

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: 211782/HOU

Address: 7 Grass Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TJ

Proposals: First floor extension over existing kitchen and bedrooms to create new Master Suite, including new side dormer and glazed gable end

Case Officer: James Schofield

Date received (valid from): 1 November 2021 Target Decision date: 21st January 2022 (Ext)

1. INTRODUCTION

The application relates to a two-storey detached dwelling on a site with a relatively steep topographical gradient. Consequently, the site is higher than its neighbour to the south and lower than the neighbour to its north. The ground floor of the dwelling is at the same level as the access, while the lower level is a walk-out and at the same level as that part of the garden. Overall the architectural style is modern and eclectic. The roof is made up of two gable-ended components in a 'L' shaped pattern. The site includes several notable trees; some of which are covered by a Tree Protection Order. The site has been identified as lying within an area suitable as habitat for protected species.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is to add a first floor over parts of the existing ground floor and some changes to materials on various elevations. Plans considered:

Drawing No: BA0190-01 - Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No: BA0190-02 - Existing Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No: BA0190-03 - Existing Elevations 1 of 2
Drawing No: BA0190-04 - Existing Elevations 2 of 2
Drawing No: BA0190-05 - Existing Site and Location Plan
Drawing No: BA0190-08 - Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans
Drawing No: BA0190-09 - Proposed Elevations 1 of 2
Drawing No: BA0190-10 - Proposed Elevations 2 of 2
Drawing No: BA0190-11 - Proposed Site and Location Plan
Bat Survey - SPH/PEA-21/29.09
As received 1st of November 2022

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Extract from planning history in 97-00358-FUL:

4395	Four houses	REFUSED 3/57, Appeal ALLOWED 9/57
5369	Two houses/bungalows	GRANTED 11/57

The above were unimplemented outline consents without specific siting.

6025	Bungalow and garage	GRANTED 9/58 (existing house no.7)
88TP647	4-bed house	GRANTED 5/88 (unimplemented)
89/0629/FD	Erection of house	GRANTED 8/89 (unimplemented)
96/0757/FD	Erection of house	Ongoing application

None of the above applications relate to the same siting as the proposal under consideration, the three latest schemes being sited nearer to the southern boundary of the site.

App Ref: 890110/89-00629-FUL

Description: Erection of one single family house and separate double garage to serve existing house.

Decision: Permitted 10th of August 1989 (committee 28/6/1989)

Comment: Record on microfiche.

App Ref:	960890/96-00757-FUL
Description:	Erection of Single detached house and garage. New driveway and ancillary engineering works.
Decision:	Refused 13 th of November 1996 (committee 13/11/1996).
Comment:	Record on microfiche.
App Ref:	970416/97-00358-FUL
Description:	Erection of two storey dwelling and detached garage.
Decision:	Refused 24 th of July 1997.
Comment:	Refused due to impact on character and privacy of the dwelling.
App Ref:	041361/04-00541-FUL
Description:	Single storey rear extension.
Decision:	Permitted 4 th of November 2004.
Comment:	Significantly increased size/footprint of the dwelling. Archaeological survey work was required for any excavation work.
App Ref:	181683
Description:	Demolition of existing ground floor extension with roof terrace over and replacement with single storey ground floor side extension with roof terrace over.
Decision:	Permitted 20 th of November 2018.
Comment:	Did not significantly increase footprint.
App Ref:	211619
Description:	Both trees are Fraxinus excelsior. Numbers G7 on the tree preservation order for 7 Grass Hill Both trees need to be extensively pollarded.
Decision:	Refused 16 th of November 2021.
Comment:	Inadequate evidence/information supplied to support proposal.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Neighbours

Council records indicate that the Site Notice was duly displayed for 21 days prior to the date of determination. The following addresses were consulted by letter.

5 Grass Hill, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7TJ
5a Grass Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TJ
8 Kelmscott Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DG
3 Courtlands, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DH
2 Courtlands, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DH
1 Courtlands, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DH
9 Grass Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TJ

One objection letter was received from residents at 3 Courtlands, St Peter's Avenue with concerns relating to a curtailing of their view of the river valley. While the Officer is sympathetic to the concern relating to this impact, it is noted that while the proposal site falls within protected views #1 and 3 of policy EN5 (Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest), the proposal would not have a material impact on the views in question as viewed from the relevant viewing points. Views out from residential properties in this area are not directly protected by policy beyond considerations of character, access to light or privacy. Please see the assessment for further detail on this matter.

4.2 Ecology

No objection on ecological grounds as bat survey indicated there was no meaningful risk of harm to protected species of bats and the survey was conducted properly.

4.3 Trees

No objections further to condition L7A requiring the implementation of the Arboricultural Impact Statement to be carried out as specified.

5. 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.

6. 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 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

EN5 Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest

EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network

H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (adopted 2021)

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Principle of Development

The application seeks permission to add an additional storey to the dwelling. Such domestic works are supported in principle by Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Local Plan (2019) subject to a number of criteria ensuring the effects of such extensions and alterations respect its context and are not harmful. These considerations will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

7.2 Character, scale and siting

Local Policy CC7 states that, development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in Reading in which it is located. Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it: respects the character of the house, respects the pattern of neighbouring properties, and does not present a large blank façade to public areas.

It is noted that while the proposal site falls within protected views #1 and 3 of policy *EN5 Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest*, the proposal would not have a material impact on the views in question as viewed from the relevant viewing points.

The proposed additional storey would be sympathetic to the dwelling while enhancing the architectural interest of the dwelling. It is considered that the scale, or resulting prominence, of the proposal is not out of proportion to either that of the dwelling or its wider context. The proposed materials are intended to match the existing materials which is acceptable.

As such, the proposal accords with the aims of policies CC7 and H9 of the Local Plan (2019) with respect to character, scale and siting.

7.3 Amenity

Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties. The proposal includes a single-storey rear extension. The SPD 'Design Guide to House Extensions' provides guidance on design considerations for single-storey rear extensions, which outlines that the design should not detract from the existing dwelling, not encroach on a line taken 45 degrees from the mid-point of the nearest neighbouring habitable room, should avoid reducing back-to-back distance for dwellings like these to less than 20 meters, and should not harm common building lines or positive repeating design features.

The proposed upward extension by virtue of its scale and siting on a hill on relatively large plot would not impede upon on any 45-degree line of sight from neighbouring windows or create any significant overshadowing for neighbouring sites. The space between 7 Grass Hill and numbers 5A and 9 is considered to eliminate the capacity for the proposal to impose a sense of overbearingness. The proposal would not increase the footprint of the dwelling and consequently would not affect the quantity or quality of the site's private outdoor amenity space.

The proposal would result in four new windows at the first-floor. Due to the topography of the site and distance between dwellings, the north-east and north-west facing windows serving the landing would have the capacity to overlook parts of the gardens of 3 Courtlands, St Peter's Avenue and 5A Grass Hill. However, in the case of 3 Courtlands that part of the garden most likely to be affected is the end of the garden which is lower than patio and parts of the garden closest to the dwelling. In the case of 5A Grass Hill, the garden in question is at a considerable distance from the window in question. In both cases the fact the windows in question serve a landing reduces the severity of this concern further. The large south-west facing window would serve the master bedroom and include doors to a rooftop balcony. In terms of loss of privacy or overlooking the window and balcony primarily present a risk to 9 Grass Hill. However, 9 Grass Hill does not have any windows serving habitable rooms which could be impacted by the window or patio. The existing ground floor windows and garden already have the capacity to overlook the outdoor amenity space of 9 Grass Hill. The south-west facing window and patio is not considered to worsen this situation. The south-east facing window would serve an ensuite bathroom which largely overlooks part of the garden of the proposal site which would be at the same level as the window. This would present a significant risk of a loss of privacy for those using the ensuite. Further to this analysis, it is considered sufficient for any permission for this proposal to include a condition that out of the proposed first floor windows, only the ensuite would need to be obscure-glazed to safeguard the privacy amenity of the dwelling and neighbouring sites.

The proposal is considered to accord with the aims of policy CC8 and H10 of the Local Plan (2019) provided the discussed condition is included with any granting of permission.

7.4 Biodiversity and sustainability

Part 'b' of Policy EN12 indicates that all development sites should not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. These aims are supported by Policy H9 which states that an extension will only be acceptable where it does not result in the loss of biodiversity within gardens.

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System requires the establishment of the presence or otherwise of protected species prior to the granting of planning permission.

A Bat Survey has been conducted and the resulting report has been reviewed by the Ecology Officer who has indicated there is no meaningful risk of harm to any protected species of Bats.

The site includes several noteworthy trees. However, the tree officer is of the opinion that a simple Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan is necessary to ensure the process of construction does not damage the protected trees.

As such, the proposal is not considered likely to result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity and the proposal accords with the biodiversity and sustainability considerations of Policies H9 and EN12 of the local plan, and to accord with the requirements of Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05.

8. CONCLUSION

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

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

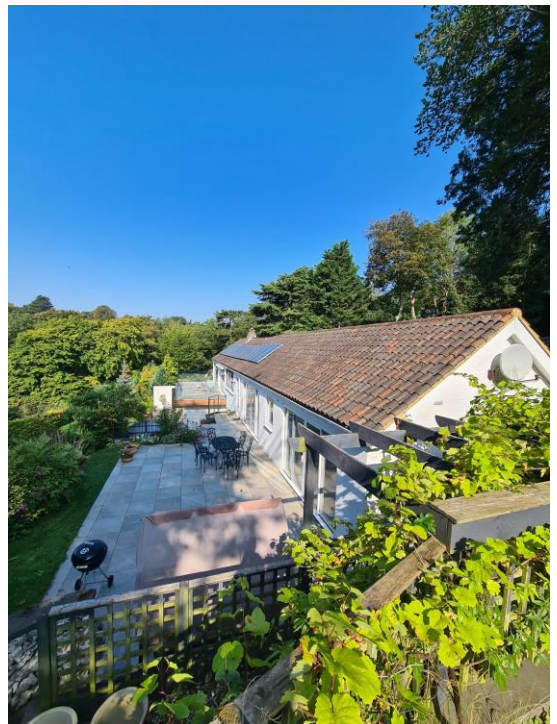
10. CONDITIONS

1. Standard time limit [TL1]
2. Standard approved plans [AP1]
3. Materials (as specified) [M3]
4. Arboricultural Method Statement (to be submitted) [L7]
5. Obscure Glazed [PD3]]

APPENDIX
Site photographs.



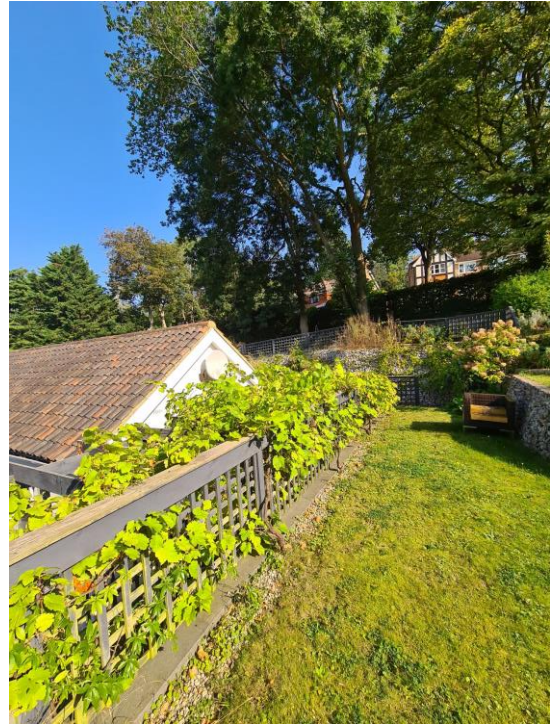
View of 9 Grass Hill from the patio.



Photos of the patio.



View from raised part of the garden looking toward the proposed south-east facing window to serve an ensuite.



Various photos of the house from the garden.











