

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Mapledurham

App Ref: 211051/HOU

Address: 22 Fernbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HG

Proposals: 2 storey side extension and 1st floor rear extension (Part Retrospective) (Amended Description).

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr Lyttle

Date received (valid from): 24/06/2021

Target Decision date: 19/08/2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site a two-storey detached dwelling located on the Fernbrook Road, Caversham. The surrounding area is considered predominantly residential with similarly designed two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings.

An unaccompanied site visit was performed on 09/08/2021.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks the erection of a two-storey side and rear extension. As stated on the application form; the works commenced on 03/08/2020. As a result, this application is part retrospective. The works appear to have commenced based on the plans submitted under application 200954, which were refused by the LPA on 25/08/2020. Therefore, should this application be approved, the works that have already been carried out will need to be altered to reflect the plans approved under this application. Failure to do so would invite intervention from Planning Enforcement.

Plans considered:

- Location Plan
- Existing Plans - July 2020
- Existing Elevations - July 2020
- Proposed Block Plan - June 2021
- Proposed Plans 2 - June 2021
- Proposed Elevations 3 - June 2021
- Bat Survey of 22 Fernbrook, Caversham - L1138.001

Received on 24/06/2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

190653/HOU - Side and rear extension - Application Permitted on 12/06/2019

200954/HOU - 2 Storey side extension and 1st floor rear extension. - Application Refused on 25/08/2020. Appeal Dismissed on 18/03/2021. Reasons for Refusal:

1. The extension would be overly dominant in relation to the original building, constituting an overdevelopment of the site. The extension would add excessive bulk to the side with a jarring roof form, lacking subservience to the original building, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore of poor design, contrary to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
2. By virtue of the size, location, and proximity to the boundary of no.24 Fernbrook Road, the proposed two-storey side extension would have a significant detrimental impact on the outlook from the first floor side facing windows, resulting in a nearly complete loss of outlook from the first floor bedroom. The proximity and size would also result in a significantly overbearing structure as viewed from ground and first floor rooms. The significant impact on the living environment of the adjoining property (no.24 Fernbrook Road) is contrary to policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

3. The applicant has failed to demonstrate, by way of a bat survey, that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on roosting habitat for bats within the roof of the existing building, therefore the development would be contrary to policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and paragraph 179 (a) of the NPPF (2019).

Summary of appeal Decision APP/E0345/W/20/3260887 in relation to planning application 200954/HOU and the reasons for refusal as states above:

1. Consequently, the proposed development would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The scheme would accord with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan where it, in part, requires proposals to respond positively to their local context.
2. The proposed development would unacceptably harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 24 with regard to outlook. It would fail to accord with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Local Plan) where it, in part, seeks to prevent unacceptable harm to outlook.
3. The Bat Survey found no bats or evidence of bat occupancy and that overall, the building provided bats with Negligible Roosting Suitability. On this basis no further survey work was recommended. From the evidence before me, I have reached the same finding. Were the appeal to be allowed, conditions could be imposed where necessary with regard to ecological enhancements. Therefore, the proposed development would not be harmful to biodiversity. It would comply with Policy EN12 of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework where they seek to protect species and their habitats.

The appeal was dismissed as the harm in respect of the living conditions of the occupiers of No 24.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

18 Wincroft Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7HH - No response received.

16 Wincroft Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HH - No response received.

14 Wincroft Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HH - No response received.

20 Fernbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HG - No response received.

24 Fernbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HG - No response received.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 10/07/2021

- Proposed parking layout has not been provided as it would appear that the proposed side extension will result in the loss of access to the garage.
- In principal there are no Transport objections to this application as it would appear that there is sufficient space on the front drive, therefore I am happy to deal with this by way of condition.

Reading Borough Council, Ecology - Response received on 23/06/2021

- A Preliminary bat Survey report (Crossman Associates, September 2020) has been submitted with this application. The report concluded that bats are unlikely to be affected by the proposals. As such, since bats and other protected species are unlikely to be affected by the proposals, there are no objections to this development on ecological grounds.

A site notices for was displayed on Tuesday 6th July 2021 for a period of 21 days, expiring on Tuesday 27th July 2021. No further consultation responses have been received.

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 Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

EN12 Biodiversity and The Green Network

TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation, house extension proposals are acceptable where it:

- *Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale and locations.*
- *Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line.*

The proposed development would be 5.5m wide at ground floor level, and 4.93m wide at first floor level. The proposed first floor rear and side extension is situated upon a previously approved single storey rear and side extension under application 190653. The height of the ridge to the proposed extensions is set down from the existing ridge would be staggered at 0.17m to the ridge of the first floor rear extension to existing ridge, and 0.53m to the ridge of the first floor rear and side extension to existing ridge. The proposed extensions serve to create a bedroom and ensuite at the ground floor, with a bathroom, bedroom and ensuite on the first floor.

Pitched roof dormer openings are proposed to the front and rear of the two storey side and rear extension and are considered an appropriate solution to counter the reduction height in the overall extensions to address amenity concerns (discussed later in this report).

