

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Mapledurham

App Ref: 200954/HOU

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

Proposals: Two-storey side extension and first floor rear extension

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

Applicant: Mr A Little

Date received (valid from): 7 July 2020

Target Decision date: 1 September 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The development site is a single detached dwelling at the end of a culs-de-sac in Fernbrook Road. The site currently has a partly constructed two-storey side extension (the subject of this application).

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal include the erection of a two-storey side and rear extension which required the demolition of the existing garage.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

190653 - Single storey side and rear extension APPROVED 12/6/2019

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

18 Wincroft Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7HH

16 Wincroft Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HH

14 Wincroft Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HH

20 Fernbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HG

24 Fernbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7HG

No responses have been received to date.

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)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the green network)

EN14 (Trees, hedges and woodland)

H9 (House extensions and ancillary accommodation)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG (2003)

6. APPRAISAL

Design and character and appearance of the area

- 6.1 Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states that *“all development should be of a high quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*
- 6.2 Policy H9 also states that: *“An extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it:*
 - *Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;*
 - *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;*
 - *Does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas; and*
 - *Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.”*
- 6.3 The proposed development would be 5.47m wide, and would extend above the previously approved single storey side/rear extension to provide a second storey. The original dwelling to which the proposal relates measures is 9m in width. The proposed two-storey side extension portion would have a set-down ridge height to join into the existing house, and then would be higher over the two-storey side extension being the same height as the existing ridge height.
- 6.4 The surrounding area within Fernbrook Road contain a reasonably consistent form of original dwelling at two-storey set in large plots. The surrounding dwellings have a number of single, and two-storey side and rear extensions of varying sizes.
- 6.5 Given the plot sizes, and variation between extensions in the immediately surrounding area, a two-storey side extension could be considered acceptable should it meet the requirements of the above mentioned policies. In this instance the proposed two-storey extension would have a ridge height, and width which is considered too wide as to be able to respect the character and appearance of the main dwelling in terms of scale and

location and appears akin to another dwelling to the side of the original in size. The convoluted design of the roof, including a partial flat roof is indicative of the overdevelopment to the side of the original dwelling, and its width relative to the main dwelling is considered to harm the appearance of the original dwelling by outweighing the architecture and unbalancing the entire dwelling.

6.6 In addition, the overly wide design includes two rear facing windows for the proposed bathroom windows. The windows are narrow and confined to the far left (as viewed in elevation view) side of the extension. This arrangement would appear uncharacteristic of the overall architecture of the host dwelling and would not respect the other architectural features of the dwelling in terms of window size, and void to mass. Amended plans could be considered to address this however as the scheme is considered unacceptable for other reasons none have been sought.

6.7 As such, the proposal is considered contrary to policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Amenity

6.8 Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) 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; or*
- *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.”*

6.9 The adjoining property, no.24 Fernbrook Road, which the proposed extension would be built in close proximity to the shared boundary includes a number of side facing windows, including a first floor side facing window.

6.10 The proposed extension would result in a large unarticulated façade which would block almost the entirety of the outlook from the existing side facing window serving a first floor bedroom. The applicant has provided a 45 degree angle drawn on the plans to ‘demonstrate’ that the proposal would not impact this line. However, the 45 degree line as drawn would show that there would be limited outlook that would not be directly at the proposed extension.

Biodiversity

6.11 The application site is located within an area surrounded by habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats (large connected gardens backing onto small pockets of woodland). The dwelling appears to host potential roosting features for bats within the roof. As such there would be the potential to affect roosting bats and a bat survey will be required (a phase 1 at least) to determine if there are suitable roosting areas for bats. *Officer note: At the time of writing although the works were well underway, no works appear to have been carried out to affect the original roof of the dwelling.*

6.12 All species of bats receive protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (the SNCO - Natural England in England).

6.13 Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document was not revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”

6.14 In addition, Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the green network) states:

“On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:

- Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*
- Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is “no net loss” of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.

6.15 The applicant has been advised that a bat survey is a requirement. However, has elected not to provide this at this time and seek a refusal of the application. As such, the need for a bat survey is a reason for refusal as the development has failed to demonstrate that there would not be an impact upon bat roosts contrary to policy EN12 of the RBLP and the NPPF.

Previous permission

6.16 The application site notably has been granted permission for a single storey side extension with an identical footprint. This is relevant as a fall-back position which could be constructed. However, due to its height, and general relationship to the adjoining dwelling, was considered acceptable on its own merits. The inclusion of a second floor above significantly alters the relationship to no.24 and the original dwelling, and as outlined above is not considered acceptable.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development, by virtue of its size relative to the original dwelling, impact upon the outlook from side facing windows and lack of suitable bat survey, should be refused.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Application Refused