundary and future maintenance issues) are matters to be resolved between the neighbours and have been passed to the applicant to consider. On the comments about the design and appearance, it must be accepted that individual owners may wish to have a design not be to everyone else's taste but while different there is nothing intrinsically wrong with what is currently proposed, subject to the materials and build being of an acceptable standard. The combination of low wall and railings is found on many residential properties and is generally a good way of providing security while retaining an open aspect. The amended plan indicates visibility splays as requested by the transport officer and a condition can be used to ensure that this splay is provided.

In terms of the concerns about the height of the gate pier on the boundary being imposing on the neighbour clearly it will be higher than the existing brick pillar but as it the gate pier its impact will be small and at the very front of the property. The level of harm likely to be caused is too insignificant to warrant refusal on the basis on policy CC8.

The conclusion reached is that the proposed amended design of the new boundary would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the original building or those of neighbouring properties. As such the proposal is found to be in accordance with Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), CC8 (Safeguarding amenity) and H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance "A Design Guide to House Extensions" (2021).

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant

Conditions:

3 years

Materials to match the bricks on the main house with railing design as shown on plans

Visibility splay retained

Informative:

Standard

Advise about internal sub-division.