The proposed two storey side and rear extension is considered characteristic of the surrounding area, with several nearby properties along Fernbrook Road benefitting from large extensions in relation to the main house. While the width of the side extension is considerable in relation to the main house, the impact of the side extension on the character and appearance of the street scene and existing dwelling is considered significantly reduced as it is set back from the existing front elevation by 3.8m. The roof formation and height of the proposed two storey side and rear extension has been reduced from previously refused application 200954. The extensions are not considered harmful to the street scene or harmful to the character and appearance of the main house in terms of size and scale.

The size and scale of the proposed development is considered sufficiently subservient to the existing dwelling and acceptable in accordance with policy H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Developments of the size and scale proposed within this application are not considered especially out of character with the surrounding area. Materials have been specified on the application to match the existing dwelling throughout.

Owing to the proposed layout, as a result of the extensions proposed, it is considered necessary in this instance to condition the proposed development as ancillary to 22 Fernbrook Road. It is considered that following the implementation of the plans proposed, the internal layout of 22 Fernbrook Road could easily be altered to create ancillary accommodation. Therefore, the proposed extensions will be secured via planning condition so that they cannot be occupied at any time other than as ancillary to the main house at 22 Fernbrook Road. This is to ensure that separate occupation of the extensions would not detract from the amenities or living conditions of neighbouring residential properties in accordance with policy H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation, house extension proposals are acceptable where it:

- *Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.*

It is not considered that the proposal would result in a loss of biodiversity within the garden to the point of refusal for this application.

7.2 Safeguarding Amenity

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to:

- *Privacy and overlooking*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development*
- *Harm to outlook*

The proposed development is not considered to have a significantly detrimental impact on the living conditions at 24 Fernbrook Road to the point of refusal for this application. As mentioned in section 3 of this report, the second reason for refusal for application 200954 was that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 24 with regard to outlook from the first floor side facing window, serving a bedroom. The window in question is the only opening serving that bedroom. This was the only reason for refusal that was agreed by the Inspector as highlighted in the appeal decision.

The development proposed under application 211051 has attempted to address the failings of application 200954 by setting the first floor side elevation further from the concerning window at number 24 by 0.57m. The height of the eaves to the first floor side extension has also been reduced from 4.68m under application 200954, to 4.41m under this application. The maximum height of the proposed extensions closest to the concerning window at number 24 has also been reduced from 7.45m to 7m.

It is considered that the combination of these alterations; reducing the eaves height, maximum height and setting the first floor side elevation further from the first floor window to number 24 has suitably addressed officer concerns that the development would harm the outlook from number 24. The proposed development under this application is considered not to harm the outlook from number 24 to the point of refusal, and allow for an appropriate level of light through reducing the height and proximity of the side extensions.

No other nearby occupier is considered to be significantly impinged by the proposed development in relation to any amenity consideration. For existing and future occupiers of the proposed dwelling, the proposals would improve the standard of accommodation at the site.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered to harm the living conditions to neighbouring properties or the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. It is considered appropriate to condition the approval of this application to restrict the potential insertion of side facing windows to the side elevations of the first-floor side extension under permitted development. This is to safeguard the amenity of 24 Fernbrook Road from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.3 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that:

- *Usable outdoor space for houses should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling. To which it relates.*

It is considered that this proposal will not represent an unacceptable loss in private outdoor space.

7.4 Ecology

Due to the works proposed to the roof of 22 Fernbrook Road, it was required that a bat survey be carried out to determine whether or not the proposal would have an acceptable impact to any roosting bats. A bat survey was submitted to support this application on 24/06/2021. The report concluded the building has been assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, so it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work. The RBC Ecology consultant has confirmed agreement with the report submitted, with no further assessment or conditions required. The proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.5 Transport

The consultation response from Reading Borough Council Transport states that the proposal is acceptable subject to a condition requiring two on site vehicle parking spaces to be approved prior to development commencing on site. It is considered by officers that this pre-commencement condition is not required as development has already commenced on site. Upon visiting the site, it was considered that there would be adequate provision for two on site vehicle parking spaces.

Therefore, the proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

8. 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. As mentioned in section 2 of this report; the works that have already been carried out will need to be altered to reflect the plans approved under this application. Failure to do so would invite intervention from Planning Enforcement.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

10. CONDITIONS

AP1: Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Plans considered:

- Location Plan

- Proposed Block Plan - June 2021
- Proposed Plans 2 - June 2021
- Proposed Elevations 3 - June 2021
- Bat Survey of 22 Fernbrook, Caversham - L1138.001

Received on 24/06/2021

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

M1: Materials (To Match)

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used on the existing building.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

PD2: No New Openings

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order) no windows/doors/dormers/openings, other than those shown on the approved plans shall at any time be placed in the side elevations of the extensions hereby permitted without the grant of a separate planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

PD6: Ancillary Domestic Use

The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling known as 22 Fernbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8NX.

REASON: To accord with the terms of the application, and to ensure that separate occupation of the extension/building would not detract from the amenities or living conditions of neighbouring residential properties (or the character of the locality) in accordance with Policy H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives